



**Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Version 2 -
(HPwES v2) -
Q&A Webinar -
May 8, 2012**

The questions listed and answered in this document were collected from home performance industry stakeholders who participated in a webinar hosted by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) on May 8, 2012. The purpose of the webinar was to provide a forum for stakeholders to ask questions related to proposed revisions to DOE's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program (HPwES). It was the intent of DOE to upload a recording of that webinar to the ENERGY STAR website. However, technical problems with the recording made the webinar inaudible.

Questions

- 1. Will you be working with MLS systems around the nation that allow for listings certifications?** While there are no formal plans at this time for DOE to engage HPwES directly with MLS, we are aware of industry initiatives that are underway to support the acknowledgment and valuation of energy features in homes through appraisal and listing services. DOE will be monitoring this work to ensure that HPwES Program processes and outcomes can complement these efforts. The addition of a certificate of completion and the opportunity for recognition level participation in HPwES v2 are intended to help facilitate homeowners' ability to more effectively value their energy efficiency improvements when they own and sell their homes.
- 2. Will the implementation contractor for the sponsor be allowed to provide the QA for projects within the program?** Yes, though it is up to the local sponsor to decide how to staff the implementation and QA elements of the Program and establish appropriate boundaries between them to address potential conflicts of interest.

3. **Which phase of the job will require contractor QA from Sponsors? During the audit? After work is completed?** Consistent with the QA requirements included in the current HPwES Sponsor Guide, the minimum QA requirements of HPwES v2 include a desk review of work-scopes and assessment data as well as meeting minimum sampling rates for post-installation field inspections. DOE is interested in stakeholder feedback on potential QA requirements for the assessment.
4. **Have you addressed needs of sponsors to have savings and energy use listed in site energy and not source energy as Home Energy Score provides? In delivery of current programs, many of the modeling tools used, favor site energy over source energy. Has DOE considered the total energy of generation and consumption when they model future software or scoring tools?** The Home Energy Score is based on source energy. The additional data and information included in the consumer facing certificate is reported in site energy to assist homeowners in making improvement decisions.
5. **Can you provide any thoughts on how the proposed HPwES v2 changes may affect BPI, RESNET, their contractors and certified individuals?** DOE envisions HPwES v2 to increase demand for all certification and standards development organizations. HPwES v2 will, for the first time in the market-rate home performance industry, establish minimum national/regional requirements for certain aspects of testing, installation, inspection, and certain programmatic elements, and will define criteria for certifications that home performance professionals must obtain. As new standards and certifications are developed, DOE will evaluate them and consider them for adoption into HPwES.
6. **Who is responsible for following up to ensure QA issues are addressed?** Sponsors are primarily responsible for ensuring QA issues are appropriately and adequately addressed. This can be accomplished with the inclusion and enforcement of relevant provisions within the Sponsor's contractor participation agreements. In the Charter Contractor model, the Charter Contractor itself is responsible for addressing QA issues.
7. **Will there be list of approved modeling software that can be used in addition to the Home Energy Score? For residential 2-4 unit buildings, are there any modeling tools you recommend since the DOE model is only for single family buildings?** DOE does not currently approve software tools. It is anticipated that DOE may establish minimum criteria for acceptable modeling approaches based on existing industry standards. Use of the Home Energy Score is intended to provide a snapshot of the home's energy profile and savings potential for the consumer and contractor and is not intended to substitute for a contractor-developed work-scope in HPwES v2.

