

Home Certification Systems

Why we care

The size, configuration, and efficiency of our homes constitute one of our most important environmental impacts. Most of the energy we use to build and operate our homes comes from fossil fuels.

Simple, positive steps

Become knowledgeable about third-party certified homes. Each category is listed from least to most stringent.

Energy certifications

1. **ENERGY STAR Homes**, developed by the EPA, assures that homes meet fuel and electricity conservation standards.
2. **Oregon Premium Performance Home** by the Oregon Department of Energy determines when a homebuilder is eligible for a tax credit.
3. **Net Zero Energy** certification verifies that the building is securing energy from the sun, wind, or earth to exceed net annual demand.
4. **Passive House** must meet the most rigorous energy saving practices. Buildings are virtually airtight, exploit solar gain, need minimal heating/cooling, and employ a heat recovery ventilation system for superior indoor air quality.

Green building certifications

1. **Earth Advantage** started as a PGE energy efficiency program in the 1990s but is now run by a nonprofit and covers other areas of green building. Silver, Gold, or Platinum certification is based on energy efficiency, indoor air quality, resource efficiency, environmental responsibility, and water conservation.
2. **LEED** (Leadership in Energy Efficient Design), developed by the US Green Building Council, is similar to Earth Advantage, but is a more stringent standard.
3. **The Living Building Challenge** defines the most advanced measure of sustainability. Living buildings use net zero energy, supply all of their own water on site, manage all of their waste water on site, and use only non-toxic, locally sourced building materials.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.