

# Truist Perspectives

magazine

The background of the page features a dynamic, abstract design composed of numerous curved, overlapping lines in shades of purple, blue, and white. These lines create a sense of motion and depth, resembling a stylized galaxy or a whirlpool. They form the main visual element behind the text blocks.

Women and wealth  
Why it's essential to play  
an active role.

Beyond the  
business transaction  
How to approach your  
personal readiness.

Lasting impact  
A scholarship advances  
diversity, equity, and inclusion.



## Examining purpose from new perspectives

We introduced the theme of financial planning with purpose in the last issue of *Truist Perspectives*. Our hope is that with a clearly articulated purpose, you can better ensure that your financial goals are aligned with your passions and values. In this issue, we address purpose from several more angles, including gender, business ownership, and family status.

### **Women and wealth**

Women are increasingly making investment decisions for a larger portion of the country's wealth. It's one reason that more women need to be part of their families' money conversations. In this issue, two of our female wealth advisors talk about how women can continue to embrace their financial power.

### **Living our purpose**

For business owners, we're highlighting insights from our Business Transition Advisory Group. It addresses a consideration that's often overlooked when you sell your business: aligning personal readiness with business readiness.

For families, exceptions are what you need to know when it comes to financial gifts. Aaron Thiel, senior vice president and GenSpring wealth strategist for *Truist Wealth*, provides considerations for a few of the most common ways to gift money to family.

### **A fitting tribute**

If you met S. Buford Scott, you quickly saw his passion for family, education, equity, and the University of Virginia. We're honoring the causes he championed through a new scholarship. You can read more about how it's developing future leaders in finance.

### **Sustainable living at home**

You may have heard about the green building program called LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) being used in commercial projects. But now the exclusive framework has caught the eye of homeowners who want to create a healthier environment for their families. See how you, too, can benefit.

Finally, a sincere thank you for your attention to these stories, and for your confidence in us.

Joe Thompson  
Chief Wealth Officer  
Truist Financial Corporation

# Table of contents

12

### **Empowering women's financial confidence**

Solutions to get more involved in financial planning.

04

### **Pulse**

News and tactical tips from our team.

10

### **Family**

Smart ways to gift money to loved ones.

06

### **Business**

Addressing personal readiness before your transition.

18

### **Community**

See how we're paying tribute to S. Buford Scott.

08

### **Insurance**

The benefits of premium financing for life insurance.

20

### **Lifestyle**

Raising the bar for environmentally conscious homeowners.



# What's new

*Putting purpose into action on several fronts.*

## Report details initiatives across climate, financial inclusion, and DEI

Our 2021 ESG and CSR Report is now online and shows our commitment to enhancing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts for all Truist stakeholders.

### What are some highlights?

**Advancing a lower-carbon economy:** Truist supported \$15.3 billion in investment-grade ESG-themed bonds—and facilitated renewable energy development with direct capital commitments exceeding \$856 million.

**Promoting financial inclusion across our communities:** We committed \$100 million in investment capital to the Sterling Capital Diverse Multi-Manager Active ETF to support its initial launch and to demonstrate our support for increasing opportunities for diverse-owned asset managers.

**Growing our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI):** We reached our goal—a year early—of increasing ethnically diverse representation in senior leadership roles to at least 15%.

To read the report, visit [ir.truist.com/corporate-social-responsibility](http://ir.truist.com/corporate-social-responsibility).



## Credit card pays off with award

You shouldn't choose a credit card based only on its looks. But it's appealing when yours can be **environmentally friendly** and **deliver a luxe aesthetic**.

The **Truist Wealth credit card recently won top honors** at the International Card Manufacturing Association's 2022 Élan Awards in the category of Environmentally Friendly Cards.

Launched in October 2021, the credit card is made with 65% recycled metal and features the signature Truist Wealth glass art. Even the carbon-based tool bits used during the mechanical engraving process are recyclable.

