

2018 ENERGY STAR® AWARD CRITERIA

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March 2018

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 Energy Efficiency Program Delivery, Energy Management, Home Energy Rater/Provider, New Home Builder, Product Brand Owner, Retailer, and Service and Product Provider.

Partner of the Year—Energy Efficiency Program Delivery

This award recognizes organizations that have demonstrated leadership and best practices in implementing energy efficiency program and/or program portfolios that incorporate ENERGY STAR as a key strategy. Recipients of awards in this category distinguish themselves through their use of ENERGY STAR tools, strategies and resources as a cost-effective approach to delivering near-term program results while also effectively overcoming market barriers to efficiency such that more efficient products, homes, and buildings become the norm.

This award recognizes organizations in four Program Categories:

1. Residential New Construction—programs that promote the construction of ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments by implementing program elements such as the following:
 - Designing approaches that are based on the local housing market and unique program goals and reflect the most important regional factors for program success;
 - Marketing strategies that increase awareness of ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments;
 - Training sessions to help stakeholders be successful program participants;
 - Strategic incentive structures that help to offset upgrade costs and encourage participation;
 - Outreach approaches that create strong relationships with stakeholders, communicate procedures and expectations, and share important program information;
 - Quality assurance protocols to ensure the integrity of the ENERGY STAR label and the EEPS program;
 - Measurement and evaluation processes to assess progress and attainment of goals, and facilitate continuous improvement in program implementation.
2. Home Performance with ENERGY STAR—innovative Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Sponsors and partners that promote or deliver Home Performance with ENERGY STAR by implementing at least one of the following:
 - Marketing strategies that increase the use and awareness of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR with demonstrated project-generating results;
 - Program delivery approaches that produce a high conversion ratio from home performance assessments to Home Performance with ENERGY STAR projects for participating contractors; significant impacts for homeowners, such as greater energy savings, improved safety and comfort, and enhanced building functionality; and are supported and funded by diverse market actors;
 - Workforce infrastructure development that provides mentoring, training, and recognition for participating contractors and is supported by a quality assurance process; and

- Leadership in the national, regional, state or local arenas to foster partnerships, collaboratives, and advancement of the home performance industry.
3. Certified Products—programs that are designed to overcome market barriers to widespread adoption of ENERGY STAR certified commercial and residential products and/or related best practices, such as power management of office equipment, consumer education on proper thermostat use, etc.
 4. Commercial and Industrial—programs that deliver improved whole-building energy performance in existing commercial buildings; target and track performance for new construction; and/or achieve facility-wide improvement in industrial plants, by using ENERGY STAR tools and resources to overcome market barriers.

Partner of the Year—Energy Management

This award recognizes businesses and organizations that demonstrate their commitment to environmental protection through superior energy management, particularly by integrating and promoting ENERGY STAR tools and resources within their energy management program. Applications are evaluated in three categories:

1. Energy Management Practices—practices employed by the organization to manage and reduce energy use. These include long-term strategies, management practices, innovative technologies, cost-effective upgrades, data-driven enhancements to systems or processes, or other practices implemented at the corporate or organization level to improve performance.
2. Communication Strategies—how the organization used communications to support and promote their energy management program and enhance its partnership with ENERGY STAR. Their communications plans are strategic, integral components of their corporate energy management programs. This is demonstrated through:
 - Communication strategies for promoting energy efficiency with ENERGY STAR to internal audiences, such as employees and senior leadership.
 - Communication strategies for promoting energy efficiency with ENERGY STAR to external audiences, such as tenants, customers, and shareholders.
 - Participation in ENERGY STAR recognition activities.
3. Demonstration of Energy Savings—actual energy performance improvements achieved by the organization during 2017, taking into account both the magnitude of the improvements, and current energy performance relative to the organization’s peers. Partners are encouraged to express savings in business, financial, and environmental metrics, and to illustrate cumulative accomplishments.

Partner of the Year—Home Energy Rater/Provider

This award recognizes certified ENERGY STAR Home Energy Rater, Accredited Rating Provider, and Accredited Quality Assurance Provider partners who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in assisting home builders and/or Raters in expanding the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program. Organizations receiving this award are evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Recruitment—how the organization directly contributed to growth in the number of builders and/or Home Energy Raters participating in the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program in its service area(s).
2. Technical Support—support the organization provided to builders and Raters during 2017, such as identifying cost effective solutions to achieve greater energy efficiency, providing technical training to builders and/or Raters, assisting builders to incorporate emerging technologies and advanced building practices, or other value added services.

