



2025 ENERGY STAR®

Awards Partner of the Year Award Application – Energy Efficiency Program Sponsor

Applications due: November 14,

ENERGY STAR Awards

Instructions

Eligibility

This award is open to utilities, state agencies, regional energy efficiency nonprofit organizations, associations, and other organizations that sponsor sustained energy efficiency and environmental programs for their customers and constituents.

Please note that for-profit energy service and product providers are not eligible for this award category and are redirected to the application for Service and Product Providers under the Partner of the Year category.

Description

This award recognizes organizations that have demonstrated leadership and best practices in implementing energy efficiency programs and/or program portfolios that incorporate ENERGY STAR as a key strategy. Recipients of awards in this category distinguish themselves through their use of the ENERGY STAR brand, tools, strategies and resources to cost-effectively deliver near-term program results while also effectively overcoming market barriers to efficiency such that more efficient products, homes, buildings, and facilities become the norm. Organizations applying for this award are strongly encouraged to address how they are transforming the market for energy efficiency in the long term.

The goal of this award is to recognize comprehensive, high-performing energy efficiency programs and/or portfolios that have directly leveraged ENERGY STAR to achieve significant impact in the marketplace, advancing energy efficiency and related greenhouse gas emission reduction objectives.

NOTE:

- For organizations that have been recognized with ENERGY STAR Awards in past years, the award evaluation committee will assess applicants not only on their ability to sustain successful strategies from prior years, but on the new strategies and activities initiated in 2024. Applicants are encouraged to respond accordingly in their narratives.
- Flexibility is granted for the time horizon for reporting accomplishments, provided that the majority of accomplishments occur in calendar year 2024.

OMB Control Number: 2060-0528
OMB Control Expiration Date: Pending
Approval

Program Categories

Applicants may apply in one or more Program Category. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit one comprehensive application, irrespective of internal organization/program management structure, to most effectively convey their organization's strategic use of the ENERGY STAR platform and partnership in advancing energy efficiency.

Category 1. Residential New Construction

Programs that promote the construction of ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments by implementing program elements such as:

- Employing program design approaches that are based on the local housing market and unique program goals and reflect the most important regional factors for program success.
- Incentivizing and promoting ENERGY STAR NextGen certified homes and apartments.
- Implementing marketing strategies that increase awareness of the ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments programs to consumers.
- Providing training to help builders and Raters become successful program participants.
- Utilizing strategic incentive structures that help to offset upgrade or verification costs.
- Implementing outreach approaches that create strong relationships with stakeholders, communicate procedures and expectations, and share important program information.
- Developing quality assurance protocols to ensure the integrity of the ENERGY STAR label and the applicant's program; and
- Using measurement and evaluation processes to assess progress and attainment of goals and facilitate continuous improvement in the implementation of the program.

Category 2. Home Performance with ENERGY STAR

Program Sponsors and Partners that promote or deliver Home Performance with ENERGY STAR by implementing at least one of the following program elements:

- Utilizes program delivery strategies that achieve verifiable energy savings, improved safety, and comfort, and enhance the durability and affordability of homes.
- Develops and implements marketing and outreach strategies that incorporate and leverage the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR brand with demonstrated project-generating results.
- Demonstrates leadership in the national, regional, state, or local arenas to foster the advancement of the home performance industry.
- Enhances program impacts through process improvements that improve the efficiency and delivery of projects, increase contractor participation in the Sponsor's program, and increase cost-effectiveness of the home performance portfolio.

Category 3. Certified Residential Products

Programs that are designed to overcome market barriers to widespread adoption of ENERGY STAR residential products including adoption by underserved communities and/or related best

practices, such as programs that deliver point-of-sale discounts to consumers and engage suppliers such as distributors and retailers in stocking and promotion.

Category 4. Certified Commercial Products

Programs that are designed to overcome market barriers to widespread adoption of ENERGY STAR certified commercial products including adoption by underserved commercial customers and/or related best practices, such as programs that deliver point-of-sale discounts to consumers and engage suppliers such as distributors and contractors in stocking and promotion.

