



Our plan to meet the goals of  
the AIA 2030 Commitment.



# Sustainability Action Plan





# Protecting the Future

We believe in creating healthy environments that improve quality of life and reflect good stewardship of the natural environment and its resources.

We also believe that sustainability is a natural outcome when creating human-centered environments is your priority.

In this document, we will showcase ESa's **Past, Present, and Future commitment** to the good stewardship of our planet and the wellness of individuals.

While our past lays the foundation for ESa's sustainable efforts, we will focus on our present and future efforts to establish goals and improve the energy performance of our buildings in line with our AIA 2030 commitment.

Moving forward together  
to create environments  
that shape lives and  
**protect our future.**

Our Commitment

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Education

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Design Approach

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Goal Setting & Evaluation/Governance & Reporting

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Outlook & Operations

 Select to jump to that section





## ■ The Past

“We have an obligation to future generations to create healthy environments.”

ESa

ESa is proud to continue to live up to the words of our founder, **Earl Swensson, FAIA Emeritus**, as we pursue designs that **enrich the lives of people and protect the environment.**

Over 60 years of experience has taught us that people drive design—and that good design improves lives.

Earl Swensson’s fundamental beliefs for creating healthy environments that improve quality of life and reflect good stewardship of the natural environment began early in his life. In *A Passion for Design*, Earl reflects how his mother’s illness made him realize how dangerous it is to walk away from the obligation of creating an environment that does not damage people physically. As a result, he developed and expressed a deep love for architecture that directly serves the needs of the people who use it; an architecture that gives them comfort and joy; an architecture that contributes to their wellbeing. In the words of Earl: “Architecture, above all else, should be a wellness profession.”

Early on, Earl focused on designing spaces for human function, needs and efficiency, the foundation that is the core of our firm today: human-centered design. Earl designed buildings for efficiency and occupant safety. He acknowledged the importance of connected communities, ties to nature and the healing effects of natural light. He was aware that a healthy interior environment plays a substantial role in the quality of the health of its occupants.

With a holistic approach that celebrates both form and function, **we continue to strive to create healthy spaces that improve the quality of life for those inside, while protecting the world outside.**



These efforts are dedicated to **Molly Alsbaugh**, an ESa family member who was a champion of sustainable design and an instrumental part in creating this document.

**Molly Miller Alsbaugh**  
1966 - 2024





## The Present



\*Certification by others prior to ESa's move to The Gulch.

Our office's neighborhood, the Gulch, is certified **LEED® ND (Neighborhood Development)\***.

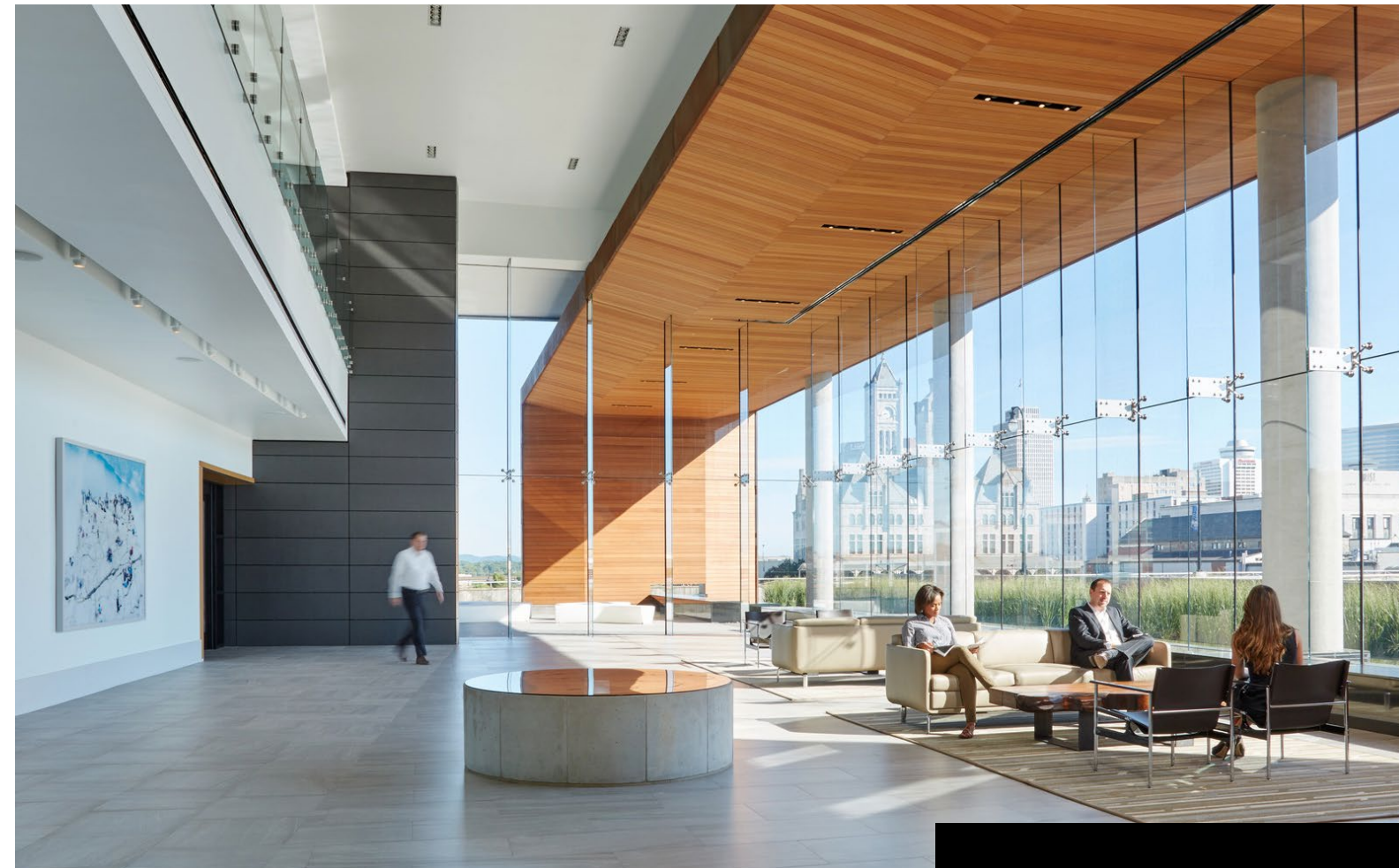
By receiving LEED® ND, the Gulch neighborhood was:

**1<sup>st</sup>**  
in the Southern US

**10<sup>th</sup>**  
in the United States

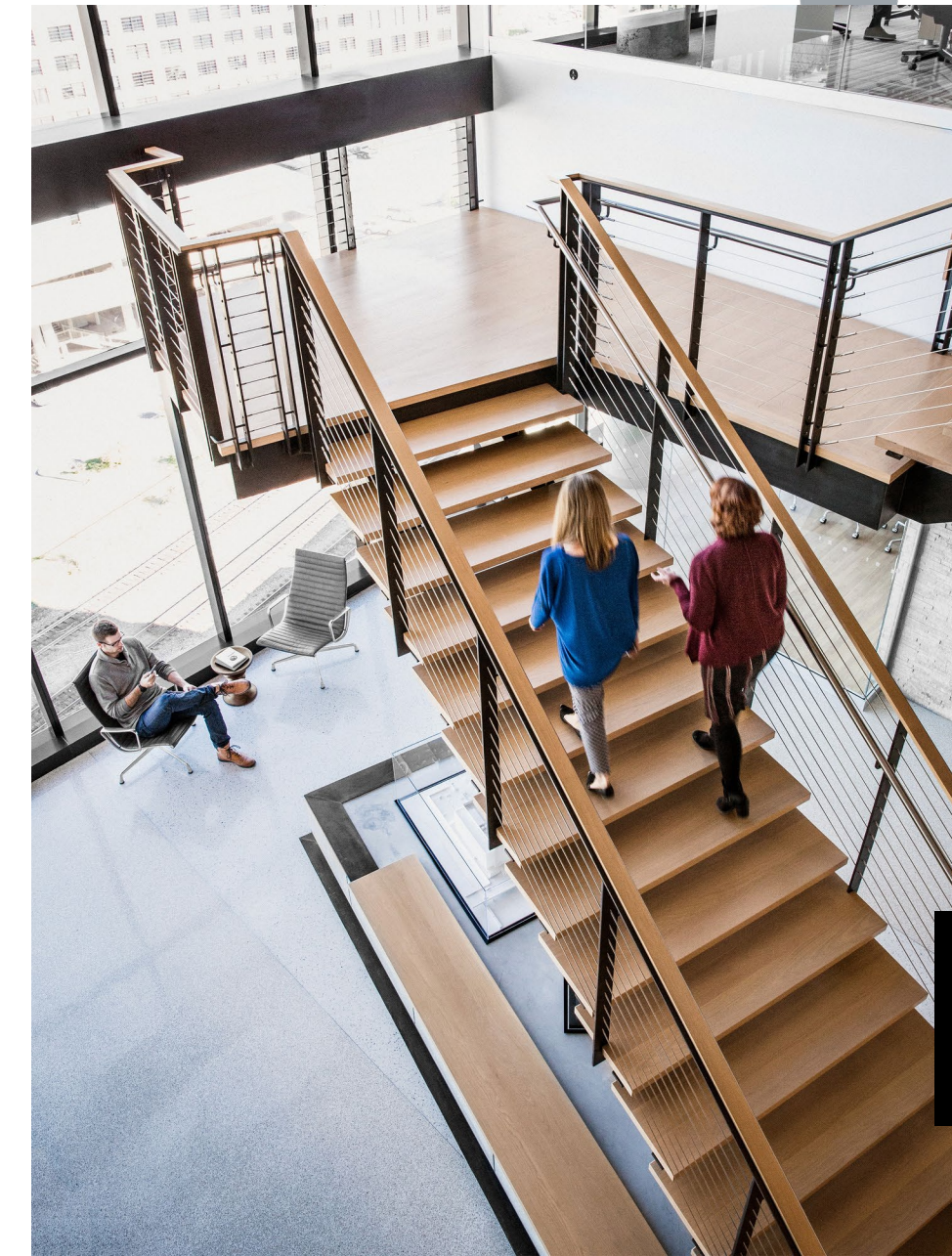
**13<sup>th</sup>**  
in the world

**4<sup>th</sup>**  
in the world to receive Silver status



Creating healthy and resilient environments that improve quality of life and stewardship of the natural environment and its resources is the core of ESa's design philosophy.

Our teams follow this same approach, regardless of sector, to provide healthcare, hospitality, educational and commercial office spaces that positively affect people and their community at large.



**ESa**

**Certified LEED Gold®**, Gulch Crossing was designed by ESa and has been our home since its completion in 2015.

Our office buildout is **LEED Platinum®**.

