

What Is the Difference Between Building "Green" and "LEED Certified?"

The simple answer to this question is that holding LEED certification means you've built green, but, you won't be surprised to hear that that is only part of the answer. Clients often, as part of their mission or for economic reasons, commit to building green, but building green can mean a wide range of things as there is no industry standard for the concept.

Generally speaking, building green is intended to yield some or all of the following benefits: lowering energy, water, waste disposal, emissions, operations and maintenance costs; increasing productivity and health of building occupants; and increasing building values. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System, on the other hand, is a rating system; a way of measuring how green a building has been built or is operating — how effective is the building in achieving the above-enumerated benefits based upon certain universally understood tools and performance criteria.

There are specific rating systems developed or in the process of development for: new construction, existing buildings (operations and maintenance), commercial interiors, core and shell, schools, retail, health care, homes, and neighborhood developments. LEED certification is also awarded at varying degrees such as Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum depending on how many rating points are achieved for a particular project.

Determination of rating points is based upon a checklist prepared for each type of rating system, and includes rating point categories such as site selection, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, innovation and design process. The LEED certification process relies heavily on careful documentation of each element of the design, demolition, construction process and the process of ongoing maintenance, and must be handled by qualified professionals. [Reinhart can help you start off on the right foot](#) with your next "green" building project.

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