



Credit Interpretation Request & Innovation and Design Request Procedures for LEED for Homes Providers

This document summarizes all procedures for submitting and processing of Credit Interpretation Requests from Providers to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for the LEED for Homes Rating System.

What are CIRs and IDs?

Credit interpretation requests (CIRs) are questions about whether designs, technologies, or practices will meet the “intent” of a given LEED for Homes credit (and thereby be awarded LEED points). USGBC-approved CIRs provide a clarification or alternate compliance pathway for a given credit, when the builder cannot meet the “requirements” stated in the rating system for that credit.

Innovation and design process (ID) requests are questions about whether designs, technologies, or practices that are not currently included in the LEED for Homes Rating system can be awarded LEED points and/or whether exceptional performance above the requirements set by the LEED For Homes Rating System can be awarded LEED points. USGBC-approved ID requests provide a method for a builder to receive credit for including an innovative new measure or exceptional performance – that is beyond the scope of the existing rating system. USGBC approved IDs will be considered as LEED for Homes credits in the next version of the rating system.

When should CIRs and ID Requests be submitted?

Builders are encouraged to submit project-related CIRs and IDs to their Provider as early as possible (i.e., at the time of the preliminary rating). Any and all CIRs and IDs are welcome.

Step 1: Informal evaluation of the CIR or ID request

In the interest of time and information management, *all CIR and ID requests should be submitted to USGBC through a Provider*. When a builder submits a question or ID request to the Provider, the Provider should:

- Conduct a quick assessment of whether the CIR or proposed ID request has previously been resolved. If so, the Provider can respond accordingly to the builder or questioner, with any relevant citations from the LEED for Homes CIR/ID Database.

If, to the Provider’s knowledge, the CIR or ID request has not previously been resolved, the Provider should:

- Submit a formal CIR or ID request to USGBC through HomesCIR@usgbc.org.

If this CIR or ID request has previously been resolved, the USGBC will respond accordingly. Otherwise, USGBC may ask for more supporting information and/or data.



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Step 2: Formal CIR or ID Request Submittals

Formal CIRs or ID Requests should be submitted to the USGBC using the CIR or ID Request Forms (see Attachment A), and the content of the request should meet the guidelines below. The USGBC will acknowledge receipt of the request within 1-2 days and forward the request to the relevant Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Each CIR and ID Request will also be given a Database identification number (e.g. EA 03-12).

The TAGs consist of a group of technical experts. Questioners should provide sufficient background information to enable the TAG members to adequately understand the specific proposed building technology or practice, and the unique aspects of the application. The TAGs review many CIRs and ID requests, so CIRs and ID requests should be as succinct as possible and only provide information that is relevant and will help the groups to reach a resolution on the specific question being asked.

Credit Interpretation Requests

All CIRs should clearly explain the primary points of concern or confusion, including any proposed alternative approach or interpretation, and the type of information or clarification that is needed to resolve the question. If the questioner proposes to meet the credit in a different manner than what is given in the rating system, there must be an explanation of the approach and a specific quantification of the benefits (e.g. energy savings, material savings) of the proposed approach, that must be comparable to what is currently in the rating system.

If a CIR is not clear or does not provide sufficient information, USGBC may have to ask for more information and resolution of the CIR will be delayed.

ID Requests

All ID Requests should include the following information (similar to the structure of all LEED for Homes credits):

- Proposed intent. This should briefly explain why this innovation is being installed – i.e. the general environmental benefits it yields. The proposed intent can mirror the intent of existing LEED for Homes credits, but if they are very similar to existing credits then the request may be framed as a CIR rather than an ID request.
- Proposed measures. This should include a succinct explanation of the technology or design measure being proposed, as well as its application in a specific project.
- Proposed metric. This should include a method or metric (preferably quantitative) for assessing the impacts of this innovation. A list of sample metrics is provided in Exhibit A below.
- Verification / Submittals: This should also include an explanation of how the proposed measures will be verified in the field.



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- Proposed benefits. This should include an explanation of how the proposed measures will yield environmental, human health, or other benefits, and an estimate of the net benefits compared to:
 - a) Standard building practice; and
 - b) Other LEED for Homes credits (see Exhibit A).

An explanation of how the estimate was calculated must also be included. Wherever possible, provide references to published material, including third-party research (preferred) and/or manufacturer's estimates.

Most ID requests will be judged using metrics similar to those that are used to justify existing LEED for Homes credits. Exhibit 1 provides a list of sample metrics, as well as a rough evaluation of how performance within each metric is rewarded by LEED for Homes. A sample completed ID request is provided in Attachment A.

Exhibit 1 **List of Sample Metrics and Benchmarks for** **Environmental Performance**

Sample intent	Sample metric for performance	Typical LEED for Homes benchmarks for performance
Reduced energy use	% of total annual energy use	3% reduction in total annual energy use*
Reduced water use	% of total annual water use	5% reduction in total water use*
Reduced waste	% of total waste diverted	25% reduction in material waste to landfill*
Reduced material	Square feet of wood	1,000-1,500 square feet of wood
Improved air quality	Health risk	Substantially reduced human health risks

* All percentages refer to the savings that are achieved when compared to performance in a conventional home, not a green home.

Step 3: Evaluation of the CIR or ID Request

All formal CIRs and ID requests will be reviewed and resolved by either a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or USGBC staff member. TAGs meet every two weeks, so CIRs and ID Requests should be resolved within no more than 3 weeks, unless the TAG is back-logged or the request is particularly challenging. *CIRs or ID requests that are unclear or lack sufficient information may require follow-up and a response from the TAG will be further delayed.*



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In some cases, if a CIR or ID Request is complex or relates to a matter of LEED for Homes policy, it may take more than one meeting to resolve or may require input from the LEED Technical Committee. In these cases, USGBC will contact the Provider with a timeline for resolution.

