

THE LITTLE GREEN BOOK

GREEN RULES

— *to* —

LIVE BY FOR REALTORS®



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION *of*
REALTORS®

Members of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® are business people who earn their living through the sale and transfer of real property. Therefore, it only makes sense that we be active stewards of that which sustains our very livelihood. Moreover, as business people, it is natural that we would frame any discussion of the environment and energy in terms of financial costs and benefits – not only for our industry but, most of all, for our clients. As business people, we recognize that sustainable actions must make financial sense if these actions are to be widely embraced and fully implemented. It is a very real and increasingly important part of our job as professionals to help advise clients about how their choices can help the environment while, at the same time, saving them hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars in energy costs and usage.

This is what *The Little Green Book* is about – practical examples of how REALTORS® are being both good stewards of the environment and better business professionals.

Just as REALTORS® implemented monumental changes in how properties were bought and sold through honest and ethical business practices, today we can help do the same when it comes to taking better care of our planet. REALTORS® are making a difference for our industry, for our clients and for our environment.

This is truly what being a REALTOR® is all about.

STEVE BROWN, GREEN, ABR, CIPS, CRS, SRES

Steve served as President of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® in 2014. He is co-owner of Irongate Inc., REALTORS®, a full-service real estate company serving the Dayton, Ohio area with six offices and 350 affiliated agents. A selling broker, Steve has been recognized as a sales leader in his market for the past 40 years. As an active member of the REALTOR® Association for more than 25 years, Steve has served as President of both the Dayton Area Board of REALTORS® and the Ohio Association of REALTORS®. Steve is an advocate for green topics and championed the first ever 2014 NAR Environmental Summit.

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Energy efficiency topics and green concepts are no longer a fad or a thing of the future. More buyers are focused on purchasing energy-efficient homes, while sellers are interested in promoting the green features of their homes. Consumer preferences are also changing. Studies show consumers seek out the benefits provided by green homes – lower operating costs, increased indoor air and environmental quality, and durability.¹

The Little Green Book: Green Rules to Live By for REALTORS® focuses on the instructions, philosophies and rules members of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR) utilize to educate, list and support working with peers, service providers and clients on green issues. This guide was created with support from the NAR's Green REsource Council and input from hundreds of NAR members, including many members with NAR's Green Designation (we've noted next to the REALTORS® name if he or she has achieved this designation with the word GREEN). *The Little Green Book* includes tips that are presented in a fun, light-hearted way with realistic advice from REALTORS®. It's a great tool for new agents and seasoned professionals wanting to incorporate sustainability into their business.

¹The Value of Green Labels in the California Housing Market

This product is the third in the “Little Book” series, joining *The Little Blue Book: Rules to Live By for REALTORS®* and *The Little Red Book: Safety Rules to Live By for REALTORS®*. These products focus on instructions, philosophies and rules members of NAR utilize to be successful and stay safe in their real estate careers.

REALTORS® shared their tips to help other members adapt to changing markets. These tips are excellent conversation starters and can help you build your personal and professional green protocols.

The guide is divided into seven sections:

- GREEN PHILOSOPHIES
- WORKING WITH CLIENTS
- KEY GREEN DO’S AND DON’TS
- LISTING AND SELLING RESOURCE-EFFICIENT HOMES
- LAYERING GREEN INTO YOUR BUSINESS
- BEST ADVICE YOU’VE EVER RECEIVED
- SUMMING UP THE GREEN INDUSTRY

TIP: *Throughout this guide you’ll see that the rules in a light gray box have corresponding images.*

The Little Green Book: Green Rules to Live By for REALTORS® is a must-have for all NAR members. It includes lessons learned, along with tips and observations that can be used to achieve a successful future in real estate. It also takes a tongue-in-cheek approach to showing these tips “in practice,” with fun images designed just for this guide.

All instructions, principles, philosophies and tips have been supplied by your fellow REALTORS®. Utilize these tips to help guide your interactions with other members, clients, the public and business professionals. This booklet also provides you with a number of resources to help you work with buyers and sellers who want to buy and sell resource-efficient homes. It is up to you to determine which of these tips works best for your business. Please keep in mind that these tips are not all inclusive and may be supplemented by local custom or practice. This booklet should not be considered the advice of green experts – these tips are anecdotal and conversational in nature. These tips should not be used to replace the advice of a green expert. In addition, nothing in this booklet should be considered legal advice or be used in lieu of the advice of an attorney.

