

2017 ENERGY STAR® Awards

Partner of the Year Award Application

New Home Builder/Affordable Housing

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What needs to be submitted?

- See *General Instructions for All Applicants* at www.energystar.gov/awards
- **Home Energy Rater Letter of Recommendation (optional):** Letter(s) of recommendation from one or more Home Energy Raters may be submitted and counted towards the score earned under the evaluation criteria listed below. Letters of recommendation should be no more than one-page each and should be submitted by the Rater directly to EPA via e-mail to Marta Montoro at montoro.marta@epa.gov

Application Instructions:

Please review all instructions carefully. Changes from previous applications have been made.

Applicant Eligibility:

New for 2017: New Home Builder applicants only – please note the revised 50-home minimum.

To be eligible to submit an application, each applicant must have*:

- Formally committed to building 100% of their homes to ENERGY STAR program requirements; and,
- Maintained active ENERGY STAR partnership in good standing for at least one full year;
- Built at least 50 ENERGY STAR certified homes (New Home Builder) or 25 ENERGY STAR certified homes (Affordable Housing applicants only) during 2016 and,
- Be in good standing with EPA regarding compliance with all applicable regulations. (Please note that all applicants will undergo enforcement compliance screenings).

*Affordable housing builders who have not made the 100% commitment or who have not built at least 25 ENERGY STAR certified homes may still apply but they will be considered for a Certificate of Recognition rather than a Partner of the Year award.

Award Description:

The Partner of Year award recognizes home builder partners that have demonstrated excellence and innovation in building and promoting ENERGY STAR certified homes. ¹

Home Energy Raters may also be recognized when nominated for an award by an eligible builder applicant. For more information, please see the section *Preparing Your Award Submission*.

¹ Starting in 2016, the Partner of the Year – New Home Builder award was also used to recognize partners demonstrating excellence and innovation in building and promoting ENERGY STAR certified homes for the affordable housing and low-income housing community. The previous Excellence in Affordable Housing award has been discontinued. Because of this change, partners who have previously applied for the Sustained Excellence or Excellence in Affordable Housing awards should use this application.

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Evaluation Criteria:

Each award application will be evaluated based on the following criteria. While none of the following criteria are mandatory for the application to be submitted, applicants that complete more of the criteria will increase the potential for a higher score.

- **Promotion and Marketing (Maximum of 35 points):** Using the narrative template, describe materials and activities that your organization developed and used to promote and market ENERGY STAR certified homes during 2016. Examples include, but are not limited to: print, audio, and electronic advertisements; websites; brochures; pre-purchase or post-purchase information sessions; signage, videos, or other materials used during open houses; and customer testimonials. Where appropriate, submit electronic copies of your promotional and marketing materials.
- **Training (Maximum of 10 points):** Using the narrative template, describe training related to ENERGY STAR certified homes that your organization engaged in during 2016. Examples include, but are not limited to, training of sales staff to promote the features and benefits of ENERGY STAR certified homes; training of site supervisors or trades regarding the ENERGY STAR certified homes technical program requirements; training of customer service representatives to answer homeowner questions related to the operation of their ENERGY STAR certified homes. Where appropriate, you may submit electronic copies of your training materials.
- **Innovations in Cost and/or Energy Efficiency, etc. (Maximum of 20 points):** Using the narrative template, describe at least one innovation you've used to lower the cost of building ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2016, or a technical innovation that you have incorporated into your contractor process. These innovations may go above and beyond ENERGY STAR requirements (i.e. use of connected home technology, high performance HVAC equipment, better-than-code insulation, or any pilot programs your company is pursuing to push energy efficiency to the next level).
- **Rater Letter of Recommendation (Maximum of 15 points):** Have one or more Raters prepare a letter of recommendation, no longer than one page each, that describes the Rater's experience working with the builder partner during 2016 to construct, verify, and/or promote ENERGY STAR certified homes. Examples of content include, but are not limited to: description of builder's commitment to properly certifying ENERGY STAR homes; project kick-off meetings with the builder, Rater, and HVAC contractor; regularly-scheduled quality assurance / continuous improvement check-ins; and training conducted by the Rater for builder staff. Letters will be evaluated based upon their quality and content, rather than by the quantity of recommendation letters received. Letters will not be shared with the builder applicant.
- **Quality Control (Maximum of 10 points):** Using the narrative template, describe at least one area where the ENERGY STAR certified homes program has been used by your organization in 2016 to enhance the quality control of the construction process. Examples include, but are not limited to: using the Thermal Enclosure System Rater Checklist to reduce insulation defects or excess framing; using the HVAC System QI Contractor Checklist to consistently right-size HVAC equipment; using the Water Management System Builder Checklist to reduce window flashing defects. If possible, please provide specific examples that quantify these impacts, such as, "HVAC-

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related comfort complaints decreased by 10%” or “Warranty claims related to water leaks decreased by 25%.”

