

Home Modernization Program Update

Scott Oliver, Program Manager

David Friello, Program Manager

Keith Bohling, Senior Project Manager

Steve Wagner, Senior Project Manager

EmPower +
Virtual Energy Assessments (VEA)
Comfort Home

February 6, 2026

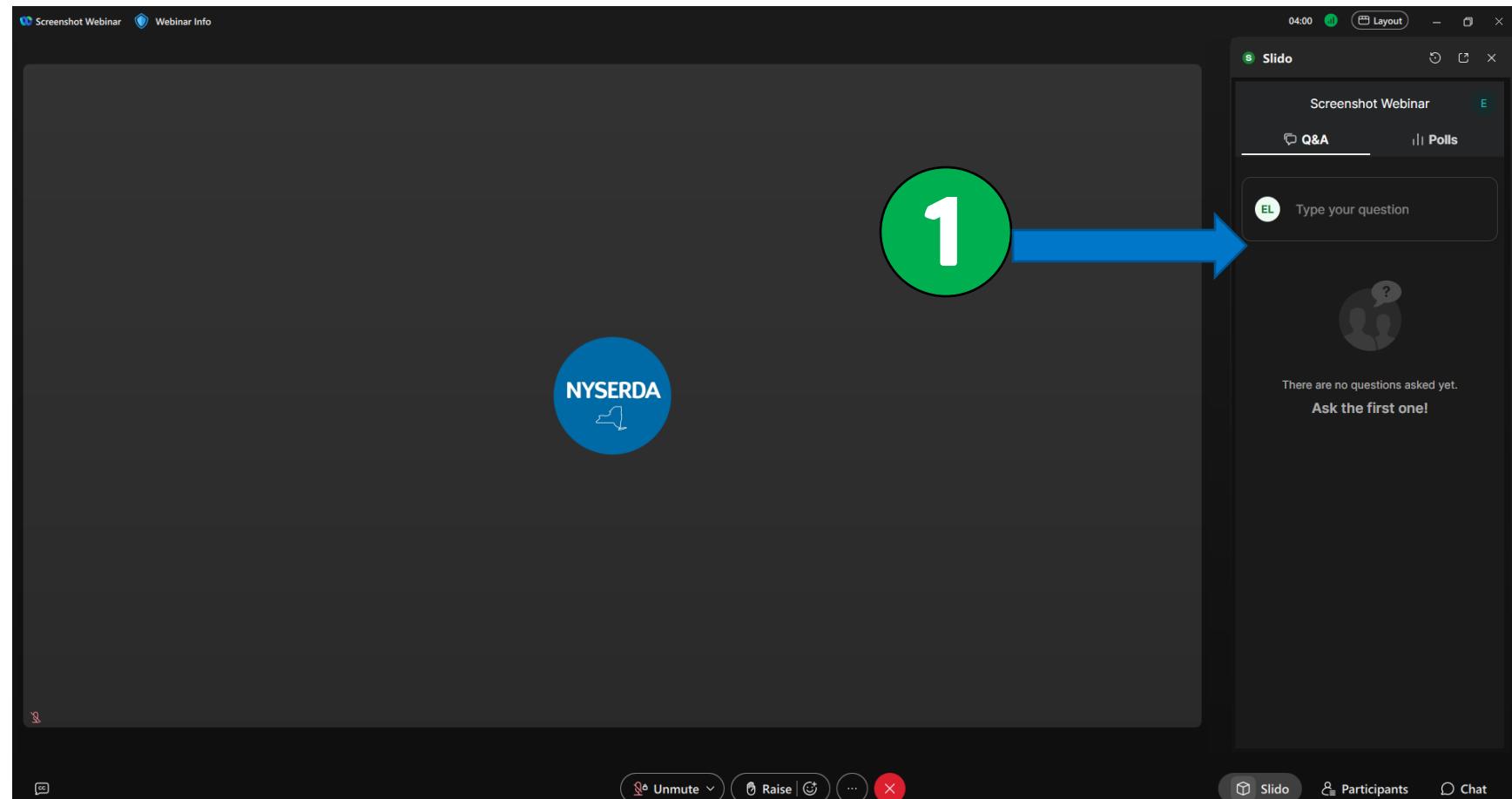


NYSERDA
New York State Energy Research
and Development Authority

Options for Q&A During Today's Webinar - Text

OPTION 1 - TEXT

- Locate **slido** panel in the right portion of your webinar panel.
- Type your question as prompted into the text field and click “send.”