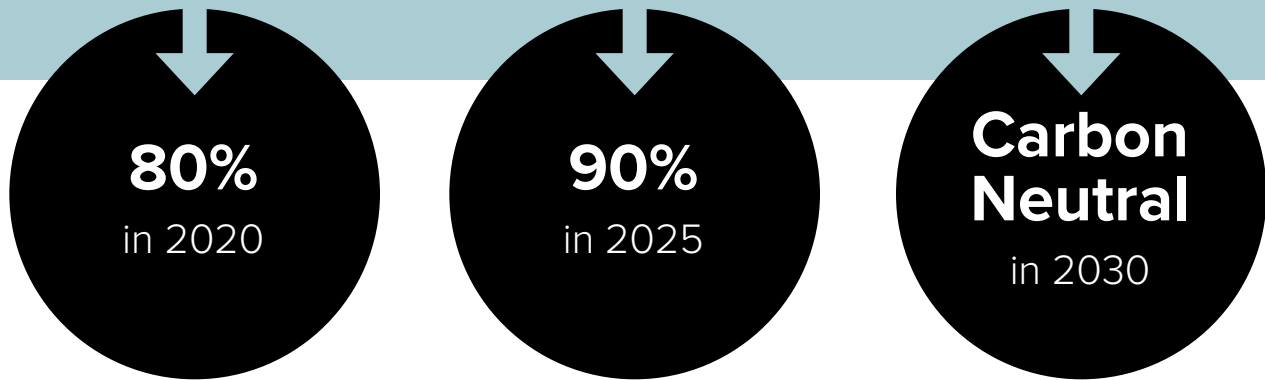


# The Future

## What is the AIA 2030 Challenge?

Architecture 2030 issued The 2030 Challenge in 2006 asking the global architecture and building community to adopt the following targets:

- 1. All new buildings, developments and major renovations shall be designed to meet a fossil fuel, GHG-emitting<sup>1</sup>, energy consumption performance standard of 70% below the regional (or country) average/median for that building type.
- 2. At a minimum, an equal amount of existing building area shall be renovated annually to meet a fossil fuel, GHG-emitting, energy consumption performance standard of 70% of the regional (or country) average/median for that building type.
- 3. The fossil fuel reduction standard for all new buildings and major renovations shall be increased to:



using **no fossil fuel GHG-emitting energy** to operate

**1. GHG (Greenhouse gas) emissions**  
Defined by the U.S. Energy Information Administration as emissions of several important greenhouse gases that result from human activity. The majority of these human-caused (anthropogenic) greenhouse gas emissions were carbon dioxide (CO2) from burning fossil fuels. Building operations are responsible for roughly 27% of annual total emissions, whereas building infrastructure materials and construction (embodied carbon) are responsible for an additional 13%.



# A Letter from Our Leadership

We are committed to designing for a better, healthier future.



June 15, 2022

Lakisha Ann Woods, CAE  
EVP/Chief Executive Officer  
The American Institute of Architects  
1735 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20006-5292

Dear Ms. Woods:

Earl Swensson Associates, Inc., a 185 person firm located in Nashville, Tennessee, is hereby signing on to the AIA 2030 Commitment program and its goal of carbon-neutral buildings by the year of 2030. The places where we live, work and play represent the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in America, as well as around the world. The design and construction industry has made significant strides toward creating high performance buildings of all types and uses. As a result, the industry is positioned to have a profound impact by continuing to foster high building performance and reducing building-related greenhouse gas emissions.

As architects, we understand the need to exercise leadership in creating the built environments. We believe we must alter our profession's practices and encourage our clients and the entire design and construction industry to join with us to change the course of the planet's future. A multi-year effort will be required to alter current design and construction practices and realize significant reductions in the use of natural resources, non-renewable energy sources and waste production, and promotes regeneration of natural resources.

We therefore commit Earl Swensson Associates, Inc. to take the following steps that are part of the AIA 2030 Commitment program:

- Create an account in the Design Data Exchange (DDx).
- Within six months of the commitment date, conduct firm engagement related to the 2030 Commitment and create a Sustainability Action Plan.
- We endeavor to meet 2030 energy reduction targets in our practice as a deliberate part of design.
- Within the first year and each year thereafter, report the progress of our firm's design portfolio toward meeting the 2030 goals by using the AIA 2030 DDx.
- Review how progress and practices are tracking with our firm's Sustainability Action Plan. Update our Sustainability Action Plan once every three years, reflecting on the progress shown on our reporting.

We also support the critical need for more consistent and more rigorous metrics related to actual building performance. We further commit our firm's assistance to the AIA and others in the ongoing development of effective metrics and standards for reporting purposes. It is understood that reporting through the AIA 2030 Commitment program must respect the confidentiality of information about specific clients, projects and proprietary tools.

We look forward to working with you and our professional colleagues to achieve the goals of the 2030 Commitment.

Sincerely,

EARL SWENSSON ASSOCIATES, INC.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'J. Todd Robinson'.

James Todd Robinson, FAIA  
President



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Kevin Harney'.

Kevin Harney, AIA  
Vice President





# Earl Swensson's early sustainable design philosophy has paved the way for the firm's approach to sustainability in the built environment.

Though we are a large scale firm with projects across the nation, ESa is located in one single office, as we believe this creates an informed and connected company. Employees have always been ESa's greatest asset, and the single office model allows for wonderful mentoring opportunities and constant education.



Our Sustainability Committee is a small, diverse group of individuals at ESa, devoted to learning and sharing the most up to date information regarding sustainability practices in our industry.

We have representatives from each department at ESa to ensure that information is disseminated evenly across the firm. We meet monthly to discuss the newest innovations in sustainable technology, discuss how our project processes can be improved to have sustainability at the forefront of design, and brainstorm how to engage clients and consultants in these design processes.





# Internal Education

Our goal at ESa is to continually learn and adapt as new technologies, processes and materials become available.

We value the talents inherently present on our team and recognize that using specialized consultants provides value to the design team and client alike.



## ESa University



We believe in providing employees with the right tools and knowledge to do their jobs well. Every October, ESa hosts “ESa University”, a month-long series of courses taught by ESa employees and outside consultants, including sustainability courses. This month of education encourages firmwide participation and provides a range of topics from “Sustainable Materials” to “WELLness Architectural Updates”.

The importance of continued education is embedded into our firm’s culture, supports our collaborative efforts and equips our design team to have more productive and informative meetings. In turn, this allows us to provide clients and communities with more informed design solutions.



# Internal Education



## Training on Sustainability Tools



**Staff training and education** is at the foundation of ESa. Employees are encouraged to pursue skills that will foster innovation and advance both sustainable and overall design efforts.

We commit to educating our staff on the importance of involving **sustainability consultants** in the design process. Sustainable consultants help the design team solve complex sustainability issues.



**Training on the latest industry tools and technology** provides our team with the knowledge necessary to approach current and future projects with up-to-date sustainable strategies. An established baseline of sustainable tools and resources, such as in-house preliminary energy modeling, beta testing and Material Bank, helps us more seamlessly accomplish project-specific sustainability goals.



**Lunch and Learns** and other seminars are a great way of dispersing information to staff in a fun way and on a regular basis. Topics range from “Best Detailing Practices to Maintain Energy Efficiency” to “The Benefits of Performance-Based Design.” Sessions are held both in-person and virtually to encourage participation in unity with our redefined hybrid work schedule.

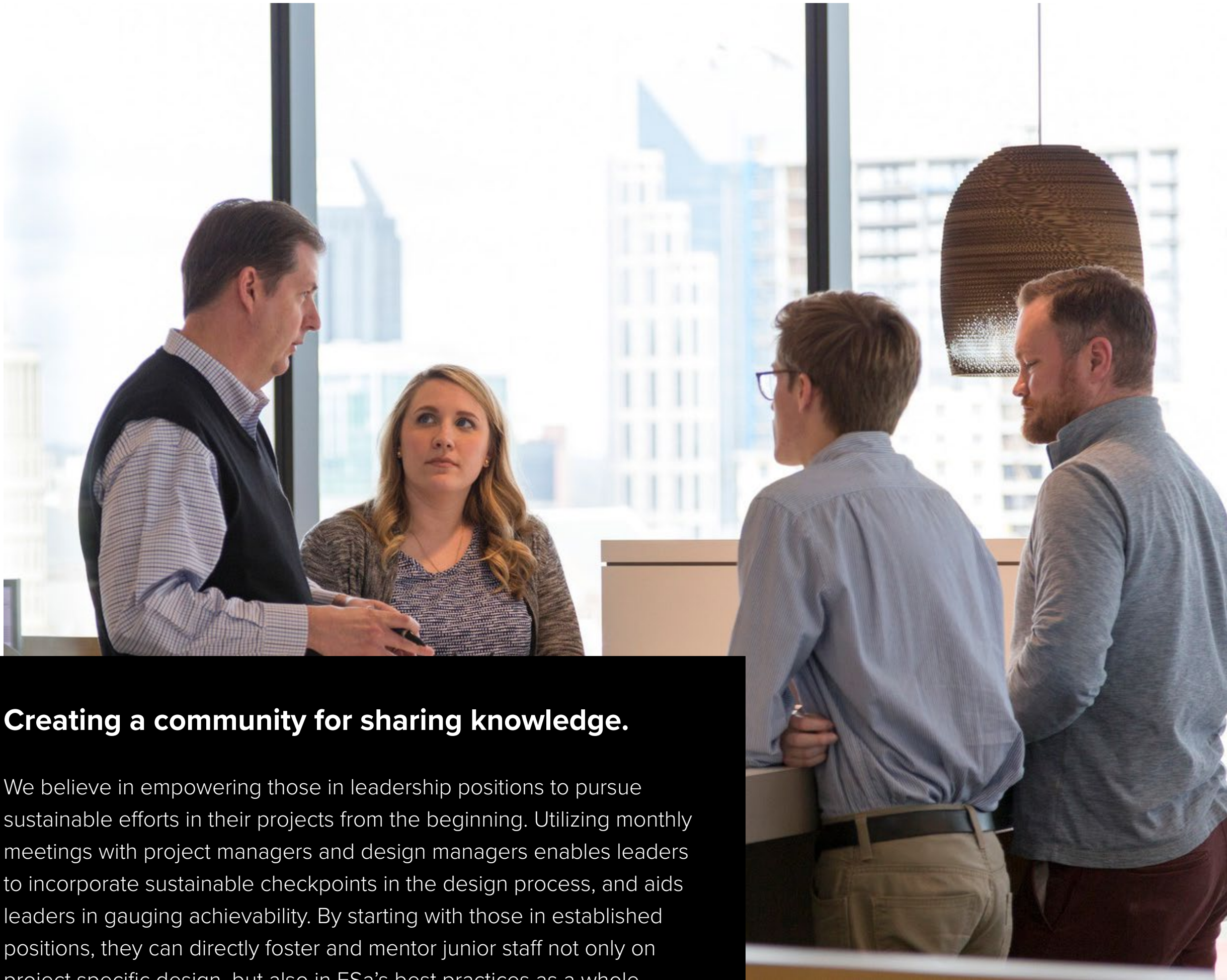


Through ESa’s **Emerging Professionals “EP” program**, those with less than 10 years in the design field can participate in a myriad of events geared towards professional development and inclusion within the firm. Events include on-site visits, guest speakers (both internally and externally), and encouraged participation with local events in and around the Nashville area.



