



Connecticut's Energy Efficiency Programs are funded by a Charge on Customer energy bills. The Programs are designed to help customers manage their energy usage and cost.

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### Residential New Construction Program Project Application 2009

CS6926 REV. 5-09

Applicant's Name	Telephone ( )	Fax ( )	Email Address	Date
Applicant's Company (if builder)		Project Name (if applicable)		
Applicant's Contact Address		Project Location/Address		
Name of Builder (if not applicant)		Number of Residential Housing Units in Project/Number of Phases*		
Utility Used For Heating: <input type="checkbox"/> CL&P <input type="checkbox"/> UI <input type="checkbox"/> Yankee Gas <input type="checkbox"/> Oil <input type="checkbox"/> Propane <input type="checkbox"/> Ct Natural Gas Corp. <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Ct Gas Co.		Expected Completion Date		
Name and Company of HERS Rater (if applicable)				

Project Type (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family <input type="checkbox"/> Multi Family (≤ 3 stories) <input type="checkbox"/> Low Income (60% median)** <input type="checkbox"/> Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Detached <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Tax Credit	ENERGY STAR Qualification Path: <input type="checkbox"/> National Builder Option Package <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Rating (HERS)
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To encourage electric energy efficiency, The Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P) and The United Illuminating Company (UI), in conjunction with the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) are pleased to offer the customer listed above energy efficiency services and financial assistance for the referenced project through the Connecticut Residential New Construction Program, subject to the attached Terms and Conditions and Project Application Sheet(s). The payment of any incentives shown below is contingent upon the presence all of the energy-saving characteristics, materials, and equipment being confirmed at the final project inspection of the home and/or paperwork. If any of the energy-saving characteristics, materials, and equipment are not installed, the incentive will be recalculated based on what has been installed. Payment of incentives is also contingent upon a submittal of all required paperwork as specified in the instructions below and in the Terms and Conditions on the reverse side. If you are a CL&P customer, contact Justin Lindenmayer; a UI customer, contact Diane Damino for questions.

**Instructions:**

- Please complete, to the extent possible, and sign the "Initial Plan" section of this form and submit to the CL&P/UI Program Administrator prior to insulation of the home. If the Applicant is not the homeowner, the homeowner's signature must also be obtained. If homeowner is not yet known, the builder or current property owner's signature (if not Applicant) is required. FILLING OUT THIS FORM DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY QUALIFY YOU FOR THE RESIDENTIAL NEW CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM. Upon submittal, the CL&P/UI Administrator will review the application. If it meets the requirements, the Administrator will sign the form and send it back to the Applicant via email, fax, or mail, and the Applicant can proceed with the proposed plan. If the application does not meet the requirements, the Administrator will contact the Applicant to discuss alternative options. The Applicant is not bound to the initial specifications; however, any changes are still subject to the minimum requirements listed on this application. If the Applicant is applying for an ENERGY STAR Certification incentive, he/she must select a certified Home Energy Rating System (HERS) rater to inspect and rate the home. The associated costs are the responsibility of the Applicant. A list of HERS raters can be found within the New Construction portion of each company's website.
- Once the home is complete and a final inspection has been performed (if applicable), the Applicant or rater must fill out the "Actual" portion of the application based on the final data. The Applicant will then sign, obtain any other necessary signatures, and submit the form to the Administrator for final review and confirmation of the accuracy of the stated values. Copies of all receipts with equipment make, model, and size documenting the installation of the equipment must also be submitted with the signed application. See attached checklist for reference. Equipment includes insulation, HVAC and geothermal systems, and natural gas hot water heaters. For ENERGY STAR homes, an electronic Rem Rate file must also be submitted. Once all parties have signed a second time and paperwork has been confirmed, a check will be processed and paid TO THE APPLICANT.

