



Comparison of Enterprise Green Communities Criteria and USGBC's LEED for Homes

The LEED for Homes Rating System was released in 2008. The LEED for Homes Rating System is promoting the adoption of more sustainable practices by the mainstream homebuilding industry. LEED for Homes is targeting the top 25% of new homes with best practice environmental features. By recognizing sustainable design and construction in homes nationwide, LEED for Homes helps home builders differentiate their homes as some of the highest quality homes in their markets, using a recognized national brand. Furthermore, homebuyers can now more readily identify a third-party verified green home.

PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY:

The LEED for Homes program is aimed at recognizing single family homes, or low-rise multifamily buildings that build to certain standards. The LEED for Homes Rating System focuses largely on new construction projects, but can be applied to 'gut rehab' so long as it can meet the energy performance requirements under the *Energy and Atmosphere* section.

Projects eligible for LEED for Homes include:

- Single-family homes (including townhomes that share a common vertical wall)
- Low-rise multifamily (1-3 story buildings, including duplexes or other stacked housing units that share a common ceiling or floor)
- Production Homes
- Affordable Homes
- Manufactured and Modular Homes
- Existing Homes (gut rehab only)

All projects participating in the LEED for Homes certification program must use a LEED for Homes Provider. See "Certification" for more details about the certification process.

POINT STRUCTURE:

The LEED for Homes Rating Systems has four certification tiers that a project team can achieve by meeting all of the applicable prerequisites and obtaining the required number of optional points in a series of categories to determine if the project is "Certified" (45-59 pts), "Silver" (60-74), "Gold" (75-89 pts), or "Platinum" (90-136 pts). The program also requires that a Home Size Adjustment be applied to the building calculations that will alter the required number of optional points based on the size of the home. The effect of this Home Size Adjustment is that

“smaller-than-average” homes are rewarded and “larger-than-average homes” are penalized.¹ The categories, along with points available and required, include:

LEED for Homes Categories	EGC Alignment	Pre-reqs	Optional	Point Floor
Innovation and Design Process (ID)	1/7	3	11	0
Location and Linkages (LL)	2	0	10	0
Sustainable Sites (SS)	2/3/6	2	22	5
Water Efficiency (WE)	4	0	15	3
Energy and Atmosphere (EA)	5	2	38	0
Materials and Resources (MR)	6/7	3	16	2
Indoor Environmental Quality (EQ)	7	7	21	6
Awareness and Education	8	1	3	0
Totals	-	19²	136	16

CERTIFICATION PROCESS:

Buildings pursuing Certification under the LEED for Homes Rating System must follow the steps below:³

- Contact a LEED for Homes Provider and register project with USGBC
 - The Provider will conduct an analysis of the building ensure it is certifying to the appropriate for the program, and determine a preliminary estimate of their LEED score and certification level. The project team (typically the LEED for Homes Provider) registers the project online. See table below for fees.
- Identify a project team
- Build the home to the stated goals and have green measures verified by a Green Rater and qualified energy rater.
 - At the design phase, a project will select a green rater to work with and review the design. During the construction process, the green rater will conduct onsite verification at critical points such as a pre-drywall site visit. Verification fees will be negotiated and charged by the green rater with the project team.
- Achieve certification as a LEED Home
- Post-certification PR and marketing support.

Performance Tests

The Green Rater will conduct several inspections and provide performance testing for several of the credits under the LEED for Homes Rating System. Those include:

- EA 1.1 Meet performance of ENERGY STAR home (prerequisite)
- EA 3 Envelope leakage (prerequisite)
- EA 5 Duct leakage (prerequisite)

¹ LEED for Homes Reference Guide, pp. 9 - 12

² LEED for Homes Simplified Project Checklist, dated Nov. 1, 2009

³ LEED for Homes Reference Guide, pp. 5.

- EA 6.1 Refrigerate charge test (prerequisite) – test performed by HVAC contractor, not Green Rater
- EQ 4.3 Outdoor air flow test (optional credits)
- EQ 5.3 Local exhaust (optional credits)
- EQ 6.2 Supply air flow test (optional credits)

Certification Notes

The prerequisites and credits and applicable for the entire building, not just the residential spaces. For any section of the building not completed at the time of certification (e.g., commercial space up for lease), tenant fit-out guidelines must be part of any contract and a copy must be submitted with the certification documents to ensure that all prerequisites and credits are met by the entire building, as appropriate.

LEED for Homes Pricing

	Single Family Housing (per unit)		Low-rise Multifamily Housing (per building)		Volume Pricing
	Registration	Certification	Registration	Certification	10+ SF/50+ MF
USGBC Member	\$150	\$0.035/sq ft	\$750	\$225	Contact LEED for Homes Green Rater for pricing
Non-member	\$225	\$0.045/sq ft	\$900	\$300	

Note: Green Rater Verification fees are not included within this matrix. Those fees are contracted directly with the Rater.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH GREEN COMMUNITIES CRITERIA:

Similarities:

- The LEED for Homes is a quality standard backed up with an extensive technical manual. Both LEED for Homes or the Enterprise Green Communities (EGC) Criteria standard would produce truly green buildings.
- Both LEED for Homes and EGC cover roughly the same categories although each program has some mandatory requirements (prerequisite) or optional points that do not overlap.
- Both standards require a pre-construction Green Development Plan. The Green Development Plan required for EGC is based on an integrative design charrette (EGC Criteria 1.1a/b). LEED for Homes requires a preliminary meeting with key project team members be conducted to determine accountability, project goals, and targeted LEED Certification level (LEED for HOMES ID 1.1). Design Charettes are awarded 1 optional point under LEED for Homes credit ID 1.4 Design Charrette.
- Both programs will accept the LEED for Homes EA P1 Alternative pathway as means for satisfying the energy efficiency requirements for the project.
- Both programs do not have extensive energy efficiency sections and instead rely on separate programs (i.e. ENERGY STAR) or performance targets to set requirements.

Differences:

- EGC is designed with more mandatory measures (prerequisites) than LEED for Homes.

- LEED for Homes has significantly less mandatory requirements (prerequisite) and thus gives a project more flexibility in reaching the standard (LEED for Homes: 18 prerequisites. Green Communities has 40 and 36 mandatory requirements for new construction and substantial rehab respectively).
- EGC has a binary certification, whereas LEED for Homes has varying levels of certification.
- EGC satisfies the combustion safety requirements for LEED for Homes, but LEED for Homes does not satisfy all of the requirements for EGC.
- LEED for Homes implements a Home Size Adjuster.
- An EGC project will most likely meet the “Certified” or “Silver” tier of LEED for Homes, but a LEED for Homes may not meet all of the mandatory requirements of EGC, especially under the Location & Neighborhood Fabric category.