The term REALTOR® has one, and only one, meaning:

REALTOR® is a federally registered collective membership mark that identifies a real estate professional who is a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and subscribes to its strict Code of Ethics.

GREEN PHILOSOPHIES

Having a mantra or a philosophy can help guide your interactions, communications and business. Check out some of these green philosophies from members just like you:



The 3 “R”s: reduce, recycle, repurpose.

LORRA C., PORTLAND, OR, GREEN

Use it up, wear it out, make do or do without!

MARY S., MAMARONECK, NY, GREEN

When you go green, you save green.

TORI M., ATLANTA, GA

Help homeowners make choices to reduce their carbon footprint and to create a cleaner, healthier, more comfortable home.

MYLENE M., CARLSBAD, CA, GREEN

If there is a better way to do something, it should be done that way.
You can get more money; you cannot get another Earth.

MICHAEL H., LOUISVILLE, KY

Every small part that an individual plays affects the greater, more global outcome in sustainability.

JACQUELINE K., LOUISVILLE, KY, GREEN

Part of an agent’s job should be to help his or her buyers and sellers be as sustainable as possible in their homes.

TONI S., WHITEFISH BAY, WI, GREEN

Recycle and reuse, limit your footprint on the Earth and,
finally, teach others.

KERRY K., HEYWORTH, IL, GREEN

Aim to educate, emulate and lead by example in regard to being green.

NICOLAS W., GOSHEN, IN, GREEN

Do everything possible, from keeping things local
(e.g., food, materials, business) to doing things that have a global
impact, no matter how small.

COREY L, LAKE PLACID, NY, GREEN

Use wisely and reuse and recycle whenever possible. Don't take or
use more than you need.

CLARK R., SPARKS, NV, GREEN

Get involved and learn what energy efficiency is and isn't. For example,
many people think that solar is an energy efficiency when, in reality, it is an
energy source. While this makes our grid potentially more efficient, it does
not make our homes/buildings more efficient by itself.

PETE W., HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA, GREEN

WORKING WITH CLIENTS

Your rapport and ability to anticipate your clients' needs can be paramount to a successful deal and a successful real estate business. Whether or not you specialize in selling green homes, you're likely to meet clients who are interested in the benefits provided by sustainable living. Follow these rules to understand the resource-efficient needs of your clients to make all of your interactions with them successful:

Ask questions – and listen to the answers. It's a matter of education, cost vs. savings, the long-term value and possible consequences.

LORRA C., PORTLAND, OR, GREEN



Conduct an extensive interview with all of your clients that includes a green section to assess their current status of awareness. This will allow you to not only gauge their interest and expertise, but it will educate them in the process.

PHILLIP A., SALT LAKE CITY, UT, GREEN

Learning about sustainable practices and resources allows you to assist your clients as they make decisions that will produce long-term value for their homes or real estate investment.

DEBRA P., PERKINS UNION, NJ, GREEN

Emphasize efficiency as a benefit directly to the client first.
Emphasize environmental impact second.

MELISSA B., MORGANTOWN, WV

Listen to clients as they go through the home. If you see a better choice for energy efficiency that is also a healthy choice, make a suggestion and then listen to their response.

DIXIE W., BERRIEN SPRINGS, MI, GREEN

Discuss your clients' needs and wants in relation to construction and remodeling projects. Encourage them to have an energy audit done on their home in order to know where they stand and where they can save energy and money.

MICHAEL S., BRIGHTON, MI

Get an idea of how your clients live in their home. From there, offer simple suggestions and informational resources they could tap into that will help them make their home more efficient and, therefore, save money. This could be in the form of best practices or potential rebates they could tap in to.

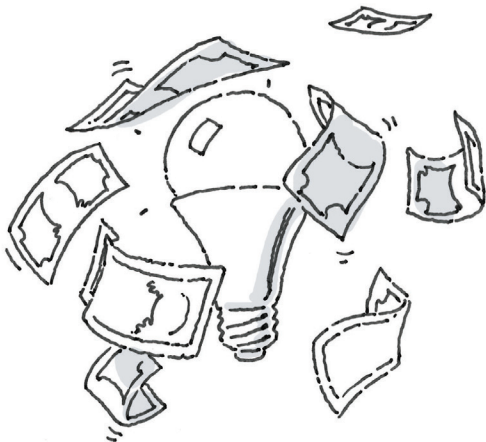
DANIEL G., SAN DIEGO, CA, GREEN

When representing buyers, point out possibilities for changes they could make that would make potential homes more energy efficient.

