

2016 ENERGY STAR® AWARD CRITERIA

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energy
efficiency.



March 2016

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, New Home Builder and Affordable Housing, Home Energy Raters, Product Brand Owner, Retailer, 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 new homes through activities such as:
 - Designing approaches that are based on the local housing market and reflect the most important regional factors for program success;
 - Marketing strategies that increase awareness of ENERGY STAR certified homes;
 - 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;
 - Measurement and evaluation processes to assess progress and attainment of goals and facilitate continuous improvement in the implementation of the program.
2. Home Performance with ENERGY STAR—innovative sponsors and partners of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR programs that implement program elements such as the following:
 - Marketing strategies that increase the use of and awareness of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR;
 - Business friendly approaches that produce a high conversion ratio from the home performance assessment to Home Performance with ENERGY STAR project delivery for participating contractors;
 - Program delivery approaches that produce high impacts for homeowners, such as greater energy savings, improved safety and comfort, and enhanced building functionality;
 - Workforce infrastructure development that strengthens home performance and trades based contractor networks with mentoring, training, and recognition; 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 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.

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 certified 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 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 energy management programs 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.
 - Participation in ENERGY STAR recognition activities.

3. Demonstration of Energy Savings—actual energy performance improvements achieved during 2015, 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. Partners are also encouraged to illustrate cumulative accomplishments.

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—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 multifamily high rise units. Developers receiving this award are evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Promotion and Marketing—materials and activities that your organization developed and used to promote and market ENERGY STAR certified units in MFHR buildings.
2. ENERGY STAR Web Presence—including a link or links from the organization’s website that highlights its ENERGY STAR partnership, discusses features of ENERGY STAR certified units, and cross-links to the ENERGY STAR Multifamily High Rise website.
3. Energy Efficiency Innovation—innovative features in the organization’s ENERGY STAR MFHR projects.
4. Costs and Benefits—description of the costs and savings associated with your ENERGY STAR certified multifamily high rise buildings constructed during 2015 as compared to code.
5. Resident Testimonials—resident testimonials describing their experience living in an ENERGY STAR certified MFHR unit.
6. Training—training related to ENERGY STAR MFHR that the organization engaged in during 2015, such as training of sales staff to promote the features and benefits of ENERGY STAR certified units; training of site supervisors or trades regarding the ENERGY STAR MFHR technical program requirements.
7. Licensed Professional Letter of Recommendation—letter of recommendation that describes the Licensed Professional’s experience working with the Developer Partner during 2015 to construct, verify, and/or promote ENERGY STAR certified multifamily high rise units.

Partner of the Year—New Home Builder and Affordable Housing

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR home builder partners who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in building and promoting ENERGY STAR certified homes. This award is 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. Organizations receiving this award are evaluated across 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 2015.

2. Training—training related to ENERGY STAR certified homes that the organization engaged in during 2015, 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.
3. Innovations in Cost and/or Energy Efficiency—innovation used to lower the cost of building ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2015, or a technical innovation incorporated into the contractor process.
4. Letter of Recommendation—describes the Rater’s experience working with the builder partner during 2015 to construct, verify, and/or promote ENERGY STAR certified homes.
5. Quality Control—at least one area where the ENERGY STAR certified homes program has been used in 2015 to enhance the quality control of the construction process.
6. Homeowner Testimonials—describing their experience living in an ENERGY STAR certified home.

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—Home Energy Rater

This award recognizes ENERGY STAR Home Energy Rater/Provider 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 as follows:

Home Energy Raters are recognized when nominated for an Award by their builder partners. This process was implemented to encourage further collaboration between builder partners and Home Energy Raters. If a New Home Builder/Affordable Housing applicant is selected for an Award, then the nominated Rater is selected also. 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. In addition, Raters are asked to submit letters of recommendation to EPA in support of their builder client’s application.

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—Product Brand Owner

This award recognizes 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 2015 and percentage change over previous year.
 - Percentage of eligible 2015 models that are ENERGY STAR certified.
 - 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/DOE in the development of training activities.
 3. Sales and Marketing:
 - Integration of ENERGY STAR in presentations for or meetings with distributors and/or retailers.
 - Leadership and/or participation in promotions in conjunction with the ENERGY STAR Campaign and related ENERGY STAR promotional activities (e.g. Team ENERGY STAR, My ENERGY STAR consumer engagement platform, ENERGY STAR Day)
 - Leadership and/or participation in other cooperative promotions (e.g., in-store, web-based) with utilities, state efficiency program sponsors, retailers, resellers, distributors or suppliers.
 - Support positioning ENERGY STAR as a trusted resource for energy efficiency and drive traffic to www.energystar.gov
 4. Consumer/End User Education:
 - Innovation in educational efforts that go above and beyond simple ENERGY STAR logo use and messaging.
 - Consumer education efforts 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.
 8. Cross-cutting Efforts 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. Provide product and marketing data using these tools. (Where applicable for your product category).
 - 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: Low Carbon IT, 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).
 - Using ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager to benchmark buildings or gave preference to leasing space from ENERGY STAR certified buildings.
 - Provide evidence of an energy management program that spans the company operations and that is in accord with ENERGY STAR's Guidelines for Energy Management.
 - Commitment to protecting integrity of the ENERGY STAR brand through continuous improvement, enhanced quality assurance, reporting logo and labeling violations, or other practices.
 - Featuring ENERGY STAR on company home page.

