



# Guiding Principles Assessment Handbook

FOR USE WITH THE FEDERAL HIGH PERFORMANCE & SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS POLICIES

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## OVERVIEW

From the EPA to NASA, federal agencies work to abide by the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings<sup>1</sup>, which were most recently updated by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) on December 23, 2020<sup>2</sup>.

In complying with the Guiding Principles, each agency may provide additional guidance to their projects. For example, the Department of Defense (DoD) has incorporated the Guiding Principles requirements into their Unified Facilities Criteria High Performance and Sustainable Building Requirements (UFC 1-200-02<sup>3</sup>) The DoD initiated the Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) program to unify all technical criteria and standards pertaining to planning, design, construction, and operation and maintenance of real property facilities.

The Green Business Certification Inc. ([GBCI](https://gbcinc.com)) has more than 300 full time technical experts and consultants specializing in architecture, engineering and building management is the premiere organization for third-party verification. GBCI has been working with these federal agencies and the Department of Defense to offer third-party certification (assessments) of each agency’s work to meet the Guiding Principles. GBCI will evaluate your compliance with the Guiding Principles and provide support for your building<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/guiding\\_principles\\_for\\_sustainable\\_federal\\_buildings.pdf](https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/guiding_principles_for_sustainable_federal_buildings.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wbdg.org/ffc/dod/unified-facilities-criteria-ufc/ufc-1-200-02>

<sup>4</sup> <https://guidingprinciples.gbcinc.com/>

This handbook coupled with the relevant Technical Guide published by GBCI will take you through the steps to show your building's compliance with the following:

### **Federal Agencies**

- Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings<sup>5</sup> for New Construction and Modernizations
  - [Technical Guide: New Construction and Modernizations – Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings](#)

### **Department of Defense**

- UFC 1-200-02 High Performance and Sustainable Building Requirements<sup>6</sup>.
  - [Technical Guide: New Construction and Renovations – Guiding Principles Implemented by UFC 1-200-02](#)

For simplicity the Guiding Principles and the UFC criteria will be referenced as the “Requirements” of the High Performance & Sustainable Buildings Guiding Principles.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Federal Agencies**

The *Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings and Associated Instructions* by the Council on Environmental Quality<sup>7</sup> for Federal Agencies addresses eligibility on page 9 under the Effective Date section. In general older projects may work with GBCI and use the 2016 offering. Newer projects may leverage LEED certification for compliance as is stated in Appendix C of the instructions.

All Requirements must be addressed for registered projects; GBCI offers third-party assessment of compliance under the Guiding Principles Assessment program. GBCI cannot provide waivers or exemptions from Requirements or third-party assessment. Contact the project's Primary Contact or Project Owner with questions regarding applicability of the Guiding Principles, specific Requirements or eligibility for third-party assessment.

### **Department of Defense**

For Department of Defense, the UFC 1-200-01 DoD Building Code (General Building Requirements)<sup>8</sup> document provides clarification for buildings eligible for third-party assessment through the current version of the UFC 1-200-02 High Performance and Sustainable Building Requirements. Table 1-1 Compliance Requirements/Thresholds outlines the applicability and requirements of third-party certification (assessment). GBCI's Guiding Principles Assessment is one of the acceptable third-party certifications (assessments) as referenced in Table 1-1.

All Requirements must be addressed for registered projects; GBCI offers third-party assessment of compliance under the Guiding Principles Assessment program. GBCI cannot provide waivers or exemptions from Requirements or third-party assessment. Contact the project's Primary Contact or Project Owner with questions regarding applicability of UFC 1-200-02, specific Requirements or eligibility for third-party assessment.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/eere/femp/guiding-principles-sustainable-federal-buildings>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.wbdg.org/ffc/dod/unified-facilities-criteria-ufc/ufc-1-200-02>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/guiding\\_principles\\_for\\_sustainable\\_federal\\_buildings.pdf](https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/guiding_principles_for_sustainable_federal_buildings.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.wbdg.org/ffc/dod/unified-facilities-criteria-ufc/ufc-1-200-01>

To be eligible to participate, the building, all other real property within the project boundary, and all work must comply with applicable federal, state, and local building-related environmental laws and regulations in place where the building is located.

