



LEED
for **HOMES**

LEED for Homes Frequently Asked Questions

What is a green home?

A green home is a high performance home that is built to exceed the minimum requirements of the building code, especially in the areas of indoor environmental quality and resource efficiency (including energy, water, materials, and land).

What are the benefits of a green home?

A green home has many high performance features built into it that may provide improved health, safety, comfort, and/or lower operating costs. Of course, green homes are also more environmentally friendly, including being more durable and less polluting, as well as making substantially better use of resources. Even better, the net cost of owning a green home may be no more than the net cost of a conventional home.

What is meant by “shades of green”?

The term "shades of green" is often used to refer to various levels of achievement in adopting resource efficiency in a home. Homes with a few green measures are sometime called light green. Homes with a lot of green measures are sometimes called dark green. In LEED for Homes there are four levels of green (or four performance tiers): Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

How will a consumer recognize a green home?

One of the many challenges faced by a home buyer is to compare a green home to another home. Any one home can be called green, but how do you determine how green it really is? LEED for Homes is a national brand that consumers can look for – to readily identify true green homes. All LEED Homes are third party inspected, performance tested, and certified to be higher-performing than conventional homes.

What is the mission of LEED for Homes?

LEED for Homes is a voluntary initiative to actively promote the transformation of the mainstream home building industry towards more sustainable practices. LEED for Homes is designed to recognize and reward the 25% of new homes that are top performers in terms of resource efficiency and environmental stewardship. LEED for Homes is a collaborative initiative that actively works with *all sectors of the home building industry*.

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

There are currently more than 50 local or regional green home building programs. For a list of these programs, please visit the LEED for Homes website at www.usgbc.org/leed/homes. Each of these programs is unique, with its own specifications and requirements. LEED for Homes is designed to provide national consistency in defining the features of a green home and to enable builders anywhere in the country to obtain a 'green' rating on their homes. LEED for Homes represents a consensus standard for green home building developed and refined by a diverse cadre of national experts and experienced green builders.

Why should I build a LEED Home?

Over the last five years, the LEED brand has become nationally recognized in the commercial building sector as a de facto standard of performance for green buildings and is rapidly gaining recognition among the public at large. LEED for Homes is designed to serve the residential construction industry. Home builders participating in LEED for Homes will be able to differentiate their homes as some of the best homes in their markets, using a recognized national brand. Furthermore, home buyers will be able to readily identify high quality green homes, simply by selecting LEED Homes.

How will the quality of LEED Homes be assured?

The strength of the LEED for Homes program is third-party verification. This verification process includes both on-site inspections to ensure that the LEED for Homes features have been installed correctly, and performance testing to ensure proper performance.

Who is responsible for rating a LEED Home?

A local organization, called a LEED for Homes Provider, has formal responsibility for rating LEED Homes. A LEED for Homes Provider has three primary roles in a given market:

1. Marketing LEED for Homes to builders;
2. Providing green home rating support services to builders; and
3. Training, coordinating, and overseeing LEED for Homes qualified inspectors and builder support staff.

LEED for Homes Providers are located around the country and contracted through the USGBC to provide services to builders. They have demonstrated outstanding abilities and have a proven record of supporting builders in the construction of high performance, sustainable homes. See the list of Providers at www.usgbc.org/leed/homes.

How can my organization be a LEED for Homes Provider?

The USGBC has selected 11 LEED for Homes Providers to service some of the country's leading housing markets during the pilot demonstration phase of the program. Only these select Providers will be eligible to work with the builders in the delivery of LEED for Homes during this first phase of the pilot. Following the pilot demonstration phase of LEED for Homes, the USGBC will re-evaluate the various residential markets and solicit organizations to serve as Providers for the full program launch.

What is the process for rating a LEED Home?

A LEED for Homes Provider will arrange for specified performance tests to be conducted on the home. When all of the LEED for Homes features have been verified, the LEED for Homes Provider will issue a rating certificate to the builder for that qualified LEED Home.

How much will it cost to earn a LEED Home rating?

Documentation and verification fees for LEED Homes will be established by each LEED for Homes Provider. It is expected that the initial verification tasks will cost from approximately \$500 to \$2,000 per home. Certain areas may have cost incentives provided through utilities, state energy organizations, or corporate sponsors. Additional costs may include training, and the purchase and installation of individual LEED for Homes measures.

When can I participate in LEED for Homes?

The pilot demonstration phase of LEED for Homes is scheduled to run through the end of 2006. Upon completion of the pilot phase, the LEED for Homes Rating System will be revised as needed and balloted by USGBC. The fully chartered program is projected to begin in early 2007.

How do I participate in the LEED for Homes Pilot?

The pilot demonstration phase is intended to test the LEED for Homes Rating System with stakeholders all across the country. Pilot projects will work with a LEED for Homes Provider in their area that will oversee performance testing and compliance with the pilot rating system. To sign up for the pilot, home builders should complete a Builder Agreement and submit it to one of the LEED for Homes Providers. The Builder Agreement can be obtained and submitted online at www.usgbc.org/leed/homes, or by contacting a local Provider directly.

We will be looking for pilot projects from a diverse group of professional builders that represent different price points and geographic regions. Production builders and affordable housing groups are encouraged to apply (a limited number of scholarships are available for affordable housing projects). It's crucial that working builders, rather than home owners, be the driving force of the LEED for Homes pilot projects because critical feedback from builders is necessary to ensure that LEED for Homes is relevant and viable.

While every effort has been made to include a variety of geographic and population centers, not every home builder will have local access to a LEED for Homes Provider during this initial phase of the program. The selected Providers

have indicated which markets they feel comfortable serving, however, home builders outside of these service areas may contact their nearest Provider to discuss participation in the pilot.

How can I become involved and receive information regularly on the progress of LEED for Homes?

USGBC members interested in LEED for Homes Committee activities can become involved in the process by joining the LEED for Homes "Corresponding Committee" e-mail listserv; sign up online in the Subscriptions - Committees sections of myUSGBC. Corresponding Committee members receive Core Committee meeting minutes, periodic updates, and announcements regarding LEED for Homes volunteer opportunities.

Interested parties who are not USGBC members can join a public announcement distribution list by request via homes@committees.usgbc.org.

Where can I find out more about green home building?

There are many green home building resources available on the internet. Many of the existing local green home building programs (listed at www.usgbc.org/leed/homes) offer training and educational information. USGBC is in the process of developing a green building university. Details will be available soon.

Will LEED for Homes include affordable and multifamily homes?

The LEED for Homes pilot includes both affordable and multifamily homes. These projects' participation and associated activities are funded by a generous grant from The Home Depot Foundation. In order to address the unique needs of affordable housing, the LEED Homes Committee has formed an expert Affordable Housing Working Group to contribute to the success of the LEED for Homes Rating System in addressing these challenges. Exactly how multifamily projects will ultimately be addressed by LEED for Homes will be examined during the pilot phase. Multifamily housing structures that are over three stories are currently eligible to participate in LEED for New Construction (LEED-NC).

Will LEED for Homes include existing homes?

The first phase of the LEED for Homes initiative is focused on the construction of new homes. Specifications and protocols for application of green measures in existing homes are under active consideration, but no specific development plans are in place.

LEED for Homes contact information

For questions about LEED for Homes, please call the USGBC at 202-828-7422 or e-mail leedinfo@usgbc.org.