

hba green

a green building toolkit for state and local
homebuilder associations

provided by the

NAHB National Green Building Program

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summary

On February 14, 2008, the National Association of Home Builders launched the NAHB National Green Building Program, commonly referred to as “**NAHB Green.**” The program is a comprehensive set of educational resources, advocacy tools, rating systems, and access to a National Green Building Certification service that help home builders anywhere build green homes, and homebuyers at all price points buy them.

Throughout the country, green home building has become more common and more mainstream in recent years. The number of home builders using green building technologies and techniques has been steadily increasing as they see its market advantages. While building green isn’t for everyone, the need to make sure that green building programs remain voluntary, market driven, and based on sound technical information is a key issue for NAHB. In fact, NAHB Green is the result of years of builders’ and local associations’ efforts throughout the NAHB federation. These efforts have led to the construction of thousands of green homes all over the country, as well as the development of dozens of local green building programs coordinated by or associated with state and local home builder associations.

Local programs are a home builder’s primary source for information, education, and networking on all topics—and green building techniques are no different. Green home building, however, also has led to the development of additional needs, like establishing a locally credible green rating criteria and certifying homes to those criteria. Working these services into a local program, and bringing in education and networking activities can be tremendous opportunities for an association to expand its scope and revenue.

This tool kit is designed for state and local associations seeking resources for their members; associations that are interested in starting local programs; and existing programs that want to take advantage of national resources. In all cases, there are instructions here about affiliating with NAHB Green, as well as descriptions of various resources that will help as you get a local program underway. In addition to introducing green home building and the different NAHB Green components, this toolkit includes a guide to establishing your local green building activities that is organized as follows:

1. **Taking the First Green Step:** Gauging Local Market and Builder Opinions
2. **Green Organizing:** Administering and Sponsoring a Local Green Program
3. **Picking Greens:** Selecting a Rating System and Certification Service
4. **Green Education:** Harnessing Educational Opportunities Locally
5. **Defining Green:** Leading the Outreach and Advocacy in Your Community

If you have questions as you work through this toolkit, please refer to the contact information page (tool 4).

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green building basics

Thinking Nationally, Acting Locally

what is green?

Green building is incorporating environmental considerations and resource efficiency into every step of the home building and land development process to minimize environmental impact. Simply put, green building is good building—and it's not that different from what builders are already doing. It means making intentional decisions that affect the following areas of the design and construction process:

- **Energy efficiency** improvements, such as high levels of insulation, efficient HVAC systems, high-performance windows and energy efficient appliances or lighting
- **Water conservation** measures, such as water-efficient appliances, water-conserving fixtures, water filtration systems, and water-efficient or low-maintenance landscaping
- **Resource conservation** techniques, such as using high-performance engineered wood, wood alternatives, allergen-free materials, recycled building materials, sustainably harvested lumber and more durable products
- **Indoor environmental quality** considerations, such as effective HVAC equipment, use of formaldehyde-free finishes, and use of products with minimum off-gassing or low volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- **Site design** techniques, like minimizing disruption and preserving open space
- **Home owner education** through green orientations, and manuals or operating guides

Most home builders are already incorporating elements of green building into their current practices. As those efforts are recognized, and builders and homeowners come to understand the best practices involved in constructing and occupying a green home, more and more mainstream home builders are effectively and holistically weaving environmental concerns into their business models. The result is homes that can perform more efficiently, and have a gentler impact on the environment.

In fact, green building has taken off beyond the expectations from even just a few years ago. Increasingly, homeowners are conscious of environmental considerations in all of their purchases and the policymakers that represent them are seeking ways to address that consciousness. According to a survey conducted by McGraw Hill Construction, demand for green building had outpaced supply by early 2007, as home buyers looked for greater energy efficiency. The study also indicated that the federation has reached a tipping point where more than half of its members are incorporating green features into the homes they build.

Some features are more cost-effective than others or have undergone more scientific scrutiny, but they all broadly fall under the green umbrella. Because of this, a similarly broad

variety of initiatives have taken root—including education and credentialing for building professionals, the development of many measurement systems for green building, and certification programs to give assurances to the home buying public.

In short, green building is a practical response to a variety of issues that affect all of us – including increasing energy prices, waning water resources, and changing weather patterns. While some of the impetus to build green is being dictated by policy makers, increased consumer awareness is also driving growth in this sector, making green a self fulfilling prophecy - the more consumers are exposed to the benefits of green homes, the more demand we will see.

what is nahb green?

Many green building programs have been in existence for 10 years or more. In fact, the NAHB Green Building Subcommittee, a voluntary member advocacy group, was established in 1998 and launched the first National Green Building Conference in 1999. Early on, the concept and practices of green building were not clearly defined. Many gray areas remained in identifying and quantifying the precise environmental impact for each particular line item. Similarly, home builders differed in their relative knowledge and comfort level with green building concepts. Some builders had been building green for years, while others were being introduced to the idea for the first time—and this is still true today. The difference between the early days and now is that now there are various road maps for builders to follow.

In 2005 the NAHB Research Center convened a team of industry experts to establish thresholds to delineate different levels of green building effort. The resulting NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines (www.nahb.org/gbg) provided the first practical, nationally-recognized baseline for determining thresholds for resource-efficient, cost-effective home building.

The market has changed rapidly since the launch of the Guidelines in 2005, and the number of local green building programs has grown. The need to provide additional technical resources and knowledge, as well as additional guidance to local programs, has also increased. Additionally, green mandates increasingly threaten to undermine the entrepreneurial spirit of these efforts, as well as the numerous voluntary local programs that have blossomed throughout the country.

NAHB developed the National Green Building Program (“NAHB Green”) to allow this growth to continue and assure that green practices remain flexible, voluntary and cost-effective. NAHB Green is an umbrella program for a variety of services and resources available to home builders and local home builder associations all over the country.

What is NAHB Green?

- **Technical Guidance:** The **NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines** and, soon, support for the **National Green Building Standard™** the foremost green rating system for residential construction in the United States, as well as the only rating system undergoing complete ANSI-consensus requirements.
- **www.nahbgreen.org** and the **NAHB Green Scoring Tool:** a free online resource that enables any builder, in any part of the country to gauge how green their planned home will be. The tool provides a “designer’s report” that compiles the information the builder has entered, and scores the home according to the ranks in the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines or the National Green Building Standard. Through this resource, builders can also access design and technical assistance for their green building projects.
- The NAHB Research Center’s **National Green Building Certification Service**, , which can be used by any builder, anywhere. Using the Green Scoring Tool as a guide, a builder can seek verification and request that a home receive national certification from the NAHB Research Center, an accredited third-party certifier.
- **Verifier Training and Accreditation** via the NAHB Research Center to ensure that certification is consistent, accurate, neutral, and technically rigorous throughout the country.
- A new **Certified Green Professional** Designation (www.nahb.org/cgpinfo) that enables individuals like builders, remodelers, and other housing industry professionals to gain and market their green expertise.
- Extensive additional education opportunities through such venues as the NAHB **National Green Building Conference**, the International Builders’ Show, and other industry-sponsored events.
- **Marketing and Advocacy Guidance** for builder members and HBAs to communicate the benefits of green building and the importance of keeping these innovative practices voluntary to the home buyers and policymakers in their communities. A local program can affiliate with the NAHB National Green Building Program (that is, receive the NAHB Green logo, services, etc.) by offering the national green building certification service exclusively or as an option next to current local or regional certifications.

All of these components are discussed in detail as they come up in the various steps involved in...

...going green!

1. taking the first green step

Gauging Local Markets and Builder Opinions

national green trend sources

If the interest in green construction in your area is growing, you're not alone! The exploding national market for sustainable, environmentally friendly and recycled building products, along with increasing consumer demand has accelerated green building's acceptance rate – green is barreling into the mainstream. Recent studies conducted by the NAHB and McGraw-Hill Construction Analytics have identified some compelling evidence of a general market trend toward green:

- More than 50% of NAHB's members were incorporating green practices into the development, design and construction of new homes by the end of 2007. (Considering NAHB builders build more than 85% of the homes in the country, this demonstrates phenomenal acceptance!)
- What was just 2% of the market in 2005; is predicted to be between 12 and 20% by 2012!
- 85% of home buyers who have purchased green homes say they are more satisfied than with their previous, more traditionally built homes.
- 63% of buyers are motivated by the lower operating and maintenance costs that come with energy- and resource-efficient homes.

Of course, these are only national indicators of local conditions. While these studies are helpful, they won't give you a definite picture of what's happening in your area. Use the national data cautiously as you mine community web sites, newspapers, magazines, and, most importantly, home builder feedback. Search the internet today and have conversations with people in your community that are informed about the local real estate market!

is your local market ready for green?