# Internal Education

## Project/Design Manager Monthly Meetings



### **Creating a community for sharing knowledge.**

We believe in empowering those in leadership positions to pursue sustainable efforts in their projects from the beginning. Utilizing monthly meetings with project managers and design managers enables leaders to incorporate sustainable checkpoints in the design process, and aids leaders in gauging achievability. By starting with those in established positions, they can directly foster and mentor junior staff not only on project specific design, but also in ESa's best practices as a whole.

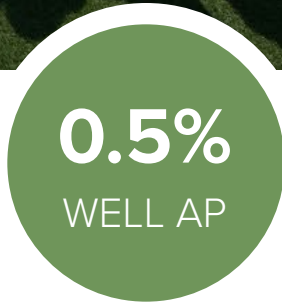
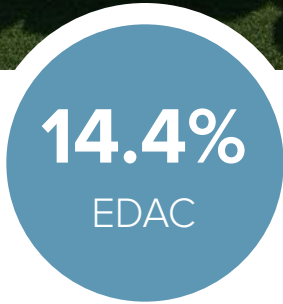
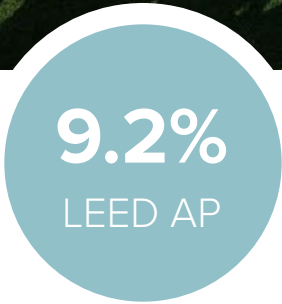


# Internal Education

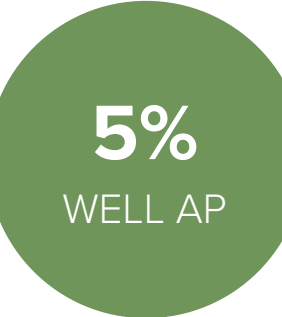
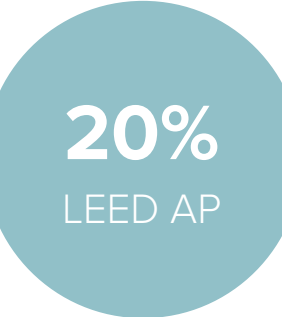
## Credentialing



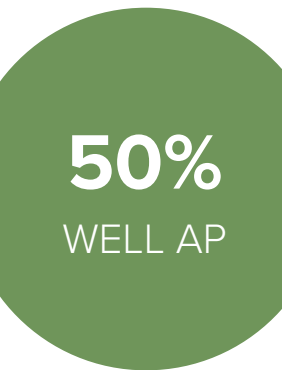
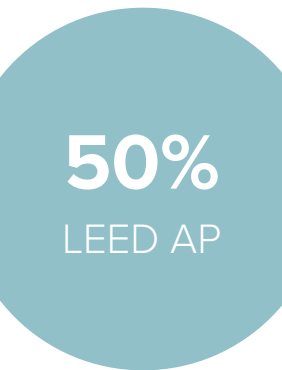
Current percentage of credentialed employees.



**Goal**  
Percentage of credentialed employees by 2025.

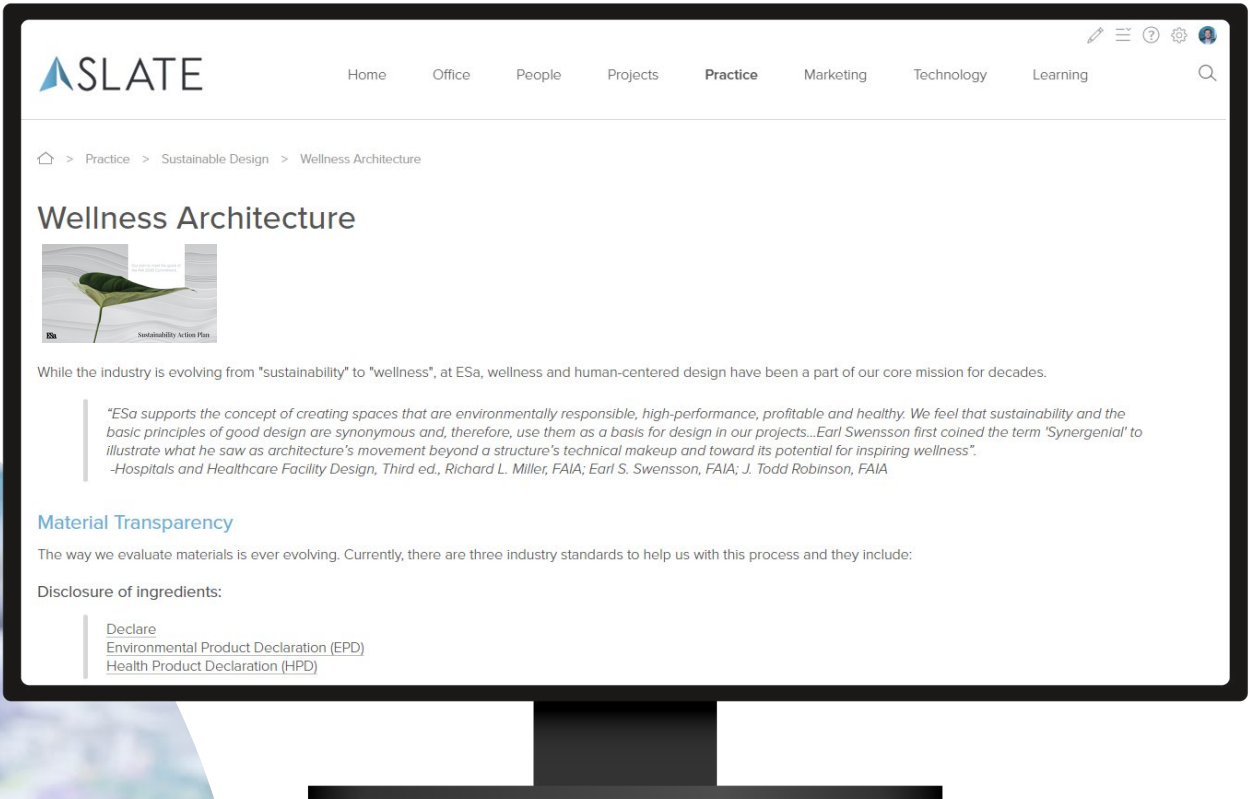
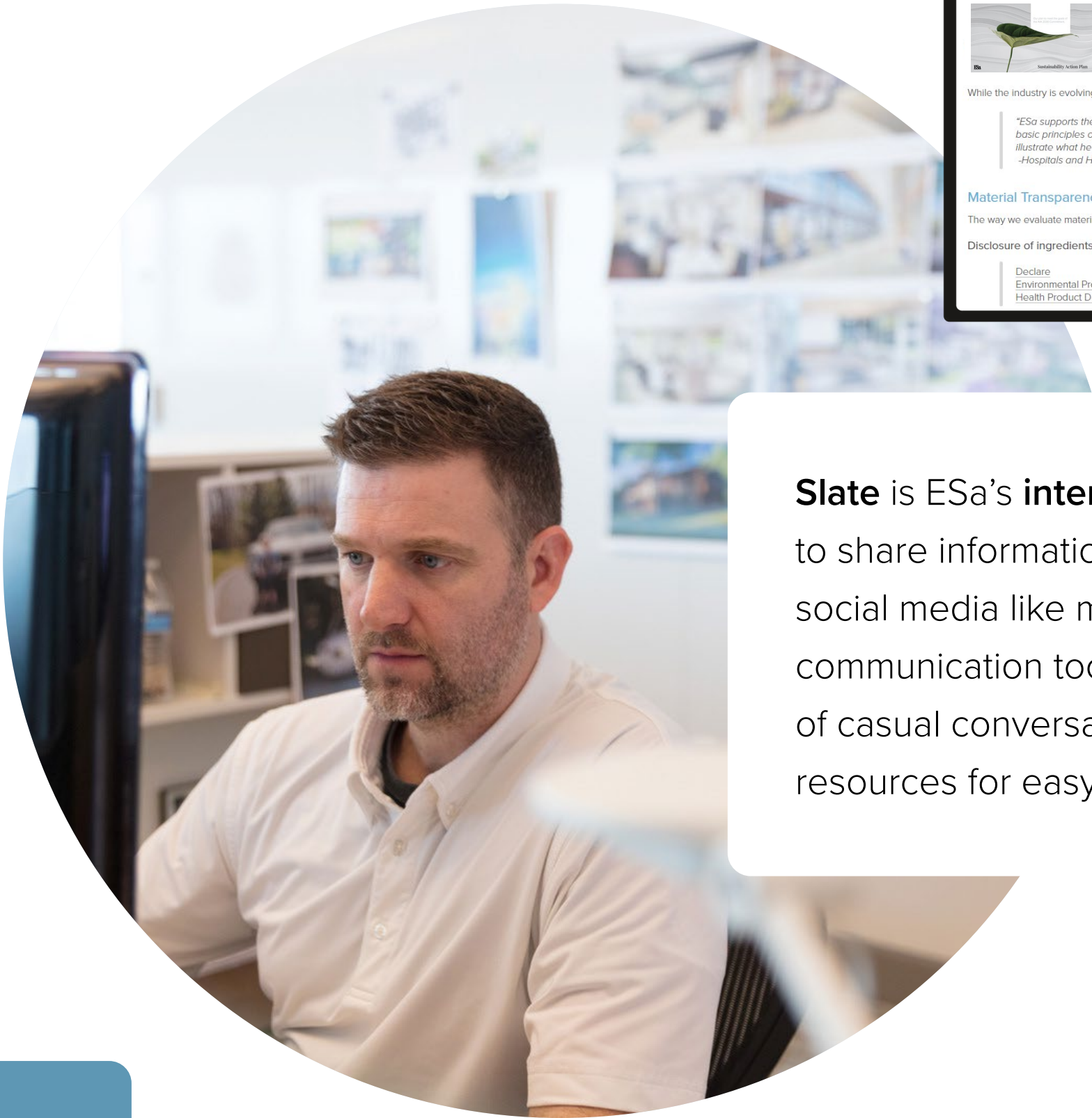


**Goal**  
Percentage of credentialed employees by 2030.





# Internal Education



**Slate** is ESa’s **internal knowledge management platform** to share information easily to all employees in a quick, social media like manner. Our goal is to use Slate as a communication tool, where sustainability becomes a part of casual conversation, while also providing credible resources for easy access.

