



## Understanding the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Score

### Why would I want to get a HERS score for my project?

The HERS score is the only energy model accepted by the Federal government to qualify for the Federal Energy Efficiency Tax Credit for new homes, a \$2,000 tax credit to the builder. The score also has marketing value, providing potential buyers with a 'miles per gallon' rating, projected utility costs, and even a 'carbon footprint' to compare with other homes.

### What does the HERS score mean?

When a certified HERS Rater models your project's projected energy use, the result is a HERS score. HERS scores for new homes range from 100 to 0 – the lower the score, the less energy the home is expected to use. Here are some approximate scores, although individual projects vary:

- 100 – Home built to the International Energy Conservation Code
- 85 - Home built to the new Washington State Energy Code
- 70 - Northwest ENERGY STAR Home
- 65 - Home qualifying for the \$2,000 Federal tax credit for the builder (approx.)
- 0 - 'Net Zero Energy' home (uses no more energy than it produces)

### Projects Still in Design ('Projected Rating'):

This is a fairly quick 'ballpark' model that can help you make design choices and let you know if you're likely to hit your energy goals. To get started on your projected rating, we will need the following:

- full architectural and structural plan set in both digital and full-size hard copy;
- total volume of conditioned space;
- glazing percentage and estimated average U-factor;
- proposed mechanical systems for space conditioning and domestic hot water;
- proposed insulation types and R-value levels for walls, ceilings, and floors.

### Completed Projects ('Confirmed Rating'):

To finalize your HERS rating, we'll need the following:

- blower door test results and duct test results for ducted heating systems;
- complete window schedule with dimensions, U-value, SHGC & compass orientation;
- installed insulation types and R-values;
- make and model of all mechanical equipment.

### Projects Qualifying for the \$2,000 Federal Tax Credit ('Certified Rating'):

If your HERS rating qualifies your project for the \$2,000 Federal tax credit, your Rater will need to submit the Confirmed Rating to WSU's Energy Office in Olympia (the state HERS authority) to review the rating and issue a tax credit certificate. WSU charges \$125 for this service, but \$75 of that covers certifying the project as an ENERGY STAR Home.