

Collaborating for Green and Healthy Development



Strong evidence indicates that where we live, work, learn, and play affects our health and well-being. Housing and community development professionals are in a unique position to ensure that their projects minimize health risks and capitalize on opportunities to improve health.

The Health Impact Project, a collaboration of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts; Enterprise Green Communities; and the U.S. Green Building Council have joined in a new partnership to streamline the comprehensive and systematic consideration of health in the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification programs. The Enterprise Green Communities Criteria provide a national framework and certification program for developing green affordable housing. LEED is a green building certification program that applies to a range of buildings—including schools, health care centers, office buildings, and housing—and the surrounding areas.

Although the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria and LEED have included health measures since their inception, the collaboration strengthens and expands the consideration of health. Drawing upon the principles of health impact assessment (HIA)—a framework for systematic, comprehensive consideration of potential public health impacts of proposed policies that emphasizes stakeholder engagement—and of integrative design, the new standards outline ways that architects, designers, and developers can consider the connections between their work and public health. These strategies encourage Enterprise Green Communities and LEED project teams to use public health information in planning and developing their projects and to engage residents and other stakeholders in identifying strategies for addressing possible negative consequences and maximizing opportunities to improve health.

In April, Enterprise Green Communities released its new “2015 Criteria,” which includes a mandatory “Design for Health” criterion. Work is underway to create a similar “Health Process” credit within the LEED pilot credit library.

For more information about this partnership and upcoming events, contact:

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