- **Homeowner Testimonials (Maximum of 5 points per letter and 10 points total):** Submit electronic copies of one or more homeowner testimonials describing their experience living in an ENERGY STAR certified home. Examples of content include, but are not limited to: lower than expected utility bills, improved comfort, or overall satisfaction with quality of home. Please also explain your process for collecting testimonials – including but not limited to email, follow-up questions, Facebook or other social media, or post-sales meetings, etc.
- **BONUS OPPORTUNITY:** Please use the space provided in the template to describe any other activities you have undertaken to support ENERGY STAR certified homes not listed above.

Preparing Your Award Submission:

Complete the following steps to prepare your award submission:

1. **Download the narrative template** provided on the award application Web page at energystar.gov/awards.
2. **Using the narrative template, complete and submit the Executive Summary section (300 words or less).** Each applicant must provide a brief overview of the company and highlights of key ENERGY STAR accomplishments in 2016. If the applicant is chosen to receive an award, this text will be used in preparing a summary of the organization's achievements and may be used for outreach purposes.

Where possible, also provide relevant cumulative accomplishments in addition to those achieved in 2016. Please be sure to include a timeframe (e.g., built 50 homes in 2016, bringing the cumulative total to 200 homes since 2010).

3. **Using the narrative template, prepare and submit responses to the Evaluation Criteria listed above.** Each response should emphasize only the most effective / innovative 2016 accomplishments that best demonstrate how the Evaluation Criteria have been met.

Higher scores will be awarded for responses that include measured / observed results (e.g., business growth, increased consumer interest) that demonstrate how the Evaluation Criteria have been met.

4. **If desired, use the application portal and narrative template to nominate one or more Home Energy Raters that you worked with in 2016 and that you believe are deserving of a Partner of the Year Award.** Builders may nominate as many Home Energy Raters as they choose, and a Rater may be nominated by more than one builder. Builders nominating a Rater will also be asked to provide a brief description of how the Rater contributed significantly to their success with ENERGY STAR, as well as a summary list of accomplishments. Nominated Home Energy Raters will be notified once the builder submits the application via MESA. **Affordable housing builders being considered for a Certificate of Recognition SHOULD NOT nominate a Home Energy Rater.**
5. **If desired, have one or more Home Energy Raters prepare a letter of recommendation,** per the guidance provided under the Evaluation Criteria section above.

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6. **If desired, prepare one or more homeowner testimonials**, per the Evaluation Criteria.
7. **Submit completed narrative template, electronic copies of supporting materials, and (if prepared) homeowner testimonials** through your “My ENERGY STAR Account” (www.energystar.gov/mesa). When possible, consolidate supporting materials into one electronic file. Any materials submitted will not be returned and may be used for ENERGY STAR program outreach purposes.
8. **If desired, have the Home Energy Rater or Raters submit letters of recommendation directly to EPA via e-mail** to Marta Montoro at montoro.marta@epa.gov. Letters received will not be returned and may be used, without any association with the author or the applicant, for ENERGY STAR outreach purposes.

Selection of Award Winners:

Each application will be assigned to one of the following categories:

- A. **Small Builder**: A single entity building 50-150 ENERGY STAR certified homes annually.
- B. **Medium Builder**: A single entity OR a single division within a corporate entity, building 151-750 ENERGY STAR certified homes annually.
- C. **Large / National Builder**: A corporate entity building more than 750 ENERGY STAR certified homes annually.

--OR--

- D. **Affordable/Low-income Housing Builder***: A single entity, single division, or a corporate entity building 25 or more ENERGY STAR certified homes annually.

* A builder of publicly subsidized, non-market rate, ENERGY STAR certified homes for affordable/low-income housing communities. Affordable/Low-income housing builders who are not 100% committed or do not build at least 25 ENERGY STAR certified homes annually may still submit an application, but they will only be considered for a Certificate of Recognition rather than a Partner of the Year award.

Applications will be evaluated and scored by a panel of EPA program staff based on the criteria defined above, for a maximum possible score of 100. EPA will select from the top-rated applicants and may choose to give multiple awards within each builder size category. The applicant, or applicants, that receive(s) the highest total score within each builder size category (i.e., Small Builder, Medium Builder, Large / National Builder) and within the Affordable/Low-income Housing Builder category, will be selected as an award winner for that category. **EPA may select more than one award winner in each category.**

Note that the same entity cannot win an award in multiple categories. This means that a large/national builder and one of its divisions cannot receive separate awards in different size categories. If both a large / national builder and one of its divisions are selected for awards, the large / national builder will receive the award. Also, multiple divisions within the same large / national builder may not apply together as a single applicant; unless the large / national builder is applying on behalf of

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all its divisions and has formally committed to building 100% ENERGY STAR certified homes across the organization. Lastly, the same builder cannot receive an award in the Affordable/Low-income Housing Builder category and in another category.

Builders that have either received Sustained Excellence in past years or demonstrated continuous commitment to excellence by winning consecutive ENERGY STAR Awards are eligible to receive a Sustained Excellence award in 2017.

Company Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

ENERGY STAR Contact: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Company Web Site: _____

ENERGY STAR Web Page(s): _____

Please indicate your ENERGY STAR builder category (select only one):

Market Rate Builders:

- Small Builder** (Single entity that built 50-150 ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2016)
- Medium Builder** (Single entity OR a single division within a corporate entity that built 151-750 ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2016)
- Large/National Builder** (Corporate entity that built more than 750 ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2016)

--OR--

- Affordable/Low-income Builder** (Single entity, single division, or a corporate entity that built 25 or more ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2016.)

