



2015 ENERGY STAR Award Criteria

Partner of the Year - Sustained Excellence

Partners who have received ENERGY STAR recognition for multiple years and have gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence. This year partners received awards for Sustained Excellence in the categories of Affordable Housing, Energy Efficiency Program Delivery, Energy Management, Home Energy Rater, New Home Construction, Product Brand Owner, Product Retailer, and Service and Product Providers.

Partner of the Year – Climate Communications

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR partners that have raised their customers' awareness of the impact of climate change. Customers are defined as consumers, tenants, or other relevant stakeholders. These organizations have created communications campaigns that encourage their customers to fight climate change with the help of ENERGY STAR or emphasize how energy-efficient behaviors have a positive effect on the environment. The partners receiving this award are evaluated on the following elements for their communication efforts and/or campaign:

1. Communications/Campaign Messaging—the communication efforts and/or campaign incorporate messages about the necessity of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and simple ways customers can help.
2. Innovation in Communications—the communication efforts and/or campaign feature innovations, such as social media, advertising, media outreach, texting, online, contests, or events, that convince customers their actions have direct, and collectively significant, consequences in the effort to reduce emissions.
3. Integration of ENERGY STAR in Communications—the communication efforts and/or campaign integrate ENERGY STAR branding and messaging, including the proper and prominent use of the ENERGY STAR logo, and tie into or coordinate with ENERGY STAR efforts or programs.
4. Linkage of ENERGY STAR with Impact on Greenhouse Gas Emissions—the communication efforts and/or campaign successfully link the increased efficiency of ENERGY STAR certified products, homes, or buildings with greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

Partner of the Year—Energy Efficiency Program Delivery

This award recognizes utilities, state agencies, regional energy efficiency nonprofit organizations, associations, and other organizations that sponsor sustained energy efficiency and environmental programs. These winning organizations have demonstrated excellence in implementing comprehensive, high performing energy efficiency programs. These programs have directly leveraged ENERGY STAR as a strategy to effectively reduce market barriers and to achieve significant impact in the marketplace for advancing energy efficiency and related greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

This award recognizes organizations in four program categories:

1. Residential New Construction—programs that promote the construction of ENERGY STAR certified new homes through activities such as: implementing consumer education and awareness campaigns; providing training for new home industry professionals on energy efficiency and building science principles; and offering incentives to builders or consumers for the construction of ENERGY STAR qualified homes.
2. Home Performance with ENERGY STAR:
 - Emerging Markets—programs that recently signed a Partnership Agreement and reported at least 50 Home Performance with ENERGY STAR jobs in 2014.
 - Established Markets—programs that have reported at least 1000 Home Performance with ENERGY STAR jobs, and have demonstrated market and program sustainability.
3. Qualifying Products—programs that are designed to overcome market barriers to widespread adoption of ENERGY STAR qualifying commercial and residential products and/or related best practices, such as power management of office equipment or consumer education on proper thermostat use.
4. Commercial and Industrial—programs that deliver improved whole-building energy performance in existing buildings, target and track performance in new construction, and/or achieve facility-wide improvement in industrial plants by using ENERGY STAR tools and resources to overcome market barriers.

Organizations receiving this award have demonstrated:

1. A strong program design with clear goals, a strategy for overcoming market barriers to achieve sustained market change, and an approach that is a best practice for the market.
2. Incorporation of the ENERGY STAR platform—messaging, tools, and strategies—into the initiative.
3. Qualitative and quantitative data supporting market change or likely upcoming market change, as a result of the initiative. Examples of market effects include:
 - An increase in sales or market share of ENERGY STAR qualifying products.
 - Energy savings, peak demand reductions, and air pollution reductions achieved through residential, commercial, and/or industrial sector programs that explicitly leverage ENERGY STAR.
 - An increase in the use of EPA's ENERGY STAR energy performance scale, increase in buildings earning the ENERGY STAR, and achievement of ENERGY STAR Leaders recognition for commercial buildings by program participants.
 - An increase in percentage of new homes built to ENERGY STAR guidelines and/or growth in percentage of housing starts that later earn the ENERGY STAR.

Partners who have been awarded the Partner of the Year distinction for multiple years and gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence for Energy Efficiency Program Delivery.

