

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR[®]

Sponsor Guide



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Introduction

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR (HPwES) offers whole-house solutions to increasing the energy performance and comfort of existing homes while improving the environment. The program is delivered by local Program Sponsors that recruit and train home improvement contractors and consultants (here after referred to as “contractor”) who are qualified to perform home performance assessments (also called comprehensive home energy audit). The assessment includes the heating and cooling systems, windows, insulation, flow of air into and out of the house, as well as a safety check of combustion appliances. Based on this assessment, participating contractors offer solutions to solve home comfort problems and reduce energy usage while decreasing the carbon footprint of the home. Another important element of HPwES is that, upon project completion, the contractor assesses the home's performance again to document that specified improvements were properly installed to achieve the promised energy savings. Finally, all participating contractors are subject to quality assurance (QA) reviews by the third-party sponsor to ensure that projects meet program standards and homeowners receive high-quality work. The goal of HPwES is to turn building science based recommendations into improved homes.

The first step of starting a HPwES program is to develop an implementation plan that explains the scope and objectives of the program. The implementation plan includes the policies and procedures that will ensure the success of the local program and compliance with National ENERGY STAR requirements. This Guide was developed to provide guidance on the development of an implementation plan. It is organized into five sections, each of which addresses a key step in the delivery of HPwES to the market.

Each Section of this Guide covers the following topics:

- **Introduction** with a general overview of the topic.
- **Required and recommended elements** that highlight key elements that a sponsor will address and those that are optional.
- **Examples or templates** that provide a visual illustration of required or recommended elements. These examples and templates are available for Program Sponsor use and customization by request.

This Guide is not meant to be a ‘one-size-fits-all’ manual for developing a successful HPwES Program, as regional factors and organizational preferences are important and vary. This Guide does provide perspective on the major components of program design and delivery that are required and those that are recommended for local sponsors to implement.

This Guide covers the following topics:

1. *Program Planning* - Provides general guidance to develop a HPwES Program Plan. Each plan will be different, but the planning process includes common elements every program must consider.
2. *Home Performance Assessment (HPA) or “Test-in”* - Defines the minimum requirements and recommendations for assessing a home's energy performance under the HPwES program. The local HPwES program can either meet or exceed National HPwES requirements.
 - a. *HPA Intake Form* – a template to facilitate the delivery of an HPA and can be used by Program Sponsors as a template / tool to provide to their participating contractors.
 - b. *Homeowner HPA Summary Report Form* – an example of how to summarize HPA information and recommendations for the customer in an easily understandable and compelling manner that could assist the participating contractor sell energy improvements. The Homeowner Summary Report can also be used to report information to the Program Sponsor for QA tracking.
 - c. *Estimating Energy Savings (under development)*.
3. *Post-Installation Tests or “Test-out”* – Defines the minimum level of diagnostic and visual inspections to be completed by participating contractors at the conclusion of a job.

- a. *Test-out Report Form* – a form for the test-out data and installed measures which is provided to the local Program Sponsor for QA tracking.
4. *HPwES Summary Certificate* – recommendations on issuing a summary certificate that lists the work completed and organizations involved. This certificate is presented to the homeowner by the local program sponsor after receipt of the Test-out Report Form and completion of the QA review process. This guidance explains the required and optional elements that a Program Sponsors can adopt.
 - a. *HPwES Certificate Template* – an example template that Program Sponsors can customize for their use.
5. *Quality Assurance Protocols* – defines the minimum requirements for program QA that applies to participating contractors.
 - a. *Job Reporting Review* – defines requirements and provides recommendations for developing program policies and procedures to perform QA reviews. The job reporting review focuses on the Homeowner HPA Summary and Test-out Reports, and the contracted scope of work. It provides guidance on what to look for in the paperwork review process and next steps to follow if issues with paperwork indicate further investigation is warranted.
 - b. *On-site Inspection Protocols* – defines requirements and provides recommendations for developing program policies and procedures for performing on-site inspections on participating contractors' completed jobs. Provides guidance on the on-site inspection process, sampling rates, and a contractor performance scoring methodology.
 - c. *Customer Feedback* – defines and provides guidance on meeting the requirement of obtaining customer feedback on participating contractor's work completed through the development and use of customer surveys.
 - d. *Contractor Feedback and Corrective Action* – provides recommendations for how to provide feedback to participating contractors on the results of a QA review (including paperwork, on-site, and customer survey). This guidance provides recommended corrective action levels and contractor de-listing procedures.

Section 1: Program Planning

1.1. Introduction

One of the best ways to start a Home Performance with ENERGY STAR (HPwES) program is to begin with setting goals for your program to achieve, assessing the barriers that inhibit energy efficiency retrofits in your chosen target market and preparing a plan to overcome those barriers. Some prospective program sponsors have requested a template for a HPwES program plan, but every market is different and will need a plan tailored to the specific market conditions. This section highlights the key ingredients needed to develop a HPwES Program Plan. For a simplified outline of suggested sections to include in your plan, please refer to *HPwES Program Plan Outline* in Appendix B.

1.2. Required and Recommended Elements

Organization Background

A HPwES Sponsor is responsible for overseeing the program's implementation and work completed by participating home performance contractors. Typical sponsor organizations include utilities, state energy agencies, municipalities or non-profit organizations that promote energy efficiency. These organizations commit to providing third-party oversight of improvements completed by participating home performance contractors, protecting the ENERGY STAR brand, and serving the public's interest. The Sponsor organization funds the program, but may decide to contract with other organizations (i.e. program implementation contractor) to assist with planning and day-to-day implementation of the program. A Program Sponsor is responsible for:

- Developing the program standards, policies and procedures,
- Submitting a Program Plan and signing the HPwES Partnership Agreement (Appendix A)
- Recruiting contractors to participate,
- Marketing the benefits of the program to homeowners,
- Verifying that work completed under the program meets program standards (i.e. quality assurance),
- Monitoring contractor use of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR logo, and
- Evaluating program success

The Program Plan will identify the sponsoring organization and describe the relationship with other organizations that may assist with program implementation.

Some Program Sponsors have created an advisory board that includes key stakeholders, to provide guidance in developing the program's design. The group, typically 8-12 people, may include building science experts, technical educators, contractors, HVAC distributor or building supply representatives, and city, state or utility officials. This group can be an important bridge of communication to several constituencies.

Goals and Objectives

Designing a HPwES program starts with defining the goals and objectives the Program Sponsor want to achieve. Achieving energy savings from home retrofits tends to be the primary goal driving Sponsor interest in HPwES. How much energy, and how soon it needs to be achieved will be key questions that will direct your program design. Once you can establish how much energy you plan to save you can break it down into more discreet objectives such as how many homes will need to be improved? What type of improvements will achieve these results; and how many contractors will be needed?