General market interest in green construction differs across the country and even within neighborhoods. Many of your members may already be interested in launching a green effort, or it may be a relatively novel concept in your area.

Prior to investing in green activities, it's important to get a sense of what kind of interest there is and what would work best in your area. Surveying the members and potential homebuyers as well as local realtors and policymakers will help generate a sense of the local market's interest in green homes. Here are some things to consider when developing your survey:

- How much awareness is there around green or environmental issues?
 - Does the local press often cover green issues?
 - Are other environmental programs in place, like community recycling?
 - Are local organic grocers and farmer's markets receiving a growing share of the market?

- Is the local market ready to support green building?
 - Are there local building material recycling programs?
 - Do local home product retailers have special promotions for green or energy-efficient products?
 - Do local utilities offer incentives for energy-efficient or green products?

- What, if any, green-related mandates are on the horizon?
 - Has your state or local government expressed a public commitment to environmental change?
 - Have they offered incentives for building and buying green homes, or improving the energy rating of existing homes?
 - Have they suggested requiring that homes meet a certain level of green construction or energy efficiency?

These questions, though basic, are often not asked. More commonly, they are only partially answered, as one group of questions might be emphasized more than others. This could lead to a green program that could be either “oversized” or “undersized” for the local context.

Taking the pulse of your community on green building is as easy as reading the local newspaper, but talking to your builders and remodelers will give you a sharper image. They can tell you what their buyers and owners are requesting, what they're hearing at the building department, and what they're generally interested in.

Another great way to gauge interest, while generating revenue, is by offering an introductory green building course, such as the NAHB University of Housing's “*Green Building for Building Professionals*.” Alternatively, you may want to have local green building experts present a primer on the benefits of green building. If enough member interest is generated, you can offer more in depth opportunities to explore green building principles at a later date.

weighing the pros and cons

During this stage, you should also think about what the benefits are for the various stakeholders in your locale. Even when the market or policy context might not be demanding extensive green activities, the benefits could still outweigh the cost and effort. So, it still might be worth your investment as a home builders association and be a successful service that you offer your members and their customers.

As an HBA, a green building effort might help you:

- increase membership through new builder recruits, as well as associate members that sell green products or services
- promote builders who are incorporating resource efficient, environmentally friendly building practices
- garner positive press and public requests (At NAHB, green is one of the top media inquiries)
- access marketing materials and training that can help raise awareness of the HBA in your community
- help builders earn professional designations like the Certified Green Professional (“CGP”)
- and position the HBA as at the forefront of local green building issues with the goal of influencing and shaping future green-related regulatory initiatives

You should remember that your survey information is as much about policymakers as it is about homebuyers—if not more so in some cases. Consumers are not the only ones who want green homes, as there has been a sharp increase in proposals that would mandate residential green building practices at the state or local level. In fact, consumers are not the 'first adopters' for many of these changes. Instead, mandated requirements are being imposed at the development stage, long before consumers are aware that their choices are being limited - and their cost of housing is being raised. To prevent outside organizations or governments from dictating the requirements for green building, more and more HBAs are starting green building certification programs for their members and presenting these as viable, successful and usually more productive ways of going green. This is a key benefit to starting a local program.

Your builder members also benefit in ways that only a home builder association can help them leverage. Builders can enjoy the business advantages of:

- *Improved Product Quality* - Building green can increase home durability, reducing warranty and callback costs. Providing a homeowner’s manual, which is a practice supported by the Guidelines and Standard, can help reduce time spent on questions before and after the home sale.
- *Market Differentiation/Competitive Advantage* - Market research indicates that consumers perceive green homes to be a better value. Builders who are able to promote features such as lower utility costs, easier maintenance, and better indoor air quality are seeing increased sales and profitability and easier-to-close sales. A recent McGraw-Hill study indicated that green homeowners are more satisfied and believe that green homes are high quality, easier to maintain, more efficient, and offer health benefits. Studies also report that homebuyers are willing to pay for these benefits when purchasing their homes. Being able to offer this kind of value and benefit to consumers can set you apart from other builders. Further, events and marketing opportunities done in partnership with local and national green building programs help to get your members names into the hands of consumers. Green building is a popular topic in the media, and builders associated with this initiative can take advantage of the media coverage and publicity that stem from this interest.

- *Advantages in the Entitlement Process* - Some green builders are taking advantage of fast-track permits and reduced permitting fees in their jurisdictions. Other builders are finding they have access to land they wouldn't have had otherwise.
- *Lower Costs* - While there is often a cost when switching from traditional building practices and supplies to more environmentally-friendly ones, many green building practices result in using fewer materials and generating less waste, so costs can be minimized and offset. When green practices are incorporated as standard building practice, builders can take advantage of volume discount savings, and reduced labor costs as the learning curve to implement and install different items is diffused. Each home that is built green adds to the knowledge base of building science and home performance to the benefit of the entire industry.
- *Incentives* - Incentives such as the federal Energy Efficient Builder Tax Credit are available to offset some of the cost of some green building upgrades.
- *Credibility* - A certified green home demonstrates a builder's commitment to the environment, the new homeowner, and the community. The third-party certification process means that it's not just a builder's word standing behind his/her product, but that the support and credibility of a national program as well.

Homebuyers also benefit in ways that they can attribute to their builders and find out about first from their local home builders association. Some of the many reasons for owning or purchasing a green home include:

- *Operating Costs* - The technologies and practices required to build a green home to certain criteria may result in lower costs to operate the home. Energy-efficient appliances, lighting systems, and HVAC equipment result in lower energy consumption compared to other models. Using less water through water-conserving faucets, showers, toilets, and irrigation systems may also result in less water consumption. Properly sized HVAC systems mean that less energy is needed to condition spaces. Employing technologies such as photovoltaic panels for solar electricity and water heating, and geothermal heat exchangers could reduce dependence on public utilities, too.
- *Maintenance* - Effective stormwater management and landscaping could mean less time maintaining outside spaces. Also, green building practices lead to the use of some longer-performing materials and careful construction assemblies. Drained foundations, water spouts on gutters, and flashing around windows and doors might reduce the opportunity for system failure within the home due to moisture intrusion.
- *Health & Comfort* - Indoor environmental quality is one of the guiding principles of the Model Green Home Building Guidelines and the National Green Building Standard. Homes that allow for proper air exchange through ventilation, and low-emitting products like low- or no-VOC paints reduce off-gassing. Further, green building practices look at reducing the opportunity for moisture intrusion. The efficient HVAC systems, windows, and floor plans also mean that heating and cooling is better distributed throughout the home.

- *The Environment* - Increased energy and water efficiency in construction could lead to decreased energy and water consumption in a home throughout its lifespan. Further, some renewable, recycled, and other efficient building products used in green home construction may reduce the impact on natural resources. Also, green homes often include resource and waste reduction and recycling amenities.

Once you've considered:

1. **the overall market and policymaker interest is in green**
2. **what can be gained by going green in terms of revenue and intangible assets like public advocacy leadership and member goodwill (benefits)**
3. **and what might be expended in terms of time and money (costs)**

**then, it's time to consider
what kind of program would bring these together!**

It comes down to gauging your members well. When surveying your membership about green in general, it might also be a good time to learn what they think the local program should entail.

The next chapter describes some ways that you can organize the program, and the subsequent three chapters focus on the most significant groups of services (technical, educational, and promotional) that can grow your market's green home demand.

2. green organizing

Administering and Sponsoring a Local Green Program

HBAs that are just getting started have several decisions to make. The first step is to gauge how important this issue is to your members at large. You should seek feedback on their level of interest in going green, awareness of green building options, and technical knowledge. Adding these topics to a regular meeting agenda, and consumer interviews at home shows or surveys of those who tour a green home are all valuable research methods because they provide direct, local information that can help convince HBA decision-makers that a local green building program makes good business sense. You can refer to the previous chapter for additional guidance.

program goals

Local program goals vary and often evolve as builder participation increases. A few examples objectives employed by other HBA Programs follow below:

- **Goal:** *Provide a credible alternative to mandates.* With the sharp increase in proposals that would mandate green building practices, your goal may be to oppose local green building mandates or legislation by offering a voluntary, market-driven alternative that local leaders can support. Positioning your association ahead of the legislative trend towards green is strongly advised. HBA programs, like the St. Louis Green Building Initiative or King County BuiltGreen in Washington State, are examples of HBAs that have been able to thwart onerous legislation by demonstrating success with a flexible, voluntary green building program.
- **Goal:** *Seek member participation.* Many HBAs set a target for builder enrollment in a new green building program. Another common metric is the number of houses enrolled and certified in the first and subsequent years. Green building efforts not only enhance opportunities for existing members, but can also entice new members to join.
- **Goal:** *Attract builder interest and create community awareness.* Attendance at green building seminars is a good indicator of builder interest in being part of a bigger initiative. Over the last year, most HBAs that offered green education reported that these had record attendance. Media impressions are another great measure of local awareness. HBAs with a local green building program often highlight green homes in their Parade or home show; or have a separate green event. Gauging the popularity of green homes or booths is another indicator of market acceptance.
- **Goal:** *Generate revenue for the HBA.* Most programs start out revenue neutral, so consider that it is likely that the program won't be a money maker for your HBA right away. Some HBA programs report being self-sustaining after the first year through sponsorship and member fees.

