



PEARL CERTIFICATION

Information Guide For Contractors

Make the value of your work visible



Monroe County
Richmond County
Tompkins County



NYSERDA

INTRODUCTION | Pearl Certification Pilot



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How to join the Pearl Certification Pilot:



LEARN

about the Pearl Certification Pilots



APPLY

to be considered in the competitive selection process.

[Apply here.](#)



TRAIN

with Pearl Certification

If your application is selected, Pearl will contact you to schedule on-site training.

INTRODUCTION | The Pilots



Pearl Certification for **HOMEOWNERS**

NYSERDA will help home energy contractors use home energy ratings as a sales tool to encourage current homeowners to invest in energy efficient upgrades.

Pearl Certification for **HOME BUYERS**

This pilot includes licensed home inspectors, who will provide ratings during the pre-purchase inspection to help home buyers learn more about their new home. Inspectors can provide homeowners with referrals to qualified contractors to provide energy efficiency upgrades.

PEARL HOME CERTIFICATION | About Pearl

Pearl's building science-based certification system helps homeowners understand how their home performs, and gives them guidance via the Home Investment Plan on how to make it perform better.

The Pearl system gives points for each high-performing asset in a home. High-performing assets make a home more healthy, comfortable, and energy efficient. **Assets are split into four categories:**



Building Shell
300 possible points



Heating and Cooling
360 possible points



Baseload
240 possible points



Home Management
300 possible points

A home's certification level depends on the number of points it earns:

Pearl Asset Certification

A home with Pearl Certified Assets has one or many energy efficient characteristics.



Pearl Silver
700 points

A home with good building shell (e.g., insulation), or heating and cooling features, will typically qualify for Pearl Silver.



Pearl Gold
825 points

Similar to a home built to modern energy code, a home that has both a good building shell and heating and cooling systems will usually qualify for Pearl Gold.*



Platinum
975 points

In addition to a good building shell and heating and cooling systems, a typical Platinum home will have efficient appliances, lighting, and energy monitoring devices like a smart thermostat.*

** A blower door test confirming air-sealing is required*

PEARL HOME CERTIFICATION | Home Investment Plan

Each Pearl Certification Report includes a personalized Home Investment Plan, which identifies different upgrades a homeowner could undertake and the possible impact of those upgrades on the home's certification level.

With in-home internet access, the Home Investment Plan can be generated on-site for the homeowner.



**MOTIVATE
HOMEOWNERS**



**GUIDE THE
CONVERSATION**



**SHOW THE VALUE
OF YOUR WORK**

In This Report

PACKAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Upgrades Include	Existing	Limited Shell Package	Comprehensive Shell and HVAC Package
Attic / Roof Insulation	R-19 Fiberglass - Batt	R-49 Cellulose - Loose Fill	R-49 Cellulose - Loose Fill
Wall Insulation	R-7 Fiberglass - Batt		R-14 Cellulose - Dense Pack
Floor and Foundation Insulation		R-15 Fiberglass - Batt	R-15 Fiberglass - Batt
Air Sealing	✓	✓	✓
Heating Systems	Gas central furnace AFUE : 80.0		Gas central furnace AFUE : 96.0
Cooling Systems	Central air conditioner Efficiency (SEER) : 10.00		Central air conditioner Efficiency (SEER) : 16.00
Lighting	✓	✓	✓
Energy Management	✓		✓
Potential Pearl Points*	625	710	837
Potential Pearl Tier	Certified Assets	Silver	Gold

Pearl Certification Home Investment Plan - Page 2

Sample page from the Home Investment Plan

PEARL HOME CERTIFICATION | A Sales Tool

Pearl Home Certifications and Investment Plans can be effective sales tools. With Pearl's onsite training, you can decide how to include the reports and recommendations in your sales process. You may choose to use Pearl Certification alongside or instead of a traditional comprehensive audit.

You as the contractor control the scope and costs quoted in the home Investment plan.

1 BEFORE HOME VISIT

Make appointment with customer. Share pre-visit information.

2 DURING INITIAL HOME VISIT

Visit home and gather data, either directly online or on paper.
You may also complete an audit at this time.

