



# Scope and Eligibility Guidelines for LEED for Homes Projects *2008 Version*

This document provides guidance on the types of projects that can participate in the LEED for Homes program.

## Universal Requirements for Participation

Any project that participates in LEED for Homes must be defined as a 'dwelling unit' by all applicable codes. This requirement includes, but is not limited to, the IRC stipulation that a dwelling unit must include "permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation." This language has been interpreted by LEED for Homes to mean that every participating home must have a cooking area<sup>1</sup> and a bathroom.

A LEED for Homes certification must be granted to an individual building. This has the following implications:

1. 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.
2. Every unit within a multi-family building must earn the same certification level (e.g. Silver, Gold).
3. Separate buildings must be certified separately. Multiple buildings in a complex, or single-family homes in a subdivision, may be certified separately, but it's not a requirement that all the buildings or homes be certified or that they meet the same certification level. If multiple buildings are planning to certify through the program, each participating building must be registered with USGBC.

Single-family side-by-side attached homes, such as row houses, are considered to be separate buildings.

## Provider Involvement

Every LEED Home project team must work with a designated LEED for Homes Provider, and a project registration must be completed for each project.

The Provider should be involved as early in the process as possible. Projects that have begun construction prior to contacting a Provider may participate in LEED for Homes, subject to the judgment of the Provider, as long as all of the mandatory measures (prerequisites) in LEED for Homes can be met.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of LEED for Homes, the definition of a "cooking area" should rely on local or state codes, but must include a sink, cooking appliance (e.g. stove, oven, microwave), and preparation space.

Typically, buildings cannot pursue certification after drywall has been installed unless all necessary pre-drywall inspections were performed for a different green homebuilding program.

## **Eligible Projects**

The following project types are eligible to participate, subject to the conditions described below. ***Providers are strongly encouraged to scrutinize all projects carefully to ensure that the prerequisites in the LEED for Homes Rating System can be addressed.***

### *Detached single-family homes*

Conventional single-family homes, whether custom, production, or affordable, are eligible to participate.

### *Attached single-family homes*

Homes that serve one family but share one or more vertical party wall with other homes are eligible to participate. This category includes townhomes but does not include stacked duplexes or triplexes, which are considered multi-family buildings.

### *Low-rise multi-family*

Low-rise multi-family buildings are one to three stories<sup>2</sup> high and include two or more dwelling units.

### *Mid-rise multi-family*

Mid-rise multi-family buildings are defined as buildings with four to six stories<sup>1</sup> and at least two dwelling units. These projects are allowed to participate in the LEED for Homes Mid-rise Pilot, which will run through 2010. Mid-rise projects must follow the guidance laid out in the Mid-rise Addendum to LEED for Homes, which includes special energy modeling and ventilation requirements.

In order to participate in the Mid-rise Pilot, each project must have a) adequate expertise to conduct modeling per ASHRAE Standard 90.1; and b) adequate expertise on mid-rise components and systems, so as to provide useful advice on energy-reduction strategies.

### *Gut / rehabilitation*

Projects that are characterized as 'substantial gut/rehab' can participate in LEED for Homes, as long as all of the prerequisites can be met. In order to qualify as a 'substantial' gut/rehab, a project must replace most of the systems and components (e.g. HVAC, windows) and must open up the exterior walls to enable the thermal bypass inspection to be completed.

### *Manufactured and modular housing*

Manufactured or modular homes can participate in LEED for Homes, but manufacturing plants cannot be LEED certified; only individual homes can earn certification, and only after the home is constructed on-site. Providers and Green Raters are encouraged to ensure that all of the energy requirements are met, particularly the thermal bypass inspection (see prerequisite EA 1.1). These projects will generally require the involvement of the plant

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<sup>2</sup> A "story" includes any floor with living or commercial space. A floor that is 80% or more garage space is not considered a story for the purposes of defining the building type in LEED for Homes.

## *LEED for Homes Guidelines for Eligible Projects*

manager / owner, and Providers may need to arrange on-site plant inspections. Please consult USGBC for further guidance on manufactured and modular housing.

### *Mixed-use buildings*

Mixed-use projects may participate if at least 50% of the building's total floor area is residential. In these cases, the project team is expected to prepare "green" tenant fit out guidelines that address energy, water, air quality, and materials performance of the non-residential portion of the building. These guidelines can be based on the commercial LEED Rating Systems.

### *Dormitories and assisted living facilities*

These buildings are typically identified by the presence of a central kitchen facility, and the fact that they fall outside of the scope of ASHRAE Std. 62.2. Any building of this type that does not have cooking and bathroom facilities cannot participate in LEED for Homes. If each unit has its own cooking area and bathroom, the building should be treated as a multi-family building.

Buildings with central kitchen facilities must fall into one of the following categories:

- Small buildings with 2-9 units: these buildings should be treated as single-family homes, and each unit should be treated as a separate bedroom.
- Larger buildings with 10+ units: these buildings should be treated as multi-family buildings, in which each unit is a separate living unit and each unit is compartmentalized (i.e. isolated from common spaces and each other). In this case, central kitchens and common bathrooms are required to meet the local exhaust requirements in ASHRAE Standard 62.1. Common living spaces are required to meet the ventilation requirements in ASHRAE Standard 62.1. In-unit spaces are still required to meet the ventilation requirements in ASHRAE Standard 62.2.

### *International projects*

At this time, projects outside the United States, US territories, or military bases are not allowed to participate in LEED for Homes. Canadian projects are allowed to participate, because USGBC is working with the Canadian Green Building Council to develop a program in Canada.

### *"In-law" flats*

In-law units are typically small, separate units that are attached or co-located with single-family homes. There are a few different designs for in-law flats:

- Attached, with a shared entrance or interior connections (e.g. doors) – the in-law flat should be treated as part of the main home. The flat may be considered a separate bedroom, but not a separate unit.
- Attached, with a separate entrance – the in-law flat must earn the same certification as the main house, but it can either be treated as a separate unit or an additional bedroom to the main home.
- Detached - the in-law flat is a separate building from the main home, and the project team can choose whether or not to pursue LEED certification.