Format of Q&A During Today's Webinar

Topic: [Type your question]

- > Please list your topic first followed by a colon sign.
- > Type your question pertaining to the topic after the colon sign.
- > This will allow the Host to align the questions with the topic being presented.
- > ***Please note that specific inquiries and topics not covered during today's agenda, i.e., enrollment number or client name can be addressed through the standard customer or contractor support options (Slide 4).***

Topic

Comfort Home: will the deadline for the new incentives be extended?

Topic

from Uthman Aziz to everyone: 1:24 PM

Topic

EmPower+: How will new applications be processed after MyEnergy roll out?

Topic

from Uthman Aziz to everyone: 1:28 PM

NYHEP: How do we confirm if a customer is getting OTDA funding or IRA funding?

Topic

from Uthman Aziz to everyone: 1:34 PM

REA: How will the new testing requirements be implemented?

Topic

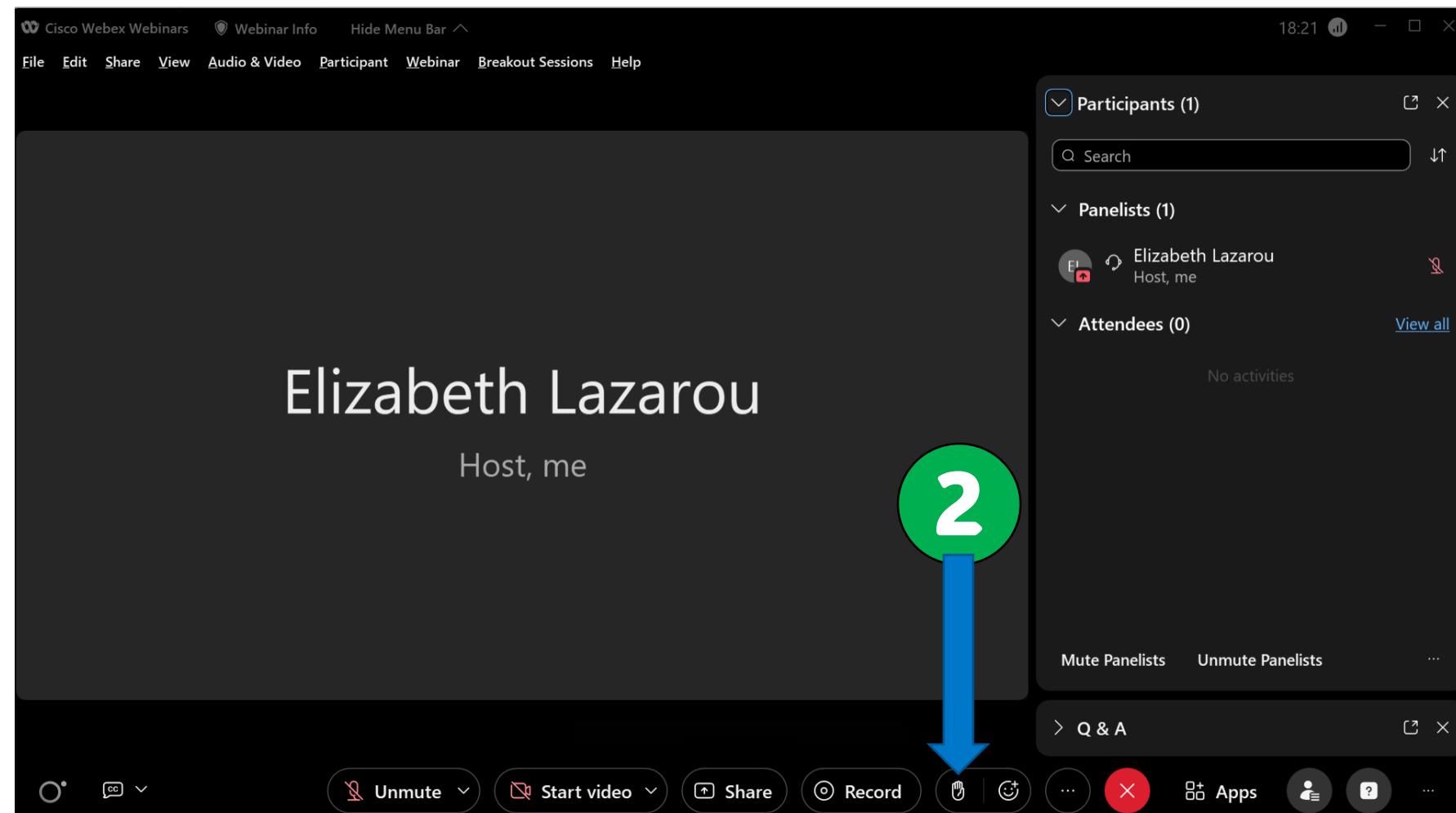
from Uthman Aziz to everyone: 1:35 PM

GJGNY:

