

What is an ENERGY STAR home, and how does it save money and resources?

A home that has earned prestigious ENERGY STAR certification is **significantly more energy-efficient than a standard home**. The stamp is a guarantee that the home meets **higher government-regulated standards** regarding specific resource saving processes and products.

Details that translate into savings within an ENERGY STAR home include:

Inside the Walls - Insulation

All insulation must be rated and installed at ENERGY STAR standards. This results in balanced temperatures that require less energy to heat and cool your home.

Looking Outward – Windows

High-performance windows are required in an ENERGY STAR home. These specially coated windows deflect more UV rays, helping keep heat outside during the summer and inside in the winter.

Detailed Construction and Sealed Ducts

Advanced techniques are used to seal every part of the home, from heating and cooling ducts to every portion of the exterior walls, floor, and roof. This does more than reduce energy costs – it also adds up to less moisture, dust, pollen, and noise.

Heating and Cooling Equipment

Heating and cooling systems must be specially rated to earn ENERGY STAR certification. Energy efficiency is only the beginning – most have longer warranties as well.

Independent Testing

An ENERGY STAR qualified home must be inspected and tested by an independent, ENERGY STAR certified third party inspector throughout the building process.

The ENERGY STAR home payoff:

Lower Energy Costs

ENERGY STAR homes are designed to be at least 15% more efficient than a home built to the national Model Energy Code. This means lower energy bills, every month.

Higher Resale Value

ENERGY STAR homes are certified for life. Resale values are strong.

Discounted Energy Costs

Progress Energy of the Carolinas offers a 5% discount for life in addition to all the other energy savings in an ENERGY STAR home. <http://www.progress-energy.com/custservice/carres/energyhome/index.asp> Some builders will make sure Progress Energy is aware your home is an ENERGY STAR home before you even move in, jump-starting your two-fold energy savings.

Home Loan Incentives

According to Energy Star, there are a variety of home loan incentive programs available for the purchase of a certified Energy Star home. FHA Energy Efficient Mortgages allow lenders to add the cost of energy efficient improvements to an already approved mortgage with no additional downpayment required. Fannie Mae guidelines allow the projected energy cost savings to be added to the income of the buyer. Go to [Energy Star Lending](#) for the latest information.

Environmental Protection

Homes use an estimated 17-20% of the nation's energy. By reducing energy requirements, builders of ENERGY STAR homes are also helping to reduce smog, global warming, acid rain, and greenhouse emissions. At present rates, ENERGY STAR homes are expected to reduce annual carbon emissions by about 4 million metric tons by 2010.

The Bottom Line

An ENERGY STAR home costs 1-3% more than a standard home. But the increase in comfort, benefits to the environment, reduced energy costs, and home loan incentives are helping homebuyers across the nation make the decision to go ENERGY STAR.

With extra discounts from Progress Energy in the Raleigh/Triangle area, the benefits are even better in North Carolina.