Slate



# External Education

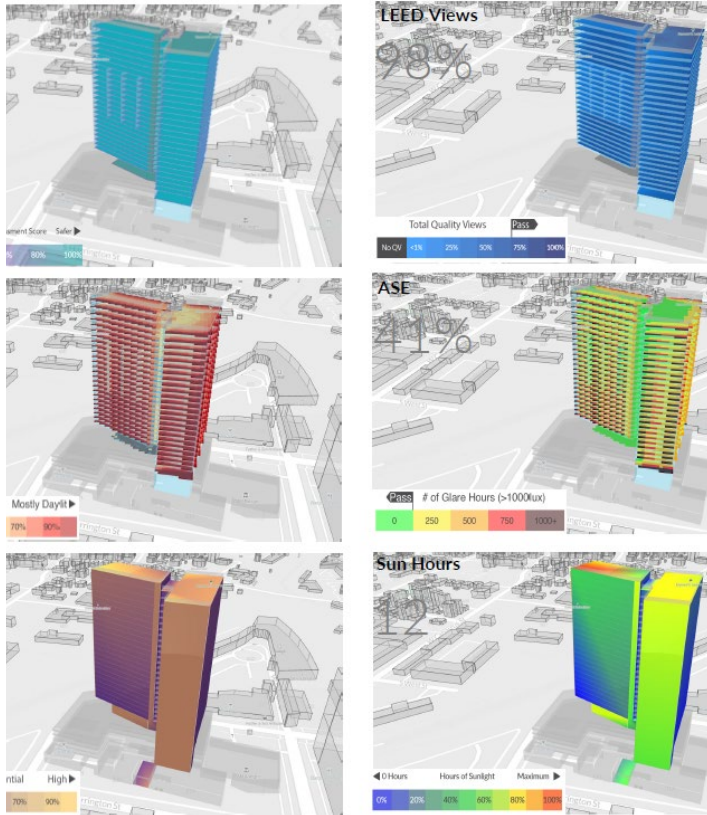
Educating our clients on the benefits of sustainable design, by providing clear and comprehensible information about sustainable materials, technologies, and certifications, helps clients understand their options and the advantages, both in the short and long term.



## Our Clients

We believe it is our duty to inform our clients of sustainable options and provide design solutions that achieve targeted sustainable ratings while working within the budget and program of the space.

Consequently, our new and improved **Project Deliverable Checklist** includes an emphasis on client conversations regarding sustainable objectives.



ESa analyzes project goals using the latest research and technology. These technologies, such as energy models, life cycle analyses, and cost analysis strategies, help close in on our carbon neutrality goal. We intend to make these shared goals with our clients.



# External Education

In addition to this array of organizations, ESa encourages staff to participate in and lead advisory committees of advocacy groups engaged in wellness and green building.

\*Currently have or previously had ESa employees in leadership positions.

## Our Community

ESa designs for the betterment of humans and the environment—we strive to design spaces that positively impact the community.

Here are a few organizations that we are involved with as a firm, and will continue to be a part of for our 2030 commitment.



### Zero Landfill

ESa’s Interiors Department works with Zero Landfill, an annual upcycling event where local creatives, artists and teachers repurpose unused interior and exterior building materials for their own artistic or educational purposes.



### Nashville Civic Design Center (NCDC)\*

NCDC came about as a result of designers banding together to ensure a safe, healthy, and beautiful built environment for Nashville. Their role right now is particularly vital as Nashville has seen rapid growth and they can act as a neutral territory to explore what’s best for the city with intentional, climate-conscious growth.



### The ACE (Architecture, Construction and Engineering) Mentor Program\*

ACE is an after-school program that exposes students to careers within the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering industries. Using a student-led project to strengthen understanding of essential concepts, ACE relies on the investment of the time and expertise of industry professionals to guide students through a simulated design process. Ultimately, ACE aims to create a path from High School to career through internship and job-shadow opportunities, as well as awarding scholarships. As mentors, ESa team members dive into the industry, expand upon major topics such as sustainability, and guide students through their own project development process.

### American Institute of Architects (AIA)

#### AIA Academy of Architecture for Health (AAH)

The AAH provides knowledge which supports the design of healthy environments by creating education and networking opportunities for members of – and those touched by – the health care architectural profession.

#### AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE)

The AIA Middle Tennessee Chapter has an active Committee on the Environment which is a knowledge community that brings together architects who are passionate about the impacts our industry is making on the environment. Architects from multiple firms come together to help create programming and continuing education for membership.

### US Green Building Council (USGBC) Local Market Leadership Advisory Board\*

Jordan Fay, Senior Project Manager and member of ESa’s Sustainability Committee, serves on the Local Market Leadership Advisory Board. The board represents a diversity of locally based leaders who advice on strategic and tactical activities implemented as park of USGBC’s global work plan.

Across the country and in our backyard.



The background image shows a modern building with a glass facade and a large, blue, textured sphere on a rooftop terrace. The sphere is made of many small, blue, rectangular pieces. In the background, a historic building with a clock tower is visible under a blue sky with some clouds. The foreground shows a concrete walkway and some small plants in a planter box.

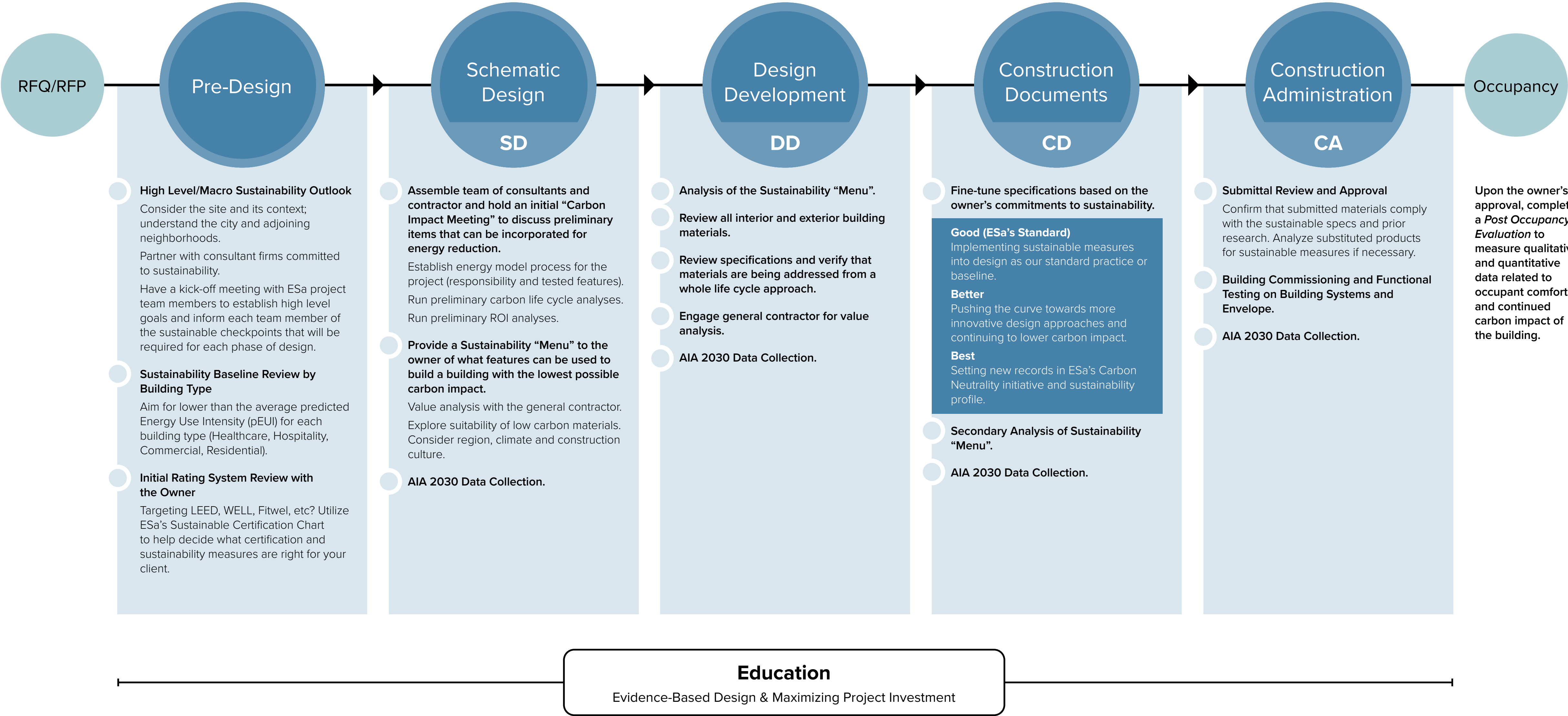
# How We Design

In this section, we will look at ESa's Design Approach from beginning to end. We will lay out the process through a Case Study on Tennessee's first WELL Platinum office project that also achieved LEED Certification.

This process will serve as a guide for future projects at ESa as we begin to track more data and work towards a decarbonized future. An example is contagious, and while we still have lessons learned from this case study, our hope is that it provides an example of sustainable achievements that can be modeled going forward and display how these goals of carbon neutrality are attainable.



# Our Design Process





Our Process in Action

# DPR Construction

Nashville, TN

In 2022, we identified our DPR Office project as a case study for how we, as a sustainability conscious firm, could approach the design process.

This project provides a thorough case study on achieving peak sustainability ratings as both our client, DPR Construction, and the MEP engineering and sustainability consultant, SSR, reflect the same sustainable values of ESa. All members were committed to an integrated design process between architects, engineers and contractors.

While not all clients will be interested in pursuing the highest sustainability credits, this case study provides a framework for the “what’s” and “when’s” of the sustainable design process.



Both LEED Certified and WELL Platinum certified, the design of this nationally recognized commercial general contractor and construction management firm’s Nashville office demonstrates an investment in the health of its occupants.

Implementing WELL Building and sustainable design elements like abundant natural light, a wellness room with a daylighting system, sit-to-stand desks and natural wood from responsible sources, the design team utilized creative solutions to infuse DPR Construction’s brand with a Nashville vibe.

- LEED Certified
- WELL Platinum Certified
  - First in Tennessee to achieve WELL Platinum
  - Highest points possible in Mind and Community Categories
- WELL Health-Safety Rating Certified





# First Steps

## Establishing a Need

In 2019, DPR began looking for a new space to support its growing work in and around Nashville.

“We wanted to be somewhere that really felt like Nashville, not necessarily a brand-new office park out in the suburbs,” said Vardaman, DPR’s Nashville Business Unit Leader.

