

Georgia's Home Energy Rebates

Homeowner/Tenant Best Practices

energyrebates.georgia.gov

Preparing for a Home Energy Assessment

Many households will need to conduct a home energy assessment as part of their participation in Georgia's Home Energy Rebates. These assessments are intended to help homeowners/tenants better understand how their home uses energy.

Program-approved contractors will use this time to identify upgrades to help improve the comfort of your home. Participating households should confirm that the contractor is approved for the program by visiting the approved contractor list on the website.

Before Participating in the Program

Households should do some preliminary research to prepare for a conversation with their program contractor.

- **Assess Your Comfort:** Be ready to discuss specific issues with the comfort of your home.
 - "My family always feels cold, especially in the living room..."
 - "Our energy bills are really expensive, especially in the summer..."
 - "It feels drafty in my home, especially when I'm sitting on the couch during colder months."
- **Explore Your Options:** Always get multiple quotes before making a final decision on a contractor.
 - Consider the following checklist to support your search...
 - Compare different contractors' strategies to improve the comfort of your home, e.g. cellulose vs fiberglass insulation.
 - Review the different price points of work you would like to have done.
 - Consider the personality, working style, and professionalism of the contractor.
 - Consider the contractor's thoroughness in preparing you prior to entering your home, e.g., setting adequate expectations for the upgrade process, paperwork, timing.
- **Get The Details:** Before agreeing to any scope of work, ask for a detailed quote with line items.
 - Make sure you see the following details on your quote/invoice...
 - Contractor name and contact information.
 - Name of equipment being installed.
 - Description of work being done.
 - Labor involved in the installation.
 - Additional work required to complete the installation, e.g., plumbing or electrical.
 - Rebate amount, i.e., discount.
 - Total project cost.
 - Signature/Terms and Conditions.

Preparing for an In-Home Assessment

To perform a home assessment, a contractor will need to enter and access different parts of your home. Here are some items to keep in mind before that happens.

- Work with a contractor to schedule a time that works best for your household.
- Prepare a list of questions and/or issues you are looking to have addressed with this work.
- Understand the difference between a blower door test and an infrared/thermographic assessment.
 - The blower door tests how leaky your home is by measuring air changes per hour while an infrared camera can produce visual images and measure heat difference at leaky areas of your home.
 - Many times, these tests are completed at the same time during the energy assessment.

- Ask about potential assessment fees that might not be included with your project cost due to eligibility.
- Have copies of your energy bills dating back at least a year (or have estimates to get started).

Before you end your initial discussion and finalize your scope of work, ask yourself the following questions:

- Did your questions get answered? Are you confident that your issue will be resolved?
- Did the contractor respect your home and space?
- Did the contractor respect your time?
- Were you confused by what was discussed? Did the proposed changes make you uncomfortable?

Use a collection of online resources to support your decision-making process. Example resources include:

- Program website.
- Online product reviews.
- Better Business Bureau, Yelp, and Reddit reviews.
- Product manufacturers website.
- ENERGY STAR™ website.
- U.S. Department of Energy residential building resources and infographics.
- Energy efficiency and building science resources.
 - o Green Building Advisor.
 - o The Pretty Good House.
 - o BuildingScience.com.

Before your contractor starts work, ask how you can best prepare your household for the work. Questions include...

- How long will the home assessment take?
- How long will it take to complete the proposed work?
- How much space does the contractor need to complete the proposed work?
- What areas of the house will the contractor need to access?
- Will I need to move and/or protect the floors and furniture?
- Can I be in the house while you work? Or should I plan to be out of the house?
- Do I need to clean out the fireplace for the blower door test? (yes)
- Will I need to vacate the home after installation (in the event of an off gassing)?
 - o For example, after getting spray foam work done, the product will need to “off-gas” for 24-48 hours and occupants will need to plan separate accommodations during that time for their safety.

After the Project is Complete

Once the work is done in your home, make sure you request the following items...

- A demo of the new equipment to ensure you know how to use your new equipment.
- The details of the warranty for your new equipment.
- Maintenance guidelines, especially for your HVAC equipment and appliances.

It is also good practice to allow for an “adjustment period” to learn how the new features will improve the comfort of your home.

- Give it some time to allow the upgrades and changes to be reflected in your energy bill.
- If you have an issue or complaint, please contact your contractor first, then the program’s support line.
- If you need to re-negotiate anything after the work is done, request final changes in writing.

For more information on Georgia’s Home Energy Rebates, visit energyrebates.georgia.gov.