All buildings must be designed for, constructed on, and operated on a permanent location on already existing land. Buildings shall not consist of mobile structures, equipment, or vehicles. Projects must include the new, ground-up design and construction, or major renovation, of at least one federal building in its entirety.

### **Guiding Principles Assessment Project Boundary**

The Guiding Principles Assessment project boundary must include all contiguous land that is associated with the building and supports its typical operations. This includes land altered as a result of construction and features used primarily by the buildings occupants, such as hardscape (parking and sidewalks), septic or stormwater treatment equipment, and landscaping. The boundary may not unreasonably exclude portions of the building or site to give the project an advantage in complying with requirements. The building must accurately communicate the scope of the project being assessed in all promotional and descriptive materials and distinguish it from any non-assessed space.

### **Shared Site Approach**

A set of buildings located within the same Guiding Principles Assessment site boundary that, because of shared site features and uniformity in building traits, can document a subset of Requirements on the site level as listed under each Requirement as specified in the Technical Guide. However, all buildings must register as separate projects.

## **REGISTER**

### **Guiding Principles Assessment Handbook**

Teams review this document, *The Guiding Principles Assessment Handbook*, to learn about the review process, fees, team member roles, project directory, and more. A copy of this document must be distributed to the Project Administrator and Project Owner. During the registration process teams will be asked to confirm receipt of this document.

### **Register your project**

To register a project, the first step is to complete the [Registration Form](#). To optimize an integrated design process, which is a core part of meeting the requirements, we encourage you to register as early as possible – ideally, prior to the design phase.

Each building seeking Assessment must register separately.

### **Project Team Roles**

During registration you will need to identify project team members. The Guiding Principles Assessment project team usually includes the owner, primary contact, and project administrator defined for Guiding Principles Assessment projects as follows:

*Owner Organization:* The “Owner Organization” also known as the Building Owner Organization is the building owner organization or the DOD department that will maintain and occupy after construction (US Army, US Air Force, US Navy, or US Marine Corps)

*Owner Name:* The “Owner Name” also known as the Building Owner Name is the name of the point of contact within the Owner Organization aka Building Owner Organization representing the owner during

the project and once the building is occupied (the individual filling this role may change once the building is occupied).

*Primary Contact Organization:* The “Primary Contact Organization” also known as Project Owner Organization is the DOD department that is executing project for the “Owner Organization” also known as Building Owner Organization (US Army, US Air Force, US Navy, or US Marine Corps).

*Primary Contact Name:* The “Primary Contact Name” also known as Project Owner Name is the name of the person within the Primary Contact Organization also known as Project Owner Organization responsible for the project.

*Project Administrator Organization:* “The Project Administrator Organization” is either the DOD or non-DOD (often and Architecture or Engineering firm) organization that the executes the project for the Primary Contact Organization aka Project Owner Organization.

*Project Administrator Name:* The “Project Administrator” is the name of the person within the Project Administrator Organization responsible for the project.

## **Fees**

Registration, review, and other project fees are listed on the Guiding Principles Assessment [fee table](#). Projects pursuing both LEED certification and Guiding Principles Assessment do not incur Guiding Principles Assessment fees if the two applications are submitted concurrently.

Once a project is registered and the registration payment is received, the team will have access to various tools including a dedicated contact from GBCI. Your GBCI contact will be available throughout the process to provide clarification and answer questions.

# APPLY

## **Demonstrate Compliance and Document Your Building**

Teams must demonstrate compliance with the Guiding Principles Requirements. The Project Information Form is used to indicate the documentation path selected for each Requirement. A portion of the Requirements have more than one documentation path available, such as a path to demonstrate compliance using a LEED compliance path for eligible applications. When using a LEED compliance path, the LEED credit form and all supporting documentation is required as specified by the LEED documentation requirements. Each Requirement also includes a path to indicate that a requirement is not applicable to the building. If a Requirement is only partially applicable (e.g. daylighting not permitted in select secure areas of the building), it is expected that the project comply in all applicable portions of the project. In such instances, documentation delineating the portions of the project that are in compliance versus those that are not applicable must be provided. Buildings that have a scope of work of both ground up new construction and renovations should contact GBCI prior to registration for tailored guidance.

