



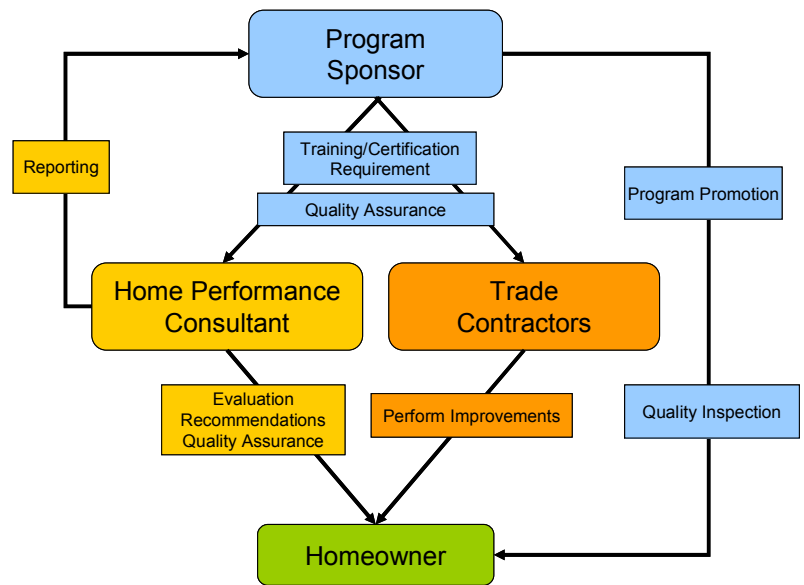
Home Performance Consultant Model

Understanding the different approaches and business models for delivering home performance improvements is one of the first steps that a program sponsor must take to design a Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. Although there are a variety of ways a program could be structured, not every model will be effective within a target market. Program sponsors must think critically about what characteristics are likely to lead one model to succeed over another. Important factors to consider include the number of contractors and businesses experienced in building science and the “whole house” approach and if there is already an established infrastructure of certified Home Energy Rating professionals.

There are two fundamental business models being implemented under Home Performance with ENERGY STAR programs – the “home performance consultant” and “home performance contractor” models. These two models are different in many ways especially with regards to who completes the work. However, these models are not mutually exclusive and hybrid models should be.

Home Performance Consultant

Under the “home performance consultant” model, the consultant conducts a comprehensive assessment to identify opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of the home. After completing the home evaluation, the consultant discusses the results with the homeowner and provides a scope of work detailing the recommended cost-effective improvements. The consultant then refers the homeowner to participating contractors that can complete the recommended improvements.



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Once the improvements have been installed, the consultant returns to the home to conduct a second inspection and follow-up testing to ensure that the improvements were installed according to best practice standards. Although the consultants are independent, it is ideal when a good relationship



exists with participating contractors so that completion of the scope of work will meet the consultant's and homeowner's expectations.

Strengths and Weakness

A unique attribute of this model is the independent, third-party role of the consultant, which can increase the homeowner's trust that the consultant's recommendations are unbiased. This model is also beneficial because the consultant can help play a role in ensuring quality of completed home improvements.

However, providing independent recommendations means the consultant only receives a financial reward for completing the assessment and not for completing the improvements. This can be beneficial or result in many home assessments, but few home improvements. To make the consultant model successful, the program design needs to foster good working relationships between consultants and participating contractors to streamline the home performance process for the homeowner.

Regardless of the business model, program sponsors need to establish participation criteria and a process to monitor quality. Participation criteria should include contractor training and certification to ensure that participating contractors are skilled in whole-house assessment, diagnostics testing, and protocols for making recommendations and installing home performance improvements. The program sponsor must conduct inspections of at least 15% of each contractor's projects to monitor quality or partner with an organization with established certification and accreditation standards, and a quality assurance process, such as the Building Performance Institute.

The program sponsor is responsible for ensuring that participating consultants and contractors receive training in building science, diagnostic testing, protocols for making recommendations, and how to properly install home performance improvements. An established infrastructure of Home Energy Raters within the target market area may facilitate the deployment of a program built around the consultant business model. This model was first established within the Wisconsin Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. The program sponsor may want to consider using the Building Performance Institute's (BPI) Building Analyst certification to verify the technical qualifications of consultants participating in this model.

Hybrid models that combine aspects of the home performance consultant and home performance contractor models can be considered. Although one model may be selected as the basis of your program design, consider allowing business model diversity to encourage innovation.