8. **Do sponsors pay for mentoring and QA? And how is it paid for?** Sponsors and Charter Contractors are responsible for providing adequate resources to ensure all required elements of the HPwES Program are supported within their service territories. This is unchanged from the current version of HPwES.
9. **Will there be a standardized audit report format?** No, DOE will not require a standardized audit report format, however, DOE may suggest minimum content to be included in an acceptable audit report.
10. **Will the DOE and EPA be reaching out to Better Buildings Neighborhood Program grantees to look at HPwES as a sustainable model to follow post grant \$\$\$?** Yes, DOE is looking forward to integrating lessons learned from the Better Buildings programs into HPwES and assisting BBNP grantees as they move into sustainable business models. BBNP grantees should definitely consider HPwES as a strategy by which they can continue their efforts in residential energy efficiency.
11. **Will there be an industry working group to review the comments on the new program design or will it be handled within DOE only? Is DOE open to shifting from their current proposal and re-starting the design phase of HPwES v2 with industry input?** DOE does not intend to abandon and “re-start” the process that is already underway. On-going stakeholder input is a critical element of this continuing process and will play a key role in informing the final HPwES v2 Program design. DOE intends to continue to engage stakeholders throughout the redesign process using a variety of formats. The Q&A sessions that have taken place to date and the initial comment period ending May 31, 2012 are among the first of these efforts with additional opportunities for stakeholder involvement to be available once those initial comments have been collected.
12. **What quality install standards will be used for the HVAC Home Performance Track? Is the DOE RFI regarding HVAC related to this effort?** DOE is considering requiring compliance with *ACCA Standard 5, HVAC Quality Installation Specification*, for installation of new and replacement equipment in the HPwES v2 Program design, however DOE is open to and interested in alternative protocols that may be equivalent to the ACCA standard. DOE’s HVAC RFI is a separate effort but it is DOE’s intention to leverage all relevant DOE resources to take advantage of knowledge and tools developed under other DOE funded programs as applicable to HPwES v2.

13. **Under the envelope improvements, why are all of the insulation levels not listed?** The insulation levels required in the proposed HPwES v2 are region-specific and included in the referenced IECC documents.
14. **How does DOE envision verifying the effectiveness of the air sealing and if mechanical ventilation would be needed?** As part of the test-in and test-out requirements, a blower door test would be required with air sealing work. The need for mechanical ventilation would be determined based on ASHRAE 62.2-2010 specifications.
15. **If a diagnostic audit is not a requirement, would that still be acceptable for the performance path?** Diagnostic testing will continue to be a requirement in HPwES v2. What is changing is the timing of when those tests are required (i.e. Sponsors may choose if they want to include a complete set of diagnostics during the assessment or defer some tests to coincide with measure installations.) If an energy simulation is used to predict savings under a performance based approach, the Sponsor will be responsible for ensuring that diagnostics are completed as necessary to provide accurate inputs to support the energy model. A traditional comprehensive energy assessment will continue to be acceptable in all paths.
16. **What is the difference between a non-traditional Sponsor or Charter Contractor?** A “non-traditional Sponsor” would be a third-party entity supporting a regional program other than a state energy office or utility. Non-traditional Sponsors may include NGO’s, retailers, manufacturers, or others and would function in a role similar to traditional Sponsors. A Charter Contractor is a new concept, which would allow contractors with sufficient resources to provide HPwES services independently within non-sponsored regions.
17. **When you mention “quality of installation” as a metric for the performance path, what are you imagining? Would something like house characterization (from Advanced Energy) qualify?** The energy savings achieved as a result of the installation of a measure can vary greatly based on the quality of that installation. For certain types of measures, a quality assurance grading system could be implemented that would allow a Sponsor to claim a specific level of savings from a measure with a quality installation grade “B”, a higher level of savings associated with a grade “A” installation, or reduced savings with a grade “C” installation. DOE is interested in learning more about how house characterization could be used in a performance path.

18. **Will the ASHRAE 62.2-2010 requirement be for installation of systems, or assessment and recommendation? This was referring to if a “blower door may not have to be done during the assessment.”** The ASHRAE 62.2-2010 requirement is intended to be related to installation of measures in the home. A blower door test is not required for compliance with ASHRAE 62.2-2010 unless an infiltration credit is being taken.
19. **How will DOE feel about a sponsor following an amended version of ASHRE 62.2? (Pacific Northwest region is looking at adopting a region based mechanical ventilation standard)** DOE encourages stakeholders to suggest alternative methods to achieve ASHRAE 62.2’s goal of acceptable indoor air quality during the comment period for possible integration into the final HPwES v2 Program design.
20. **The DOE site says to be a Home Energy Assessor you must “receive a passing grade on DOE’s Home Energy Scoring Tool Online Training Module Test” Where is that module and test?** The results of the Home Energy Score pilot projects are currently under review and will inform the final format and design of the full launch of the Home Energy Score. The training module and test for Home Energy Assessors is administered through the Home Energy Score Program Partners who may be located by visiting:
<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/homeenergyscore/>

Answers to all of the following questions may be found in the PowerPoint presentation and appendix document available at:

http://www.energystar.gov/ia/home_improvement/downloads/ACI_presentation.pdf?fc7b-48aa

Additional information has been provided below where applicable.

