

USGBC's 2010 Natural Talent Design Competition: Presented by Salvation Army's EnviRenew

F.A.Q.

Introduction

To clarify some of the excellent questions we have been receiving, we have created this Frequently Asked Questions document to give answers in a more timely fashion. Please refer to this document if you have any questions pertaining to the competition. If your questions still aren't answered, please email designcompetition@usgbc.org. Thank you!

Eligibility and Entering

Q: I have received a degree in one of the included professions, but I am not currently employed in that profession/employed in any profession. Am I still eligible?

A: Yes, you are eligible. Any full time student (undergraduate or graduate) in one of the prescribed fields is eligible, regardless of age. Any emerging professional, no more than 5 full years removed from receipt of his or her degree, is eligible, regardless of employment status.

Q: I am an emerging professional but I would like to work with a student or students. Can I do so?

A: No, this is not allowed. The categories are separated to create a fair environment for all involved.

Q: Can we have a member of our team who has more than 5 years experience? Is there a contributor category, for people who are outside of the emerging professionals requirements?

A: No, there is no "contributor category." You may solicit advice from persons outside the eligibility requirements, but that person cannot have any information or design aspects attributed to him or her. That being said, the idea is to promote creativity and ingenuity among students and emerging professionals, not to transfer ideas from established professionals.

Q: I am not a U.S. Citizen and/or I do not reside in the United States. Am I eligible?

A: Yes, you are eligible provided you meet the requirements of being a full-time student or emerging professional no more than 5 full years removed from receipt of your degree.

Q: If I am helping to host a local competition, am I eligible to enter?

A: Unfortunately not. We greatly appreciate your help in hosting a local competition, but if you were to participate at the same time it could easily be a conflict of interests.

Q: Can my team be made up of people from around the country/world?

A: Yes, absolutely. Of course, all team members must either be students or emerging professionals, not a mix of both. Also, each team must choose a location, usually the location of the team leader, in order to place them into a chapter.

Q: What local chapter competition should I join?

A: Please join the local competition that is hosted by the USGBC chapter geographically closest to your team's location. If you still have questions, refer to the email address at the beginning of this document. If you are an **international entrant** not from Canada or Mexico, please select the international option on the chapters list.

Q: Are part-time students eligible?

A: Yes, but they must enter as emerging professionals. The student category is reserved for full time students.

Competition Particulars

Q: Why is USGBC building houses?

A: USGBC is not building houses. USGBC is providing four designs, by way of this competition, to Salvation Army's EnviRenew. EnviRenew is then providing these designs to the Broadmoor Development Corporation. These designs will be used to build four new houses in the Broadmoor neighborhood. USGBC is not a homebuilder or builder of any kind.

Q: I cannot find the cost estimation template, where is it?

A: It is located under the [resources tab](#).

Q: Can I alter the cost estimation template?

A: Yes, but be warned. We want teams to be creative in finding alternative materials, etc., but please do not go overboard. If you alter the template, you are expected to provide detailed information about the products you are adding and/or swapping in. This includes pricing, product ID numbers, product specifications, number of units, product sources, shipping/transportation cost per unit, and sources for the aforementioned information. This does not all need to be on the template itself, but must be included somewhere in the submitted files. There must also be a note in the template describing where the further info can be found.

Q: Is the use of gray water legal in New Orleans?

A: No, unfortunately it is not. The use of captured rainwater is legal only for irrigation.

Q: Can we include donated, salvaged or reclaimed materials in our design? Do they need to be accounted for in the cost estimate?

A: Yes, all materials included in the design must be accounted for in the cost estimate. This design must be highly replicable, and therefore donated, salvaged and reclaimed materials do not really apply. These sorts of items are rarely replicable.

Q: Can we include tax breaks and incentives in our design and cost estimate?

A: Similar to donated materials, tax breaks and incentives must be replicable. If you can provide documentation (and citation) of how to achieve the tax breaks and/or incentives in question and how they are replicable, please feel free to deduct from your construction costs and note on the cost estimation template. Please be aware, however, that these breaks/incentives must relate to construction.

Q: Can you provide more information regarding the site?

A: Assume that it is a mid-block infill site, 30' x 100', with one 30' facing the street and the other 30' side backing up to another lot. Assume there are no alleys to the side or rear of the site. Please also assume that any existing buildings or structures on any site will be cleared and these costs will not factor into the \$100,000 construction cost limit. Beyond that, site specifics are not yet determined. The Broadmoor Development Corporation is still in the process of acquiring the sites and thus we are not able to give further information.