## Hear from our thought leaders

The Truist Investment Advisory Group (IAG)—our team of experts—is bringing you a series of insightful videos to help you better understand investing opportunities. **Among the videos available now at [Truist.com/insights](http://Truist.com/insights):**

**Sabrina Bowens-Richard** details how you can benefit from diverse asset management firms.

**Ravi Ugale** explains why you should consider investing in private equity.

# Our take

*Tips from the Truist team*

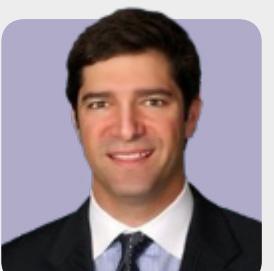
Consider how old you were when you learned about the stock market. **Financial literacy is important—regardless of age.** But talking about investing with your kids—and getting them up to speed—may not come naturally. You're definitely not alone. We sought help from Truist advisors on the best ways to get kids interested in investing.



### It's never too early

When I was a child, financial topics weren't discussed in my home—I learned about investing in college. But we know that wealth equality depends on increased education and awareness. When my daughter was one year old, I started an investment portfolio for her. Now she's 11, and we talk together about the basic concepts of investing. She picks the stocks, based on companies that she's heard about or places that we shop. She's learning that she can invest in companies that matter to her.

**Sabrina Bowens-Richard**  
Senior investment solutions specialist,  
diverse asset managers  
Atlanta, GA



### Firsthand inspiration and experience

There's a saying, "Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand." This is never truer than when trying to impart financial literacy to children. In addition to encouraging mock investing challenges, our group has invited young clients into the office for an informal one-day internship. Children perform a case study on a company that resonates with their interests in the hopes of jump-starting their interest in the financial markets.

**Todd LaRocca**  
Sports and entertainment wealth advisor  
Del Mar, CA



### What drives them?

I always start with a conversation, whether it's my daughter or the kids of my clients who are in high school or college. What drives them? What are they interested in? What kind of stock would they like to buy? Then they come back with a list, and I'll help them understand what's going on with the stock. What are the highs, what are the lows, what's the good, what's the bad? I'll help them buy the stocks (or an ETF). And then we'll talk every few months to review the performance.

**Sabina Lien**  
Senior managing director/  
financial advisor  
Winter Park, FL



# The most overlooked consideration in business transitions

Aligning **personal readiness** with **business readiness** will help you create a successful transition plan.

When you sell your business, there's an important difference between the transaction and the transition. Yes, the market needs to be receptive to the sale—and your business needs to be prepared. But **you need to be personally ready** for the transition as well.

Typically, business owners primarily focus their transition planning through a transactional lens: the financial capital the sale will generate. But all too often, those same business owners later regret not spending more time on personal planning earlier in the process.

Many owners don't know what they want to do after the transition. They tend to overlook the personal fulfillment that the business provided—qualities such as daily structure, purpose, and motivation, or feeling connected to others and experiencing the camaraderie of a team.

"Their planning focus is really on the business, not themselves, and not the impact that the transaction is going to have on them," says Russell Sanders, managing director of Truist's Business Transition Advisory Group. "The question then becomes, 'How do we get owners to begin to think about this?'"

## A critical first step

Sanders suggests thinking about how your brain examines information. In short, there's automatic processing (or fast thinking) and more intentional calculating and planning functions that require extra effort (slow thinking).<sup>1</sup> Fast thinking is our go-to method.

"You can't change that," Sanders says. "But what you can do is acknowledge that when you're about to make an important decision, you need to force slow thinking to engage. For a business transaction, it's a very important decision to stop and do research, to make sure that you're focusing on all of the things that you need to be focusing on."

That means spending time exploring your options and strategizing about your alternatives before engaging in a transaction. **Here's a road map to get you started:**

### 1 Define your purpose and priorities:

Appreciate all the intangibles your business provides. (See "Personal fulfillment" sidebar)

- How will you replace the purpose, community, and structure that the business provided?
- What pursuits would make you genuinely happy?



