



**NYSERDA**

**Renewable Heat NY  
Residential Pellet  
Stove Incentive  
Program  
Program Manual**

July 2017

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# 1 Program Summary

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## 1.1 What is the Renewable Heat NY Initiative?

NYSERDA’s Renewable Heat NY (RHNY) Initiative provides support toward the installed costs of high-efficiency, low-emission wood heating systems across New York State. High-efficiency, low-emission wood heating systems are a cleaner way to use wood for heat than traditional wood stoves and boilers. Because the stoves are more efficient, they burn less fuel and often save homeowners money.

Renewable Heat NY helps New York State residents, businesses, and municipalities use local cordwood and wood pellets for heat in a cleaner way, made possible by recent improvements in wood heat technology. Incentives are available for the installation of high-efficiency, low-emission wood heating systems in residences that do not have access to natural gas service through their utility. Through education, customer support, and infrastructure development, New York State is helping this industry reach scale. The Renewable Heat NY initiative includes several individual programs.

Visit <http://www.nyserra.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Renewable-Heat-NY> for more information.

## 1.2 How does the Renewable Heat NY Residential Pellet Stove Incentive Program Work?

Under NYSERDA’s Renewable Heat NY **Residential Pellet Stove Incentive Program**, all homeowners with a primary residence in New York State without natural gas service are eligible for a \$1,500 incentive to replace and recycle one wood stove, pellet stove, or insert (with firebox) with a high-efficiency wood pellet stove. Income-qualified homeowners can receive \$2,000, or \$2,500 if they recycle their existing stove. The new pellet stove can be used for main or supplemental heating.

<b>Customer Type</b>	<b>Incentive Amount (additional financing may apply)</b>
Homeowner	\$1,500 with recycling of an old stove
Homeowner – Income Qualified	Up to \$2,500 (\$2,000 for purchase of new pellet stove and an additional \$500 if recycling an old wood stove)

To qualify for incentives, an approved pellet stove **must be installed by a Participating Contractor**. See Section 1.3 for the Web page that includes Program Manual, applications, upload sites, currently eligible pellet stoves and inserts, and Income Qualification information.

This Program Manual contains the terms and conditions applicable to the availability of incentives for the sale and installation of eligible residential wood pellet stoves in New York State. For the purposes of this manual, “pellet stove” refers to pellet stoves, or pellet fireplace inserts (with firebox).

### **1.3 Webpage for Program Resources**

Visit [nyscrda.ny.gov/renewableheatny/pelletstoves](http://nyscrda.ny.gov/renewableheatny/pelletstoves) for program information including the Program Manual, applications and forms, and upload sites.

### **1.4 How to Become a Participating Contractor**

To become a Participating Contractor in the Renewable Heat NY Pellet Stove Program, interested parties (hearth stores, equipment installers, and other companies) must submit a Participating Contractor Application and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the Participation Agreement.

Only approved, Participating Contractors can apply for the financial incentives available through the Renewable Heat NY Residential Pellet Stove Incentive Program. Participating Contractors are responsible for preparing and submitting all required program application documentation to NYSERDA as well as managing the incentive process for each pellet stove installation. All installations must be completed by Certified Installers (see Section 1.6), and the Participating Contractor is responsible for each installation. NYSERDA will pay the incentives directly to the Participating Contractor.

NYSERDA must approve applicants as Participating Contractors before the companies can represent themselves as eligible to offer incentives and participate in the program. Interested parties may apply to participate at any time while the program is open.

#### **1.4.1 Submitting an Application to be a Participating Contractor**

To apply to become a Participating Contractor, review the Participation Agreement and Program Manual. Then complete the Participating Contractor Application at [http://nyscrda-site.force.com/CORE\\_CONAPP\\_Program\\_Page?programFamily=Renewable%20Heat%20NY&programName=RHNY\\_Pellet\\_Stove](http://nyscrda-site.force.com/CORE_CONAPP_Program_Page?programFamily=Renewable%20Heat%20NY&programName=RHNY_Pellet_Stove). Follow the directions on the screen to submit the application.

As a part of the review, NYSERDA will assess any significant history of unresolved consumer issues and or a history of business practices that may not be in the best interest of a homeowner. NYSERDA reserves the right to refuse approval of a Participating Contractor based on publicly available information regarding historic business practices, such as Better Business Bureau ratings.

