



EmPower New York / Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® Frequently Asked Questions

Assisted Home Performance component of NY Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® offers incentives to moderate income households with incomes below 80% of state or area median. The program offers homeowners a comprehensive, whole-house approach to improving energy efficiency and home comfort while saving money. Participating Home Performance contractors accredited by the Building Performance Institute (BPI) conduct energy assessments and upgrades.

NYSERDA's EmPower New York program offers no-cost energy efficiency services to low-income households with incomes below 60% of state median (HEAP eligible). These services include electric reduction and home performance measures. On-site energy education offers customers additional strategies for managing their energy costs. The services are provided by contractors accredited by the Building Performance Institute.

CLEAResult formerly Conservation Services Group (CSG) is the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program Implementation Contractor.

Energy Finance Solutions (EFS) is the loan originator for NY Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program and income verification provider for the Assisted Home Performance subsidy.

Honeywell is the EmPower New York Program Implementation Contractor.

A. General Referrals

1. Q: Why are the new requirements regarding EmPower and Assisted Home Performance (AHP) being put in place?

A: In screening applicants for the AHP subsidy EFS previously referred applicants that appeared income eligible for free services to the Weatherization Assistance Program. The coordination of EmPower and Assisted now offers a contractor the ability to offer the low income families additional measures, if they are willing and able to pay 50% of the cost of these additional measures. When EmPower measures are provided, the customer's obligation for the AHP project is significantly reduced.

The coordination of these two programs is a challenge, as one provides free services and the other is market-based with a partial subsidy and each is managed on NYSERDA's behalf by separate Implementation Contractors, with different program requirements. Despite the challenges, NYSERDA is confident that the end result will benefit low-income households and provide contractors with additional opportunities. We will be making adjustments as we learn more. Please share your recommendations with us.

2. Q: What if a customer applies for AHP and EFS determines the household is eligible for EmPower?

A: EFS will evaluate the following:

- a. EFS will determine if the household previously received EmPower services costing \$4,000 or more. If not, a letter will be sent to the customer and the contractor advising of the referral for free services through EmPower. The letter will instruct the customer to fill out the accompanying waiver form and return it to EFS if they wish to decline EmPower services.
- b. If the customer has already been served through EmPower, chooses to opt out, or is otherwise ineligible, the customer may be served through AHP.
- c. If the contractor or referral entity indicates that the project includes additional funding, such as through the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, that will fully fund the customer's 50% contribution, the project will remain in AHP.

3. Q: If co-funding or other grant funds are available to cover the AHP customer share, how should this be documented?
A: Any co-funding opportunities should be noted and documented on the AHP application or in a separate note attached to the application. This will help avoid confusion regarding program service to customers.
4. Q: Is there any way for me to tell in advance what measures Honeywell may approve for EmPower?
A: If you are developing a workscope for a household that provides income information that indicates that the household is HEAP eligible, you may submit the entire comprehensive workscope to Honeywell for preliminary-approval. The proposed worksopes must include electric reduction measures where appropriate (see C-2., below). If you request such a review, please notify EFS by e-mail. EFS will then withhold the customer notification letter until the review is complete. Once the review is complete, Honeywell will share the determination with both the contractor and EFS. Final approval will be contingent upon confirmation of income-eligibility.
5. Q: It can be difficult for us if our sales team spends time developing a project for Assisted only to have it turned over to EmPower. How can we avoid this?
A: Contractors can help improve the communication, and help the overall efficiency of the process, by doing some initial screening of the household prior to the audit. By identifying households who appear to be eligible for EmPower during your initial discussions, you can help ensure that customers are appropriately served in the best way possible.
6. Q: How can I find out the status of a referred EmPower customer?
A: A referral entity may request status updates for specific customers by contacting Honeywell directly at **800-263-0960**. Honeywell can also provide further information regarding EmPower.
7. Q: Will our CLEAResult project coordinator be able to answer EmPower questions or guide us in the direction of EmPower if they see a client who should be eligible, but we missed that fact during our interview process?
A: The CLEAResult team can offer limited guidance, but it is recommended that Honeywell be contacted directly regarding EmPower eligibility and procedures.
8. Q: If a HPwES contractor not participating in EmPower has started work on a project and then the customer is accepted into EmPower, will they be given the EmPower work?
A: EmPower will attempt to work with contractors who have initiated contact with a household through Assisted whenever possible, under the following conditions:
- The contractor must be in good standing with AHP.
 - If the contractor is new to AHP, and has not yet been reviewed by the Quality Assurance team, further references and evaluation of competency may be required, such as references for completed work and descriptions of trainings attended.
 - The contractor must sign an Empower Contractor Agreement and agree to complete work according to EmPower pricing and program requirements
 - The contractor must meet with the Program Implementer and be trained in program procedures.
9. Q: When a job is referred to EmPower from AHP what is the expected length of time it will take to receive EmPower approval?
A: Upon receipt of a comprehensive workscope and proof of eligibility, review and approval of the proposed workscope will occur within 5 business days. If it is an emergency situation (i.e. no heat), then it will be handled ASAP. If no income documentation is in place, or the comprehensive workscope is not received, the approval may take longer; how long will depend on the contractor providing documentation.