## Personal fulfillment

After a business transaction, you don't want to be thinking, "What do I do now?" These are a few of the **often-overlooked personal accomplishments** that are achieved through your business:

- **Connectedness to others**
- **Daily structure, purpose, and motivation**
- **Camaraderie of a focused team**
- **An expression of your values and goals**
- **The means to positively impact the lives of others**
- **Financial control and security**

"We all do things for a reason—because they make us happy," Sanders says. "And if we don't do this after getting out of the business, **what's going to make us happy tomorrow?** How are we going to replace these things?"

### 2 Understand your alternatives:

Explore what's motivating you and investigate viable alternatives for yourself and the business.

- What's left for you to achieve?
- What's the best way for you to exit the business?

### 3 Focus on your preparations:

Review financial planning objectives and estate planning goals to ensure existing plans will accomplish what you want them to accomplish. Learn how other successful families have transitioned—and determine what makes sense for your family.

- How can your money move you toward your goals?
- How will the deal's structure impact what you have to invest?

### Don't wait to start preparing

Considering you in your business transition takes time. Work with the **Truist Business Transition Advisory Group** to develop a multidisciplinary approach to meeting these new challenges.

# For life insurance, borrowing might beat cash

*Consider the benefits of leverage.*

Life insurance is an important financial tool, and you can get even more out of it by borrowing against your assets to fund the premiums.

Using leverage often is an efficient way to finance life insurance. Instead of selling assets to generate the cash for premiums, you keep the funds in these investments.

## As a result:

- Your money can stay in investments that are earning higher rates of return than the interest rates you'd pay by borrowing the money.
- You can stay fully invested in assets with low current returns that you believe will be more profitable in the future.

"You usually do premium financing when there's a liquidity event in the future, such as a business sale in five years," says Carma McCallie, Truist's vice president of advanced sales, Crump Life Insurance Services

division. At that point, you can repay the loan with the cash generated from the sale. So in this scenario, you know you'll have a certain amount of cash in the future, but in the meantime it can continue to work for you.

Making the option even more attractive, your bank typically will charge you rates that are favorable relative to standard commercial ones, says Luis Arango, head of international wealth management at Truist Wealth.

## Strategic uses of life insurance

Clients choosing to finance premiums through debt often are buying these policies for estate tax reasons, McCallie says. If you structure buying a policy correctly, you not only can help pay potential estate taxes but also might avoid a situation where your heirs need to sell assets to pay these taxes.

The key is to have the policy in an irrevocable trust from day one, typically an irrevocable life insurance trust



Clients choosing to finance premiums through debt often are buying these policies for estate tax reasons. If you structure buying a policy correctly, you not only can help pay potential estate taxes but also might avoid a situation where your heirs need to sell assets to pay these taxes.

(ILIT), says Nathan Duncan, senior vice president and planning strategist at Truist Wealth. When the policy is in an ILIT from day one, the trust owns the policy and the death benefit is free of estate taxes.

Taking this step also helps ensure there won't be any income taxes from the death benefit for the beneficiary.

As for paying the premiums, you might want to borrow what you need instead of using cash if you don't have the gifting capacity available, McCallie says. "Normally you might make a gift of, for example, the entire premium amount to a trust," she says. "But if you've used up all your gifting capacity, with premium financing the only thing that has to be paid is the interest, not the full premium. So it results in a substantial reduction of the amount that needs to be gifted every year to pay that premium." In other words, you don't need to gift as much to acquire the same amount of insurance.

## Using your assets wisely

Just as life insurance can serve several purposes, from helping to pay for estate taxes to providing much-needed income replacement for beneficiaries, investment assets serve more than one purpose.

You fund investments to protect and grow your wealth. But they also can serve as collateral so that you can take advantage of life insurance's financial planning benefits at the right price.



## A holistic approach for international clients

Foreign clients can also reap the benefits of using leverage to fund life insurance premiums. But structuring the estate requires understanding tax laws in your home country, the home countries of your beneficiaries, and the U.S.

"You're taking a holistic, multijurisdictional approach to the planning side," says Luis Arango, head of international wealth management at Truist Wealth. In these cases, Truist can help clients to coordinate the efforts of experts in local tax laws and accounting regulations. Researching treaties for tax implications is another important step.