Partner of the Year—Energy Management

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR partners from commercial, industrial, institutional, and other organizations that demonstrate improved energy performance of buildings and plants through a corporate-wide energy program—as proven by work completed and energy savings—during the 2014 calendar year. Applications are evaluated in three categories:

1. Management Practices—use of best practices in managing energy, as demonstrated through:
 - Implementation of each fundamental element of superior energy management described in the ENERGY STAR Guidelines for Energy Management.
 - Current energy efficiency projects, energy management strategies, and integration of ENERGY STAR tools and resources into the organization’s energy program.
 - Promotion of additional energy savings at the local and/or national level by engaging external organizations and offering expertise to improve their energy performance.
2. Organization-wide Improvements—actual energy performance improvements achieved during 2014, taking into account both the magnitude of improvements (measured via change in energy intensity across the portfolio) and current energy performance relative to organizational peers. Energy savings must also be expressed in business, financial, and environmental metrics.
3. Promoting and Communicating Success— demonstrated ability to promote partnership with ENERGY STAR and communicate energy efficiency to customers, employees, guests, tenants, students, and community through:
 - Use of ENERGY STAR messaging and resources in their communications strategies.
 - Participation in EPA recognition opportunities, such as earning the ENERGY STAR or obtaining ENERGY STAR Leaders recognition, and promotion of those achievements.
 - Direct communications with organization and external stakeholders, and publicizing efforts to media through various activities such as press releases, internal and external website updates, energy-related events, producing/distributing collateral about ENERGY STAR, reaching out to state and local government officials, etc.

Partners who have been awarded the Partner of the Year distinction for multiple years and gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence in Energy Management.

Partner of the Year—Home Energy Rater

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR Provider and Home Energy Rater partners who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in participating in the ENERGY STAR New Homes program. Home Energy Raters and Providers receiving this award are evaluated on the following categories:

1. Builder Recruitment—direct contribution to the growth of ENERGY STAR builders and developers in an organization’s market, as measured through the number of builders recruited and ENERGY STAR certified homes verified in the past year.

2. **Builder Marketing and Sales Support**— demonstration of robust effort to help builders increase consumer awareness and participation in ENERGY STAR outreach efforts, and presentation of training to real estate professionals.
3. **Builder Technical Support**—demonstration of the organization’s efforts to provide technical training to builders.
4. **Innovation**—description of the unique approaches that the organization took in implementing and promoting ENERGY STAR in its market.
5. **Letter of Recommendation**—this letter of recommendation must be from a builder client who is also an ENERGY STAR partner to describe their experience in working with the partner.

Partners who have been awarded the Partner of the Year distinction for multiple years and gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence for Home Energy Raters.

Partner of the Year—New Home Builder

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR home builder partners who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in building and promoting ENERGY STAR certified homes. Organizations receiving this award are evaluated across the following criteria:

1. **Promotional and Marketing Collateral**—materials developed to promote and market ENERGY STAR new homes in the organization’s market.
2. **New Homes Technical Training**—construction staff and subcontractors are prepared to build ENERGY STAR certified homes.
3. **New Homes Sales and Marketing Training**—sales employees and real estate professionals are prepared to communicate the benefits of ENERGY STAR certified homes and promote them to potential homebuyers.
4. **Program Innovation**—unique approaches to implementing and promoting ENERGY STAR in the organization’s market.
5. **Letter of Recommendation**—this letter of recommendation must be from the organization’s Home Energy Rater to describe his/her experience in working with the builder partner.

Partners who have been awarded the Partner of the Year distinction for multiple years and gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence for New Home Builders.

Partner of the Year—Product Brand Owner

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR partners who manufacture qualified products and have furthered the goals of ENERGY STAR through their active participation in the program.

Applications are evaluated in the following categories:

