

ENERGY STAR® Certified Homes & Apartments



A Green Home Begins with ENERGY STAR Blue

Homebuyers and renters across the country are choosing to live in green buildings. But what exactly makes a home or apartment green? Green homes are designed to be environmentally sustainable; their construction focuses on the efficient use of energy, water, and building materials.

Energy efficiency: the foundation of a green home

The energy used to heat, cool, and operate a home is typically the most significant aspect of its environmental impact. That's because the energy used in homes often comes from the burning of fossil fuels, which can contribute to smog, acid rain, and climate change. By using energy more efficiently, a green home can help reduce the demand for power and the amount of air pollution generated.

The easiest way to make sure a new home or apartment is energy efficient is to look for the blue ENERGY STAR mark, the government-backed symbol for energy efficiency. ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments are independently verified to meet strict guidelines for energy-smart construction set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. They are designed to be at least 10% more efficient than homes built to code and, on average, deliver savings of more than 20% for homeowners. And the same features that drive energy savings also result in a more comfortable and durable home.

[Learn more](#) about the features and benefits of ENERGY STAR certified homes and apartments.

What comes after energy efficiency?

Maximize indoor air quality.



EPA's [Indoor airPLUS](#) program addresses the indoor environment component of green building, with required construction practices and product specifications designed to minimize exposure to airborne pollutants and contaminants.

Save water.



EPA's [WaterSense®](#) program ensures that homes use at least 25% less water than average. WaterSense homes are inspected and certified to meet both indoor and outdoor water efficiency requirements.

Zero out your energy bills.



DOE's [Zero Energy Ready Homes](#) (ZERO) program builds on the comprehensive building science requirements of EPA's ENERGY STAR and Indoor airPLUS, and includes additional energy-saving requirements that result in homes that are 40%-50% more energy-efficient than typical new construction.

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Certified Homes & Apartments



Completing the green home picture

ENERGY STAR, Indoor airPLUS, WaterSense, and ZERO certification programs can help prospective homebuyers address many of the most important aspects of green building.

For those that want to go further, look to one of the many green home certification programs in the market today. Each program takes a slightly different approach to green, and the level of rigor of the certification requirements can vary. But they all typically address additional green building features like waste reduction, material use, site selection, and sustainable land development practices. Some programs offer multiple levels of certification, which reward higher levels of achievement.

ENERGY STAR is broadly recognized by the leading green home certification programs, but not all require EPA's ENERGY STAR certification, and others only require ENERGY STAR at higher tiers.

Below is a summary of how some of the largest green building programs address ENERGY STAR certification.

**Enterprise Community Partners:
Green Communities** ENERGY STAR certification required

**ICC 700 National Green Building
Standard (NGBS)** ENERGY STAR certification is an optional compliance pathway

**Passive House Institute U.S.:
PHIUS+** ENERGY STAR certification required, as well as Indoor airPLUS and Zero Energy Ready Home

**Southface Energy Institute:
EarthCraft** ENERGY STAR certification required for multifamily buildings at Gold and Platinum tiers

**U.S. Green Building Council:
LEED Residential** ENERGY STAR certification is an optional compliance pathway