One advantage of using U.S.-based financial institutions as part of the solution is that the leverage available to foreign clients is very attractive compared with what they typically can get in other countries. The U.S. life insurance industry also is highly developed relative to ones in many other parts of the world, with better rates and regulation, Arango says.

Just as with U.S.-based clients, international clients employ life insurance mainly for the estate planning benefits, though some also seek it for income replacement.

Though cultural differences around insurance can present barriers to adding life insurance, foreign clients are often more open to it as a solution for estate planning after they learn about the benefits, Arango says.

"Most of our international clients hadn't considered this solution before," says Marcello Zaffaroni, international wealth advisor at Truist. "So it starts as an educational alternative, and then it develops from there."

# What to consider before giving financial gifts to loved ones

*There are many reasons to give—and many rules to follow.*

Giving the perfect gift brings joy, and financial gifts can jump-start the savings of a loved one, reduce your estate size—or both. To help avoid unintended consequences of financial gifts, make a successful gift strategy part of your overall financial plan. That means discussing your intentions with your advisor to help determine whether it's best to give now or later.

"The purpose for gifting many times goes beyond financial—it's emotional," says Aaron Thiel, senior vice president and GenSpring wealth strategist for Truist Wealth. "Empowering family members to do certain things with that money—to accomplish the family's mission, values, and purpose—and to see that happen while you're alive, that is very impactful."

## **Gift tax 101**

Gifts might be subject to a gift tax. But have you considered all the exceptions?

The IRS allows you to gift up to \$16,000 per calendar year (in 2022) to any recipient without paying a gift tax. A married couple may give up to \$32,000 to any individual. This includes cash or the fair market value of gifts such as real estate, stocks, or art.

## **Exemptions to this limit include:**

**Tuition payments made directly to the educational institution. So you could pay for your grandchild's full tuition, for example, but not for college housing, dining, or supplies.**

**Medical expenses paid directly to a medical provider or to a health insurance company on behalf of somebody else.**

## **Gifts to your spouse.**

The final exemption is the lifetime gift and estate tax. In 2022 the limit is \$12.06 million—or \$24.12 million for married couples. This is how much you can give during your lifetime or have in your estate at death without paying estate taxes.

If a gift to one individual exceeds \$16,000 in a calendar year, you can apply the excess to this exemption. Your estate also can use any remaining exemption to reduce or eliminate estate taxes at death.



## **Top considerations for gifting methods**

You have many options when giving a financial gift. Here are a few of the more common ones:

Gifting method	Consideration	Scenario
Cash	Simple and straightforward, this often is the entry point to gift giving.	You write a check, transfer between bank accounts, or give cash.
Transferred investments, such as stock	Your cost basis transfers with the gift, which impacts the capital gains tax if the gift recipient sells the investment.	You gift a stock that you bought for \$10 per share. The gift recipients sell the stock at \$100 per share. They are taxed based on the gain of \$90 per share.
529 savings plan	You can "superfund" five years' worth of annual gifts at once—a great way to help a loved one get started on funding college expenses.	You gift \$80,000 (or \$160,000 from you and your spouse) to a 529 plan in one year. This means you can't make any other gifts to the same person for the next four years.
Trust	Several different trust structures allow you to generally have more control over how the money is disbursed and used.	You want to support specific activities, such as entrepreneurial efforts, and determine an appropriate age for the beneficiary to receive the money.
These events <b>need to fall below the gifting limits</b> (or be counted toward your lifetime gift and estate tax exemption).		
Buying a car	Paying for a wedding	Giving an <b>interest-free loan</b>



# Empowering women financial futures

to take  
charge  
of their

*Historically, women haven't been encouraged to care about building their wealth. But it's not just a good idea to be more informed—it's crucial.*



> continued on page 14

**M**aria Facciolo is passionate about helping women with finances. So it's not unusual for people to say to her, "I told my friend to call you. She really needs your help." But sometimes, they don't call. Facciolo thinks it's because they feel like they don't know enough about finances to even make the first call. "I think they're intimidated," says Facciolo, managing director and senior wealth advisor at Truist Wealth.

