Affordable Multi-Family Housing Sustainability Upgrade Program Development

In Seattle, approximately 40% of residents live in multi-family buildings with 5 or more units. To reduce our green-house gas emissions, and create a community that is economically and environmentally resilient we must address sustainability in this building sector. Significant opportunities exist but to realize these opportunities we must remove barriers and simplify the process by creating a coordinated, comprehensive program for retrofits of multi-family buildings. Our efforts will begin with the non-profit owners of affordable housing with the intention using this program as a foundation for a broader program covering the entire multi-family housing sector.

Project Goals

1. Create a comprehensive program to enable the widespread adoption of sustainability retrofits in affordable housing in order to reduce operating costs, improve health outcomes and comfort of tenants.
2. Provide standards for multi-family sustainability in the region.
3. Create standard tools to calculate upgrade costs and savings to support project design and decision making.
4. Maximize funding through leverage of existing funding, collaboration between stakeholders, and the identification of new sources of funding.
5. Take advantage of synergies among building improvement efforts (energy efficiency, water conservation, seismic upgrades, moisture remediation, etc.) and among outreach/education efforts (emergency preparedness, recycling/waste, health, etc.) to deliver cost-effective sustainability services and education.
6. Build tools to monitor performance and use for continuous program improvement.

The Program Design Process

Emerald Cities convenes program design process. - April 2013
Non-profit Housing owners, Dept of Housing, building sustainability consultants, finance specialists, utilities, engineers, banks/CFI, energy services companies

Research and design specific program elements May-Sept 2013

Create program delivery model Sept-Nov 2013
Align service providers in assessment, construction, and education in an accessible program.

Advocate for funding and policy needs Sept - Nov 2013
City, County, and State Government as well as private sources of capital.

Pilot projects launched January 2013
Gather data, evaluation, review and program updates.

Emerald Cities Seattle (ECS) is a non-profit collaborative of government, labor, business and community organizations working together to advance a sustainable environment while creating greater economic opportunities for all. We are advancing sustainability in a high road way, by retrofitting buildings, creating family wage jobs, and revitalizing the local economy of the Puget Sound region.

Contact: Steve Gelb, Emerald Cities Seattle, sgelb@emeraldcities.org, 206-713-0952