ANDREA W., KEY WEST, FL, GREEN

Clients may be able to get energy-saving materials like LED light bulbs from cities that offer energy-saving assessments or energy rebates.

CAREN O., PALM DESERT, CA, GREEN



Recommend an energy assessment to clients when they close. Also, keep them aware of any incentive programs that are available in your state.

COREY L., LAKE PLACID, NY, GREEN

Show clients how to estimate the costs and benefits of various green features with immediate payback. Be prepared to tell them where to go for more information on energy efficiency, indoor air quality and renewable energy products.

JULIA S., PORTLAND, ME, GREEN

Have them talk with their energy company for free energy-savings tips.

TORI M., ATLANTA, GA

Help clients look at home features that can make a difference. Look for trees that provide shading to a home. Look at the color of the roof. Look at the overhangs. All of these things make a difference in the cooling costs and overall comfort of your home.

CAMELIA V., ARCADIA, CA, GREEN

When homeowners talk about remodeling a home, offer ideas about different green concepts they could utilize in the remodel. Clients will often respond most to the inherent benefits of the feature or systems.

KIM M., SEATTLE, WA, GREEN

Be aware of appliance efficiency, windows, roof, shingles and the exterior envelope concept. Also share information about how to limit drafts in the home.

PAT C., LISLE, IL

Try to show the potential savings for buyers.

TAFFY H., CHESTER, NJ, GREEN



Check with your local utility company to see if they offer a free service to homeowners. They can come to the home with energy-efficient products to help the homeowner save money; these can include light bulbs, shower heads and thermostats.

PAM D., HIGHLAND PARK, IL, GREEN

Know what green features your home includes – the cost differences and benefits. Document it and make that information available when selling.

PATRICIA K., GREEN BAY, WI, GREEN

Look for state and federal rebates and incentives at the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency®.

LAURA S., ELMHURST, IL, GREEN

Do think outside the box in making green decisions by being aware that they go beyond recycling or buying energy-efficient appliances. Do share your experiences on green choices with clients and fellow professionals.

COLIN M., ASHLAND, OR, GREEN



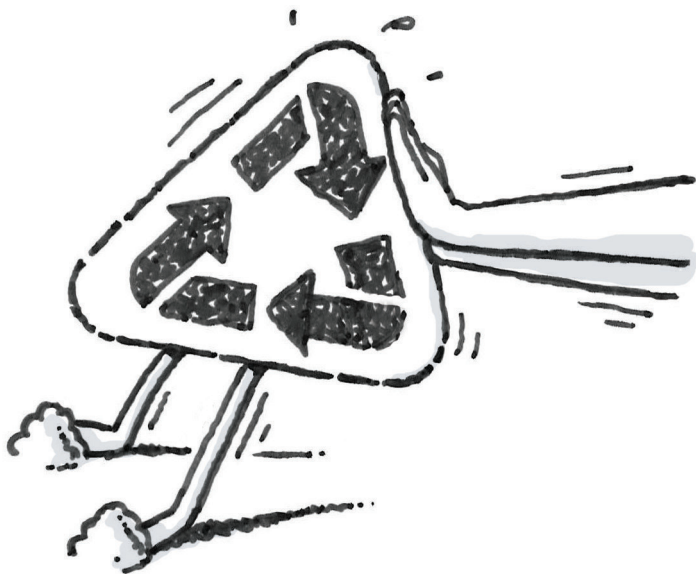
KEY GREEN DO'S AND DON'TS

Knowing what you should and shouldn't do in any given situation can mean the difference between success and failure. Understanding sustainability concepts and what it means to be green may be your passion, but it may not be right for your clients. Agents need to be a step ahead and always listen to what consumers want. Here are some key do's and don'ts of being green:

DO:

Do reuse building materials whenever possible. Deconstruction and reuse should be the first consideration. Do spend the money up front on energy savings, such as insulation and window and weather stripping. The payback time is short on these.

