



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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About the LEED® Green Building Certification System

What is LEED?

LEED is a third party certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2000 through a consensus based process, LEED serves as a tool for buildings of all types and sizes. LEED certification offers third party validation of a project's green features and verifies that the building is operating exactly the way it was designed to.

What types of buildings can use LEED?

LEED certification is available for all building types including new construction and major renovation; existing buildings; commercial interiors; core & shell; schools and homes. LEED systems for neighborhood development, retail and healthcare are currently pilot testing. To date, there is over 3 billion square feet of construction space involved with the LEED system.

How does LEED work?

LEED is a point based system where projects earn LEED points for satisfying specific green building criteria. Within each of the six LEED credit categories, projects must satisfy particular prerequisites and earn points. The six categories include Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality and Innovation in Design (projects can earn ID points for green building innovations). The number of points the project earns determines the level of LEED Certification the project receives. LEED certification is available in four progressive levels: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

Is LEED training available?

Yes, USGBC offers a variety of LEED training workshops and online educational webinars including a basic introduction, technical reviews, and advanced application-oriented sessions. Workshops are available nationally in conjunction with local chapters, at industry tradeshow, and at Greenbuild. Private workshops can also be scheduled for your company.

Can products be certified under LEED?

No, LEED applies to green building projects. Individual products can contribute to points under the certification system; LEED criteria are performance-based. In attempting to meet these requirements, LEED practitioners identify products that have desired attributes. However, some LEED criteria do require specific product data as a part of a successful submittal.

How much does it cost to register a project?

The registration fee for a project is \$450 for USGBC members and \$600 for non-members.

What is the average LEED certification fee?

LEED certification fees vary by project size but the average certification cost is \$2000.

What is a LEED Accredited Professional™ and how do I become one?

LEED Accredited Professionals are experienced building industry practitioners who have demonstrated their knowledge of integrated design and their capacity to facilitate the LEED certification process. To become an Accredited Professional you must take the exam. The exam tests an individual's understanding of green building practices and principles, and familiarity with LEED requirements, resources, and processes. For more information: www.gbci.org.

Does green building cost more?

No, green buildings do not have to cost a penny more. LEED certified projects to date demonstrate that you can achieve LEED certification and reap its many benefits with a common-sense approach to design with no additional dollars. Depending on your green building strategy and the level of certification your project is targeting, there may be mid- and long-term ROI associated with additional green features that merits an investment in first costs.

What are the benefits of LEED certification?

LEED certification is third-party validation of a building's performance. LEED certified projects blend environmental, economic, and occupant-oriented performance. They cost less to operate and maintain; are energy- and water-efficient; have higher lease-up rates than conventional buildings in their markets; are healthier and safer for occupants; and are a physical demonstration of the values of the organizations that own and occupy them. For more information: www.usgbc.org.