



LEED, or **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design**, is redefining the way we think about the places where we live, work and learn. As an internationally recognized mark of excellence, LEED provides building owners and operators with a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions.

With nearly 9 billion square feet of building space participating in the suite of rating systems and 1.6 million feet certifying per day around the world, LEED is transforming the way built environments are designed, constructed, and operated --- from individual buildings and homes, to entire neighborhoods and communities. Comprehensive and flexible, LEED works throughout a building's life cycle.

LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building, home or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at achieving high performance in key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

Developed by the [U.S. Green Building Council \(USGBC\)](#) in 2000, the LEED rating systems are developed through an open, consensus-based process led by [LEED committees](#)

. The next update of the LEED rating system, coined

[LEED 2012](#)

, is the next step in the continuous improvement process and on-going development cycle of LEED.



LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in key

areas:



Sustainable Sites

Site selection and development are important components of a building's sustainability. The Sustainable Sites



Water Efficiency

Buildings are major users of our potable water supply. The goal of the Water Efficiency category is to e



Energy & Atmosphere

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, buildings use 39% of the energy and 74% of the electricity



Materials & Resources

During both the construction and operations phases, buildings generate a lot of waste and use large quantities



Indoor Environmental Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that Americans spend about 90% of their day indoors



Locations & Linkages

The LEED for Homes rating system recognizes that much of a home's impact on the environment comes from



Awareness & Education

The LEED for Homes rating system acknowledges that a home is only truly green if the people who live in it



Innovation in Design

The Innovation in Design category provides bonus points for projects that use innovative technologies



Regional Priority

USGBC's regional councils, chapters and affiliates have identified the most important local environment

<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1988>