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, both large and small, that are making an ever-increasing contribution to the growing success of ENERGY STAR. These partners have excelled in the following areas:

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:
 - Working to order, stock, and promote ENERGY STAR products in store and on-line.
 - Working to increase stocking, sales, and labeling of ENERGY STAR products every year.
 - Giving ENERGY STAR a consistent, year-round presence through in-store signage and online labeling.
3. General ENERGY STAR Consumer Education—what the company has done throughout the year to promote ENERGY STAR and educate 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). Activities include:
 - High-level and multi-channel ENERGY STAR consumer outreach activities (e.g., Earth Day promotions—April, Energy Awareness Month—October, and ENERGY STAR Day)
 - A dedicated ENERGY STAR web page
 - Participation in ENERGY STAR’s Change the World and social media initiatives, such as Twitter parties and ENERGY STAR pledge drive efforts.
 - Integration of environmental benefits messaging, such as climate protection, in consumer outreach efforts, where possible.

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 catalyze market transformation in energy efficiency through their products, services, and/or effective outreach efforts. Award-winning SPPs demonstrate outstanding success in helping private- or public-sector organizations to improve energy performance in their existing buildings and 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. Benchmarking and Certification:

- Quantifying the results of their efforts to help their clients benchmark and certify existing buildings.
 - Quantifying the results of their efforts to help their customers improve the energy efficiency of their building design projects.
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 through ENERGY STAR.

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.

Climate Communicator

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. Partners are recognized for creating 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. Communications campaigns should also convey the positive environmental impact ENERGY STAR has in the fight against climate change. 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.

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR—Contractor of the Year

This award recognizes participating contractors who demonstrate innovative business practices that make them leaders among their peers. 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.

In 2013 and 2014, the US Department of Energy (DOE) honored eight participating contractors for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the Program with the Housing Innovation Award for Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. That award is being renamed to the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Contractor of the Year Award and more strongly integrated with the ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Awards. Participating contractors are evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Customer Relations—demonstrate an effective, systematic approach to building strong customer relationships including established channels for customer feedback, consistently high customer ratings, and responsiveness to customer concerns.
2. High Energy Savings—consistently achieve verified high-energy savings for Home Performance with ENERGY STAR projects and are able to demonstrate replicable and innovative approaches to achieve savings.
3. Industry Leadership—showcasing efforts to engage in local and national policy and/or regulatory initiatives, training and mentoring, industry trade groups, and continuing education.
4. Sales and Marketing—innovative approaches to marketing Home Performance with ENERGY STAR services and demonstrate success by connecting marketing activities to sales.

Excellence—ENERGY STAR Promotion

This award recognizes specific, exemplary ENERGY STAR promotions or consumer outreach campaign activities (vs. ongoing efficiency programs) that took place during calendar year 2015. Promotions and educational campaigns may have leveraged the national “Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR” campaign, including the ENERGY STAR Change the World Tour, use of the online My ENERGY STAR consumer engagement platform (including the ENERGY STAR Pledge), and/or Team ENERGY STAR or may focus on promoting ENERGY STAR certified products or practices in conjunction with EPA’s seasonal outreach efforts (e.g., promoting ENERGY STAR LEDs and/or other ENERGY STAR certified products, enabling power management settings on computers, or setting programmable thermostats correctly). Partners receiving this award implemented promotions that met 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. Increase consumer participation in Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR national campaign activities (i.e., pledge driving or Team ENERGY STAR sign-up activities).
3. Increase 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).
4. Affect sustained behavior change around energy efficiency – move consumers from “knowing” to “doing.”
5. Increase presence of ENERGY STAR in media/social media (TV, newspapers, consumer publications, Web content, trade publications, radio, etc.).

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

Excellence—Lighting Retailer or Showroom

This award recognizes lighting retailers and showrooms which demonstrate outstanding effort and achieve noteworthy success selling ENERGY STAR certified lighting products. Through promoting the program, training associates, and stocking shelves with certified products, lighting retailers and showrooms contribute immensely to advancing ENERGY STAR's goals in the lighting market.

1. Product Selection
 - Demonstrate setting and meeting goals/targets for increasing stock of ENERGY STAR certified lighting products (e.g. increases in number of SKUs or percentage of SKUs).
 - Describe all efforts to work with vendors to increase stock of ENERGY STAR certified lighting products.
 - Report progress in meeting these goals/targets (e.g. increases in number of SKUs or percentage of SKUs).
2. Sales Associate Training
 - Demonstrate the integration of ENERGY STAR into training strategy and in all existing training vehicles.
 - If applicable include information on how your organization worked with vendors or utility/state/regional partners to increase ENERGY STAR sales associate training.
 - Report progress in implementing training plan and achieving goals.
 - Please list all training efforts and include electronic examples (as available) of all training materials that include ENERGY STAR, e.g. publications, web-based, and in-person.
3. In-Store Marketing—ENERGY STAR marketing efforts, e.g. displays, signage, and consumer educational events, and include electronic examples of in-store marketing materials.
4. Ex-Store Marketing—ex-store ENERGY STAR marketing efforts, e.g. advertising (broadcast, print, direct mail) and web promotions.

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.

Special Recognition

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