

Vice President Biden Launches Home Energy Scoring Program

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Vice President Biden joined U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Steven Chu today to announce the launch of the Home Energy Score pilot program. The Home Energy Score will offer homeowners straightforward, reliable information about their homes' energy efficiency. A report provides consumers with a home energy score between 1 and 10, and shows them how their home compares to others in their region. The report also includes customized, cost-effective recommendations that will help to reduce their energy costs and improve the comfort of their homes.


DOE today also released the Workforce Guidelines for Home Energy Upgrades, a comprehensive set of guidelines for workers in the residential energy efficiency industry. The guidelines will help develop and expand the skills of the workforce, ensuring the quality of the work performed, while laying the foundation for a more robust worker certification and training program nationwide. Vice President Biden made the announcements today at a Middle Class Task Force event, highlighting the progress that has been made on implementing the recommendations of last year's [Recovery through Retrofit](#) report.

"The initiatives announced today are putting the Recovery Through Retrofit report's recommendations into action – giving American families the tools they need to invest in home energy upgrades." said Vice President Biden. "Together, these programs will grow the home retrofit industry and help middle class families save money and energy."

"The Home Energy Score will help make energy efficiency easy and accessible to America's families by providing them with straightforward and reliable information about their homes' energy performance and specific, cost-effective energy efficiency improvements that will save them money on their monthly energy bills," said Secretary Chu.

Under this voluntary program, trained and certified contractors will use a standardized assessment tool developed by DOE and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory to quickly evaluate a home and generate useful, actionable information for homeowners or prospective homebuyers. With only about 40 inputs required, the Home Energy Scoring Tool lets a contractor evaluate a home's energy assets, like its heating and cooling systems, insulation levels and more, in generally less than an hour. That means a homeowner can see how their home's systems score, regardless of whether a particular homeowner takes long or short showers or keeps their thermostat set high or low.

A score of "10" represents a home with excellent energy performance, while a "1" represents a home that will benefit from major energy upgrades. Along with the score, the homeowner will receive a list of recommendations for home energy upgrades and other useful tips. For each specific improvement, the

estimated utility bill savings, payback period, and greenhouse gas emission reductions are included. To see a sample copy of the Home Energy Score and get more information on how it is calculated, visit the [Home Energy Score](#) Web site. View an [example PDF](#)  of a score and recommendations.

The Home Energy Score initially will be tested with local government, utility, and non-profit partners in ten pilot communities across the country, located in both urban and rural areas that cover a wide range of climates. During this test phase, the Department and its partners will gauge how homeowners respond to the program, and whether the information encourages them to get energy improvements done on their homes. After the pilot tests conclude in late spring 2011, DOE expects to launch the Home Energy Score nationally later next year, based on the findings from the initial programs.

The following states and municipalities are participating in the pilot program: Charlottesville, Virginia; Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts; Minnesota; Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska; Indiana; Portland, Oregon; South Carolina; Texas; and Eagle County, Colorado. More information on each of the pilot programs and details on how to participate in the Home Energy Score program are available on the [Testing Locations](#) Web page.

In addition to launching the Home Energy Score, the Department of Energy announced the release of the new Workforce Guidelines for Home Energy Upgrades. Energy improvement programs can adopt these guidelines to increase the consistency and effectiveness of energy upgrades, and training providers can use them to improve course curricula and training materials. These guidelines were developed through a collaboration between energy efficiency contractors, building scientists, health and safety experts, technicians and trainers in the weatherization program, and other professionals in the building and home energy upgrade industry.

The Workforce Guidelines include standard work specifications required for high-quality work, a reference guide for technical standards and codes, analyses of the job tasks involved in completing various energy efficiency improvements, and the minimum qualifications workers should possess to perform high quality work. Identifying the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform efficiency upgrades represents an important step in developing a nationwide framework for training program accreditation and worker certification. The guidelines, which can be accessed on the [Weatherization Web site](#), will be available for public comment through January 7, 2011.