## Women's wealth will triple by 2030

Some women feel intimidated by finances, and that needs to be addressed because women are gaining financial power. Today,

women control a third of the household financial assets in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>—that's about \$10 trillion. By 2030, women are expected to control much of the \$30 trillion in financial assets that baby boomers will possess.<sup>2</sup>

This is an unprecedented change. And it's a reason why now, more than ever, women need to be heard during family financial conversations—a topic from which they've historically been excluded.

There are myriad reasons for this; among them is an outdated attitude. Margaret Wright, managing director and senior wealth advisor at Truist, notes that historically, men often have built the family's wealth. As a result, wealth managers have a habit of acknowledging only them. And in the past, "sons would get the assets outright, and the daughters'

money would go into a trust. The perception was that the men could handle the financial responsibility and women could not," notes Wright. Some of her female clients even told her that previous financial planners hadn't looked at them, much less talked to them, when meeting with them and their husbands.

It's telling that 70% of women change advisors within a year after their spouse dies.<sup>2</sup>

Because they are often left out, it's no surprise that women might lack confidence about making financial decisions. Recent world events have empowered them, however. "The world has changed a lot," says Wright. "There's been a shift in how people view all sorts of stereotypes." That shift includes how women are feeling about managing their finances.

## Four ways to get more comfortable with finances

That trend is encouraging, but many women are still behind in financial planning and confidence. Facciolo says that they may not know where to even begin. "When we don't understand something, we avoid it," she says. To get past this challenge, both Facciolo and Wright offer solutions for women to get more involved in financial planning.

- 1 **Set goals for your future.** Men and women tend to invest differently. Men often want to get to a certain dollar figure, whereas women are often motivated by a goal, such as effecting change. "Women are very much big picture," says Wright. "They think about goals and wants. They'll say, 'I just want

**"You can be the richest person in the world, but if you don't have a reason to get up in the morning, it's irrelevant."**

—**Margaret Wright**, managing director and senior wealth advisor, Truist



my kids to be happy.' Men are more about the bottom line."

One way to get more excited about your financial future is to get a clearer picture of your core values.

Below is a list of some potential core values.

### Which five stand out to you?

Do your choices differ from your partner's? Does your family know these values are important to you? How do you want to communicate those values to future generations? What is your purpose? "You can be the richest person in the world, but if you don't have a reason to get up in the morning, it's irrelevant," says Wright.

### 2 Find a financial advisor who makes you feel safe.

"I think some clients feel like they can't ask questions," Wright says. "They feel like they

> continued on page 16

Core values				
Service	Creativity	Cooperation	Health	Stability
Learning	Competition	Power	Family	Ethics
Order	Relationships	Fairness	Diversity	Exploration
Philanthropy	Excitement	Freedom	Flexibility	Pleasure
Security	Money	Fame	Safety	Status
Achievement	Independence	Recognition	Play	—

<sup>1</sup> "Women are gaining power when it comes to money—here's why that's a big deal," CNBC, May 3, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> "Women as the next wave of growth in US wealth management," McKinsey & Company, July 29, 2020.



aren't smart enough." She assures her clients they're in a safe space, and that there are no dumb questions.

In Atlanta, Wright has created a safe space for female clients to connect with one another. Her Women and Wealth series, which meets both in person and online, helps them form their own community.

Although they live a life of wonderful privileges, "women in wealth can struggle," says Wright. She notes that women of means often don't want to talk about it with their friends. And sometimes their family members are in a different financial situation. "You find yourself isolated, and it's not expected to bring up these topics socially," she adds.

When her group meets, Wright sees 70-year-old clients giving advice



*"I see women prioritizing the trust with their financial advisor. ... I'm trying to be that pillar of stability, that resource, for her. She knows Truist is going to have her back. We've got it. We'll manage it."*

—Marisa Facciolo,  
senior wealth advisor and  
managing director, Truist

to the 20-year-olds on topics like how to handle family resentments and how to give generously to friends without making it awkward. "Sometimes the best advice doesn't come from us, but from our other clients," she says. "Truist supports them by having this network for them to lean on."

