



# LED Certified Sites Program

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Louisiana Economic Development is responsible for strengthening the state's business environment and creating a more vibrant Louisiana economy. LED has instituted a Certified Sites Program to identify development-ready industrial sites.

Economic developers have found that the timeframe for making business location decisions has shortened and companies are becoming much more risk-averse. When a company makes a decision to build a new facility they look for a site that is ready to develop and relatively risk free. LED is assisting communities throughout Louisiana to identify and certify industrial sites as development-ready. Communities can propose a certified site to their clients confident of the site's availability and suitability. Certified sites offer the additional advantage of ensuring that the client's construction is more likely to remain on schedule.

## WHAT IS A LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CERTIFIED SITE?

A Louisiana Economic Development Certified Site is a development-ready industrial site that has completed a rigorous review process by Louisiana Economic Development and URS, an independent, third-party engineering firm. Specific site details, such as zoning restrictions, title work, environmental studies, soil analysis and surveys, are assessed for compliance and authenticity. Louisiana Economic Development Certified Sites are identified in the Louisiana Site Selection Center by a special notation and logo.

## ADVANTAGES OF LED CERTIFIED SITES

- Development ready
- Substantial due diligence completed
- Significant site information gathered and documented
- Independent third-party engineering review
- Uncertainty and potential obstacles eliminated through enhanced site knowledge
- More competitive
- Greater marketability
- Granted priority in site proposals

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## CONTACT

**DANIEL MICHEL**  
Site Development Program Manager  
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225.342.9214

## ELIGIBILITY

**Note:** A site does not have to be certified to have its profile published on Louisiana Economic Development's interactive sites and building website.

- **Size:** At least 25 contiguous, buildable acres, free of impediments to development such as existing structures not appropriate for future commerce, soil contaminants, wetlands, flood plain, protected species and/or cultural resources. Price per Acre: A fixed purchase price or a fixed leasing price per acre for a specified time period is required to certify and publish a site.
- **Property Control/Ownership:** Control of the site through option, purchase or other legally binding agreement must be obtained and maintained as a condition of certification. It is required that the property can be obtained free and clear of encumbrances.
- **Zoning/Land Use:** The site must be zoned or otherwise approved for industrial applications. If zoned, a zoning district description and map are required. Only sites suitable for industrial use will be considered. Sites adjacent to significant residential development or other land uses incompatible with industrial activities will not be considered.
- **Flood Plain:** At least 25 contiguous, buildable acres must be above the 100 year flood plain. Alternatively, the applicant may provide a formal cost estimate, construction plan and funding source by which construction footprints can be elevated above the plain and meet FEMA standards.
- **Water Supply:** Delivery prior to any potential project startup, either by line or by well, a minimum of 50,000 gallons of potable or process water per day. If an existing source of water supply is not available, certification will require submission of an order-of-magnitude cost estimate, conceptual design and funding source to meet the minimum level of service within a reasonable timetable.
- **Sanitary Sewer:** Provide a minimum of 50,000 gallons per day of available sanitary sewer capacity in a reasonable time period upon notification. If existing capacity is not available to the property boundary, certification will require submission of an order-of-magnitude cost estimate, conceptual design, and funding source to meet the minimum level of service within a reasonable timetable.
- **General Road Access:** The roads accessing the site must be able to support vehicles with a maximum gross weight of 83,400 pounds, such as semi-trucks and trailers. If an access road does not exist, certification will require submission of an order-of-magnitude cost estimate, conceptual design and funding source to meet the required access within a reasonable timetable.
- **Electricity:** Identify service provider or providers that can deliver reliable 3-Phase power service to the site prior to any potential project startup. If existing capacity is not available at the site, certification will require submission of an order-of-magnitude cost estimate, conceptual design and funding source to meet the minimum level of service within a reasonable timetable.
- **Natural Gas:** Natural gas must be available to the property boundary or available prior to any potential project startup. If natural gas is not available, certification will require submission of an order-of-magnitude cost estimate, conceptual design and funding source to meet the minimum level of service within a reasonable timetable.
- **Listing:** The property owner must agree to have the site published by Louisiana Economic Development on its interactive sites and building website.
- **Phase I Environmental Assessment:** The site must have undergone a Phase I environmental assessment as a prerequisite for being considered for participation in the certification process. The Phase 1 Environmental Assessment must be less than 5 years old from the date of submission.
- **Remediated Sites:** If there are unresolved environmental issues, the site cannot be certified until a No Further Action letter or its equivalent from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is provided.
- **Re-Certification:** LED Certified Sites must be re-certified every five years by documenting changes in adjacent land use, right-of-ways, existing structures, zoning, transportation infrastructure, utilities, total available acreage, environmental and cultural conditions, ownership, topography, and any other pertinent changes that impact the marketability of the site. A new application and due diligence will not be required.

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## CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

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The following due diligence action items must be completed for certification.