10. Q: Once the customer is accepted, is the contractor contacted by EmPower?
A: Yes, contractors are notified by e-mail when a job is put into the EmPower CRIS database.
11. Q: If an AHP customer is referred to EmPower, will it be an “HP” (heating and shell measures) job or just an ER (electric reduction only) job?
A: Jobs referred from AHP to EmPower will be assigned as HP jobs.
12. Q: If a customer signs the EmPower waiver stating that they would like to do work through AHP at this time, does that prevent them from ever being able to use EmPower?
A: No, a waiver form is specific to a project and does not prevent a customer from participating in EmPower in the future.
13. Q: What if a customer applies for EmPower and Honeywell determines that the household is over-income?
A: Over-income customers are handled as follows:
- If a customer applies directly to EmPower, and no contractor is yet involved, Honeywell will send a letter to the customer advising their ineligibility for EmPower and instruct them how to begin the AHP application process.
 - If a contractor refers a household directly to EmPower and Honeywell finds that the customer is over-income, Honeywell sends a letter to the customer and notifies the contractor.
 - If EFS determines that a customer is over-income for EmPower, the customer is not referred to Honeywell. EFS notifies the customer that they can proceed with AHP only.

B. Referrals from CBOs

1. Q: Will the CBO be required to submit all of the intake materials to Honeywell or simply refer the customer to Honeywell?

A: To obtain reimbursement for the referral the CBO is required to submit a fully completed application (income documentation is not required, but welcome). Referrals without a completed application, such as providing the Honeywell phone number to a household, are also welcome, but will not be tracked as referrals and will not be eligible for compensation.

For CBOs not participating in the referral program, please direct customers to Honeywell and Honeywell will complete all intake forms.

If there are co-funding opportunities that can match AHP funds these should be noted and documented on the AHP application or in a separate note attached to the application. This will help avoid confusion regarding program service to customers.

2. Q: Will EmPower referrals be counted toward the CBO's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR performance goals?
A: No, these remain separate.
3. Q: What is the role of the CBO once a customer referral is made to EmPower?
A: If a customer contacts a CBO regarding their referral, a CBO may either direct the customer to Honeywell, OR may contact Honeywell on the customer's behalf. Honeywell will close the loop with the CBO on any resolution and/or copy the CBO on any email correspondence.
4. Q: Can a CBO use their vetted list of contractors to direct referrals to contractors that do EmPower work?
A: No, Honeywell is responsible for distribution of work through EmPower.

5. Q: Is it the CBO's role to educate customers on the availability of the AHP/EmPower coordinated project?

A: CBO's should be familiar with the coordination opportunity, but will only need to refer the customer to one program or the other. EFS is responsible to refer income-eligible households to EmPower that are encountered during income review for the AHP subsidy.