Executive Summary: In no more than 300 words, provide a brief overview of your company and highlights of key ENERGY STAR accomplishments in 2016. If your organization is chosen to receive an award, this text will be used to prepare a summary of the organization's achievements and may be used for outreach purposes and for inclusion in ENERGY STAR's *Profiles in Leadership*. For affordable/low-income housing builders, include a brief description of the income requirements for your housing and the main sources of public funding used for construction.

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ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year—Climate Communications: We are looking for ENERGY STAR partners who, during calendar year 2016, helped raise their customers’ awareness of their impact on climate change. This award has no bearing on EPA’s evaluation of your Partner of the Year – New Home Builder Award application. If you wish to be considered, please submit the separate 2017 ENERGY STAR Award Application for Partner of the Year – Climate Communications. See www.energystar.gov/awards

Raters You Are Nominating for an ENERGY STAR POY Award:

Note: If a nominated Rater works with an independent Provider, EPA may also choose to recognize the Provider. In addition, Affordable Housing builders who do not meet the 100% Commitment or 25-home minimum requirement **should not** nominate a Rater.

Rating Company Name	Contact Person	Email	Phone Number

Brief explanation of why you are nominating each Rater listed above, describing how the Rater contributed to ENERGY STAR success and including a list of accomplishments:

Responses to Application Evaluation Criteria:

1. ENERGY STAR Promotional and Marketing Efforts (35 pts.):

ENERGY STAR Consumer-focused Promotional	Used in 2016
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and Marketing Activities	(check all that apply)
<i>Traditional Advertising:</i>	
Radio	
TV	
Print	
Direct Mail	
Homeowner Newsletters	
Billboards/Transit Signage	
Other Traditional Marketing (insert here):	
<i>Onsite Promotions:</i>	
Outdoor Signage (yard signs, flags, banners)	
In-model Displays/Signage	
Parade of Homes	
ENERGY STAR-themed Community Events	
Other Onsite Promotions (insert here):	
<i>Online Promotions:</i>	
ENERGY STAR Pages on Company & Community Web Sites	
ENERGY STAR Ads on Other Web Sites	
ENERGY STAR-related On-line Videos or Blogs	
ENERGY STAR Outreach via Social Media	
Other Online Promotions (insert here):	

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<i>Other Promotions (homeowner awareness surveys, “dirty boots” tours, etc.)(insert here):</i>	

Describe the 2016 promotional and marketing efforts you listed above. Provide specific examples of your efforts and information that describes the frequency of your efforts, as well as their reach or impact. Where appropriate, provide Website URLs. Also provide electronic copies of your outreach materials as attachments:

2. Your ENERGY STAR Training Activities (10 pts): Provide specific examples of your training efforts, as well as information describing the impact of your training activities. Attach electronic copies of your training materials as attachments.

2016 ENERGY STAR Training Activities	Number of Sessions	Number/Percent of Staff Trained
Construction Staff and Subcontractors Trained in 2016		
In-house Sales Staff and Outside Real Estate Agents Trained in 2016		
Homeowner Training in 2016 (i.e., post-sale training about their ENERGY STAR certified home)		
Other Training Activities (please describe)		

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3. **Your ENERGY STAR Innovation Activities (cost, energy efficiency, etc.) (20 pts):** Describe at least one innovation you have used to lower the cost of building ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2016, or a technical innovation that you have incorporated into your contractor process. These innovations may go above and beyond ENERGY STAR requirements (i.e. use of connected home technology, high performance HVAC equipment, better-than-code insulation, or any pilot programs your company is pursuing to push energy efficiency to the next level) or include other relevant information, such as utility bill savings, if known.

4. **Rater letter(s) of recommendation (15 pts.):** Raters must submit letter(s) electronically directly to EPA per the application instructions.
5. **Quality Control (10 pts):** Please describe at least one area where the ENERGY STAR certified homes program has been used by your organization in 2016 to enhance the quality control of the construction process. Examples include, but are not limited to: using the Thermal Enclosure System Rater Checklist to reduce insulation defects or excess framing; using the HVAC System QI Contractor Checklist to consistently right-size HVAC equipment; using the Water Management System Builder Checklist to reduce window flashing defects. If possible, please provide specific examples that quantify these impacts, such as, "HVAC-related comfort complaints decreased by 10%" or "Warranty claims related to water leaks decreased by 25%."

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- 6. Homeowner Testimonials (Maximum of 5 pts per letter and 10 pts total):** Submit electronic copies of one or more homeowner testimonials describing their experience living in an ENERGY STAR certified home. Examples of content include, but are not limited to, lower than expected utility bills, improved comfort, or overall satisfaction with quality of home. Please also explain your process for collecting testimonials - including but not limited to email, follow-up questions, Facebook/social media, or post-sales meetings, etc.

BONUS OPPORTUNITY: Please use the space below to describe any other activities you have undertaken as an ENERGY STAR partner not listed above and the impacts they have had on your organization and/or customers.