Regardless of your immediate goals, the process of structuring a local green building program has invariably followed a path from informal to more formal organization. It should be noted, too, that a local program can affiliate with the National Green Building Program (that is, receive the NAHB Green logo, services, etc.) regardless of organizational structure (see more under “affiliation”).

organizational decisions

There are a variety of local priorities that could dictate the timing of formalizing organizational efforts. Generally speaking, the level of formal organization will depend on the immediate needs that your members have and the resources that your association can offer. But an HBA can take advantage of the opportunity that heightened awareness about green building brings by developing a more formal organization as soon as possible. This allows for revenue-generating possibilities earlier on, and also demonstrates a clear movement among the members that can be used in public policy discussions.

Organizational levels might include:

- A single or a few “member-champions” of green building
- Informal meetings of several interested members
- A green building committee or stakeholder group with preliminary offerings
- A green building council with more advanced offerings
- A regional or even statewide coalition of green building efforts

Placed along a continuum, these levels of organization provide one possible path to building a well-formed and fully functioning local green building program. Your HBA can follow these steps to reach whatever level of organization best suits the local environment or enables you to pick-up steam on efforts already underway.

finding a champion

Historically, green building program efforts have been led by a member champion who has some familiarity or expertise in green building. In conducting your member survey before deciding to go green, you should be able to identify the most likely green building champion to lead the initial stages of the HBA’s green building efforts.

informal member meetings

Regular and well-publicized open meetings are a good way to generate more awareness and interest in green building among members. Encourage those who attend these informal meetings to become active in the development of a broader initiative.

green building committee or stakeholder group

It's recommended that you develop a stakeholder group to set objectives and decide how the program will operate. In many instances, this group has evolved into a green building council once the program is up and running. The stakeholder group should identify and formalize the primary purposes and goals of your association's green building involvement.

You'll want to build a stakeholder group that represents the various interests of your membership: HBA leadership, builders (including custom and volume builders), remodelers, associate members (distributors, trade contractors, local manufacturers or sales reps), realtors and lenders (for marketing insight); and finally, an experienced local green builder or a good contact list of experts outside your area.

Established programs report that it is helpful to have a core group decide the initial program objectives, program scope, etc. before expanding the size of the committee. At full capacity, it may be helpful to break the group into oversight areas (i.e. program structure, program content, marketing, etc). These oversight areas can focus on the subjects of the next three chapters, but could also begin with a few early attempts and tools and resources to get their feet wet.

initial program offerings

Key program activities that you can start with focus on these three primary channels:

1. technical services—or, picking a green rating system and third-party certification that will get you the most mileage in your market and policy arena as affordably as possible.
2. education services—or, offering a substantial green building course, such as the NAHB University of Housing “Green Building for Building Professionals,” is a good way to start gathering members around the subject at little to no cost. It's also an excellent way to further provide services to those committed members in your committee or stakeholder group. And,
3. promotional services—or, performing some preliminary home buyer outreach at local home shows, doing some preliminary press releases and interviews, showcasing your green builders and remodelers, and meeting with local policymakers about your efforts.

These are just a few examples of efforts in these areas. A more detailed list of activities is provided in later chapters, but preliminary versions of all of these can be introduced at the early stages of a program depending on how much the local association wants to take on.

green building council

Once they realize increased success, many green building groups choose to formalize their charge by proposing council formation to the association's Board of Directors. Council activities can include education and training, networking opportunities, local advocacy, Parades, home shows, and other events that promote green home building in the community – but on a much larger and more self-sufficient scale.

Most HBAs have councils on a variety of topics. These councils often charge annual dues, which entitle members to discounted rates for all council activities. Green Building Council member benefits might include subscriptions to local green newsletters, mentoring programs, listings in local green resources directories, etc. And of course, council members can increase their contacts and can grow their own businesses by associating with other green professionals.

At this time, these efforts are locally grown; there is no national green building council at NAHB though with increased attention, this situation may change in the future. Should a national green building council be formed, it is reasonable to expect that a dues amount will be set for that organization. Benefits similar to other councils (publications, opportunities for networking, etc.) will be put in place and be funded through council dues.

In the meantime, though, local councils are encouraged to write their own rules and regulations and determine their own budgeting and dues structure. NAHB staff can assist along the way by sharing lessons learned from other HBAs and explaining the different components of NAHB Green. If your HBA is ready to launch a green building council, your leadership can refer to these basic principles:

- Examine the NAHB Bylaws. Also review the HBA Bylaws to determine whether they need to be amended to create a council within the association's structure. Discuss the council with the board. This is an appropriate time to also discuss the operating budget both with respect to expenses and potential revenue.
- Prepare a brief mission statement that concisely explains the council's primary purpose and goals.
- Make the council chairman a full voting member of the HBA Board of Directors.
- The only criterion a council should require of a prospective member is that the person is a member in good standing of the HBA. Any membership requirements beyond those imposed by the HBA might be interpreted as exclusionary. (Federal anti-trust laws prohibit arbitrary membership criteria). A council should not be set up as a "club" for an exclusive few. Keep in mind that an organization has more influence on its members than on those who aren't: more members translates into a better chance for recognition and more clout in the community.

- Rather than create additional council committees, ask council members to participate in existing HBA committees, making sure that green building goals are included among each committee's overall goals. In this way, the council functions as a coordinating committee to ensure that its goals are integrated with those of the Association. Another benefit of this approach is that the council can leverage its efforts by using the broader resources of the association.
- In developing its annual strategic or business plan, the council should attempt to tie its goals, where appropriate, into those of the HBA. Again, the emphasis is on positioning the council as integral part of the HBA, not as an isolated group working independently.
- The chairman should make a concerted effort to delegate responsibility for the council's various programs and projects to prevent the council from becoming a one-person organization and to cultivate future leaders. Job descriptions should be prepared for appropriate leadership positions within the council.
- It is recommended that the council be somewhat conservative in developing its list of priorities for its first year of operation. Allow the Council time to achieve some initial successes and gain momentum before developing a more ambitious plan.

regional or statewide coalitions

A handful of HBA green building programs have gone regional or even statewide after initial local success. HBAs participating in statewide programs are finding that a consistent brand and definition for green eliminates market confusion, ensures consistency in technical definitions, and provides a single credible voice for regional green building to policymakers. At times, this voice is supplemented by national resources. However, statewide and regional coalitions should include all local homebuilder associations and related groups that are located within the stated jurisdiction in order to be viewed as credible and effective.

Regardless of the ultimate structure, it is recommended that a local program do research to insure that it's hitting the right balance of meeting local demand and policy conditions, while not overexerting its resources and credibility.

securing sponsors

Sponsorship plays a pivotal role. There is an opportunity in all of the structures described above for sponsored activities. Even in a slow housing market, green remains an attractive topic to many potential sponsors. You'll find a number of suppliers and related industries are very interested in supporting the greening of your community. With all of the activities possible within a green building program, there are many sponsorship opportunities an HBA can develop.

As with other local sponsorship efforts, NAHB suggests that HBAs follow these steps:

- Set sponsorship goals and needs for the year. Because of green building's popularity, it's tempting to set unrealistic budget goals. Don't assume that your sponsors will go green at any price or that a green building committee or council can make up for poor performance in other areas.
- Create sponsorship categories and benefits based on the norms of your area. In other words, know your audience.
- Make the categories and benefits fair. Make sure the value of each benefit is clear. A logo on the event brochure is a good benefit, but three minutes of podium time before a live audience is a great benefit. So is serving as a moderator or panelist for an educational program.
- When determining benefits, don't give away the shop. Remember that the goal is to make money for the green building council and the association. It's a common trap to want to continue to offer benefits to important benefactors, but doing too much can devalue the overall program.
- Don't promise what you can't deliver. Make sure the sales person or sales committee are very clear about what benefits are available so the integrity of the program doesn't suffer.
- Put together a sponsor information packet before you start. That establishes the professionalism of the program, sets clear expectations for both the sponsors and the sales committee, and helps associations avoid over promising and under delivering.
- Develop a list of potential sponsors. Prospect by reviewing lists of exhibitors and advertisers for other green-themed programs and publications. To ensure that there are no accusations of "greenwashing," make sure that member green building experts are involved in reviewing lists of prospects. Sales persons should not be expected to be experts on defining green.
- Determine who will contact potential sponsors. Consider how to divide a prospect list among council and board members or individual sales persons so that no potential sponsor falls through the cracks – or gets multiple phone calls.
- Determine how contact will take place. Will there be a phone campaign, blast faxes or emails, personal letters, a visit from a council leader, or a combination of efforts? Decide on a strategy and then keep a record for follow-up.
- Determine how often sponsorship drives will take place. Most marketing experts recommend annual drives and suggest concentrating on Fall selling, because that's the time of year that most vendors' annual advertising and sponsorship budgets are set. It doesn't mean, however, that sponsor contact should be limited to only one "ask." Make sure that each new member gets information about sponsorship

opportunities too.