Category 5. Commercial and Industrial Building and Plant Performance

Programs that deliver improved whole-building energy performance in existing commercial buildings; target and track performance for commercial new construction; and/or achieve facility-wide energy-performance improvement in industrial plants, by using ENERGY STAR tools and resources to overcome market barriers. The evaluation committee will look for several specific actions, including but not limited to:

- Employing program design approaches that are based on the local housing market and unique program goals and reflect the most important regional factors for program success.
- Implementing marketing strategies that increase awareness of ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments.
- Increasing the use of ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager by making whole-building energy data more readily available to customers, in particular through use of the Portfolio Manager web services.
- Promoting and/or incorporating in program design and delivery Treasure Hunts, the Challenge for Industry, ENERGY STAR Tenant Space™ recognition, and helping customers earn the ENERGY STAR for buildings or plants,
- Setting energy design goals using Target Finder and achieving Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR for new buildings; and
- Implementing Building Performance with ENERGY STAR.

Application Requirements

Accomplishments

Applicants should provide **a detailed description of 2024 accomplishments** demonstrating how you have met the required criteria below.

NEW! Incremental Annual Energy Savings and Avoided Emissions

When highlighting accomplishments, please be sure to include:

- Include annual energy savings from installed efficiency measures (e.g., products, homes, insulation upgrades) in 2024 (see related [Specification of Time Horizon](#)).
- Choose and clearly indicate whether 1) energy savings are for one year or 2) for the lifetime of the installed measures and be consistent in this choice throughout the application. If you wish to include both, please include both throughout your application.
- Use gross savings i.e., the change in energy consumption that results directly from program-related actions ... in an energy efficiency program, regardless of why [customers participate].”¹
- Provide the basis for avoided greenhouse gas and other emissions as relevant (i.e., provide a breakout of emissions avoided based on energy savings and those avoided based on other factors, such as those avoided due to use of environmentally preferred refrigerants).
- Products programs should provide details of avoided energy consumption by product category, per the example tables in [Program Specific Market Effects](#). This requirement is a direct response to lack of transparency for program accomplishments seen in recent applications. Programs wishing to include 2024 lighting accomplishments should focus on sales and installation of ENERGY STAR-certified recessed downlights.

Specification of Time Horizon

While incremental annual energy savings and other accomplishments need largely to have occurred in calendar year 2024, the application deadline as well as applicant program/fiscal year often make quantification and reporting difficult. As such, the applicant may provide estimated incremental annual savings and other data through the end of the calendar year and specify that it is estimated or provide more precise data and include the time horizon (e.g., between October 2023 and October 2024). Please be consistent throughout the application, i.e., use the same method/time horizon for all accomplishments.

Context Matters, Tell Your Story

Don't assume that reviewers know your service territory or the local conditions that affect program performance. Putting data in context can help tell your story. For example, raw data on the number of ENERGY STAR certified homes your program facilitated can be strengthened by estimates of the percent of home starts they represent in your territory. Similarly, if you achieved the same or greater volume of equipment sales as the prior year, but the energy

¹ [SEE Action Energy Efficiency Program Impact Evaluation Guide](#). December 2012

savings claims are lower due to a change in the baseline of comparison, that is important context. If you are in a state or territory where fuel switching is more challenging, but you are still offering rebates on measures that result in efficient electrification, share that context and discuss the barriers overcome and/or how this is addressed in your Program Design narrative.

Part 1: Award Accomplishments Document

(use the following information to create a Word or PDF file)

1. Executive Summary (no more than 300 words)

(required):

Please open your Award Accomplishments discussion with an executive summary of no more than 300 words. The summary should highlight your organization's main ENERGY STAR achievements during 2024 that you will be discussing in more detail in section 2 below. **NOTE: If your organization is selected for award recognition this year, EPA may draw from this executive summary in developing content promoting this year's award winners. Your executive summary is not included in the 3 page per program category limits for the main narrative outlined in item 2a - 2f, following.**

2. Narrative (no more than three pages per program category) (required):

It is recommended that each item, as defined below, be addressed explicitly in the application. Newer programs (those that have been in the market at least a year) are encouraged to apply, and scores will be weighted accordingly (i.e., more heavily based on program design and anticipated market effects than energy savings.)

Candidates **must** include the following in their submissions:

a. Category(ies)

Please identify all target Program Categories (listed in the [Program Categories](#) section) for your program(s)/initiative(s). If you address multiple Program Categories, please ensure that each category clearly addresses the following criteria.

