About LEED v4

Published on **3 Oct 2012** | Posted in **LEED**

We use LEED as our instrument of collective expression in the world for people who are doing something to improve the planet through the built environment. LEED is an instrument of common expression; that's a beautiful thing."
Scot Horst, Senior Vice President, LEED, U.S. Green Building Council

Established by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 2000, the LEED green building program provides a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions. Over the past ten years, LEED has rapidly expanded into a global system representing new and existing buildings, neighborhoods and homes with a combined force of over 9.8 billion square feet (836 million square meters) in 135 countries.

For LEED to continue to drive market transformation it must constantly evolve along with the building industry and the needs of the marketplace. LEED follows a continuous improvement cycle to drive innovation and expand its reach across market sectors and geographic boundaries.

As the built environment improves, the technical rigor of LEED must be raised. Further, a common global language for green building can be established to improve and evolve the certification process for our stakeholders. The newest update to the LEED rating system, LEED v4, is a vital step in this evolution. As always, this evolution involves a balancing of technical, market and implementation factors; USGBC and volunteers serving on LEED committees listened to numerous stakeholders in trying to find the best balance.

WHAT'S NEW

Impact categories: USGBC developed new impact categories to align more closely with the vision of LEED. These categories go beyond the categories used for LEED 2009 that were based on limiting damage; instead the LEED v4 categories emphasize the potential for projects to contribute positively to their communities and to the planet. The impact categories, shown below, serve as the driver for determining the technical requirements of the rating system. Additionally, the impact categories are used to assign points to each credit. Projects have incentives to pursue higher-point-valued credits and higher certification levels and achieve better environmental, economic and social outcomes.

Increased technical rigor: LEED v4 is poised to raise the bar on performance and has the potential to reduce CO2 emissions more than any other versions of the LEED rating systems. In addition, LEED v4:

- Places a renewed importance on integrative process and the benefits of early design analyses and project team collaboration
- Includes a Location & Transportation category that rewards projects for utilizing existing development infrastructure, embracing the principles of walkability, connectivity, density and quality alternative transportation
- Defines high performance site design by increasing requirements for rainwater management, heat island reduction, and light pollution reduction while significantly reducing the LEED documentation associated with each credit
- Expands the scope of water efficiency to total building water use
- Requires building level water and energy metering to understand and manage performance
- Increases emphasis on energy and the associated impacts by allocating 20% of all points to building energy efficiency
- Encourages enhanced building commissioning for greater energy and operational performance
- Brings the benefits of smart grid thinking to the forefront with a credit that rewards projects for participating in demand response programs
- Supports a lifecycle approach to product and material specification through a revised and strengthened Materials & Resources credit category
- Drives leadership in the manufacturing sector by promoting innovative reporting tools and programs
- Encourages support of products extracted and manufactured from domestic and local sources
- Takes a more performance based approach to indoor environmental quality to ensure improved occupant comfort

Market sectors: Additional LEED rating systems have been developed to

address data centers, warehouses and distribution centers, hospitality, existing schools, existing retail and mid-rise residential. LEED v4 covers a wider swath of the market than ever before and seeks to meet the unique needs of users by providing technical solutions for all project types.

Support tools and resources: Simplified submittal requirements, step-by-step reference guide materials and forms that are more intuitive are now being built and aim to reduce certification complexity. LEED v4 support tools and resources will be thoroughly tested with actual LEED users to ensure that these intentions are met and that a quality LEED v4 program is delivered.

BETA

With the LEED v4 rating system is in its final stages of development, USGBC is expanding its focus to include the infrastructure that will support the program. Beginning in November, USGBC will run a LEED v4 beta that includes user review and testing of LEED v4 forms, reference guide materials, submittal requirements and certification process.

The beta is not testing the credit requirements themselves (this is done through the pilot credit library, public comment and the ballot process). It is however, a central part of the development of the LEED v4 program, and will run until the full LEED v4 program is launched in late 2013. Project teams will use the fifth public comment draft to begin working toward certification.

The LEED v4 beta is open to projects of all market sectors, space types, sizes and locations. Projects selected to participate will receive guided support from LEED technical staff, a beta program toolkit and will be among the first to lead the market in achieving LEED v4 performance levels. Interested projects should contact leedv4@usgbc.org for more information.

CONNECT AT GREENBUILD

At USGBC's Greenbuild International Conference and Expo in San Francisco, LEED v4 credits, features and support tools will be highlighted in a variety of formats. Through education sessions and public forums dedicated to LEED v4 where attendees can have one-on-one conversations with LEED staff, the building community will have the opportunity to engage with and learn about LEED v4. There is also a USGBC space where LEED information and USGBC staff will be available for questions and help.

0 comments

Leave a comment

Leave a comment

Don't have an account? Create one

You must be signed in to leave a comment.

Email

Password

SIGN IN