



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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LEED for Homes FAQs for Builders

What is LEED?

LEED is a national third-party certification system that recognizes leadership in green building. It is developed by consensus process by volunteer members of the U.S. Green Building Council who contribute their expertise to its technical development. LEED was first introduced eight years ago for new commercial construction, and has since growth to include specialized versions for homes, neighborhood development, commercial interiors, high performance building operations and maintenance, and core and shell development. More than 3.2 Billion square feet of real estate in the U.S. and in 60 countries are pursuing LEED certification.

LEED measures green homebuilding performance based on seven categories including: site selection, water efficiency, materials & resources, energy & atmosphere, indoor environmental quality, location & linkages, and innovation. Within each of these areas, projects earn points towards certification. LEED has four levels of certification: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum, with Platinum representing the highest level of achievement.

Why should I build a LEED Home?

LEED certification recognizes and celebrates *leadership* in high quality green homebuilding, and allows you as a builder to clearly differentiate your work.

For the homebuyer, LEED is like the nutrition label on the side of a box of crackers: It clearly labels in measurable terms that the home has healthy, green, efficient features that have been third-party verified.

What is the difference between LEED for Homes and other green home building programs?

LEED is a national third-party certification system for green homebuilding. It is designed to recognize leadership, so the program is rigorous and focused on measurable results. LEED for Homes features lots of support for builders who choose to work with rating system, including Reference Guides, instructor-led workshops, and online courses.

There are also more than 70 highly regarded local or regional green home building programs in the United States. (Visit www.usgbc.org/leed/homes for a complete list.) Each of these programs is unique, with its own specifications and requirements.

By reviewing the checklists for LEED and other available local or regional programs, you can choose the rating system that works best for your goals.

What types of homes can use the LEED certification system?

The LEED for Homes certification system is tailored for the construction of new single family or low-rise multi-family homes. Existing homes undergoing extensive renovations - down to the last studs on at least one side of each exterior wall - are also eligible to participate in the program.

What about remodeling projects?

For green remodeling projects, USGBC and the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) partnered to create the REGREEN Program, which is the first nationwide green residential remodeling [guideline](#) for existing homes.

What about affordable housing?

Affordable housing is also addressed by LEED for Homes, and is funded by a generous grant from The Home Depot Foundation. Grant funds are available to cover costs associated with LEED certification including local rating and verification services. For more information, please [contact a LEED for Homes Provider](#).

How can I participate in LEED for Homes?

First, check out www.usgbc.org/LEED/homes, and download the LEED for Homes Checklist. It's an easy way to familiarize yourself with the rating system so you can decide if you want to take the next step and register a project.

Builders interested in registering a project with LEED should contact their local LEED for Homes Provider.

OK, so I'm ready to register a project for LEED certification...

- Connect with the LEED for Homes Provider of your choice. If you're interested in building a LEED Certified home, your first step is to contact a LEED for Homes Provider. They'll walk through the checklist with you so that you can see how the LEED rating system would apply to your project. You can also work with your Provider to engage their help to complete the HERS rating and onsite green inspections that will be required to submit your project for LEED certification.
- Set your green goals. LEED is a flexible system, so you'll need to choose which credits are aligned with your project's green goals. Your goals should include which level of LEED – certified, silver, gold, or platinum – you want to achieve.

- Register your project. You can register your project online at www.usgbc.org/LEED/homes. Registration fees apply.
- Document and verify. Working with your Provider, you'll need to complete a HERS rating, and two on-site inspections of the project to document that you've met the LEED credit requirements that reflect your green goals.
- Certify. Once your project is complete and your documentation is ready, your Provider will submit your final LEED checklist to USGBC for certification. Following a rigorous review, your project will be awarded its final certification.
- Celebrate! We want to help you to celebrate your achievement with a certification packet you can share with your homebuyer and a PR toolkit to share the good news with your local community.

Builders work with a LEED for Homes Provider in their area who will oversee performance testing and compliance with the LEED for Homes rating system. To participate, home builders should contact a geographically proximate [Provider](#) directly to complete a Builder Agreement.

How can I stay up to date on the progress of LEED for Homes?

Get involved in one of the many USGBC committees. USGBC members interested in LEED for Homes Committee activities can join the LEED for Homes "Corresponding Committee" e-mail listserv. Just sign up online in the Your Account section of the USGBC website (www.usgbc.org/YourAccount). Corresponding Committee members receive committee meeting minutes, periodic updates and announcements regarding LEED for Homes volunteer opportunities.

Non-USGBC members can join a public announcement distribution list by sending a request to homes@usgbc.org.

What does it cost to register my homes under the LEED program?

USGBC members are eligible to receive significant cost discounts for program participation. Registration and Certification fees vary based on housing type:

Single Family

Registration: \$150 Members/\$250 Non-Members

Certification: \$250 Members/\$350 Non-Members

Multi-Family

Registration: \$450 Members/\$600 Non-Members

Certification: \$0.035/sq.ft. Members/\$0.045/sq.ft. Non-Members

Volume Building Pilot (50+ single family homes)

Pilot information. Please contact Tom Flanagan at USGBC to express your interest: tflanagan@usgbc.org.

Affordable Housing

No cost. Additional grant funding is available to help to cover the cost of HERS ratings, green inspections, and other associated fees.

It is very important to note that the total cost of getting LEED certified will include service fees associated with HERS rating and green inspections. Please contact the Provider of your choice regarding their rates.

How do I contact USGBC?

You can call USGBC at (202) 828-7422. Please mention that you're a homebuilder interested in LEED for Homes, and our receptionist will transfer you to a member of the Homes team.