

What is LEED?

It is now the standard in commercial building, and LEED for residential homes has really become prominent in the more recent years. So what exactly does LEED mean? LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and is simply a certification process that was set up by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to certify green homes. LEED details the code that all parties who touch the home – from architects, to builders & developers, to the subcontractors will follow.

People often hear that a project is LEED certified Silver or Gold status. There are actually four levels of LEED certification, and projects are awarded points as a project is built. Depending upon the number of points received, the project is awarded certified, silver, gold or platinum status.

According to the USGBC, there are nine key areas measured by LEED:

- Sustainable Sites
- Water Efficiency
- Energy and Atmosphere
- Materials and Resources
- Indoor Environmental Quality
- Location and Linkages
- Awareness and Education
- Innovation in Design
- Regional Priority

Note: a home can be considered a Green Home, but NOT LEED-certified. A completely custom green home can be built, using all of the same products and processes, and yet the homeowners may choose NOT to get the home LEED certified. Some homeowners feel it is enough to know that their home has been built according to green building standards, and is more efficient and well-built, but choose not to through the process and expense of the LEED certification process.

Here is a helpful link to learn more about this

process: <http://greenhomeguide.com/program/leed-for-homes>.

What is Energy Star?

ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that serves to help consumers save money and protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices.

What are the benefits when building Green?

Most clients choose to build green due to the enormous environmental benefits, and the long-term bottom line savings. Building green means maximizing both economic and environmental performance.

According to the United States Environmental Protections Agency, the following are the potential benefits when building Green:

Environmental benefits

- Enhance and protect biodiversity and ecosystems
- Improve air and water quality
- Reduce waste streams
- Conserve and restore natural resources

Economic benefits

- Reduce operating costs
- Create, expand, and shape markets for green product and services
- Improve occupant productivity
- Optimize life-cycle economic performance

Social benefits

- Enhance occupant comfort and health
 - Heighten aesthetic qualities
 - Minimize strain on local infrastructure
 - Improve overall quality of life
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Do homeowners receive a Tax Abatement for building "Green"?

According to the City of Cincinnati: the LEED-CRA residential tax abatement is a real property tax exemption offered for both new construction and renovation of residential space (up to 3 units), constructed according to green standards and located within the City of Cincinnati. To be eligible, projects must receive LEED certification from the US Green Building Council.