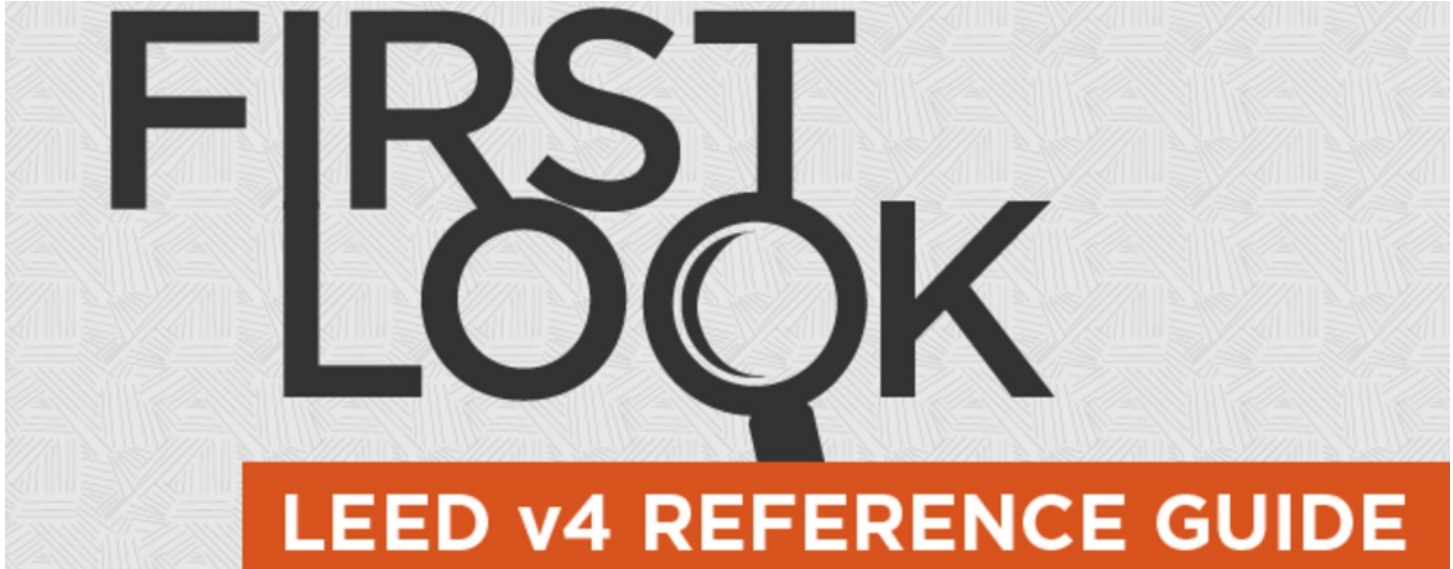


# First Look: LEED v4 reference guides

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Quick - what's the first thing that comes to mind when you want to understand a credit? The reference guide. It's like the rating system content is your trusty automobile and the reference guide is your owner's manual that helps you figure out how to use everything. In our [last article in this series](#), we took a look at the different online tools that support the LEED v4 reference guides. In this article, we'll take a deeper look at the guides themselves.

## Reference Guides

Just like we did for the LEED Online forms, we used a two-pronged strategy to address the reference guides.

First, we looked at the guides as a whole and how we could make each function better as one full guide, instead of a collection of separate credit-specific explanations. To help with this, we added the following:

- **Getting Started section:** This new segment at the beginning of each guide goes beyond what's found in the introduction and includes a work-plan framework that guides project teams through the steps leading up to certification.
- **Navigation tools:** Information is only helpful if you can find it. Throughout the guides, we've identified connections – so when there is one credit that connects to another, we let you know. If a credit references information in the *Getting Started* section, we let you know that too. Using icons and other wayfinders, we point out relationships so that project teams can benefit from the full picture.

Next, we looked at the credits themselves. Our focus here was on clarity, making sure project teams can quickly and easily see what each credit requires AND how to achieve it. Supporting that goal are several new sections:

- **Step-by-step:** suggests the implementation and documentation steps that can be used by most projects, as well as generally applicable tips and examples
- **Behind the intent:** connects credit achievement with larger sustainability issues and provides general background on the credit requirements
- **Further explanation:** provides additional guidance for lengthy calculations or for special project situations, such as tips for nonstandard project types or credit approaches
- **Related credit tips:** identifies other credits that will affect their decisions and strategies for the credit in question; the relationships between credits may imply synergies or trade-offs
- **Changes from previous versions:** indicates the changes since the last release of the rating system
- **Referenced standards:** lists all standards related to the credit and offers web links to find them

These are just a few of the updates you can expect with LEED v4. We hope you've enjoyed this series and learned more about the tools and resources we've developed to help save project teams time (and money). Voting for LEED v4 is open now through the end of the month for those that registered in April. Don't forget to vote!

Have questions? Learn more about [LEED v4](#) or [email us](#).

Earlier in this series:

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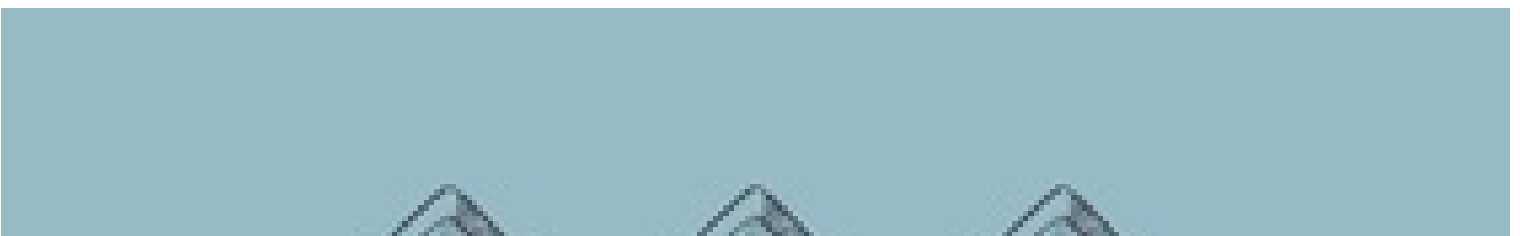


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