

Six Ways REALTORS® Can Observe Earth Day

☒ Citizens of the Pacific Northwest are renowned for a commitment to living green, whether we're walking our kids to school or composting our kitchen scraps.

How can REALTORS® do their part in maintaining the clean, natural beauty that makes our region such a joy to inhabit? In observance of Earth Day (April 22), we've compiled six ideas for real estate professionals who may be looking for ways to be a little more Earth-friendly.

1. Educate yourself!

In the RMLS™ region, educating yourself about sustainability can easily translate into more business. Consider earning a Green Designation from the National Association of REALTORS®—to celebrate Earth Day, in April they're offering 25% off the course bundle. Or consider taking a course from Earth Advantage Institute, who trains real estate professionals to market and sell green homes.

2. Encourage clients to make energy efficiency upgrades in their homes.

Energy-efficient homes can mean lower utility bills, rebates, tax credits, and more! Energy-efficient homes are also much less likely to go into default, and are highly desirable to home buyers.

3. Consider everyday business practices.

Real estate can generate a lot of paper, other waste, and require a lot of travel. Could you send a PDF rather than printing out a client report? Print marketing materials on recycled paper with soy-based (rather than petroleum-based) inks? Reducing or batching car trips is another tactic that's good for both the planet and your business—less money spent on

gas means more money in your pocket! And if you're one of the northwest's many coffee fiends, bringing a reusable mug to your morning java joint is one of the easiest ways to reduce landfill waste.

4. Attend sustainability-minded conferences.

The Better Living Show in Portland is a great place to learn about sustainable products for the home and garden. Likewise, GoGreen is a meeting of sustainability oriented businesspersons, with yearly events in both Portland and Seattle. These events also offer a great opportunity to hear about like-minded vendors and network with potential clients!

5. Take care of green infrastructure in your community.

RMLS™ is contacted regularly by government staff members hoping to reach out to REALTORS® about community facilities. You may not be familiar with green street facilities, multi-use paths/bikeways, and other green infrastructure, but they're important to the health of the community! They provide community benefits such as reducing traffic congestion, absorbing on-street floods, and providing a more livable community. When you encounter these facilities, avoid disrupting them by placing for sale signs in the public way, as we advised in this recent article about buying and selling a house with green street facilities.

6. Be a recycling resource.

People who are moving from one house to another will have stuff they need to get rid of. Brokers can help clients by providing resources for recycling or reusing goods. Thrift stores, Freecycle, or non-profits such as Dress for Success can utilize clothes and other household goods. Many (but not all) charities accept car donations. Local governments can put people in touch with companies that recycle nearly anything (Clark County and Metro, for example).

There are plenty of ways you can help keep our region's environment healthy—all it takes is the choice to do so. If

you're interested in cultivating environmentalism in real estate and you're a member of the Portland Metro Association of REALTORS®, consider getting involved with their sustainability committee—or start one at your REALTOR® association!

Do you have any Earth-friendly tips for fellow REALTORS®?