Options for Q&A during today's webinar Mic/Phone

OPTION 2 - MIC/PHONE

- > Locate the “raise hand” icon in the toolbar at the bottom of your screen.
- > Click on the raise hand icon to let the host know you have a question.
- > The Host will indicate when you have been sent a request to unmute. Click on the unmute request to ask your question verbally.



Support questions should be directed to:

Please send your email to only ONE of the email addresses listed below, using both causes duplicative work for the implementation teams.

Customer Engagement and Enrollment Contractor

- Implementor: TRC
- 1-866-NYSERDA
- 1-877-NYSMART (Customer Support)
- info.residential@nyserda.ny.gov
- Call-center support for customers to answer questions about program offerings and assist with customer enrollment and applications to EmPower+. Process customer applications for EmPower+ and provide income verification services for program incentives.

TRC



Program Operations and Technical Support

- Implementor: **CLEARResult**
- 1-800-284-9069, calls will be routed to person best able to assist
- support.residential@nyserda.ny.gov
- Customer support once an application has been approved as well as programmatic and technical support for contractors in the EmPower+ and Residential Energy Assessment and Comfort Home programs.

CLEARResult

Today's Agenda:

Comfort Home

Program Manual
Photo Requirements
Contract Requirements
Case Study Opportunity

EmPower+

EmPower+ Program Changes Overview

Reminders

BPA Conference
Clean Energy Hub Coordination
EmPower+ Clean Heat



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Comfort Home

- January 2026 Comfort Home Pilot Program Manual is now available
- NYSERDA program support website at:
<https://hpwescontractorsupport.com/>

At the top, point to **Program Resources** then click on **Comfort Home Resources**.

- Page 4 includes a list of the changes made in this version.

Comfort Home Pilot Program

Program Manual

January 2026



January 7, 2026

- Section 2.1 updated to remove references to heat pump referral incentives and heat pump installation contractors
- Section 3.2 and Table 1 updated to add DAC project incentive
- Section 3.2.1 and Table 2 multiple project incentives clarified
- Section 3.3 updated to include all costs
- Section 3.5 (Comfort Home Website and Lead Generation) removed
- Section 3.5 adjusted to include municipal electric customer eligibility for assessment incentives
- Section 4.2.1 (Accessibility to perform work) removed and content moved to section 4.2
- Appendix B: Sample Contract removed

4.1.2 Ventilation

Comfort Home projects uploaded into NYHEP that include air-sealing will have the Building Airflow Standard calculation performed as part of the project review. If continuous mechanical ventilation is required, it will need to be installed before the project can be approved and incentives paid. A photo showing the means of ventilation will need to be uploaded to NYHEP along with the installation submission.

4.2.1 Blower Door Measurement Requirement

The Contractor is required to take photos of the manometer for the Blower Door Test In and Test Out values and keep on file internally. The contractor does not have to submit photos in NYHEP, but the photos can be requested at any time by NYSERDA if the project is selected for review.

When hazardous materials are present or suspected but must be documented in NYHEP when the installation is submitted. Photos must be taken of the hazardous material conditions. (BDT is not required in this situation)

4.2.2 Dense Packing Walls

Work scope submissions that include the dense packing of wall cavities or ceiling slopes where the proposed cavity includes **pre-existing insulation** must include photos of the **existing wall cavity conditions** to support that the combined R-value and density of new and existing insulation will meet manufacturer installation specifications.

6.2 Comfort Home Workflow General Notes

It is the contractor's responsibility to, upon request from NYSERDA, provide photos taken at the time of the initial site visit and after installation of the standard package improvements, especially of improvements that will not be accessible after installation. Photos support the quality assurance process by providing the required documentation (Refer to section 7.5 for Quality Control Requirements).

Photos of attic walls insulated that qualify for Package B must be attached during Install Started.

7.5 Quality Control Requirements

Contractor must maintain the required photos listed in this manual and provide the relevant photos to resolve nonconformances.

