



SMALL BUSINESS & NONPROFIT CLINIC

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**Green Standards**

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The United States does not currently have one unified standard for whether something is environmentally friendly, or “green.” Instead, there are many different standards that have been established by a variety of entities. Below are a few of the more familiar standards which can be relevant to businesses and/or nonprofit organizations.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also has a searchable database of green standards – which was developed so that people could find out more information about the environmental qualities of products and services purchased by the government – located at <http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/guidance/standards.htm>.

Cradle to Cradle (<http://www.mbdc.com/c2c/>): A standard administered by McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry (MBDC) in Charlottesville, Virginia, the C2C certification identifies companies that, instead of developing and manufacturing products which end up in landfills due to their lack of recyclability (a “cradle-to-grave” product cycle), go “cradle-to-cradle” by using chemicals, materials, and processes to produce products that are perpetually recyclable.

EcoLogo (<http://www.ecologo.org>): a North American program featuring “multi-attribute environmental standard[s] and certification mark[s].” Uses a stringent multi-criteria process to certify as environmentally responsible more than 7,500 products (including office furniture, cleaners, paper, and even things like shampoo and bed & breakfasts) and services (printing services, office facilities, packaging, and motels).

Energy Star (<http://www.energystar.gov/>): Energy Star is a partnership between the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). It has established standards for products which meet “strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and U.S. Department of Energy.” Consumers and



homeowners are very familiar with Energy Star as it relates to energy-efficient homes and appliances, but Energy Star also works with businesses too. The partnership offers a proven energy management strategy that helps in measuring current energy performance, setting goals, tracking savings, and rewarding improvements. The EPA also recognizes top energy-efficient buildings with the Energy Star.

### The Forest Stewardship Council

(<http://www.fscus.org>): FSC has its own standard for well-managed or responsibly-harvested forests, and the wood that is produced as a result, which can be used in paper or building materials. Also certifies commercial printing facilities.



Green Advantage (<http://www.greenadvantage.org/>): Green Advantage offers an environmental certification for building-related practitioners (contractors, subcontractors and tradespeople). Certified individuals have successfully passed the Green Advantage Certification Exam demonstrating knowledge of current green building principles, materials, and techniques.

### Green-e (<http://www.green-e.org/>):

Green-e offers certification and verification of renewable energy and greenhouse gas mitigation products – this includes energy sources like wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal. Businesses, organizations, and events that purchase enough Green-e Energy Certified renewable energy (or generate power themselves) can license the Green-e logo for use in communications materials, advertising, and on-product packaging through Green-e Marketplace. Administered by the Center for Resource Solutions (<http://www.resource-solutions.org>).



Green Nonprofits (<http://www.greennonprofits.org>): This organization serves as a resource for greening your nonprofit organization, as well as providing certification to nonprofit members that implement approved practices in their workplaces (such as buying recycled paper, reducing mailings sent to donors, and getting rid of Styrofoam). By doing so the nonprofit earns “points;” at 100 points the organization is officially Green Nonprofit-certified for two years. Membership costs \$55 for individuals and \$125 for institutions. Nonprofits who do not wish to join can download the certification handbook at <http://www.jolera.com/greennonprofits/2008%20Green%20Nonprofit%20Certification%20Program.pdf>, which includes a long list of practices to improve environmental efficiency.



Green Seal (<http://www.greenseal.org>): Green Seal provides science-based environmental certification standards. Green Seal certifies a range of products, including commercial cleaning services, home cleaning products, hand soaps, papers, and hotels. The Seal identifies a product as environmentally preferable, provides third-party corroboration of environmental claims, and distinguishes a product from competitors that can't support their environmental assertions.

International Organization for Standardization (<http://www.iso.org>): Based in Geneva, Switzerland, ISO is a non-governmental organization (NGO) which develops international standards for businesses, governments and society in general. There are two ISO standards which correlate to environmental issues. ISO 14004:2004 provides guidelines on the elements of an environmental management system and its implementation, and discusses principal issues involved, while ISO 14001:2004 specifies the requirements for such an environmental management system. Their web site also addresses benefits of compliance with these standards.

United States Green Building Council (<http://www.usgbc.org>): The USGBC has established the "LEED" standard (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for design, construction and operation of high-performance buildings which are environmentally responsible and healthy places to work. Recognizes performance in five key areas: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. Besides homes, schools, and neighborhood development, LEED certification is also available in the following commercial categories: interiors; new construction; core & shell; and existing buildings operation and maintenance.