- Set deadlines. This is an important management issue. Make sure that there are due dates for each phase of the sponsorship program, from initial calls to collecting logos and ads. Hold members and paid staff accountable, especially volunteers who may be shy about requesting contract signatures.
- Get the word out. When the sponsorship agreement is signed or funds are received, make the sponsorship known as soon as possible by posting logos on the website, adding “thank-yous” to the next membership meeting. Sponsors appreciate immediate promotion, and potential sponsors will notice.
- Remember to say thank you. Personal interaction is important, and so are old-fashioned manners. When sponsorship funds are received, immediately send a personal thank-you letter.
- Devise a sponsorship retention plan. How will these sponsors return to support the green building council year after year? One way is to over deliver on benefits, especially with high-level sponsors. If a lower-level benefit remains unsold, add it to the sponsorship package for higher level sponsors. It’s a no-cost way to say thank you for continued business.

Now that your association has identified its preferable organizational structure and methods to pay for it, the various activities it will perform can be selected from a menu of options in three different categories: technical, educational, and promotional activities.

3. picking the right shade of green

Selecting a Technical Rating System and Certification Service

One of the most decisive steps that any local association does is to determine how it defines green building, and what it considers to be a green home. In fact, NAHB Green began in order to ensure that builders had a variety of options that would be most responsive to local conditions and market differences.

Two critical technical components must be weighed by your members: one is which green rating system, and the other is the certification service for that rating system.

green rating systems

A variety of green rating systems exist throughout the country, and some local programs have even chosen to develop their own based on how they assessed local conditions. In virtually all of these cases, rating systems involve defining a handful of categories within green building (like energy efficiency, materials or resource efficiency, etc.), describing a threshold of performance for each of those categories (for example, 15 % increase in energy-efficiency above current energy codes), and then describing ways and means that achieve that performance. For each of those ways and means, a green rating system should provide points that, when tallied across all of the categories, lead to an overall building score.

The selection of a rating system can be difficult for many local programs because it determines what kinds of alliances they will make with rating system developers or other rating system adopters, as well as the level of effort required to maintain and update a rating system. As a core activity in NAHB Green, the NAHB spearheaded the development of two nationally-recognized green building rating systems, the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines and the National Green Building Standard, to ensure that turnkey, flexible, cost-effective tools are available for members that want to build green. The NAHB promotes both rating systems. A description of each document and a comparison follow.

nahb model green home building guidelines

The NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines were developed with builders at all price points in mind. It is intended for individuals with some expertise in environmentally conscious design and construction and includes a criteria list with several performance levels and associated verification measures. The Guidelines emphasize and reward durable, well-built homes. There is also a companion User Guide to assist with implementation.



NAHB developed the Guidelines through a consensus-based process in 2003-2004, with participation from a variety of stakeholder groups including builders, researchers, environmental experts and designers.

The development process included borrowing or actively involving administrators of the green building programs that were already in existence. The Guidelines seek to reduce the environmental impacts of housing development by focusing on several key aspects of the building process, which are termed “guiding principles.” Published in 2005, the voluntary Guidelines cover seven areas, including lot preparation and design; resource efficiency; energy efficiency; water conservation; indoor environmental quality; and home operation, maintenance and home owner education. Each guiding principle offers a variety of distinct line items from which builders (and HBAs) can pick and choose. This allows the Guidelines to be customized to reflect local geographic and climate conditions.

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Lot Design, Preparation, and Development	8	10	12
Resource Efficiency	44	60	77
Energy Efficiency	37	62	100
Water Efficiency	6	13	19
Indoor Environmental Quality	32	54	72
Operation, Maintenance, and Homeowner Education	7	7	9
Global Impact	3	5	6
Additional Points From Sections of Your Choice	100	100	100

The stakeholder groups determined the minimal requirements for a house in each of these guiding principle groups, and then developed additional features for each principle to distinguish a home as green. The stakeholder groups identified point values for these additional features and developed Bronze, Silver, and Gold designations for them. The Guidelines can be downloaded for free at www.nahb.org/gbg.

Since its debut, the Guidelines document has helped move environmentally friendly home building concepts further into the mainstream marketplace by systematizing the green design and construction process. Currently, there are dozens of locally grown green building programs based on the Guidelines.

national green building standard

The Guidelines remain the basis for many successful green programs around the US. However, the expansion of green practices and technologies within other areas related home building, along with general confusion caused by the introduction of competing and conflicting programs, made clear the need for a more robust and widely-recognized text. The National Green Building Standard™ (the Standard) was developed to address that need.



The Standard, developed in partnership with the International Code Council (ICC), was submitted to American National Standards Institute (ANSI) in April 2008 and is pending approval. ANSI-required protocols ensured that a balanced committee of various industry professionals used a rigorous, transparent and controlled process to establish all criteria within the Standard. ANSI approves standards that have gone through a strict consensus process that avoided duplicating efforts, ensuring uniformity in everything from the size of electrical outlets to medical-device testing processes. Accordingly, the National Green Building Standard will be the industry benchmark for residential green building.

The Standard defines what makes a home green: what practices should be incorporated into green construction on a national scale, for single-family, multifamily, remodeling, and site development, and how home owners can operate and maintain their green homes.

The National Green Building Standard is based on the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines. Using the Guidelines as a foundation, the Standard is based on the same seven key components. But now, along with single family construction, the Standard also addresses best practices for remodeling, multi-family construction and land development. In creating the Standard and taking it through the ANSI approval process, the criteria was updated to reflect building codes changes, the wider availability of products, and introduction of new technology and practices since the 2005 debut of the Guidelines. For example, the baseline for energy savings has been changed from 2003 IECC to 2006 IECC. To qualify for bronze in the energy efficiency chapter, a home must be at least equivalent to 15% better than the 2006 IECC.

The process began in early 2007 when a committee including builders both large and small; code officials; green advocates like U.S. Green Building Council and Green Building Initiative; government representatives, including the U.S. EPA, U.S. DOE, and U.S. Navy; and manufacturer representatives met in Washington, DC. It has included multiple public hearings and two rounds of public comment. The NAHB Research Center, an ANSI-accredited standards developer, was the secretariat for the process. The resulting standard has been submitted to ANSI, whose mark will ensure that a balanced committee vetted the criteria; and that the result is unbiased toward any interests. With a diverse group of users, producers and general interest stakeholders contributing, adopting entities can be sure of the Standard's rigor.

As with the Guidelines, the builder must incorporate a minimum number of features in the following areas: energy, water, and resource efficiency, lot and site development, indoor environmental quality, and home owner education and maintenance. The more points accrued, the higher the score. In addition to Bronze, Silver and Gold, the Standard allows builders to strive for a new highest threshold, Emerald.

**National Green Building Standard
Threshold Point Ratings for Green Buildings (Single Family New Construction)**

Green Building Categories		Performance Level Points ^{(1) (2)}			
		BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	EMERALD
Chapter 5	Lot Design, Preparation, and Development	39	66	93	119
Chapter 6	Resource Efficiency	45	79	113	146
Chapter 7	Energy Efficiency	30	60	100	120
Chapter 8	Water Efficiency	14	26	41	60
Chapter 9	Indoor Environmental Quality	36	65	100	140
Chapter 10	Operation, Maintenance, and Building Owner Education	8	10	11	12
	Additional Points from any category	50	100	100	100
Total Points:		222	406	558	697

In addition to the threshold number of points in each category, all mandatory provisions of each category shall be implemented.

For dwelling units greater than 4,000 square feet, the number of points in Category 7 (Additional Points from any category) shall be increased in accordance with Section 601.1. The "Total Points" shall be increased by the same number of points.

