

Harvard Achieves a Record 75 LEED Certifications

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Harvard University recently achieved an important green building milestone: our 75th LEED certification, representing over 2.4 million square feet of our campus in LEED New Construction, Commercial Interiors, Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance and Homes systems.

We have estimated that over 11,000 people on campus work, learn or live in a LEED Certified project. Our focus on building and operating greener buildings has demonstrated that supporting the environment and public health ultimately supports our research and teaching mission by conserving resources, increasing efficiency and reducing costs. For example, our [newest LEED Platinum lab building](#) saves operational costs by using greywater for toilet flushing and by reducing air flow change rates during unoccupied periods with the use of occupancy sensors. Because of this, the building is estimated to consume 11 percent less electricity and 51 percent less steam annually.

How did our community reach this exciting green building milestone? There were two key strategies that helped us in getting this far. First, we focused on the bigger picture, creating university-wide [Green Building Standards](#) to integrate energy efficiency and conservation into every construction project. Second, we developed a strong internal service model comprised of experts who know Harvard's building and culture better than anyone else.

Harvard's [Green Building Standards](#) are one of our clearest commitments to sustainability for our built environment. The Standards, adopted in 2009, go well beyond LEED to help ensure greenhouse gas impact, energy use and ongoing operational costs are part of the decision-making process during design and construction. LEED certification is just one piece of these Standards. Two reasons we use the LEED rating system are the opportunity for third-party verification and accountability for defining green building, and because the documentation aids in knowledge management to help promote continual improvement and institutionalize green building practices.

One of our key goals is to create replicable models for how large institutions and organizations can engage their entire community to implement innovative and economically-viable solutions. Harvard's Green Building Standards seek to institutionalize green building practices for capital projects on campus by focusing on process-oriented requirements.

Multiple stakeholders across campus, as well as external design teams, have contributed to this exciting green building milestone. Harvard's [Green Building Services](#) help the schools and units design, building and operate efficiently. GBS services include oversight of the Green Building Standards and LEED certification administration, among many other services.

The GBS team works in close collaboration with the [Energy & Facilities department](#), as well as the campus-wide Office for Sustainability to ensure buildings are [operated as efficiently as possible](#). We also focus on sharing best practices in part by [posting case studies](#) for every LEED project.

We are also in the process of forming Harvard's USGBC Students group to further involve students in green building and LEED projects on campus – this benefits both the campus and students, as we are able to apply student research to capital projects and to help students develop skills to take with them when they graduate and become leaders in various sectors around the world. One key USGBC initiative that we're looking forward to participating in through USGBC Students is the [Green Apple Day of Service](#) on September 29.

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