Step 4: Formal Response

Once a final resolution has been made, USGBC does the following:

- Records the resolution in the Database
- Relays the resolution to the questioning Provider
- Includes any relevant changes in the ongoing revisions to the rating system for future version releases

The Database will be posted on the Provider Resources Page each month. *Any CIR resolutions that are included in the Database should be treated as precedent, and are applicable to any and all LEED for Homes projects.* However, since USGBC recognizes that Providers may not have the time or means to review every entry in the Database, any change in how the rating system is interpreted or applied as a consequence of the TAG resolutions will not be enforced until the changes are formally incorporated into a new version of the rating system or official errata.

Unless otherwise indicated in the TAG resolution, ID Requests are treated as case-specific and resolutions relating to old ID Requests should not be applied to ongoing or future projects.

Providers should relay the final resolution to the builder and project design team, and they are welcome to make record of the formal response in their own documentation. However, Providers do not need to submit the entire response to the USGBC in their Project Documentation Package; simply reference the Database identification number on the LEED for Homes Project Checklist.

Please note that Credit Interpretation rulings do not guarantee credit award; the project applicant must still demonstrate and document achievement during the LEED Certification Application process.



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Appendix A: LEED for Homes CIR & ID Request Forms

Please fill out the appropriate form below. A CIR submittal form is provided in Exhibit A-1. An ID request submittal form is provided in Exhibit A-2. A sample completed ID request form is provided in Exhibit A-3.

Please save this submittal form page using some file name that will distinguish this particular request. For example, if “ABC Provider” is submitting a request on behalf of Joe’s Construction on March 1, 2009, you may choose to name the file:

ABC-Joes-030109.doc.

Please submit this form to USGBC:

HomesCIR@usgbc.org

For guidance on how to complete the CIR or ID Request Form or information about the process, please review “CIR & ID Request Guidelines”.

Explanation of Terms (in CIR and ID submittal forms):

<i>Relevant credit</i>	The relevant credit from the LEED for Homes rating system
<i>LEED for Homes version</i>	The relevant version (e.g. 1.7, 1.11) of the rating system
<i>Project type</i>	Information about the building type: Single- vs. multi-family; Attached (<i>optional</i>) vs. detached; Custom vs. production vs. affordable
<i>Priority</i>	How urgent is the request: High Necessary for a specific project in the (<i>optional</i>) short-term; Medium Necessary for a specific project in the medium- or long-term; Low Not necessary for a specific project.
<i>Resolution deadline (optional)</i>	If there is a date by which a resolution is needed to make a project decision, please provide it here.
<i>CIR question</i>	Explain the points of concern or confusion, including any proposed alternative approach or interpretation, and the type of information or clarification that is needed to resolve the question. If you propose to meet the credit in a different manner than what is given in the rating system, please explain the approach and provide the information given as described in the “burden of proof for new approaches” below.



Appendix A: LEED for Homes CIR & ID Request Forms

Exhibit A-1 CIR Submittal Form

FOR DISPLAY ONLY, [a Word version of this form can be found here](#)

<i>Credit Interpretation Request</i>			
Relevant credit:		LEED-H Version #:	
Provider:		Priority:	
Project:		Origination date:	
Project type:		Resolution deadline:	
Credit interpretation request:			
Draft resolution:	<i>To be completed by USGBC within 1-2 weeks. Draft recommendations are non-binding and subject to TAG review.</i>		
TAG resolution:	<i>To be completed by the relevant TAGs within 2-4 weeks.</i>		
Other comments:	<i>To be completed by the relevant TAGs.</i>		

Exhibit A-2 ID Request Submittal Form

<i>Innovation and Design Credit Request</i>			
Relevant category:		LEED-H Version #:	
Provider:		Priority:	
Project:		Origination date:	
Project type:		Resolution deadline:	
Proposed intent:			
Proposed measures:			
Proposed metric:			
Verification / submittals:			
Proposed benefits:			
Draft resolution:	<i>To be completed by USGBC within 1-2 weeks. Draft recommendations are non-binding and subject to TAG review.</i>		
TAG resolution:	<i>To be completed by the relevant TAGs within 2-4 weeks.</i>		
Other comments:	<i>To be completed by relevant TAGs.</i>		



Appendix A: LEED for Homes CIR & ID Request Forms

Exhibit A-3 Example ID Request (Completed)

<i>Innovation and Design Credit Request</i>			
Relevant category:	Energy and Atmosphere	LEED-H Version #:	Version 1.11
Provider:	Provider X	Priority:	High
Project:	222 Tenth Street, Madison, WI	Origination date:	February 8, 2007
Project type:	Single-family, detached, custom	Resolution deadline:	March 15, 2007
Proposed intent:	Reduced energy use through education and awareness		
Proposed measures:	<p>The house includes an electronic meter that tracks electricity, gas, and water usage and presents this information to the homeowner in an easy-to-understand format. The meter can provide instantaneous, weekly, and monthly reports of how much energy is used and where that energy is consumed in the house.</p>		
Proposed metric:	Percent of annual energy saved		
Verification / submittals:	<p>The Provider's third-party rater shall perform a visual inspection of the installed measure. The Builder shall include an explanation of the measure and its use in the Homeowner's Manual.</p>		
Proposed benefits:	<p>Smart meters that provide feedback to the homeowner about how much energy is used can change homeowner behavior and lead to savings of 5% to 15%, according to research discussed in the paper "The Effectiveness of Feedback on Energy Consumption" by Sarah Darby in 2006.</p>		
Draft resolution:			
TAG resolution:			
Other comments:			