WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) have released a report that highlights the most effective incentives for greening American communities.

The report, “Local Leaders in Sustainability: Green Building Incentive Trends” found that the incentives that provide the most tangible results are basic: tax incentives, density/floor area ratio bonuses, and expedited permitting. The report also found that (1) communities should select incentives based primarily on desired impact on the construction industry and local governments’ financial situations, and (2) the simpler the policies, the more likely they are to be implemented successfully, the report concludes.

“Local green building incentives are an opportunity for counties to move their communities toward sustainable development, jobs, and strong communities,” said Green Government Advisory Board Chair Gregg Goslin, commissioner, Cook County, Ill.

AIA President Jeff Potter, FAIA, said the report should serve as a guidepost for many communities throughout the country looking for ways to implement green initiatives but have concerns about the expense involved.

“Local governments in recent years have already implemented numerous green incentives,” Potter said. “These programs have met with varying levels of success. This report seeks to analyze those initiatives and provide best practice examples.”

The report includes in-depth case studies from communities across the country, including:
- Bernalillo County, N.M. on impact fee reduction;
- Cincinnati, Ohio on community reinvestment area (CRA) property tax abatement;
- King County, Wash. on green building grants;
- Santa Barbara County, Calif. on innovative building review and financing;
- Arlington County, Va. on density bonus;
- Chicago, Ill. on expedited permitting;
- San Diego County, Calif. on fee discounts and expedited review;
- Alameda County, Calif. on critical design assistance, and

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• Sarasota County, Fla. on broad green building promotion.

The report is available in the Solutions Center/Get Information, Training, and Assistance/Green Government Initiative section of the NACo website at www.naco.org. Hard copies are available upon request. For more information about the NACo Green Government Initiative, contact Jared Lang 202.942.4224.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.