6. Q: Can the CBO acquire the audit information to help the customer determine if they need additional measures?

A: EmPower/AHP staff and contractors will drive the workscope and coordination effort. However, if the CBO is listed on the application as the referral source and can assist the household in deciding whether to accept additional measures through Assisted. They may discuss any concerns about the workscope with the Program Implementers.

C. Developing Projects in EmPower

1. Q: How can I learn more about EmPower pricing and guidelines, and sign up? How long does it take?

A: Contact Elizabeth Lazarou at NYSERDA (518-862-1090 x 3427; el3@nyserda.ny.gov). Liz can forward a PDF that includes the Contractor Agreement, including pricing, the EmPower New York Guidelines and Procedures Manual, and instructions. Liz can also answer questions regarding the program and how to become a participating contractor.

2. Q: What are Honeywell's criteria for approving measures?

A: The criteria for approval are:

- a. The measures must meet SIR and optimize energy savings for the household.
- b. Approved measures typically include:
 - Attic insulation where low R-values exist
 - Wall insulation where little or none exists
 - Strategic air sealing
 - Heating system upgrades where cost-effective or where an emergency exists.
- c. Approved electric reduction measures include LEDs to replace incandescent bulbs; replacement of inefficient refrigerators and freezers found by metering to be inefficient. Electric reduction measures are not be funded through NYSERDA in PSEG territory.
- d. Measures must be proposed at EmPower pricing, where applicable

3. Q: Is the EmPower insulation pricing all-inclusive?

A: No. If an insulation project entails additional work, such as installation of wind baffles or attic hatches, or where particular challenges exist, such as excessive fire stops in wall cavities, a contractor may propose an additional charge.

4. Q: Is there is fixed pricing for HVAC work?

A: No, pricing for HVAC work is determined on a case-by-case basis.

5. Q: If my sales staff develops a project for Assisted, and the customer is moved to EmPower, can I get reimbursed for the time spent developing the project?

No, the current EmPower pricing accounts for an acquisition fee.

6. Q: What about measures not included on the price list, such as extensive foam insulation?

A: Contractors may propose custom measures to EmPower. The contractor must demonstrate the measure's cost effectiveness, and must provide Honeywell with the data that supports the estimated savings. The implementation staff will consider whether these measures are the most

appropriate and cost effective, or whether a lower cost strategy may provide the household with equal benefit.

7. Q: Are EmPower guidelines based on 60% of area median income or 60% of state median income?

A: EmPower guidelines are based on 60% of **State** median income. Please note that, in many areas, this is a lower income level than 60% of area median income.

8. Q: How much funding is available through EmPower?

A: EmPower is funded at an average cost of \$3,800 per unit to a **maximum** of \$7,000 per unit. EmPower measures must meet an SIR of 1.1 on a per-measure basis.

The Program does not approve expenditures of \$7,000 on every project; the Implementation Contractor determines what measures meet cost-effectiveness guidelines, ensures that a workscope is appropriate to the customer's level of energy use, and approves accordingly.

This funding includes an average of \$600 for electric reduction measures. For this reason it is critical that contractors consider opportunities for providing ER measures to program participants. (Please note, however, that electric reduction measures may not be charged to EmPower in PSEGLI territory).

9. Q: What is the expected turn-around time for contractors to complete work in EmPower?

A: Once assigned, a contractor has 10 days to accept the project. Audit and work is expected to be completed within 60 days for ER projects and 120 days for HP projects. Events such as natural disaster relief may create the need to adjust these timelines.

10. Q: Sometimes we sign a contract with a homeowner to provide services through AHP, but EmPower denies the measures that the customer wants. Why can't NYSERDA just honor the agreement between the homeowner and the customer, and pay the contractor the amount in the contract?