1. Product Qualification Efforts:
 - Number of ENERGY STAR qualified models/units available in 2014 and 2013, and percentage change over previous year.
 - Percentage of product lines that are ENERGY STAR qualified.
 - Percentage of total sales that were ENERGY STAR qualified in 2014 and 2013, and percentage change over previous year.
 - Availability of information concerning new ENERGY STAR models qualified or in development in 2014.
 - Innovation in product design for energy efficiency.
2. Labeling Efforts:
 - Minimum labeling requirements are met on products, packaging, website, user manuals, etc.
 - Demonstration of activities that go above and beyond minimum labeling requirements.
 - Number of qualified models and displays carrying the label (manufacturers of windows, doors, and skylights).
3. Training Efforts:
 - Integration of ENERGY STAR into organization's sales force and employee training, including number of organization new and existing employees reached, as well as number of distributor and retailer locations trained.
 - Cooperation with distributors, retailers, or utility/ state/ regional partners to increase ENERGY STAR information in retail/distributor product knowledge training.
 - Collaboration with EPA/DOE in the development of training activities.
4. Sales and Marketing:
 - Demonstration of ENERGY STAR integration in exhibits, presentations, and other gatherings. Leadership or participation in cooperative promotions.
 - ENERGY STAR-themed community outreach activities, advertising, public relations efforts, special events, and press releases
 - Print, radio, television, direct mail advertising, brochures, Web and social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, blogs) with ENERGY STAR messages.
 - Point-of-Purchase (POP) materials.
 - Inclusion of environmental messaging in any of the above activities.
5. Consumer/End User Education:
 - Innovation in educational efforts that go above and beyond simple ENERGY STAR logo use and messaging.
 - Development of educational content to include in YouTube videos, blogs, social media sites, and other Web pages, brochures, pamphlets, etc.

6. Cross-cutting Efforts Incorporated Into Company Practices:
 - Participation or leadership in revising and developing new ENERGY STAR specifications.
 - Offering recycling of products and/or packaging or developing in-house recycling programs.
 - Participation in the development of data tools such as Find-A-Product and provision of product and marketing data using these tools.
 - Commitment to organization-wide facility energy efficiency improvements.
 - Procurement of energy-efficient and/or ENERGY STAR certified products.
 - Implementation of energy efficiency improvements in organization facility and pursuit of ENERGY STAR certification for buildings. Giving preference to ENERGY STAR certified buildings when leasing space.
 - Participation in other EPA partnership programs, such as Low Carbon IT, SmartWay, and Green Power Partnership.
 - Pursue ENERGY STAR certification for building or give preference to leasing space from ENERGY STAR certified buildings.
 - Offering innovative product design.
 - Commitment to protecting the integrity of the ENERGY STAR brand.

Partners who have been awarded the Partner of the Year distinction for multiple years and gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence for Product Brand Owner.

Partner of the Year—Product Retailer

This award recognizes retailers that have made an extensive commitment to the growing success of ENERGY STAR. These partners have excelled in the following areas:

1. ENERGY STAR strategy:
 - Integrating ENERGY STAR into corporate strategy across all relevant product categories.
 - Clearly articulating ENERGY STAR marketing strategy that includes specific goals, tactics, schedules and evaluation.
 - Engaging and collaborating with EPA to optimize ENERGY STAR partnerships strategically and tactically.
 - Helping to advance ENERGY STAR program goals through specific ENERGY STAR partner activities.
 - Reporting progress and achieving outlined goals.
2. Product Specification and Stocking:
 - Working to increase stock, specification, and sales of ENERGY STAR qualified products through active merchant engagement, development of goals, coordination with vendors, and regular reporting on progress.
3. Sales Associate Training: Leveraging sales associates to help educate and promote ENERGY STAR to customers in store, including integrating ENERGY STAR content into all existing training tactics across all relevant product categories.
 - Collaborating with EPA at the beginning of the planning cycle to develop a clearly articulated ENERGY STAR training plan with specific goals, tactics, schedules, and evaluation.

- Working with vendors or utility/state/regional partners to increase ENERGY STAR sales associate training.
 - Reporting progress and achieving outlined goals.
 - Utilizing training efforts that include ENERGY STAR across different mediums such as publications, TV, Web-based, in-person, and more.
4. Product Labeling and Marketing/Promotions:
 - Effective leveraging of all relevant marketing/promotions tactics to help educate and promote ENERGY STAR among customers.
 - Participating in EPA's Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR campaign.
 - Utilizing ENERGY STAR marketing efforts in-store and on the organization's website including displays, signage, in-store radio/Muzak/ TV, clinics/events, collateral, and more.
 5. Evaluation:
 - Cooperation in supporting EPA's efforts to evaluate its ENERGY STAR program's success.
 - Conducting evaluative studies relevant to ENERGY STAR, energy efficiency, and the environment from a retailer perspective.
 - Evaluation of ENERGY STAR partnership and the value of ENERGY STAR to marketing efforts and reporting of these results to ENERGY STAR.

Partners who have been awarded the Partner of the Year distinction for multiple years and gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence for Product Retailers.

