

# Guide to Certification: Homes

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## Congratulations on your decision to pursue LEED certification!

You're on your way to increasing the value and environmental integrity of your project. This guide will lead you through the process.

LEED for Homes applies to single family homes, low-rise multi-family (one to three stories), or mid-rise multi-family (four to six stories); includes Homes and Multifamily Lowrise and Multifamily Midrise. [Learn more.](#)

LEED for Homes certification involves four main steps:

1. **Register** your project by selecting your team, completing key forms and submitting payment.
2. **Verify** your project milestones and achievements through the on-site verification process.
3. **Review.** Submit the necessary information, calculations and documentation to your Green Rater. Your LEED application is then reviewed by GBCI.
4. **Certify.** Receive the certification decision. If you've earned LEED certification: congratulations!

[Access resources](#) to get started on your project, or if you need assistance at any time, please [call or email us](#).

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## Register

Before you begin, you'll want to make sure that your project has the minimum characteristics that make a project appropriate for pursuing LEED.

Building projects pursuing LEED 2008 certification must:

- Be defined as a dwelling unit by all applicable codes - so every participating building must have a cooking area and a bathroom
- Be in a permanent location on existing land
- Use reasonable LEED boundaries
- Be a complete, permanent building:
  - A building cannot be partially certified. Single units in multi-family buildings cannot participate in LEED for Homes unless the entire building is registered to participate. Stacked attached homes, such as condominium flats, are considered to be multi-family buildings.
  - Every unit within a multi-family building must earn the same certification level (e.g. Silver, Gold).
  - Single-family side-by-side attached homes, such as row houses, are considered to be separate buildings

- Work with a credentialed LEED for Homes Green Rater

Building projects pursuing LEED v4 certification must:

- Be in a permanent location on existing land
- Use reasonable LEED boundaries
- Comply with project size requirements

For more information, LEED 2008 projects should read the [Scope and Eligibility Guidelines LEED for Homes - 2008 Version](#). LEED v4 projects should visit the [LEED Credit Library](#) to read the specifics on Minimum Program Requirements and the Supplemental Guidance to the Minimum Program Requirements.

Next up: select the appropriate LEED rating system for your project using our Rating System Selection Guidance for [LEED 2009](#) or [LEED v4](#).

Now, onward to registration: visit [LEED Online](#), the online portal through which you will submit your application for certification, as well as access a variety of tools and resources, complete the registration information related to your project, submit payment and sign the certification agreement (the project owner must do this last one). Once you've finished, your project application will be accessible in [LEED Online](#).

From here, you can assemble your project team and the documentation process begins!

## Verification team roles

LEED for Homes requires on-site verification and performance testing - your Verification Team will provide these services for your project. Verification Team members are a great resource for you: they have worked on hundreds, if not thousands, of LEED for Homes projects, and can walk you and your team through the best way to incorporate the rating system requirements into your project's planning, design and construction. Here's a rundown of who's who so you can select your team wisely:

- **LEED for Homes Provider organization:** Your [LEED for Homes Provider Organization](#) will oversee the certification process. Provider organizations work with a network of Green Raters (below) and provide quality assurance of their verification services.
- **LEED for Homes Green Rater:** [Green Raters](#) provide the required on-site verification for LEED for Homes projects and complete the LEED for Homes Workbook (view a [sample](#)), the comprehensive tool that documents fulfillment of [LEED Credit Library](#) and prerequisites.
- **Energy rater:** The LEED for Homes rating system requires that the project is performance tested by a qualified energy rater. The Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) administers credentials and oversees the largest body of energy raters, called Home Energy Raters (HERS Raters). In many cases, your Green Rater may also be a qualified energy rater, or HERS Rater, and can provide you with both the required on-site verification and performance testing services. Your Provider and/or Green Rater can help you select a qualified energy rater.



You can begin by contacting either the Green Rater or the Provider directly; they work closely together. To find a LEED for Homes Provider Organization, visit the [Provider Directory](#). Another good way to find a Provider is through a Green Rater. With a growing network of Green Raters (see our [directory](#)), you'll be sure to find a Green Rater in your area who works with one of our Provider organizations. While it is not uncommon for the Provider to be located in a different city than the project, the Green Rater will be visiting your project site for a minimum of two visits - often more. It is most common and convenient to have a local Green Rater. If you register your project in [LEED Online](#) without a Verification Team identified, we will contact you to assist. It's very important to engage with your Verification Team as early in the process as possible and before construction begins.

Click [here](#) to view a detailed Verification Team Scope of Services. This document details the mandatory services that will be provided by your verification team.

### **Project Team Roles**

In addition to your LEED for Homes Verification team, you will also select project team members to work with you throughout the project process:

- **Owner:** The owner of the project is the person (or entity) who has the authority to hold and control the real and personal property associated with your project, and accepts (or authorizes the acceptance of) the certification agreement. While there may be multiple owners for a particular project (if so, please submit a [Confirmation of Primary Owner's Authority Form](#)), we ask that you identify a single individual to administer the certification process. Big takeaway: the owner has ultimate control over the LEED certification application, meaning that the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI: the organization responsible for administering LEED certification) will respond to the owner regarding the administration of the project over any other member of the project team.
  - **Agent:** The agent is the person (or entity) who is granted actual authority by the owner to register the project and accept the certification agreement. If you are using this option, remember to upload a signed [Confirmation of Agent's Authority Form](#).
    - **Project Administrator:** This team member acts as a project manager, overseeing the LEED project as well as which project team members are responsible for certain tasks, credits or prerequisites. The project administrator plays a key quality role by checking that the LEED submission is complete and accurate before submitting the project to GBCI for review, and accepting the review results once the review is complete. Note: the individual who initially registers the project will automatically be granted the role of the project administrator, but the owner may transfer this role to another team member at any time

## Important considerations

### Deadline for registration

We encourage you to complete the registration steps as early in the design process as possible, before you begin construction. [View the LEED registration close and certification close deadlines.](#)

### Single buildings vs. multiple buildings:

A project is defined as a single building. For example, a development consisting of six single-family homes would be six projects, and a project consisting of three large multifamily buildings with 50 residential units each would be considered three projects. If you are working on multiple buildings at once, such as a group of multifamily buildings or a production home development, we offer **bulk registration** and **batch certification** to help streamline verification requirements and reduce cost.

### Identify your building type(s):

- **Single family attached:** Townhouse-style single family homes. Adjoining units are separated by vertical dividing walls.
- **Single family detached:** Stand-alone single family structures.
- **Multifamily lowrise:** Multifamily housing (apartments, condominiums, etc.) consisting of units that are separated by horizontal dividing walls so the units are stacked up to three conditioned stories above grade.
- **Multifamily midrise:** Multifamily housing (apartments, condominiums, etc.) consisting of units that are separated by horizontal dividing walls so that the units are stacked four or more stories (LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise, LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010). *Note: Buildings with four to five stories can use LEED Homes Multifamily Lowrise if they have 80 percent in-unit space OR, if they are required to use ENERGY STAR for Homes by a funding or incentive program.*

### Bulk registration:

Bulk registration allows you to register a group of buildings in a single registration, given that all buildings

in the bulk registration are:

- Under the responsibility of one builder/developer
- Located in a single country
- Pursuing certification under the same rating system (LEED for Homes v2008, LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010, LEED v4 BD+C:Homes or LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise)

#### **Batch Certification:**

Within a bulk registration group, you may submit multiple projects as a batch certification, given that all buildings in the batch certification:

- Meet bulk registration requirements
  - Are part of a single metropolitan area and within the same country. For metropolitan areas in the U.S. or Canada that cross state or province lines, a batch may consist of buildings in up to two states or provinces
  - Have the same project team and verification team
  - Are located in the same climate zone
  - Earn the same certification level
  - Utilize the “worst-case” set of LEED for Homes credits: this means if some units earn more credits than others, the batch is reviewed at the lower level of credits achieved.
  - *For LEED for Homes v2008 and LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010 only:* Have the same designer, builder, and subcontractors
  - *For LEED v4 BD+C: Homes and LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise only:* Have the same designer and builder
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## **Verify**

Off to a good start? Great. In order to verify that your project is on track and properly achieving certain milestones and steps in the LEED for Homes certification process, you’ll need to participate in on-site verification throughout the design and construction process. On-site verification involves working with your Verification Team to arrange site visits and provide supplemental documentation when requested.

