

Fuel Costs are Increasing Almost Daily and People are Looking for Help Cutting Their Energy Costs. A Certified Home Energy Rater Provides Solutions.

A **Certified Home Energy Rater** or **Rater** is a person trained and certified by an accredited Home Energy Rating Provider to inspect and evaluate a home's energy features, prepare a home energy rating and make recommendations for improvements that will save the homeowner energy and money.

The path to becoming a Home Energy Rater begins with attending Rater Training classes.

- First, locate an accredited Energy Rater Training organization. The organizations are listed on the Residential Energy Services Network's (RESNET) website at <http://www.resnet.us/programs/training/directory.aspx> under "National Registry of Accredited Energy Rater Training Providers". Some training providers offer their training online
- It is a good idea to begin preparing early for rater training by studying the materials recommended by the training organization you have selected.
- You may want to consider attending an on-line test preparation class. For more information on preparing for the RESNET rater test go to RESNET's web site at <http://www.resnet.us/rater/tests/rater.htm>.
- Though you do not have to attend a class to take the test, it is highly recommended. *You do, however, have to complete two energy ratings and take the test the first time in the presence of a Rater Trainer.*
- Should you decide to attend training, you should be prepared for an intensive week of learning building science principles and incorporating that knowledge into the actual practice of conducting onsite home energy inspections and preparing home energy ratings.
- All candidates must pass the national online core competency test with a score of 80 or greater. The test is challenging and if you wish to accomplish this goal, you will need to take the course work and test seriously, so don't plan to have other work or play activities during the training week.
- If you do not pass the Rater test the first time, there are proctoring guidelines from RESNET as to how you can retake the test in your own neighborhood.

After you return home, you are required to perform three probationary ratings through a Rating Provider.

- The Energy Rating industry is governed by RESNET and is structured to ensure a high level of quality assurance. With that in mind, energy raters must work through a Rating Provider, who is responsible for their quality assurance.
- An accredited Rating Provider will assist new Raters in conducting and submitting their required three additional probationary ratings.

- After completing these probationary ratings and passing the Rater test successfully, the chosen Rating Provider will issue a document stating you have passed the course work necessary to become a HERS Certified Rater.
- Training is, however, only the first step in the process.

The final aspect of the Rater certification process is to contract with a RESNET-accredited Rating Provider.

- Home Energy Raters are actually certified by RESNET-accredited Rating Providers rather than RESNET per se.
- The accredited Rating Providers are also listed on the RESNET website at <http://www.resnet.us/programs/providers/directory.aspx> under “National Registry of Accredited Rating Providers”.
- You will want to seek out a Rating Provider who will provide you with a high level of assistance and will help you to develop a successful rating business. Remember you will have to conduct the three probationary ratings with them to become certified and your Rating Provider is important to the process.
- Choose a provider carefully since they offer widely varying levels of service with regard to technical support, business development and business management tools. Be sure to discuss with your prospective provider whether or not they service raters other than those they have trained. In other words, are they willing to certify independent raters not trained by them. Also remember you have options for a Rating Provider that are not located in your state. Many companies certify Raters to provide rating services outside of the state in which they are headquartered. Not all Rating Providers have the same cost structure and business model. Make sure that you are comfortable with the services provided and costs charged.
- You will need to sign a Rater Agreement outlining the responsibilities and obligations for both the Rater and the Rating Provider-this is detailed in the RESNET Standards.
- Once you have signed with a Rater Provider, *the Provider will assign you a unique number and issue you your certification.*
- RESNET Standards require the Rating Provider to perform quality assurance “desk audits” on a minimum of 10% of all energy ratings and follow up field inspections on a minimum of 1% of your ratings. The Rating Provider, following RESNET’s standards, establishes the timing by which these quality assurance requirements are completed.
- All of these additional processes typically require fees that are paid by the Rater to the Rating Provider.
- “A rater may employ or use a Rating Field Inspector to perform the physical inspection tasks allowed under that job designation. This definition does not restrict a Rater from conducting the inspections and necessary basic performance tests (blower door & duct blaster) to produce a home energy

rating. The certified Home Energy Rater remains responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in the rating.” (RESNET Standards)

What are the benefits if you add Home Energy Rating certification to your business?

- Gain the ability to find building flaws that can cause discomfort, high utility bills, moisture problems and indoor air quality problems by using state of the art diagnostic tools.
- Help builders reap the benefits of utility incentives and state and federal tax credits.
- Be able to evaluate both new and existing homes using cutting edge energy analysis software.
- Learn how to create or expand your business by selling home comfort and diagnostics.
- Develop a sound understanding of building science principles and residential energy use.
- Green building is a rapidly expanding market niche, and now is the time to get in on the ground floor.
- Assist your builder clients to qualify for such programs as ENERGY STAR, federal tax credits, the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Builders Challenge, LEED Homes, NAHB’s Green Building Program, and offer innovative mortgage financing.

What are the start up costs for a rating business?

- Training will cost between \$1200 and \$2500 depending on the location of the training and the Training Provider you have chosen.
- Equipment will be the largest investment. The purchase of the blower door, duct leakage testing device, digital manometer(s) and register tape normally costs between \$3500 and \$4500.
- A good hygrometer will cost around a \$100.
- You will need to pay your Provider to come to your location to perform quality assurance on 1% of your annual ratings (\$300 to \$1400 per year). This cost will vary significantly from Provider to Provider-ask upfront.
- As with all businesses, there will be office and insurance expenses. Professional Liability insurance is available for RESNET Rater members. Typical costs for a beginning Rater are around \$1500 per year.
- And there will be 12 hours of continuing education every three years you must obtain.

Want to find more information on this subject? Please visit the RESNET website at <http://www.resnet.us> or <http://www.resnet.us/rater/certified/default.htm>.