3. Innovation—innovative approaches used by the organization in working with builders and/or Raters to implement their ENERGY STAR Certified Homes programs during 2017 (e.g., customer management systems, verification processes, unique quality assurance approaches).
4. Marketing and Sales Support—ENERGY STAR-related marketing and sales support provided to builders and/or Raters during 2017. This may include activities designed to increase consumer awareness /demand for ENERGY STAR certified homes, or activities designated to increase the knowledge and ability of builder sales agents and/or real estate professionals to effectively sell the features and value of ENERGY STAR certified homes.

Partner of the Year—Multifamily High Rise Developer

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR multifamily high rise (MFHR) developer partners that have demonstrated excellence and innovation in building and promoting ENERGY STAR certified apartments. Developers receiving this award are evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Promotion and Marketing—marketing materials and activities that the organization developed and/or used in 2017 to promote and market its ENERGY STAR certified apartments.
2. ENERGY STAR Web Presence—how the organization’s website highlights its ENERGY STAR partnership, discusses features of ENERGY STAR certified apartments, and cross-links to the ENERGY STAR Multifamily High Rise program website.
3. Energy Efficiency Innovation—at least one innovation or emerging technology that was featured in the organization’s ENERGY STAR certified MFHR projects in 2017 that improved cost and/or energy efficiency. Partners are encouraged to demonstrate how the innovation translated into benefits for occupants.
4. Costs and Benefits Associated with ENERGY STAR—costs and savings associated with the organization’s ENERGY STAR certified MFHR projects constructed during 2017 as compared to code. Costs can include incremental hard costs (e.g., materials) and soft costs (e.g., labor hours). Savings can include utility bill savings, energy savings, and/or emissions savings.
5. Training Activities—training developed and/or conducted related to ENERGY STAR certified MFHR projects that the organization engaged in during 2017, such as training of sales/leasing staff to promote the features and benefits of ENERGY STAR certified units, or training of site supervisors or trades regarding the ENERGY STAR MFHR technical program requirements.
6. Licensed Professional Letter of Recommendation—letter of recommendation that describes the Licensed Professional’s experience working with the developer during 2017 to construct, verify, and/or promote ENERGY STAR certified MFHR apartments. Licensed Professionals can be considered for a Certificate of Recognition when nominated by their developers.

Partner of the Year—New Home Builder

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR home builder partners that have demonstrated excellence and innovation in building and promoting ENERGY STAR certified homes, including builder partners who serve the affordable housing and low- income housing community. Organizations receiving this award are evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Promotion and Marketing—materials and activities that the organization developed and used to promote and market ENERGY STAR certified homes during 2017.
2. Training—training related to ENERGY STAR certified homes that the organization developed and/or conducted

during 2017, such as 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.

3. Quality and Cost Control—organizations must describe at least one area where the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program was used to enhance the quality or cost control of the construction process in 2017.
4. Innovations and Emerging Technologies—organization must describe at least one innovation or emerging technology that was incorporated into its ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2017, such as the use of connected home technology or an advanced building practice such as LED lighting or spray foam insulation.
5. Home Energy Rater/Accredited Rating Provider Acknowledgement—organization is asked to identify any Home Energy Rating companies or Rating Providers who were integral to their success with the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program in 2017. EPA takes these acknowledgements into consideration when reviewing the Partner of the Year – Home Energy Rater/Provider applications.

Partner of the Year—Product Brand Owner

This award recognizes product brand owners of ENERGY STAR certified products who have furthered the goals of ENERGY STAR through their active participation. Partners must demonstrate that their company's activities and accomplishments are specific to supporting ENERGY STAR's objective in the following areas: ENERGY STAR partners who manufacture certified products and have furthered the goals of ENERGY STAR through their active participation in the program. Applications are evaluated in the following categories:

1. Furthering Energy Efficiency in Products:
 - Number of ENERGY STAR certified models available in 2017 and percentage change over previous year.
 - Percentage of eligible 2017 models that are ENERGY STAR certified.
 - New ENERGY STAR models/option packages developed/certified in 2017, including a brief description of innovation in product design for energy efficiency.
 - Engagement and leadership in regards to the ENERGY STAR program, including participation in ENERGY STAR product specification development effort(s) and conduct/sharing of research and/or data that support specification development.
 - Activities that go above and beyond minimum labeling requirements.
2. Training Efforts:
 - Integration of ENERGY STAR into organization's sales force and employee training.
 - Cooperation with distributors, retailers, or utility/state/regional partners to increase ENERGY STAR information in retail/distributor product knowledge training.
 - Collaboration with EPA in the development of training activities.
3. Sales and Marketing - specific activities undertaken to promote ENERGY STAR certified products:
 - Integration of ENERGY STAR in exhibits at key industry tradeshow and inclusion of ENERGY STAR in presentations for meetings with distributors and/or retailers.
 - Participation in one or more of EPA's 2017 ENERGY STAR Products Promotions or other consumer outreach initiatives/campaigns including: Light the Moment; Water Heaters; Smart Thermostats; Pool Pumps; Flip Your Fridge; Earth Day; Cooling; Room Air Conditioners; ENERGY STAR Most Efficient; and ENERGY STAR Day.

- Consumer outreach that promoted ENERGY STAR certified products, such as in-store activities, advertising, public relations, media or community events, digital media, and direct mail.
4. Consumer/End User Education:
 - Innovative and/or impactful educational efforts that go above and beyond simple ENERGY STAR logo use and/or messaging.
 - Consumer education on the importance of energy efficiency, the problem of climate change, the benefits of preserving the environment, and/or the benefits of reducing air pollution.
 5. Cross-Cutting Efforts That Have Been Incorporated into Company Practices:
 - Offering recycling of products and/or packaging or developing in-house recycling programs.
 - Participation in the development of data tools, such as QPX and Product Finder.
 - Commitment to organization-wide facility energy efficiency improvements.
 - Organizational procurement practices of energy-efficient and/or ENERGY STAR certified products.
 - Company efforts to reducing GHG emissions (e.g., recycling programs, solar, Bike to Work initiatives, electric vehicle charging stations, etc.)
 - Participation in other EPA programs and campaigns, such as: SmartWay, Green Power Partnership, Responsible Appliance Disposal (RAD) Program, and WaterSense.
 - Company efforts to reducing GHG emissions in the value chain of its products (i.e. manufacturing processes for products).
 - Use of ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager to benchmark buildings or preference given to leasing space from ENERGY STAR certified buildings.
 - Energy management program that spans the company operations and that is in accord with ENERGY STAR's Guidelines for Energy Management.
 - Commitment to protecting the integrity of the ENERGY STAR brand through continuous improvement, enhanced quality assurance, reporting logo violations, or other practices.

Partner of the Year—Retailer

This award recognizes retailers, both large and small, that are making an ever-increasing contribution to the growing success of ENERGY STAR. Applications are evaluated in the following categories:

1. ENERGY STAR Partnership and Planning:
 - High-level engagement that includes the development of an implementation plan informed by EPA's top-priority products and initiatives for the year.
 - Working throughout the year to facilitate EPA relationships with merchant and marketing representatives.
2. Product Marketing and Promotions:
 - Working to order, stock, and promote ENERGY STAR products in store and online.
 - Working to increase stocking, sales, and labeling of ENERGY STAR priority products categories, including lighting, appliances, consumer electronics.
 - Engaging in ENERGY STAR seasonal promotions.
3. General ENERGY STAR Consumer Education:
 - Promoting ENERGY STAR and educating consumers about energy efficiency and its environmental and other benefits through general efforts, such as in-store, online, and other (e.g., advertising, public relations, events, trainings, and participation in EPA ENERGY STAR communications campaigns).

4. ENERGY STAR Training Efforts:

- Educating sales associates about the ENERGY STAR program and the value of ENERGY STAR certified products.
- Cooperation with product brand owners, manufacturers, or utility/state/regional partners to increase ENERGY STAR information in product knowledge training.
- Collaboration with EPA in the development of training activities.
- Provision of specific training materials to associates for ENERGY STAR certified lighting and ENERGY STAR Most Efficient appliances.