CHARACTERISTIC/ INCENTIVE	CRITERIA (SQ. FT. REFERS TO CONDITIONED FLOOR AREA)	INCENTIVE OFFERING	INITIAL PLAN		AS BUILT	
			Applicant \$	Rater \$	Applicant \$	Rater \$
ENERGY STAR Certification***	1. Must meet ENERGY STAR Thermal Bypass Checklist requirements 2. Must have mechanical ventilation system installed 3. Must have ENERGY STAR lighting in 80%+ of sockets 4. Must have ENERGY STAR refrigerator, dishwasher and washer (if installed)	See appended chart for builder and rater incentive amounts	HERS Index		HERS Index	
			Applicant \$	Rater \$	Applicant \$	Rater \$
Above Grade High Performance Insulation***	1. Must meet ENERGY STAR Thermal Bypass Checklist requirements 2. Must have mechanical ventilation system installed 3. RESNET Grade 1 High Performance standard 4. R-21 minimum for walls, R-30 minimum for ceilings 5. Basement ceiling areas do not qualify	\$0.50/sq. ft. of insulated area Caps: 1 bedroom: \$660 2 bedrooms: \$1030 3 bedrooms: \$1395 4 bedrooms: \$1910 5 bedrooms: \$2095	Est. Installation Date	# Bedrooms	Total Home Sq. Ft..	# Bedrooms
			Total Ceiling Area	Total Wall Area	Total Ceiling Area	Total Wall Area
			Ceiling R-Value	Wall R-Value	Ceiling R-Value	Wall R-Value
			Ceiling Insul. Type(s)	Wall Insul. Type(s)	Ceiling Insul. Type(s)	Wall Insul. Type(s)
			\$ Incentive Amount		\$ Incentive Amount	
Geothermal Heating and Cooling	1. Home must be ENERGY STAR certified 2. System must be ARI/ISO rated. 3. Certification of installed performance required (VIP). Units must operate at least 85% of their rated efficiency and capacity.	\$500/ton, capped at \$1500 per location	COP	EER	COP	EER
			# Tons	Incentive \$	# Tons	Incentive \$
ENERGY STAR HVAC systems (A/C, heat pumps, or split ductless heat pumps)	1. ENERGY STAR Certified, ARI rated 2. SEER >= 14.5, EER >=12, H.S.P.F >= 8.2	\$500/system For ductless heat pumps, cap of \$500/home	Heating Fuel Type	HSPF/COP	Heating Fuel Type	HSPF/COP
			SEER / EER	Size	SEER / EER	Size
High Efficiency Natural Gas Hot Water Heater	Instantaneous or indirect natural gas hot water heater that meets ENERGY STAR standards, including an efficiency of .82 or greater with electronic ignition	\$300	DHW Efficiency	# Machines / Incentive \$	DHW Efficiency	# Machines / Incentive \$
			ESTIMATED TOTAL \$		ACTUAL TOTAL \$	

\* For multi-unit projects, only one application is necessary for groups of units with similar characteristics.

\*\* RNC projects where residents on limited income will reside will receive 150% of the incentives described above.

\*\*\* The ENERGY STAR and Insulation incentive amounts are for homes with natural gas or electric heat. For homes with oil heat, propane heat (or other heat), the incentive values are 30% of the incentive amounts listed above. In situations where dual fuel heating or water heating systems are installed (e.g., geothermal system with natural gas back-up), the incentive allocation is based on the estimated benefit associated with each fuel type. Insulation square footage must not include door or window areas.

**ENERGY STAR Certification Incentives**

Tier	HERS Index Rating	Single Family		Multi Family (≤ 3 stories)	
		Applicant Incentive	Rating Incentive	Applicant Incentive	Rating Incentive
Tier 1	85-75	\$0	\$100	\$0	\$100 (cap = \$5000 per project)
Tier 2	74.9-65 (or BOP)	\$500	\$200	\$250	\$125 (cap = \$6250 per project)
Tier 3	64.9-55	\$1500	\$300	\$750	\$150 (cap = \$7500 per project)
Tier 4	<55	\$3000	\$400	\$1500	\$175 (cap = \$8750 per project)

Initial Plan Acceptance Of Agreement – A signature by all parties indicates that the Applicant’s information has been received and that the characteristics listed on the application either meet the RNC Program’s requirements for the specific incentives to which the Applicant is applying or have been discussed by the Administrator and Applicant. The initial signatures do not bind the Applicant to participate in the program. The signature by the property owner (if not the Applicant) ensures that he/she is aware that the builder, vendor, or other third party is participating in this incentive program and will receive the incentive payment should they meet the necessary criteria. He/she is also aware that a second application may not be submitted for the same property.