Applicants will be asked to provide additional documents, including an Electronic Funds Transfer Form, Certificate of Liability Insurance and proof of Worker's Compensation Insurance. Participating Contractors are strongly encouraged to participate in Direct Deposit – Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Using EFT reduces transaction time and provides a simpler, more detailed process for all transactions. Applicants will not achieve Participating Contractor status until NYSERDA receives and accepts all required documents.

#### **1.4.2 Provisional and Full Participating Contractor Status**

All new Participating Contractors will initially be assigned Provisional status. Once Provisional status is approved, Participating Contractors will:

- Be listed on NYSERDA's website as eligible.
- Be limited to three Project Applications at a given time. Additional Project Application(s) may be submitted after previous application(s) have passed NYSERDA review, such that no more than three Project Applications are in review at any time.

At least one of the first three installations performed by a Provisional Participating Contractor will be assigned for a Quality Assurance (QA) Field Inspection. The purpose of a QA Field Inspection is for NYSERDA to verify that the pellet stove was installed as planned and in accordance with all program requirements, including health and safety and performance items and specific compliance items per applicable code or law. Qualified, independent, third parties conduct QA Field Inspections using a comprehensive checklist or other QA standard as approved by NYSERDA. Such visit(s) will be at a time convenient to the homeowner. A notice of the scheduled QA Field Inspection will be sent to the Participating Contractor with approximately one-week-advance notice. Additional QA Field Inspections may be assigned as necessary depending on the quality score of the initial review, or as deemed necessary by NYSERDA.

Provisional Contractors who have successfully completed the terms of the provisional period, and have demonstrated through performance that they provide quality services through NYSERDA, will be assigned full status as Participating Contractors.

### **1.4.3 Status Review**

NYSERDA reserves the right to place any Participating Contractor on probation or suspension, or to terminate Participating Contractor status for failure to operate within the rules included in this Manual and the Participating Contractor Agreement. Please review the Agreement for more detailed discussion.

All Participating Contractors are expected to:

- Consistently deliver projects that fully pass QA field inspections.
- Meet Program standards in terms of timely responses to NYSERDA communications and QA Field Inspections including corrective action requests.
- Take effective corrective actions to deficiencies in performance as identified by NYSERDA.
- Monitor their own credentialing documentation: insurance, worker's compensation, change in address, email, phone number to ensure no lapse in credentialing or communication occurs.

## **1.5 Qualifying to Offer Financing**

Participating Contractors in the Program may also apply to Energy Finance Solutions (EFS) to provide homeowners with access to residential financing. Visit [energyfinancesolutions.com/forcontractors-contractor-qualifications](https://energyfinancesolutions.com/forcontractors-contractor-qualifications) for more information or to become a participating financing contractor.

## **1.6 Certified Installers**

Although the Participating Contractor is responsible for the project, each project must be installed by a Certified Installer. A Certified Installer must be on-site at all times during the installation work, complete the installation, and sign the Certificate of Completion. A Certified Installer must hold one of the following certifications:

- Building Performance Institute (BPI) – Heating Professional
- Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) – Certified Chimney Sweep®
- National Fireplace Institute (NFI) – Pellet Stove Specialist

## 2 Incentive Process and Requirements

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### 2.1 General Information about the Incentive Process

Participating Contractors must apply for incentives on behalf of the Homeowner. By submitting a Project Application, the Participating Contractor confirms agreement to abide by the rules of the Residential Pellet Stove Incentive Program, including the terms contained in the Participation Agreement and Program Manual. Incentives are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Program funds are not reserved until the Participating Contractor has received a “Project Approved” email from NYSERDA with a Reservation Number.

Any Participating Contractor that moves forward with the installation of a pellet stove that has not obtained a Project Approved status via email from NYSERDA does so at their own financial risk, as funds are not reserved until the approved project is assigned a reservation number.

NYSERDA reserves the right to deny or place “on-hold” any submitted applications in any NYSERDA program if the Participating Contractor is delinquent on any previously approved projects in the Program.