Partner of the Year—Service and Product Provider

This award recognizes businesses and organizations that catalyze market transformation in energy efficiency through their products, services, and/or effective outreach efforts. Award-winning Service and Product Providers (SPPs) demonstrate outstanding success in helping private- or public-sector organizations to improve energy performance in their existing buildings and building designs. Applications are evaluated in the following categories:

1. Organization and Business Practices:

- Utilizing ENERGY STAR partnership and EPA’s tools and resources to differentiate organization and improve business relationships with customers.
- Alignment of organization’s mission with the ENERGY STAR program.
- Delivering energy efficiency in existing buildings and/or building designs that incorporate superior energy performance.
- Integration of ENERGY STAR tools and resources into day-to-day business practices.
- Collaborated with EPA or provided feedback to EPA on the design and functionality of ENERGY STAR tools and resources.

2. Benchmarking and Certification:

- Helps its clients benchmark and certify existing buildings
- Helps its customers improve the energy efficiency of their building design projects

3. Marketing and Recognition:

- Organization uses its ENERGY STAR partnership to help the organization market its services and recognize the success of its projects and clients.
- 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.
- Including the ENERGY STAR logo and/or referencing the ENERGY STAR program on any marketing materials, articles, publications, white papers, web pages, or other media.
- Using ENERGY STAR to help clients gain recognition for achieving energy efficiency and enhanced performance in design projects and/or existing buildings.

Contractor of the Year—Sustained Excellence, Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program

Participating contractors who have received Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Contractor of the Year recognition for multiple years and have gone above and beyond the criteria needed to qualify for this recognition are honored with the award for Sustained Excellence.

Contractor of the Year—Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program

This award recognizes participating contractors who demonstrate innovative business practices that make them leaders in the home performance industry. The award winners take on challenges and apply unique approaches to realize notable success in their local Home Performance with ENERGY STAR markets. They exhibit outstanding professionalism, build strong customer relationships, and apply building science solutions to improve homes. Applications are evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Project Results**— consistently achieve significant energy savings, load shifting, or demand reduction with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR and are able to demonstrate replicable and innovative approaches to achieve these results.
2. **Industry and Business Leadership**—providing leadership in their market, either among their peers or by improving their own company, including efforts to engage in local and national policy and/or regulatory initiatives, training and mentoring, industry trade groups, and continuing education. Improved business efficacy and operational efficacy by implementing new offerings or procedures learned through their association with Home Performance with ENERGY STAR.
3. **Customer Engagement**— building strong customer relationships through effective approaches including innovative Home Performance with ENERGY STAR marketing campaigns, connecting marketing activities to sales, using unique tactics to close sales, collecting and integrating customer feedback, responding to customer concerns, achieving high customer ratings.

Excellence—ENERGY STAR Promotion

This award recognizes specific, exemplary ENERGY STAR promotions or consumer outreach campaign activities (as opposed to ongoing efficiency programs) that took place during calendar year 2017. Activities may include participation in one or more of EPA’s ENERGY STAR 2017 product promotions listed below, or other consumer outreach initiatives that promoted ENERGY STAR certified productions.

- Flip Your Fridge
- Earth Day
- Pool Pumps
- Cooling
- Room Air Conditioners
- ENERGY STAR Most Efficient
- Water Heaters
- ENERGY STAR Change the World Tour: Brighten a Life with ENERGY STAR
- ENERGY STAR Day

Partners receiving this award implemented promotions, marketing, or consumer outreach campaigns that clearly work in the support of any or all of the following goals:

1. Increase consumer understanding of ENERGY STAR – visual recognition of blue label, what it stands for, who’s behind it, individual and collective benefits of choosing ENERGY STAR.
2. Increased consumer awareness and sales of ENERGY STAR certified products in a sustainable manner (e.g., any price incentives are complemented with educational materials conveying product benefits and value).
3. Affect sustained behavior change around energy efficiency – move consumers from “knowing” to “doing.”
4. Increase presence of ENERGY STAR in media/social media (TV, newspapers, consumer publications, Web content, trade publications, radio, etc.).

5. Support positioning ENERGY STAR as a trusted resource for energy efficiency and drive traffic to www.energystar.gov.

Excellence—Product Design

This award recognizes important contributions to driving efficiency in products. Partners recognized with this award lead in the design and manufacture of the best of ENERGY STAR certified products.

Certificates of Recognition

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