### **Preliminary Rating**

Integrative Project Planning Prerequisite 1.1 within the LEED for Homes rating system requires you to conduct a preliminary meeting with the Verification Team and key members of your project team early in the design process. As part of the meeting, you will create an action plan that identifies the following:

- The targeted LEED certification level
- The LEED for Homes credits that you have selected to pursue in order to meet the targeted award level
- The individuals accountable for meeting the LEED for Homes requirements for each selected prerequisite and credit

Communication with your Verification Team during construction is critical to ensure the Green Rater and energy rater visit the site at key milestones – your project team is responsible for scheduling these visits. Verification Teams follow the LEED for Homes Verification and Submittal Guidelines in order to adequately verify all prerequisites and pursued credits – you may wish to peruse these guidelines for reference.

### **Mid-construction verification visit**

LEED for Homes requires a mid-construction verification site visit, sometimes called the “pre-drywall” visit. During this visit, the Green Rater and energy rater will verify certain building systems that are only visible while the building walls remain open, such as efficient framing measures and installed ventilation ducting. Please note that this verification visit is mandatory for certification, and provides the Green Rater an opportunity to observe your project’s compliance with credit requirements that are fulfilled over time, such as construction waste management.

## **Final construction verification visit**

Once construction is complete, including landscape, the Green Rater and energy rater return for the second mandatory site visit. During this visit, the Green Rater verifies that you have met all remaining prerequisite and credit requirements, and the energy rater conducts the required performance testing.

## **Supplemental documentation**

Many prerequisite and credit requirements cannot be adequately verified through site visits alone. For those reasons, the Verification Team will ask to see appropriate documentation, such as project plans, material specifications, etc. Make sure to keep key documents on-hand and well organized!

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## **Review**

**Once your Verification Team has verified all prerequisites and pursued credits, the Green Rater is ready to submit the appropriate documentation to the LEED for Homes Provider for their quality assurance review. This occurs before your Provider submits your completed LEED for Homes Workbook for certification review to GBCI.**

Once your Provider has submitted your LEED for Homes Workbook, you will receive a prompt to pay the certification fees – once received, GBCI will begin your certification review. The Verification Team will participate in the review process with GBCI.

All LEED for Homes projects undergo a standard review, in which your Provider will submit your entire application (all credits and prerequisites) once the project is complete.

### **Part 1: Preliminary Review**

- Your Provider will first submit your completed application for a preliminary review. GBCI will check your application for completeness and compliance with the selected rating system and attempted credits.
- GBCI will respond with its preliminary review within 20-25 business days, indicating which prerequisites and credits are anticipated to be awarded during final review, pending further information or denied.
- Your team can accept the preliminary review results as final if you are satisfied or submit new or revised documentation, and/or attempt additional credits before submitting for final review.

### **Part 2: Final Review (optional)**

- The final review stage allows your Verification Team to submit supplementary information or amend/clarify the application. GBCI will review revised or newly submitted prerequisites and credits, and reconsider any anticipated credits or prerequisites for which information has changed since the return of the preliminary review.

- GBCI will respond with a final LEED certification review report within 20-25 business days, marking prerequisites and attempted credits as either awarded or denied.
- Like the preliminary review, you can either accept the review results as final, or revise your application and submit for re-review (appeal).

### **Part 3: Re-review/Appeal Review (optional, appeal fees apply)**

- The appeal review stage provides one additional round of review and allows you to submit supplementary information, amend the application or add new credits not previously attempted. GBCI will review the pending or newly submitted prerequisites and credits, and reconsider any anticipated credits or prerequisites for which information has changed since the return of the final review.
- GBCI will respond with an appeal LEED certification review report within 20-25 business days, marking prerequisites and attempted credits as either awarded or denied.
- Like the final review, you can either accept the appeal review results as final, or submit a further appeal.

### **Optional pre-review**

The pre-review allows you to get feedback from GBCI during the design process, prior to submitting for certification review, and is available for the following model/credits only (if you'd like feedback on a different prerequisite or credit from GBCI prior to the certification review, please read up on how to file an inquiry, below):

- *As-designed energy model for LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010 and LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise projects:* The pre-review will ensure that you will meet the minimum energy performance requirement and earn sufficient points. Once construction is complete, you'll need to submit an as-built version of the energy model to your Verification Team if any changes to the model have occurred.
- *Water Efficiency Credit 2.3 and Sustainable Sites Credit 2.5 in LEED for Homes v2008 and LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010:* Submit your "reduction in irrigation demand" calculations to confirm that your team has completed the calculation correctly and that the project is on track to earn the associated points, so long as you fully implement the strategies indicated in the pre-review.

All required documentation should be submitted to your Verification Team, who will then submit directly to GBCI.

### **Expedited review**

In a time crunch? [Contact GBCI](#) at least five business days (please allow longer if you are paying by check) prior to submitting an application to request an expedited review to cut your review time in half (reduced from 20-25 business days to 10-12 business days per review phase). Please note that there is an additional charge for this service, and GBCI's ability to fulfill your request depends on their current review capacity. If GBCI can accommodate your request, they will confirm availability and provide a custom review schedule for your project.

### **Submitting an inquiry**

Having difficulty fulfilling a rating system prerequisite or credit? Have you thought of an alternative way to interpret a credit or path to fulfill it? We've established inquiries so that you can gain clarification before you register your project or as you're working through your LEED application. All inquiries are filed through [LEED Online](#) (unless you haven't registered yet – in which case, please reach out to [GBCI](#)) and should address only one credit or prerequisite. Here are your options:



## Important considerations

### Deadline for submitting for review

Your Provider will need to submit for review no later than two years after your project is substantially completed (the date on which your building receives a certificate of occupancy or similar official indication that it is fit and ready for use). If you decide you no longer want to pursue LEED certification for your project, we understand. Please contact GBCI so that they can close your application and maintain accurate records.

### Appeals

If you feel that the results of a review appeal or a CIR appeal are incorrect and wish to challenge those results, you may do so by contacting GBCI.

- **Credit Interpretation Ruling (CIR):** A CIR allows you to obtain technical guidance related to a particular credit or facet of the LEED rating system. Our review team will let you know if your interpretation of a particular credit or prerequisite is consistent with published rating system requirements. When it comes time to submit your application for review, you will need to provide documentation demonstrating fulfillment of the CIR and indicate the approved CIR within your application for certification. You may file an appeal if you are not satisfied with the result of your CIR using the process above. Keep in mind, also, that CIRs are not precedent setting; your project team can only utilize the ruling for the project under which the CIR was submitted.
  - **LEED Interpretation:** Administered by USGBC, LEED Interpretations focus on the evolution of the LEED rating system and are published periodically in the form of official addenda. They are developed through a deliberative process involving LEED committees and are not conducted within the standard 20-25 business day timelines. Like Project CIRs, LEED Interpretations provide answers to technical inquiries about applying LEED in situations not already addressed by the rating systems, reference guides and MPRs. They differ from Project CIRs in that, as USGBC issued addenda, these rulings are precedent-setting and applicable to all projects registered in the future. As in the case with all addenda, projects registered before a LEED Interpretation is published may voluntarily elect to follow these revisions. You can access published LEED Interpretations online in our [searchable database](#).
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## Certify

You've made it to the finish line: accepting your certification is the final step in the LEED review process. Once your final application review is complete, your project team can either accept or appeal GBCI's final certification report. If you've achieved certification: congratulations from all of us at USGBC and GBCI!

Once you've accepted the final certification report, the project will be deemed "closed out" – meaning that you will no longer be able to appeal the certification level or review decisions for specific credits or prerequisites, so please double (or triple) check that you have achieved all prerequisites and targeted credits before accepting the final certification.

## Certification Levels

While all LEED certified projects are a cut above the rest, each is assigned one of four levels of certification to acknowledge the degree of achievement. The number of points that your project earns determines the level of LEED Certification that your project will receive.



Certification levels for LEED v4 BD+C: Homes and LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise:

- LEED Certified™: 40-49 points earned
- LEED Silver®: 50-59 points earned
- LEED Gold®: 60-79 points earned
- LEED Platinum®: 80+ points earned

Certification levels for LEED for Homes v2008 and LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010:

- LEED Certified™: 45-59 points earned
- LEED Silver®: 60-74 points earned
- LEED Gold®: 75-89 points earned
- LEED Platinum®: 90+ points earned

## Promote your project

Once you've earned certification, it's likely that you'll want to tell the world. You should. LEED certification benefits your personal or business bottom line and underscores your sustainability efforts. It's a cause for celebration!

