



PE3 Action: Green Building Standard for Government Buildings

2 Points

3 Points

5 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Numerous local governments throughout the country have adopted green building standards for new construction of local government buildings. The construction of new buildings presents a significant opportunity to design with energy efficiency and resource conservation in mind. Adopting a green building standard for new construction will make green design consistent among all newly constructed buildings, reduce the local government's environmental impact, and demonstrate leadership by example to the rest of the community. This action is also in line with the New York State Green Building Construction Act passed in 2009 requiring all new state buildings meet green building standards. While not all local governments are constructing new buildings, all have existing properties. Green building standards can also be established for the operation and maintenance or retrofit of existing facilities. Significant energy savings and associated greenhouse (GHG) emissions reductions can come from improvements to existing buildings.

B. How to implement this action

New Construction

Green building standards such as the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or Green Globes are now used widely to provide guidelines for the design of new buildings. The local government should adopt a clear policy that requires new construction be designed to a set of specific criteria or a green performance threshold. The local government may choose to reference existing standards such as [LEED](#), [ENERGY STAR](#), [ICC-IGCC 2012](#) or [ASHRAE Standard 189.1](#). Alternatively, a local government may choose to establish its own standards, but those standards should go substantially beyond minimum code requirements. If referencing an existing standard such as LEED, it is important to note that it is not necessary to require buildings to be officially certified, as that is often cost prohibitive. Instead, the policy can reference that the guidelines be met and that official certification by a third party is optional. [NYSERDA's New Construction Program](#) may be able to help offset the cost of incorporating energy efficiency measures into new buildings and achieving LEED certification.

Existing Buildings and Facilities

FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ADOPT A CLEAR POLICY THAT REQUIRES ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Proactively upgrade existing buildings to a specific set of green building standards by a certain date
- Incorporation of green building standards when facilities are to be upgraded
- Apply green building standards to existing operation and maintenance programs

As with new construction, the local government can reference existing green building design guidelines such as LEED for Existing Buildings or LEED Operations and Maintenance, or may establish its own standards. If referencing an existing standard, it is not necessary to require buildings to be certified under the referenced program, as costs for certification can be cost prohibitive. Policies can instead require that buildings be certifiable under the guidelines. It is recommended that the adopted standards or policy specify the size and age of buildings to which the standards would be applicable.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Adoption of the policy itself can be completed in the standard time for the local government to adopt any internal policy. Staff resources required to fulfill this task will depend on in-house expertise. Consultants could assist as needed. Implementation of the existing buildings policy will require significant staff time and resources to evaluate all existing buildings and implement improvements wherever necessary to meet the adopted standards.

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. The policy would likely be developed in coordination with numerous staff involved with capital planning, facilities management, and construction of new government buildings and would require approval and official adoption by the local government's highest ranking official(s).

E. How to obtain points for this action

Points can be obtained for this action by adopting a green building standard for new construction (2 points), adopting a green building standard for existing local government buildings and facilities (3 points) or both (5 points).

F. What to submit

Documentation of the written policy as well as signed documentation of its adoption and enactment by the government official or body authorized to enact such policies. Additionally, local governments should submit a memorandum outlining how the policy has incorporated an existing green building standard directly or incorporated aspects of the standard into the policy. The policy may have been adopted at any time prior to the application date to receive points for this action.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- [NYSERDA Commercial New Construction Program](#)
- [LEED Green Building Standard](#)
- [US EPA ENERGY STAR](#)
- [ASHRAE Standard 189.1 for the Design of High-Performance, Green Buildings](#)
- [2012 International Green Construction Code \(IGCC\)](#)
- [Syracuse, NY Green Building Ordinance \(2007\)](#)

H. Recertification requirements

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