



## Home Performance Washington Policy Platform

Updated 7/21/2009

**Home Performance Washington** (HPW) is a non-profit association formed in 2009 to achieve deep energy savings in Washington State homes by promoting energy audits and whole house retrofits.

HPW is a membership organization that brings together residential energy professionals and service providers, conservation programs, educational institutions and other stakeholders to fight climate change and foster economic development by enabling a highly effective whole-house energy retrofit industry in Washington State.

For more information, visit our web site at [www.homeperformancewashington.org](http://www.homeperformancewashington.org).

### **Vision, Mission and Service Provider Pledge**

---

Our actions are guided by the following statements adopted at our May 2009 membership meeting:

**Our Vision** is that homeowners in Washington will have ready access to energy professionals they can trust to recommend and implement whole-house energy services that dramatically lower energy bills and reduce environmental impact while improving levels of home comfort, health, durability and safety.

**Our Mission** is to advance highly effective residential energy services in Washington State by:

- Promoting awareness of the benefits of whole-house energy services.
- Bringing energy professionals together to improve their ability to efficiently offer high quality services to customers.
- Ensuring the convenient availability of training programs that lead to nationally recognized professional certification.
- Supporting energy conservation programs to advance their goals in partnership with home performance companies.
- Working in close cooperation with aligned local, regional and national organizations.

#### **Our Service Providers Pledge to:**

- Understand how whole-house energy services, based on diagnostics and building-science, can result in deep energy savings while simultaneously enhancing indoor air quality, thermal comfort, and combustion safety.
- Recommend that each customer develop a whole-house energy strategy and implement improvements in the appropriate order to maximize the quality and effectiveness of the final result.
- Ensure that employees and subcontractors have the appropriate knowledge and skills to effectively and safely implement solutions that will work well over the life of the home.
- Value integrity and honesty in dealing with people and their property.

## Certification and Training

---

In order to ensure the highest quality of service, HPW will require that its member Service Providers involve professionals with appropriate professional training and certification in all projects.

HPW recognizes the Building Performance Institute (BPI) as the national leader in ensuring that home energy retrofits are conducted in a way that enhances indoor air quality and combustion safety. BPI provides a variety of role-specific professional certifications that are meant to be obtained in combination with other industry standard certifications.

HPW will recognize certifications from national and regional organizations such as BPI, ResNET, Performance Test Comfort Systems Northwest (PTCS) and ASHRAE.

Our *Membership Benefits and Requirements* document provides further details regarding the professional training and certification required of Member Service Providers based on the categories of work offered to customers.

## State Policy

---

Home Performance Washington has established a policy committee to work with energy conservation programs, government agencies and related organizations to ensure that programs are created and designed in a way that fosters an industry capable of offering highly effective whole-house energy services to homeowners beyond the availability of stimulus funded programs.

With that in mind, we have developed the following recommendations for energy program administrators and project evaluators:

### Energy Program Design and Evaluation

---

When evaluating programs created and funded by the federal stimulus, agencies should:

- 1) Judge programs on their potential for Market Transformation that lasts beyond the stimulus.
- 2) Encourage permanent jobs created or retained in the private sector over stimulus-funded jobs at government agencies and utilities.
- 3) Recognize that Climate Change and Energy Security goals require that we maximize the conservation potential of each home. This requires developing a plan for each home and implementing steps in the right order to avoid lost opportunity. Shell efficiency (air sealing and insulation) should be achieved early so that any subsequent HVAC and renewable energy systems can be properly designed and sized. Cost effectiveness assessment should be for the overall project.
- 4) Recognize that a home energy services industry exists. Programs should encourage existing residential energy services companies to improve practices, and encourage innovative companies to permanently enter the industry.
- 5) Recognize that many home energy service companies are small businesses, and that self-funded start-ups are bringing passion and innovation to the industry. Many small, entrepreneurial businesses treat their employees like family and offer ownership opportunities. Programs should be designed in a way that encourages the participation of small businesses and start-ups.
- 6) Recognize that homeowners prefer to exercise choice in how they manage their homes. Facilitating ways for homeowners to choose a contractor will reward

companies with the ability to market their services and help ensure an industry that can continue delivering whole house energy retrofit services long term.

## Enhancing Existing Trade-Ally Networks

---

Utilities in Washington have a long tradition of providing energy conservation services through a strong network of Trade-Ally partners. In the residential sector, this includes a strong array of companies that specialize in individual services such as insulation and furnace sales and installation.

HPW recommends that energy conservation programs strengthen and expand existing Trade-Ally networks by adding certified energy professionals such as energy auditors, air and duct sealers and home performance contractors.

## Home Energy Scoring

---

Recent legislation (SB 5854) adopted in the State of Washington requires that the Department of Commerce identify the best strategy for measuring energy performance of single family homes.

Home Performance Washington sees the ability to measure the energy performance of existing homes as essential to enable consumers to make wise choices in purchasing homes and in planning and assessing energy efficiency retrofits.

HPW supports the adoption of a rating method that:

1. is based on in-house measurements or tests that yield consistent results across all certified auditors.
2. is useful to homeowners in comparing the expected energy use of homes they are considering purchasing.
3. includes information beyond the basic numerical score, such as detailed observations unique to the home and a sense of energy savings potential achievable by a cost effective retrofit.
4. can be incrementally adjusted after an energy efficiency retrofit to provide an immediate indication of energy savings achieved.
5. is efficient and cost effective, such that energy performance ratings can be provided for as many homes as possible.