## Finding a Location

Ultimately, DPR found a space minutes from downtown previously occupied by a Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

The adaptive re-use of the nearly 10,000-sq.-ft. building could provide not only office space, but storage and warehousing space to accommodate DPR’s self-perform capabilities in Nashville.



Before

## Determining Feasibility

Achieving a LEED Certification was a top priority at the beginning of the project, but upon further analysis of the space and DPR’s company philosophy, it became clear that a WELL certification was highly desired.

After conducting a feasibility survey, the team concluded that pursuing WELL was achievable for the workspace that would become the new Nashville office.

## Creating a Program

DPR and ESa worked together through design charrettes to establish an efficient program with a focus on occupant comfort and sustainable construction.

“We rented out a board room in a hotel, and we had everyone involved at DPR do their own design,” recalled Vardaman. “We presented our design to our architects—we treated them like the owners—and they had to critique our design, but they were able to incorporate a lot of the elements that kept popping up as each group presented their designs.”



RFQ/RFP

1

Meet with your client and understand their best practices. Sometimes, client's expectations for their space align closely with those of WELL or LEED certification.

2

Establish a partnership with your consultants early on that lays out the sustainability goals and outlines when each sustainable checkpoint will be addressed throughout the project. This allows consultants like SSR to not only meet sustainable goals, but have the opportunity to exceed them when involved early in the design process.

3

Review any WELL or LEED criteria that could affect programming. For DPR, this included restorative spaces, mother's room, café/break area sizing, etc. to determine feasibility for inclusion into the final design.

“

We initially sat through a meeting with DPR, and a lot of the points [for WELL Certification] were already part of DPR best practices—like healthcare and mental well-being—that spoke to the wellness aspect,” said Jordan Fay, ESa’s Project Architect.



#### Acoustical Control

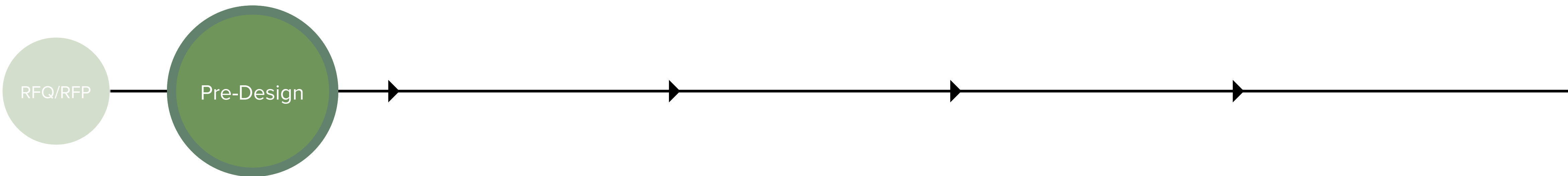
A ceiling drywall feature, colloquially known as clouds, suspend from the ceiling, not only to offer an aesthetic appeal, but to dampen sound that reverberates off the steel and concrete walls.



#### Temperature

Individual desk fans are provided for personal comfort, as well as an interactive air quality monitoring system that anyone can access.





**1** Schedule an integrative process team meeting, required by WELL, to review all pursued sustainability and health and wellness targets. The meeting is led by SSR, or another Sustainability Consultant, to kick-off the sustainability process and get integrated into the overall team dynamic and communication structure.

From the meeting, action items and green building certification scorecards will be generated and used throughout design to track overall health and sustainability goals for the project.



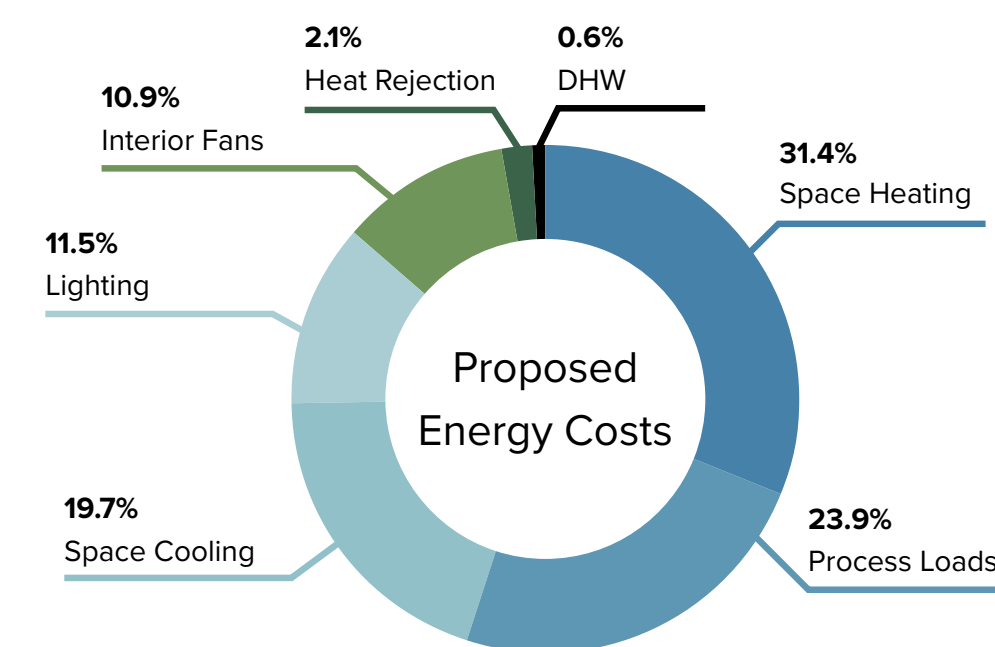
**2** SSR helped facilitate creation of the Owner's Project Requirements (OPR) document, which will be used to guide the design in subsequent phases and used as a guide for the Commissioning Agent's future design reviews.



**3** Review project "Yes" and "Maybe" points to determine items that need cost input for Owner decision tracking for LEED and WELL. When pursuing WELL, getting Owner input of their internal corporate policies early is critical to overall certification goal tracking. If the Owner follows employee-centric policies and benefits, the less impact to design is needed to achieve certification targets.

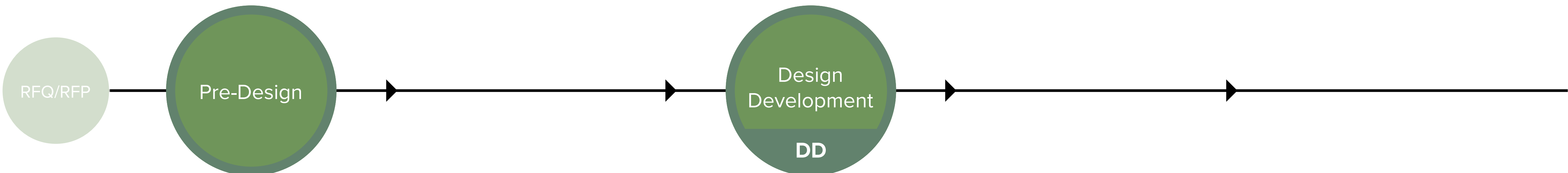
**4** Begin early-phase energy modeling to review big picture design concepts. For this project, we reviewed different types of domestic hot water heaters for energy usage and efficiency, which guided the design per results and Owner feedback.

For new construction projects, this phase of analysis would look more into orientation, massing, window-to-wall ratios, and other large-scale factors to determine energy and load impacts to the project over the life of the building. However, due to limited scope on this project, energy analysis was more focused on tenant-controlled energy systems.



**i Indoor Air Quality**  
When it comes to indoor air quality, the office uses a combination of MERV-13 and activated carbon filtration, which not only keep the air fresh and removes volatile organic compounds (VOCs), but also removes at least 85% and 90% of particulate matter known as PM2.5 and PM10, respectively.





- 1

Continue to hold integrated team meetings with design and construction team to review active LEED and WELL credit criteria and action items. Back check reviews by SSR of internal check sets or issued packages against health and sustainability criteria.
- 2

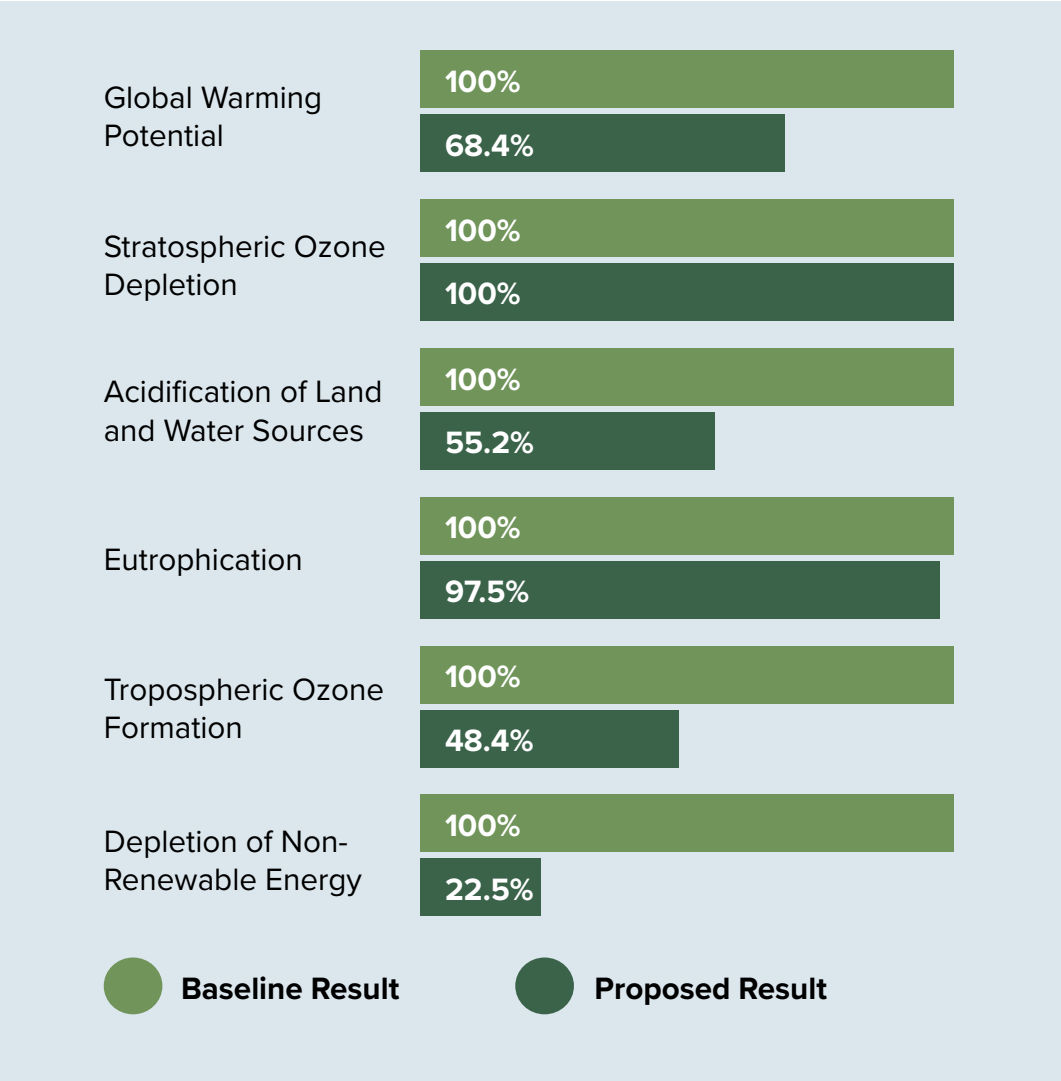
Perform energy modeling update to include any HVAC or systems alternatives, controls sequences, or other energy conservation measures under consideration by the team, prior to finalizing design.
- 3

SSR coordinated with ESa to provide Division 1 sustainability specifications to cover all contractor-responsible criteria such as material sustainability tracking, VOCs, waste management, and indoor air quality management during construction.
- 4

Involve a third-party Commissioning (Cx) Agent to provide Cx specifications for inclusion in design and construction deliverables.
- 5

The Cx Agent performs design review of mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and building enclosure narratives, drawings, and specifications against the Owner’s Project Requirements and LEED commissioning criteria. The scope of this service depends on the credits pursued by the project team, though a minimum level of third-party commissioning is required. This service can align with local energy codes, depending on local jurisdiction.

