



PE3 Action: Green Building Certification

15 Points

A. Why is this action important?

While the greenest buildings are existing buildings, local governments often must construct a new building if they cannot meet local needs with existing facilities. Building a resource-efficient green building provides local governments with the opportunity to lead by example and make long-term investments that will reduce energy use and operating costs of the building. Local governments should also make sure to apply smart-growth principles in selection of a site or location for the building, and possibly use the development as an opportunity to promote development in a redevelopment area.

B. How to implement this action

Local governments should first determine if it is necessary to build a new building or if existing facilities can be used to meet the needs of the government and community. If it is determined that a new building is needed, then local government should evaluate the existing national green building certification programs (listed below), and select its preferred program. In order to be eligible for points for this Climate Smart Communities (CSC) action, the local government must achieve certification for its new green building under one of the programs listed below.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Each green building certification program will have its own individual timeline and associated costs. The additional incremental costs of the green building features will typically pay for themselves after a period of time through energy savings, but the payback periods can vary greatly depending on the type of energy efficiency improvement. Local government personnel resources may also vary based on the certification program chosen.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?

This action is applicable to any local government that has built a new facility in recent years. The department of public works or facilities will typically have responsibility for this action; however, the department(s) that will use the building will also be involved in the development process. The individual green building certification program guidelines may also dictate parties involved, for example, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) requires each project include the building owner, a building agent, and a project administrator.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Local governments can earn points for attaining a green building certification from one of the four national programs listed below. A flat fifteen points are awarded for the certification, regardless of the level of certification the building achieves within the green building program.

- ENERGY STAR Certification
- Green Globes Certification (4 certification levels: One Green Globe, Two Green Globes, Three Green Globes, and Four Green Globes,)
- LEED Certification (4 certification levels: Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum)
- Living Buildings Certification (Full Living Certified, Petal Certified, Net Zero Energy Certified, and Zero Energy Certified)

F. What to submit

Local governments must submit evidence of achieving green building certification from one the four eligible programs listed above. The building must have been certified within ten years prior to the application date.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

Green Building Certification Programs:

- [ENERGY STAR Certification](#)
- [Green Globes Certification](#)
- [LEED Rating Systems](#)
- [Living Buildings](#)

Best Practices:

- [2012 International Green Construction Code](#)
- [US EPA Link to ANSI/ASHRAE/USGBC/IES Standard 189.1-2014](#)
- [US EPA Link to National Green Building Standard ICC 700-2012](#)
- [NYSERDA New Construction Program](#)

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.