Our [public relations guide](#) for LEED-certified projects can help you do that. You'll also receive a formal certificate of recognition, and can choose to order LEED plaques and certificates. [Learn more.](#)

(Psst... did you know that USGBC Platinum-level members receive 20 hours of dedicated public relations support from USGBC's in-house communications team? Learn more about [Platinum membership.](#))

## Project information: How USGBC handles your data

Your work with LEED is something to be celebrated – and communicated to the world at large. Achieving LEED certification gives you the opportunity to share your project strategies, photos and insight, and play a pivotal role in educating other project teams.

### How is USGBC utilizing your project data?

We use your project data for the greater good: to educate and provide resources for LEED project teams and others around the world, showcase your strategies, and share the size and power of the green building movement.

Residential LEED-certified projects are, by default, considered “public” projects, and thereby included in USGBC's public LEED project directory. A listing in this directory allows the general public and members of the media to look up your project listing and its related details.

Here's a full list of the data and project elements that may be listed in the project directory:

### Project directory information

- Project name
- Project ID
- Physical address, with link to Google map
- Date of registration
- Date of certification
- Certification level
- Total points earned

- Project scorecard
- ACP (Alternative Compliance Path) selection
- Project scorecard
- Rating system and version
- Builder name
- Builder type
- Builder organization
- Gross square footage
- Total property area
- Project type

All “public” projects also benefit from publicity opportunities: we may utilize your project data to create case studies highlighting your project’s features, reference your project on our website or to the media, or create other derivative works.

Information that may be used for articles, project profiles, other features:

- Service providers
- Project team members
- Promotional or other project photographs
- Project strategies for certification
- Quotations from team members

You are free to opt-out of the LEED project directory and publicity opportunities as a “private project” at the time of registration: specific instructions on how to do so are available in [LEED Online](#). All private projects that earn certification will be prompted once more to transition to public status (we can’t help ourselves, we love sharing good news!). You will need to re-confirm your “private” status at that time, if you wish to retain it. We respect your privacy, and should you choose to retain your "private" project status, we will never share your confidential project information. Please note, confidential, or private LEED-certified projects are not authorized to use the LEED certification logos.

## **Important considerations**

### **Deadline for achieving certification**

Each rating system will remain open and available for certification for at least six years after the rating system registration close date. To certify your project under a specific rating system, you must submit for certification by that rating system's certification close date, also called the sunset date. If you have difficulty meeting this deadline, please reach out to GBCI—they’ll work with you on a solution for your project. [View the LEED registration close and certification close deadlines.](#)

### **Revocation of LEED certification**

Verification teams and GBCI reviewers work hard to ensure that any problems with a project application are discovered and resolved during the certification process. However, in rare situations, LEED certification may be revoked. We’ve created the **Certification Challenge Policy** to ensure that all LEED project applications and subsequent reviews by GBCI team members are done so with integrity, accuracy and truthfulness. A certification challenge may be initiated by GBCI or by any third party within 18 months of a project’s certification. In line with the policy, you need to retain all project documentation related to your certification, and the achievement of prerequisites and credits, on-site at your certified project for two years after receiving certification, to ensure that this information is available in case of a challenge. Click below to read the policy in its entirety.

This Certification Challenge Policy has been put in place to protect the integrity of the LEED certification program as a credible, accurate, and industry-recognized system for evaluating the design and construction of sustainable buildings. GBCI intends this policy to function as both a quality check on GBCI LEED reviews, as well as an instrument designed to detect and remedy incidents of intentional or inadvertent misrepresentation which result in the inappropriate award of LEED certification. This policy is not meant to serve as a vehicle for the adjudication of disputes between outside parties. Accordingly, this policy and the certification challenge process detailed herein do not replace any applicable judicial or other alternative dispute resolution processes that third parties may have available to resolve such disputes between themselves. Complaints that might warrant initiation of the Certification Challenge Process should be submitted to [legal@gbc.org](mailto:legal@gbc.org).

- 1.1 Certification Challenge Overview: All persons participating in the submission of information in applying for an award of LEED certification must be truthful, forthcoming, and cooperative in their dealings with GBCI; however, it is the responsibility of the project owner to confirm and represent the veracity and accuracy of the documentation submitted. To the extent the veracity or accuracy of such documentation, or GBCI's evaluation of the same, is called into question, GBCI may initiate a certification challenge thereby revisiting its determination that the submitted documentation properly demonstrates that the project satisfied all credits, prerequisites, and MPRs necessary to achieve the awarded level of LEED certification. A project owner may defend against such certification challenge by electing to participate in the process described below. Based on the final determination of such a challenge, GBCI retains the right to reduce the level of LEED certification awarded or revoke an award of LEED certification altogether.
- 1.2 Basis for an Initiation of a Certification Challenge: GBCI reserves the right to institute investigations and review documentation for any reason or for no reason at all. In addition, GBCI encourages third parties who wish to make a complaint, or bring to light information affecting the grant of LEED certification to do so in the following manner. Parties seeking to submit a complaint or report information affecting the grant of LEED certification must have specific personal knowledge of an event or condition that would prevent a project from satisfying a particular credit, prerequisite, or MPR. Complainants must indicate the credit, prerequisite, or MPR that is affected. Further, such persons must indicate to the fullest extent possible, in the form of a written statement, details of such event or condition including the following: i) the alleged offending conduct or condition; ii) the persons involved; iii) other persons who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances concerning the allegation, including contact information for such persons; and iv) the identity of the person presenting the complaint including such person's full name, address, email, and telephone number. Complaints ideally should be submitted to GBCI within eighteen (18) months of the award of LEED certification for a project. GBCI cannot guarantee anonymity to persons submitting complaints. If GBCI determines that the complaint is frivolous or irrelevant to the credits, prerequisites and MPRs required for LEED certification, no further action will be taken.
- 1.3 Initiation of a Certification Challenge: The GBCI President may initiate a formal investigation into the appropriateness of an award of certification to a particular project if the veracity or accuracy of the documentation supporting such award is called into question, or if GBCI's evaluation of such documentation is suspected to have been incomplete or flawed. A formal investigation will be deemed opened upon the date that GBCI sends written notice to the project owner that such investigation has been initiated. The investigation will remain open until a final determination is reached on such certification challenge. GBCI shall not publicly comment on an ongoing investigation prior to the forwarding of the final determination on such certification challenge to the project owner.
- 1.4 Certification Challenge Investigation Process: In performing a formal investigation, GBCI will review any or all of the project's documentation that GBCI, in its sole discretion, deems relevant. GBCI may request supplemental information from the person(s) making the complaint and may require the complainant to provide a statement in the form of an affidavit attested to under penalty of perjury. GBCI may request information from the project team, project owner, and/or others involved in the project.

If GBCI determines that a site visit may be useful, GBCI, with the assistance of one or more technical consultants, may, but is not required to, conduct an on-site inspection of a project. GBCI shall notify the project owner of the necessity of the site visit in writing. GBCI representatives including staff members and/or technical consultants shall make the arrangements for the site visit.

No staff or technical consultant may: i) investigate any matter regarding a project he or she previously reviewed; ii) investigate any matter in which his or her impartiality might reasonably be questioned; or iii) investigate any matter which presents an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest. GBCI representatives who are tasked with conducting a site visit must sign an engagement agreement and abide by GBCI requirements regarding conflicts of interest and confidentiality.

- 1.5 GBCI Preliminary Staff Findings: Upon the conclusion of an investigation, if GBCI determines in its sole discretion that the project owner submitted truthful and accurate documentation when applying for certification and that sufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that (i) all prerequisites and MPRs were properly completed at the time certification was conferred and (ii) the minimum number of credits were properly completed at the time certification was conferred such that the project obtained the requisite number of points necessary to achieve LEED certification at the level awarded, no further action will be taken. The project owner and any persons submitting complaints will be notified of this decision. If GBCI determines that the documentation submitted was not completely truthful and accurate, or that insufficient evidence exists to demonstrate the project properly achieved LEED certification at the level awarded, GBCI shall transmit a statement of its findings to the project owner by email via verifiable method of delivery, setting forth the affected credits, prerequisites, and/or MPRs, and including a written statement:
  1. of the facts constituting the inaccurate grant of credit, prerequisite, minimum program requirement, or falsely submitted documentation and the credits/prerequisites/minimum program requirements affected;
  2. that the project owner has thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of such statement to notify GBCI if it disputes the findings and to provide a written response; and
  3. identifying the proposed sanctions determined by GBCI potentially including revocation of LEED certification, or reduction of the level of LEED certification awarded.
- 1.6 Stage 1: Contesting GBCI Preliminary Staff Findings: If the project owner seeks to contest the findings, or is unwilling to accept the determined sanctions, such owner must submit a written response addressing the Preliminary GBCI Staff Findings and/or the determined sanctions within thirty (30) calendar days after the owner's receipt of such statement. The project owner may also submit additional information related to the challenged LEED program requirement(s). If the project owner accepts, or fails to timely respond to such statement and underlying findings, GBCI shall enact the determined sanctions and close the matter. Such acceptance, or failure to respond, shall constitute a waiver of the right to a review or hearing and appeal of the same.

