

# GREEN BUILDING INTRODUCTION: *LEED*

DOVETAIL PARTNERS, INC.

2008



## What is LEED?

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program is a national Green Building Rating System developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. The program offers guidance for the design, construction, and operation of green buildings. The Council is composed of over 15,259 organizations and 91,000 individuals (as of May 2008) who actively promote environmentally responsible and profitable buildings and healthy places to live and work. LEED projects can be found in all 50 states and 69 different countries worldwide. The USGBC was founded in 1993 and is represented by a network of over 70 local chapters, affiliates, and organizing groups.

## About LEED

The LEED rating system was created to encourage environmental sustainability by providing consistent and measurable green building standards for the building industry. The system monitors and documents a variety of building types and development phases for their environmental performance. The LEED program includes a review of the entire building project to assess sustainable development.

The standards acknowledge performance in five areas of environmental and human health:

- sustainable site development,
- water savings,
- energy efficiency,
- materials selection, and
- indoor environmental quality

## LEED Assessments

LEED has several programs and green building guidelines for voluntary standards:

- New Commercial Construction and Major Renovation Projects
- Existing Building Operations and Maintenance
- Commercial Interiors Projects
- Core and Shell Construction
- Schools
- Retail
- Healthcare
- Homes
- Neighborhood Development

In development are standards for healthcare facilities.

A project seeking LEED certification must submit an application either via mail or online prior to registration and review.

In order for a project to earn LEED certification, all buildings must meet a minimum of 32 credits before achieving the pursued award level based on performance rating standards. Projects are then awarded a Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum rating, depending on the number of points granted.

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## Uses

LEED is currently the most recognized national standard for green building in the United States. Nearly 3.6 billion square feet of commercial building space are involved with the LEED Green Building Rating System. It is considered a comprehensive approach that can help lower operating costs, provide for healthier and more productive building occupants, and conserve natural resources.

LEED is used within the built environment by multiple agencies and organizations including architects, real estate agents, facility managers, engineers, interior designers, landscape architects, construction managers, lenders, and government officials.

LEED encourages building industry professionals to voluntarily become accredited within the program through the Green Building Certification Institute. LEED Accreditation provides practicing individuals the opportunity to strengthen green building qualifications, enhance skills marketability and industry recognition. Candidates are awarded accreditation after successfully demonstrating proficiency on a comprehensive exam. Over 50,000 individuals have achieved accreditation since the program was launched.

USGBC sponsors an annual Greenbuild International Conference and Expo. The seminars at the conference offer practical knowledge as to how to create lower environmental impact, healthier, and more productive buildings, and how to translate that knowledge into new business opportunities. Held in a different U.S. city each year, the upcoming 2008 conference will be held in Boston in November, focusing on the theme “Revolutionary Green: Innovations for Global Sustainability.” More than 22,000 people attended Greenbuild in 2007.

### **For more information:**

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*This overview was compiled by Dovetail Partners as part of a series of Green Building Introductions. For the most current and complete information about LEED, please contact their office and visit their website.*