

Enterprise Green Communities, the standard for sustainable futures, is the only national green building program designed explicitly for affordable housing construction. Green building practices lead to healthy, efficient and environmentally responsible affordable homes, and promote equitable development by giving residents a voice in creating their communities.

Project Overview

St. Joseph Village in Dyersburg, Tennessee is a senior affordable housing community that recently completed a modernization, and received federal housing credits allocated by the state housing finance agency, THDA. The project team certified the property to the Enterprise Green Communities 2015 Criteria, earning a total of 49 points.

Improving Resident Well-Being

Enterprise Green Communities requires all project teams to follow an integrative design process, where project team members meet and establish resident, property and community goals. In preparation, Southface Institute reviewed the West Tennessee Health's Dyer County Community Health Needs Assessment¹ to determine community health issues applicable to current residents. Issues included smoking and obesity, and St. Joseph Village had many amenities already in place that addressed these health issues. The Enterprise Green Communities integrative design process allowed for recommitment to healthy living amenities, as well as selecting new features. The project's healthy living environment highlights include:

- Continuing to require both residents and visitors to refrain from smoking within the facility, ensuring residents are not exposed to harmful second-hand smoke.
- Keeping and upgrading to all-electric equipment and appliances, ensuring no exposure to combustion by-products that could exacerbate health conditions, like asthma.
- Encouraging active living by providing a fitness center, hallway railings, ADA accessible outdoor spaces including a walking path, and ample outdoor seating, allowing residents to remain active within their capacity.
- Maintaining a contract with a local farmer's market for produce delivery, giving residents access to fresh food.



View of new ADA-accessible pathways that give residents increased access to outdoor spaces.

Project Information

Location: Dyersburg, Tennessee

Project Type: Moderate Rehabilitation

Construction Cost: \$5,000,000

Property Information: 89 apartments; 11 garden-style apartment buildings and one main building; 60,206 SF; built in 1977. All buildings are single story with slab foundation.

Project Team

Property Owner: Wesley Living

Architect: MMH Hall, Architects/Planners, Inc.

General Contractor: SRP, Inc.

Green Building Consultant: Southface Institute



Apartment kitchens were updated with more energy-efficient and user-friendly appliances.

¹ West Tennessee's Dyer County Health Needs Assessment accessed on January 7, 2021: <https://www.wth.org/community-health-needs-assessment/>

Green Building Strategies

St. Joseph Village exceeded the minimum 30 point requirement for Enterprise Green Communities certification by 19 points. The team completed significant upgrades to the building systems, including new windows, LED lighting, extensive building envelope air sealing, and new in-unit HVAC equipment. The rehabilitation prioritized healthy building materials, using low and no VOC paints and sealants, mold-resistant surfaces in the kitchen and bathrooms, and Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label certified carpet.

The project team faced minor setbacks. During the rehabilitation, the project team determined that they would not be able to fully comply with 6.7a Environmentally Preferable Flooring due to carpet being in direct contact with the foundation slab. The team [submitted a waiver request](#) and were approved to deviate from the requirement. Based on this and other project teams' experiences and waiver requests, Enterprise Green Communities modified this requirement in the 2020 Criteria.

“Wesley Living transitioned to LED lights, but it’s hard to get staff to replace things that are still working. They are used to economizing. However, the impact on utilities was a substantial savings.”

Ron Budynas, Wesley Living

Energy and Water Savings

St. Joseph Village exceeded mandatory energy efficiency standards, achieving a HERS Index of 80. The energy efficiency upgrades decreased energy usage by approximately 40%, saving the property over \$30,000 annually in energy costs.² This resulted in a \$349 per unit annual energy savings. Not all appliances, such as in-unit refrigerators were replaced, but the property's Operations & Maintenance manual specifies that when replacement does occur, it must be ENERGY STAR.

Additionally, the property was projected to reduce indoor water consumption by 20% due to replacement of bathroom fixtures, and installation of new ENERGY STAR dishwashers.

² St. Joseph Village participated in the Department of Energy's Better Buildings Challenge. Additional energy savings information can be found on their website: <https://betterbuildingsolutioncenter.energy.gov/show-case-projects/wesley-housing-st-joseph-village>



Inefficient centralized HVAC systems were replaced with efficient PTAC units located in each apartment.

Implemented Optional Criteria

- 2.4 Compact Development
- 2.7 Preservation of and Access to Open Space
- 2.8 Access to Public Transportation
- 2.12 Access to Fresh, Local Foods
- 5.2a Additional Reductions in Energy Use
- 7.4 Elimination of Combustion within the Conditioned Space
- 7.16 Smoke-Free Building



New hallway railings in the main building.