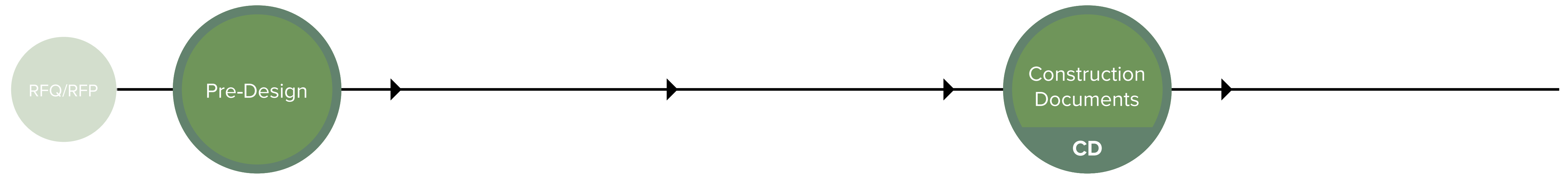
Life Cycle Analysis



i

**Social Wellbeing**  
The outdoor patio is a favorite of DPR employees, with a firepit and enough room to gather outdoors comfortably and safely.





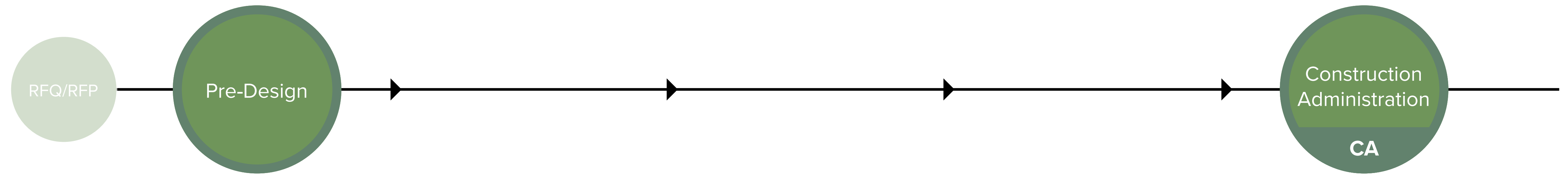
- 1** The design team received and responded to the Cx Agent design review comments and provide clarifications and/or adjustments to the project documents for more clarity in the final construction issuance.
- 2** The design team performed a whole building Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of Interior and/or Structural/Envelope Materials. Due to the interior buildout nature of this project, only interior materials are required for review as part of the LEED LCA credit. This analysis can be done earlier or later in design or into construction using actual submittal data of installed materials. \*This scope is highly dependent on the intended use of the analysis outputs. If ESa is looking to select or choose between multiple finishes or structural materials, earlier analysis is recommended. At minimum, an analysis based on 100% Construction Documents should be performed for overall embodied carbon impact tracking for projects.
- 3** SSR provided a daylighting analysis in alignment with LEED and WELL credit criteria. This analysis was to determine daylight credit point thresholds for the project, but could be expanded based on degree of interest from design team on optimizing daylight for the project.
- 4** Perform final energy modeling to document final energy code (if performance path is pursued) and LEED energy performance thresholds.
- 5** LEED and WELL design documentation submission. SSR gathers and compiles, annotates, highlights, and provides narrative descriptions to upload to online platforms in preparation for third-party review by GBCI for LEED and WELL.



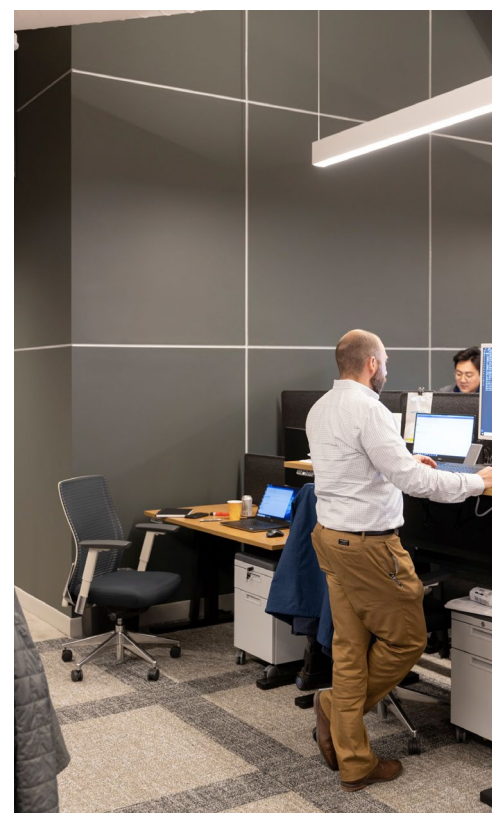
**i Educational Opportunities**

DPR has a track record of creating workspaces where employees can feel physically and mentally healthy, and use its workspace to display construction best practices in the form of “living labs.” More than just offices, these buildings function as places that reflect trends in wellness and building sustainability where technologies are implemented and tested, and can be carried over into client projects. These living labs allow teams to think outside the box, discover new strategies and create intelligent, high-performing buildings for clients. DPR believes that if it is going to apply these trends on customer projects, it should also apply these trends to its own office spaces.





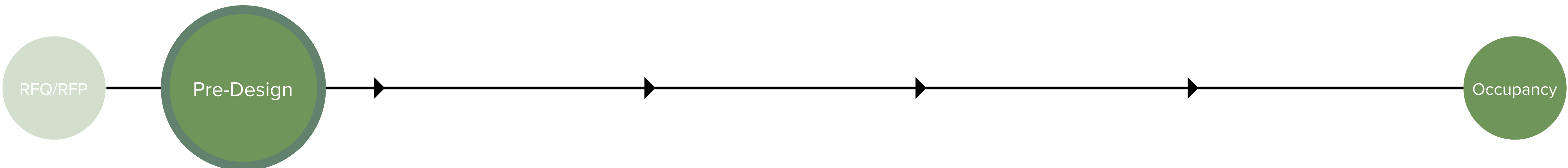
- 1** ESa and SSR actively reviewed submittals and tracks product and material data for LEED and WELL criteria in accordance with project specifications.
- 2** SSR performed site visits to confirm indoor air quality management strategies during construction. This is especially critical for WELL projects that will go through post-occupancy air quality testing.
- 3** Cx Agent provides kick-off meeting with contractor and MEP trades, facilitates completion of the prefunctional checklists, and performs site visits to observe functional testing of all MEP equipment. This quality assurance process provides the Owner with valuable master issues log for tracking of MEP equipment within their space prior to occupancy.
- 4** After substantial completion and final commissioning, SSR submitted final LEED documentation for review. Final certification is received and confirmed within 3-4 months after initial submission to allow for review responses and clarifications, as requested by the GBCI.



#### Physical Wellbeing

Standing desks, healthy snacks, wellness rooms and private spaces for new mothers are provided and available to all employees.



