

Certification Eligibility

Certification Eligibility & Requirements

Eligibility

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 % 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.

The location of a project and the timing of its certification application determine which version of the program should be used. Certification applications that are submitted for the first time after October 15, 2020, must use the 2020 version of the Criteria. Certifications submitted before October 15, 2020, may use either the 2015 or 2020 version of the Criteria. All projects in the five boroughs of New York City must use the NYC Overlay of the Criteria; all other developments use the national program.

Certification Process

All buildings seeking Green Communities Certification must meet mandatory and optional criteria appropriate for their construction typology. Refer to the Criteria resources for specifics on number of required optional points for each version of the program.

Prebuild	Construction	Postbuild	Impact
<p>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.</p>	<p>Incorporate the criteria into your building based on building design and goals set at Prebuild. Track and monitor development goals.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Leverage and share green building successes and lessons learned from this building to strengthen future developments.</p>

The process of Enterprise Green Communities Certification has two steps.

All **PreBuild** and **PostBuild** applications will be reviewed in no more than 30 days by Enterprise. After the review period, project teams will either receive a notice that additional information is needed for their application to be approved, or that their application was successful. If additional information is requested and the project team subsequently resubmits their **PreBuild** or **PostBuild** application, these will re-enter the review queue, which may take up to 30 days.

PreBuild applications are due at least 30 days before start of construction:

1. Provide information on project as designed.
2. Document how the project will meet the appropriate mandatory and optional criteria.
3. Upload the required **Certification Documents**.

PostBuild applications are due within 60 days of construction completion:

1. Confirm/update project information.
2. Document how the project met the appropriate mandatory and optional criteria.
3. Upload the required **Certification Documents**.

Both phases of certification occur within the [Green Communities Certification portal](#), and the templates used for many Certification Documents are located on the Criteria webpage. For a sneak peek of the certification portal, check out our video.

Waiver Request Process

Projects encountering circumstances that prevent compliance with a mandatory criterion may submit a waiver request to follow an alternate strategy that meets the intent of the criterion. In certain instances, projects may seek approval to omit a certain criterion requirement altogether.

Waiver Request Submission, Evaluation and Approval

All waiver requests must be submitted in the online portal and may be submitted at any time during the certification process before a project earns certification. Project teams will receive a response to their submitted request within five business days. Responses may include notice of waiver approval, request additional information, or decline the request. Depending on the nature of the request, resolution of a waiver may delay the PreBuild or PostBuild approval process.

All waiver requests must demonstrate consideration of potential impacts of the waiver on project stakeholders (residents, property managers, community members, developers, property owners, project team, other), surrounding neighborhood, and climate and environmental vulnerabilities.

Requests are evaluated based on clear documentation of consequential and insurmountable circumstances preventing compliance, the appropriateness of the alternate strategy proposed and how it fulfills the intent of the criterion for which the waiver is requested (if applicable), and demonstrated consideration for how stakeholder and environmental impacts will be addressed.

A waiver request approval for one project does not guarantee approval for the same request on another project.

Projects that achieve Certification following the 2020 Green Communities Criteria will receive a final Certification Approval letter itemizing the mandatory criteria for which waivers were approved.

2020 Criteria Waivers for 2015 Projects

Project teams able to demonstrate compliance with the 2020 version of a mandatory 2015 criterion may be relieved of the 2015 requirement. Such requests should be submitted per standard waiver protocol and will be automatically approved.

Levels of Certification

The 2020 Criteria offers two levels of certification:

- Enterprise Green Communities Certification demonstrates a holistic approach to green affordable housing.
- Enterprise Green Communities Certification Plus recognizes projects making the greatest strides on the Path to Zero Energy.

Developments are awarded with a Green Communities Certification plaque when both phases of certification are approved.

Certification Fees

Projects certifying to the 2020 Criteria will incur a fee of \$1,250 at the time of Prebuild application and \$300 at the time of PostBuild application. Fees will be collected online through the Green Communities Certification portal at the time that an application is submitted.

Projects with a total construction cost of \$500,000 or less, or construction cost of \$20,000 per unit or less, may request that certification fees be waived. Such requests should be submitted via email to certification@enterprisecommunity.org and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Verification Protocol

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.

Enterprise Green Communities will notify the project team if the development is randomly selected for verification. Green Communities will then direct a consultant to conduct the verification, monitor the consultant for quality assurance, and cover the costs to complete the verification.