

Introduction to the ENERGY STAR Multifamily New Construction (MFNC) Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s ENERGY STAR MFNC program is designed to reduce energy usage in multifamily buildings while improving comfort, indoor air quality, and durability.

What buildings are eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR MFNC program?

All site-built or modular multifamily buildings that are not single-family detached homes or duplexes are eligible to participate in the Multifamily New Construction program, including townhomes. Mixed-use buildings may use this program if they are at least 50% residential. The program is primarily intended for new construction. Learn more about the ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction programs for single-family and manufactured new homes on the EPA’s [website](#).

What are the elements of an ENERGY STAR MFNC building?

Efficiency & Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Above-code performance of dwelling units and common spaces• Third-party inspections and functional tests
Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete thermal enclosure system• Individually-sealed dwelling units• Properly sized and installed HVAC system
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dwelling-unit fresh air system• Kitchen and bath fans that perform well and exhaust outside• Combustion safety
Durability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete water management system

It all starts with above-code performance. All ENERGY STAR multifamily buildings must demonstrate energy savings of at least 10% over their state’s energy code using an Energy Rating Index (ERI) score, ASHRAE 90.1 model, or the EPA’s prescriptive energy efficiency features. Buildings must also include mandatory efficiency measures related to lighting and HVAC controls for common spaces, central systems, and garages. Buildings $\geq 50,000$ ft² must have a strategy to collect energy data and allow benchmarking of performance once occupied.

Verified by third-party inspections and tests. Raters and HVAC professionals ensure that required efficiency features are included, verify critical construction details, and perform system tests to ensure proper operation.

- **Rater inspections and field tests.** An independent Rater verifies that efficiency measures and key required features are installed and that dwelling-unit air-tightness, dwelling-unit and central exhaust duct tightness, and ventilation fan airflow in dwelling units and common spaces all meet performance thresholds.
- **HVAC functional testing:** All HVAC systems, including central systems and those serving common spaces, must undergo functional testing. Depending

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on the system, tests may be completed by the installing contractor (if they have the required credentials), a Rater, a licensed professional mechanical engineer, or a commissioning agent.

And adds seven key features. If your buildings already achieve above-code energy performance, you're well on your way to ENERGY STAR. Now, just include these seven key features, which your Rater will verify during their inspections:

1. **Complete thermal enclosure system.** Minimum requirements for insulation levels and window performance, properly installed insulation, comprehensive air sealing, and strategies to reduce thermal bridges from framing, slabs, and columns. This helps maintain year-round comfort.
2. **Individually-sealed dwelling units.** Dwelling units must be individually air-sealed from outdoors, adjacent units, and common spaces, as well as meet a tested air-tightness limit. This reduces energy loss while also minimizing pest, odor, and sound transfer between units.
3. **Properly sized and installed HVAC systems.** Dwelling-unit HVAC systems must be properly sized with sealed ductwork and have a thermostat within the unit, a return-air pathway for bedrooms (where applicable), and a properly installed MERV 6 or better filter. For common spaces and central systems, loads must be documented, and applicable controls installed. These measures improve comfort through even temperatures and good air circulation.
4. **Dwelling-unit fresh air system.** To ensure that a consistent amount of air is delivered into each dwelling unit, a bath fan with controller, motorized damper on the HVAC system, heat recovery ventilator, or other fresh air system is installed. This dilutes contaminants inside to improve indoor air quality.
5. **Kitchen and bath fans that perform well and exhaust outside.** A range hood or exhaust fan in kitchens and full baths that vents outside and meets minimum airflow rates. This removes moisture and contaminants at the source.
6. **Combustion safety.** Furnaces, boilers, water heaters, and fireplaces must be power-vented or direct-vented; or installed in lower-risk areas such as exterior balcony closets. This helps to prevent dangerous combustion gases from accumulating in the dwelling unit.
7. **Complete water management system.** Builders are responsible for including construction details, such as flashing, continuous drainage planes, and foundation capillary breaks. This ensures that bulk moisture drains away from the building and safeguards materials inside.

To view the full program requirements, visit: energystar.gov/newhomesrequirements.

How can ENERGY STAR certified buildings earn the federal tax credit?

As part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Section 45L New Energy Efficient Home Credit was updated and extended through 2032. A dwelling unit that is eligible to participate in the ENERGY STAR MFNC Program can earn a credit of \$2,500 (or \$500, if prevailing wage requirements are not met) when certified to an eligible version of the ENERGY STAR program requirements (based on the date that the unit is acquired). More details are available at: energystar.gov/45Ltaxcredits.

How can a developer get started?

1. [Find a Rater](#) to analyze how close your buildings are to achieving ENERGY STAR.
2. Sign EPA's free [Partnership Agreement](#) to make you eligible to certify your buildings.