3 DURING OR AFTER INITIAL HOME VISIT

Generate initial Home Investment Plan and close the deal.

4 AFTER INITIAL HOME VISIT

Receive finalized Pearl Certification* and share with homeowner.
This offers an additional relationship and closing touch point.

5 AFTER COMPLETING HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Complete post-work certification to show the value of your work.

** An initial Home Investment Plan is generated as soon as the home's characteristics are entered into Pearl's website. The full Pearl Home Certification and Pearl Points score will be received from Pearl within two days.*

PILOT OVERVIEW | Benefits to Contractor

Pearl Home Certification provides benefits to your business

- Add value for your customers by offering a snapshot of their home with a path to increased comfort and improved energy efficiency.
- Convert more customers using Pearl's personalized, targeted recommendations.
- Access sales and marketing materials exclusively for Pearl Advantage Contractors to help you stand out from the competition.
- Create lifetime engagement opportunities with your customers.
- Be a member of the best-in-class Pearl Advantage Contractors Network.

As a home energy contractor, joining the pilot can help you:

- Capture new customers who learn about ratings via NYSERDA-sponsored marketing and promotional efforts.
- Become a market leader and position yourself to earn referrals from customers, agents, and inspectors as the pilots expand.
- Offer your customers unique financing opportunities from NYSERDA and other lenders.
- Leverage Pearl's 3rd-party quality control to increase credibility with your customers.



COLLECT

information about the home's envelope, heating, cooling, and more.



REPORT

the information to the homeowner via a Pearl Home Investment Plan and Pearl Certification.



CONSULT

with the homeowner about possibilities for efficiency improvement.

PILOT OVERVIEW | Benefits to Customers

Pearl Certification's home asset inventory provides benefits to your customers

- Visual, easy to understand home efficiency score and home asset report
- Trustworthy certification backed by 3rd-party quality control
- Personalized Home Investment Plan with a clear path to a healthier, more comfortable home
- Empowering recommendations, both large-scale and smaller-scale, that help homeowners make smart improvements
- Comparable to other Pearl Certified homes across the country so homeowners can see how their home compares

Recommended energy efficiency improvements can help your customers achieve:

- More comfortable homes that are warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer
- Lower utility bills throughout the year
- Less pollen, dust, mold and other irritants in the home
- Less humidity indoors
- A healthier planet for everyone



SCHEDULE

A home energy rating with a Pearl Pilot Provider



REVIEW

The home's Pearl Certification report and Home Investment Plan



UPGRADE

the home based to be more energy efficient based on Pearl's report

PILOT OVERVIEW | Roles and Responsibilities



- Provide administrative and financial support
- Coordinate and educate pilot participants and community members
- Reimburse contractors for training & ratings
- Report on pilot learnings and outcomes



- Train contractors
- Mentor new contractors
- Provide quality assurance
- Deliver technical support



- Integrate Pearl Home Certification into sales process
- Refer customers to the pilot
- Use Pearl's Home Investment Plan to detail improvement options
- Encourage ratings instead of, or alongside, an audit
- Document ratings
- Share feedback and experience with NYSERDA

PILOT OVERVIEW | Reimbursement Overview

Training

Funds, for contractors selected during the competitive application process, are available for reimbursement of training completion time.

Current funding opportunities

Delivering Pearl Home Certifications

Funds are available to partially or completely cover the cost of delivering certifications.

NYSERDA's reimbursements and incentives will decrease over the course of the pilot. As the ratings become in-demand in the pilot markets, contractors will determine whether or not they will charge homeowners a fee for ratings.



RESOURCES | Learn More About Pearl Certification Pilots

To increase demand for Pearl Certification, NYSERDA has created materials to advertise Pearl Certification in your area. NYSERDA has also created educational materials for your customers that are interested in learning more about the pilots. NYSERDA marketing support includes:

[SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN](#)

[NYSERDA-LED COMMUNITY MEETINGS](#)

[TAILORED HOMEOWNER FAQ](#)

[INFORMATION GUIDE FOR HOMEOWNERS](#)

[INFORMATION ABOUT INCENTIVES AND FINANCING](#)

The Pearl Certification Pilot for homeowners will begin this Winter. During the winter, informational webinars will be hosted for each round of applications. If you're interested in learning more, click on the links below to check out these resources, or feel free to contact NYSERDA or Pearl with any questions or comments.

