



## ANSWERS TO LEED FAQs

### WHAT IS LEED?

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is an internationally recognized green building rating and certification system developed by the [U.S. Green Building Council](#) (USGBC). It verifies that a building was designed, built, and operated with a focus on reducing the environmental impacts of the building. LEED began development in 1994, and began certifying new construction projects in 2000. It is managed by the USGBC.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO HAVING A PROJECT LEED CERTIFIED?

In addition to the inherent environmental benefits, the owner of a LEED certified building will usually see lower operating costs. Also, depending on the state they live in, the owner could receive tax breaks on their property and their building materials.

### HOW IS LEED CERTIFICATION DETERMINED?

For a building to be LEED Certified it must achieve a certain number of points based on the environmental impact of the building during both construction and operation. There are multiple LEED rating systems that are used to determine the number of points earned. The key areas measured by LEED depend on the specific rating system being used (i.e., the type of project involved). However, most of the nine [LEED 2009 rating systems](#) include Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Materials & Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality, Innovation in Design, and Regional Priority. The maximum number of [points attainable within each of those categories](#) varies with the type of project, but the sum is always 100 total points. In addition, up to 10 bonus points are possible for Innovation in Design (6 points) and Regional Priority (4 points), leading to a total of 110 possible points for any given project. The four levels of certification (from lowest to highest) are Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum, depending on the total number of points received.

## CAN I GET MY PRODUCT LEED CERTIFIED?

LEED does not certify any products or services, so there is no way to make a product “LEED certified” or have it listed as an item that will get LEED credits. The selection of products is left up to the individual designers/ architects to identify the products that meet the particular environmental needs of the project.

## HOW DO I GET STARTED ON A LEED PROJECT?

You first need to register your project with the USGBC. Although buildings can still be “green” without being registered, it must be registered in order to be publicly recognized.

Unless you are extremely knowledgeable about the LEED certification process and LEED rating systems, you should hire a General Contractor construction company that has LEED certified employees. If the contractor does not have LEED Certified employees, you should hire a consultant who is LEED Certified to ensure that the LEED requirements are met. Otherwise you may incur significant costs and still fall short of achieving the desired level of certification.

## HOW CAN I MAKE MY PRODUCT KNOWN FOR USE IN LEED PROJECTS?

Understand the LEED system in detail and where your product can help designers/architects meet specific criteria, then clearly communicate this benefit in your marketing statements.

USGBC recommends exhibiting at “[Greenbuild](#)”, their international conference & expo.

Get your product certified to other established green standards, including:

- [Green Seal](#)
- [Greenguard](#)
- [Scientific Certification Systems](#)
- [Sustainable Materials Rating Technology \(SMaRT\)](#)

Participate in other major Green programs including:

- [USDA BioPreferred](#)
- [EnergyStar](#)
- [EPA Climate Leaders](#)

## HOW CAN I OBTAIN MY LEED PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS?

You would need to take the LEED Professional Accreditation Exam, which is managed by the [Green Building Certification Institute](#) (GBCI). People in all professions, including architects, engineers, interior designers, and construction managers take the same exam. [LEED Training courses](#) are available for anybody that is interested.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ON LEED?

Go to the [U.S. Green Building Council web site](#).