



# National Green Building Certification

## Certification Overview

The NAHB Research Center serves as the certification agent for the National Green Building Program (NAHBGreen). As an independent research and testing organization, the Research Center has both the capacity, expertise, and credentials to ensure consistency, rigor, and credibility for the certification process.

The National Green Building Standard, which is an ANSI-approved, consensus-based standard, is one of the rating systems to which a project can be certified by the Research Center. The Standard provides a menu of green building practices for builders, remodelers, and land developers to plan their green projects. These building practices, when employed in construction and development, will reduce the potential environmental impacts of a residential project. The Standard offers four levels of green certification for residential buildings: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald; and four levels for residential developments: One-Star through Four-Star. With each successive level, the project has to employ a greater number of green practices in every category, and therefore the home or development will have a smaller environmental footprint.

### Green Certified to the Standard

For homes to become Green Certified, the Standard requires green building practices in six categories: Lot Design, Preparation, and Development; Resource Efficiency; Energy Efficiency; Water Efficiency; Indoor Environmental Quality; and Operation, Maintenance, and Building Owner Education. Some of the green practices in the Standard are mandatory. Additional green practices are selected at the builder's discretion.



To be eligible for green certification, all mandatory practices must be included and a minimum score must be achieved in each category, with the point requirements in each category increasing along with the levels of green certification. Builders, remodelers, and developers can select from the optional practices those that are best suited to their local market conditions, homebuyer preferences, and individual business strategies.

### Green Scoring Tool

As a first step in the certification process, builders, developers, and remodelers can use the free Green Scoring Tool available at [www.NAHBGreen.org](http://www.NAHBGreen.org) to explore how to improve the environmental performance of their projects with the green building practices in the Standard. The Green Scoring Tool is designed to guide users through the Standard step-by-step eliminating the need for a costly team of green and/or building science professionals to prepare projects for evaluation. After working through the six sections of the Standard, the Green Scoring Tool produces a Designer's Report that can be used by an accredited, third-party verifier to help confirm the project's green practices.

## Independent Verification

The Standard requires that a qualified, independent third-party inspect the project and verify that all green design or construction practices that the builder claims toward green certification are actually incorporated into the project. Verifiers record the results of their rough and final inspections on a Verification Report which is submitted to the NAHB Research Center. Builders can not self-certify that their projects have met the criteria, nor can any employee of the builder, or trade contractors or suppliers that have supplied materials and/or installed products or systems in the home being verified.

The NAHB Research Center trains, tests, and accredits these verifiers and maintains a current list at [www.NAHBGreen.org](http://www.NAHBGreen.org). Accredited verifiers must also maintain adequate professional liability insurance. At this time, there are more than 300 accredited verifiers nationwide. The cost for a home to be verified to the Standard is determined by agreement between the builder and the verifier.

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The NAHB Research Center reviews the Verification Reports submitted by accredited verifiers to ensure accuracy and completeness and issues green certification to the project. The cost of certification is \$500 per home. NAHB members benefit from a discounted price of \$200 per home for certification. The cost for certification of a development starts at \$2,500 (discounts apply for NAHB members).

While certifying projects and accrediting verifiers are key elements of the national program, these services are only a small part of what the NAHB Research Center offers through National Green Building Certification. The Research Center Green Team provides technical information on green building products, new technologies, business management, and housing systems to all program partners at no additional charge. Builders, remodelers, and developers can access building science professionals for technical assistance through the National Green Building Program Hotline (877-NAHB-GRN). The Research Center also produces numerous technical resource documents to assist builders, developers, and verifiers through the certification process.

## Partnership with Local Green Building Programs

The NAHB National Green Building Program recognizes that the national green building movement started with the passionate efforts of a number of local programs and individuals. These programs brought green building to the mainstream and helped to transform markets. Consequently, NAHBGreen is specifically designed to complement existing local programs provided they require residential projects to achieve a minimum level of environmental performance to be recognized as green; mandate third-party verification of the green building practices; and endorse the national certification program.

Additionally, the National Green Building Program encourages the development of new local green building programs provided that they are at least as stringent as the Bronze level of the NAHB Green Guidelines and that they participate in National Green Building Certification through the NAHB Research Center.

**For more information, please call the NAHB National Green Building Program Hotline at 877-NAHB-GRN (877-624-2476) or contact us at [www.nahbgreen.org/ContactUs](http://www.nahbgreen.org/ContactUs).**