The Standard suggests that higher thresholds be met in several categories, as the chart on the previous page demonstrates. It also introduces additional mandatory measures – many of which are consistent with the International Code Council’s I-Codes. Additionally, a fourth threshold, Emerald, has been adopted to recognize homes meeting the highest achievement levels possible in green building.

regional guidance to the guidelines or the standard

Both the Guidelines and Standard are designed to allow builders the flexibility to choose regionally appropriate solutions. However, some HBAs have chosen to provide further guidance to their members by developing an addendum that suggests best practices for that locality. Such a companion document can also provide builders with a list of green practices that may be required locally but, still earn points within the national program. Builders from these areas are able to locate the local guides by using the “Find a Local Program” link on www.nahbgreen.org. Development of this guide is typically a green building council activity and can serve as revenue source for the local program, in addition to being an engaging opportunity for your members. It is also permitted by the National Green Certification Service because it does not suggest local alterations to either rating system—only local guidance to them.

other rating systems

The two other most common groups of residential home ratings systems include the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED for Homes (LEED-H) and a wide variety of locally created rating systems. The former group is not supported by NAHB Green services or resources in any way, and is largely much more time-consuming and costly for most builders. In fact, the Guidelines have also already been used for more homes than any other rating system. It and the Standard are more user-friendly for builders, and are more cost-effective for a wider cross-section of homes.

To support this, a study sponsored by the NAHB in January 2008 has evaluated the costs and technical requirements of bringing two sample code-compliant production houses in

different climate zones (Dallas and Washington, DC metropolitan areas) into compliance with the three nationally-available green building rating systems: the NAHB Model Green Building Guidelines; the National Green Building Standard, Version 2 (NGBSv2), from December 2007; and LEED-H. With costs taken for the three rating systems at that specific point in time, preliminary results indicate that costs vary among the rating systems, with the Guidelines as the least costly overall. For direct compliance costs—that is, those costs associated only with changes or additions in construction and not including any program costs—the Standard surpasses estimated Guidelines costs by only a few hundred dollars at the introductory compliance levels (e.g., Bronze), and increases costs significantly over the Guidelines at the Gold level of compliance – about \$2,000 to \$3,000 more.

Most expensive was the LEED-H rating system. The first level of compliance in LEED-H (Certified) was calculated at roughly three times as much as the Guidelines or the Standard equivalent levels (Bronze) for this sample. LEED-H ratings at higher levels are similarly higher in costs to comply than the other two rating systems, with the magnitude of difference diminishing as higher levels are reached; at the highest level (Standard’s Emerald or LEED-H’s Platinum) costs were similar. This is summarized below as a percentage above the average baseline house cost:

Cost Comparisons of Compliance
(not including programmatic costs)

<i>Rating System</i>	Bronze/Certified	Silver	Gold	Emerald/Platinum
Guidelines	1.0 – 1.4%	2.3 – 3.4%	4.7 – 6.4%	NA
NGBSv2	1.1 – 1.7%	2.8 – 3.1%	6.9 – 7.6%	16.3 – 16.9%
LEED-H	3.6 – 5.6%	5.1– 7.4%	11.2 –13.5%	17.3 – 22.9%

In all cases, builder overhead and programmatic costs for LEED-H were greater than those estimated for either of the other systems, estimated between \$1,441 and \$3,735 for LEED-H registration, verification, and certification compared to the \$500 - \$900 verification and certification estimates for the Guidelines or the Standard.

Construction stringency comparisons among the systems were also performed in the areas of mandatory requirements, openness to alternatives, and credibility. LEED-H requires more mandatory actions than both the Standard and Guidelines, yet it rewards those actions with fewer proportional points. It also does not require a minimum threshold in all green building areas. As defined by the number of mandatory requirements, then, LEED-H is less flexible. The Guidelines and Standard, however, are less flexible when accounting for allowances beyond mandatory points; this is mirrored in the more prescriptive language of the Guidelines and the Standard.

Minimum Point Requirements for First Level (*Bronze, Certified*)

Guidelines Chapter/ NGBS Section	Guidelines Bronze		NGBSv2 Bronze		LEED-H ^B Certified		LEED-H Section
	Points	% Total	Points	%Total	Points	%Total	
Site ^A	n/a		79	NA ^A	0		Location & Linkages (LL)
Lot	8	3.4%	39	17.6%	5	11.1%	Sustainable Sites (SS)
Resource Efficiency	44	18.6%	45	20.3%	2	4.4%	Materials & Resources (MR)
Energy Efficiency	37	15.6%	30	13.5%	0	0%	Energy & Atmosphere (EA)
Water Efficiency	6	2.5%	14	6.3%	3	6.8%	Water Efficiency (WE)
IEQ & Global Imp.	32	13.5%	36	16.2%	6	13.3%	Environmental Quality (EQ)
Operations, Maint. & Ed ^C	10	4.2%	8	3.6%	0	0%	Awareness & Ed. (AE)
Add'l Points - Any Section	100	42.2%	50	22.5%	29	64.4%	
Total Min. Points^A	237		222		45		

^A Site Design & Development points in the NGBSv2 are earned independently from the points required for house baseline program minimums. Only Chapters 5 through 10 are aggregated in the total and percentages shown in this table.

^B This assessment is based on the Dallas house (2,509 s.f. on slab foundation). Because LEED-H minimum point requirements vary with the ratio of bedrooms to total conditioned space, there is a 13% variance in minimum point requirements between the Dallas and Metro DC houses.

^C The GBG chapter titled *Global Impact* has been incorporated into Sections 9 and 10 – *IEQ* and *Operations, Maintenance, and Building Owner Education* in the NGBSv2.

Overall, the magnitude or effort of actions required of LEED-H and the Standard were comparable. This credibility is evidenced by the varying degrees of consensus with national review in which these rating systems were developed. The Standard, if approved as the first ANSI standard, will provide the highest level of credibility by virtue of the rigor, transparency, and publicly-solicited input required for this approval. On this point, then, the Standard ranks highest.

No comparable studies have been performed yet among these three nationally promoted green rating systems and the second group of rating systems—that is, the locally created rating systems. Regardless, many local rating systems have been successful in both providing a benchmark for builders in their areas, warding off excessive mandates, and promoting green building in their communities. The only two disadvantages are the inability to point to a national consensus rating system when faced with increased mandate pressures, and of having to develop and maintain a certification service for its rating system. The Standard provides both.

certification services

Establishing a home certification program is a key objective of most local green building efforts after a rating system has been selected. Certification services are the outside world’s way of knowing and confirming that a home is built to a certain green threshold; like a “stamp of approval,” certification assures the home buyer of a home’s greenness without requiring him or her to understand all the technical details behind it. In many cases, it is also required to qualify for tax credits and other incentives that a local jurisdiction may be offering.

Third-party certification is generally going to provide a greater assurance than self-certification or in-house certification because it involves a party with no vested interest in the outcome of determining whether a home meets green thresholds or not.

local certification

The NAHB Research Center will not be able to certify to locally-developed rating systems, nor issue the national certification mark for homes built to locally-developed rating systems.

To date, HBAs that have developed their own rating systems or have altered the criteria in the Guidelines have typically developed in-house or local third-party certification processes to support it.

When this is the case, NAHB Green recommends that the certification be as transparent as possible and that there be “arms’ length” distance between the certification agent (i.e. HBA, local utility or other provider), its verifiers, and the builders. An HBA considering taking on certification locally should weigh several factors. Local certification often requires a significant level of financial and staff resources to maintain accurate records and timely performance. HBAs must also consider potential the liability exposure as the certifying body if and when a homebuyer is unsatisfied with the final product.

HBAs that maintain their own local certification programs will still have the ability to direct their builders to national certification as an alternate path. Offering builders the option to seek national certification is a requirement of affiliation with NAHB Green.

If the local program adopts the National Green Home Certification service in coordination with a local certification, the NAHB Research Center will provide the verifier training, qualification standards, and auditing of verifier performance and record keeping for national certification activities only. There is no prohibition against local programs making agreements with NAHB Research Center approved verifiers to provide services that are required to document compliance with local programs standards. Local programs that offer both local and national certification may choose to enter into an agreement with the NAHB Research Center with regard to coordinating services when a builder chooses both. However, again, the NAHB Research Center will not be responsible for aspects of local certification and will not allow alteration of the recordkeeping process it requires of verifiers.

national green home certification from the NAHB Research Center

The national certification mark is only available for projects scored using the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines and, soon, the National Green Building Standard. Aside from an affordable fee for members, additional benefits accrue to HBAs that refer members to this service: the National Green Home Certification provides a nationally accredited third-party stamp of approval (the NAHB Research Center is an accredited certification agent); removes the start-up and administrative costs of running certification; substantially lessens an HBA’s liability; and provides a host of other resources (like the easy to use on-line Green Scoring Tool and a green building technical assistance hotline).

