

Augment Your Texas Real Estate License with EcoBroker Certification

In 2007, MSN named Austin, Texas, as one of the Top 10 Greenest Cities in America. Austin Energy has the greenest power grid in the country, the city leads the nation in wind and bio-diesel production, and is a hotbed for start-up companies developing green technologies. Among other city initiatives, they aim to increase energy efficiency in any new construction by 75%, and have all new single-family homes be energy neutral (meaning they produce as much energy as they use) by 2015. Now it is more important than ever for real estate professionals to have the skills and resources to support their eco-conscious clients. One way to augment your Texas real estate license is to become EcoBroker Certified®.

What is it? Founded in 2002, EcoBroker is the first and largest provider of green designation training. The program is overseen by the Association of Energy and Environmental Real Estate Professionals and provides education on energy and environmental issues, and strategies for capitalizing on the growing green market.

What are the benefits? There are several reasons to obtain this designation. First and foremost, as there are no other national programs that offer this kind of training, the EcoBroker Certification is an excellent way to distinguish yourself from thousands of other real estate agents in Texas. Continuing education is essential to the real estate profile, and its important to focus on topics that are relevant. Environment issues like mold, radon, water quality, and others create liabilities for both yourself and your client. Educating yourself about these potential challenges, and other topics that are pertinent in today's green market, will give you a competitive advantage.

Help sellers understand that green features increase the value of their home and learn how to best market them. Help buyer's find those homes that satisfy their growing desire for an energy efficient and environmentally friendly home. EcoBroker also provides tools like energy efficient mortgages that help buyers create more purchasing power. With both the buyer and seller, you will be bale to work through environmental issues and improve on the efficiency and cost of a home. In short, you will improve customer satisfaction by enhancing each transaction with training and tools from EcoBroker.

Finally, you can increase your business by identifying new buyers and sellers, and will expand your network of professional resources and referrals.

How do I do it? You do not have to be a broker to get certified, the designation is available to all real estate professionals. To obtain the EcoBroker Certification, you must complete the required amount of coursework. These courses are Texas Real Estate Commission approved for 18 hours of Mandatory Continuing Education elective credit or can be used toward obtaining your broker's license. The three six-hour courses are: EcoBroker Environmental Advantage™, EcoBroker Energy Advantage™, and EcoBroker Green Market Advantage™. The Austin Institute of Real Estate offers these courses via live sessions or online. The initial cost varies slightly, but the yearly EcoBroker membership fee is \$129 and includes a four-hour continuing education course each year.

Environmental and energy issues drive the current real estate market in Austin, Texas. Consider the EcoBroker Certification a valuable supplement to your Texas real estate license allowing you to provide additional benefits to your clients.

About the Author

Helen Walker. Get your EcoBroker Certification at [The Austin Institute of Real Estate](http://www.austininstituteofrealestate.com). They provide online real estate classes, correspondence real estate classes, and live real estate classes for credit towards a [Texas real estate license](http://www.texasrealestate.com).

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