



**EMERALD BUILT  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Emerald Gives 2025: Emerald Built Environments Selects Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity for Pro Bono LEED Certification Project**

CLEVELAND, OH (July 2025) — Emerald Built Environments, a Cleveland-based sustainability consultancy, proudly announces Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity as the 2025 recipient of its annual *Emerald Gives* initiative. Now in its fourth year, *Emerald Gives* recognizes and supports a nonprofit each year by offering pro bono LEED certification services to elevate sustainability, operational excellence, and community impact.

This year's project will focus on certifying Greater Cleveland Habitat's headquarters, located at 2110 W 110th Street in Cleveland, under the LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations + Maintenance (LEED O+M) rating system. The initiative will be delivered through a year-long collaboration between Emerald's expert sustainability consultants and Habitat's internal team, supporting the organization's vision of building not only homes, but sustainable futures.

This initiative deepens the existing relationship between Emerald and Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity – the two organizations have been working together for several years to deliver sustainable certifications on new home builds.

**Empowering an Anchor of Affordable Housing and Environmental Justice**

Founded in 1987, Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity is a critical force in Northeast Ohio's affordable housing ecosystem. Over the years, the organization has brought together more than 83,000 volunteers and over 200 sponsor groups to help 300+ families, earning low to moderate incomes—achieve homeownership across more than 20 Cleveland neighborhoods.

Their headquarters—a 140,000 sq. ft. multi-functional facility—serves as both an operational hub and symbol of sustainability in action. Originally constructed pre-1940, the building sits on 5.37 acres and now houses a growing staff of 79. Over the past year, the organization has taken meaningful steps to modernize its infrastructure, including upgraded HVAC systems and new energy-efficient LED lighting throughout the building. Habitat has also begun converting warehouse space to a climate-controlled storage facility, enhancing operational resilience.

**LEED O+M Certification: A Strategic Step Forward**

The LEED O+M certification focuses on operational practices and performance for existing buildings. LEED O+M evaluates a building's performance including its emissions profile from operations and transportation, waste diversion, green cleaning, indoor air quality, occupant comfort. Pursuing certification under this rating system will validate Habitat's commitment to environmental stewardship while empowering the organization to set benchmarks for future improvements. "We were already proudly building energy efficient homes with Emerald's help. Now, we can also apply those principles to our own "home" and lead by example," said John Litten, President and CEO of Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity.

The certification process will focus on optimizing energy and water use, improving indoor environmental quality, and strengthening policy and operational practices designed to support Habitat's long-term capacity and sustainability goals.

### **A Legacy of Local Impact**

The 2025 award continues a legacy of impactful partnerships through *Emerald Gives*. Since launching the initiative, Emerald has certified:

- The Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall, elevating one of the city's cultural landmarks to LEED O+M standards, recognizing it for its commitment to energy efficiency and sustainable operations. The building achieved LEED Gold certification earlier this year.
- The Centers, a nonprofit healthcare and education provider, whose commitment to health equity through sustainability elevates the benefits of certification for the people it serves. Their building achieved LEED Gold certification earlier this year.
- Hathaway Brown School for Girls, reinforcing environmental education and stewardship in academic settings. HB achieved LEED Gold certification in 2023.

Each project exemplifies Emerald's mission to accelerate sustainability for organizations shaping our communities. "The *Emerald Gives* initiative reflects our commitment to helping mission-driven organizations thrive by aligning building performance with their values," said Laura Steinbrink, CEO of Emerald Built Environments. "Greater Cleveland Habitat's proposal was deeply compelling in both its community impact and its drive toward sustainable operations."

### **About Emerald Built Environments**

Emerald Built Environments is a leading consulting firm specializing in sustainability, business, and the built environment. Their services include sustainable building certifications, emissions reporting, net zero initiatives, engineering, and building science. Emerald creates meaningful change by crafting solutions that benefit people, reduce environmental impact, and ensure long-term financial success. Emerald is a Crete United company, and the Crete platform of companies provide energy efficiency advisory and full-scale MEP design, installation and service capabilities. Emerald is a B Corp certified company, a member of 1% for the Planet, holds the Ecovadis Gold designation, and is recognized with LEED Proven Provider status.

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