When an HBA chooses to work with the NAHB Research Center, oversight of national certification, management of the verifier network and record retention are done entirely by the NAHB Research Center. This third-party oversight helps HBAs to maintain an

appropriate degree of separation from the certification administration, while still allowing local programs to be involved as a portal to and recruiter for the National Green Home Certification service, in addition to any local program services and benefits. Because disputes are arbitrated by the NAHB Research Center, HBA liability is lessened. NAHB Green offers HBAs an opportunity, not a mandate, to rely on a national technical services and provides HBAs with the credibility of a nationally-recognized, voluntary, umbrella program to present should local policymakers be considering green mandates.

A survey of current local programs suggests that outsourcing certification, while offering corollary services at the local level is the business model with the greatest revenue-generating potential. As such, NAHB Green also provides comprehensive educational and promotional features to local green building programs in addition to the technical guidance regarding green rating system adoption and certification services discussed in this chapter.

This is how the National Green Building Certification service works:

- A builder logs onto www.nahbgreen.org and uses the Green Scoring Tool to select which green features he or she will incorporate. The builder must include a minimum number of features in seven areas: energy efficiency, water efficiency, resource efficiency, lot and site development, indoor environmental quality, global impact, and maintenance and homeowner education in order to reach different performance levels (Bronze, Silver, and Gold to the Guidelines, or Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Emerald to the upcoming Standard). The more points accrued, the higher the score.
- After completing the designer's report via the Green Scoring Tool, the builder independently contracts with a local verifier from a list of Research Center-accredited professionals. Verification costs will vary from market to market and will be set by the individual verifiers.
- The local verifier coordinates with the builder and confirms, through document review and on-site inspections during construction and upon completion, that all the green features and requirements specified by the builder are in place.
- Once the Verifier's Report is complete, the builder pays a certification fee (\$200 for NAHB members). The Research Center reviews the submission and supporting documentation. If the house passes and achieves one of the green thresholds, the Research Center issues a certificate indicating that the house has been certified to the appropriate threshold. This can be coordinated through the local associations that are affiliates of NAHB Green. If a local HBA affiliate refers the builder, \$50 of the certification fee is directed to the HBA and the certificate can be co-branded with both national certification and local program marks.

The Research Center is the sole certifier for the NAHB National Green Building Program. To receive the national certification mark, certification must be done by the Research Center. If an HBA chooses to outsource all certification and use the services of the NAHB

Research Center, the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines or the National Green Building Standard must be the adopted rating system for the program.

The National Green Home Certification service is available in all areas of the country and to all builders. This is an important distinction because if the NAHB Research Center offers certification services, it must do so without regard to location or membership in the NAHB. Non-members pay a significantly higher fee for certification, and will be encouraged to seek membership information from their local HBA, in order to take advantage of lower fees and the additional green services offered by the local program.

4. green education

Harnessing Educational Opportunities Locally

NAHB Green has created many resources for members to learn more about building green. Likewise, the creation of a local green program opens the door to many opportunities to provide training locally and to further position an HBA as the local green building resource.

certified green professional™ (CGP) designation

First and foremost is the NAHB's latest professional designation: the Certified Green Professional (CGP). As with other NAHB University of Housing coursework and designations, the CGP brings with it numerous opportunities for local training and education. This is particularly true of the core CGP course: *Green Building for Building Professionals* (below).

The CGP along with several other NAHB designations requires that candidates pass the *Business Management for Building Professionals* course, another possible course offering at the local level. Additional requirements include a minimum of 2 years' building industry experience, maintaining the required continuing education, adhering to the NAHB code of ethics, and graduation or membership fees.

Earning the Certified Green Professional designation is a demonstration that the designee is committed to the best and latest in green building practices and techniques and offers proof of a solid background in green building methodology. It also demonstrates that the designee holds his or her work to the highest standards of professional ethics. Coordination is open to all HBAs regardless of local program or certification system used (though the NAHB Green offerings will be presented and will serve as the technical base for many of the course materials). Coordination can be done directly with the University of Housing by calling 800-368-5242 x8154, or sending an email to CGPinfo@nahb.com. A listing of upcoming course sites is available at: www.nahb.org/cgpinfo.

COURSES

At the core of the designation is the *Green Building for Building Professionals* course—a two-day session developed by NAHB that teaches strategies for incorporating green building principles into homes without driving up the costs of construction. Attendees will learn how green homes can potentially provide homebuyers with easier home maintenance, better indoor air quality and greater long-term value. Techniques for competitively differentiating home products are also discussed.

Graduates of this course will be able to:

- Locate and design green building development sites
- Effectively control moisture and durability for each component of the building envelope effectively
- Employ resource-efficient materials to achieve comfortable, safe and sustainable buildings

- Strategize ways to meet, exceed and verify green building energy-efficiency requirements
- Implement indoor and outdoor water conservation practices
- Achieve indoor environmental quality
- Consider green building objectives in a remodeling project
- Explain a home owner's and builder's role in effective operation and maintenance of a green home
- Apply successful business management, marketing and sales strategies to sell green

verifier training and accreditation

Verifiers are independent, third party contractors accredited by the NAHB Research Center whose main duty is to verify that homes seeking certification within the program do indeed meet the program requirements. Individuals interested in becoming verifiers must have pre-existing experience that provides a baseline understanding of general home building practices and specific "green" building knowledge. Specific types of experience that meet these eligibility requirements include, but are not limited to: 1 year of acceptable professional experience in home building and green building practices; at least 12 hours of acceptable green training; or a CGP Designation.

Eligible prospective verifiers must participate in training administered by the NAHB Research Center — either in person at an HBA, via web cast, or via self-guided online materials — and pass a verifier accreditation test. The course covers the protocol for verifying that a house meets the national certification program requirements, and is intended to ensure all verifiers across the country evaluate homes in a consistent manner. This training does not include developing the "green" expertise each prospective verifier is expected to have as a pre-requisite.

For a limited time, onsite verifier training is free to HBAs, except for instructor travel and lodging costs. As such, HBAs can coordinate training with the NAHB Research Center and use this training for revenue and outreach generation. This is also an opportunity to reach out to local utilities, energy-service providers, and related professionals with whom the HBA would like to expand relationships.

The NAHB Research Center will provide ongoing oversight of verifiers including training, testing, accreditation, and on-site audits for its National Green Building Certification service. Verifiers are required to pay an annual registration fee of \$125 to be listed on www.nahbgreen.org; demonstrate they carry the insurance coverage required by the NAHB Research Center; and participate in regular professional education updates.

Comprehensive information about upcoming class schedules and eligibility requirements is available at <http://www.nahbgreen.org/Certification/becomeverifier.aspx>

conferences

The flagship event for NAHB Green is the NAHB National Green Building Conference held each Spring. The Conference is a chance for industry professionals to gather and learn best practices from nationally known green building experts in lecture and panel formats. It is also an exhibition of the latest innovations in green building technology.

NAHB's annual International Builders' Show, the premier conference of the home building industry, is another venue to learn more about green building. Additional opportunities will be available at other NAHB conferences throughout the year.

At both the National Green Building Conference and the International Builders Show, as well as at local venues around the country, attendees wanting to take the next step in becoming a green building expert can do so by taking the CGP courses.

other educational opportunities

Here are a few other ideas, some of which are also great for getting positive press. All of these opportunities provide additional revenue sources as well as services to your members:

- Bring in experts from local universities to speak with members about green building topics
- Arrange for members to teach green building fundamentals in high school and vocational school seminars, as well as local NAHB Student Chapters at universities that can be sponsored by outside organizations coordinated by the local association's program
- Provide consultation services on green design and construction, including working with a member-champion on tours of his or her green home to other members
- Provide scholarships to attend national events to create networking opportunities for members
- Offer training about your local program to area manufacturers and retailers

5. defining green

Leading the Outreach and Advocacy in Your Community

It's critical once you have developed a certain level of organization and program offerings that you may take advantage of being the voice of green building in your community. This includes doing outreach to press, to homebuyers and homeowners, to other industry professionals, and to policymakers.

public outreach

NAHB Green includes a variety of promotional assistance materials, the first of which is a dynamic *Public Relations Toolkit*. The document gives HBA leaders a starting point for promoting association green building activities throughout the year and building recognition for NAHB Green and HBA members' involvement in the green building movement. Green builders are community leaders – and that is a great “white hat” story to tell to the media and the home buying public. The member communications tools also help inform HBA members about NAHB Green —why the HBA has chosen to sign on and how and why members should participate. Regularly informing members about NAHB Green and its flexibility and balance between resource efficiency and affordability will encourage them to take a closer look at the Green Scoring Tool and to begin integrating the suggested practices that make sense to them. From there, HBA staff can begin to develop case studies and other story ideas to not only gain earned media coverage for the association and members, but also to showcase successes to other members and bring more builders into the program.

