



National Green Building Certification

Multifamily Building Certification to the Standard

The National Green Building Standard (the Standard) is an above-code residential green building rating system that sets green baselines for all multifamily residential construction, development, and remodeling projects.

The Standard is one of a number of green building rating systems currently available. However, there are five key areas that distinguish the Standard from other rating systems:

- 1) it is an authentic **ANSI-approved** consensus standard
- 2) it has a complementary web-based **Green Scoring Tool**
- 3) it requires uncompromising **third-party verification and certification** and does not allow for any self-certifications
- 4) it establishes green practices for **all residential building and development** including new multifamily residential buildings of all sizes, multifamily remodeling, and land development
- 5) it requires **progressively higher levels of environmental performance** in every category of green building practices to obtain higher levels of green certification

The Standard offers 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. For a project to become Green Certified, a minimum score must be achieved in each category, with the point total requirements increasing for successively higher levels of green certification (Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Emerald). When relevant, the Standard has practices and requirements specifically tailored for multifamily buildings.

The Standard provides a point-based system that accommodates incremental improvements in environmental performance; allows builders to select the most effective and efficient path to reach the project's green building goals; recognizes regional and local environmental conditions; and encourages innovation in both design and technology development.

Defining Multifamily under the Standard

Under the Standard, multi-unit residential buildings are those where several units share common areas, as well as a common foundation and roof. Townhouses, rowhomes, and quads must be scored and certified as single-family units. In some jurisdictions, duplexes can be built on a single platted lot and permitted as a multifamily structure. In these instances – and with proper documentation provided (i.e., copies of permit and plat plan) – the NAHB Research Center will certify a duplex as a multifamily building. In all other cases, each unit of the duplex will be certified as a single-family building.

Multifamily buildings can earn points for the green building practices incorporated into the building only when the practices are implemented in all of the units. Where application of a

prescribed practice allows for a different number of points for different units in a multi-unit building, the lesser number of points shall be awarded to the entire building. Points that apply to multiple units are credited once for the entire building. Each multifamily building receives just one certification – not one for each unit.

Green Scoring Tool

A costly team of consultants is not required to have your project Green Certified. The Green Scoring Tool is designed to guide users through the Standard step-by-step. Builders can use the free Green Scoring Tool available at www.NAHBGreen.org to learn more about green building practices.

Independent Verification

The Standard requires that a qualified third-party inspect the project and verify that all green design or construction practices that the builder claims toward green certification have actually been incorporated into the project. 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 comprehensive list at www.NAHBGreen.org. Accredited verifiers must also maintain adequate liability insurance. At this time, there are more than 400 accredited verifiers nationwide.

Green Certification, Powered by the NAHB Research Center

The NAHB Research Center certifies that projects meet the requirements of the National Green Building Standard. As an independent research and testing organization, the Research Center has the capacity, expertise, and credentials to ensure consistency, rigor, and credibility for the process. The Research Center trains and accredits all National Green Building Certification verifiers, and reviews every Verification Report submitted to ensure accuracy, completeness, and consistency before certifying any project.

While accrediting verifiers and certifying projects 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 online contact page (www.nahbgreen.org/ContactUs). The Research Center also produces numerous technical resource documents to assist builders, developers, and verifiers through the certification process.

Green Certification Costs

There are three categories of costs to build a green project to any green rating system: construction, verification, and certification. Construction costs are highly variable and depend on the green building practices selected and market prices. Verification costs vary by market. The cost for a building to be verified to the Standard is determined by agreement between the builder and the verifier. For multifamily projects, National Green Building Certification through the NAHB Research Center costs \$200 per building plus \$20 per unit for NAHB members, and \$500 per building plus \$20 per unit for non-members.

For more information, please contact us at www.nahbgreen.org/ContactUs.