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Comparison of Green Communities and LEED for Homes Program

Enterprise is a leading provider of the development capital and expertise it takes to create decent, affordable homes and rebuild communities. For 25 years, Enterprise has pioneered neighborhood solutions through public-private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, community organizations and others that share our vision. In 2004, Enterprise launched Green Communities as an initiative to transform the way America thinks about, designs and builds affordable communities. Green Communities brings together affordable housing investment strategies with environmentally responsible building practices. The Green Communities Criteria provide a holistic framework for promoting smart growth, public health, energy and water conservation, operational savings and sustainable building practices in affordable housing design. The 2008 version of the Green Communities Criteria is explicitly and purposefully aligned with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Homes Green Building Rating System™, launched in 2008 (<http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/tools/criteria/index.asp>).

The Green Communities Criteria were developed collaboratively by Enterprise and Natural Resources Defense Council – a founder and longtime supporter of LEED, and one of the nation's leading experts in green building and smart development – and in consultation with other industry experts, such as the National Center for Healthy Housing, the children's environmental health research organization. The Criteria are achievable today and provide significant benefits for families, communities and the environment. They cover a wide range of building practices that can deliver these benefits, including smart siting, materials and resource conservation, water management, clean room finishes and energy efficiency. The Green Communities Criteria draw heavily on the LEED rating systems, and the U.S. Green Building Council, a national coalition of building industry leaders promoting healthy and environmentally responsible buildings, strongly supports Green Communities.

The Green Communities Criteria and LEED for Homes are aligned in content but differ programmatically in three key areas: **participants, construction type, and certification** (see Table A. Comparison Matrix of Green Communities and LEED for Homes).

Participants

Green Communities. The Green Communities Criteria is intended specifically for developers of affordable housing but is applicable to for-sale or rental market rate housing. Enterprise is targeting all housing that is reasonably affordable to households with incomes at or below eighty percent of the area median income for for-sale housing or sixty percent of the area median income for rental housing.



LEED for Homes. The LEED for Homes rating system is intended for home builders of market rate housing but is applicable to developers of affordable housing. The USGBC is targeting the top 25% of new homes with best practice environmental features.

Construction Type

Green Communities. The Green Communities Criteria apply to all construction types: new construction; moderate and substantial rehabilitation; adaptive re-use of buildings; low, mid and high-rise building construction.

LEED for Homes. The LEED for Homes rating system applies only to gut rehab and new construction of housing that is three stories or less with a pilot rating system designed for mid-rise.

Certification

Both Green Communities and LEED for Homes offer checklists that can be followed by any housing developer or homebuilder. These checklists are often used as planning tools for project teams interested in green building during the integrated design process when environmental and performance goals are set. If a builder or developer is interested in certification, both Enterprise and LEED for Homes have requirements for participation in their respective programs which result in formal recognition as being a LEED for Homes or Green Communities project.

Green Communities. The Green Communities Criteria are the framework for Enterprise Community Partner's Green Communities grant funding program. Through this program qualified Enterprise staff review project information prior to construction to determine if the intended methods and materials proposed by project teams during the design phase satisfy the eligible methods set forth within the Green Communities Criteria. Upon construction completion, the project sponsor, project engineer, green building specialist and project architect submit and sign-off on documentation to Enterprise of how the Green Communities Criteria were actually met within the project. The project sponsor must also submit results from performance tests verifying the project meets the Green Communities energy performance requirements appropriate for the building type. Enterprise reviews documentation and certifies the project if all supporting documents verify that the Green Communities Criteria were met. On a random sample, Enterprise will contract with a third-party to complete performance testing of completed projects. There is no fee for participation or certification.

LEED for Homes. Certification through LEED for Homes requires registering a project with USGBC, working with a LEED for Homes Provider, and submitting project documentation through the Provider for certification. The cost for registering and certifying a project with LEED for Homes ranges based on whether applicant is a member of the USGBC and the size of the project. Registration fees range from \$150 per home for a member with a single family



project to \$600 per building for a non-member with a multi-family project. Certification fees range from \$225 for a member with a single family project to \$0.045 a square foot for a non-member with a multi-family project. Currently there are 38 Providers in the U.S., able to deliver LEED for Homes verification support throughout the country. A list of providers can be found on the USBC website (<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1554>). Providers assist project teams with a preliminary checklist of the project, at least two onsite performance tests and visual inspections of various measures in the home during construction, and final field inspection and performance testing of the project after construction completion. The cost for engaging a Provider is set by the market.

Table A. Comparison Matrix of Green Communities and LEED for Homes

	Green Communities	LEED for Homes
Website	www.greencommunitiesonline.org	www.usgbc.org/leed/homes/
Target Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers of affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 25% of homebuilders in the U.S. – building beyond code
Target Construction Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All construction types • Single-family, multi-family and low, mid- and high-rise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gut rehab and new construction • Affordable and market-rate • Single-family and low and mid-rise multi-family (3-6 stories)
Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit intended method of meeting the Criteria to Enterprise • Initial project review by Enterprise • Construction completion document review by Enterprise including performance test results • On a random sample basis Enterprise contracts with a third-party to complete on-site verification post-construction • Enterprise notifies project of certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Provider • Register project with USGBC (pay fee to USGBC) • Provider completes onsite inspections and performance tests of project throughout construction process • Provider submits documentation to USGBC for review and certification (pay fee to USGBC) • USGBC notifies Provider and project team of certification and sends certificate to the project