NOTE: Sponsors that provide quantitative results of campaigns and initiatives will be considered more competitively than those who do not provide any quantitative information.

b. Program Design

Describe your program design in terms of goals, market barriers addressed, strategy for overcoming market barriers, key activities, and discuss why this approach is the best practice for your market. Applicants with new programs/program designs should focus heavily on this section, clearly explaining their program logic and why it is likely to lead to sustained market change. The evaluation committee will be looking for changes in your program design from the prior year.

c. Incorporation of ENERGY STAR

Describe how you have incorporated the ENERGY STAR platform as a central pillar of your program including

- Use of ENERGY STAR specifications and other marketing designations (e.g., ENERGY STAR Most Efficient)
- Branding with ENERGY STAR—explicit use of the ENERGY STAR logo and the words “ENERGY STAR certified” in consumer education and outreach initiatives (website, point of purchase signing, advertising, web, social media, and events, etc.)
- Leveraging of ENERGY STAR messaging, tools, and strategies including program design best practices, online tools (e.g., Ways to Save Tips web services) and campaign initiatives (e.g., Earth Day, ENERGY STAR Day, product promotions, Rule your Attic, Battle of the Buildings, and [ENERGY STAR Home Upgrade](#)). Information about our Marketing Materials can be found at [here](#).

d. Market Effects

Please provide qualitative and numerical data to support your case that the market has changed or will likely change in a sustained way as a result of your initiative (e.g., improved energy performance of buildings and homes in your region, changes in ENERGY STAR awareness or availability/sale of ENERGY STAR certified products, homes, or services). To the extent possible, also indicate the size and importance of the market that has been (or will be) affected within the context of your service territory, state, or region.

Examples of market effects *include, but are not limited to*, the following:

- Energy savings, peak demand reductions, and air pollution reductions achieved through residential, commercial, and/or industrial sector programs that explicitly leverage ENERGY STAR
- Increase in salesperson/contractor knowledge; change in business practices
- Increase in participation by key suppliers, including energy service companies, software vendors, financial institutions, trainers, manufacturers, distributors, equipment suppliers, architects, engineers, contractors, or retailers
- Increase in service availability
- Increase in third-party advertising by market participants
- Increase in consumer awareness; change in consumer attitude
- Breadth and reach of publicity activities
- Increase in participation in the ENERGY STAR Program
- Decrease in costs to administer a program through better efficiency and/or streamlining operations
- Estimated year-to-date energy savings

e. Program Category-Specific Market Effects

Applicants must provide the following information specific to the Program Category(ies) covered in your application:

For Residential New Construction:

- Promoting Retention and Growth in ENERGY STAR Certified Homes and Apartments
Describe and quantify efforts to retain and increase ENERGY STAR participation by builders and Raters. Provide the following numbers for both 2024 and 2023, and the percent change in these numbers between years:
 - Total number of homes built in your service territory
 - Number of incentivized ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments in your service territory
 - Number of incentivized ENERGY STAR NextGen certified homes and apartments in your service territory
 - Number of incentivized non-ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments in your service territory
 - Number of builders participating in your program
 - Number of Energy Rating Companies participating in your program
 - The program implementation budget directed to residential energy efficient new construction programs overall and to ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments programs specifically, both in dollar terms and as a percentage of your overall implementation budget
- Educating Homebuyers About ENERGY STAR Certified Homes and Apartments
Innovative program marketing efforts in 2024 that utilized the ENERGY STAR brand to increase homebuyer awareness of, and demand for, ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments, including ENERGY STAR NextGen. Quantify your examples (e.g., number of media impressions, number of website visits, number of brochures distributed).
Examples may include:
 - Developing ENERGY STAR-related marketing collateral (printed materials, online content, social media, etc.)
 - Assisting builders and Raters with marketing ENERGY STAR certified homes (e.g., training sales agents and/or real estate professionals)
- Assisting Builders and Energy Rating Companies in Meeting Program Requirements
Describe your program's efforts in 2024 to directly assist builders and energy rating companies in meeting ENERGY STAR program requirements in 2024. Quantify your examples (e.g., number of HVAC contractors trained on ENERGY STAR program requirements, number of technical trainings provided to builders, etc.). Examples may include:

- o Providing technical support and/or training to builders and/or energy rating companies
 - o Efforts to engage energy rating companies about Standard 310
- Demonstrating Leadership with ENERGY STAR
Describe your program's efforts in 2024 to be a leader in the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program. Examples may include:
 - o Implementing innovative program solutions to overcome market and/or regulatory barriers
 - o Promoting the value of the ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction programs to other organizations and delivering ENERGY STAR information at industry conferences and meetings

NOTE: Sponsors implementing tiered incentive programs where the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program is not the entry-level tier should only report results from those that participated at the ENERGY STAR level.

