

EmPower+ Program Background

NYSERDA's Single Family Residential Program, EmPower+(Program), provides incentives for energy efficiency work based on household income. Households identified as Tier 1, are considered low-income, meaning the household earns 60% or less than the State Median Income. Tier 1 households were previously served through the EmPower New York Program. Tier 3 households are considered moderate income, earning 80% or less than the State or Area Median Income. Tier 3 Households were previously served through Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®.

EmPower+ assists New Yorkers in improving the energy performance, durability, comfort and safety of existing one-to-four-family homes throughout New York State.

The objectives of EmPower+ are to enhance the delivery of building performance services by using diagnostic tools and building science principles to cost effectively achieve goals which include decreasing energy consumption and costs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing building stock resiliency while simultaneously addressing health and safety issues pertaining to indoor air quality.

Implementation Contractors

NYSERDA relies upon the following implementation and external contractors to provide program support services:

- Intake Implementation Contractor- Currently TRC
 1. Provide Customer Support for prospective customers.
 2. Review and approve EmPower+ applications.
 3. Oversee the Call Center and Help Desk Ticketing intake and triage through the application approval step.
- Technical Services Contractor - Currently CLEAResult
 1. Assign Participating Contractors to approved applicants.
 2. Provide Program and technical support as needed to Participating Contractors.
 3. Review and approve project workscopes.
 4. Oversee Participating Contractor customer concerns and quality assurance compliance.
 5. Review Participating Contractor performance in the Program.
 6. Review and approve Participating Contractor project completion paperwork for payment.
 7. Submit biweekly invoices to NYSERDA for review and processing.
- Loan Originator - Currently SlipStream (formerly Energy Finance Solutions or EFS)
 1. Review and approve loan applications.
 2. Review and approve loans for eligible EmPower+ projects.

3. Distribute loan payments to Participating Contractors for completed projects.
- Quality Assurance - Currently Honeywell
 1. Schedule Quality Assurance inspections for project completions and for households who requested them within one year of project completion
 2. Perform in-field quality assurance inspections and report findings to Participating Contractor and Technical Services Implementor

External Contractors

- Loan Servicing - Currently Concord
 1. Following the completion of a project with a loan, the loan and associated project completion paperwork is transferred from SlipStream to Concord, who will then collect the loan payment from the customer.
 2. Maintains the loan and payment processing until the loan obligation is fulfilled.
 3. Following loan fulfillment, loan servicer will return customer documents to NYSEERDA.
- [Regional Clean Energy Hubs](#)
 1. Help residents, businesses, and multifamily building owners reduce their energy use and energy costs and make informed energy decisions. NYSEERDA's partners are dedicated to helping New Yorkers save money and live or work more comfortably.
 2. Work with households to complete Program paperwork and foster them through NYSEERDA's residential programs

How the Program Works

Intake Implementation Contractor

- [EmPower+ Application](#)- Households looking to participate in the Program must complete the application and provide any requested documents. Intake Implementation Contractor reviews applications and those approved will be designated either Tier 1 (Low-Income) or Tier 3 (Moderate-Income) eligible.

Technical Services

- Participating Contractor Assignment- Approved applications will be assigned to a Participating Contractor if one was identified by the applicant. Otherwise, the next available contractor serving the region will be assigned. Participating Contractors can accept or defer assignments based on their current capacity.
- Home Energy Assessments- Following the assignment of a Participating Contractor, the Participating Contractor will coordinate with the household a time for performing a home energy assessment. The home energy assessment is at no cost to the household with the Participating Contractor identifying eligible energy upgrades for the household.

In addition to the home energy assessment, Direct Install measures, as explained in Section 5.14 of the [Program Manual](#), are available at no cost to EmPower+ households.

- Workscope Development and Approval- Following the home energy assessment, the contractor will identify a workscope based on the home's needs and using eligible Program measures. The workscope will be reviewed (either through auto-approval or by Technical Services Implementor) and once it meets Program standards, approved. Participating Contractor must have the necessary certifications per Section 5.2 of the [Program Manual](#) for the work being performed or use a sub-contractor with the appropriate certifications.
- Project Completion- Upon approval of the workscope, Participating Contractor will schedule and install measures and work with the household to have required project completion documents signed.
- Project Close Out/Payment- Participating Contractor submits completion documents to the Program, who reviews and if complete approves project for payout. Invoice packages are processed by NYSERDA twice per week.
- Quality Assurance- If selected for Quality Assurance, Participating Contractor will be notified and will be provided with the opportunity to join the inspection (unless otherwise indicated by the Customer). A report of the field inspection will be provided, and the Participating Contractor will be required to address any significant deficiencies noted.

Customer Incentives

EmPower+ provides incentives to offset the cost of energy efficiency improvements for income-eligible households. For additional information regarding customer incentives, please refer to Section 3.1 in the [Program Manual](#).

- All EmPower+ Households
 1. No-Cost Home Energy Assessments
 2. No-Cost Direct Install Measures
 3. Access to Quality Assurance for completed projects
 4. Available to both renters and homeowners in 1-4 unit residential buildings
- Tier 1 (Low-Income) Households
 1. Incentive up to 100% of the project cost, however, select measures have incentive caps that may require customer contribution or project costs with caps based on the number of eligible units.
 2. Set pricing- Since the Program pays for all or most of the project, set pricing has been established for eligible measures with an Upstate/Downstate cost structure. Please refer to Section 5.5 of the [Program Manual](#) for current Tier 1 (Low-Income) pricing.

3. Referrals- NYSERDA receives referrals from multiple organizations including, but not limited to, utilities, The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Offices for the Aging (OFA), other Participating Contractors, and other local community groups. NYSERDA’s Program Implementor will distribute these referrals based upon geographic location of the referred household to the next available Participating Contractor. Participating contractors should expect referrals to supplement their own customer generation. Please see Section 5.21 of the [Program Manual](#) for additional information on referrals and the project assignment process.
- Tier 3 (Moderate-Income) Households
 1. Incentives for approved energy efficiency measures- Households qualify for a discount covering 50% of the cost of eligible energy measures with project caps based on the number of eligible units.
 2. Participating Contractor/customer negotiated pricing- Participating Contractor works with the household to develop a workscope and fair pricing for submission and review by the Technical Services Implementor.
 3. Access to low-interest financing- NYSERDA offers two loan options to help EmPower+ households pay for the upfront cost of energy efficiency upgrades. Both loan options are available for up to \$13,000 per applicant, and up to \$25,000. For further information, please visit NYSERDA’s [finance web page](#).

Please see Section 5.15 of the [Program Manual](#) for a list of eligible measures for Tier 1 (Low-Income) and Tier 3 (Moderate-Income) Households.

Benefits of Contractor Participation

- No-Cost Home Energy Assessments and Direct Install- Provides Participating Contractors with an opportunity to provide in-home services to households and potentially provide additional comprehensive services through the Program.
- Contractor Assignments- Participating Contractors can receive assignment/referrals from the Program providing them with the opportunity to serve households without prior outreach.
- Third-party Quality Assurance- Participating Contractors can provide “peace of mind” to households with the added option of third-party quality assurance to ensure the project was installed to Program requirements.
- Technical Assistance- Participating Contractors have access to Technical Assistance for workscope development and navigation of Program components.
- Opportunities to participate in other NYSERDA pilot initiatives (i.e., programs, studies) as needs arise.
- Access to the NY Home Energy Portal for project submission and tracking and other NYSERDA platforms for Program communication and assistance.
- Prompt payment of eligible incentives upon successful approval of project completion paperwork.