The columns, press releases and fact sheet in the toolkit are designed for direct release from the HBA to local news media. To appeal to local audiences, HBAs can customize the articles to add data and other information particular to each association, community and green building program. One way that this can be accomplished is by putting a new green spin on the HBA's work and the success of its members. For example, an editor must perceive a newsworthy angle in each story to consider it for publication. Before getting started, HBAs should designate and then prepare spokesperson(s) with talking points. Green building spokespeople can sign up for Spokesperson Training at each of NAHB's three board meetings. HBAs can also help pave the way for publication of the articles by following some of these suggestions:



- Target the real estate, home and garden, business or news editors of the newspaper. Explain the observance or event that the HBA has planned and link the series of articles as a newsworthy educational component of the program.



- Suggest a special tabloid section to kick off a celebration of Energy Awareness Month in October, Earth Day in April or the HBA Parade of Homes. Supply the articles in the kit, as well as articles regarding special activities planned and featured houses that have been built as a part of the HBA green building program.
- Provide the editor with a list of member spokespeople to contact for additional information. Make sure to discuss this with the members first so they know to expect a call. Also make sure that members understand and respect the reporter's deadline and are willing to respond quickly to inquiries.

- Distribute news about the HBA green building program and any special events associated with it to Chamber of Commerce publications, employee publications of larger local industries, business trade publications and civic and fraternal organization publications. Remember that community magazines and local weekly and monthly publications may also be appropriate vehicles for the local association's green building message.
- Form partnerships with other organizations in the area that have an interest in green building. Builders are uniquely qualified to make important contributions by participating with community-based organizations and local governments in events, programs and new initiatives aimed at enhancing communities, promoting homeownership opportunities and applying environmentally-friendly building practices.
- Plan a housing forum that promotes green building and introduce the HBA participation in NAHB Green. A forum provides an opportunity for both public and industry leaders to examine the state of the local housing situation, residential energy consumption and local policy.

Planning a Green Expo Home

Consumers often perceive something very different from reality when they hear the term "green building." By planning a green expo house, HBAs can not only visibly clarify green building for consumers, but also highlight innovative and efficient technologies and building practices that the public and builders both will appreciate.

"A green expo house is a great tool because it shows the community that 'built green' can be a beautifully designed mainstream home," said Stacey Genzlinger, director of Member Events for the Olympia Master Builders in Olympia, Wash. "The perception is that if you want to build green, the house is going to look strange or be a straw bale structure."

Genzlinger's association built three expo houses that were toured over six weekends from March to May, 2005. The HBA employed a number of techniques and touches to make the event a success such as:

- Offering visitors a park and ride service to help ease the flow of people in and out of the neighborhood site.
- Completing two of the homes with full landscaping and furnishings and leaving one home with open space internally that allowed visitors to see the green features
- Featuring the innovations with signage and/or in program guides

While a lot of work goes into building a green expo house, even before groundbreaking, the rewards for your association and your membership can be tremendous.

- Set up individual interviews for your leadership with relevant members of the media. Use these opportunities to present green building as an important community issue and position the association as an authority on green building.
- Meet with state and local legislators to emphasize HBA leadership in green building and provide elected officials with background information on how the issue affects the community, and what builder and developer members are doing to provide information and solutions for residents and voters.

A Green Parade

More than 60 communities throughout the U.S. have green home building programs in place or in development. Many of those programs are integrated into the local HBA Parade of Homes. For example, the Green Built Home™ program in Madison, Wisconsin first incorporated green building into a 1999 Parade of Homes. By 2005, 13 of the 31 builders used green building practices.

“We went through the process of engaging builders and letting them know of the high prominence a green built home in our parade would have,” said Nathan Engstrom, Green Built program director for the Wisconsin Environmental Initiative, a nonprofit organization that has partnered with the local HBA on the green building program.

Engstrom said that promotional opportunities exist both during construction and afterwards, and that even suppliers can get in on the act by participating in garage exhibits that feature energy efficient appliances.

To get the most out of integrating green building into your Parade of Homes, Engstrom believes that it is essential to market and educate your builders. Some strategies Green Built Home uses to market and promote builders include:

- Educate sales staff, realtors and subcontractors
- Educate potential buyers
- Use your green building program logo throughout the Parade on literature, signage, etc. Display signage prominently.
- Market your Parade homes as green built homes.

HBA's have historically worked on outreach efforts such as a local Parade of Homes, local home building awards, and other promotional events. Now, many HBA's are dramatically expanding these efforts—and sometimes, breathing new life into them—by focusing on green building. A “green parade” provides numerous sponsorship opportunities, and can garner significant local interest for both media and potential home buyers. The National Green Building Awards can be promoted among local members, while complementary local events to celebrate national winners could be a large source of publicity, too.

The *Public Relations Toolkit*, which can be downloaded at www.nahb.org/greentoolkit includes information on: Hosting a Green Building Media Event, Integrating Green Building into your Parade of Homes, Capitalizing on Ready-made Media Opportunities, Adding a Green Building Section to the HBA Web site and finally, sample Ad Copy.

careful marketing

As your HBA and your members go green, it's important to be careful in promotional materials that the claims being made are ones that can be verified. It's advisable to exercise caution when touting the benefits of green building in general or the features of a green home. This poses a dilemma when we want to create market excitement about green. Some restraint, though, can ensure that the message is within appropriate bounds, while being appealing.

For example, each of the areas of green building (including those categorized by the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines and the upcoming National Green Building Standard) suggest some measurable benefit to green homes compared to standard construction. Many of these benefits are demonstrable (i.e., a percentage increase in energy efficiency by using a specific technology), but because many are dependent on proper homeowner operation and maintenance, they can not be guaranteed (i.e. builders should not promise consumers decreased energy bills). Others, such as the health benefits of certain indoor environments or the productivity benefits of daylight exposure, are less rigorously proven. As a consequence, care must be exercised in making any claims about green building—including the homes that are certified locally or by the NAHB Research Center; and any of the services offered by NAHB Green.

Acceptable statements include:

- Specific technologies or practices “may lead to” or “have been shown to” result in some home performance measure—like increased energy-efficiency. Please reference studies as much as possible, and make sure those studies are sound and that you quote them accurately.

Example: “Energy-related technologies and practices listed in the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines and the National Green Building Standard may increase your home’s energy-efficiency potential”

Unacceptable claims:

- Do not say that particular technologies or practices will lead to certain benefits to the homeowner or occupant beyond the technical performance. Do not claim a product or practice will result in a reduced electric bill or better health, because there is little or no way such a claim can be guaranteed or verified. There are many reports and publications that will make these claims, and you must exercise good judgment in reviewing and referencing them.

Examples: “Green homes provide healthier living environments” or “Certified homes will save an average of \$1,400 in utility bills per year.”

Using good judgment, you can create compelling promotional and press materials without mischaracterizing or making overstatements about green building. If you are unsure about the appropriateness of language or a specific claim, NAHB Green and Legal Services staff are available to offer guidance.

advocacy

NAHB has been at the forefront of advocating for voluntary, non-mandatory, market-driven green building at both the national and the local level in collaboration with state and local HBAs. To advance this work, NAHB Green created *Green Building Legislative Responses* (http://www.nahb.org/fileUpload_details.aspx?contentTypeID=3&contentID=84810&subContentID=124313), a guide to aid efforts to oppose state and local green building mandates.

Being proactive on this issue is preferable to being reactive. Green building is cropping up on political agendas at all levels of government and will likely be a topic of discussion in every jurisdiction in the near future. Whether an HBA is positioning itself ahead of this trend by creating a local green council or already facing onerous green building legislation, these materials will help structure these efforts. In addition to providing guidance on organizing HBA responses to proposed green building mandates, this resource helps raise awareness about this issue among the HBA membership. Builder and industry support are essential to successfully influence regulatory or legislative processes.

This guide is being updated with new releases and additional advocacy pieces based on changes that NAHB Green is witnessing in the policy arenas, as well as the technical changes from historic efforts such as the development of the National Green Building Standard. NAHB Green hopes to launch a listserv for green building efforts among HBAs soon so that staffers across the country compare notes and document best practices in legislation and program administration.

