

What is “LEED® Certification” All About?

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ (LEED certification) is a third-party certification program and the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED gives building owners and operators the tools they need to have an immediate and measurable impact on their building’s performance. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance and awarding points in five key areas of human and environmental health: *sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.*

Sustainable site development accounts for 14 points that may be earned in the areas of pollution prevention and abatement, eco-friendly transportation alternatives, open space preservation, storm water control, heat island prevention and light pollution reduction.

Water savings accounts for 5 possible points and includes water efficient landscaping, wastewater technologies and water use reduction.

Energy efficiency accounts for 17 possible points from efforts to optimize energy performance, the uses of renewable energy, on site energy generation, refrigerant management and energy use measurement and performance verification.

Materials selection accounts for 13 possible points and covers the topics of recycling, structure re-use, construction waste management, material re-use, recycled content, use of locally manufactured components, use of rapidly renewable components and use of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) approved wood.

Indoor environmental quality accounts for 15 possible points from the areas of ventilation, no smoking, air quality monitoring during construction, air quality monitoring systems, use of low emitting materials, chemical pollutant controls, controllable lighting systems, controllable heating and cooling, thermal comfort monitoring, daylighting and use of views.

Innovation in design accounts for 5 possible points that may be earned through the implementation of a Green Cleaning Program, an Education Program, exemplary performance in using regional materials and water savings and having a member of the project team who is a LEED Accredited Professional.

As is evident, LEED certification involves every aspect of the building’s design, construction and ultimate performance.

LEED points for the certification of new construction are awarded according to the following scale:

Certified:	26-32 points
Silver:	33-38 points
Gold:	39-51 points
Platinum:	52-69 points

At present the new monastery building has a good probability of receiving the highest rating, the Platinum certification level, with a possible score of 63 points.

To learn more about LEED certification visit www.usgbc.org.