- **Phase I Environmental Assessment:** The site must have undergone a Phase I environmental assessment as a prerequisite for being considered for participation in the certification process. The Phase 1 Environmental Assessment must be less than 5 years old from the date of submission.
- **Wetland and Stream Delineation:** Applicants must have a wetland and stream field survey conducted to delineate all wetlands and “waters of the US” on the site. If wetlands and waters of the US will likely be impacted by planned development of the site (i.e., wetlands are in the middle of the site or in areas likely to undergo construction), the applicant must submit the wetlands delineation to the US Army Corps of Engineers for a formal Jurisdictional Determination. This formalizes the wetlands delineation and provides some assurance from the Corps that wetlands are no more extensive than the delineation purports.

**Note:** Wetlands mitigation is NOT required of an applicant but applicants with wetlands in the prime areas of their site are encouraged to mitigate those wetlands.

- **Topographic Survey and 100/500 year Floodplain Designation:** Obtain a suitable interval aerial topographic survey of the site. Demonstrate that the site is either above the 100/500 year floodplain or a site manufacturing pad can be cost effectively constructed to raise the site above the floodplain.
- **Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation:** Obtain a preliminary geotechnical investigation of the site generally characterizing the site's soil, rock and groundwater conditions. Substantiate that unfavorable geotechnical conditions do not exist at the site. The geotechnical investigation required for certification should involve no less than 3 and no more than 5 borings spread evenly across the site, unless engineers recommend more for a very large site.
- **Cultural Resources Investigation:** Obtain a database research level cultural and archeological investigation of the site from a qualified third party archeologist to document that there are no known cultural resource sites existing on the site. Provide the results of this third party investigation to the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) and request a letter from SHPO indicating whether the site is cleared for development or if the site requires a Phase 1 Cultural Resources Assessment. If a clearance letter cannot be obtained from SHPO, then a Phase I cultural resources survey must be performed.
- **Endangered Species Investigation:** Secure a letter from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries indicating that development on the site will not impact any protected or endangered species on or near the site..
- **Railroad Accessibility:** If the site can be served by railroad, determine if a right-of-way can be secured and that there is a cost effective manner to reach the site. Also, determine if the railroad owner is a short line or single Class 1 railroad and if a long term commitment has been made by the railroad to keep the rail in service. Obtain an order-of-magnitude cost estimate for rail service to the site, if appropriate. A letter from the rail provider should be obtained stating their willingness to serve the site.
- **Utility, Oil/Gas Well and Pipeline Easements and Rights-of-Way:** Identify any and all existing easements, utility rights-of-way, well heads, pipelines, etc. on the site that may be potential impediments to fully utilizing the site. Determine if the identified impediments can be cost effectively relocated.
- **Roadway Accessibility:** A four lane major highway within close proximity of the site is preferred. Determine if there is a cost effective means to obtain right-of-way and construct an access road from the site to the four lane highway. Obtain an order-of-magnitude cost estimate for the access road construction, if needed. The roads accessing the site must be able to support vehicles with a maximum gross weight of 83,400 pounds, such as semi-trucks and trailers.

**To qualify for certification, you must complete the pre-application and submit it to LED.**

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## FUNDING ASSISTANCE

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The EDRED site improvement funds are available to site owners, managers and regional ED Organizations to assist with identified action items needed to improve the marketability of quality sites and qualify for LED site certification. EDRED allows for LED to provide a 75% match for required site improvement work. All sites accepted into the site improvement program are eligible for LED site certification

Requirements include: a clearly defined price range (including an option or MOU for third-party owned sites), and the scope of work in proposals by local firms should be reviewed by LED. Funds will be used for expenses such as site engineering and basic due diligence. These expenses may include: Phase I environmental survey, threatened & endangered species survey, cultural & archaeological survey, preliminary geotechnical survey, wetlands / floodplain delineation, engineering conceptual plans for infrastructure improvements, and other necessary work. A responsible party (site owner, EDO, etc.) must agree to pay the vendor(s) 25% of the total invoice price.

The 25% local match cannot come from EDO Tier 1 funds.

### PROCESS

- Complete LED certified suites pre-application (NOTE: Site owners are not required to pursue LED site certification but the same due diligence action items apply for EDRED funding as for certification so the site becomes automatically eligible for certification pending completion of the application).
- If approval of the pre-application is received, the site will be added to the work plan and be considered eligible for certification and EDRED funding assistance.
- The applicant will be notified of the due diligence action items required and be asked to engage appropriate vendors to provide proposals with itemized scope of work and proposed price.
- LED will approve vendor proposals or suggest revisions.
- If land owners wish, LED contracted vendors can provide proposals and complete work, or site owners can use preferred vendors.
- Site owners must arrange for and guarantee the funds for the 25% match required by the program.
- Reimbursement of approved site due diligence at 75% of the total cost must be through a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) with the state of Louisiana. CEAs are in place with the eight regional economic development organizations. The LED contract vendors also have CEAs in place. (NOTE: Arrangements for reimbursement through an existing CEA must be made before any work is commenced. Site work done prior to the execution of a CEA will not be reimbursed).
- Invoices and all supporting documentation for 75% of the cost of completed due diligence action items should be presented to LED for payment.