KIM M., SEATTLE, WA, GREEN



Do ask your clients if green is part of their belief system. Then attempt to educate them if they show interest. Do ask. Don't push.

JANE C., FORT LAUDERDALE, FL, GREEN

Do what you can when and where you can. This isn't a sprint, it's a long-distance run. If a few little things become habit, you can make it part of your lifestyle. Every little bit counts.

SCOTT W., LAS VEGAS, NV, GREEN

Do get your NAR Green Designation.

JULIE H., INVER GROVE HEIGHTS, MN, GREEN

Do get an energy audit on your home and an itemized plan for making it more efficient. Do seek out information at utility companies for rebates and programs. Do get the whole family involved. If you are building new, do consider certifying your home using a green rating system. Do start small and go one step at a time.

THOMAS S., STATE COLLEGE, PA, GREEN

Do ask yourself if there is a better, cleaner, less resource-intensive way.

MARK W., PORTLAND, OR, GREEN

Do something, big or small. If someone is going to do some actual retrofit work, start with buttoning up the building envelope. ALWAYS air seal before you insulate. Take advantage of all government rebates and incentives to “get your taxes back.” Do set goals before starting. Do get an energy audit as a first step.

JAMES M., FORT COLLINS, CO, GREEN

Do think outside the box in making green decisions by being aware that they go beyond recycling or buying energy-efficient appliances. Do share your experiences on green choices with clients and fellow professionals. Don't assume a product is green based purely on labeling. Look closer to see what and how much of the product is produced using green manufacturing.

COLIN M., ASHLAND, OR, GREEN

Do include your green knowledge in your listing package. Always keep a list of green networking partners to help provide your clients with resources. Stay current on green technologies so you can share this information with your clients.

CAMELIA V., ARCADIA, CA, GREEN

Do emphasize positive green solutions that will save both energy and money for your clients in the long run, while potentially increasing the value of their home.

MAURICE K., SAN ANTONIO, TX, GREEN

Do set an example. Don't make excuses for not being green.

DOUG V., SANTA BARBARA, CA, GREEN

Do ask for information from your builders/developers. They can be a wealth of information regarding innovation and technology resources related to green living.

CAROL M., MAUMEE, OH

DON'T:

Don't assume your clients are interested in hearing about the green features of a property. Some people are misinformed of the benefits of green features and sustainable practices and, therefore, may be biased against them. Ask in the initial interview or soon after if they are interested in hearing about them.

DONALD A., JACKSON, WY, GREEN



Don't be a waster. Do be a green ambassador by promoting alternative energy solutions.

JILL H., TEMECULA, CA

Don't overstate or over promise resources (e.g., do not say a home can be dust free just because there isn't any carpet). Don't over promise energy reduction with specific upgrades (e.g., adding extra insulation will drop your bill by X dollars per month or X percent per month). Stating a more general approach can help prevent unrealistic expectations.

JAN G., SCOTTSDALE, AZ, GREEN

Don't focus on the short-term expense. Do think beyond and see long-term benefits to the environment and savings.

RITU S., SAN DIEGO, CA

LISTING AND SELLING RESOURCE-EFFICIENT HOMES

The latest environmentally friendly home features aren't just good for the planet – they look great, improve home performance and are a huge draw for buyers. Consumers have gravitated to the idea that they can help the Earth and their pocketbook by making smarter purchases and lifestyle decisions. Making green benefits tangible and relevant to your clients can be pivotal to a transaction. Use these tips to help set your listings apart:

Have all of the information available for buyers as to what makes this home a green home, as well as the benefits to them.

CAROL M., MAUMEE, OH

Work with an MLS that has adopted energy- and water-efficiency features into the fields. If this isn't possible, then make it very clear to call out the specific resource-efficient features in the remarks/comments section of the listing, as well as in the photo descriptions and on all marketing materials.

DANIEL G., SAN DIEGO, CA, GREEN



Focus on environmental items for your region. A/C efficiency matters less in a cold climate.

BLAKE H., PENN VALLEY, CA

Focus on energy efficiency. Have sellers write up descriptions of important energy-saving appliances and home features, since their words can best describe the details, and add it to the list of the home features.

HOLLY H., COPPELL, TX

Know the products and partnerships (i.e., energy raters, inspectors and appraisers, and building partners) who understand the options for energy-efficient building envelopes.