## **Application to GBCI**

To transmit documentation to GBCI for review you may use GBCI’s Dropbox or you may use your preferred file transfer service. If using your own file transfer service, GBCI must be able to access the documentation via link for download. For projects requiring special handling contact us. All files must be organized by Guiding Principles section and then sub requirement as pictured in Figure 1. If using GBCI’s Dropbox, a folder will be pre-loaded with the aforementioned folder structure.

Figure 1.

- 2-2 Employ Integrated Design Principles
- 2-3 Optimize Energy Performance
- 2-4 Protect and Conserve Water
- 2-5 Enhance Indoor Environmental Quality
- 2-6 Reduce Environmental Impact of Materials
  - 2-6.1.1 Recycled Content
  - 2-6.1.2 Bio-based Products
  - 2-6.1.4 ODP Substances
  - 2-6.2.1. Storage and Collection of Recyclables
  - 2-6.2.2 Waste Diversion
- 2-7 Address Climate Change Risk
- Project Information Form / general building documents

Once the application is complete, you'll notify GBCI to commence the review. Prior to notifying GBCI to commence the review, ensure that the registration and review fees have been paid. If you need an alternative submission process, contact GBCI as early in the process as possible to see what alternate considerations may be available. Additional fees apply.

## REVIEW

### **Participate In the Review of Your Application & Assessment Report**

After the applicable review fee has been paid, GBCI will conduct the review. Note that if the submission is concurrent with a LEED project review, any issues hindering the LEED review would also affect this review's timeline and vice versa.

Guiding Principles Assessment projects use the split review process. To do this, you'll submit part of your application at the conclusion of the project's design phase (design Requirements) and the remainder at the conclusion of construction (construction Requirements), completing two phases of reviews for each design requirement and construction requirement. The split review is designed to help your team determine if your project is on track early in the process. Please note that only Requirements identified as design Requirements can be submitted during the design review. The Technical Guide identifies whether each Requirement is a design or construction Requirement.

If any changes occur to the project after the design review that might affect compliance, those changes must be re-reviewed by GBCI. In these cases, documentation for the affected Requirements must be updated and submitted for one additional round of review during the construction phase.

Contact GBCI to request an exception if the project is better suited to submit the entire application (design and construction Requirements) after the project is completed.

## Review Process for both the Design Review and the Construction Review

### Part 1: Preliminary Review

- Once all application materials are finalized and uploaded to the project folders, contact GBCI and indicate that the application is ready for preliminary design review.
- GBCI conducts a technical review of the project application, checking your application for completeness and compliance. Throughout this and subsequent reviews, GBCI may request clarifications.
- GBCI will contact the project administrator with its preliminary review report within 20-25 business days of receiving the assessment fee. The assessment report will indicate those aspects of the Guiding Principles that are compliant, as well as those that are pending with a request for more information.
- Your team can accept the preliminary review results as final if you are satisfied, prepare new or revised documentation, or attempt additional Requirements before submitting for final design review.

### Part 2: Final Review (optional)

- The final review stage allows you to submit supplementary information requested by GBCI during the preliminary review or amend the application. GBCI suggests you submit these clarifications within 25 business days after receiving the preliminary review results. GBCI will review the revised or newly submitted information.
- GBCI will respond with a final review report for the assessment within 20-25 business days, marking Requirements as either compliant or not compliant.
- Like the preliminary review, you can either accept the review results as final, or revise your application and resubmit for a supplemental (appeal) review.

### Part 3: Supplemental (appeal) Review (optional, fees apply)

- The supplemental (appeal) review stage provides an additional round of review and allows you to submit additional information, amend the application, or address Requirements not previously submitted. GBCI will review the previously not compliant or newly submitted Requirements, and any information that has changed since the return of the final review. The fee associated with supplemental (appeal) reviews varies depending on the level of complexity.
- Appeals are specific to each Guiding Principle Requirement and multiple appeals may be submitted concurrently; a separate fee is required for each appeal.
- GBCI will respond with an updated assessment report within 20-25 business days, indicating which Requirements are compliant or not compliant.
- Like the final review, you can either accept the supplemental (appeal) review results as final, or submit for additional supplemental (appeal) reviews. There is no cap on the number of supplemental (appeal) reviews you may submit.
- After the appeal review is completed, contact GBCI to accept the results.