**[VIEW CURRENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES PAGE
FOR APPLICATION AND WEBINAR INFORMATION](#)**

[VISIT THE RATING PILOT WEBPAGE](#)

[VISIT PEARL'S WEBSITE](#)

[EXPLORE EXAMPLE CERTIFICATIONS](#)

Still have questions?

Email us at HomeScore@nyserda.ny.gov

RESOURCES | Frequently Asked Questions

About Pearl Certification

What types of homes can be scored with Pearl Certification?

At this time, only single-family homes, duplexes, and townhomes can be scored. Multifamily units, condominiums, and manufactured homes cannot be scored.

Does homeowner behavior contribute to the Pearl Score?

No. A defining feature of Pearl Certification is that it allows different homes to be compared to each other. If the score included information about users, like home temperature or the number of people living in the home, the score would not be comparable between homes. Instead, the score only considers a home's characteristics.

Is a blower door test required for Pearl Certification?

A blower door test is not a required component of the Pearl Home Asset Certification or Silver Certification. Pearl Home Certification does support recording blower door test results if you want to include the test in the assessment and is required to achieve Gold- or Platinum-level Certification.

What does the Pearl home performance asset inventory include?

The Pearl asset inventory includes features like:

- Air sealing
- Insulation levels and installation quality
- Heating and cooling equipment efficiency and installation quality
- Water heater efficiency
- Duct location and leakiness
- Window, door, and roofing characteristics
- Appliance efficiency
- Lighting types
- Thermostat and energy management
- Renewable energy production

What is a Pearl Approved Contractor?

Pearl-Approved Contractors have received special training on performing the Home Performance Asset Inventory and are the only contractors approved to deliver Pearl Certifications.

They abide by rigorous standards like those set by the Building Performance Institute—an independent, not-for-profit organization and the nation's leading developer of technical standards for home performance

and weatherization retrofit work.

Pearl requires contractors to submit information on their license, insurance, workers compensation, and required certifications.

If I join the pilot, will I be part of the Pearl Advantage Network?

Yes. If you join the pilot, you will be a Pearl-Approved Contractor and have access to the Pearl Advantage Network, which can include Real Estate Agents and/or Home Inspectors, depending on your area.

What is the Pearl Registry?

The Pearl Registry is an online map of completed Pearl Certifications. It is available on Pearl's website for the public to view.

Will scores automatically be added to the Pearl Registry?

Homeowners can decide whether Pearl can publish their home to their Registry by granting or denying permission.

Will scoring a house impact its value?

It may. Homeowners can decide whether to share information about their Pearl Home Certification. If they do share it, potential buyers, real estate agents, and appraisers will have a more complete picture of the home.

RESOURCES | Frequently Asked Questions

About the Pilots

What type of feedback is NYSERDA looking for?

NYSERDA is looking to contractors for feedback on:

- How using Pearl Certification impacts your closure rate
- How your customers respond to Pearl Certification
- How Pearl Certification performs on its own or in conjunction with an audit.

What will NYSERDA do with the feedback and lessons learned?

NYSERDA will create a toolkit to provide best practices and information about implementing home energy ratings.

What's the difference between an audit and a home energy rating?

An audit is more in-depth, including operations like a combustion efficiency test, test for gas leaks (if applicable), and blower door test.

A home energy rating is an asset inventory of the heating & cooling equipment, building shell (walls, insulation, roof, windows, doors), air sealing and other building characteristics.

Will I still use audits?

The pilot is testing whether a home energy rating can be more effective than an audit in encouraging homeowners to undertake efficiency work.

Some contractors may want to combine the rating and a comprehensive audit to compare results to a standalone Pearl Home Certification.

BPI Gold-Star contractors and work completed as part of other NYSERDA programs may require things like health & safety checks. If the customer moves forward with work, these checks should be performed.



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