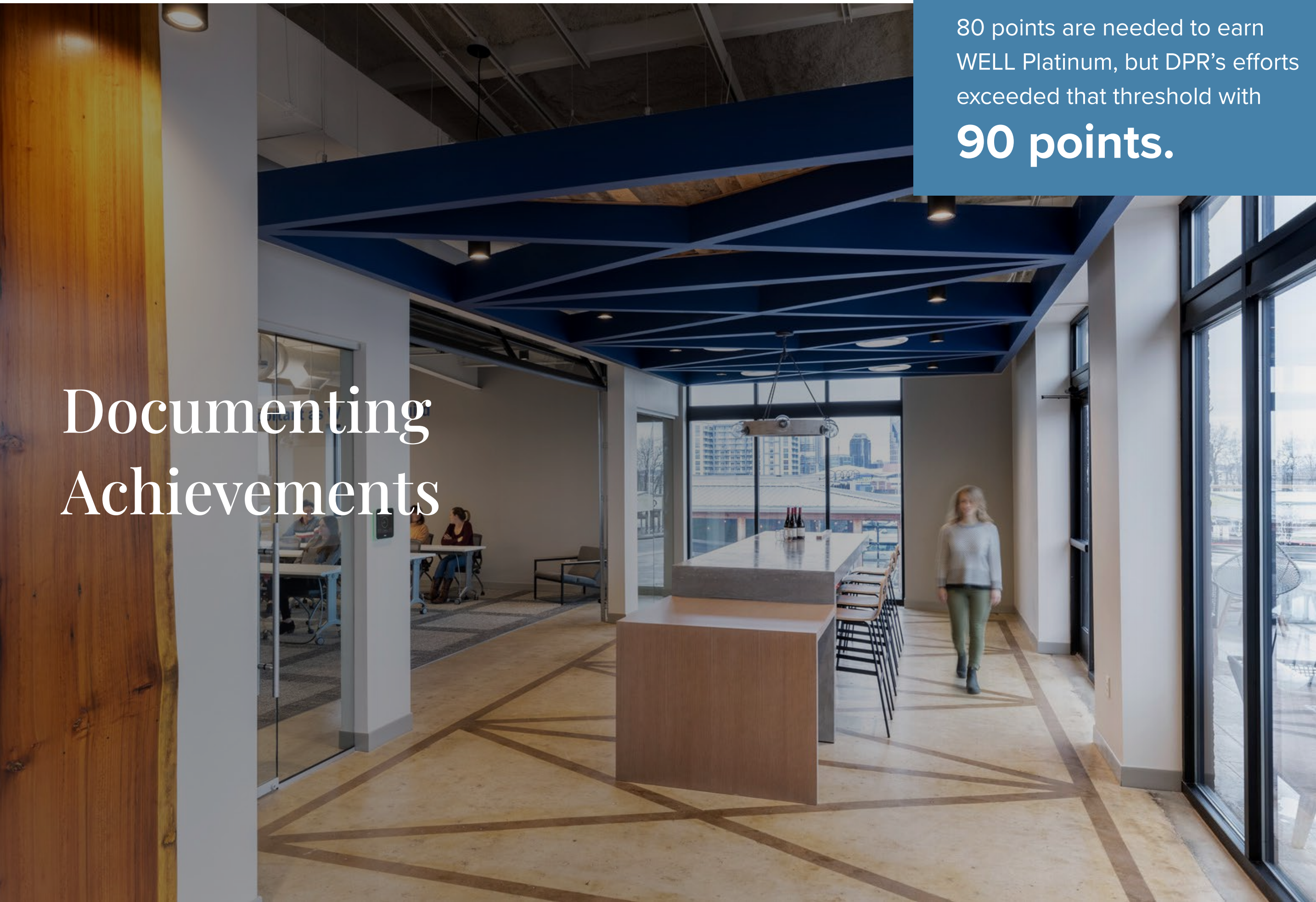


- 1** Issue post-occupancy engagement and indoor environment satisfaction surveys to building occupants. This is typically, 3-4 months after project hand-off once occupants and operations have settled into a normal pattern.
- 2** SSR performed a preliminary site visit prior to scheduling of WELL Performance Verification Testing to confirm all WELL criteria pursued is in place and accessible for verification.
- 3** Schedule a WELL Performance Testing Agent for on-site performance testing of Air, Water, Sound, Light, and Thermal Comfort criteria for the project. This is typically, 3-6 months after project hand-off. Testing for this project was delayed due to overlap with COVID and lack of occupancy within the project building during this time. SSR was in attendance throughout the site visit to take notes and interpret any measurement feedback provided by the testing agent when on-site.
- 4** Results of final testing can take several months to receive and once received on this project, additional re-testing was required to confirm a thermal comfort precondition (mandatory). The WELL Performance Testing Agent came to provide additional testing. SSR was in attendance to provide guidance on any corrective measures that might be needed by the team to make sure that criteria are met.
- 5** Upon certification, project stakeholders debrief and tour all health and sustainability criteria achieved for the project with any lessons learned and items of note.



**i** **Wayfinding**  
The office is designed as an open office, which flows naturally from seating areas to common areas to outdoor areas.





# Documenting Achievements

80 points are needed to earn WELL Platinum, but DPR's efforts exceeded that threshold with **90 points.**

DPR Nashville's new office earned **WELL Platinum** based on 10 categories of building performance:

- 1. Air
- 2. Water
- 3. Nourishment
- 4. Light
- 5. Movement
- 6. Thermal Comfort
- 7. Sound
- 8. Materials

9. Mind  
10. Community

Achieving the highest points possible in the Mind and Community categories.

SSR provided final LEED and WELL scorecards based on final design, construction, and operations achievements for the project. SSR provided interviews with marketing staff from all stakeholders as part of announcement of achievements.

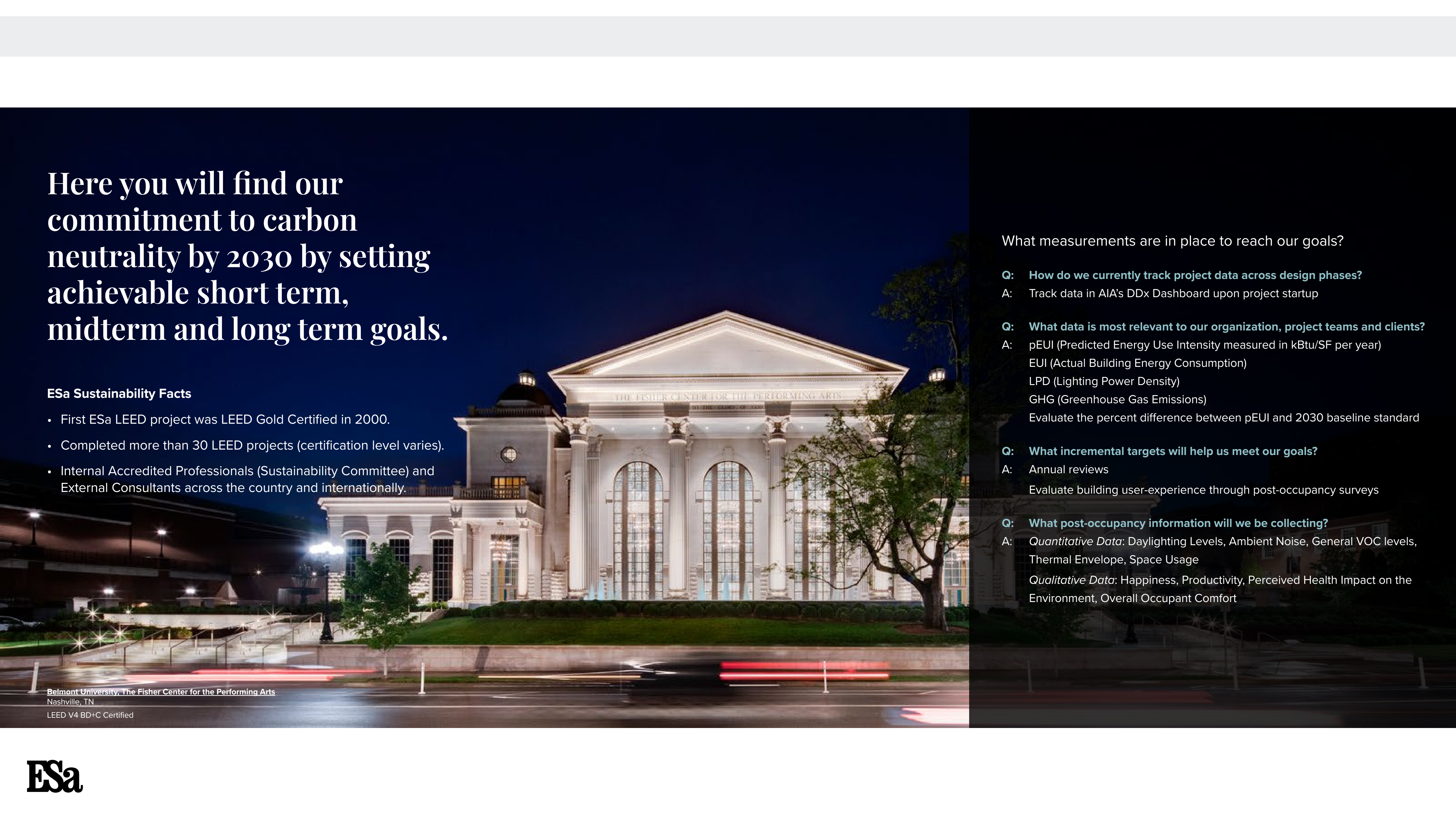
DPR is committed to monitoring and maintaining it's WELL certification. Ongoing maintenance and annual air, water, and thermal comfort criteria are coordinated and performed by SSR to assist DPR in these maintenance criteria. Engagement and thermal comfort surveys are also issued to help track employee satisfaction with the WELL certified space.



### Biophilia

A portion of a naturally felled Redwood tree adorns the wall on the office lobby, providing a connection to the outdoors immediately upon entering the space.





# Here you will find our commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030 by setting achievable short term, midterm and long term goals.

## ESa Sustainability Facts

- First ESa LEED project was LEED Gold Certified in 2000.
- Completed more than 30 LEED projects (certification level varies).
- Internal Accredited Professionals (Sustainability Committee) and External Consultants across the country and internationally.

Belmont University, The Fisher Center for the Performing Arts  
Nashville, TN  
LEED V4 BD+C Certified

What measurements are in place to reach our goals?

**Q:** How do we currently track project data across design phases?

A: Track data in AIA's DDx Dashboard upon project startup

**Q:** What data is most relevant to our organization, project teams and clients?

A: pEUI (Predicted Energy Use Intensity measured in kBtu/SF per year)

EUI (Actual Building Energy Consumption)

LPD (Lighting Power Density)

GHG (Greenhouse Gas Emissions)

Evaluate the percent difference between pEUI and 2030 baseline standard

**Q:** What incremental targets will help us meet our goals?

A: Annual reviews

Evaluate building user-experience through post-occupancy surveys

**Q:** What post-occupancy information will we be collecting?

A: *Quantitative Data:* Daylighting Levels, Ambient Noise, General VOC levels, Thermal Envelope, Space Usage

*Qualitative Data:* Happiness, Productivity, Perceived Health Impact on the Environment, Overall Occupant Comfort



# Short Term

## Operations

Improved Well-Being Benefits for our Team Members

- Access to Boost Fit Club (free)
- YMCA Discount (10% discount)
- Employee Assistance Program (free)
- Digital Behavior Health added to all of our medical plans
- SmartDollar Financial Wellness Benefit (free)
- SmartDollar Financial One on One Coaching (free)
- Work area FF&E (ergonomic chairs, sit/stand desks)
- ESa encourages firm participation in active community events such as the AHA Heart Walk, LLS Light the Night, Golf Events and Rebuilding Together Fishing Tournament.

## Design Process & Strategy

- Inform all staff of our newly improved Design Process that includes specific sustainability checkpoints to verify the implementation of carbon saving strategies.
  - Begin to integrate principles of “design excellence” into client communication and presentations, and share ESa’s commitment to AIA 2030.
  - Publish our SAP on our website to share with our firm, clients, consultants, and trade partners.
  - Create clear, measurable energy baseline targets for each project in the programming phase in the form of EUI, certification level, or other tangible metrics by using the Framework for Design Excellence metrics.
  - Report all active projects annually to the AIA 2030 DDx.
  - Engage all project team members in the process of tracking information.
  - Address best practices for performing energy analysis and designing to LEED or other ratings systems at monthly PM meetings.
  - Advocate for sustainability and wellness opportunities with clients and trade partners.
  - Set goals early. Share ESa’s Sustainability Approach and AIA 2030 Commitment with clients.
- Reassess goals at “prescribed” intervals/checkpoints (see Design Process Infographic).
  - Establish a “This for That” Materials Guideline List that provides sustainable substitutions for commonly used interior and exterior building materials.
  - Compile digital libraries of high-performance model components (walls, roofs, windows, doors, floors, products).
  - Compile digital libraries of sustainable manufacturer’s components.
  - Update standard high performance details in our project templates.
  - Add sustainable options for specs in the case that an owner/client would like to pursue a carbon neutral building, or another sustainable certification.
  - Begin to adjust specs to comply with the strictest energy codes.
  - Research and implement an energy modeling software for use by architects and designers, such as cove.tool.
  - Expand our sustainability peer networks.
  - Participate in Greenbuild, USGBC & similar conferences to share knowledge on both a local and national scale.





