

Green Building Case Study

American YouthWorks



American YouthWorks (AYW), formerly American Institute for Learning (AIL), is unique in its approach to helping youth and adults complete their education, prepare for employment, and improve their life skills. Completed in early 2000, the design goal for the new classroom and administration facility was to be the most sustainable school and office building in Austin. Throughout the design process energy efficiency and indoor air quality were stressed.

Green Building features in the project:

- The building's roof is 85% solar reflective to minimize cooling load.
- The building is oriented on an east/west axis to maximize daylighting, minimize sun exposure, and add volume efficiency.
- A combination of low-e windows with sun-shading devices for south-facing windows and electronic ballasts with T-8 lamps allows for day-lit offices and classrooms while minimizing solar heat gain and cooling loads.
- The building's breezeway is often used as an outdoor classroom, for student or staff gatherings, class projects and workspace, and a variety of other uses.
- Recycled and renewable materials and finishes were used throughout the building including recycled steel framing, recycled content ceiling tiles, sunflower seed panels used in wainscot, and reused salvaged doors.
- The concrete used contains 40% flyash, a waste product from coal burning power plants.
- No or low VOC paints used throughout.
- A student-run vegetable and herb garden creates a perimeter around the parking lot, acts as a natural vision barrier, grows organic produce, and adds vital green space to its urban surroundings.
- Materials were also chosen to increase indoor air quality and reduce the need for pesticides including the recycled brick façade with HardiPlank above, Solenium resilient flooring, and stained concrete floors.

Located at 4th and Brazos, American YouthWorks is within walking distance to public transportation and is a thriving part of downtown Austin. By encouraging students and staff to carpool and use alternative forms of transportation, AYW helps to dramatically reduce the amount of automobile traffic and air pollution in Austin's central business district.

American YouthWorks' philosophy of energy efficiency and use of environmentally friendly materials and practices is not only evident in its facility, but also an integral part of its educational practices with the young people who are a part of the program. Through the Casa Verde Builders and Green Builders programs, participants build single-family, energy-efficient, affordable housing throughout Austin.