Upon receiving a response to this statement, GBCI staff shall make a determination as to the disposition of the challenge and identify the sanctions to be imposed. GBCI shall provide notice of such determination and sanctions to the project owner along with a statement:

1. that the owner or representative thereof may request an oral hearing (in person or by phone) or a review by written briefing for the disposition of the matter, with the owner bearing its own expenses;
  2. that the owner or representative may appear in person, may examine and cross-examine any witness under oath, and may produce evidence on its behalf;
  3. that if the owner disputes the findings, or requests a review or hearing, the owner thereby consents to the formation of a Review Panel for the purpose of rendering a decision on the evidence before it, and further agrees to comply with any applicable sanctions subject to an appeal; and
  4. those certain administrative fees, as detailed in Pricing Appendix A, apply if the project team requests a written review or hearing.
- 1.7 Stage 2: Written Review or Hearing of a GBCI Staff Determination: If a project owner seeks to contest the determination or sanctions issued by GBCI staff, the project owner may submit a request

for either a hearing or review by written briefing. The fees outlined in Pricing Appendix A must be provided to GBCI within thirty (30) calendar days following the date the owner's written request was received by GBCI.

If the project owner requests a hearing or written review, the GBCI Chair in consultation with the GBCI President shall appoint three persons to serve on a Review Panel, each of whom shall be qualified by virtue of training and experience to have the appropriate technical knowledge in the relevant LEED program requirements. No member of such Review Panel may: i) review any matter regarding a project he or she previously reviewed; ii) review any matter in which his or her impartiality might reasonably be questioned; or iii) review any matter which presents an If the project owner requests a written review, GBCI will forward its findings and the response of the project owner to the Review Panel. Written briefing may be submitted within thirty (30) calendar days following receipt of the request for such written review.

If the project owner requests a hearing, GBCI shall forward its findings and the response of the project owner to the Review Panel and shall designate one staff member to present the findings and any substantiating evidence, to examine and cross-examine witnesses, and to present the matter during the hearing. The Review Panel will schedule a hearing after the request is received, allowing for a period of at least thirty (30) days to prepare for such hearing, and will send by email and via verifiable means of delivery, a Notice of Hearing to the project owner. The Notice of Hearing will include a statement of the time and place selected by the Review Panel. The project owner may request modification of the time and place for good cause.

The Review Panel, GBCI, and the project owner may consult with and be represented by counsel, make opening statements, present documents and testimony, examine and cross-examine witnesses under oath, make closing statements and present written briefs as scheduled by the Review Panel. To the extent a project owner or representative fails to attend the hearing in person or by phone, such hearing shall commence as scheduled without representation by the owner. The Review Panel will determine all matters related to the hearing. Formal rules of evidence will not apply. Relevant evidence may be admitted. Disputed questions will be determined by the Review Panel.

GBCI will meet its burden of proof if it is able to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence, and the project owner is unable to refute either that the project owner failed to submit truthful, and accurate documentation when applying for certification, or that insufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that (i) all prerequisites and MPRs were properly completed at the time certification was conferred and (ii) that the minimum number of credits were properly completed at the time certification was conferred such that the project obtained the requisite number of points necessary to achieve LEED certification at the level awarded.

Upon the conclusion of a review or hearing, if the Review Panel determines that GBCI has not met this burden of proof no adverse action will be advised and the matter shall be closed. If the Review Panel determines that GBCI has met this burden of proof it shall identify the appropriate sanctions to be carried out by GBCI.

The Review Panel will issue a written decision following the review or hearing. This decision will contain factual findings, conclusions, and any sanctions if appropriate. Such written decision shall be sent promptly by email via verifiable means of delivery to the project owner and any persons submitting complaints.

- 1.8 Stage 3: Appeal of a Review Panel Decision Before GBCI Board of Directors: If a project owner seeks to contest the decision of the Review Panel, such owner may submit a request for an appeal to the GBCI Board of Directors. All requests for appeals must be submitted in writing and sent to GBCI by verified and traceable email, U.S. Postal Service mail, personal delivery, or private courier (such as Federal Express, United Parcel Service, etc), within thirty (30) calendar days after the owner's receipt of the Review Panel's decision. Requests for appeals must be accompanied by written briefing setting forth the basis for the appeal. If the project owner requests an appeal in accordance with this section,

the fees outlined in pricing Appendix A must be provided to GBCI within thirty (30) calendar days of GBCI's receipt of such request.

In order to overturn a certification challenge decision by the Review Panel, it shall be the burden of the project owner to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the GBCI Board of Directors that such decision was arbitrary or capricious.

The GBCI Board of Directors will render a written decision based on the record below and written briefs (if any); there will be no oral hearing. The decision of the GBCI Board of Directors will be mailed promptly by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the project owner. Decisions rendered by the GBCI Board of Directors shall be final. Persons submitting complaints shall be notified of the decision of the GBCI Board of Directors.

- **1.9 Revocation of LEED certification:** Based on the final determination of a Certification Challenge, GBCI retains the right to reduce the level of LEED certification awarded, or to revoke an award of LEED certification.

GBCI retains the right, in its sole discretion, to revoke LEED certification from any project where it is denied access to a project for the purposes of performing an audit or site visit, or it is prevented from examining documentation related to the project's design, construction, and/or operations pertaining to LEED certification, as a result of a project owner being unwilling or unable to provide such access or documentation.

GBCI retains the right, in its reasonable discretion, to revoke LEED certification from any project where it is denied access to, or for which it is not provided with, energy and water use data on an ongoing basis after LEED certification is conferred, as is required.

To the extent a project is subject to revocation of LEED certification, such project will be removed from the LEED certified project database and may no longer be referred to as a LEED certified project. GBCI shall identify the project's certification as having been revoked. Additionally, if GBCI revokes certification of any project for which a Platinum-level certification was previously awarded, and for which the project owner received a rebate of any or all certification fees, the owner of such project shall be liable for refunding all monies so received to GBCI. Further, the owner of such project shall immediately terminate all use and display of any LEED trademarks, associated logos, and other intellectual property licensed by GBCI

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## Fees

### **LEED certification provides an exceptional value for your money: So, how much will it cost to certify your project?**

- **Registration fee:** There is a flat registration fee (discounted for USGBC Silver-level members and above) calculated on a per-project (building) basis that you'll pay up front at the time of registration. If we haven't received your payment within 60 days of your registration, we'll assume you changed your mind and go ahead and cancel the registration.
- **Certification fee:** The certification fee is charged on a per-project (building) basis and based on the size of the project and the rating system under which the project is registered. Certification fees are due when you submit your application for review. After all that work you did to submit your documentation, don't forget to send your payment! Remember, GBCI will not begin your review until payment in full has been received and cleared our system (thank you!). Also, please note that certification fees are based on the fees published at the time the project is submitted for review.
- **Other fees:** Other fees related to expedited reviews, appeals, and other optional aspects of the LEED

certification process may apply, should you pursue these avenues.

[Access the comprehensive fee chart »](#)

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## Resources & Tools

**USGBC offers a number of resources and tools to support you during the process of LEED certification.**

### General resources

[Credit Library](#)

[Addenda database](#)

[Pilot Credit library](#)

[Regional Priority Credit lookup](#)

[LEED Online](#)

### Homes specific

[LEED BD+C: Homes v4 | LEED BD+C: Multifamily Midrise v4 Verification and Submittal Guidelines](#)

[LEED for Homes v2008 Verification and Submittal Guidelines](#)

Reference Guide: [v2008](#), [v4](#)

Rating System Document (v2008): [Homes](#), [Home California](#), [Midrise](#), [Midrise California](#)

Checklist (v2008): [Homes](#), [Homes California](#), [Midrise](#), [Midrise California](#)

[LEED v4 for Homes and Midrise - Ballot Version](#)

[Checklist \(v4\)](#)

[Green Rater Directory](#)

[LEED for Homes Provider Directory](#)

[LEED v4 Homes and Multifamily Workbook](#)

[California T24 LEED v4 Homes and Multifamily Workbook](#)

[LEED for Homes: International market update](#)

[Summary of Changes: LEED 2008 to v4 — Homes and Midrise](#)

[Overview](#)

## Congratulations on your decision to pursue LEED certification!

You're on your way to increasing the value and environmental integrity of your project. This guide will lead you through the process.

