

LEED Rating

Basic Description: The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system, established by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), is a third-party verification of green buildings and construction practices and awards innovation in sustainable design and building strategies.

Site Specifics:

Sunnylands Center & Gardens received a total of 47 point, achieving a LEED Gold rating using the LEED for New Construction v.2 standards.



Program Background:

The first version of LEED for New Construct and Major Renovations was first released in 2000. The rating system consists of five categories:

1. *Sustainable Sites:* Encourages strategies that minimize the impact on ecosystems and water resources
2. *Water Efficiency:* Promotes smarter use of water, inside and out, to reduce potable water consumption
3. *Energy & Atmosphere:* Promotes better building energy performance through innovative strategies
4. *Materials & Resources:* Encourages using sustainable building materials and reducing waste
5. *Indoor Environmental Quality:* Promotes better indoor air quality and access to daylight and views

Within each categories there are a series of credits and each of the credits are designated a certain number of points if achieved. Some of the credits have different levels of points that can be awarded based on varying levels of achievement. No site is required to meet the requirements of all of the subsections, but in order for a site to obtain certification it must achieve a minimum of 40 points through achievement of a combination of the credits. There is also a section called Innovation & Design Process. This section addresses sustainable building expertise as well as design measures not covered under the other five LEED categories. The various certification levels, for New Construction v.2, are based on the following number of total points achieved by the site:

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

Benefits: This is a voluntary rating system that encourages business owners, designers, architects, etc. to design spaces that are functional while having a much smaller impact on the natural environment. This rating system has grown exponentially in popularity over the last few years and has become a widely recognizable way for spaces to be acknowledged publically for their environmental efforts.

Problems/Warnings: While this is a highly recognizable and voluntary rating system there are still considerable fees that are involved with participation in the program. With the New Construction standards that we were certified under it is important to remember that all levels of achievement are calculated during the planning and design phases and determined based on modeling numbers. The realities of operational use may cause spaces to deviate from those modeled numbers.

Resources: USGBC (usgbc.org)