



WHAT IS LEED?

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a rating system designed to “improve the environmental and economic performance of new and existing commercial, institutional, and high-rise residential buildings.”ⁱ Its strategies “aim at improving performance across the metrics that matter most...identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, and operations and maintenance solutions...working throughout the building lifecycle-design and construction, operations and maintenance, tenant fitout, and significant retrofit.”ⁱⁱ Participation in the LEED program benefits the community as well as the builder/renovator. Some of these benefits include:

- Minimizing a building’s impact on ecosystems and waterways
- Smart transportation choices
- Controlling stormwater runoff
- Reducing erosion, light pollution, heat island effect and construction-related pollution
- Water reduction through more efficient appliances, fixtures, and fittings inside and water-wise landscaping outside
- Reducing existing building energy-consumption (currently 39%-energy, 74%-electricity) by using renewable and clean sources of energy
- Recycling; reduction of waste at a product’s source
- Improve tenants indoor air while providing access to natural daylight and views and improving acoustics
- Encourages building homes in infill (previously developed and/or preferable sites) near already-existing infrastructure, community resources and transit
- Open space for walking, physical activity and time spent outdoors
- Providing education and tools needed to understand what makes a home green and how to get the most out of those features

The LEED system divides these solutions into six categories, sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and LEED innovation credits. Based on how much of the possible criteria have been met the participant’s project is placed into one of four levelsⁱⁱⁱ:

- LEED Certified
- LEED Certified Silver
- LEED Certified Gold
- LEED Certified Platinum

For more information on LEED please visit www.leed.net.

ⁱLEED Green Building (www.doas.psu.edu/leed.html)

ⁱⁱUSGBC: Intro – What LEED Is (www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1988)

ⁱⁱⁱ Wikipedia.org: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership_in_Energy_and_Environmental_Design)