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Please ensure that your process is aligned with the Comfort Home requirements. Section 3.3 of the Pilot Program Manual states that:

Participating Contractors are free to use their own standard contract; however, any contract must be signed and dated by both the Participating Contractor and the homeowner/representative. The signed contract must be submitted to the Program. The Electronic Signature Policy is shown in Appendix A. The contract must include:

- Total job cost
- Comfort Home incentive labeled as “NYSERDA Comfort Home”
- Other incentives (if applicable)
- Net customer cost

The signed contract needs to align with approved work scope and be signed prior to the start of work. Any work scope changes from the contract must be included in a change order or new contract.

An invoice signed after the work is completed does not meet the program requirements.

SUGGESTION: USE A NOTE TO DESCRIBE PROJECT CONDITIONS AND SCOPE

A best practice that some contractors have adopted is proactively entering a note that in just a few sentences explains in plain English what's happening in the home.

This note can help the reviewers easily understand the project and can significantly help when troubleshooting is needed.

Attic is fully insulated and air sealed. Proposing to spray foam basement rim joist with 2" CCF (R-14). Submitting for package A, \$2,500 incentive.

Attic flat is fully insulated with R-49 of cellulose insulation. Proposing to spray foam basement rim joist with 2" CCF (R-14). Proposing to dense pack all exterior walls with 4" of cellulose (R-14). Submitting for package B, \$3,000 incentive.

Proposing to air seal all attic penetrations and open blow attic space with an additional 12" of cellulose (R-42) over existing R-21 batts to bring attic insulation above an R-49. Proposing to spray foam basement rim joist and crawlspace foundation walls with 2" CCF (R-14). Submitting for package A, \$2,500 incentive.

NYSERDA is looking for your most impactful projects with happy customers to be featured in a few case studies.

We're looking for projects to highlight the benefits for contractors and customers to participate in Comfort Home. Case studies are no longer a static PDF file – they are colorful stories with photos, quotes, and can include video.

If you have a candidate project, please email details to Keith Bohling at Keith.Bohling@nyserda.ny.gov.

Example: <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Publications/Featured-Case-Studies/Geothermal-HP-Install-SFR-Case-Study>

Pause for Questions

EmPower+

Program Changes Winter 2026

The LMI Energy Efficiency / Beneficial Electrification Order was issued by the Public Service Commission in May 2025. This order covers funding for LMI single and multifamily programs for 2026-2030.

EmPower+ will serve as the 1-4 LMI family statewide program. National Grid and Con Ed will operate the downstate multifamily program (AMEEP). NYSERDA will operate the Upstate multifamily program (AMP Up).

The order calls for many changes to the EmPower+ program. These changes will be phased in over the next year and a half.



Tranche 1: Early 2026

1. Contractor Application Submissions
2. Low Income Eligibility Changes (greater of AMI or SMI)
3. Reinstate the 50% project incentive cap for moderate Income
4. Increase project incentive caps for Upstate and Downstate
5. Changes to light bulb eligibility
6. Heat Pump Water Heater incentive changes
7. Update insulation requirements for Heat Pump projects
8. Update project photo requirements



Tranche 2: Q3 2026

1. Introduce Pre-weatherization Health and Safety enhanced incentive pilot
2. Introduce Regional Plans to increase uptake in underserved regions
3. Public Facing Dashboards
4. Re-introduce a refrigerator incentive option



Tranche 3: 2027

1. Deploy new project management system (to replace NYHEP)
2. Introduce a Renter Offer
3. Direct install changes

Customer Profiles and Program Budget Management

The EEBE Order calls on the EmPower+ program to focus on certain customer types:

1. Referrals from utilities of customers participating in Energy Assistance Programs.
2. Customers in geo-graphic DACs
3. Customers with high energy cost burden.
4. Customers in areas that have been historically underserved by the program (Capital District, Hudson Valley, New York City, North Country)

Program budget goal: maintain a steady monthly pace in incentive expenditures

Initial program actions:

1. Allow contractors to submit applications for defined customer segments.
2. Establish pipeline management at application submission to maintain program stability and align demand with planned budgets.

Starting on March 18, 2026 participating contractors will be able to submit applications for customers who have categorical income verification.

- Contractors will have access to MyEnergy for the purpose of submitting and monitoring these applications.
- Contractors will also be able to see the applications of customers who have listed the contractor as the contractor of choice on their applications.
- Training in MyEnergy for contractors will take place:
 - [Session 1](#) - February 25th - 12-1 PM
 - [Session 2](#) - March 11th - 12-1 PM
 - [Session 3](#) - March 18th - 12-1 PM
 - [Session 4](#) - March 25th - 12-1 PM

Categorical eligible types:

- HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program)
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/Food Stamps)/SNAP NYC
- SSI (Supplemental Security Income)- (this is different from Social Security Retirement or Disability benefits which are used as income sources for Standard Eligibility)
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- Weatherization Assistance Program
- Public Assistance

Low-Income Eligibility Changes

Historically, EmPower+ has used 60% of State Median Income to determine income eligibility for low-income customers. The EEBE order requires EmPower+ to use 60% Area Median income or State Median Income, whichever is greater.

