



Greener
Homes
Initiative



Overview

With energy prices constantly on the rise, energy efficiency is an increasingly important factor to buyers when evaluating a home purchase. In addition, tax incentives, financing options, and local utility discounts are adding to the desirability of investing in a more efficient home.

A lot of what we focus on is new construction, for which there are many energy efficient certification programs including Energy Star, Earthcraft Home and NC HealthyBuilt Home that ensure a home's level of quality, efficiency & anticipated energy savings.

But what about an existing home? How can a homebuyer evaluate older houses on the market and distinguish the energy efficiency of one home from another?

To address this question, Verdi has created the **Greener Homes Initiative** in the Charleston, SC area with the help of The Sustainability Institute, a non-profit organization with a mission to make South Carolina a more sustainable community through programs and services that help homeowners reduce energy waste, save money, and live healthier in their homes.

Purpose

Buyers looking to purchase an existing home have a way to evaluate the energy efficiency of homes on the market.

Sellers of existing homes that invest in some energy improvements have a marketing tool to distinguish their home, increase buyer traffic, and yield a potentially higher selling price.

How it Works



Level 1

Sellers can invest minimal time and money with a do-it-yourself Home Energy Kit created by The Sustainability Institute. Applying the simple tools and materials in the kit is guaranteed to save up to 10% on utilities each year. Once the kit is applied the house can be certified as Level 1. This level requires only hours of a homeowner's time and less than \$100.



Level 2

Sellers can conduct an Energy Audit provided through the Sustainability Institute. This includes an inspection from a trained staff member resulting in a report with suggestions for repairs or replacements that affect energy usage. By making substantial recommended repairs and making the report available, the house can be certified as Level 2. This level may require the help of a home improvement professional and might cost \$150-\$2000 for minor repairs and more for substantial replacements.



Level 3

Sellers can further invest in an Energy Analysis which includes a computerized energy model of their home, a blower test to identify leaks, and a more detailed report that evaluates the structure and its systems. By investing in repairs, replacements and upgrades that substantially improve the home's performance, the house can be certified as Level 3. This level often requires a great deal of investment in upgraded heating and air conditioning and hot water systems, plumbing and electrical fixtures and insulation.

The Greener Homes Initiative is a program that hopes to encourage buyers and sellers to become more aware of the factors that influence home energy performance. Unfortunately, it can't guarantee a homebuyer's maintenance or energy costs, but it can give them another factor to evaluate as they decide which home to purchase.