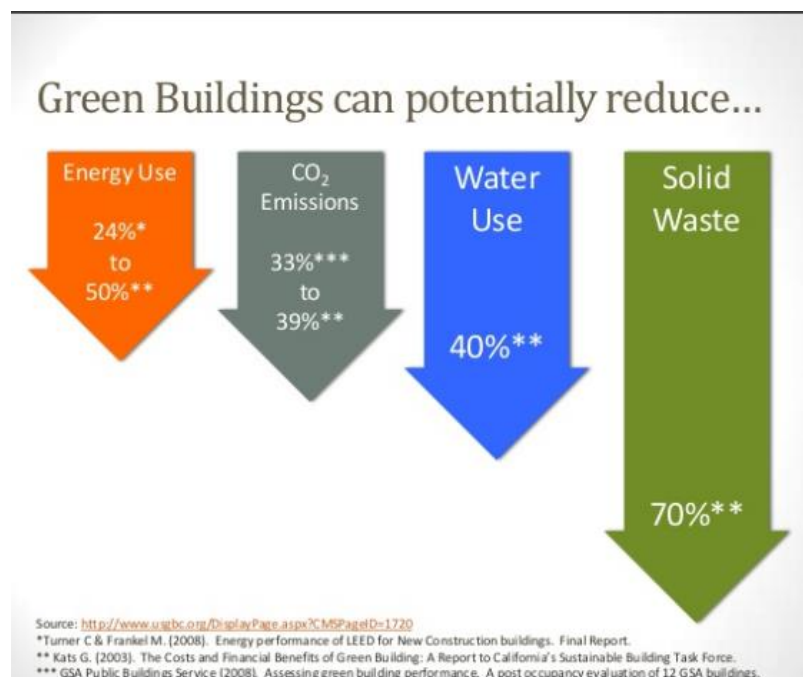


# MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ACTION OPPORTUNITY

## GREEN BUILDINGS

Buildings account for 40% of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions; this carbon footprint is linked to the fact that buildings consume 40% of the country's energy. By constructing or renovating buildings to sustainable standards such as those used by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or Energy Star programs, greenhouse gases can be reduced by one-third. And the benefits are long lasting: the up-front investment during construction will produce climate benefits over the lifetime of the building. Municipalities also see reductions in energy bills, water use and solid waste by building to these green standards.

The US Building Council's LEED rating system is the most widely adopted framework for evaluating the green attributes of new buildings and remodels. Many communities interested in promoting sustainability or climate action have instituted a requirement that all new public buildings be built to the LEED silver standard or better. The most ambitious green building policies establish a 'net zero' energy standard which uses exemplary building design plus renewable energy generation to create a zero carbon footprint for the facility. This practice is rare, but illustrates the evolution of the green building phenomenon.



Source: "Green Buildings" by P. Muenprasertdee

There is a well-established green building industry in Pennsylvania, with trade associations and experienced design and construction firms across the state and many examples of certified green buildings in the public and business sectors from which to learn and draw inspiration.

# MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ACTION OPPORTUNITY

## Where to get more information

**A guide to LEED Certification** is available from the Green Building Council which provides information on how LEED qualification is determined, the process for applying for LEED certification, and a library of additional information resources.

<http://www.usgbc.org/cert-guide>

Source:

*Green Building Council LEED certification program*

## Four Certification Levels



**The Energy Star Buildings program** is another building certification program. The primary focus is on energy use in the facility. The website provides discussion of the business case for more energy efficiency. <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings>

**Green Building Information Gateway** of the US Green Building Council provides access to an array of information on new initiatives, standards updates, strategies, meetings, and more. <http://www.gbinfo.org/>

**Green Building Council of Central Pennsylvania**, a local chapter of the Green Building Council serving a 34 county area in the state, provides information on LEED-certified buildings in the region. <http://www.usgbc.org/usgbc-central-pennsylvania>



Source: Energy Star program

**Delaware Valley Green Building Council**, a regional chapter of the Green Building Council located in the Lehigh Valley has a program focused on green building in schools; they also offer a regional database of green building contractors. <https://www.dvgbc.org/>

**Green Building Alliance**, the Pittsburgh-based chapter of GBC, provides basic facts and links, examples of green building in the region, and a list of sources of incentives for constructing green buildings. They also provide a broader discussion of different building certification options. <https://www.go-gba.org/>

**Planning and Zoning for Green Building** by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission discusses building certification, use of local ordinances to promote green building as well as information on green building programs in the region. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/MIT017.pdf>

**The World Green Building Council** provides information on net zero approaches. <http://www.worldgbc.org/advancing-net-zero>