



Overview of Initiative for Affordable Housing

- **What are the objectives of the Initiative for Affordable Housing?**

The Initiative for Affordable Housing is a component of LEED for Homes that addresses the inherent differences between affordable housing – particularly multi-family homes – and market-rate, single-family homes. It is being funded by a generous grant provided by The Home Depot Foundation. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to recognize and reward the intrinsic resource efficiencies of affordable housing in the LEED for Homes rating system. In this way, USGBC and The Home Depot Foundation will promote sustainable building practices specifically for affordable homes.

- **How does the Initiative for Affordable Housing fit within the scope of the LEED for Homes program?**

LEED for Homes is a collaborative initiative that actively works with *all sectors of the home building industry*, including the affordable housing sector. LEED for Homes is a voluntary initiative designed to promote the transformation of the mainstream home building industry toward more sustainable practices.

LEED for Homes certification requirements include several measures specifically intended to reward efficiencies typical of affordable projects:

- Compact developments (up to 3 points);
- Site selection and close to existing infrastructure (up to 3 points)
- Limit outdoor water use (automatically earned by compact developments —1 point);
- Homes with ready access to community resources and open spaces (up to 3 points); and
- Homes that are smaller than the national average (up to 10 points).
- Collectively these measures represent more than 50 percent of the points needed to achieve a certified LEED Home.

- **Why should I build LEED for Homes qualified affordable housing?**

A home is not affordable if it is not energy efficient, healthy and durable. Affordable homes that are certified under the LEED for Homes Program will be distinguished in their markets as environmentally responsible and higher quality products. LEED-rated homes benefit residents directly because the LEED Rating System incorporates prerequisites related to occupant health and well-being. In addition, the mandatory energy-related prerequisites ensure at least 20-30% energy savings (relative to the national energy code). Additional energy measures can result in 30 to 70% reductions in energy costs. The selection of

sustainable materials, recommended in LEED for Homes, provides improved durability and is more environmentally responsible.

- **How will the quality of LEED Homes be assured?**

The strength of LEED for Homes is third-party verification. This verification process includes both on-site inspections to ensure that the LEED for Homes features have been installed correctly and performance testing to ensure proper performance. LEED for Homes Providers are local and regional organizations that are selected to provide technical, marketing and verification support services to builders. A Provider arranges for certain performance tests to be conducted on the home. When all of the LEED for Homes features are verified, the USGBC issues a rating certificate for that qualified LEED Home.

- **How do I participate in LEED for Homes?**

Affordable housing developers interested in participating in LEED for Homes should contact a Provider. A list of Providers can be found at www.usgbc.org/leed/homes. Once the Provider approves the project to move forward, the project team can register the project online.

- **What kind of funding is available to affordable housing projects?**

Assistance is available through a generous grant from The Home Depot Foundation to help cover registration, verification and certification fees associated with LEED certification. Contact your Provider for more information on how to qualify for this assistance.

In order to apply, projects must meet all of the following criteria:

- a. The affordable housing developer requesting the funding support **must** be a 501(c)(3), per The Home Depot Foundation requirements.
- b. The project must be considered low income housing, defined as \leq 80% of the local area median income (AMI) or the local jurisdiction standard of affordable housing.
- c. The number of low income, affordable units must be at least 75% of the units in each building.

- **LEED for Homes contact information**

For questions about LEED for Homes, please e-mail homes@usgbc.org or contact your Provider.