

# GREEN RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### ***What is the Green Residential Building Program (GRBP)?***

The GRBP is a program run by NYSERDA that provides incentives to building owners to promote building and certifying green residential buildings using existing green building standards and rating systems. The building must be built or permanently sited in New York State, contain fewer than 12 dwelling units, and be certified at the Silver level or higher using either the National Green Building Standard™, LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Homes, or LEED® for New Construction, and meet other program energy efficiency requirements.

### ***Who may receive a GRBP incentive?***

The incentive is paid to the “Owner.” The Owner is the person who owns the residential building on the date the Certificate of Occupancy is issued for the building for newly constructed buildings, or on the date that a Certificate of Completion or similar document is issued for an existing building that has been substantially renovated. The Certificate of Occupancy, or Certificate of Completion, must have been received by the Owner on or after January 1, 2010, but before October 31, 2013 for the building to qualify. Incentives are paid on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the availability of funds.

### ***What are the incentive levels available?***

GRBP incentives will be offered based on the number of dwelling units in a residential building, subject to a limit of \$3.75 per qualified occupied square foot\*, as follows:

<b>Number of Dwelling Units</b>	<b>Maximum Incentive Payment</b>
1	\$5,125
2	\$6,125
3	\$7,125
4	\$8,125
5	\$8,875
6	\$9,625
7	\$10,375
8	\$11,125
9	\$11,875
10	\$12,625
11	\$13,375

\*=For details on calculating qualified occupied square footage, please refer to the Green Residential Building Program Guidelines.

### ***How do I apply to NYSERDA to receive an incentive?***

In addition to an application form, which requires basic information such as the building address, building owner's contact information and taxpayer identification number, the building owner must provide copies of the following documents or forms:

- the Certificate of Occupancy for a newly constructed building; or the Certificate of Completion or similar document for a substantially renovated building;
- Proof of green building certification, which may include:
  - ✓ Official notification from the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) that the building has achieved a LEED-Silver certification or higher (Gold or Platinum) using either the LEED for Homes (LEED-H) or LEED for New Construction (LEED-NC) Rating Systems;
  - ✓ *Or*, official notification from a certifying entity that the building has achieved National Green Building Standard Silver Performance level or higher (Gold or Emerald).
- Forms completed by a Technician showing that that combustion safety tests for all installed combustion appliances have been successfully completed;
- Form completed by a Technician showing that certain ENERGY STAR appliances, lighting, and equipment have been installed to deliver 500 kWh of electric savings annually for each dwelling unit. If there are not enough lights or qualified appliances in the dwelling unit to meet this requirement, then all ENERGY STAR equipment must be installed.
- ***Owners of one to four unit low-rise buildings must provide a report from a Technician which show that the following additional Program requirements have been met:***
  - ✓ A rating report (a Home Energy Rating Certificate) generated showing the building has achieved an Expanded Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Score of 86.0 or higher (or HERS Index of 70 or lower); the rating report must also show that blower door and duct pressure testing (if applicable) have been completed and meets or exceeds program requirements.
  - ✓ ENERGY STAR qualified heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning equipment has been installed

NYSERDA strongly suggests that anyone considering applying for an incentive begin by reading the Program Guidelines. The Program Guidelines, and all forms needed will be available soon on the GRBP website: <http://www.getenergysmart.org/GreenBuilding.aspx>

### ***What is a "Technician" and how do I find one?***

Technicians must have the training or qualifications to inspect and verify that the building meets the GRBP performance requirements. The Technician will be an independent contractor who oversees the process of documenting the LEED or National Green Building Standard certification, performs diagnostic

testing, and ensures that other Program building performance requirements are met. The building Owner is responsible for retaining NYSERDA-qualified Technicians to assist with projects seeking GRBP incentives. Qualified Technicians will be listed on NYESDA's Resource Locator map at <http://www.getenergysmart.org/Resources/FindPartner.aspx>. Qualified Technicians are those individuals that have responded successfully to NYSERDA's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Technicians, which is available on NYSERDA's [Funding Opportunities](http://www.nyserda.org/funding/15rfq.asp) web page (<http://www.nyserda.org/funding/15rfq.asp>). The Technician providing Program services for a building qualifying for incentives through the Program cannot also be the builder or owner of that residential building. Technicians also do not include any sub-contractors hired by the builder, general contractor, or building owner, to install products or equipment in the building.

