

Home Energy Assessments

EmPower+ offers free home energy assessments for eligible Tier 1 (Low-Income) and Tier 3 (Moderate-Income) households. The application can be completed online or downloaded at www.nyserdera.ny.gov/empower-app. As part of a whole house approach, program requires that home energy assessments and recommendations for energy efficiency measures be conducted in accordance with all relevant standards published by the Building Performance Institute (BPI). To be eligible for Program incentives and/or financing, recommendations made for proposed energy efficiency measures must meet or exceed the efficiency or eligibility criteria specified by the Program in Section 5.15 of the [Program Manual](#).

The Program has adopted the published BPI-1100 Home Energy Audit Standard. The BPI-1100 Standard describes all elements necessary for a Home Energy Assessment. The BPI-1200 standard complements the BPI-1100 standard and provides the protocols for achieving the requirements of the BPI-1100 standard (i.e. BPI-1100 describes what a comprehensive assessment is, and the BPI-1200 standard describes how to complete the assessment.).

For more information, visit BPI.org.

General Notes Regarding Home Energy Assessments

- A. Participating contractor must carry an ID and display it to an appropriate household member prior to entering the home for the first time.
- B. If the participating contractor is utilizing a sub-contractor to perform the home energy assessment, the household must be informed, and sub-contractor must carry an ID and display it to an appropriate household member prior to entering the home for the first time.
- C. Personnel completing the home energy assessment must be certified in accordance with Section 5.2 of the [Program Manual](#).
- D. Participating contractors must provide and carry with them all necessary tools.
- E. If an adult is not home at the time of the home energy assessment, the Participating contractor must not enter the home but should attempt to contact the customer by close of business that day.
- F. Participating contractors are not obligated to continue in any situation in which they feel their personal or staff's health or safety is at risk. In situations where a participating contractor decides not to proceed with work, all dealings with the household must be courteous and professional. The participating contractor must provide the Program with details on why they are not moving forward with the project in a timely manner.
- G. It is important that the participating contractor work directly with the residents of the building. The household is familiar with how the building performs and can provide valuable data as to how well the heating system functions, whether the hot water system satisfies the needs of the family, etc. This contact also provides the

- opportunity for in-home energy use management education. See Section 7 of the [Program Manual](#) for further details.
- H. The participating contractor shall provide Program participants with a finalized home energy assessment report within 14 calendar days of site visit. The report shall be generated from Program-approved software and include a detailed workscope proposal that identifies measures and pricing for improving the energy efficiency, comfort and safety of the home. The report shall include all energy efficiency, comfort, health and safety opportunities that exist in the home regardless of type of service(s) the participating contractor offers (i.e., a participating contractor with heating certification needs to identify applicable envelope issues in the report) while adhering to the policies and procedures.
 - I. To proceed with a home energy assessment:
 - i. In owner-occupied households, the participating contractor must attest to the review of documentation that proves home ownership (deed, mortgage book, tax bill, etc.)
 - ii. In rental properties, the participating contractor must ensure that the building owner signs a Rental Property Energy Efficiency Services Agreement, found in Section 3 of the [Program Manual](#) prior to completing any invasive work and attest to the review of documentation that proves home ownership (deed, mortgage book, tax bill, etc.). Otherwise, measures are limited to non-invasive direct install/electric reduction measures and tenant-owned appliances.
 - J. The participating contractor must evaluate the home for the opportunity to provide direct install measures in accordance with Section 5.14 of the [Program Manual](#).
 - K. Section 5.18 of the [Program Manual](#) includes assessment related information regarding appliances, CO/smoke detectors, hot water heater adjustments, air-sealing/insulation, and lighting measures.
 - L. For all projects, households are provided with documentation on what measures are approved for incentives by NYSERDA and what, if any, customer contribution is required. Households can deny any measure from being installed; however, if a household denies a measure required for health and safety requirements, they must be informed that the project cannot proceed if this measure is denied.
 - M. Work performed must comply with BPI health and safety standards.
 - N. The participating contractor must take digital photos to document pre-existing conditions. Photos will need to be geo-tagged, time-stamped and compiled into a single PDF file. To reduce review time and conserve space in NYHEP, contractors will be required to upload project photographs as one document with each photo labeled. There will be multiple ways contractors can fulfill this requirement:
 - Use a commercial product like CompanyCam which labels and organizes photos of a project.
 - NYSERDA will provide a PowerPoint template in the forms section of the contractor support site: (need link here). Once the photos are added to the PowerPoint, the contractor can save the PowerPoint as a pdf and upload it to NYHEP.

- The PNNL Quality Install Tool is a free website that can work on cell phones to aggregate photos of a project.
- Contractors with other methods of organizing their photos into one document are encouraged to share their ideas with NYSEERDA.
- The follow is a list of photos required on all projects:
 - i. All exterior sides of dwelling
 - ii. Refrigerator
 - iii. Freezer (if present)
 - iv. HVAC (Heating and Cooling Systems, Water Heater)
 - v. Pre-existing attic insulation levels
 - vi. Other targeted measure(s) for replacement
 - vii. Exception requests

Home Energy Assessments must also consist of the following as appropriate:

- A. Completion of appropriate signoffs and permissions.
 - i. If a Tier 1 (Low-Income) household owns an appliance that is being considered for replacement through EmPower+, the participating contractor must obtain a signed Appliance Exchange Agreement completed with all required information, including documentation of available spacing for the new appliance.
 - ii. For additional information on Tier 1 (Low-Income) incentives for renters, please see section 5.19 of the [Program Manual](#).
- B. Energy education, with a goal of identifying energy-saving actions which the household will commit to completing. (See Section 7 of the [Program Manual](#) for further details).
- C. The installation of direct install measures.
- D. Test of the ambient air for CO/combustible gas if a combustion appliance is present or if the building has an attached garage.
- E. For Tier 1 (Low-Income) households, in addition to direct install measures, the following electric reduction measures must be evaluated through the use of an approved audit tool:
 - i. Replacement of refrigerators or freezers
 - ii. Opportunity to reduce or eliminate electric space heater use by enhancing or repairing the main heating system's distribution system, air sealing or insulating.
 - iii. A motion sensor light or timer for a high-wattage outdoor light that is currently left on all night.
 - iv. Repairs to well pump systems that cycle continuously due to a leak in the system
 - v. Heat tape that runs continuously.
 - vi. Leaking hot water pipes or faucets.

- vii. Occasionally, a participating contractor may encounter a home that has been converted from a two family to a one family, but still retains two meters and two accounts. This means that the household is paying two basic service charges instead of one, and probably a higher overall cost per kWh than if the whole house was on one meter. In these situations, Contractor should explore the option of switching the house to one set of meters.
 - viii. Provide advanced power strips for TVs or other appliances to prevent continuous run times.
- F. Any measures/items not on the eligible measures list must be reviewed and approved by program implementation staff prior to installation

Home Energy Assessments must conform to BPI Standards 1100 and 1200 and consist of all of the above, as well as the following:

- A. In the event that multiple units exist in the dwelling, and access is available, participating contractor must test all units if possible. Notification to the landlord prior to home energy assessment can help in obtaining access.
 - i. If the additional unit cannot be tested, participating contractor must decide whether to go forward with measures that impact air movement in the dwelling. Participating contractor should contact contractor support and make notes regarding the situation in the NY Home Energy Portal.