### REQUIREMENTS

- LED funding requires a pledge to provide the local match: 75% LED/25% local+ Requirements
- Site needs to be on LED work plan
- Sale price and/or option needs to be secured prior to funding
- Expenditure items need to be on the LED work plan to receive funding. These work items should be identified by LED as a priority. Other work not identified by LED should be funded without the LED match.
- Local entities can select the firm to perform the work or LED can assign the work to an engineering firm with which LED has an existing professional services contract. In any case, LED must review and concur with the scope prior to agreeing to provide the 75% match.
- Local vendors may be asked to subcontract with an engineering firm contracted to LED or work through their regional Economic Development Organization.
- If work is performed by LED contracted firms such as URS or SJB, then a letter of agreement to pay 25% of the total invoice must be provided by a responsible party. The responsible party will have the opportunity to review and approve the scope and price in advance.

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## REGIONAL EDO SITE FUNDING CONTACTS

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### **ACADIANA REGION**

**Rebecca Shirley**

Acadiana Economic Development

### **BAYOU REGION**

**Vic Lafont**

South Louisiana Economic Council

### **CAPITAL REGION**

**Jim Cavanaugh**

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

### **CENTRAL REGION**

**Rick Ranson**

Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance

### **NORTHEAST REGION**

**Tana Trichel**

Northeast Louisiana Economic Alliance

### **NORTHWEST REGION**

**Liz McCain**

North Louisiana Economic Partnership

### **SOUTHEAST REGION**

**Grady Fitzpatrick**

Greater New Orleans, Inc.

### **SOUTHWEST REGION**

**David Conner**

SWLA Economic Development Alliance



# Louisiana Certified Sites Program

## RESOURCE GUIDE

This guide is designed to assist applicants to the Louisiana Certified Sites Program. Details as to how and where to obtain materials for some of the required documents, as well as contact information are provided below, whenever possible. Do not hesitate to contact the Certified Sites Coordinator (Larry Henson at [lhenson@la.gov](mailto:lhenson@la.gov)), should you have any questions about the program.

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### **I. VERIFICATION OF SITE AVAILABILITY**

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#### **A. Site Zoning, Tax Assessment, and Special Economic Development Districts**

- Tax millages can be found at [http://www.latax.state.la.us/Menu\\_ParishTaxRolls/TaxRolls.aspx](http://www.latax.state.la.us/Menu_ParishTaxRolls/TaxRolls.aspx)
- Parish assessors can provide information on parcel sizes and current property tax millages applied to the parcel. A list of assessors can be found at <http://www.louisianaassessors.org/Assessors/Assessors.htm>

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### **II. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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#### **A. Potable Water Infrastructure**

Applicants will need assistance from their water company. Contact information can be found at <http://www.lpsc.org/default.aspx>

#### **B. Wastewater Infrastructure**

Applicants will need assistance from their wastewater company. Contact information can be found at <http://www.lpsc.org/default.aspx>

#### **C. Electricity Infrastructure**

Applicants will need assistance from their electrical company. Contact information can be found at <http://www.lpsc.org/default.aspx>

#### **D. Natural Gas Infrastructure**

Applicants will need assistance from their natural gas provider. Contact information can be found at <http://www.lpsc.org/default.aspx>

#### **E. Pipelines Section**

Pipeline maps can be found at <http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/>

#### **F. Telecommunications Infrastructure**

Applicants will need assistance from their local carrier. Contact information can be found at <http://www.lpsc.org/default.aspx>

#### **G. Roadway Transportation**

Applicants will need assistance from the Public Works offices of their Parish Government and local district offices of Louisiana Department of Transportation

#### **H. Air Transportation Infrastructure**

The Department of Transportation provides an airport directory at [http://www.dotd.la.gov/intermodal/imt\\_airport\\_directory.asp](http://www.dotd.la.gov/intermodal/imt_airport_directory.asp)

#### **I. Rail Infrastructure**

Railroad service can be found at <http://www.laoperationlifesaver.org/map.aspx>

#### **J. Water Transportation Infrastructure**

Applicants can benefit from the Ports Association of Louisiana website at <http://portsoflouisiana.org/>

## **K. Geography and Geological Assessment**

- **U.S. Geological Survey Quad Map**

<http://nationalmap.gov/>

- **Soils Conservation Service (SCS) Map**

<http://soils.usda.gov/>

- **National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Map**

<http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/>

- **FEMA 100-year Floodplain Map**

Contact your local floodplain administrator. Useful websites include LSU AgCenter's flood map portal at <http://www.lsuagcenter.com/floodmaps>, RiskMap6 site at <http://www.riskmap6.com/Community.aspx?sid=2> and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) site at <https://msc.fema.gov>

## **L. Environmental Assessment**

- **Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries**

Contact

Amity Bass

Coordinator, Louisiana Natural Heritage Program

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

225.765.2975

[abass@wlf.la.gov](mailto:abass@wlf.la.gov)

- **State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)**

Contact

Rachel Watson

Section 106 Review & Compliance

Division of Archaeology

Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

225.342.8165

[rwatson@crt.la.gov](mailto:rwatson@crt.la.gov)

- **Wetlands Delineation/Determination**

Applicants are encouraged to contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at 504.862.2201 (Team New Orleans) and 601.631.5000 (Vicksburg District)