Technicians will be qualified to verify projects seeking National Green Building Standard or LEED-H certification. Technicians may or may not be Home Energy Rating System (HERS Raters); however a HERS rating is required for low-rise 1-4 family buildings.

***What qualifies as "substantial renovation?"***

A substantially renovated building for purposes of the GRBP means the completed scope of work included replacement of two of the three major building systems (HVAC, plumbing, or electrical) and sufficient work on the building envelope to ensure that the air and thermal barriers are aligned, continuous and complete (as verified by a completed ENERGY STAR Thermal Bypass Inspection checklist). In most cases, extensive work on the building envelope will need to be done, such as adding insulation or air-sealing to prevent drafts, so that the building meets energy efficiency requirements of the GRBP.

***Why is NYSERDA requiring a green building certification? There is a significant cost associated with it and I would rather spend the money making my house greener.***

NYSERDA recognizes that there are costs for the service of third-party verification for green building certification. However, certification is an assurance (both to NYSERDA and the building owner) that the building meets a certain level of green building performance, and that this has been independently verified by a professional Technician, much like the ENERGY STAR label does for energy efficiency. NYSERDA encourages homeowners and builders to make their homes as green and energy-efficient as possible, but in order to receive an incentive through the GRBP, the building must be certified to the National Green Building Standard, LEED-H or LEED-NC.

***As a builder participating in the New York ENERGY STAR Homes (NYESH) program, can I receive both the GRBP incentive and the NYESH incentive?*** Yes. A builder may be eligible for both incentives if the builder is the Owner on the date the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, the building is permanently sited in System Benefit Charge (SBC) territory, and the building meets or exceeds the requirements for the GRBP, AND the Tier 2 requirements for NYESH.

***Are higher incentives available for higher green building certification levels?***

No. NYSERDA will provide a baseline incentive for achieving green building certification in order to make Program participation straightforward and increase access to green buildings throughout New York

State to the greatest extent possible. Building owners are encouraged to target higher certification levels, but NYSERDA does not anticipate offering a tiered incentive structure through this Program.

***Why are LEED and NGBS the only green certifications eligible for incentives?***

While there are other green building certification programs in the market, the LEED Rating Systems and the National Green Building Standard provide nationally-recognized, comprehensive, third-party verified systems for measuring green building performance for residential buildings. Both are based on proven techniques and best practices in the green home building industry, and provide flexibility for use of basic to more advanced green building techniques and technologies.

***Are mixed-use buildings eligible?***

Yes. They are eligible to apply for a program if the building meets all Program eligibility guidelines and performance requirements. The building must meet any guidelines or requirements for residential and commercial space that the USGBC has in place for LEED-H projects, or that the certifying organization for the National Green Building Standard has in place.

***Are townhouses considered a building for purposes of the GRBP?***

Townhomes are considered a residential building for purposes of the GRBP if they have a full, insulated party wall between adjacent units that extends from roof to basement that is not penetrated by ducts or utility chases.

***Are LEED Silver and National Green Building Standard Silver equivalent in terms of green building performance?***

NYSERDA's analysis has shown that buildings meeting the requirements for Silver-level certification through LEED-H and NGBS, as well as GRBP performance requirements for energy efficiency, will provide a reasonably comparable level of overall green building and energy efficiency performance.

***What is the difference between the GRBP and Green Jobs/Green New York?***

The GRBP will encourage newly constructed homes and small apartment buildings to obtain green building certification at the Silver Level or above through the National Green Building Standard, LEED for Homes, or LEED for New Construction. While this program focuses on new construction, buildings that have undergone substantial renovations such that they meet the performance and green certification requirements of a newly constructed building will be eligible to apply for an incentive through the GRBP. This program also requires that all residential building owner show that , certain energy efficiency measures have been installed, and building performance testing has been completed, in order to be eligible for program incentives.

The Green Jobs/Green New York (GJ/GNY )program is being established to encourage homeowners and building owners to make and cost-effective energy efficiency improvements to their existing homes and light commercial or office buildings. The GJGNY program features a low-or-no-cost comprehensive audit of the existing building and makes recommendations to improve the energy efficiency of the building through one of NYSERDA's established programs (such as the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR

program or Existing Facilities Program). The GJ/GNY program requires NYSERDA to establish a revolving loan fund, which will be an option for building owners in financing the energy efficiency improvements identified through the audits.