Facciolo wants the women she works with to know she's a partner they can trust. She spends a lot of time building relationships, showing she's someone to be counted on.

"What's different about Truist is how we emphasize the importance of planning along with developing the relationship," she says. She added that while men tend to want to see the data and performance, "I see women prioritizing the trust with their financial advisor. She knows

Truist is going to have her back. We've got it. We'll manage it," says Facciolo.

**3 Know your finances before you have to.** Women may look at goals differently, but don't be taken in by the stereotype that women just aren't interested in the details of financial planning. That alleged lack of interest is "the biggest misconception," says Wright. "Women do want to know and be prepared, because they're seeing what happens when they aren't."

Not long ago, Facciolo heard that familiar statement: "I have a friend who needs your help, and she's going to call you."

But this time, the woman did call. Her husband had died suddenly, and without a will. "There was no one she could rely on for guidance," says

Facciolo, "and she didn't understand anything that was going on."

Says Wright: "Studies show that women are outliving men, and women will need to be responsible for [their money] at some juncture. If we're not homing in on that, we're doing women a disservice."

**4 Talk to your partner.** The time to get a handle on your finances is now, and not when there's no choice—and you're coping with loss.

Have an open dialog with your husband or partner about your financial future. Do you both want the same things? What is your hierarchy of needs, wants, and wishes? Are there preparations in place for when one of you is gone? And have you sat with your financial advisor together? "I constantly push my male clients

who have not introduced me to their wives," says Wright. "I make it clear this is not a one-spouse relationship." That said, she wants her female clients to feel confident enough to meet with her one-on-one from time to time.

## Gaining confidence, understanding—and financial power

Women are coming into more money, and they're likely to have sole responsibility for that wealth at some point. They need to empower themselves to feel confident making financial decisions—and find a financial advisor who understands them.

# Honoring a legacy of enrichment

**S. Buford Scott's** impact was far-reaching. Find out how Truist continues to fulfill his mission of service.

Among many things, S. Buford Scott was a noted philanthropist who dedicated much of his life to two things: increasing financial literacy and championing inclusion at his alma mater, the University of Virginia (UVA).

He spent his career working for Scott & Stringfellow, a securities firm founded by his family in 1893, which became a wholly owned subsidiary of BB&T in 1999. Having keen financial insight was his family business—and Scott wanted to empower future generations with that knowledge.

## Truist pays tribute to S. Buford Scott

Last year, Truist Wealth gifted \$1 million to UVA's Walter N. Ridley Scholarship Program in Scott's name. The gift endows a merit-based scholarship that covers the full cost of attendance for four years. It also established the Truist-Ridley Leadership and Financial Education Academy.

"Buford was incredibly active in the community, tied to UVA, and

well-known for his philanthropy," says Denise Merinar, senior managing director within Truist Wealth. "Our executive leaders Joe Thompson and Bryan Cram wanted to honor him with a substantial gift while supporting the ideas that were most important to him."

The Ridley Scholarship Program has awarded more than 300 scholarships to Black undergraduates at UVA. In keeping with Scott's vision—and Truist's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion—the gift ensures that future Black students can become Buford Scholars through the renewable four-year scholarship.

## Developing leaders in finance

Truist's gift also perpetuates Scott's commitment to financial literacy. Through the Truist-Ridley Leadership and Financial Education Academy, four cohorts will develop deep personal and professional skills related to finance.

The academy helps students gain a greater understanding of self while discovering career opportunities within the world of finance, Merinar says. "We spend time talking to them about their lives, getting their first job, and why retirement planning is so important," she continues.

In May, the first cohort of 25 students got an immersive introduction to corporate communications, economics, and investing. Leaders from Truist Wealth imparted knowledge on motivation, interviewing, and building important professional skills.