LEED for Homes certification involves four main steps:

1. **Register** your project by selecting your team, completing key forms and submitting payment.
2. **Verify** your project milestones and achievements through the on-site verification process.
3. **Review.** Submit the necessary information, calculations and documentation to your Green Rater. Your LEED application is then reviewed by GBCI.
4. **Certify.** Receive the certification decision. If you've earned LEED certification: congratulations!

If you need assistance at any time, please [call or email us](#).

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[Register](#)

## Register

Before you begin, you'll want to make sure that your project has the minimum characteristics that make a project appropriate for pursuing LEED.

Building projects pursuing LEED 2008 certification must:

- Be defined as a dwelling unit by all applicable codes - so every participating building must have a cooking area and a bathroom
- Be in a permanent location on existing land
- Use reasonable LEED boundaries
- Be a complete, permanent building:
  - A building cannot be partially certified. Single units in multi-family buildings cannot participate in LEED for Homes unless the entire building is registered to participate. Stacked attached homes, such as condominium flats, are considered to be multi-family buildings.
  - Every unit within a multi-family building must earn the same certification level (e.g. Silver, Gold).
  - Single-family side-by-side attached homes, such as row houses, are considered to be separate buildings
- Work with a credentialed LEED for Homes Green Rater

Building projects pursuing LEED v4 certification must:

- Be in a permanent location on existing land
- Use reasonable LEED boundaries
- Comply with project size requirements

For more information, LEED 2008 projects should read the [Scope and Eligibility Guidelines LEED for Homes - 2008 Version](#). LEED v4 projects should visit the [LEED Credit Library](#) to read the specifics on Minimum Program Requirements and the Supplemental Guidance to the Minimum Program Requirements.

Next up: select the appropriate LEED rating system for your project using our Rating System Selection Guidance for [LEED 2009](#) or [LEED v4](#).

Now, onward to registration: visit [LEED Online](#), the online portal through which you will submit your application for certification, as well as access a variety of tools and resources, complete the registration information related to your project, submit payment and sign the certification agreement (the project owner must do this last one). Once you've finished, your project application will be accessible in [LEED Online](#).

From here, you can assemble your project team and the documentation process begins!

### Verification team roles

LEED for Homes requires on-site verification and performance testing - your Verification Team will provide these services for your project. Verification Team members are a great resource for you: they have worked on hundreds, if not thousands, of LEED for Homes projects, and can walk you and your team through the best way to incorporate the rating system requirements into your project's planning, design and construction. Here's a rundown of who's who so you can select your team wisely:

- **LEED for Homes Provider organization:** Your [LEED for Homes Provider Organization](#) will oversee the certification process. Provider organizations work with a network of Green Raters (below) and provide quality assurance of their verification services.
- **LEED for Homes Green Rater:** [Green Raters](#) provide the required on-site verification for LEED for

Homes projects and complete the LEED for Homes Workbook (view a [sample](#)), the comprehensive tool that documents fulfillment of [LEED Credit Library](#) and prerequisites.

- **Energy rater:** The LEED for Homes rating system requires that the project is performance tested by a qualified energy rater. The Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) administers credentials and oversees the largest body of energy raters, called Home Energy Raters (HERS Raters). In many cases, your Green Rater may also be a qualified energy rater, or HERS Rater, and can provide you with both the required on-site verification and performance testing services. Your Provider and/or Green Rater can help you select a qualified energy rater.



You can begin by contacting either the Green Rater or the Provider directly; they work closely together. To find a LEED for Homes Provider Organization, visit the [Provider Directory](#). Another good way to find a Provider is through a Green Rater. With a growing network of Green Raters (see our [directory](#)), you'll be sure to find a Green Rater in your area who works with one of our Provider organizations. While it is not uncommon for the Provider to be located in a different city than the project, the Green Rater will be visiting your project site for a minimum of two visits - often more. It is most common and convenient to have a local Green Rater. If you register your project in [LEED Online](#) without a Verification Team identified, we will contact you to assist. It's very important to engage with your Verification Team as early in the process as possible and before construction begins.

Click [here](#) to view a detailed Verification Team Scope of Services. This document details the mandatory services that will be provided by your verification team.

## Project Team Roles

In addition to your LEED for Homes Verification team, you will also select project team members to work with you throughout the project process:

- **Owner:** The owner of the project is the person (or entity) who has the authority to hold and control the real and personal property associated with your project, and accepts (or authorizes the acceptance of) the certification agreement. While there may be multiple owners for a particular project (if so, please submit a [Confirmation of Primary Owner's Authority Form](#)), we ask that you identify a single individual to administer the certification process. Big takeaway: the owner has ultimate control over the LEED certification application, meaning that the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI: the organization responsible for administering LEED certification) will respond to the owner regarding the administration of the project over any other member of the project team.

## Important considerations

### Deadline for registration

We encourage you to complete the registration steps as early in the design process as possible, before you begin construction. [View the LEED registration close and certification close deadlines.](#)

### Single buildings vs. multiple buildings:

A project is defined as a single building. For example, a development consisting of six single-family homes would be six projects, and a project consisting of three large multifamily buildings with 50 residential units each would be considered three projects. If you are working on multiple buildings at once, such as a group of multifamily buildings or a production home development, we offer **bulk registration** and **batch certification** to help streamline verification requirements and reduce cost.

### Identify your building type(s):

#### Bulk registration:

Bulk registration allows you to register a group of buildings in a single registration, given that all buildings in the bulk registration are:

#### Batch Certification:

Within a bulk registration group, you may submit multiple projects as a batch certification, given that all buildings in the batch certification:

- **Agent:** The agent is the person (or entity) who is granted actual authority by the owner to register the project and accept the certification agreement. If you are using this option, remember to upload a signed [Confirmation of Agent's Authority Form](#).
  - **Project Administrator:** This team member acts as a project manager, overseeing the LEED project as well as which project team members are responsible for certain tasks, credits or prerequisites. The project administrator plays a key quality role by checking that the LEED submission is complete and accurate before submitting the project to GBCI for review, and accepting the review results once the review is complete. Note: the individual who initially registers the project will automatically be granted the role of the project administrator, but the owner may transfer this role to another team member at any time
  - **Single family attached:** Townhouse-style single family homes. Adjoining units are separated by vertical dividing walls.
  - **Single family detached:** Stand-alone single family structures.
  - **Multifamily lowrise:** Multifamily housing (apartments, condominiums, etc.) consisting of units that are separated by horizontal dividing walls so the units are stacked up to three conditioned stories above grade.
  - **Multifamily midrise:** Multifamily housing (apartments, condominiums, etc.) consisting of units that are separated by horizontal dividing walls so that the units are stacked four or more stories (LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise, LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010). *Note: Buildings with four to five stories can use LEED Homes Multifamily Lowrise if they have 80 percent in-unit space OR, if they are required to use ENERGY STAR for Homes by a funding or incentive program.*
  - Under the responsibility of one builder/developer

- Located in a single country
  - Pursuing certification under the same rating system (LEED for Homes v2008, LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010, LEED v4 BD+C:Homes or LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise)
  - Meet bulk registration requirements
  - Are part of a single metropolitan area and within the same country. For metropolitan areas in the U.S. or Canada that cross state or province lines, a batch may consist of buildings in up to two states or provinces
  - Have the same project team and verification team
  - Are located in the same climate zone
  - Earn the same certification level
  - Utilize the “worst-case” set of LEED for Homes credits: this means if some units earn more credits than others, the batch is reviewed at the lower level of credits achieved.
  - *For LEED for Homes v2008 and LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010 only:* Have the same designer, builder, and subcontractors
  - *For LEED v4 BD+C: Homes and LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise only:* Have the same designer and builder
- 

## [Verify](#)

### **Verify**

Off to a good start? Great. In order to verify that your project is on track and properly achieving certain milestones and steps in the LEED for Homes certification process, you'll need to participate in on-site verification throughout the design and construction process. On-site verification involves working with your Verification Team to arrange site visits and provide supplemental documentation when requested.

### **Preliminary Rating**

Integrative Project Planning Prerequisite 1.1 within the LEED for Homes rating system requires you to conduct a preliminary meeting with the Verification Team and key members of your project team early in the design process. As part of the meeting, you will create an action plan that identifies the following:

- The targeted LEED certification level
- The LEED for Homes credits that you have selected to pursue in order to meet the targeted award level
- 
- The individuals accountable for meeting the LEED for Homes requirements for each selected prerequisite and credit

Communication with your Verification Team during construction is critical to ensure the Green Rater and energy rater visit the site at key milestones – your project team is responsible for scheduling these visits. Verification Teams follow the LEED for Homes Verification and Submittal Guidelines in order to adequately verify all prerequisites and pursued credits – you may wish to peruse these guidelines for reference.