MEL H., FORT WORTH, TX, GREEN

Fully describe the home's efficient appliances, windows and insulation, what direction the home faces, the yard composition, etc. in the remarks.

KARIN D., AUSTIN, TX, GREEN

Advertise green and energy efficiency as desirable features of the home. When your MLS designates a green option field, learn it and use it to the fullest.

LORRA C., PORTLAND, OR, GREEN

LAYERING GREEN INTO YOUR BUSINESS

Educating yourself on green topics and resources won't help your business unless you actually put them into practice. Here is how other REALTORS® have incorporated sustainability principles into their business:

Consistently post green tips and articles on social media and in e-newsletters, electronic post cards, magazines, etc. Try to live the values of a green lifestyle.

PHILLIP A., SALT LAKE CITY, UT, GREEN

Use your NAR Green Designation logo on all correspondence and attend relevant meetings to let people know that it is your area of expertise.

COREY L., LAKE PLACID, NY, GREEN

Use email for documents and digitally sign more often to reduce paper. Clients are more often appreciative of this.

JANE R., GREENVILLE, NC, GREEN



Highlight green home features in your marketing materials, and have backup facts and documents ready to verify your claims.

ALLYSON B., DANBURY, CT, GREEN

It is very important to integrate the green aspects when showing a property. Mention them in the landscape when entering a property, pointing out energy-efficient appliances and solar energy powered elements.

MARIA ELENA N-L., BOCA RATON, FL

Start a self-published monthly e-newsletter that includes a single green topic of the month, along with a green tip and a cool green home. Getting a large subscriber list for the e-newsletter allows the recipients to embrace the tips and examples it provides.

DAVE S., FORT COLLINS, CO, GREEN

Put a section on your real estate website with links to green resources (local and national), along with green articles that cover a sustainable lifestyle with everyday advice.

DAVID P., DARIEN, CT, GREEN

Work with your office to continuously eliminate as much paper as possible. Use green cleaning products and keep thermostats at 68° in the winter and 74° in the summer.

KIMBERLY P., TRAVERSE CITY, MI, GREEN

BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED

Hindsight is 20/20. Having the support of seasoned professionals with sage wisdom and advice can really help you succeed. Whether you are a seasoned professional or just starting out, following a well-traveled path can help lead you to your green goals more quickly. We asked our members to share the best advice they've ever received and here are some of the most useful insights:

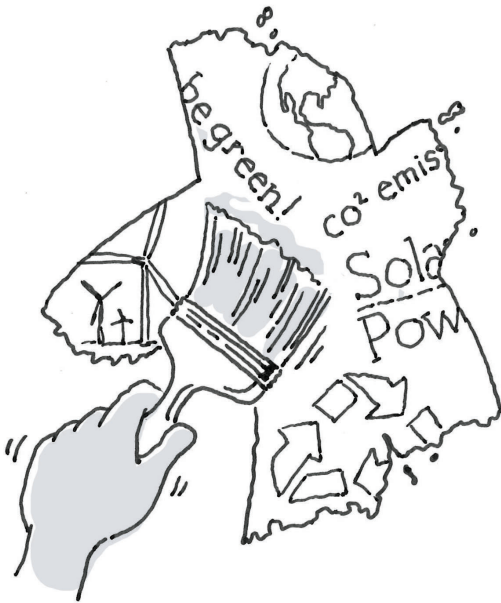
Be part of a solution. The buildings we live and work in are responsible for 40% of U.S. power consumption. Real estate agents have a huge opportunity to convey the value of more energy-efficient properties to the public. Lowering your clients' operating costs and environmental impact, as well as living in a more comfortable and a healthier space, is a win/win.

CRAIG F., SOMERVILLE, MA, GREEN

Energy Information Administration <http://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=86&t=1>

Being green does not have to be costly. And don't underestimate the savings garnered from smart design choices.

KENNETH G., MARSHALL, VA, GREEN



Don't paint green or sustainability with a broad brush for fear of greenwashing. Try not to sound preachy when you speak with others about sustainability. Try to meet people where they are.

JACQUELINE K., LOUISVILLE, KY, GREEN

Learn about the benefits to home buyers and sellers of having green upgrades and improvements in a home in terms of lower utility bills and resale value.