And the student response was overwhelming. "They immersed themselves in the program the week after finals while their peers were on vacation or relaxing," says Merinar. "It was busy, and we're looking forward to our second cohort in January."

The first Buford Scholar will start their freshman year at UVA this fall.

*"When you do something to help a child, that lasts a lifetime. Now that is a really good investment."*

—S. Buford Scott



## A life of service

**S. Buford Scott** was dedicated to charitable causes largely focused on youth and education. He helped establish the Virginia Council on Economic Education (VCEE), which advises K-12 teachers on teaching youth-focused financial literacy. In 1970, he sold his family farm to create Elk Hill, a nonprofit that provides residential and health services for low-income children. He also helped organizations such as the Micah Project and Virginia Mentoring Partnership.

## Influence at UVA

Scott served on the Alumni Board of Managers, chaired the Jefferson Scholars Foundation, and his grandfather's name adorns the university's football stadium. He was also a two-time appointee to the university's Board of Visitors. Recognizing a need for greater diversity within the university's board leadership, Scott stepped down from his second term to make way for a Black appointee.

# LEED-ing the way at home

*Environmentally conscious homeowners are raising the bar with LEED certification.*



For more than 20 years, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification has been the sustainability gold standard for commercial buildings. But now, LEED-certified homes are soaring in popularity.

The exclusive framework has caught the eye of people who want to build or remodel their homes to improve energy efficiency, lower carbon emissions, and create a healthier environment for their families. And there's plenty of incentive to seek the certification: **A new home built to LEED standards can be worth 8% more** and use up to 60% less energy than a conventional home.<sup>1</sup> What's more, LEED-certified homes often qualify for insurance discounts, tax breaks, and other incentives.

## *The LEED road map for greener living*

LEED-certified homes provide clean indoor air and ample natural light, and they use safe building materials to ensure comfort and good health, according to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). They reduce energy and water consumption, lower our contribution to global climate change, and enhance a community's quality of life.

"The difference between a LEED-certified home and a 'green' home is that third-party certification demonstrates a home not only has these measures installed but also is performing at a different level," says Jennifer Owens, USGBC's quality director for LEED Residential.

In other words, the proof is in the performance.

Whether LEED certification is the end goal, there are many steps homeowners can take on the journey to making their homes more energy efficient and sustainable. **If you want to rethink your habitat, USGBC suggests focusing on these six areas:**

<sup>1</sup> "LEED in Motion," U.S. Green Building Council, July 2019.

### 1 Human health and comfort

LEED-certified homes offer improved air quality as well as thermal, visual, and acoustic comfort. Consider enhanced ventilation systems, radon-resistant construction, and low-emission building materials and furnishings.

### 2 Energy

By using renewable energy sources, such as solar or geothermal systems, LEED-certified homes use fewer fossil fuels and contribute less to air pollution.

### 3 Water efficiency

Lower water consumption by remodeling kitchens and baths with high-efficiency fixtures and fittings, changing your approach to hot water distribution, or finding ways to capture and reuse rainwater and gray water (such as used water from your shower). Landscaping with native or climate acclimated plants also helps.

### 4 Location

Choose homes and neighborhoods with easy access to public transportation, sidewalks, and bike paths, thereby reducing dependence on cars. If you can't relocate, advocate for changes that help your community be more physically active while reducing overall emissions.

### 5 Materials

In addition to promoting sustainably produced materials, such as FSC certified lumber, LEED standards reward the use of locally sourced, recycled, or salvaged materials. A life cycle analysis can identify materials and finishes that last longer and produce less environmental waste.

### 6 Resilience

LEED certified residential buildings have features like eaves, berms, and backup power sources that reduce risk from wildfires, extreme heat, flooding, and winter storms. "If a home makes it through a wildfire because of intentional design, that's obviously a huge cost and material savings," Owens says.



“ We all do things for a reason—because they make us happy. And if we don’t do this after getting out of the business, what’s going to make us happy tomorrow? ”

**Russell Sanders**

Managing director of Truist's Business Transition Advisory Group (from "The most overlooked consideration in business transitions," pages 6–7)



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