- The EmPower+ program will update the income qualification tables with these new numbers by March 15, 2026.
- TRC will start using the updated tables for qualification on March 18, 2026.
- If a customer who has previously applied and was classified as moderate income is now eligible as low income, their contractor can request that TRC rereview the application. If they now qualify as low-income, a new project will need to be created in NYHEP when the application is revised.

Project Level Incentive Cap Updates

PROJECT LEVEL INCENTIVE CAP UPDATES

- On March 18, 2026, the EmPower+ program will update the incentive rates for all projects submitted to the program that do not yet have a submitted work scope.
- The moderate-income incentive will cover 50% of the project cost up to the incentive cap.

	Downstate LI	Downstate MI	Upstate LI	Upstate MI	Long Island LI	Long Island MI
First unit	\$14,000	\$7,000	\$12,000	\$6,000	TBD	TBD
Unit 2-4 ea.	\$7,000	\$3,500	\$6,000	\$3,000	TBD	TBD

For moderate income customers, EmPower+ will provide 50% of the cost of eligible measures up to the incentive cap. Incentive cap change from \$5,000 to: \$6,000 for Upstate customers and \$7,000 for Downstate customers

- IRA funds will be layered on top of this amount of funding.

For example: The only eligible measure in the project is air sealing with a cost of \$4,000.

- Total cost: \$4,000
- Base EmPower+ incentive is \$2,000 (50% of \$4,000)
- IRA incentive is \$1,600
- Total possible incentive is \$3,600.

As part of the EmPower+ yearly cycle, the program will update utility rates and EmPower+ measure pricing during the Q1 changes to the NYHEP system.

In response to stakeholder suggestion, EmPower+ will use the customers address rather than the contractors address to determine if a project is eligible for Upstate or Downstate pricing.

Lighting Measures

The EEBE order classified light bulbs as a non-strategic measure that may continue in limited applications through 2027 and phased out afterwards.

As this is a **high cost/low savings measure with recent federal standards accelerating diminished savings opportunities**, there are limited applications where direct install lighting measures will save sufficient energy to justify the cost. Beginning March 18, 2026 eligibility for direct install lighting will be limited to:

- Replacement of existing in-service incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs, AND
- As part of a comprehensive project where lighting is under 5% of the total project cost.

Based on findings from a recent evaluation study, the program will be ending smart power strips as a measure on March 18, 2026.

- If they have been added to a work scope that has been submitted, it can move forward as a measure, but they will no longer be available to be added to new work scopes.

Heat Pump Water Heater Changes

Effective 02/06/26, EmPower+ will be using the Sustainable Futures Program Funding to incentivize Heat Pump Water Heaters.

- Maximum incentive for HPWH will be:
 - 100% of the project up to \$5,000 for Low Income (Tier 1)
 - 50% of the project up to \$2,500 for Moderate Income (Tier 3)
- This incentive will include all electrical upgrades associated with the HPWH including:
 - A new breaker, running a new electrical line, and other associated costs.
- Contractors will need to include these costs in the measure.
- Contractors should not use the HEAR electrical upgrade measure for HPWH associated costs.
- The HEAR electrical service panel box upgrade measure will still be eligible when installing a HPWH.

Heat Pump Requirements

HEAT PUMP READY ENVELOPE REQUIREMENTS, BEGINNING Q1-2026

After running thousands of models and evaluating over 60,000 LMI projects in all climate zones of New York, the following specifications were determined to provide the best balance between installation costs, operating costs, and achievability with New York's housing stock.

