

LEED

LEED is an acronym developed by the US Green Building Council (USGBC) to measure the sustainability and performance of a building. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is a Green Building Rating System. The LEED system is set up to be a voluntary system. While there are other green rating systems, the popularity of the LEED system is partly driven by the fact that it quantifies green credits. For example, instead of simply stating that using recycled material as building material is good, it gives a threshold that 10% of the building must contain recycled material in order to get credit.

USGBC has four different levels of building certification: **Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum**. They are based on the points that a building gets under the LEED green building rating system.

There are four main steps to obtain LEED certification:

- Registration of the project by completing key forms and submitting payment
- Application for LEED certification by submitting a complete certification application through LEED Online and paying a certification review fee
- Reviewing of the application by GBCI (Green Building Certification Institute)
- Certification—receiving the LEED certification decision

The benefits of LEED certification which are promoted by the USGBC include:

- A positive impact on health and environment
- Likely increases in occupant productivity
- Reduction in building operating costs
- Help creating sustainable communities
- Enhance the building and company marketability and provide branding opportunities
- Social benefits increase occupancy levels and rent levels

While we mostly think of new buildings being built to reach a certain LEED level, there are actually six LEED rating systems:

- 1) LEED-NC (LEED for New Construction and Major Renovation, which is applied to new commercial construction and major renovation projects)
- 2) LEED-EB (LEED for Existing Buildings)
- 3) LEED-CI (LEED for Commercial Interiors and for Retail)
- 4) LEED-CS (LEED for Core and Shell)
- 5) LEED-H (LEED for Homes)
- 6) LEED for Neighborhood Development

These different systems allow for more than just an owner-occupied building to achieve recognition for creating buildings and occupants that have minimized impact on the environment.

For information on LEED certification and the rating system, visit the website at <http://www.usgbc.org>.