

SUMMARY

The 2020 Enterprise Green Communities (EGC) Criteria and ICC 700 National Green Building Standard® (NGBS) are rigorous green building rating systems with comparable performance levels required for certification.

Local jurisdictions that seek to promote high performing buildings can rely on either program equally to deliver similarly performing homes and multifamily buildings. Both are suitable for affordable housing as their fees are comparable. The NGBS is the leading green building certification nationally for all residentially used buildings as it is recognized by myriad federal, state, and local agencies,

OVERVIEW

Both NGBS and EGC offer a guideline for assessing the health, performance, and sustainability of new and renovated buildings, yet there are key differences between the two programs.

The NGBS was developed through an open consensus process and is the first residential specific rating system to be approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Applicable to new and existing buildings, the NGBS is designed to serve residential buildings of all types irrespective of the building height, construction style, or climate zone. The NGBS's scope includes single-family homes, multifamily, and mixed-use buildings, and land development. Home Innovation Research Labs (Home Innovation) serves as the national certification agency issuing NGBS Green certificates of conformance for buildings that are NGBS compliant.

The 2020 Enterprise Green Communities Criteria was developed as a cost-effective framework for all affordable housing development types. The certification program is suitable for New Construction, Substantial Rehab, and Moderate Rehab in multifamily and single-family projects.

CATEGORIES OF GREEN PRACTICES

Head-to-head, the NGBS and EGC have practices in six parallel categories. The EGC has an additional category for Integrative design. Integrative design deals with information and data gathering so the project teams can gain a holistic understanding of the context, place, and population they are serving. Although the NGBS does not have a separate category for integrative design, most clients using the NGBS Green consult with their verifiers early in the design process to ensure compliance and there is a practice for the project team to develop a mission statement and goals. Because the NGBS Green Team highly encourages and promotes involving verifiers in the design team early on to ensure a smooth certification process, this is one of the most frequently selected practices for certification.

NGBS GREEN	ENTERPRISE GREEN COMMUNITIES
1. Lot design, Preparation, and Development	1. Site Improvement and
2. Resource Efficiency	2. Location + Neighborhood Fabric
3. Energy Efficiency	3. Materials
4. Water Efficiency	4. Operating Energy
5. Indoor Environmental Quality	5. Water
6. Operations, Maintenance, and Homeowner Education	6. Healthy Living Environment
	7. Operations, Maintenance + Resident Engagement
	8. Integrative Design

LEVELS OF CERTIFICATION

The NGBS has four levels of certification for both New Construction and Existing Buildings: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald.

Within the NGBS, no one category of green practices is weighted as more important than another. All projects must achieve a minimum point threshold in every category of green building practice to be certified at any level. In order to jump to the next certification level, the building is required to score additional points in every category – not collectively. The NGBS is the only national program with this level of cross-category stringency, making it the most rigorous and comprehensive green building rating system.

The 2020 EGC offers only two levels of certification:

- Enterprise Green Communities Certification
- Enterprise Green Communities Certification Plus

To achieve Enterprise Green Communities Certification, projects must achieve compliance with the mandatory measures applicable to that specific construction type. New Construction projects must also achieve at least 40 optional points, and Substantial and Moderate Rehab projects must achieve at least 35 optional points.

ELIGIBILITY

NGBS Green certification is available to residentially used buildings including single-family homes, low-, mid-, and high-rise multifamily buildings, and mixed-use buildings with 50% or more residential portion. Moreover, it is also available to existing buildings and land development – covering a much wider variety of projects. NGBS allows batch submissions of multiple homes/buildings within the same community to make the process easier and quicker. The NGBS offers one complete rating system to address all housing types, rather than bifurcating buildings based on height, configuration, or cost.

Green Communities Certification is available for all buildings that contain affordable housing units. Enterprise defines affordable housing as projects serving residents at or below 60% Area Median Income or AMI for rental buildings and at or below 80% AMI for for-sale buildings. Single, as well as groups of, single-family and multifamily buildings may pursue Enterprise Green Communities Certification. Projects with several buildings may submit one single certification application for multiple buildings if all units and buildings in that grouping will follow the same mandatory and optional criteria and will not be completed within more than one year of each other.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Most NGBS Green new construction projects are required to be inspected at least twice by an independent, third-party NGBS Green Verifier. The Verifier must perform a rough inspection before the drywall is installed to observe the wall cavities and insulation installation, and a final inspection once the project is complete. Most practices must be visually inspected to receive points – documentation, photos, or written assertions are not allowed as alternatives. Home Innovation reviews the rough and final verification reports for the project as a quality check to ensure building conformance. Home Innovation allows sampling of 1 in 5 or 1 in 7 units (depending on the Verifier’s experience and credentials) for projects with more than 20 units.