Partner of the Year—Service and Product Provider

This award recognizes businesses and organizations that are the catalysts—the ones that provide the products, services, and/or effective outreach efforts to help companies or public sector organizations strategically manage their energy use or to design buildings with superior energy efficiency. Service and Product Providers assist their customers to improve energy performance in existing buildings/manufacturing plants and new building designs. These partners have excelled in the following areas:

1. Organization and Business Practices:
 - Utilizing ENERGY STAR partnership to differentiate organization and improve business relationships with customers.
 - Alignment of organization's mission and ENERGY STAR program.
 - Delivering energy efficiency in buildings designs and existing buildings.
 - Integration of ENERGY STAR tools and resources in business practices.
2. Measurement and Efficiency:
 - Partners provide information on energy-efficient design projects and/or energy improvements in existing buildings.
3. Marketing and Recognition
 - Integrating ENERGY STAR into marketing materials and strategies to attract new clients and/or maintain existing clients.

- Recruiting clients and other affiliates to become ENERGY STAR partners.
- Promoting ENERGY STAR at conferences, events, internal and external training, marketing materials and publications, etc.
- Marketing Collateral—marketing materials and website include ENERGY STAR logo and messaging.

Helping clients gain recognition for achieving energy efficiency and enhanced performance in design projects and/or existing buildings. Partners who have received ENERGY STAR recognition for multiple years and gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for Partner of the Year are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence for Service and Product Providers.

Excellence—Affordable Housing

This award recognizes governments, nonprofits, nongovernmental organizations, public housing authorities, or utilities that have made exceptional or market-leading contributions during 2014 toward advancing energy efficiency in publicly funded, low-income housing by constructing ENERGY STAR certified homes or promoting construction of ENERGY STAR certified homes through affordable housing policies and programs.

Organizations receiving this award have leveraged funding sources to pay for energy efficiency features in affordable housing for low-income families, and have met the following criteria:

1. **Demonstrated Success**—demonstrating quantifiable success in the organization’s affordable housing programs, policies, and projects in 2014 as measured through:
 - The number of new ENERGY STAR certified homes built and a comparison to previous years, as well as the total number of homes built by the organization in 2014.
 - Cost-benefit data associated with building ENERGY STAR certified homes and a description of the organization’s residential energy efficiency milestones and goals that were met or will likely be met in 2014.
2. **Institutional Change**—creating significant and lasting change to the organization through efforts to build ENERGY STAR certified homes or encourage the construction of these homes via housing programs and policies as demonstrated through a description of why the organization made these changes, how it was able to implement these changes including institutional or fiscal challenges or barriers encountered, how these barriers were overcome, and lessons learned.
3. **Housing Affordability**—providing a description of the target market for the organization’s housing programs and the public funding sources leveraged to pay for energy efficiency activities and how those funds were sourced and utilized.
4. **Outreach and Education**—encouraging other individuals or organizations to pursue greater energy efficiency as part of their affordable housing efforts. Utilized the ENERGY STAR name and logo in outreach efforts, materials, and at events.

Excellence—ENERGY STAR Promotion

This award recognizes organizations that have planned and executed a successful promotion or consumer education campaign around an ENERGY STAR qualified product category, series of products, or ENERGY STAR at large. Organizations receiving this award must have executed a promotion, consumer awareness, or social marketing campaign in calendar year 2014 that:

1. Leverages EPA’s Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR national campaign for ENERGY STAR product or “practices” messaging.
2. Uses the ENERGY STAR label properly to increase consumer recognition and understanding of its meaning.
3. Distinguishes ENERGY STAR as a government-backed label associated with energy efficiency and environmental protection.
4. Demonstrates visual consistency with the national ENERGY STAR identity.
5. Implements tactics that leverage ENERGY STAR to create repeat sales in a sustainable manner and, ultimately, influence market share. Provides evidence of retail sales staff training on ENERGY STAR, where appropriate.
6. Engages in media activities that enhance relevant consumer understanding of ENERGY STAR.

Other Excellence Awards

1. Excellence in Energy-Efficient Product Design—this award recognizes important contributions to raising the visibility of ENERGY STAR by leading industry in the design and manufacture of ENERGY STAR qualified products across a broad range of categories.
2. Excellence in Retailing—this award recognizes retailers who display exceptional commitment to ENERGY STAR across their corporate strategy, product selection, sales associate training, marketing, public relations efforts, and evaluation.

Special Recognition

These certificates recognize organizations that have made significant contributions toward advancing energy efficiency in specific areas of the marketplace.