### **Mid-construction verification visit**

LEED for Homes requires a mid-construction verification site visit, sometimes called the “pre-drywall” visit. During this visit, the Green Rater and energy rater will verify certain building systems that are only visible while the building walls remain open, such as efficient framing measures and installed ventilation ducting. Please note that this verification visit is mandatory for certification, and provides the Green Rater an opportunity to observe your project’s compliance with credit requirements that are fulfilled over time, such as construction waste management.

## **Final construction verification visit**

Once construction is complete, including landscape, the Green Rater and energy rater return for the second mandatory site visit. During this visit, the Green Rater verifies that you have met all remaining prerequisite and credit requirements, and the energy rater conducts the required performance testing.

## **Supplemental documentation**

Many prerequisite and credit requirements cannot be adequately verified through site visits alone. For those reasons, the Verification Team will ask to see appropriate documentation, such as project plans, material specifications, etc. Make sure to keep key documents on-hand and well organized!

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## [Review](#)

## **Review**

**Once your Verification Team has verified all prerequisites and pursued credits, the Green Rater is ready to submit the appropriate documentation to the LEED for Homes Provider for their quality assurance review. This occurs before your Provider submits your completed LEED for Homes Workbook for certification review to GBCI.**

Once your Provider has submitted your LEED for Homes Workbook, you will receive a prompt to pay the certification fees – once received, GBCI will begin your certification review. The Verification Team will participate in the review process with GBCI.

All LEED for Homes projects undergo a standard review, in which your Provider will submit your entire application (all credits and prerequisites) once the project is complete.

### **Part 1: Preliminary Review**

- Your Provider will first submit your completed application for a preliminary review. GBCI will check your application for completeness and compliance with the selected rating system and attempted credits.
- GBCI will respond with its preliminary review within 20-25 business days, indicating which prerequisites and credits are anticipated to be awarded during final review, pending further information or denied.
- Your team can accept the preliminary review results as final if you are satisfied or submit new or revised documentation, and/or attempt additional credits before submitting for final review.

### **Part 2: Final Review (optional)**

- The final review stage allows your Verification Team to submit supplementary information or amend/clarify the application. GBCI will review revised or newly submitted prerequisites and credits,

and reconsider any anticipated credits or prerequisites for which information has changed since the return of the preliminary review.

- GBCI will respond with a final LEED certification review report within 20-25 business days, marking prerequisites and attempted credits as either awarded or denied.
- Like the preliminary review, you can either accept the review results as final, or revise your application and submit for re-review (appeal).

### **Part 3: Re-review/Appeal Review (optional, appeal fees apply)**

- The appeal review stage provides one additional round of review and allows you to submit supplementary information, amend the application or add new credits not previously attempted. GBCI will review the pending or newly submitted prerequisites and credits, and reconsider any anticipated credits or prerequisites for which information has changed since the return of the final review.
- GBCI will respond with an appeal LEED certification review report within 20-25 business days, marking prerequisites and attempted credits as either awarded or denied.
- Like the final review, you can either accept the appeal review results as final, or submit a further appeal.

## **Optional pre-review**

The pre-review allows you to get feedback from GBCI during the design process, prior to submitting for certification review, and is available for the following model/credits only (if you'd like feedback on a different prerequisite or credit from GBCI prior to the certification review, please read up on how to file an inquiry, below):

All required documentation should be submitted to your Verification Team, who will then submit directly to GBCI.

## **Expedited review**

In a time crunch? [Contact GBCI](#) at least five business days (please allow longer if you are paying by check) prior to submitting an application to request an expedited review to cut your review time in half (reduced from 20-25 business days to 10-12 business days per review phase). Please note that there is an additional charge for this service, and GBCI's ability to fulfill your request depends on their current review capacity. If GBCI can accommodate your request, they will confirm availability and provide a custom review schedule for your project.

## **Submitting an inquiry**

Having difficulty fulfilling a rating system prerequisite or credit? Have you thought of an alternative way to interpret a credit or path to fulfill it? We've established inquiries so that you can gain clarification before you register your project or as you're working through your LEED application. All inquiries are filed through [LEED Online](#) (unless you haven't registered yet – in which case, please reach out to [GBCI](#)) and should address only one credit or prerequisite. Here are your options:

## **Important considerations**

### **Deadline for submitting for review**

Your Provider will need to submit for review no later than two years after your project is substantially completed (the date on which your building receives a certificate of occupancy or similar official indication that it is fit and ready for use). If you decide you no longer want to pursue LEED certification for your project, we understand. Please contact GBCI so that they can close your application and maintain accurate



records.

## Appeals

If you feel that the results of a review appeal or a CIR appeal are incorrect and wish to challenge those results, you may do so by contacting GBCI.

- *As-designed energy model for LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010 and LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise projects:* The pre-review will ensure that you will meet the minimum energy performance requirement and earn sufficient points. Once construction is complete, you'll need to submit an as-built version of the energy model to your Verification Team if any changes to the model have occurred.
- *Water Efficiency Credit 2.3 and Sustainable Sites Credit 2.5 in LEED for Homes v2008 and LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010:* Submit your "reduction in irrigation demand" calculations to confirm that your team has completed the calculation correctly and that the project is on track to earn the associated points, so long as you fully implement the strategies indicated in the pre-review.
  - **Credit Interpretation Ruling (CIR):** A CIR allows you to obtain technical guidance related to a particular credit or facet of the LEED rating system. Our review team will let you know if your interpretation of a particular credit or prerequisite is consistent with published rating system requirements. When it comes time to submit your application for review, you will need to provide documentation demonstrating fulfillment of the CIR and indicate the approved CIR within your application for certification. You may file an appeal if you are not satisfied with the result of your CIR using the process above. Keep in mind, also, that CIRs are not precedent setting; your project team can only utilize the ruling for the project under which the CIR was submitted. /li>
  - **LEED Interpretation:** Administered by USGBC, LEED Interpretations focus on the evolution of the LEED rating system and are published periodically in the form of official addenda. They are developed through a deliberative process involving LEED committees and are not conducted within the standard 20-25 business day timelines. Like Project CIRs, LEED Interpretations provide answers to technical inquiries about applying LEED in situations not already addressed by the rating systems, reference guides and MPRs. They differ from Project CIRs in that, as USGBC issued addenda, these rulings are precedent-setting and applicable to all projects registered in the future. As in the case with all addenda, projects registered before a LEED Interpretation is published may voluntarily elect to follow these revisions. You can access published LEED Interpretations online in our [searchable database](#) .

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## [Certify](#)

# Certify

You've made it to the finish line: accepting your certification is the final step in the LEED review process. Once your final application review is complete, your project team can either accept or appeal GBCI's final certification report. If you've achieved certification: congratulations from all of us at USGBC and GBCI!

Once you've accepted the final certification report, the project will be deemed "closed out" – meaning that you will no longer be able to appeal the certification level or review decisions for specific credits or prerequisites, so please double (or triple) check that you have achieved all prerequisites and targeted credits before accepting the final certification.

## Certification Levels

While all LEED certified projects are a cut above the rest, each is assigned one of four levels of certification



to acknowledge the degree of achievement. The number of points that your project earns determines the level of LEED Certification that your project will receive.

Certification levels for LEED v4 BD+C: Homes and LEED v4 BD+C: Multifamily Midrise:

- LEED Certified™: 40-49 points earned
- LEED Silver®: 50-59 points earned
- LEED Gold®: 60-79 points earned
- LEED Platinum®: 80+ points earned

Certification levels for LEED for Homes v2008 and LEED for Homes Midrise Pilot v2010:

- LEED Certified™: 45-59 points earned
- LEED Silver®: 60-74 points earned
- LEED Gold®: 75-89 points earned
- LEED Platinum®: 90+ points earned

## **Promote your project**

Once you've earned certification, it's likely that you'll want to tell the world. You should. LEED certification benefits your personal or business bottom line and underscores your sustainability efforts. It's a cause for celebration!

Our [public relations guide](#) for LEED-certified projects can help you do that. You'll also receive a formal certificate of recognition, and can choose to order LEED plaques and certificates. [Learn more.](#)

(Psst... did you know that USGBC Platinum-level members receive 20 hours of dedicated public relations support from USGBC's in-house communications team? Learn more about [Platinum membership.](#))

## **Project information: How USGBC handles your data**

Your work with LEED is something to be celebrated – and communicated to the world at large. Achieving LEED certification gives you the opportunity to share your project strategies, photos and insight, and play a pivotal role in educating other project teams.