<b>FOR THE APPLICANT LISTED ABOVE</b>		
Signature	Print Name	Date
<b>FOR THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR</b>		
Signature	Print Name	Date
<b>FOR THE HOMEOWNER (IF NOT APPLICANT)</b>		
Signature	Print Name	Date

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- These Terms and Conditions are a part of the Project Application for the above referenced Project. Project Application must be submitted prior to completion of home. Necessary inspection will be conducted when measures are installed.
- Applications must be signed by CL&P/UI Program Administrator. This Project Application is in effect until December 31 of the year following the date of acceptance of the Project Application by CL&P/UI. All homes must be completed and ready for inspection by December 15 of the year following the date of acceptance of the Project Application by CL&P/UI to be eligible to receive any incentives offered in the Project Application. Any homes not completed by December 15 of the year following the date of acceptance of the Project Application by CL&P/UI may be subject to changes in the program.
- ENERGY STAR® is a program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy. For a home to receive an ENERGY STAR label, the EPA requires that the Builder sign, and send to the EPA, a non-binding “Memorandum of Understanding” (M.O.U.). This M.O.U. allows the Builder to access and use the EPA’s copyrighted ENERGY STAR marketing materials when advertising an ENERGY STAR home. A certified HERS rater is required for ENERGY STAR certification. An electronic Rem Rate file must be submitted upon completion of the inspection to the Program Administrator. It is the responsibility of the applicant to select and pay the services for a certified HERS rater. Prices are to be negotiated between the applicant and the rater/rater’s company.
- ISO-NE CAPACITY PAYMENTS: By signing this document and as a condition to receiving an incentive pursuant to this program, customer hereby assigns to its participating electric utility, either CL&P or UI (as the case may be), any and all payments, benefits and/or credits in connection with the Forward Capacity market or any currently existing or successor or replacement markets (including but not limited to any and all Locational Installed Capacity (LICAP), Installed Capacity (ICAP), transitional credits or other capacity-related payments, benefits and/or credits for which customer is eligible) and that are associated with or applicable to customer’s participation in the program. Customer agrees to execute any and all documents and/or instruments as requested by UI or CL&P (as the case may be) to evidence such assignment. Forward Capacity Market means the market for procuring capacity pursuant to ISO-NE Tariff, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Electric Tariff No. 3, Section III, Market Rule 1, Section 13, any modifications to the Forward Capacity Market, or any successor or replacement market/capacity procurement process.
- In accordance with the Department of Public Utility Control’s (hereinafter “DPUC”) September 29, 2008 decision in Docket No. 05-07-19RE01, DPUC Proceeding to Develop a New Distributed Resources Portfolio Standard (Class III) – 2007 Revisions, the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) shall retain all of the Class III conservation credits for residential projects that receive incentives from the CEEF. In addition, based on the September 29, 2008 decision in Docket No. 05-07-19RE01, residential projects of one hundred (100) kilowatts or greater that do not receive incentives from the CEEF shall receive one hundred (100) percent of the value of the Class III conservation credits for said projects.
- The Builder/Homeowner agrees to allow CL&P/UI and its agents access to the project for the purpose of conducting a Project Inspection(s) to confirm the home(s) has been constructed with all of the energy-saving characteristics, materials, and equipment listed on the Project Agreement Form(s). All measures must be installed in order to qualify for incentives.
- Copies of all receipts with equipment make, model, and size documenting the installation of the equipment once the project is complete must be submitted. Equipment includes insulation, HVAC and geothermal machines, and hot water heaters. Incentives will not be paid until all appropriate paperwork has been submitted. In the case of ENERGY STAR certified homes, an electronic Rem Rate file must also be submitted. When an incentive has been offered for a geothermal HVAC system, the appropriate version of the CL&P/UI Verified Installed Performance (VIP) Worksheet must be completed by the installing geothermal system contractor before the home will be considered complete and eligible for any incentive payments. The VIP Worksheets are available from CL&P/UI on the geothermal heat pump rebate portion of each company’s website.
- The payment of the incentives shown on the Project Application is contingent upon the home(s) being constructed with all of the energy saving characteristics, materials, and equipment listed in the “Actual” portion of the Project Application form(s).
- CL&P/UI assumes that the signed applicant is the party to be paid, and therefore will make the check payable to him/her. Only one payment will be issued for each qualifying incentive for a given unit. Builders/owners/vendors will not be permitted to apply separately for the same incentive for a given unit. These incentives may not be combined with any other utility or energy service provider offer.
- Incentives are subject to change.