A: Where the customer is fully funding the measures, such agreements would be honored. However, EmPower and AHP are funded through New York ratepayers. Our goal, and obligation, is to provide cost-effective energy efficiency measures that will reduce customer energy usage and costs, thereby helping New York meet its overall goal of reducing energy use statewide. To reach these goals, the programs must choose the most effective measures and support a network of contractors who are effective in installing the measures at a cost that allows the optimum amount of work to be completed. While these choices are not always the measures that the customer asks for, or that the contractor wishes to sell, it is important that NYSERDA, implementers and participating contractors support these goals through our work, and help the customers understand the value of approved measures.

11. Q: Why do we have to fill out the EmPower audit paperwork?

A: The paperwork serves a number of purposes. (1) It provides the auditor with a data collection tool and guidance to ensure that all of the options for energy savings that may be available to a low income household through EmPower are properly evaluated. (2) Program staff use these forms to evaluate the costs of measures proposed. (3) The forms help staff understand how well the contractor is performing, and whether additional training is needed. (4) QA inspectors use these forms to locate measures installed, such as CFL, smoke alarm and CO detector locations, and the various attic and wall cavities that may exist in a home. (5) The Appliance Data Collection and Exchange Agreement is a signed document that can be forwarded to a vendor and used as the basis for deliveries. The signature ensures that the household understands exactly what is being offered. (6) The "Clean and Tune" and Combustion Appliance forms helps us ensure that the heating system is thoroughly examined and treated.

12. Q: How are no-heat emergencies handled under EmPower?

A: During the heating season, HEAP-eligible households should be referred to the Heating Repair and Replacement Program (HERR) administered by OTDA. Contractors interested in providing service to HERR can contact the county Department of Social Service for information on how they can participate in that program. If that program is closed, or if HERR determines a customer ineligible for services, the contractor should propose replacement to Honeywell.

13. Q: How does EmPower deal with heating system replacements?

A: EmPower will replace heating systems under one of the following conditions:

- If the heating system meets SIR requirements on a measure basis, it may be approved for replacement under EmPower. Please note that kWh savings for an ECM motor may be factored into overall measure cost-effectiveness. EmPower sometimes obtains additional bids in order to ensure competitive pricing.
- If the low income household experiences a no-heat emergency (see #13, above)
- Heating system replacements that do not make SIR, and that are not no-heat emergencies, may be considered as AHP measures in a coordinated AHP/EmPower project.

14. Q: We are a heating-only contractor. Do we need to get shell certification to participate in the EmPower program?

A: BPI accreditation is required. Shell certification is not required, but highly recommended. EmPower contractors are expected to recommend the most cost-effective measures. Most often these include insulation, air sealing and ER measures. These services may be provided by the EmPower contractor directly, or through subcontractors, but all measures must meet the standards of BPI and the Program. If you are only interested in providing heating measures, please notify NYSERDA and Implementation staff that this is the case. You may then be invited to offer bids on heating systems only, as the need arises.

15. Q: How are EmPower jobs distributed to contractors?

A: When referrals are available from other sources than the contractors themselves, priority in distributing these jobs is given the contractors who have achieved “Full” status by demonstrating competency in QA scoring and overall program performance. If the number of referrals exceeds the Full status contractor’s capabilities, the work is offered to new “Provisional” status contractors. Consult the EmPower New York Guidelines and Procedures Manual for further information.

16. Q: Is Total Resource Cost (TRC) a consideration when using EmPower or is it just SIR, or both?

A: Measures proposed under EmPower must meet an SIR of 1.1, with the exception of hardwired fixtures, which must meet a TRC of 1.0. Consult the EmPower Manual for guidance.

17. Q: Are contractors required to take on EmPower customers?

A: No. Please notify NYSERDA and Honeywell if you choose not to accept referrals, and are only interested in providing AHP/EmPower coordinated projects.

D. Developing Coordinated Projects

1. Q: When we go out to the home we usually create an estimate of the measures. Without knowing whether the customer is eligible for EmPower, it will be difficult to propose a project to a customer. How can the contractor advise the customer of their out-of-pocket expenses if it is not yet determined what each program will pay?

