United States Green Building Council

LEED: The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System *

What is the LEED System?

LEED is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their buildings' performance. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.*

Who Uses LEED?

Architects, real estate professionals, facility managers, engineers, interior designers, landscape architects, construction managers, lenders and government officials all use LEED to help transform the built environment to sustainability. State and local governments across the country are adopting LEED for public-owned and public-funded buildings; there are LEED initiatives in federal agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Agriculture, Energy, and State; and LEED projects are in progress in 41 different countries, including Canada, Brazil, Mexico and India.*

How is LEED Developed?

LEED Rating Systems are developed through an open, consensus-based process led by LEED committees. Each volunteer committee is composed of a diverse group of practitioners and experts representing a cross-section of the building and construction industry. The key elements of USGBC's consensus process include a balanced and transparent committee structure, technical advisory groups that ensure scientific consistency and rigor, opportunities for stakeholder comment and review, member ballot of new rating systems, and a fair and open appeals process. *

What are the current LEED Products?

LEED New Construction (Version 2.2) The LEED for New Construction and Major Renovation Rating System is designed to guide and distinguish high-performance commercial and institutional projects, including office buildings, high-rise residential buildings, government buildings, recreational facilities, manufacturing plants and laboratories. *

LEED for Existing Buildings / Maintenance & Operations (Version 2.0)
The LEED for Existing Buildings Rating System helps building owners and operators measure operations, improvements and maintenance on a consistent scale, with the goal of maximizing operational efficiency while minimizing environmental impacts. LEED for Existing Buildings addresses whole-building cleaning and maintenance issues (including chemical use), recycling programs, exterior maintenance programs, and systems upgrades. It can be applied both to existing buildings seeking LEED certification for the first time and to projects previously certified under LEED for New Construction or Core & Shell. *

LEED for Commercial Interiors (Version 2.0) is the green benchmark for the tenant improvement market. It is the recognized system for certifying high-performance green interiors that are healthy, productive places to work; are less costly to operate and maintain; and have a reduced environmental footprint. LEED for Commercial Interiors gives the power to make sustainable choices to tenants and designers, who do not always have control over whole building operations.*

LEED for Core & Shell (Version 2.0) Precertification Process is a green building rating system for designers, builders, developers and new building owners who want to address sustainable design for new core and shell construction. Core and shell covers base building elements such as structure, envelope and the HVAC system. LEED for Core & Shell is designed to be complementary to the LEED for Commercial Interiors rating system, as both rating systems establish green building criteria for developers, owners and tenants.*

LEED for Schools recognizes the unique nature of the design and construction of K-12 schools. Based on the LEED NC v2.2 rating system, it addresses issues such as classroom acoustics, master planning, mold prevention and environmental site assessment. By addressing the uniqueness of school spaces and children's health issues, LEED for Schools provides a unique, comprehensive tool for schools that wish to build green, with measurable results. *

LEED for Homes promotes the design and construction of high-performance green homes. A green home uses less energy, water and natural resources; creates less waste; and is healthier and more comfortable for the occupants. Benefits of a LEED home include lower energy and water bills; reduced greenhouse gas emissions; and less exposure to mold, mildew and other indoor toxins. *

LEED for Neighborhood Development (Pilot Version) integrates the principles of smart growth, urbanism and green building into the first national system for neighborhood design. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a development's location and design meet accepted high levels of environmentally responsible, sustainable development. *

LEED for Healthcare (Pilot Version) was developed to meet the unique needs of the health care market, including inpatient care facilities, licensed outpatient care facilities, and licensed long term care facilities. LEED for Healthcare may also be used for medical offices, assisted living facilities and medical education & research centers. LEED for Healthcare addresses issues such as increased sensitivity to chemicals and pollutants, traveling distances from parking facilities, and access to natural spaces. *

LEED for Retail (Pilot Version) recognizes the unique nature of the retail environment and addresses the different types of spaces that retailers need for their distinctive product lines. In development are two new rating systems: LEED for Retail: New Construction, and LEED for Retail: Commercial. *

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