NGBS certification process steps:

Step 1	Download the Builder’s Resource Guide (BRG).	Step 5	Send the design information to the Verifier. Forward the scoring spreadsheet to your Verifier and schedule a rough inspection before the drywall is installed.
Step 2	Score the building using the downloadable scoring spreadsheet.	Step 6	Home Innovation will send a client agreement to new builders/developers.
Step 3	Hire an accredited Verifier who will register the project and obtain a unique Project ID.	Step 7	Schedule a final inspection with your Verifier.
Step 4	Register for an AXIS Account. Every NGBS Green client must have an AXIS account for certification purposes.	Step 8	Home Innovation will review the report and issue a “NGBS Green Certified” certificate, provided all documentation is complete.

The EGC certification involves a two-step online submission and review process: Prebuild and Postbuild. Project teams submit their Prebuild application near the end of the design phase, prior to the start of construction. Project teams submit their Postbuild application shortly after the project has received its Certificate of Occupancy.

EGC certification process steps:

Prebuild	Construction	Postbuild	Impact
Employ an integrative process to set goals and design your building using the criteria for economic, health and environmental benefits. Submit Prebuild application 30 days prior to start of construction.	Incorporate the criteria into your building based on building design and goals set at Prebuild. Track and monitor development goals.	Share building manuals, and engage residents and staff in the healthy and green aspects of the development. Submit Postbuild within 60 days of construction completion.	Leverage and share green building successes and lessons learned from this building to strengthen future developments.

Moreover, NGBS Green requires third-party testing and inspection by a qualified green building professional **for all projects**. NGBS Green Verifiers provide guidance and verification services for buildings pursuing NGBS Green certification. In the case of EGC, a verification protocol is designed to bring the benefits of third-party on-site assessment and performance testing to developments seeking certification. Any project team submitting a request for certification to Enterprise **may be subject to** on-site verification by a third-party provider.

NET ZERO ENERGY

Both [NGBS and Enterprise Green communities](#) are two of the most recognized green building programs for green affordable housing which offer “built-in” net zero energy recognitions for buildings that are certified through their respective programs.

[NGBS Green+ NET ZERO ENERGY](#) certification offers a flexible and affordable solution for net zero energy construction that is issued at the same time as green certification and does not require post-occupancy benchmarking or recertification. Building must demonstrate it is constructed or renovated to be net zero energy. Certification is based on as-built conditions when construction is complete; no post-occupancy benchmarking is required.

For the EGC, there are two compliance options:

1. *Moving to Zero Energy* – buildings need to be certified under a program that requires advanced levels of building envelope performance, such as DOE ZERH, PHI, or PHIUS.
2. *Achieving Zero Energy* – buildings need to be certified under DOE ZERH or PHI Plus and install or procure renewable energy to offer the same amount or more than the energy that the project is modeled to consume OR be certified under a program that requires zero energy performance, such as PHIUS+ Source Energy, PHI Plus, PHI Premium, ILFI’s Zero Energy Petal, Zero Carbon Petal.

CERTIFICATION COST

NGBS Green registration is free. Here is the detailed [NGBS Green certification cost](#).

For a 4-Story, 100-Unit New Construction project, the NGBS certification fees will be:

Certification Fees: = \$700/building + (\$30/unit x 100 units)
Total Cost = \$3,700

Projects certifying to the 2020 EGC Criteria [incur a fee](#) of \$1,250 at the time of Prebuild application and \$300 at the time of Postbuild application (a total of \$1,550).

Applications that undergo two reviews in a given review phase (Prebuild or Postbuild) and still require additional review(s) before achieving approval incur an additional \$200 re-review fee per each subsequent submission and review in that phase.

For a 4-Story, 100-Unit New Construction project, the EGC certification fees will be:

Total Cost = \$1,550 (provided no additional reviews are required before approval)