Final Acceptance Of Agreement (upon project completion) – A second signature by the Applicant indicates that the information presented on this form is accurate. A second signature by the Administrator verifies that the information is accurate and that CL&P/UI will pay the Applicant an incentive of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per completed housing unit in the above-referenced project, up to a maximum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the entire project. A second signature by the property owner (if not Applicant) ensures that he/she is in agreement with all of the above.

<b>FOR THE APPLICANT LISTED ABOVE</b>		
Signature	Print Name	Date
<b>FOR THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR</b>		
Signature	Print Name	Date
<b>FOR THE HOMEOWNER (IF NOT APPLICANT)</b>		
Signature	Print Name	Date

## 2009 Residential New Construction Application Checklist

This document is intended to ensure that builders, vendors, homeowners, or other applicants of the 2009 RNC program have included all necessary documentation and information required for incentive approval.

Required paperwork:

- Completed application, including all necessary signatures. For multi-family/multi-unit projects, only one application is necessary for groups of units with similar characteristics.

### **ENERGY STAR applicants:**

- W-9 Form
- Electronic RemRate file

CL&P customers, e-mail to Justin Lindenmayer at [lindejm@nu.com](mailto:lindejm@nu.com)

UI customers, e-mail to Diane Damino at [diane.damino@uinet.com](mailto:diane.damino@uinet.com)

- Lighting Inventory—Energy Star/CFL bulbs and fixtures only. Bulbs refer to screw-in applications and Fixtures refer to pin-based applications. All are either bulbs or fixtures but not both. Please do not double count.

Room Type	Total # bulbs	Avg. installed bulb watts	Total # pin-based fixtures	Avg. pin-based fixture watts
Bedroom				
Bathroom				
Den/Office				
Hallway				
Kitchen				
Living Room				
Dining Room				
Exterior				
Other				

### **Insulation applicants:**

- Invoice, including net square footage of applicable walls and ceilings (minus doors and windows), type(s) used, and R-value(s).

### **Geothermal applicants:**

- ENERGY STAR paperwork listed above
- Certification of installed performance (VIP) form, filled out by the geo contractor. Available on the CL&P website (<http://www.cl-p.com/home/saveenergy/rebates/heatpumprebate.aspx>) at the bottom of the page or on the UI website (<http://www.uinet.com/uinet/connect/UINet/Top+Navigator/Your+Home/UI+Products+%26+Services/Geothermal+Heat+Pumps/>)

### **HVAC applicants:**

- Invoice(s) listing make, model, size, SEER/EER/HSPF for each applicable machine

### **Natural Gas Hot Water Heater applicants:**

- Invoice(s) listing make, model, size, efficiency for each applicable machine

## Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification

**Give form to the  
requester. Do not  
send to the IRS.**

<b>Print or type See Specific Instructions on page 2.</b>	Name (as shown on your income tax return)	
	Business name, if different from above	
	Check appropriate box: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Sole proprietor <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Limited liability company. Enter the tax classification (D=disregarded entity, C=corporation, P=partnership) ▶ ----- <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt payee <input type="checkbox"/> Other (see instructions) ▶	
	Address (number, street, and apt. or suite no.)	Requester's name and address (optional)
	City, state, and ZIP code	
	List account number(s) here (optional)	

### Part I Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

Enter your TIN in the appropriate box. The TIN provided must match the name given on Line 1 to avoid backup withholding. For individuals, this is your social security number (SSN). However, for a resident alien, sole proprietor, or disregarded entity, see the Part I instructions on page 3. For other entities, it is your employer identification number (EIN). If you do not have a number, see *How to get a TIN* on page 3.

Social security number
or
Employer identification number

**Note.** If the account is in more than one name, see the chart on page 4 for guidelines on whose number to enter.

### Part II Certification

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that:

1. The number shown on this form is my correct taxpayer identification number (or I am waiting for a number to be issued to me), and
2. I am not subject to backup withholding because: (a) I am exempt from backup withholding, or (b) I have not been notified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that I am subject to backup withholding as a result of a failure to report all interest or dividends, or (c) the IRS has notified me that I am no longer subject to backup withholding, and
3. I am a U.S. citizen or other U.S. person (defined below).