## COMPLIANCE

### Assessment Report

Once the construction final review is complete, the assessment report will indicate the final determination of compliance. The building can be either Compliant or Not Compliant. Guiding Principles for Federal Leadership in High Performance and Sustainable Buildings requires that each Requirement is assessed and determined to either meet or not meet the guidelines in the Executive Orders.

Requirements deemed not applicable will not impede compliance<sup>9</sup>. Buildings cannot be partially compliant.

Compliant buildings will receive an official GBCI certificate.

### **Celebrate and Communicate**

Your work toward demonstrating compliance with the High Performance & Sustainable Buildings, Guiding Principles is something to be celebrated and communicated. All projects are, by default, considered “public” projects and thereby included in the public project directory. A listing in this directory allows the general public and members of the media to look up your project listing and its related details. Neither the public directory nor the publicity opportunities will disclose the underlying information from the High Performance and Sustainable Buildings, Guiding Principles review application. You are free to opt-out of the project directory and publicity opportunities as a “private” project at the time of registration or any time thereafter.

### **Project directory**

The public project directory provides the opportunity to share your success, educate, and motivate. Here’s a full list of the data and project elements that may be listed in the project directory:

- Location
- Size of the project
- Identity of the agency that occupies the building
- Identity of the agency that built the project
- The project is registered
- The project has been reviewed against the Guiding Principles

By submitting information to GBCI, you grant GBCI a license to access, view, publish, and display the above project information.

### **Publicity opportunities**

Successfully meeting the Guiding Principles gives you the opportunity to share your project strategies, photos, and insight, and play a pivotal role in educating other project teams. All “public” projects also benefit from publicity opportunities: we may use your project data to create case studies highlighting your project’s features, reference your project on our website or to the media, or create other derivative works. Information that may be used for articles, project profiles, or other features includes:

- Service providers
- Project team members
- Promotional or other project photographs
- Project strategies for compliance
- Quotations from team members

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<sup>9</sup> To learn more (1) DoD projects see the [UFC 1-200-02](#) Section 4-2 COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS (2) Federal Agencies see the [Guiding Principles for Sustainable Federal Buildings and Associated Instructions](#) Section III. Agency Determination of a Building’s Compliance with the Guiding Principles

## **Trademarks**

Note that if a project chooses to remain “private,” it must not be marketed or represented to the general public as a Guiding Principles project. These projects are not entitled to use or display any intellectual property, including the GBCI trademarks and logos. These projects may communicate their status as a Guiding Principles project to government entities for the limited purposes of complying with building and tax laws, and for administrative proceedings related to land use entitlements.

## **How is your project data used?**

We use your project data for the greater good: to educate and provide resources for project teams and others around the world, showcase your strategies, and share the size and power of the green building movement. Whether or not you elect for your project to be private, you confer the right to GBCI and GBCI’s affiliates to publish, display, and exploit the project information only in aggregated, anonymized, and non-identifying form.

## **Disclaimer of warranties**

Neither GBCI nor any of GBCI’s representatives make any (and GBCI and GBCI’s representatives do hereby disclaim, to the greatest extent allowed by law, any and all) warranties, representations, and conditions, whether written, oral, express, implied or statutory, including any warranties of accuracy, completeness, title, against infringement, merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, with respect to the program, the application, GBCI’s assessment, and any optional services provided by or on behalf of GBCI. GBCI explicitly disclaims any and all liability arising from client’s use of the application for any purpose other than for the facilitation of GBCI’s assessment.

By submitting information to GBCI, you acknowledge that certain aspects of the Guiding Principles are conceptual, qualitative, and open to broad interpretation. GBCI’S interpretation of the Guiding Principles may differ from that of OM and/or other Federal Agencies tasked with evaluation or enforcement of your compliance. The results of GBCI’s assessment are to be used for your internal purposes only and neither constitute an official determination of conformance, nor does it guaranteed any such determination by an applicable governing authority.

Except as expressly set forth herein, GBCI owns and retains all rights and interests to GBCI Intellectual Property and Marks. All GBCI Intellectual Property and Marks are commercial items in accordance with and as such “commercial items” term is used in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 12, 27.405-2, 27.405-3 and Defense FAR Supplement (DFARS) 227.7105.