Two existing home energy scoring systems deserve special consideration, as each has unique advantages.

1. *HERS Index*<sup>[1]</sup>, is a scoring system established by the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET). A HERS Index of 100 is assigned to a home that exactly meets the requirements of the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code. A HERS Index of 80 indicates a home that uses 80% as much energy as a code home of similar size and design. HERS is used across the nation as an assessment tool for EnergyStar and other incentive and financing programs. In Washington, HERS and EnergyStar raters are trained and certified by the WSU Energy Program.

2. *Energy Performance Score*<sup>[2]</sup> (EPS) is a scoring system proposed by the Energy Trust of Oregon. This score estimates expected annual energy use across all fuel sources assuming standard occupant behavior. It functions like the MPG rating of a car, allowing homebuyers

---

<sup>[1]</sup> US EnergyStar web site. *What is a HERS Rating*. retrieved 2 July 2009  
<[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bldrs\\_lenders\\_raters.nh\\_HERS](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bldrs_lenders_raters.nh_HERS)>.

<sup>[2]</sup> Energy Trust of Oregon web site. *Energy Performance Score*. retrieved 2 July 2009  
<<http://www.energytrust.org/eps/>>.

to easily compare houses across the market. An EPS is presented as a simple graphic report, similar to an EnergyGuide appliance label, that indicates the home's energy use, the energy use of a similar "code" home, and the potential energy use of the home after a cost-effective retrofit. A second scale indicates the home's greenhouse gas emissions.

Both RESNET and Energy Trust of Oregon assess methodologies and software models provided by external parties in order to certify models that provide reliable results. A soon-to-be released Energy Trust study indicates that new software models can produce results significantly more accurate than existing RESNET-approved models while requiring fewer measurements to be taken in each home. Thus, it is possible for assessments to be simultaneously less expensive and more accurate.

HERS and EPS scoring systems are not inherently incompatible. A HERS Index is, in theory, the same as an EPS energy score expressed as a percentage of code-home energy use. Similarly, an EPS energy score expressed as a percentage of the score of a code home yields a score comparable to the HERS Index.

If a single software model were certified by both RESNET and Energy Trust, it would be possible for an audit to produce both a RESNET-accepted HERS Index and an Energy Trust-accepted EPS.

As such, HPW recommends that the Department of Commerce separate the assessment of ways to communicate energy use information to consumers from the assessment of technical methods and models.

### **Home Performance Branding Programs**

---

Home Performance branding programs can promote the services of energy professionals that recommend and implement residential energy services based on a comprehensive whole-house approach. To earn homeowner trust, such branding programs need to enforce rigorous standards and complete post-retrofit inspections to ensure consistently high quality work.

Nationally, the largest brand to emerge has been *Home Performance with ENERGY STAR (HPwES)*, a program promoted by the US EPA and DOE that operates in over 20 states, including New York, California and Oregon.

Currently, there are no Home Performance branding programs operating in Washington State. As a result, homeowners are not effectively able to distinguish the marketing claims of companies offering the installation of individual products from those able to optimize home energy use, comfort and air quality.

HPW recommends that conservation programs in Washington State consider the benefits of moving into alignment with the national model by establishing and promoting in-state Home Performance with EnergyStar branding. In doing so, it is important to recognize that HPwES programs vary from state to state, making it necessary to study multiple implementations before devising a model appropriate for Washington State.

### **Prevailing Wage**

---

Home Performance Washington desires that energy professionals be well paid for their services. Our members companies train crew members well and offer pay which is significantly higher than those offered by mainstream insulation contractors.

HPW agrees with the goals of the federal government (DOE and DOL) in ensuring that require all ARRA funded projects to offer prevailing wages. Yet, weatherization services are not well covered by existing US Department of Labor job categories.

To eliminate this confusion, HPW is working with Efficiency First in proposing two new wage categories, Weatherization Worker and Weatherization Crew Chief, and in conducting a wage survey of member companies as input to the federal DOE and DOL process.

## Federal Policy

---

Home Performance Washington is an affiliate of *Efficiency First* ([www.encyfirst.org](http://www.encyfirst.org)) a national organization designed to promote Home Performance Contracting at the federal level while encouraging aligned state and local policy.

HPW adopts by extension the Core Platform of Efficiency First:

### **National Incentives to help all homeowners retrofit their homes.**

---

Implement performance based incentives for home energy efficiency retrofitting sufficient to jump start the industry and create markets nationally. To solve our climate crisis in the built environment, there needs to be a focus on incentives that equally promote renewable generation and energy efficiency based on results not products, providing a balance that is economically sustainable at scale and extending the impact of the public investment by allowing homeowners to choose the most cost-effective measures for their home.

### **Provide Financing options that allow homeowners to amortize retrofitting costs over time.**

---

Provide federal loan guarantees, interest deduction, and long-term, low-interest unsecured financing options to help homeowners invest in improving their home's performance. With proper financing homeowners can achieve cost effectiveness immediately by offsetting loan payments with energy savings.

### **Industry Standards and Certifications to ensure quality and results**

---

Leverage the Home Performance with Energy Star program as a standard model, including third party verification. Mandate national contractor and auditor certification and accreditation through RESNET (Residential Energy Services Network), BPI (Building Performance Institute), or other qualified accreditation agencies who conduct independent, third-party quality assurance on the work performed.