### 2.2 Homeowner Income-Eligible Incentives

Homeowners that have a total household income equal to or lower than 80% of the State or area median income, whichever is greater, are eligible for additional incentives through the Program. Homeowners that meet the income qualifications listed in Section 2.2.1 can receive up to \$2,500 (\$2,000 for purchase of new pellet stove and an additional \$500 if recycling an old wood stove).

#### 2.2.1 Income Qualification

Households with an income equal to or lower than 80% of the state or area median income, whichever is greater, may receive additional incentives through the Program. The Income-Eligible Incentives and Credit Application must be completed and submitted to Energy Finance Solutions (EFS) to determine income-eligibility. See Section 1.3 for the Web page to access to the application and instructions to fulfill this process.



The process may be expedited by providing EFS with income qualification letters received within the past 12 months from any of the following services:

- NY HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program).
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).
- WAP (NYS Weatherization Assistance Program).
- SSAI / SSDI (Supplemental Security Assistance or Disability).
- NYSERDA's EmPower New York program.

Homeowners applying for income-eligible incentives through the Program should be encouraged to apply for financing as they may also qualify for a reduced interest rate.

Applicants who are determined income-eligible will receive a Pre-Approval Letter from EFS stating income-eligibility and/or loan eligibility. The EFS Pre-Approval Letter is the only qualification letter allowed by the program to be uploaded as part of the Project Application. The Pre-Approval Letter must be uploaded as part of the Project Application as confirmation of income-eligibility and will allow the income-eligible incentive to be processed by the Program.

To view a listing of household income guidelines by county based upon the number of individuals in the household, visit the webpage listed in Section 1.3. For additional information regarding income-eligibility contact EFS at 1-800-361-5663.

## **2.3 Project Financing**

NYSERDA offers two loan options to assist eligible homeowners with the remainder of the project cost. Participating Contractors may also apply to Energy Finance Solutions (EFS) to provide homeowners with access to residential financing. Refer to Section 1.5 for application and additional financing information.

### **2.3.1 Financing Qualification**

To apply for a loan the homeowner must complete the Income-Eligible Incentives and Credit Application and submit this to Energy Finance Solutions (EFS) to receive written determination of loan eligibility. See Section 1.3 for the Web page with the application and instructions to fulfill this process. Information on loan approval criteria is available via a link on the Web page.

#### **2.3.1.1 Loan Options**

Two loan options are available through NYSERDA's Residential Financing Program:

- Smart Energy Loan – a more traditional loan that is repaid through an automated monthly payment from the applicant’s bank account (for a lower rate) or through monthly payment by check.
- On-Bill Recovery Loan – a loan repaid through the homeowner’s utility bill, provided the monthly loan payments do not exceed the estimated average monthly energy cost savings.

### 2.3.1.2 Loan Qualification Financial Tool (Proforma)

A financial tool (Proforma) is available to help with the process of determining loan qualification and loan terms (5, 10, 15 years) for the loan products. In addition, the Proforma provides a method for determining the fuel cost savings for a pellet stove project, as required for the On-Bill Recovery loan product. A laptop is recommended for the home visit, because the Proforma is an Excel spreadsheet (.xls) and data collected during the home visit can speed the completion of both the Pellet Stove Incentive Application and the Proforma.

## 2.4 Applying for Incentives

Completed Project Applications that have been signed by the Homeowner can be submitted by a Participating Contractor at <https://nysesda-portal.force.com/login>.

If applicable, include:

- Award Letter from EFS stating Income Qualification and/or Loan Qualification.
- Finance tool (Proforma Excel in **.xls format**) when financing is part of the project.

NYSERDA will review Project Applications for accuracy and for containing all aspects as required for approval including:

- New Pellet Stoves must be listed on the US EPA Certified Wood Stoves list as having a particulate matter output of 2.0 grams per hour (PM 2.0 g/h) or less and an actual measured efficiency of 70% efficient or greater.
  - Participating Contractor remains in good standing
  - All information in the signed application is complete and thorough
- If applicable:
- Income Qualification is met.
  - Loan Financing is pre-approved
    - Financing tool (Proforma) matches Project Application totals and loan options are properly selected.

