

COLUMBUS CURRENTS

Is a Ductless Mini-Split System Right for Your Home?

By Anne Prince

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.

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 that they typically have a higher SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) 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 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.

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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



Power Your Future! Apply for Columbus Electric's Cooperative Scholarship Program

Columbus Electric Cooperative offers educational scholarships to active members of CEC and their immediate family members. Scholarship recipients can receive financial assistance for up to eight semesters of undergraduate studies at the college of their choice. Applicants must complete an application and submit letters of recommendation. Applications may be obtained by contacting our office, the student's high school counselor or at columbusco-op.org/scholarships. The deadline to apply is March 4, 2025.

For questions, please call our office at 575-546-8838

Scholarship Applications will be accepted beginning December 2, 2024 for the 2025-2026 school year.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're heading out of town during the holiday season, remember to set your home to vacation mode. You can save energy while you're away by lowering your thermostat a few degrees or creating an "away" schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat. Newer water heaters include a vacation mode setting to help you save on water heating costs, or you can simply lower the temperature manually.

Small actions can also stack up to energy savings. Unplug devices that consume energy when they're not in use, including phone chargers, toothbrush chargers, TVs and gaming consoles.

Board Highlights

Adam Bailey of Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss presented the 2024 audit report at the October board meeting. He reported that it was a clean audit and that the Cooperative is in good financial condition and in compliance with all lender and government requirements.



Our office will be closed November 28th and 29th in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday. Wishing you a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!



Columbus Electric Cooperative is now accepting applications for the annual Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

This year, New Mexico will be in D.C. June 16-21, 2025, and Youth Tour delegates will spend their time touring monuments, visiting museums, meeting with elected officials, learning about the cooperative business model, and getting to know young leaders from all over New Mexico and 46 other states! The best part? It's **FREE!** Everything is covered by Columbus Electric Cooperative!

It truly is the trip of a lifetime.

Interested? Check out our website for more information or call our office at 575-546-8838 with any additional questions. Applications for the Youth Tour are available on our website, at our Deming office or the student's high school counselor. Space is limited! The deadline to submit your application is January 31, 2025. Don't let this opportunity of a lifetime pass you by!

Emergency Response Number
1-800-228-0579

Toll - free Office Number
1-800-950-COOP (2667)

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