Q: What are the limitations for stairs, ramps, terraces, porches, etc encroaching upon the edges of the site?

A: Relevant information regarding setbacks and zoning ordinances has been posted under the [resources tab](#). The link in the zoning document will take you to the full City of New Orleans Municipal Ordinances library.

Q: Does the mechanical equipment need to be located at or above the 7' plane?

A: Yes.

Q: Is the area below the house permitted to be used other than required by the published program, such as parking or storage?

A: This area can be used as garage or storage space, but not livable space. However, any garage equipment (door, motor, etc) must be accounted for in the cost estimation template. Parking spaces are not required in the design as most Broadmoor residents park on the street.

Q: What is the standard for measuring square footage?

A: Interior perimeter of exterior walls. Square footage of exterior spaces (porches, etc.) should not be counted toward the 880sf maximum.

Q: Is off street parking required?

A: According to the City of New Orleans Municipal Ordinances, one space is required for a house of this type. More information here:

<http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=16306&stateId=18&stateName=Louisiana>

Q: May the design cut into the existing grade?

A: The lot on which you are designing the house is essentially flat, so cutting into the grade is not really an option. Also, this is a very bad idea due to the risk of hitting the water table.

Q: Is it a requirement to have the space below the living floor covered?

A: Although it is not a stipulated requirement, to leave this space uncovered or unclad would likely cause the house to stick out too much in terms of the rest of the Broadmoor neighborhood. It may be wise to avoid uncovered pilings which would give the design a “beach house” appearance.

Q: Would a “floating house” be acceptable an alternative to elevating the structure 7' above the grade?

A: First, all houses must be designed at least seven feet (7') above grade. Once that is accomplished, it may be extremely expensive to enable the house to float. That is not to say it can't be done, but it will take serious creativity and research. Also, please consider the damage that an uncontrolled, floating house could inflict on other structures.

Q: Does the site have an alley or rear entrance?

A: As stated before, the site does not have a rear or side alley, but a rear entry/doorway, etc. into the house would most likely be a good idea.

Q: Do the figures on the cost estimation template reflect overhead costs and contractor mark-ups?

A: No. The template reflects only direct costs for labor and materials.

Q: When you list a total number for work on the house in the estimate template, as with the foundation, can you tell us what your assumptions are that set that price? For example, can you say the low end of the foundation range is for a perimeter block foundation?

A: These assumptions are an educated guess to average out the work for perimeter block vs. concrete. As most contractors charge different prices and have different methods for building foundations, it is only possible to provide a rough average.

Q: Is it allowed to build up with fill dirt outside the building envelope in order to get a head start with the built ramp?

A: You are allowed to build up 12" with fill dirt, but no more. Beyond that, the risks of excessive water run-off increase greatly.

*Q: Are there any ADA compliance pieces we don't have to follow (with the emphasis on the elderly rather than wheelchairs?) Do **both** baths have to be ADA compliant?*

A: No, all ADA and Universal Design compliance issues must be followed. Regarding baths, only one needs to be ADA/UD compliant (must be a full bath) provided it is accessible to all persons in the house. Thus, if the full bath is only accessible through one bedroom, the half bath must be ADA/UD compliant.

Q: Would raising the house on dirt fill count as landscaping?

A: NO. This is a very bad idea. Soil in New Orleans is poor, and dirt fill would not anchor the house against hurricane-level winds and water.

Q: Are there any guidelines on appliance sizes?

A: No. We assume that the sizes of the appliances will be dictated by the size limitations of the house itself. That being said, an oven or microwave that can't fit a plate inside it doesn't make much sense.

Q: Does our faculty advisor count as a LEED AP for the credits?

A: Your faculty advisor does not count, but there will be a LEED AP involved with the four winning designs. Therefore, teams are allowed to assume they will achieve points towards LEED for Homes Platinum that involve a LEED AP, e.g. the ID credit point of having a LEED AP involved in the design process.

Q: Can we claim other LEED AP points (like the community based discussions, etc.) on a theoretical basis?

A: Yes, but you must provide documentation and explanation of how that process will work. If you claim points without explanation, you will not receive credit for them.

Q: Is it necessary to design for a carport?

A: It is not necessary to design a carport, but as stated earlier, one off-street parking space is required.

Q: Does participation in this project count as sufficient experience to qualify as "LEED project experience" for qualifying for the LEED AP+ test?

A: No. Consideration will be given to this idea for the members of the four winning designs, but you do not automatically receive sufficient experience by simply creating a design. Sufficient experience comes from seeing the design through to construction.