Building Assembly	Minimum Requirement	Application Notes
1-4 Family Homes		
Infiltration	10 ACH50 max	Contractor must verify the home is at or below this level. If the contractor cannot perform a blower door test, they must use NYHEP to estimate the air leakage.
Attic Insulation	R-40 min	Area-weighted average R-value of all horizontal attic floor areas in the home must be \geq R-40. This area includes attic hatches and pull-down stairs.
Above Grade Exterior Wall Insulation	R-11 min	Fill wall cavities to capacity
Rim Joint Insulation	R-14 min	Rim joists must be sealed and insulated
Foundation Wall Insulation	R-17 min	Insulation of foundation wall to cover above grade areas only
Manufactured Homes		
Infiltration	12 ACH50 max	Contractor must verify the home is at or below this level. If the contractor cannot perform a blower door test, they must use NYHEP to estimate the air leakage.
Attic Insulation	R-19 min	Area-weighted average R value of all horizontal attic floor areas in the home must be \geq R-19. This area includes attic hatches and pull-down stairs.
Above Grade Wall Insulation	R-11 min	Fill wall cavities to capacity
Belly	R-23 min	

Updated Photo Requirements

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

In order to shorten project review times and standardize document submissions, the EmPower+ will be launching new photo templates for:

- Assessment/Workscope Submission
- Final Project Submission

Starting March 18,2026 Contractors will be expected to use the new submission templates or use a product that can arrange photographs in the same order as the templates.

A photo reference document will also be available for each measure. This document will enable users to readily identify photo needs when proposing measures.

We do want to remind contractors that the IRA requires clear pictures of the make and models tags of the installed units. We will be reviewing these photos more closely to ensure that the information on them is legible.

NYSERDA is continuing to pursue a contract with CompanyCam to provide licenses for CompanyCam for all participating contractors.

Contractors should be providing customers with a copy of the signed test in form before submitting the projects for completion

- See new language below that has been added to the Test-In Form**

I understand that funding for this project will be approved by NYSERDA through the EmPower+ Program. The EmPower+ Program requires the completion of required paperwork as well as required testing upon project completion. I understand that EmPower+ Program funding will be withheld for this project if I fail to sign all required paperwork or if I do not allow the required testing to be completed at project completion. If EmPower+ Program funding is withheld for this project, I understand that I will be responsible for payment of the total project cost to the EmPower+ contractor.

Reminders

Building Performance Association's CEFH Upcoming Conference

Date: May 28th-29th, 2026

Location: 534 Broadway Saratoga Springs, New York, 12866

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Submit topics by 2/9/26

BPA is seeking regional experts and practitioners to lead 90-minute sessions at the event.

Showcase your expertise and elevate your voice within the New York's energy efficiency community.

Connect with peers who are shaping the future of clean energy homes in New York. If you have a topic, case study, or insight to share [Submit a session proposal today](#)

EmPower+ and Clean Heat Rebate Reminder

Reminder for all Contractors participating in the New York Clean Heat Program that utilizes funds from both Clean Heat and EmPower+ for the same measures is against Program Guidelines.

Be sure to remind your customers not to apply for Clean Heat rebates if they are receiving EmPower+

The Clean Heat ICF team continues to review mid-stream projects to catch projects using both Program funding.

Questions?

If there are any questions on contractor participation or project-related inquiries, please contact nyscleanheat@icf.com

CLEAN ENERGY HUB COORDINATION

- Coordinating with your Clean Energy Hub where possible, helps make your job easier!
- The Hubs have been tasked with assisting NY residents navigate this space. If you are reached out to by one of the Hubs, please be responsive.
- <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Regional-Clean-Energy-Hubs>



Regional Clean Energy Hub
Partnering Organization

Final Questions

PAPER APPLICATION

- If you are providing paper applications to customers, there are a few things to keep in mind.
 1. **Make sure the application is the most recent version and not an outdated application missing crucial components i.e. the updated attestation.**
 2. **If you are encouraging customers to send completed EmPower+ applications through the mail, please be sure they are sending to the correct address:**

TRC COMPANIES 3 CORPORATE DRIVE, SUITE 202 CLIFTON PARK, NY 12065

Site Visits by Technical Services Program Implementer

CLEAResult conducts on-site inspections to assist Participating Contractors and Customers for a variety of reasons including:

- Home Energy Assessments*
- Workscope Development Options*
- Quality Control (QC) of In-Progress Projects*
- Customer Concern Resolution
- Quality Assurance (QA) Resolution
- Internal Quality Management (IQM) Plans

*Required for New Contractors with Provisional Status

Please work with CLEAResult when they reach out to schedule a site visit. Contractors can also request on-site or remote inspections through Contractor Support.

support.residential@nyserda.ny.gov | (800) 284-9069

Remote Inspections Available

Live-service video solution to perform remote inspections.

- Call into Contractor Support
- Link is sent directly via SMS text to a phone number
- Join the live call without the need to register an account or download an app
- Embedded features such as guides, markup tools, file sharing and chat enhance the interaction