

The Benefits of a Green Home

Benefits of a LEED home include lower energy and water bills; reduced greenhouse gas emissions; and less exposure to mold and other indoor contaminants. The net cost of owning a LEED home is comparable to that of owning a conventional home.

A healthier home

Green homes' use of contaminant-free building materials helps combat indoor air pollution, which can be much worse than outdoor pollution. According to the EPA, unhealthy air inside is considered to be one of the top five hazards to human health. This is why LEED certified homes undergo a 75 point checklist to ensure the air quality is good. Natural ventilation in green homes, as well as use of mechanical ventilation systems to filter and bring fresh air inside and vent stale air outside, keep residents breathing easy and sealed combustion appliances ensure that carbon monoxide stays out of the house.

A cost efficient home

The net cost of owning a green home is comparable to – or even cheaper than – owning a standard home. Month to month, people who live in green homes save money by consuming less energy and less water than standard homes. Over the years, that adds up to big savings.

<i>Average Predicted Energy Savings of LEED Homes</i>			
Based on their average Home Energy Rating System (HERS) scores, homes certified under LEED for Homes since the program launched in January 2008 are predicted, on average, to have the potential for reduced energy usage compared with International Energy Conservation Code standards:			
LEED-Certified	LEED-Silver	LEED-Gold	LEED-Platinum
~30%	~30%	48%	50-60%

Since heating and cooling account for about 56% of the energy use in a typical home, cutting that almost least in half by owning a LEED home (as shown in the chart above) will translate into huge monthly utility savings for the homeowner.

(Source: <http://www.chelseagreen.com/content/ten-surprising-facts-about-the-energy-we-use/>)

Energy efficient plumbing and bathing fixtures, drought-tolerant landscaping and water-conserving irrigation systems also help green homes use less water than standard homes.

In addition, several mortgage companies offer discounted loan rates for homebuyers buying a LEED certified home. Please click the following link for more information.

http://www.greenhomeguide.org/features/mortgage_discounts_for_green_homes.html

An environmentally friendly home

Building a standard 2,500-square-foot home creates approximately 2 tons of construction waste that ends up in landfills; far fewer natural resources are used in the construction of a green home. Instead green homes use materials made from rapidly renewable materials, like bamboo, hemp and agrifibers, and have significant recycled content. For example, some companies now make carpets and floor tiles from recycled tires and bottles. Because of the recycled and renewable building materials used in green home, numerous LEED certified projects have drastically lower construction waste than standard homes. Please click this link - http://www.rjwalterhomes.com/home_of_the_future.php – and this one- http://blog.mlive.com/grpress/2008/06/habitat_for_humanity_homes_in.html - for a couple examples.

Owning or renting a green home is good for your health, your wallet and our environment.

For more details on LEED for Homes and to learn how you can begin your own LEED project, please visit www.usgbc.org/LEED/homes