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Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR: A New Business Opportunity for Home Energy Raters Working with EPA's ENERGY STAR

Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR is a new partnership for architects and plan designers whose home plans meet rigorous energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. EPA's ENERGY STAR program.

Home plans that are *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* must be independently reviewed and verified by a Home Energy Rater¹ to include requirements for the energy-efficient features and construction details typically found in ENERGY STAR qualified homes—tight construction and duct systems, properly installed insulation, high performance windows, efficient heating and cooling equipment, and ENERGY STAR qualified lighting and appliances.²

This new program creates a business opportunity for Home Energy Raters, as architects and plan designers will need your services to verify that their plans meet *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* requirements.



How are home plans qualified as *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR*?

Architects and plan designers who want to label a home plan as *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* must submit it to a Home Energy Rater for review. As a Rater, you are already experienced in evaluating home plans to help builders choose the most appropriate and cost-effective approaches for meeting ENERGY STAR guidelines. Now, you can extend these services to the architectural design community as well. Similar to ENERGY STAR qualified homes, *Designed to Earn* home plans can be evaluated in one of two ways:

- Using the **performance path**, the home plan is modeled with specialized computer software to estimate the as-built home's energy use based on the specifications of the home plan. The results of this analysis help you identify the most effective upgrades needed to meet ENERGY STAR requirements.
- Using the **prescriptive path**, the home plan is reviewed for consistency with an EPA-developed climate-specific construction specification called a Builder Option Package (BOP). Based on extensive analyses, BOP specifications have been determined to result in homes that consistently meet ENERGY STAR guidelines.

The Rater will also ensure that the home plan contains all other elements required for it to be labeled as *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* (specified below). You will perform the review using a specially designed checklist available from EPA. The completed checklist, as well as the HERS Rating or BOP checklist, should be attached to the final home plan. Once all of these requirements are met, the Rater is authorized to issue the *Designed to Earn* logo for the designated home plan.

¹ For readability, the term "Home Energy Rater" or "Rater" is used throughout this document. However, Builder Option Package (or BOP) Inspectors are also eligible to review and verify home plans under the *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* program.

² Field verification, including onsite inspections and testing by a Home Energy Rater is required for a home to earn the ENERGY STAR qualified home label to ensure that energy-saving measures specified in the home plans are incorporated into the as-built house. This field verification may or may not be performed by the same Rater who reviews the home plans.

Required elements for a home plan to qualify as *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR*

Attached Documents:

- Projected HERS Rating or ENERGY STAR BOP checklist
- ENERGY STAR Thermal Bypass Checklist with all N/A items checked
- Any required specifications not already included on the plan

Information on Plan (Floor Plan, Specifications, or Details):

- Note stating that field verification by an EPA-approved verifier is required for the home to earn the ENERGY STAR
- Note stating that space cooling system sizing calculations must be provided and verified for the home to earn the ENERGY STAR
- Wall sections delineating complete thermal boundary of home
- Tight construction details and performance specifications
- Thermal Bypass Checklist air barrier installation details and/or specifications
- Proper insulation installation details and performance specifications
- R-values of insulation assemblies
- Window and door specifications
- Water heater specifications
- Heating and cooling equipment specifications
- Tight duct details and performance specifications and/or layout for ductwork and air handlers in conditioned space
- Required ENERGY STAR qualified products
- Critical plans and trade details in languages appropriate to the prevailing trade labor pool is recommended, but not required

How can Raters promote *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* to architects and designers?

Now, when talking with design professionals, you can present the advantages of partnering with ENERGY STAR:

Market Differentiation and Recognition. Labeling home plans as *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* can distinguish architects and plan designers as leaders in energy-efficient design and environmental stewardship. Partnering with ENERGY STAR and using the government-backed symbol for energy efficiency can give prospective clients added confidence that their new home will be truly energy efficient when it is built.

Increased Revenue. Consumer demand for green homes is growing, and energy efficiency is a great place for architects to start getting involved. The best way for architectural design professionals to show that their home plans are energy efficient is with the blue ENERGY STAR, which is increasingly recognized by consumers as the national symbol for energy efficiency.

Program Flexibility. A variety of “tried-and-true” energy-efficient features and equipment are available to ensure that home plans meet the *Designed to Earn* guidelines. These improvements can be easily integrated into architects’ designs, layouts, and option packages.

Enhanced Customer Satisfaction. The energy-efficient features specified in *Designed to Earn* home plans can translate into increased comfort and satisfaction for homeowners, which can lead to more referrals from customers who have bought and built from design partners’ home plans.

Learn more about EPA’s *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* at:
www.energystar.gov/DesignedToEarn