# Mid Term

## Operations

- Office Operations
- Test office water quality periodically
  - Work with building management to develop an updated recycling and composting policy
  - Encourage non-single use plastic
  - Provide incentives for carbon friendly commuters with monthly commuter days – (lunch/breakfast) for carpool/bike/walk staff
  - Perform a post-consumer waste production audit annually

- Sustainability Committee
- Establish a “Sustainability Director”
  - Establish ambassadors in each project sector
  - Encourage professional development within the Sustainability Committee and firmwide
  - Set annual goals and review within the committee
  - Provide interns the opportunity to explore the committee and become involved with ongoing design research projects

- Incorporate our Commitment to Carbon Neutrality in the Annual State of the Firm
- Discuss why certain project perform well from an energy standpoint
  - Discuss ROI with projects that are designed and constructed from a high energy saving standpoint
  - Discuss opportunities for improvement

## Design Process & Strategy

- Review Sustainable Substitutions for materials used during the first year of commitment, and establish an office database for “green” products after concluding which substitutions were the most effective.
  - Shifting use away from materials on the Red List.
  - Continuing to review and remove materials that:
    - Reduce indoor air quality
    - Adversely affect the supply chain
    - Have a high energy output throughout the entire life cycle
  - Advocate for salvaging and repurposing buildings to minimize embodied carbon and transform them into energy efficient and beautiful spaces.
- Establish a protocol for sustainability feedback including: data sharing and Post Occupancy Evaluations.
  - Encourage a stronger understanding of energy modeling firmwide.
  - Expand the Sustainability Toolkit.
  - Examine Material Library and remove products that do not align with our sustainable goals.
  - Gather relevant design research and share regularly with the firm via Slate.
  - Develop a portfolio of precedents (illustrating current state of sustainable building benchmarks).
  - Develop “Performance Targets” based on project type.

## Education

- Share “Lessons Learned” from high performing projects
- Strategically identify which projects have high performance potential
- Target Lunch and Learn topics that address the themes of carbon neutrality and energy savings
- Continue to incentivize credentialing (GBC, LEED, GG, WELL)
  - ESa is committed to educating our staff. Testing, credentialing and study materials are paid for by the firm. Credentials are assessed on an annual basis.





# Long Term

## Operations

### Office

- Continue to provide health screenings and educational sessions on health and well-being.
- Incorporate educational sessions on sustainable living at home by inviting experts to speak on ways we can lower our footprint as individuals and families.
- Work with gyms in walking distance to our office to provide discounts for ESa employees.

### Sustainability Committee

- Revisit SAP and revise (at a minimum) every 3 years.
- Streamline DDx reporting practices.

## Design Process & Strategy

- Require energy modeling as standard practice for all projects to inform design decisions (to include: daylight analysis, radiation, glare, energy use, and building systems) by writing it into the consultant’s contracts.
- Design a net positive building.
- Maintain relationships with our clients and their buildings to track building energy performance and annual operational carbon measurements.
- Conduct post-occupancy evaluations to gather data on performance, related to carbon impact, occupant wellness, and design efficacy.
- Surpass simple carbon measurements and look to whole Life Cycle Assessments for material selection from structural systems to finishes.

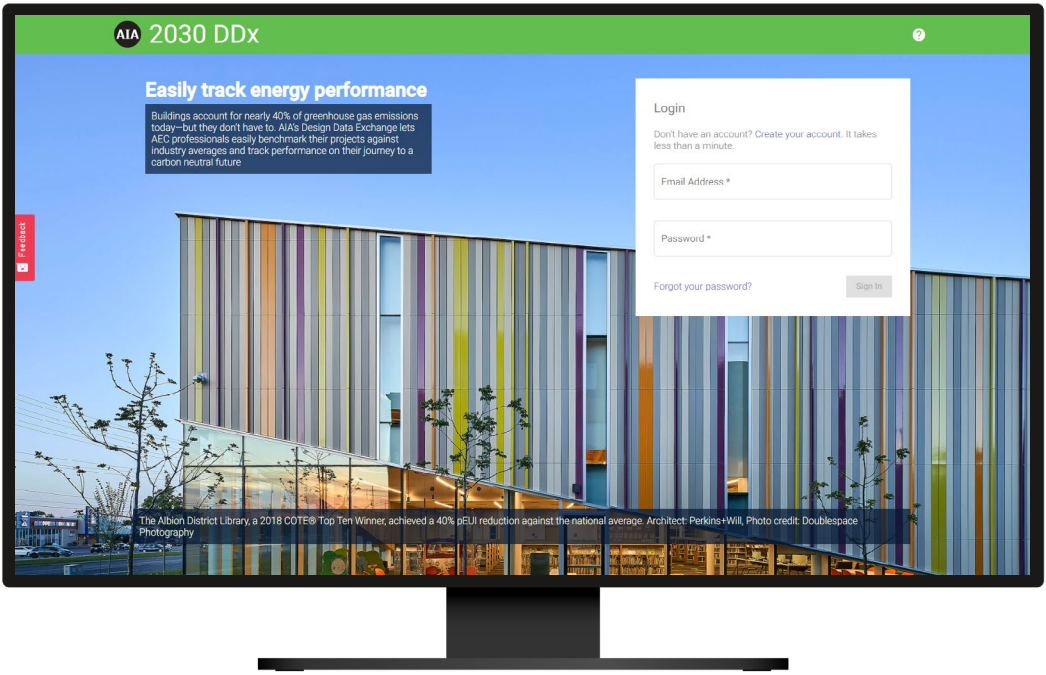
## Challenges/National Participation Efforts

- Have a LEED, WELL or other sustainable project certification in most states.
- Achieve a COTE Top Ten Award.
- Continue to align values and missions with AIA 2030.





# Governance & Reporting



Every Quarter, the Sustainability Committee will meet to confirm that all projects in process and completed during that quarter are reported to the AIA DDx Dashboard. Project staff will be responsible for gathering project data and coordinating with the sustainability team to have the project created in the AIA DDx dashboard.

Quarterly meetings will be used to compile internal data and share with AIA annually. This meeting will also serve as a time to address lessons learned for the entire project reporting process. This data will be presented at ESa’s annual “State of the Firm” address by firm leadership.

Our ultimate goal is to automate this reporting process to confirm that all data points are captured for each project.

## What are we reporting?

### Baseline

- Project Name or Identifier
- Country and ZIP Code for US projects (City for International)
- Project Design Phase
- Project Use Type
- Building Area
- Energy Modeling Status
- Energy Use Intensity Baseline (EUI):  
This is a site EUI, not source EUI, derived through a default national average or via Zero Tool integration with the AIA 2030 DDx.  
You can also use an alternative baseline established by another baseline tool (i.e. Labs 21) or through firm research.
- Target/Predicted Energy Use Intensity (pEUI):  
This anticipated building energy consumption of a project is based on computer modeling. If you are not using energy modeling, an equivalent reduction percentage will be calculated based on the design energy code.
- Interiors-Only Projects:  
ASHRAE 90/1-2007 Lighting Power Density (LPD) Baseline, default or space by space
- Target/Predicted LPD
- Design Energy Code:  
If your project does not use energy modeling, default performance equivalents will be calculated based on the design energy code.





# Outlook & Operations

We cannot analyze what we don't measure, so joining the AIA 2030 commitment is our goal to track all project data, regardless of their energy requirements, in order to learn from our work and seek to improve buildings for the betterment of the planet and wellbeing of its occupants.

Our LEED certified projects alone account for more than 6.2 million square feet and \$1.2 billion in construction value.

These figures do not include projects that, while incorporating high levels of sustainable design, did not pursue formal certification with LEED or that follow other benchmarking rating systems. Regardless whether or not a certification is pursued, ESa advocates for the integration of sustainable, regenerative and equitable design practices that fully capture a human-centered approach. We also focus on wellness and productivity design that supports the client's vision. Our design approach has long embraced the key goal of supporting healing, safety and wellness while striving for optimal performance and flexibility.

We team with specialty consultants, including sustainability and commissioning specialists SSRCx. Working closely with our design team, SSRCx collaborates to develop environments that promotes health, carbon and water reduction, social wellness, effective life cycle costs, among other important factors to our clients. This is achieved both through the pursuit of LEED and other certifications, but also through the general integration of sustainable design elements.



# Operations

There is much to implement into ESa’s design process and project data collection in order to align our mission with AIA 2030. Improved wellness standards and office operations will provide the foundation for our employees to feel supported individually, and equipped to reach the AIA 2030 goals.



Wellness	Hiring	Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide healthier snacks and beverages for client meetings.</li><li>• Limit the use of single-use plastics for office guests.</li><li>• Improve cleaning and sanitization practices during heightened seasons of illness.</li><li>• Encourage staff to utilize staircases over elevators. Make sure that all employees know of every available access point in the building.</li><li>• Encourage getting out of the office during lunch and walking through our LEED ND neighborhood.</li><li>• Establish ESa sporting activities to encourage fun, social fitness activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make conscious efforts to hire staff interested in sustainable design practices.</li><li>• Further develop ESa’s internship program by adding a component of sustainability research.</li><li>• Add verbiage to employee handbook to integrate SAP principles.</li><li>• Improve current on-boarding process:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Familiarize new hires with ESa Sustainability Efforts and Design Approach.</li><li>• Identifying Sustainability Committee members within the office.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce overall waste at the office.</li><li>• Service the auto-operating shades as needed to continue to reduce overall heat loads.</li><li>• Share weekly sustainability posts on Slate, our internal employee dashboard.</li><li>• Encourage utilization of hybrid work schedule to reduce carbon emissions of commuting.</li><li>• Schedule workstations to auto turn off at night.</li><li>• Eliminate single-use utensils, and require all lunch and learn supplies to be more eco-friendly.</li><li>• Establish a relationship with our building’s recycling services to ensure recyclables are brought to the correct facilities.</li><li>• Provide a quarterly workshop on how employees can reduce carbon emissions at work and home depending on the season or year.</li></ul>

# Outlook

Joining AIA 2030’s Commitment to Carbon Neutrality by 2030 provides a framework for actionable efforts that work towards a common goal. It gradually takes carbon neutrality from a lofty goal to a practical expectation. Together, we will measure our impact and work towards are more sustainable, carbon neutral future.



**Completed LEED Projects**  
Click here to see a full list of ESa’s completed LEED projects.





Moving forward together to create environments that shape lives.