### **How is USGBC utilizing your project data?**

We use your project data for the greater good: to educate and provide resources for LEED project teams and others around the world, showcase your strategies, and share the size and power of the green building movement.

Residential LEED-certified projects are, by default, considered “public” projects, and thereby included in USGBC's public LEED project directory. A listing in this directory allows the general public and members of the media to look up your project listing and its related details.

Here's a full list of the data and project elements that may be listed in the project directory:

### **Project directory information**

- Project name
- Project ID
- Physical address, with link to Google map
- Date of registration
- Date of certification

- Certification level
- Total points earned
- Project scorecard
- ACP (Alternative Compliance Path) selection
- Project scorecard
- Rating system and version
- Builder name
- Builder type
- Builder organization
- Gross square footage
- Total property area
- Project type

All “public” projects also benefit from publicity opportunities: we may utilize your project data to create case studies highlighting your project’s features, reference your project on our website or to the media, or create other derivative works.

Information that may be used for articles, project profiles, other features:

- Service providers
- Project team members
- Promotional or other project photographs
- Project strategies for certification
- Quotations from team members

You are free to opt-out of the LEED project directory and publicity opportunities as a “private project” at the time of registration: specific instructions on how to do so are available in [LEED Online](#). All private projects that earn certification will be prompted once more to transition to public status (we can’t help ourselves, we love sharing good news!). You will need to re-confirm your “private” status at that time, if you wish to retain it. We respect your privacy, and should you choose to retain your "private" project status, we will never share your confidential project information. Please note, confidential, or private LEED-certified projects are not authorized to use the LEED certification logos.

## **Important considerations**

### **Deadline for achieving certification**

Each rating system will remain open and available for certification for at least six years after the rating system registration close date. To certify your project under a specific rating system, you must submit for certification by that rating system's certification close date, also called the sunset date. If you have difficulty meeting this deadline, please reach out to GBCI—they’ll work with you on a solution for your project. [View the LEED registration close and certification close deadlines.](#)

### **Revocation of LEED certification**

Verification teams and GBCI reviewers work hard to ensure that any problems with a project application are discovered and resolved during the certification process. However, in rare situations, LEED certification may be revoked. We’ve created the **Certification Challenge Policy** to ensure that all LEED project applications and subsequent reviews by GBCI team members are done so with integrity, accuracy and truthfulness. A certification challenge may be initiated by GBCI or by any third party within 18 months of a project’s certification. In line with the policy, you need to retain all project documentation related to your certification, and the achievement of prerequisites and credits, on-site at your certified project for two years after receiving certification, to ensure that this information is available in case of a challenge. Click below to

read the policy in its entirety.

This Certification Challenge Policy has been put in place to protect the integrity of the LEED certification program as a credible, accurate, and industry-recognized system for evaluating the design and construction of sustainable buildings. GBCI intends this policy to function as both a quality check on GBCI LEED reviews, as well as an instrument designed to detect and remedy incidents of intentional or inadvertent misrepresentation which result in the inappropriate award of LEED certification. This policy is not meant to serve as a vehicle for the adjudication of disputes between outside parties. Accordingly, this policy and the certification challenge process detailed herein do not replace any applicable judicial or other alternative dispute resolution processes that third parties may have available to resolve such disputes between themselves. Complaints that might warrant initiation of the Certification Challenge Process should be submitted to [legal@gbc.org](mailto:legal@gbc.org).

- 1.1 Certification Challenge Overview: All persons participating in the submission of information in applying for an award of LEED certification must be truthful, forthcoming, and cooperative in their dealings with GBCI; however, it is the responsibility of the project owner to confirm and represent the veracity and accuracy of the documentation submitted. To the extent the veracity or accuracy of such documentation, or GBCI's evaluation of the same, is called into question, GBCI may initiate a certification challenge thereby revisiting its determination that the submitted documentation properly demonstrates that the project satisfied all credits, prerequisites, and MPRs necessary to achieve the awarded level of LEED certification. A project owner may defend against such certification challenge by electing to participate in the process described below. Based on the final determination of such a challenge, GBCI retains the right to reduce the level of LEED certification awarded or revoke an award of LEED certification altogether.
- 1.2 Basis for an Initiation of a Certification Challenge: GBCI reserves the right to institute investigations and review documentation for any reason or for no reason at all. In addition, GBCI encourages third parties who wish to make a complaint, or bring to light information affecting the grant of LEED certification to do so in the following manner. Parties seeking to submit a complaint or report information affecting the grant of LEED certification must have specific personal knowledge of an event or condition that would prevent a project from satisfying a particular credit, prerequisite, or MPR. Complainants must indicate the credit, prerequisite, or MPR that is affected. Further, such persons must indicate to the fullest extent possible, in the form of a written statement, details of such event or condition including the following: i) the alleged offending conduct or condition; ii) the persons involved; iii) other persons who may have knowledge of the facts and circumstances concerning the allegation, including contact information for such persons; and iv) the identity of the person presenting the complaint including such person's full name, address, email, and telephone number. Complaints ideally should be submitted to GBCI within eighteen (18) months of the award of LEED certification for a project. GBCI cannot guarantee anonymity to persons submitting complaints. If GBCI determines that the complaint is frivolous or irrelevant to the credits, prerequisites and MPRs required for LEED certification, no further action will be taken.
- 1.3 Initiation of a Certification Challenge: The GBCI President may initiate a formal investigation into the appropriateness of an award of certification to a particular project if the veracity or accuracy of the documentation supporting such award is called into question, or if GBCI's evaluation of such documentation is suspected to have been incomplete or flawed. A formal investigation will be deemed opened upon the date that GBCI sends written notice to the project owner that such investigation has been initiated. The investigation will remain open until a final determination is reached on such certification challenge. GBCI shall not publicly comment on an ongoing investigation prior to the forwarding of the final determination on such certification challenge to the project owner.
- 1.4 Certification Challenge Investigation Process: In performing a formal investigation, GBCI will review any or all of the project's documentation that GBCI, in its sole discretion, deems relevant. GBCI may request supplemental information from the person(s) making the complaint and may require the complainant to provide a statement in the form of an affidavit attested to under penalty of perjury. GBCI may request information from the project team, project owner, and/or others involved

in the project.

If GBCI determines that a site visit may be useful, GBCI, with the assistance of one or more technical consultants, may, but is not required to, conduct an on-site inspection of a project. GBCI shall notify the project owner of the necessity of the site visit in writing. GBCI representatives including staff members and/or technical consultants shall make the arrangements for the site visit.

No staff or technical consultant may: i) investigate any matter regarding a project he or she previously reviewed; ii) investigate any matter in which his or her impartiality might reasonably be questioned; or iii) investigate any matter which presents an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest. GBCI representatives who are tasked with conducting a site visit must sign an engagement agreement and abide by GBCI requirements regarding conflicts of interest and confidentiality.

- 1.5 GBCI Preliminary Staff Findings: Upon the conclusion of an investigation, if GBCI determines in its sole discretion that the project owner submitted truthful and accurate documentation when applying for certification and that sufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that (i) all prerequisites and MPRs were properly completed at the time certification was conferred and (ii) the minimum number of credits were properly completed at the time certification was conferred such that the project obtained the requisite number of points necessary to achieve LEED certification at the level awarded, no further action will be taken. The project owner and any persons submitting complaints will be notified of this decision. If GBCI determines that the documentation submitted was not completely truthful and accurate, or that insufficient evidence exists to demonstrate the project properly achieved LEED certification at the level awarded, GBCI shall transmit a statement of its findings to the project owner by email via verifiable method of delivery, setting forth the affected credits, prerequisites, and/or MPRs, and including a written statement:
  1. of the facts constituting the inaccurate grant of credit, prerequisite, minimum program requirement, or falsely submitted documentation and the credits/prerequisites/minimum program requirements affected;
  2. that the project owner has thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of such statement to notify GBCI if it disputes the findings and to provide a written response; and
  3. identifying the proposed sanctions determined by GBCI potentially including revocation of LEED certification, or reduction of the level of LEED certification awarded.
- 1.6 Stage 1: Contesting GBCI Preliminary Staff Findings: If the project owner seeks to contest the findings, or is unwilling to accept the determined sanctions, such owner must submit a written response addressing the Preliminary GBCI Staff Findings and/or the determined sanctions within thirty (30) calendar days after the owner's receipt of such statement. The project owner may also submit additional information related to the challenged LEED program requirement(s). If the project owner accepts, or fails to timely respond to such statement and underlying findings, GBCI shall enact the determined sanctions and close the matter. Such acceptance, or failure to respond, shall constitute a waiver of the right to a review or hearing and appeal of the same.