**Certification instructions.** You must cross out item 2 above if you have been notified by the IRS that you are currently subject to backup withholding because you have failed to report all interest and dividends on your tax return. For real estate transactions, item 2 does not apply. For mortgage interest paid, acquisition or abandonment of secured property, cancellation of debt, contributions to an individual retirement arrangement (IRA), and generally, payments other than interest and dividends, you are not required to sign the Certification, but you must provide your correct TIN. See the instructions on page 4.

<b>Sign Here</b>	Signature of U.S. person ▶	Date ▶
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### General Instructions

Section references are to the Internal Revenue Code unless otherwise noted.

#### Purpose of Form

A person who is required to file an information return with the IRS must obtain your correct taxpayer identification number (TIN) to report, for example, income paid to you, real estate transactions, mortgage interest you paid, acquisition or abandonment of secured property, cancellation of debt, or contributions you made to an IRA.

Use Form W-9 only if you are a U.S. person (including a resident alien), to provide your correct TIN to the person requesting it (the requester) and, when applicable, to:

1. Certify that the TIN you are giving is correct (or you are waiting for a number to be issued),
2. Certify that you are not subject to backup withholding, or
3. Claim exemption from backup withholding if you are a U.S. exempt payee. If applicable, you are also certifying that as a U.S. person, your allocable share of any partnership income from a U.S. trade or business is not subject to the withholding tax on foreign partners' share of effectively connected income.

**Note.** If a requester gives you a form other than Form W-9 to request your TIN, you must use the requester's form if it is substantially similar to this Form W-9.

**Definition of a U.S. person.** For federal tax purposes, you are considered a U.S. person if you are:

- An individual who is a U.S. citizen or U.S. resident alien,
- A partnership, corporation, company, or association created or organized in the United States or under the laws of the United States,
- An estate (other than a foreign estate), or
- A domestic trust (as defined in Regulations section 301.7701-7).

**Special rules for partnerships.** Partnerships that conduct a trade or business in the United States are generally required to pay a withholding tax on any foreign partners' share of income from such business. Further, in certain cases where a Form W-9 has not been received, a partnership is required to presume that a partner is a foreign person, and pay the withholding tax. Therefore, if you are a U.S. person that is a partner in a partnership conducting a trade or business in the United States, provide Form W-9 to the partnership to establish your U.S. status and avoid withholding on your share of partnership income.

The person who gives Form W-9 to the partnership for purposes of establishing its U.S. status and avoiding withholding on its allocable share of net income from the partnership conducting a trade or business in the United States is in the following cases:

- The U.S. owner of a disregarded entity and not the entity,

## 2009 Residential New Construction Program FAQs

**Question:** What is required for mechanical ventilation?

**Answer:** It can be as simple as a quiet (1 son or less) bath fan that is on an automatic timer, or as advanced as a Heat Recovery or Energy Recovery Ventilator. The system should be verified by your HERS rater if the home is being Energy Star certified.

**Question:** What is the Thermal Bypass Checklist?

**Answer:** The Energy Star Program created the Thermal Bypass Checklist in 2006 in response to major changes in residential energy codes and standards throughout the U.S. From the Energy Star website: "The Thermal Bypass Checklist is a comprehensive list of building details where thermal bypass, or the movement of heat around or through insulation, frequently occurs due to missing air barriers or gaps between the air barrier and insulation." The Thermal Bypass requirements must be confirmed by a certified home energy rater (HERS rater) in order for a home to be Energy Star certified. For applicants who are only interested in insulation incentives, the Checklist may be confirmed by the program administrator or another inspector from the utility company. The checklist can be found here:

[http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/bldrs\\_lenders\\_raters/downloads/Thermal\\_Bypass\\_Inspection\\_Checklist.pdf](http://www.energystar.gov/ia/partners/bldrs_lenders_raters/downloads/Thermal_Bypass_Inspection_Checklist.pdf).