Incentive Type	Incentive Amount (additional financing may apply)	Income Qualified?	Recycling?
Market Rate	\$1,500		Required
Income Qualified	\$2,000	Yes	
Income Qualified with Recycling	\$2,500	Yes	Required

For any project, NYSERDA may request and the Participating Contractor agrees to promptly provide to NYSERDA a copy of the written agreement between the Participating Contractor and the Homeowner.

### 2.5 Project Approval for Installation

When a Project Application is approved, NYSERDA will send an email to the Participating Contractor with a Reservation Number valid for project installation within 60 days. Receiving this number is the “go-ahead” for the Participating Contractor to sign a contract with the homeowner, schedule an installation, and install the pellet stove for the homeowner.

The contract between the homeowner and Participating Contractor must clearly show the full amount of the NYSERDA incentive being applied toward the total installed system cost. Incentives will be paid directly to the Participating Contractor, not to the homeowner.

For projects receiving financing, the Participating Contractor will receive a Loan Approval Letter from EFS. The Participating Contractor will need to verify that the loan information is correct on the loan approval letter and contact EFS if it is not. The Participating Contractor cannot alter the loan amount after EFS has issued the loan approval letter, without project cancellation and re-submission.

### 2.6 Post-Installation Documentation

Once the pellet stove has been installed in the home, the Participating Contractor is responsible for gathering and completing the post-installation documentation and providing it to NYSERDA in order to receive the incentive payment. Documentation includes:

- Certificate of Completion (signed by Homeowner and Certified Installer).
- Receipt for Pellet Stove Recycling as necessary.
- Proof of Pre-Existing Recycled Stove.

Once the pellet stove has been installed in the home, the homeowner signs the Certificate of Completion (COC) stating that all agreed/contracted items have been satisfactorily installed or supplied. The Certified Installer signs the COC to certify that the installation meets all of the manufacturer's installation requirements, all applicable NYS Codes, and the requirements as stated by the installer's certifying organization.

### **2.6.1 Receipt for Pellet Stove Recycling**

Recycling must be completed at a regional recycling center that provides a legible receipt. Each receipt must clearly state:

- Recycling center's name and address.
- Recycling date.
- It is the responsibility of the Participating Contractor to state that "Destructive recycling is required for these materials."
- The Participating Contractor must write the name of the Homeowner on the receipt.

Receipts for separate single units/stoves are preferred. If not possible, the tare weight for the whole load must contain stoves/units only, and the name of each homeowner must be clearly written on the receipt. (This receipt can be re-submitted for each Project Application for which it applies.)

### **2.6.2 Proof of Pre-Existing Recycled Stove**

NYSERDA may request photos of a pre-existing installation at any time or as a part of Quality Assurance review for any project where recycling is required or applied. This proof would include both full-frame and wide-angle shots of the existing stove installation, noting the location of the stove/unit in the home, as well as any close-up name-plate photos that would aid in identifying the stove or its age in years. In addition, a photograph of the unit should be taken at the recycling center, especially if proof of destructive recycling can be displayed.

## **2.7 Submitting the Project Completion Package**

As long as all completion and agreement/contract qualifications are met, the Participating Contractor can put together the Project Completion Package, including signed Certificate of Completion and the recycling receipt as a PDF, and submit it through <https://nyserda-portal.force.com/login>.

NYSERDA staff will review Project Completion Packages to ensure all necessary information is included. Once all requirements are met, NYSERDA will email approval to the Participating Contractor.

This email begins the NYSERDA 30-day prompt payment policy. Participating Contractors who have enrolled in Electronic Funds Transfer will get their funds sooner than those who are paid by check.

If there is NYSERDA Financing involved, NYSERDA will also send an email to Energy Finance Solutions to initiate payment of loan funds to the Participating Contractor.

### **2.7.1 Changes to Approved Projects with a Reservation Number**

Any changes that will affect total project costs, especially on projects that qualify for loans, will require the Participating Contractor to re-apply with a revised Project Application, EFS letter and Financing tool reflecting the changes.

In some instances, NYSERDA will allow a no-cost change to a project. These changes must be reviewed by NYSERDA and verified they will not void project eligibility before the Project Completion Package can be submitted. Please contact [pelletstoves@nyserda.ny.gov](mailto:pelletstoves@nyserda.ny.gov) with questions regarding project changes.