For Home Performance with ENERGY STAR

- Program impacts and growth
 - o Number of HPwES completed projects by participating contractors, including number of low-moderate income projects²
 - o Number of contractors actively participating in the HPwES program
 - o Project and portfolio-level energy savings from HPwES projects and processes for verification of program impact and savings.
 - o Annual budget for implementation of the HPwES program, including administration, marketing, incentives, and workforce training.
- Demonstrating leadership and innovation with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR
 - o Develops and incorporates diversity, equity and inclusion into HPwES program design and strategies, including engagement of diverse contractors, households and communities
 - o Demonstrate innovation in one or more areas of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program administration and delivery (e.g., customer engagement, low-moderate income households, advanced technologies, certification systems)
 - o Provide evidence for success in coordinating with other organizations (i.e., utilities, manufacturers, state/local governments, retail, finance organizations, non-profits, and trade associations) to grow overall market acceptance of home performance

² HPwES completed projects include a test-in/assessment, the work or installation of energy saving measures, and a test-out.

- o Process improvements that improve the efficiency of program delivery while addressing barriers to project delivery (e.g., remote inspections).
- Workforce development
 - o Partnering with trade allies, workforce development organizations and vocational education institutions to foster diversity and grow the contractor workforce, and/or promote economic development opportunities through the energy efficiency industry
 - o Examples of metrics include:
 - Increase in number of participating HPwES contractors
 - Number of contractor training sessions provided, and number of contractors trained
 - o Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) objectives, evidenced by number of participating minority-owned businesses and/or contractors.
 - o Activities to recruit and train participating contractors
- Marketing
 - o Describe innovative marketing that specifically highlights and leverages the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR platform including examples and metrics
 - o Lead generation and marketing strategies, including program participation and conversion rate metrics
 - o Marketing campaigns incorporating ENERGY STAR, including impact metrics

For ENERGY STAR Certified Residential Products:

- Increase in sales or market share of ENERGY STAR certified products—and any tiered subsets, vis a vis non-certified model
- Increase in shelf space devoted to ENERGY STAR certified products and/or increase in dealer stocking for certified products
- Increase in program participation by underserved customers as identified by program and/or utility commission
- Marketing campaigns incorporating ENERGY STAR, including impact metrics
- Alignment with the [ENERGY STAR Home Upgrade](#) or how emphasis on relevant program categories was placed in your programs
- Please provide a summary of your program impact in 2024 by product category, per the example in [Tables 1 - 6 below](#). This data will be used to evaluate program impacts relative to your program size and number of years running the program. In highlighting award accomplishments, EPA may choose to aggregate impacts at the product, product category, or in total, so it is important to use consistent metrics.

For ENERGY STAR Certified Commercial Products:

- Increase in sales or market share of ENERGY STAR certified products—and any tiered subsets, vis a vis non-certified model
- Increase in dealer/supplier stocking and/or marketing of certified products
- As applicable, number of older/inefficient units consolidated and/or removed from service
- Increase in program participation by underserved customers as identified by program and/or utility commission
- Marketing campaigns incorporating ENERGY STAR, including impact metrics
- Please provide a summary of your program impact in 2024 by product category, per the example in [Tables 7 - 10 below](#). This data will be used to evaluate program impacts relative to your program size and number of years running the program. In highlighting award accomplishments, EPA may choose to aggregate impacts at the product, product category, or in total, so it is important to use consistent metrics.

For Commercial and Industrial Building and Plant Performance:

When summarizing overall market effects, please also take this opportunity to highlight how ENERGY STAR has been integrated when delivering services into markets that have been historically underserved, including small and disadvantaged businesses, Class B and C office properties, communities of color, and low- and moderate- income communities.

- Increase in use of EPA’s ENERGY STAR measurement and tracking tool, ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, and the Target Finder, for new construction
- Number of customers obtaining the energy data they need to benchmark in Portfolio Manager through a utility service to enhance data access
- Number of customers participating in Treasure Hunts and/or the Challenge for Industry
- Increase in buildings earning the ENERGY STAR label, ENERGY STAR Tenant Space, or ENERGY STAR NextGen
- Number of customer buildings benchmarked and evaluated through a Building Performance with ENERGY STAR program

f. Data Integrity and Sources

Please reference data sources used to support your market effect claims. As relevant, briefly (1-2 sentences) describe the data collection method, sample frame, and respondent population (e.g., telephone survey, large-share sample of heating and cooling contractors).