**Question:** How long do I have to complete the project?

**Answer:** Projects must be completed and ready for inspection by December 15, 2010.

**Question:** Is a gut rehab considered new construction or retrofit? If I have a retrofit project, is there a different program I can participate in? How about additions to existing homes?

**Answer:** A full gut rehab down to the studs would be considered new construction, and is therefore eligible to participate in this program. Additions are generally not considered new construction, but decisions may be made on a case-by-case basis. Anything short of a gut rehab is considered retrofit and it may be eligible for our Home Energy Solutions (HES) program. You can find out more about the HES program here: <http://www.cl-p.com/home/saveenergy/rebates/homeenergysolutions.aspx>

**Question:** Are there additional incentives for limited income residents/homes?

**Answer:** Yes. Any home or unit where residents with limited incomes (60% median income) will be residing will receive 150% of the incentive amounts listed on the form.

**Question:** Do homes with a geothermal system need to have Energy Star lights and appliances?

**Answer:** Yes. One of the minimum requirements to receive a geothermal incentive is for the home to be Energy Star certified. Energy Star certification requires that the home have, at a minimum, an Energy Star-rated dishwasher, washing machine, and refrigerator, and have at least 80% of the lighting sockets be Energy Star rated.

**Question:** What is the cutoff for being able to enroll in the Residential New Construction program?

**Answer:** Applications for any homes that will be receiving insulation, Energy Star, or geothermal incentives must be submitted BEFORE the home is insulated to allow sufficient time for the Energy Star rater or the utility company to perform an insulation inspection. Applicants who are only interested in HVAC or natural gas hot water heater incentives are encouraged to instead apply directly through those programs rather than through the New Homes program. Applications can be found on the CL&P/UI websites in the rebates section.

**Question:** Who must fill out and submit the application? The homeowner? The contractor? The builder? The rater?

**Answer:** It does not matter who completes and submits the application, as long as both the applicant's signature and the current home/property owner's signature (if different) have been obtained. All parties must also understand that CL&P/UI will be sending a check to the APPLICANT; we will not be responsible for discussing who the proper recipient of the money should be once the check has been sent, should multiple parties be involved in the application process.

**Question:** If I'm working on a 10-unit project where most of the units will have the same or similar designs, sizes, and equipment, do I need to complete 10 different applications?

**Answer:** For multi-unit projects, only one application is necessary for any group of units that have the same or similar characteristics. This applies to both the initial and final application submittals. If, however, each unit has different characteristics, a separate application will need to be completed for each unique unit. If the units in your project will be completed in phases, you may submit the final version of the application after each phase is complete if you prefer.

**Question:** My home is heated by a wood stove. Am I eligible for the full 100% of the incentives or do I receive 30% of the listed amounts like the oil and propane heated homes do?

**Answer:** If the wood stove is your primary heating source, you would receive 30% of the listed incentive amounts. If, however, the wood stove serves as a backup to an electric or natural gas-fired system, you would be eligible for the full 100%.

**Question:** Where can I find a list of qualified HERS raters?

**Answer:** The CL&P website lists a number of HERS raters who have agreed to perform ratings for the New Construction Program. They can be found here: <http://www.cl-p.com/home/saveenergy/rebates/hers.aspx>. If you would like to use a rater who is not on this list, you may do so, as long as he/she is certified himself/herself and is affiliated with a certified HERS provider.

**Question:** How much does a HERS rating cost?

**Answer:** In most cases a HERS rating's cost will depend on a number of factors, most importantly the size of the home. Different raters/rating companies may charge different prices, so it is up to the applicant to contact these raters to determine the specific cost.

**Question:** Is an Energy Star rating even worth pursuing if I may not fully recuperate the cost of the rating with the incentive I receive?

**Answer:** The decision to pursue an Energy Star Certification on a home is a personal one. The advantages of going through the certification process can be many, including: consultations with home energy efficiency professionals who can help you decide on the most efficient, cost-effective way to construct a high-performing home; identification of leaks, malfunctioning or improperly sized equipment, or other performance issues before they become problematic; a likely increase in the retail value of the home, should it become Energy Star certified; and piece of mind that the home functions the way it was designed to. The Energy Star process can provide builders with a guideline as to how to build a comfortable, healthy, and safe home, but certification is certainly not required to achieve such an outcome.