



We are making high-performing buildings the new normal in DC-area real estate

Challenge

Washington DC and the surrounding region has ambitious climate policies, particularly with respect to buildings and clean energy, but the commercial real estate industry needs resources and connections to achieve them. Major challenges include high costs, limited funding and financing for green retrofits, a shortage of skilled labor knowledgeable in new policies and building performance practices, and the overall complexity of regulations. In general, the industry is conservative, and risk-averse, which can sometimes hinder innovation and cross-sector collaboration.

Overview

The Building Innovation Hub (Hub) helps building industry professionals in and around Washington, DC create and operate high-performing buildings. We connect ambition with action.

Our goal for the Hub is to meet the current needs of the building industry while simultaneously pushing it towards high-performing buildings. To do this, we provide resources and connections to make it easier to act, and to help building owners, operators, designers, contractors, and tenants improve their buildings. We highlight market leaders, educate decision-makers on rising trends, assist in making critical connections, clarify regulatory requirements—such as those from DC’s Building Energy Performance Standards and new local building codes—and break down barriers to making building improvements with sustained impact. Through this work, we help ensure the District remains a highly competitive market and a leader in sustainable and equitable building practices.



Our Program

Our current focus is:

- **Connecting building owners and managers with qualified contractors and funding/ financing** resources through our online database and through interactive trainings. Our **Funding & Financing Map** helps identify available options that are right for each project, and our **Find-a-Vendor** tool helps distribute job opportunities to a wider pool of local vendors.
- **Building awareness and providing education** across all building industry professionals, from design conception through operations. This is challenging in a highly segmented industry, and while some team members might be savvy about high-performance building practices, it typically does not extend through all involved parties. See our **Building Industry Playbook** for actions various building industry professionals can take.
- **Building economic inclusion and opportunity** for smaller, disadvantaged contractors and businesses that serve buildings in DC by partnering with like-minded groups. There is a need for more specialized, skilled labor in all facets of project development and delivery, which impacts both the “supply” side of the industry’s job market and the “demand” side. Our **Service Procurement Guide** helps project managers navigate the process as it relates to high-performing buildings. We also advocate for embedding social considerations into the procurement process. Our priority is to build on this in the next year with leaders in training and economic development, including Emerald Cities Collaborative’s DC BEPS Incubator for mid-career professionals, and Prosperity Now’s Accelerator for entrepreneur-serving organizations.
- **Simplifying regulatory complexity.** There is a complicated web of regulatory requirements and approval processes for owners and practitioners to navigate. Our resources include plain language explanations of DC’s **Building Energy Performance Standards**, recent **code changes** in DC, and where the **two intersect**.
- **Showing what works.** It is hard to change long-held business practices and the perceived risk of innovation. See our **case studies and BEPS interviews from the field** to learn about what market leaders are already doing in the area.
- **Increasing our support of the Maryland and Virginia building industries**, by expanding to serve buildings and professionals doing business in various jurisdictions. We are currently in the process of developing a green building career map for the region. However, we seek to also create resources and convene experts to support buildings in understanding the various regional BEPS and code requirements, connect to more partners, and implement high-performance retrofits.

Take Action

To join us in this critical work, consider becoming a Hub member or sponsor. You can contact Ashawnda Fleming (Ashawnda@imt.org) for more information on the variety of ways to partner with the Hub.