

Green is the New Affordable



Green Communities is a five-year, \$555 million initiative to create more than 8,500 healthy, efficient homes for low-income people and make environmentally sustainable development the mainstream in the affordable housing industry.

Green Communities provides funds and expertise to enable developers to build and rehabilitate homes that are healthier, more energy efficient and better for the environment – without compromising affordability. Green Communities also assists state and local governments to ensure their housing and economic development policies are smart and sustainable.

Green Communities homes are built according to the Green Communities Criteria, the first national framework for healthy, efficient, environmentally smart affordable homes.

Rationale: Why Now is the Time for Green Communities

Housing and environmental problems are inextricably linked and solutions should be too. Green Communities delivers an integrated approach to achieve the following benefits:

- **Healthier homes and communities.** Nationwide, more than four million children have asthma. Moreover, residential exposure causes more than 40 percent of doctor-diagnosed asthma among U.S. children. Asthma prevalence is 40 percent to 50 percent higher among minority children living in urban areas. Green Communities homes are healthier and more comfortable because they use building practices that minimize moisture, provide proper ventilation, prevent pest infestations and avoid unsafe materials.
- **Greater energy efficiency.** Energy costs for poor families have far outpaced their incomes in recent years, forcing many to spend less on food and other necessities. Green Communities homes are at least 30 percent more energy efficient—cutting utility costs by hundreds of dollars per home each year. In addition, families at the poverty level pay nearly 40 cents of every dollar they earn for transportation. Sited near public transportation or within walking distance to schools, jobs and services, Green Communities homes reduce transportation costs for families.
- **Smarter, more sustainable development.** Poorly planned development expands the distance between good jobs and affordable housing for low-income people. To combat negative health and environmental consequences associated with sprawl, Green Communities homes offer increased energy efficiency and proximity to mass transit—benefiting families, communities and the environment. Green Communities homes also feature water-conserving fixtures and appliances. They use low-cost maintenance techniques to minimize erosion and manage storm water. In addition, Green Communities homes support local and state strategies to direct development to areas with existing infrastructure, reducing local tax burdens. And Green Communities homes are built at appropriate densities, away from farmland and environmentally sensitive areas. Whenever possible, Green Communities homes use certified wood and recycled materials.

Results: What Green Communities Has Achieved So Far

- Green Communities Criteria, the first national framework for sustainable affordable housing: developed through consensus, endorsed by partners and aligned with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED for Homes pilot rating system
- More than \$426 million in grants, loans and equity committed
- More than 8,000 highly sustainable Green Communities homes in 180 developments in 23 states complete or in development
- More than 3,000 affordable housing professionals trained in sustainable design and development practices
- 20 state and local housing policies enhanced to promote health and sustainability
- 10 state/local partnerships formed to advance holistic systems change

Resources: How Green Communities Helps Developers Go Green

- Grant funds for design, planning, predevelopment and construction
- Low-interest loans for acquisition, predevelopment and construction
- Competitive tax credit equity for construction of rental apartments
- Technical expertise, training and practical tools
- Advice and assistance to policymakers at all levels of government

How Much More do Green Communities Homes Cost to Build?

Preliminary data show that costs rise 2 percent to 4 percent for developers who meet the Green Communities Criteria. The grants and financing offered by Green Communities, augmented by other funding sources, are designed to cover these costs. More than half of participating developers surveyed indicated that Green Communities developments are their first sustainable projects. A significant number said they had "gone greener" as a result of the program.

How did Green Communities Develop its Criteria?

The Green Communities Criteria represent the collective knowledge and consensus of leading experts in building design and construction, public health, smart growth, environmental protection and sustainable development. The Criteria align with the LEED for Home pilot rating system. The Criteria apply to for-sale and rental housing; urban, suburban and rural areas; new construction and substantially rehabilitated housing. They raise the bar for affordable housing providers through proven, cost-effective building strategies, without burdening them with undue complexity or infeasible costs. Green Communities partners are carefully tracking developer experience and project performance.

For More Information:

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Partners: Green Communities Greatest Asset

Anonymous
The American Institute of Architects
The American Planning Association
Bank of America
Blue Moon Fund
BP America
The Bullitt Foundation
Cabot Foundation
Citigroup Foundation
Earth Pledge
Family Housing Fund
Fannie Mae
Florida Community Loan Fund
Florida Green Building Coalition
Freddie Mac
The George Gund Foundation
Giant Steps Foundation
Global Green USA
Great Lakes Capital Fund
Greater Minnesota Housing Fund
The Home Depot Foundation
James Family Foundation
JPMorgan Chase
The Kendeda Sustainability Fund
The Kresge Foundation
M&T Bank

Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
MassHousing
Merrill Lynch Community Development Company
Meyer Memorial Trust
Michigan State Housing and Development Authority
National Association of State Energy Officials
National Center for Healthy Housing
National City Bank
Natural Resources Defense Council
Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing
Ohio Department of Development Office of Energy Efficiency
Ohio Housing Finance Agency
The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation
Rhodebeck Charitable Trust
The Rockefeller Brothers Fund
The Russell Family Foundation
San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing
San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
Southface
Surdna Foundation
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Green Building Council
Washington Mutual
Wells Fargo
William Penn Foundation



Enterprise is a leading provider of development capital and expertise for creating decent, affordable homes and rebuilding communities. For 25 years, Enterprise has pioneered neighborhood solutions through public-private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, community organizations and others that share our vision. Enterprise has raised and invested \$7 billion in equity, grants and below-market loans and is currently investing in communities at a rate of \$1 billion a year. Visit www.enterprisecommunity.org to learn more about Enterprise's efforts to build communities and opportunity, and to meet some of the half a million people we have helped.

For more information, please visit www.greencommunitiesonline.org.

05.07