### **2.7.2 Project Cancellation**

If prior to submitting the Project Completion Package, the Homeowner or Participating Contractor cancels the project, the Participating Contractor must email [pelletstoves@nyserda.ny.gov](mailto:pelletstoves@nyserda.ny.gov) with a cancellation notice including:

- Reservation number.
- Name of Homeowner.
- Reason for cancellation.

## **3 Equipment and Installation Specifications**

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### **3.1 Eligible Pellet Stoves, Components, and Accessories**

Pellet stoves that are eligible under this Program must be listed on the US EPA Certified Wood Stoves list as having a particulate matter output of 2.0 grams per hour (PM 2.0 g/h) or less and an actual measured efficiency of 70% efficient or greater.

### **3.2 Installation Requirements**

#### **3.2.1 Venting and Combustion Air Intake**

Qualifying components and materials used in the installation of the venting or flue system must meet existing New York State Code and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 211) standards for solid fuel residential combustion units. Stove-specific venting systems and parts are allowable.

Sealed combustion is the recommended installation design. Whenever possible the system should be installed with a combustion air intake that is connected directly to outside air. The only exception to this installation is when the distance to outside combustion air and the associated angles of venting to the exterior, would exceed manufacturer's recommendations.

When a "skuttle" air intake is installed to bring in combustion air, this air intake must not be installed directly below the flue or on the windward side of the home, where during exceptionally cold days, the stove's emitted combustion byproducts from the flue/chimney, may be taken back into the fresh air of the household.

#### **3.2.2 System Noise**

During the selection process, Participating Contractors are required to make homeowners aware of the level of noise associated with their selected pellet stove and its associated parts.

### 3.2.3 Bulk Pellet Storage Must Be Outside of the Building

**Figure 1.** This 4.5-ton outside residential bulk wood pellet storage bin has a ventilated soffit and two ports for pellet delivery.

*Photo courtesy of Vincent's Heating and Fuel Service LLC*



Wood pellets can produce high levels of dust and off-gas carbon monoxide (CO) during storage that present health and safety concerns. CO is a colorless, odorless gas that has health effects below the levels at which common CO detector alarms are triggered. Due to concerns regarding CO exposure and the absence of a documented effective ventilation strategy for pellet storage, all bulk pellet storage must be outside of the home (Figure 1). Pellet delivery to outside bulk storage does not require the homeowner to be present for the delivery, for the appliance to be turned off during the fill, or create dust or CO in the basement, resulting in quicker, more convenient, and cleaner pellet deliveries. A sign communicating potential CO hazards associated with bulk pellet storage must be posted on storage units.

### 3.2.4 Bagged Pellet Storage

Bagged pellets must be kept dry to burn properly. Do not store pellet bags directly on concrete, as most concrete can wick large quantities of water (and even the smallest holes in bagged pellets can allow added moisture. Excess moisture can condense from air when pellets are in contact with cold concrete or the ground.

### 3.2.4 Battery Backup

Battery backup systems are permitted for the purpose of resiliency when grid electric power is not available. Where available, battery backup systems for a specific brand or series of stoves are the recommended option. Generic or third-party systems are allowable only if such a system does not void the warranty of the installed pellet stove.

### **3.2.5 Compliance with Manufacturers' Requirements and Laws, Codes and Standards**

The Participating Contractor is responsible for ensuring that all approved pellet stoves, accessories and installations comply with any and all manufacturers' installation requirements, applicable laws, regulations, codes, licensing and permit requirements, including but not limited to, the New York State Building Code and the National Electric Code (NEC), and all applicable state, city, town, or local ordinances or permit requirements.

### **3.2.6 Carbon Monoxide and Fire/Smoke Detectors**

To comply with New York State and local law, CO alarms must be listed to comply with UL (Underwriters Laboratories) 2034 or CSA (Canadian Standards Association) 6.19 and installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Smoke/fire detectors must be installed to the same standards. Certified Installers are expected to know the requirements outlined in "Amanda's Law," as well as other local ordinances regarding the number and placement of carbon monoxide and smoke/fire detectors necessary for compliance in the home.

Certified Installers will be required to verify that both CO detectors and fire/smoke detectors are "present, tested and operable" per building code and installed to manufacturer's instructions by signing the Certificate of Completion.