21. **What is the timing for the formal rollout? What is the timeline for the pilot to be started?** A proposed timeline for piloting and final rollout of HPwES v2 is included in the presentation (slides 12-13.)
22. **Will certification(s) be required for the program? Which if any certifications are you considering requiring for participating contractors? Are you considering requiring any/all of the new Home Energy Professional Certifications? Does a certified BPI Building Analyst meet DOE approved certification for the program? How about RESNET HERS Raters?** DOE is proposing a minimum certification requirement for workers participating in HPwES v2. The final decision regarding these minimum

certification requirements is yet to be determined, but it is envisioned that BPI and RESNET certifications would both be acceptable. (This information is included in slide 17 and Section 2 of the Appendix.)

23. **Will the program require a Manual J calculation for contractors that follow the HVAC system path? Is there concern that equipment may not be sized appropriately?** The proposed program design requires load calculations and correct sizing of newly installed or replacement equipment. Variable speed, multi-stage equipment may be required when mechanical improvements occur before envelope improvements. DOE is interested in alternative methods to the Manual J that could yield similar results. (Additional discussion related to this issue is included in Section 5 of the Appendix.)
24. **How is HPwES v2 addressing healthy and safety?** The proposed program design includes minimum standards related to health and safety including moisture inspections, combustion safety testing, and compliance with ASHRAE 62.2-2010. (Slides 18, 20, 23)
25. **What is the thermal checklist? Is there one that DOE has for existing housing and where do we find it?** The Thermal Enclosure System Rater Checklist was developed for Energy Star labeled new homes and can be found at: http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/bldrs_lenders_raters/Bundled_Checklists_v68_2011-09-01_clean_fillable_508.pdf?e033-f631. It is envisioned by DOE that application of this checklist to existing homes would be limited to those building components that are accessible post-construction. DOE is interested in industry feedback on the portion of the house that must be accessible in order to comply with this requirement.
26. **Under recognition level strategies, what is the whole house in Options 2 and 3?** The question refers to the proposed recognition level strategies shown in the presentation in slide 28. The “whole house” option assumes that improvements have been made according to the recognition level criteria in both the HVAC and envelope systems and have been verified through a comprehensive whole-house assessment.

Detailed answers to all of the following questions can be found in the HPwES v2 FAQ document located at:

http://www.energystar.gov/ia/home_improvement/downloads/Home_Performance_with_ENERGYSTAR_FAQ.pdf?7d7e-8d90

27. **Can a sponsor operate an HPwES program that follows just the whole house or envelope path, but not the HVAC-only path?** (FAQ Section 2)
28. **Will DOE allow local program sponsors to define prescriptive requirements to ensure that they meet local cost effective limitations?** (FAQ Section 3)
29. **Is more information about the performance path available or written up somewhere? Can sponsors choose to offer only the performance path or do they have to offer the prescriptive path too?** (FAQ Section 2)
30. **What type of Home Energy Audit will be required? Will it need to include a blower door test?** (FAQ Section 2)
31. **How does DOE envision the trades will participate in the whole house scenario?** (FAQ Section 2)
32. **For regions with mostly hydronic heating and no AC, like much of New England, any thoughts on whether the HVAC path will still be relevant and on whether addressing only HVAC will really represent a whole-house approach?** (FAQ Section 2)
33. **Where are Charter Contractors going to be allowed? If a state has a utility program but it is not statewide, will you allow a charter contractor in those states and if so, how you prevent confusion between participating in the program and those that are not?** (FAQ Section 5)