

Is ductless mini-split system right for your home?

How would you like a personalized comfort zone within your home? One where the temperature is customized to your liking and may be different than the temperature in the shared living areas or other rooms in the house. This flexibility and customization are precisely why mini-split systems, also known as ductless air-source heat pumps, and their energy-efficiency aspects are so popular.

Let's unpack some mini-split basics and explore whether this type of system is a good choice for your home heating and cooling needs.

A mini-split system is a type of HVAC equipment used for heating and cooling, allowing you to control the temperature in individual rooms or spaces. Similar

to central heating and cooling, mini-split systems have two main components – an outdoor compressor and an indoor air-handling unit(s). A narrow conduit links the indoor unit(s) to the outdoor compressor.

While central heating and cooling systems feature an indoor unit connected by long lengths of ductwork, mini-splits are typically ductless. This means energy is not lost traveling through long stretches of ductwork. Installing the air-handling unit in a desired room or area enables you to control the temperature more precisely, reducing energy consumption. That's because you're adjusting the temperature to a single room or space rather than the whole home.

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MINI-SPLITS AT A GLANCE

Mini-split systems, also known as ductless air-source heat pumps, heat/cool a home through an outdoor unit that connects to one or more individual indoor air handlers, which are typically mounted on a wall. Depending on the size of your home and personal preferences, a mini-split system is worth considering when you need to replace or upgrade your heating/cooling system.

Mini-Split System Benefits:

- Zone-controlled heating/cooling
- Higher energy efficiency ratings
- Easy to install
- Good for heating/cooling home additions

Mini-Split System Considerations:

- Potentially higher upfront cost
- Appearance
- May require electrical upgrades
- Not as effective in large spaces



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Is a mini-split system right for you?

Mini-split systems are a popular option in home additions or to supplement heating and cooling in a space that may be furthest away from the main living area, such as a finished attic or basement. In these instances, it may not be feasible to install or extend the ductwork required in traditional central cooling and heating systems.

In contrast, mini-splits are relatively easy to install, requiring a small hole for the conduit connecting the indoor and outdoor units. Most systems can handle up to four indoor rooms or zones connected to one outdoor unit. Each of the zones can be customized, because each includes a thermostat that enables you to heat or cool the space as needed, saving energy and money over time.

Cool solutions

Mini-split systems bring additional benefits. They are quiet, improve indoor air quality and are typically easy to install. Many come with remotes to make temperature control even easier, and because of their smaller size, mini-split systems have many placement options for indoor and outdoor units.

One of the greatest benefits of mini-splits is they typically have a higher seasonal energy efficiency ratio

(SEER) rating than traditional central heating and cooling systems. The higher the unit's SEER rating, the more energy efficient it is.

Additional considerations

However, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, "mini-splits cost about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per ton of cooling capacity. That's about 30% more than central systems (not including ductwork) and may cost twice as much as window units of similar capacity."

While the technology is improving and evolving, those in particularly colder climates may need a fuel backup to run a mini-split system. Aesthetics are another factor to consider, as some homeowners don't like the appearance of the indoor units, which are more visible than central air conditioning vents.

If you're considering an upgrade or additional heating and cooling equipment, talk to a qualified technician to learn if a ductless mini-split system could work for your home. ■

Rate adjustment planned in 2025

The substantial rise in wholesale power costs, along with escalating material and equipment expenses, has prompted Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) to conduct an annual cost-of-service study.

This study evaluates both fixed and variable costs, revealing LYREC is not generating enough revenue to cover its operational expenses. While LYREC has managed to maintain stable rates for several years, the rising costs from power suppliers and increased material and equipment prices will necessitate a rate adjustment in 2025.

LYREC receives power from Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). Both suppliers are experiencing a rise in demand for electricity, while the supply of power continues to be influenced by technology and policy. As a result, both BEPC and WAPA will be raising their power costs at the start of next year.

To help members manage their energy bills, LYREC provides various resources. The SmartHub mobile app enables members to track their daily usage and offers convenient ways to pay. Multiple payment options are available, including prepaid billing, which allows members to pay as they go and monitor their energy consumption. Budget billing helps mitigate fluctuations by taking an average of the previous 12 months of usage and calculating an even monthly payment. Additionally, LYREC shares energy efficiency tips through its monthly magazine and social media platforms.

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, LYREC returns margins to its members, so there is no incentive to raise rates more than necessary. Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members. Despite the upcoming rate adjustment, LYREC continues to have one of the lowest rates in the state and the cost of electricity remains a great value considering all the ways we depend on it. ■

APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

- All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. paid for by Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative.
- A week of visiting historic monuments, meeting elected officials and learning about cooperatives.
- Developing lifelong friendships from across the country.



JUNE 14-21, 2025

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.



ESSAY QUESTION

What was the most important event to have occurred in our nation during your lifetime? How did it affect you?

HOW TO APPLY

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school, and your parent or guardian must be served by Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative.
- Email entries to scholarships@lyrec.coop or mail to: LYREC, P.O. Box 1047, Sidney, MT 59270.
- The deadline is Dec. 2, 2024.

LEARN MORE AT [LYREC.COM](https://www.lyrec.coop)



Need assistance heating your home this winter?

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in Montana and North Dakota is accepting applications. These programs assist residents with their heating bills through the winter months.






Eligibility is based on your household income and resources. If you live in Montana and need help paying your heating bill, you can contact Energy Share at 800-227-0703. If you live in North Dakota, you can contact Community Action at 701-572-8191. You may also download an application at www.lyrec.com or call Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative.

The application process can take up to two months before receiving assistance. If you fall within the guidelines below and need assistance, please download an application today.






If you do not fall within these guidelines, you may still qualify for Energy Share. Energy Share benefits are a one-time grant to alleviate a temporary heating emergency. Eligibility is not based solely on income, but also on extenuating circumstances the household is facing.

Below are the income eligibility criteria for Montana and North Dakota residents. ■

MONTANA RESIDENTS:

Number in household	Annual income
	■ \$32,102
	■ \$41,979
	■ \$51,857
	■ \$61,735
	■ \$71,612

NORTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS:

Number in household	Annual income
	■ \$35,724
	■ \$46,716
	■ \$57,708
	■ \$68,701
	■ \$79,693



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Eric McPherson	System Controller
Kevin Goff	Operations Assistant
Kelly Keysor	Operations Manager
Aaron Eide	Journeyman Lineman
Bryan Franck	Journeyman Lineman
Jesse Obergfell	Journeyman Lineman
Tanner Roth	Journeyman Lineman
Ryder Peterson	Journeyman Lineman
Cole Jankovsky	Journeyman Lineman
Lee Delp	Apprentice Lineman
Preston Long	Apprentice Lineman
Trey Schepens	Apprentice Lineman
Jory Bell	Apprentice Lineman
Brandon Mueller	Master Electrician
Mike Eberling	Mechanic
Dan Gieser	EMS
Lee Alvstad	Mechanic/EMS
Richard Tremblay	EMS
Bo Kindopp	GIS/Easement Technician
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Justin King	Warehouse Supervisor
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