DANA S., BETHESDA, MD, GREEN

Educate yourself on green living and try to have some understanding of all the different products out there. Check out energy efficiency and green websites.

DONNA B., WOODSTOCK, GA, GREEN

Get the proper home testing or energy audit before making any statements as to energy savings or what will save someone money.

IAN G., SCOTTSDALE, AZ, GREEN

Electronic technology such as DocuSign saves so much time, trees and heavy files!

JOSIE L., OXNARD, CA



SUMMING UP THE GREEN INDUSTRY

Developments in the green arena and meeting the growing needs of clients should be top priorities for all real estate agents looking for success and longevity in real estate. Here are some comments that summarize sustainability in the real estate industry:

Green real estate is the wave of the future. Smaller, energy efficient, and healthier interior and exterior environments for people and wildlife will become the norm, not the exception, in the next 10 years.

DONALD A., JACKSON, WY, GREEN

Everything old is new again. When you improve a home and make it energy efficient, you are repurposing it to last for another lifetime.

PAT E., PORTLAND, OR, GREEN

As buyers and sellers become more aware of environmental conservation vs. consumption, it is easier to grow this aspect of our industry. But we still have so much more we could do to improve.

ERICA B., BALTIMORE, MD



Give the choices you make just a little extra thought. Sometimes that's all it takes to make what can be a very painless change for the better.

LYNDA D., DEPERE, WI, GREEN

Going green is not some crazy fad. Sustainable living is vital to our future and, as real estate agents, we are in a position to influence positive change and move away from a disposable society.

MICHAEL F., WEST BOYLSTON, MA

People's understanding of being energy efficient is getting better, but not enough people see the connection between their wallets and more efficient homes, and the benefits to our environment. Being green doesn't have to be expensive.

ELLIE B., CAMBRIDGE, MA, GREEN

The future of real estate is green!

JAMES B., HOUSTON, TX, GREEN

This is the tip of the iceberg. There is tremendous need for more education among clients AND real estate professionals. Those who enter early into the field will have a distinct advantage.

NICHOLAS W., GOSHEN, IN, GREEN

Resource efficiency is definitely a priority for many clients. There are many advantages and benefits that will help to improve how families and communities live.

NORKA Z., CLERMONT, FL, GREEN

Change is happening slowly. There are great initiatives locally, nationally and worldwide. We can always be part of the change.

ALI A., GLENDALE, AZ, GREEN

We can do much better. High-efficient buildings and home products should be the norm, not the exception. The general public needs to be better educated on the opportunities available to them.

MICHAEL F., WEST BOYLSTON, MA

Boundless! So much momentum everywhere you look – fueled by millennials.

LAURA S., ELMHURST, IL, GREEN

#nichefornow

JAMES M., FORT COLLINS, CO, GREEN

#nichefornow



RESOURCES

There are a number of resources and additional tools from the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, the Green REsource Council and the NAR Green Designation that members can use in their real estate business to become more informed. Below is a list of those resources, but new tools are added frequently to the Green REsource Council website, so visit often for the latest information.

REALTOR® Sustainability Program

<http://www.nar.realtor/sustainability>

NAR's Green REsource Council and Green Designation

*<http://www.greenresourcecouncil.org/>
GreenDesignation@realtors.org*

NAR Smart Growth Program

<http://www.nar.realtor/topics/smart-growth/>

NAR Library – Sustainability eBooks & Field Guides

<http://www.nar.realtor/library> and search Resource Efficiency

REALTOR Benefits® Program Partners DocuSign and zipLogix™

<http://www.nar.realtor/RealtorBenefits/DocuSign>

<http://www.nar.realtor/RealtorBenefits/zipLogix>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Be sure to also check out these resources for additional information about sustainability.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

<https://www.epa.gov>

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

<https://www.doe.gov>

ENERGY STAR®

<https://www.energystar.gov/>

U.S. Green Building Council® (USGBC)

<http://www.usgbc.org/>

Residential Energy Service Network (RESNET®)

<http://www.resnet.us/>

GreenHome Institute

<https://greenhomeinstitute.org/>

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- Working with Clients
- Key Green Do's and Don'ts
- Listing and Selling Resource-Efficient Homes
- Layering Green into Your Business
- Best Advice You've Ever Received
- Summing Up the Green Industry



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