

Education Needs

Education is needed to get Federal officials at all levels—top executives, middle management, headquarters, regional and field staff, and contractors—trained, motivated, and involved in implementing actual green building procedures.

Often, green building is considered an exotic “add-on” program, rather than part of an agency’s mainstream budgeting, contracting, and other procedures. This creates the perception that green building is “extra credit” rather than a requirement or a worthwhile opportunity. Employees may believe that they are more likely to be punished rather than rewarded for taking risks on a new, green technology—and in some cases, that may be true. Even where environmental design is seen as a requirement, staff often lack adequate resources, tools, and training to get it done right. Some staff have received big picture sustainability training, which may motivate them, but lack the nitty-gritty technical training required to figure out the basic architectural and engineering problems involved in making buildings more healthy and efficient. Furthermore, a lack of detailed case studies makes it hard to pass on lessons learned.

As in other institutional frameworks, Federal government agencies often fail to take advantage of existing knowledge and tools to improve design and implementation of environmentally responsible design processes. The most effective means to deliver the existing knowledge and facilitate its use by Federal government facilities development staff must be identified.