A: If the customer has not yet been accepted into EmPower during the initial visit, the contractor might express the customer’s out-of-pocket expense as 50% of the eligible AHP measures. Once accepted in EmPower, the contractor can then share the good news that the customer’s out of pocket expense will be less. Customers must not, however, be promised free services through

EmPower until they have been approved. Once approved, the customers must be given the choice of only free services through EmPower or a combined project where the customer will be responsible for partial payment for AHP measures.

2. Q: What if the customer has already given me a down payment, but NYSERDA approves free measures through EmPower?
A: Contractors must ensure that customers are not billed for measures funded by EmPower. In the event that the customer has made a down payment, and the funding provided by NYSERDA through EmPower and Assisted results in a project in which the customer contribution is less than the down payment, the contractor must make arrangements with the customer for repayment. The arrangement must be made prior to invoicing and documented on the Certificate of Completion. However, the actual reimbursement to the household may occur within 30 days after the contractor is paid by EFS.
3. Q: Can I offer EmPower measures as an incentive for AHP Measures?
A: No. The low income household must be given the option of only free service through EmPower or a combined project of EmPower and Assisted measures. The household must not be put under obligation to accept AHP measures in order to receive EmPower services.
4. Q: If we have a customer that was previously approved for subsidy and is now approved for EmPower, will we be able to change the contract and install more measures so that they can take advantage of the EmPower funding?
A: Yes; contact the Implementation Staff at CLEAResult and Honeywell to discuss this.
5. Q: What energy modeling software is required?
A: For coordinated projects model measures in TREAT, RHA or other approved software and provide EmPCalc for any recommended measures not included in the other software or lacking adequate detail. For EmPower only projects, measures must be entered into EmPCalc. This simple audit program takes approximately 15 minutes to complete, and generates an invoice.
6. Q: Can I split measure costs between AHP and EmPower?
A: No. Program rules related to funding and evaluation require that each measure be billed to a single program.
7. Q: If EmPower reduces the eligible cost of any particular measure, can I bill the customer for the difference, add the cost to some other measure, or include that in the GJGNY financing?
A: No. Participating EmPower contractors are expected to install the approved measures according to the EmPower pricing guidelines, with no additional cost to the customer.
8. Q: If I am serving a 2-4 family project, and some or all of the tenants are eligible for EmPower, which program do I use?
A: The building may be served as follows:
 - If the tenants pay the heat, the building may be served as a combined project.
 - If the tenants pay only electric, EmPower can provide electric reduction measures to all EmPower eligible units. The remaining services must be provided through AHP.
 - If the landlord pays both heat and electricity, the building may only be considered for AHP.
9. Q: Do I have to submit a signed contract in order to get an approval?
A: No, the project could be reviewed for AHP/EmPower coordination and a conditional approval issued, pending the final signed contract. However, no loan docs can be generated until the contract is signed and any changes made from the original workscope must be reviewed for coordination again. You also have the option of requesting that Honeywell pre-

screen the work for EmPower before the contract is signed.

10. Q: What if I have a change order after the approval was issued?

A: Submit a revised workscope to CLEAResult along with the Field Change Order or revised contract.

The project may need to be reviewed by Honeywell again, if the changes impact the measures approved for EmPower. It will also be determined whether any added work could be covered by EmPower. CLEAResult will then issue a new coordinated approval letter to both the contractor and EFS.

11. Q: Do HPwES contractor incentives apply to EmPower funded measures?

A: No.

12. Q: Once the work is completed, how do I get paid?

A: The coordinated project completion must be submitted to CLEAResult and Honeywell separately.

For EmPower:

- Completed EmPower audit paperwork
- Final TREAT TPG file or EmPCalc
- Invoice, which may be generated by EmPCalc. The invoice must include the customer's name and address, and an itemized list of measures and costs. Please include the note "The charges on this invoice are unique to the EmPower New York program, and are not charged to any other NYSERDA program."
- The project's Certificate of Completion
- If air sealing was completed, please detail the air sealing activities on the invoice.