Collaborative Public Policy

In a unique public-private collaboration, the **Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties** partnered with King County and Snohomish County in creating Built Green™. King County offers free project management, priority processing, and technical assistance for home builders getting specific BuiltGreen certifications.

affiliation with NAHB Green

Both HBAs that choose to use the National Green Building Certification service as the local program platform and HBAs that choose to add it as an option under an existing program will be able to co-brand local identities with NAHB Green. If a local program uses the National Green Building Certification service exclusively, it will automatically be affiliated with NAHB Green. Existing HBA programs must meet two criteria in order to affiliate with NAHB Green. These programs must: 1) be using the Guidelines, Standard, or equivalent locally; and 2) have a credible third-party verification process. These criteria will be reviewed by a group composed of Federation members.

HBAs that affiliate with NAHB Green will have access to template brochures, ads and other collateral material that can be reproduced locally, as well as a host of promotional ideas and a list serve to share ideas with other program managers. They will also be able to co-brand with the program by using the NAHB National Green Building Program logos (see tools 2 and 3). Once affiliated, the HBA will be able to coordinate local outreach for the national program and will receive regular assistance for new efforts.

NAHB Green affiliates will agree to perform a variety of services including offering National Green Building Certification, and green educational opportunities for members. A full list of these will be available on the Affiliation Enrollment Form.

5. frequently asked questions

Answers for Home Building Professionals

what is nahb green?

NAHB Green is a program from the National Association of Home Builders that helps any builder, anywhere learn how to incorporate green building practices into their projects, certify the results, and communicate the benefits of doing so to their buyers. The program offers:

- design and technical assistance
- an online scoring tool so builders can gauge how green a planned home will be
- an accredited verifier network and national green building certification service
- green building education
- marketing and advocacy support

what is the green scoring tool and how does the national certification process work?

The Green Scoring Tool takes builders step-by-step through the design and construction process to select which green features to incorporate into their home plans. Although one doesn't need to certify a house to use the scoring tool, builders seeking certification can work with an accredited verifier, who confirms that all the specified green features are in place at rough-in and at project completion. Results can then be submitted to the NAHB Research Center, an accredited third-party certification agent. If the project passes review, the Research Center issues a certificate indicating that the house has reached one of the program's green thresholds.

what criteria does nahb green use to score homes?

NAHB Green is based on the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines, which were developed in 2005 for single-family homes. Soon, builders will also have the option of scoring homes to the 2008 National Green Building Standard™, which adds guidance for remodeling and multifamily construction; and suggests higher thresholds and new requirements in many existing categories. The Standard is under review by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), an organization whose approval ensures that a balanced committee vetted the criteria through a transparent and rigorous process; and that the result is unbiased toward any interests.

what types of projects can be certified?

Single-family homes can be certified Bronze, Silver or Gold. With the release of the National Green Building Standard, remodelors, multifamily builders and developers will also be able to score, verify and certify their projects. In addition to Bronze, Silver and Gold, the Standard adds an Emerald threshold to recognize projects that meet the highest achievement levels possible in green. Any home building professional, in any part of the country, regardless of NAHB membership, can use the National Green Building Certification service. Please note: the certification process must begin pre-drywall – verification can not be done retroactively.

who verifies and certifies projects?

The NAHB Research Center trains and certifies verifiers across the country who inspect builder score sheets, homes, and accompanying documentation to determine that projects meet the NAHB Green program benchmarks. When inspections are complete and the builder is satisfied with the resulting score, the verifier submits all necessary paperwork to the NAHB Research Center for review and certification.

how much does it cost?

The Green Scoring Tool and associated design and technical assistance are free to all home building professionals. Verification costs are set by individual verifiers and therefore, vary from market-to-market. The fee for NAHB members to certify homes is \$200 per home.

what are the benefits of using nahb green's national green building certification?

NAHB Green is a nationally recognized third-party certification program. National certification means, for example, that the bronze-level green home in Seattle is at least as energy efficient as a bronze home in Savannah, and a bronze home in St. Louis. It doesn't mean that they have the same features or that they even look the same. It means that they all meet a minimum, national level of performance. NAHB Green's online platform allows easy navigation through a variety of choices, allowing regionally appropriate green homes to be built at all price points.

what is a certified green professional (CGP) and what are its benefits?

The Certified Green Professional is a professional designation for individuals in the home building industry. A CGP designation allows those who hold it to distinguish themselves as having been trained in the fundamentals and best practices of sustainable residential construction. Designees have access to marketing materials and are included in an online database. The CGP is available to all home building industry professionals, including builders, subcontractors, architects and design professionals, as well as manufacturers and vendors. Earning a CGP entails passing two courses – *Green Building for Building Professionals* and *Business Management for Building Professionals*. A CGP designation is not required to certify homes with NAHB Green, although a CGP is one of the recognized prerequisites for becoming a verifier. Many local home builder associations are offering this course to their members. To find upcoming classes, contact NAHB's University of Housing.

how do I get started?

www.nahbgreen.org is the home for NAHB Green tools and resources, including the Green Scoring Tool, and is a great place to go for more information. In addition, many local home builder associations offer green building education and networking activities – and, some have local green building programs that use unique rating systems. By visiting the “Find a Local” tab on www.nahbgreen.org, you can learn more about what's going on locally and how it connects with NAHB Green.

Answers for Green Home Buyers

what is a green home?

A green home incorporates energy and water efficient products and practices; is constructed with renewable, recycled and/or more durable materials; and is designed for improved indoor air quality. Green building is a practical response to a variety of issues that affect all of us – including increasing energy prices, waning water resources, and changing weather patterns.

what is “nahb green” certification?

NAHB Green is a certification program from the National Association of Home Builders that allows home buyers to easily locate homes that have been built to nationally recognized green building criteria. Since many of the processes and technologies that go into a green home happen behind the scenes and behind the walls, the NAHB Green certification mark is an important identifier for buyers seeking more environmentally responsible homes. NAHB Green certification means, for example, that a bronze-level green home in Seattle is at least as energy efficient as a bronze home in Savannah and a bronze home in St. Louis. It doesn't mean that they have the same features or that they even look the same. It does mean that they all meet a minimum, nationally recognized level of performance.

why should I buy or build an nahb green certified home?

Potential benefits can include lower operating costs, reduced maintenance needs, and lifestyle and health improvements. The renewable, recycled, and more efficient building products used in green home construction can help to reduce a home's impact on the environment and natural resources. NAHB Green certified homes are inspected by trained experts and have the backing of an accredited certification agent, the NAHB Research Center. Additionally, NAHB Green homes are scored to the market-tested NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines. Soon, homes will be able to be scored to the 2008 National Green Building Standard™, the foremost green rating system for residential construction in the United States.

what is a certified green professional and what are the benefits of working with one?

A Certified Green Professional (CGP) is an individual in the home building industry who has been trained in the fundamentals and best practices of sustainable residential construction.

how can I find a green builder or certified green professional?

Your local home builders association (HBA) is a great resource. By using the “Find a Local Program” search function on www.nahbgreen.org, you will be able to locate local green building initiatives that are affiliated with NAHB Green. Certified Green Professionals can be found online at www.nahb.org/cgpinfo.

do green homes cost more?

Some green features do cost more, but there are also inexpensive ways to go green. Because some green components are less expensive to operate and may last longer, they can even pay for themselves over time! NAHB Green allows home buyers and builders to choose among dozens of options to achieve thresholds in seven key areas. This flexibility allows regionally-appropriate green homes to be built at any price point.

are there any financial incentives or rebates?

In addition to the many benefits of living in a green home, there are often financial incentives that can help make green homeownership even more affordable. www.dsireusa.org is a searchable web database for green building, energy efficiency and renewable energy incentive programs. You can research local utility and manufacturer rebates, or ask your builder about available offers.

tool 1: interest form

Pending review! In the meantime, please contact Emily English at 202-266-8366 or eenglish@nahb.com and initiate the process of becoming affiliated with NAHB Green and receive program materials.

tool 2: nahb green program mark agreement form

Pending Legal Review

To receive this tool, please check back soon!

tool 3: nahb green identity guidelines

Pending Legal Review

To receive this tool, please check back soon!

tool 4: contact info

staff contacts

For NAHB Green Affiliation or HBA Questions:

Emily English

eenglish@nahb.com

202-266-8366

For information on the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines or the National Green Building Standard

Kevin Morrow

kmorrow@nahb.com

202-266-8375

For the CGP Designation and Other Educational Opportunities:

Chad Riedy

criedy@nahb.com

202-266-8225

For the NAHB Green PR Toolkit and Related Services:

Calli Schmidt

cschmidt@nahb.com

202-266-8132

For the National Green Home Certification service from the NAHB Research Center:

Tom Kenney

tkenney@nahbrc.org

800-638-8556

For Verifier Training and Accreditation:

877-nahb-grn

web references

www.nahbgreen.org

www.nahbrc.org

www.toolbase.org

www.nahb.org

newsletters

To subscribe to the Green Building Update:

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