In addition to data sources, applicants will be judged on the consistency and integrity of claimed savings. (See [NEW! Incremental Annual Energy Savings and Avoided Emissions](#)).

Residential Product Impacts Charts Example

Please fill in 1 of the 3 energy savings/avoided emissions columns for each measure rebated.

Table 1. Residential Products - Appliances

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWhs)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Air Cleaners				
Clothes Dryers				
Clothes Washers				
Dehumidifiers				
Dishwashers				
Electric Cooktops				
Freezers				
Refrigerators				

Table 2. Residential Products - Building Products

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWhs)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Windows, Doors, Skylights				
Storm Windows				
Sealing and Insulation				

Table 3. Residential Products - Heating and Cooling

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWhs)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Air Source Heat Pumps				
Ductless Heat Pumps				
Geothermal Heat Pumps				
Furnaces/Boilers				
Room Air Conditioners				
Smart Thermostats				

Table 4. Residential Products - Lighting

ENERGY STAR	# of units	Associated	Associated	Associated
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Certified Product	rebated/ upgraded	Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWhs)	Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Recessed Downlights*				

* Given continued available energy savings for this specialty application, recessed downlights will remain a focus of the ENERGY STAR program under a [new specification](#) effective January 1, 2025 (after the sunset of the ENERGY STAR luminaires specification December 31, 2024)

Table 5. Residential Products – Water Heaters

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWhs)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Heat Pump Water Heaters				
Gas Storage/Tankless Water Heaters				
Solar Water Heaters				

Table 6. Residential Products – Other

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWhs)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
EV Chargers				
Pool Pumps				
Smart Home Energy Management Systems				
Water Coolers				

Commercial Product Impacts Charts Example

Please fill in 1 of the 3 energy savings/avoided emissions columns for each measure rebated.

Table 7. Commercial Products – Appliances and Commercial Food Service Equipment

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWht)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Clothes Washers				
Coffee Brewers				
Dishwashers				
Electric Cooktops				
Freezers + Refrigerators				
Fryers				
Griddles				
Hot Food Holding Cabinets				
Ice Makers				
Ovens				
Steam Cookers				

Table 8. Commercial Products – Heating and Cooling

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWht)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Light Commercial Air Conditioners				
Light Commercial Heat Pumps				
Smart Thermostats				

Table 9. Commercial Products – Water Heaters

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWht)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
Commercial Water Heaters				

Table 10. Commercial Products - Other

ENERGY STAR Certified Product	# of units rebated/ upgraded	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MWhs)	Associated Energy Savings - annual or lifetime (MMBtu)	Associated Avoided Emissions - annual or lifetime (specify units)
EV chargers				
Laboratory Grade Refrigerators and Freezers				
Water Coolers				



Prepare/Gather Remaining Documents for Upload

ALL application materials must be submitted electronically through your My ENERGY STAR Account (MESA) (www.energystar.gov/mesa) using the electronic application forms provided. These materials must include:

Part 1: Award Accomplishments Document **(required)**

Applicants should provide **a detailed description of 2024 accomplishments** demonstrating how you have met the required criteria above. The evaluation committee will be looking for each of the sections requested in Part 1 to be addressed in the submission.

Part 2: Supporting Materials **(at least one required)**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit electronic samples of program materials and evaluation reports to support the narrative description. Importantly, applicants should provide examples of the use of the ENERGY STAR name and mark in customer and trade ally outreach that is not easily accessible to the public online. In addition, EPA will validate incorporation of ENERGY STAR label by reviewing use of the ENERGY STAR logo and educational content of the applicant's website, if they are otherwise deemed competitive applicants.

Part 3: Organization's High Resolution Logo **(required)**

The public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 73 hours per response. Send comments on the Agency's need for this information, the accuracy of the provided burden estimates, and any suggested methods for minimizing respondent burden, including through the use of automated collection techniques, to the Director, Collection Strategies Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2822T), 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C., 20460. Include the OMB control number in any correspondence. Do not send the completed form to this address.