### **3.2.7 Structural Requirements**

The Participating Contractor is responsible for determining that a building is structurally capable of supporting the addition of a pellet stove at the specified location inside the home. The installation of the pellet stove should not over stress the structure and/or increase the dead load beyond acceptable limits as described in all relevant national and New York State codes and standards. The Certified Installer may be consulted for input on this determination.

### **3.2.8 Warranty Information**

#### **3.2.8.1 Participating Contractor Pellet Stove Installation Warranty**

All Participating Contractors must warranty their complete installation including parts and labor for one full year from the date the Certificate of Completion is signed. The warranty must cover the full costs, including labor and repair or replacement of defective components or systems. The warranty includes venting, and where an existing vent system is used, it is up to the Participating Contractor to deem the



existing venting system as passing for applicable use for one full year into the future. If the venting does not pass the quality assurance review, the Participating Contractor will be responsible for covering the cost and labor of any repairs or upgrades deemed necessary. The system as a whole as installed and approved by the Participating Contractor must be able to function for one full year from the approval of the installation.

### **3.2.8.2 Pellet Stove Warranty**

The Participating Contractor must share a copy of the manufacturer's warranty of the pellet stove with the homeowner. If the manufacturer needs to be notified to initiate the warranty, the Participating Contractor will be responsible for submitting verification of the installation and initiation of the warranty.

### **3.2.8.3 Battery Backup Warranty**

If the installation includes a battery backup, the battery system must be covered by a full warranty including labor and repair or replacement of the battery to the homeowner for two full years after installation. If the manufacturer needs to be notified to initiate the warranty, the Participating Contractor will be responsible for submitting verification of the installation and initiation of the warranty.

### **3.2.9 Permits**

The Participating Contractor is responsible for obtaining all necessary building permits and licensing required by the local jurisdiction for the installation site prior to installing the pellet stove. Installations performed without acquisition of necessary permitting, licensing, or valid certification is cause for immediate suspension of the Participating Contractor. The Participating Contractor is responsible for payment of the fees for permits, inspections, or other regulatory requirements unless the homeowner is notified in the contract in advance.

All permits must clearly reference installation of the approved pellet stove equipment at the installation site. If permit(s) are not needed for installation, each Participating Contractor is encouraged to obtain a signed letter from the Town Code Officer or Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) stating that no building permit is required. The permit, an AHJ or third-party inspection certificate should be maintained on file with the Participating Contractor and shared with NYSERDA prior to or as part of any Quality Assurance inspection.

## 4 Homeowner Complaint Resolution Policy

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Quality, safe work is a priority for NYSERDA. Participating Contractors agree to the following:

- Homeowner complaints will be responded to by phone within 24-hours of receiving a complaint.
- The Homeowner shall be contacted directly by a certified installation professional or their supervisor, depending on the nature of the complaint. Follow-up will not be left to administrative personnel.
- Issues of an emergency nature shall be responded to immediately. Emergency repairs must be made immediately to ensure the safety of the client and the home. Emergency issues may include any of the following: no heat calls in cold weather, suspected carbon monoxide in the home, or back-drafting of the appliance, or flue (smoke smell in the home).
- Complaints shall be documented and included in the homeowner's file, including: the nature of the complaint, the name of the person responding to the complaint, the resolution of the problem, copies of all written correspondence related to the issue, and the dates and times of all client contact relating to the issue.
- Follow up with complaints related to the quality of work, errors, omissions in construction or installation process and/or property damage shall include a site visit and inspection of the area in question. Photographs should be taken of all areas identified in the complaint and kept on record in the client file.
- Correction of improperly installed materials and repair of damaged property should be completed based on mutual agreement with the client as determined by written mutual agreement (a punch-list of items) prior to completing the repair. Repairs that are completed prior to obtaining client approval may not be billed to the client.
- All reasonable efforts will be made by the Participating Contractor to ensure a timely and fair resolution to all customers' issues. The Participating Contractor will exhaust every reasonable measure to resolve the issue, including three attempts to achieve complete customer satisfaction.

Modified from the Building Performance Institute, BPI Customer Concern Resolution Policy:

[http://www.bpi.org/home\\_pros.aspx](http://www.bpi.org/home_pros.aspx)