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# Green Building Resource Guide

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Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.  
4250 N. Fairfax Drive, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Arlington, VA 22203  
703-812-2000  
[www.abc.org](http://www.abc.org)

## **What is “Green Building”?**

The term “green building” is increasingly used in construction and can have multiple meanings. In a broad sense, however, “green building” refers to construction that is intended to produce environmental, health and economic benefits and can take a variety of forms. It can include the use of recycled materials; the protection and preservation of a construction site’s existing natural resources; designing buildings to lower their operational energy consumption; improving air and water quality; and easing a building’s impact on human health and the environment.

## **Green Building and Merit Shop Contractors**

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) has been at the forefront of the green building movement since its inception. ABC member SIGAL Construction was a green building pioneer during the 1980’s. In 1991, SIGAL Construction started SIGAL Environment and began incorporating environmentally preferable methods and materials into new construction projects. It was through this sustainable design and practice SIGAL Environment went on to become a founding member of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). In addition, SIGAL was one of the authors of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. ABC members continue leading the construction industry by utilizing sustainable construction methods and practices. ABC understands that more thoughtful and environmentally responsible construction is an important step in ensuring that we leave a softer footprint on the landscape for future generations.

ABC strongly advocates the merit shop construction philosophy, which encourages open competition and a free-market approach to awarding construction contracts. ABC believes that all contractors should have the opportunity to compete openly and fairly for green projects. Requirements that restrict the ability of merit shop contractors to bid on green projects unnecessarily limit competition and do not offer any benefit to the end users – the general public. Construction contracts should be based on merit and awarded to the most qualified and responsible low bidders, regardless of labor affiliation.

## **The Benefits of Green Building**

In addition to the environmental and other societal benefits, green building can provide economic benefits to contractors. For example, according to the Department of Energy, the use of green construction techniques can lower material costs and reduce unnecessary waste. Additionally, although most green building planning and decisions are made by developers, owners and architects, contractors will increasingly be called upon to provide recommendations and practices on what green building materials, products and designs might be best for the particular project. Also, state and local governments are increasingly requiring the use of green building techniques in new construction and rehabilitation building projects.

## **Green Building Library**

ABC recognizes the importance of green building in the commercial and industrial construction community and supports all initiatives that result in healthier and more energy efficient buildings without sacrificing quality and safety. Below is a list of resources available for ABC members:

### **ABC's Green Building Advisory Group**

A panel consisting of a broad cross-section of ABC member contractors, the Green Building Advisory Group examines the latest advances in green construction technologies, applications and policies for the more than 24,000 ABC members.

Contact ABC's Green Building Advisory Group: [greenbuilding@abc.org](mailto:greenbuilding@abc.org)

### **ABC's Green Building Resources Website**

As ABC's clearinghouse for green building, this area of the ABC website is where you will find recent articles and publications on green construction, information on green building certification training and ABC's green building contacts.

Visit ABC's Green Building Resources site: [www.abc.org/greenbuilding](http://www.abc.org/greenbuilding)

### **ABC's Green Building "Resume"**

As demand for green building continues to grow, it is important for ABC member contractors to demonstrate their continued leadership in green building and construction. ABC member contractors should prepare a "green resume" outlining their past experiences and successes in green building.

To learn more, contact: [greenbuilding@abc.org](mailto:greenbuilding@abc.org)

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "Energy Star" program**

A joint venture with the EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy, this management strategy helps measure a building's current energy performance by setting conservation goals, tracking savings and rewarding improvements.

To learn more about EPA's "Energy Star" program, visit: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

### **U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC), Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)**

This ratings system was developed and established by the USGBC to assess a building's environmental, economic, and occupant-oriented performance. Under the USGBC system, the higher the LEED rating of a building, the more it is environmentally responsible, profitable and a healthier place to live and work.

For more information on LEED certification, visit: [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

## **U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Reference Guides**

The USGBC's Reference Guides are available to ABC members at bulk rates:

- 1-9 Reference Guides - \$150-USGBC Member/\$200-USGBC Non-Member
- 10-49 Reference Guides - \$125
- 50-99 Reference Guides - \$100
- 100 plus - \$75

To purchase USGBC Reference Guides, call: 1-800-795-1747

## **Green Building Education & Training**

### **National Workshops**

ABC National has partnered with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to offer half-day and full day workshops at ABC's national conferences. Workshops will teach attendees awareness, understanding and implementation of green building principles and the LEED Rating System.

For upcoming workshops, visit ABC's Green Building Resources site:

[www.abc.org/greenbuilding](http://www.abc.org/greenbuilding)

### **ABC Chapter Training**

Many ABC chapters also offer green building training. To locate a chapter, visit:

[www.abc.org](http://www.abc.org)

### **Online Courses**

The U.S. Green Building Council offers the following online courses for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED):

- Essentials of LEED Professional Accreditation
- LEED 101: Green Building Basics
- Introduction to LEED for Schools
- Introduction to LEED for Homes

Visit the USGBC's site for information on course content, pricing and registration links:

[www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

### **Green Advantage Environmental Certification**

Contractors can become certified green building practitioners by testing their knowledge of green construction concepts, technologies and techniques through this nationally recognized program.

For more information on obtaining Green Advantage certification, visit:

[www.greenadvantage.org](http://www.greenadvantage.org)