Upon receiving a response to this statement, GBCI staff shall make a determination as to the disposition of the challenge and identify the sanctions to be imposed. GBCI shall provide notice of such determination and sanctions to the project owner along with a statement:

1. that the owner or representative thereof may request an oral hearing (in person or by phone) or a review by written briefing for the disposition of the matter, with the owner bearing its own expenses;
2. that the owner or representative may appear in person, may examine and cross-examine any witness under oath, and may produce evidence on its behalf;
3. that if the owner disputes the findings, or requests a review or hearing, the owner thereby consents to the formation of a Review Panel for the purpose of rendering a decision on the evidence before it, and further agrees to comply with any applicable sanctions subject to an appeal; and
4. those certain administrative fees, as detailed in Pricing Appendix A, apply if the project team requests a written review or hearing.

- 1.7 Stage 2: Written Review or Hearing of a GBCI Staff Determination: If a project owner seeks to contest the determination or sanctions issued by GBCI staff, the project owner may submit a request for either a hearing or review by written briefing. The fees outlined in Pricing Appendix A must be provided to GBCI within thirty (30) calendar days following the date the owner's written request was received by GBCI.

If the project owner requests a hearing or written review, the GBCI Chair in consultation with the GBCI President shall appoint three persons to serve on a Review Panel, each of whom shall be qualified by virtue of training and experience to have the appropriate technical knowledge in the relevant LEED program requirements. No member of such Review Panel may: i) review any matter regarding a project he or she previously reviewed; ii) review any matter in which his or her impartiality might reasonably be questioned; or iii) review any matter which presents an If the project owner requests a written review, GBCI will forward its findings and the response of the project owner to the Review Panel. Written briefing may be submitted within thirty (30) calendar days following receipt of the request for such written review.

If the project owner requests a hearing, GBCI shall forward its findings and the response of the project owner to the Review Panel and shall designate one staff member to present the findings and any substantiating evidence, to examine and cross-examine witnesses, and to present the matter during the hearing. The Review Panel will schedule a hearing after the request is received, allowing for a period of at least thirty (30) days to prepare for such hearing, and will send by email and via verifiable means of delivery, a Notice of Hearing to the project owner. The Notice of Hearing will include a statement of the time and place selected by the Review Panel. The project owner may request modification of the time and place for good cause.

The Review Panel, GBCI, and the project owner may consult with and be represented by counsel, make opening statements, present documents and testimony, examine and cross-examine witnesses under oath, make closing statements and present written briefs as scheduled by the Review Panel. To the extent a project owner or representative fails to attend the hearing in person or by phone, such hearing shall commence as scheduled without representation by the owner. The Review Panel will determine all matters related to the hearing. Formal rules of evidence will not apply. Relevant evidence may be admitted. Disputed questions will be determined by the Review Panel.

GBCI will meet its burden of proof if it is able to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence, and the project owner is unable to refute either that the project owner failed to submit truthful, and accurate documentation when applying for certification, or that insufficient evidence exists to demonstrate that (i) all prerequisites and MPRs were properly completed at the time certification was conferred and (ii) that the minimum number of credits were properly completed at the time certification was conferred such that the project obtained the requisite number of points necessary to achieve LEED certification at the level awarded.

Upon the conclusion of a review or hearing, if the Review Panel determines that GBCI has not met this burden of proof no adverse action will be advised and the matter shall be closed. If the Review Panel determines that GBCI has met this burden of proof it shall identify the appropriate sanctions to be carried out by GBCI.

The Review Panel will issue a written decision following the review or hearing. This decision will contain factual findings, conclusions, and any sanctions if appropriate. Such written decision shall be sent promptly by email via verifiable means of delivery to the project owner and any persons submitting complaints.

- 1.8 Stage 3: Appeal of a Review Panel Decision Before GBCI Board of Directors: If a project owner seeks to contest the decision of the Review Panel, such owner may submit a request for an appeal to the GBCI Board of Directors. All requests for appeals must be submitted in writing and sent to GBCI by verified and traceable email, U.S. Postal Service mail, personal delivery, or private courier (such as

Federal Express, United Parcel Service, etc), within thirty (30) calendar days after the owner's receipt of the Review Panel's decision. Requests for appeals must be accompanied by written briefing setting forth the basis for the appeal. If the project owner requests an appeal in accordance with this section, the fees outlined in pricing Appendix A must be provided to GBCI within thirty (30) calendar days of GBCI's receipt of such request.

In order to overturn a certification challenge decision by the Review Panel, it shall be the burden of the project owner to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the GBCI Board of Directors that such decision was arbitrary or capricious.

The GBCI Board of Directors will render a written decision based on the record below and written briefs (if any); there will be no oral hearing. The decision of the GBCI Board of Directors will be mailed promptly by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the project owner. Decisions rendered by the GBCI Board of Directors shall be final. Persons submitting complaints shall be notified of the decision of the GBCI Board of Directors.

- **1.9 Revocation of LEED certification:** Based on the final determination of a Certification Challenge, GBCI retains the right to reduce the level of LEED certification awarded, or to revoke an award of LEED certification.

GBCI retains the right, in its sole discretion, to revoke LEED certification from any project where it is denied access to a project for the purposes of performing an audit or site visit, or it is prevented from examining documentation related to the project's design, construction, and/or operations pertaining to LEED certification, as a result of a project owner being unwilling or unable to provide such access or documentation.

GBCI retains the right, in its reasonable discretion, to revoke LEED certification from any project where it is denied access to, or for which it is not provided with, energy and water use data on an ongoing basis after LEED certification is conferred, as is required.

To the extent a project is subject to revocation of LEED certification, such project will be removed from the LEED certified project database and may no longer be referred to as a LEED certified project. GBCI shall identify the project's certification as having been revoked. Additionally, if GBCI revokes certification of any project for which a Platinum-level certification was previously awarded, and for which the project owner received a rebate of any or all certification fees, the owner of such project shall be liable for refunding all monies so received to GBCI. Further, the owner of such project shall immediately terminate all use and display of any LEED trademarks, associated logos, and other intellectual property licensed by GBCI

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## [Fees](#)

## Fees

### **LEED certification provides an exceptional value for your money: So, how much will it cost to certify your project?**

- **Registration fee:** There is a flat registration fee (discounted for USGBC Silver-level members and above) calculated on a per-project (building) basis that you'll pay up front at the time of registration. If we haven't received your payment within 60 days of your registration, we'll assume you changed your mind and go ahead and cancel the registration.
- **Certification fee:** The certification fee is charged on a per-project (building) basis and based on the size of the project and the rating system under which the project is registered. Certification fees are due when you submit your application for review. After all that work you did to submit your

documentation, don't forget to send your payment! Remember, GBCI will not begin your review until payment in full has been received and cleared our system (thank you!). Also, please note that certification fees are based on the fees published at the time the project is submitted for review.

- **Other fees:** Other fees related to expedited reviews, appeals, and other optional aspects of the LEED certification process may apply, should you pursue these avenues.

[Access the comprehensive fee chart »](#)

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[Resources & Tools](#)

## Resources & Tools

**USGBC offers a number of resources and tools to support you during the process of LEED certification.**

### General resources

[Credit Library](#)

[Addenda database](#)

[Pilot Credit library](#)

[Regional Priority Credit lookup](#)

[LEED Online](#)

### Homes specific

[LEED BD+C: Homes v4 | LEED BD+C: Multifamily Midrise v4 Verification and Submittal Guidelines](#)

[LEED for Homes v2008 Verification and Submittal Guidelines](#)

Reference Guide: [v2008](#), [v4](#)

Rating System Document (v2008): [Homes](#), [Home California](#), [Midrise](#), [Midrise California](#)

Checklist (v2008): [Homes](#), [Homes California](#), [Midrise](#), [Midrise California](#)

[LEED v4 for Homes and Midrise - Ballot Version](#)

[Checklist \(v4\)](#)

[Green Rater Directory](#)

[LEED for Homes Provider Directory](#)

[LEED v4 Homes and Multifamily Workbook](#)

[California T24 LEED v4 Homes and Multifamily Workbook](#)

[LEED for Homes: International market update](#)

[Summary of Changes: LEED 2008 to v4 — Homes and Midrise](#)