For HPwES:

- Upload final AHP/Loan TREAT package with the status of 'Complete'. If using RHA, enter test-out data and flag measures as installed.
- Completion Signature Page signed by both the customer and contractor and Post-Installation Health & Safety Test Result.
- CLEAResult will issue a completion transmittal to EFS, who will then disburse the AHP and Loan funds to the contractor.

13. Q: Is the contractor required to coordinate EmPower with AHP or can the contractor choose to complete EmPower measures independently first and then refer the customer to AHP after the customer's EmPower project is completed?

A: Coordination is an important goal, as it improves the efficiency of the project, and permits the entire project to be considered in screening for loan eligibility. However, AHP and EmPower services can also be provided sequentially. If this instance, each set of measures will be evaluated independently, according to each program's guidelines.

14. Q: Is there going to be a new subsidy application that we need to have customers fill out?

A: The AHP application is accepted by EmPower; customers do not need to fill out both applications.

15. Q: Will the total amount of free services be used to calculate Pro forma?

A: Yes, the entire project, both EmPower and AHPwES measures and savings are used to calculate Pro Forma.

16. Q: Is an SIR of 1.0 required on the project in its entirety (EmPower and AHP measures combined)?

A: EmPower measures must meet measure level SIR and TRC requirements, as noted above. AHP incentives will only be paid for pre-approved measures (See “NY Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Eligible Measures and Accessories”) not covered in full by EmPower.

17. Q: When calculating loan amounts, are the EmPower and AHP measures combined or just AHP?

A: The loan amount may be up to the balance of approved workscope costs not covered by the AHP subsidy (excluding free services provided by EmPower). The entire project savings, including those created by EmPower measures, are used in calculating the cost-effectiveness for loan eligibility purposes.

19. Q: What is the Quality Assurance process for coordinated projects?

A: A single inspection is done by the lead program’s QA contractor. The inspector follows the lead program’s QA protocol and scoring scale. The lead program is determined by the dollar value of the measures going through each program.

E. Audit Fees

1. Q: What audit fees can be charged?

A: Audit fees may be charged as follows:

- a. **For AHP-only projects:** the GJGNY Audit fee of \$250 or \$400 for a larger or 2-4 unit home
- b. **For EmPower-only projects:** Audit fees according to the terms of the EmPower York Contractor Agreement
- c. **For AHP/EmPower coordinated projects:**
 - If the GJGNY reservation number was claimed already: \$250 from AHP for the GJGNY audit
 - Invoiced to EmPower: \$125 for additional ER evaluation, mileage, and reporting of EmPower measures on EmPower audit forms; \$55 additional if the EmPower energy education process is integrated into the work
 - If GJGNY reservation number not claimed for AHP, then invoice fully to EmPower, and the GJGNY reservation number will be cancelled.

2. Q: How will coordination work if the auditor is different than the contractor performing the work? Who is reimbursed for the audit?

A: If the audit has been completed, and the work goes to an alternate contractor, the original auditor will be reimbursed.

3. Q: What happens if the customer applies for the AHP subsidy after audit completion, EFS determines the customer to be eligible for EmPower, but CLEAResult cannot retract the audit incentive?

A: If the audit fee was already paid through Assisted, it will not be retracted. EmPower will then only reimburse the difference between AHP and EmPower audit fees.

4. Q: One of my customers has now been approved for EmPower. When I completed the audit I did not include ER measures. Will I need to go back and redo the audit?

A: Typically, no. While EmPower procedures typically call for certain measures to be installed and appliance evaluations to be conducted during the initial visit, the Contractor can complete these tasks when returning to home to do work. However, if no additional HP work is approved through either AHP or EmPower, and the contractor must return to the house only to complete ER measures, an additional reimbursement will be provided for this return visit.

F. Primary Contacts:



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