



## GBA BACKGROUND

See [www.gbapgh.org](http://www.gbapgh.org)

Pittsburgh-based Green Building Alliance (GBA) is a seven person, nonprofit organization that works to improve the health, economic, environmental and community impacts of new and existing development in Greater Pittsburgh through the integration of green building practices into the regional market. The organization spearheaded efforts to position the region at the vanguard of the national market shift towards green building. The region lays claim to many buildings that are the first of their type to be certified: historic building, warehouse, university residence hall, banking facility, convention center. Western Pennsylvania has over 50 green projects underway and, until June 2005, Pittsburgh had more square feet of certified green building than any other city. Over the past two years, Pittsburgh has been cited for its green building leadership in *The Economist*, *Fortune*, *USA Today* and *New York Times*.

Early on, GBA recognized a powerful opportunity to drive the regional market by greening the new convention center, the largest public project in recent history and a cornerstone of the region's downtown renaissance. Beginning in 1998, GBA assisted the Southwestern Pennsylvania Convention Center Design Commission in planning an international design competition, the first design competition for a civic building in Pittsburgh since H. H. Richardson's landmark 19th-century Allegheny County Courthouse. The competition used sustainability along with functionality and aesthetics as judging criteria. Viñoly's design was the unanimous winner of the competition and has been widely acclaimed for its seamless integration of green features with the many other excellence requirements. GBA subsequently received a multiyear grant from The Heinz Endowments to assist the owner with activities to assess and implement cost effective green strategies.

Through its current programs, GBA undertakes a range of services to help the region benefit from green building, including public policy assistance, facilitation of performance data collection, client-focused advice and tools, a Green Building Fund, a web based clearinghouse, a variety of education events and several publications.

Starting in 1997, the organization adopted a strategic approach to driving market demand through the education of progressive-thinking decision makers within the commercial sector. In order to meet the demand resulting from these efforts, GBA began providing a variety of educational opportunities for building professionals.

GBA began in 1993 as a cooperative effort among four environmental groups to promote more environmentally sensitive building practices. The early activities of GBA were focused on coalition building and the education of self-motivated professionals. In 1997, the Howard Heinz Endowments recruited Rebecca Flora to be GBA's first executive director. The Endowments also provided start-up funding to create a professionally staffed organization to actively promote green building and expand the existing coalition's impact.

GBA's green offices are located on Pittsburgh's South Side. For further information on the GBA, call 412-431-0709 or visit the website at [www.gbapgh.org](http://www.gbapgh.org)