

USGBC-LA – U.S. Green Building Council, Los Angeles

Electrifying the Green Affordable Housing Program

Project Description

The U.S. Green Building Council - Los Angeles (USGBC-LA) implemented replicable heat pump retrofit installation strategies and built market awareness in Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) and subsidized multifamily affordable housing in the Eastern San Fernando Valley. NOAH refers to unsubsidized rental that is affordable because of low-market values. The [project](#) leveraged USGBC-LA's existing Green Affordable Housing Program (GAHP) to engage nineteen buildings across sixteen properties, reaching an estimated 1,710 residents.

USGBC-LA performed 11 heat pump space and water heating retrofits at three properties, retrofits at three unsubsidized properties all located in disadvantaged communities. The project generated valuable lessons for participating contractors, property owners, managers, and program administrators looking to implement fuel-switching projects to meet California's decarbonization goals.

USGBC-LA also developed strategies for reaching residents and individual property owners in lower-income communities who face increased barriers to accessing the benefits of green technologies and electrification.



TIMELINE:

January 2022 –
December 2023



HOUSING TYPE:

Multifamily



EQUITY SEGMENT:

Disadvantaged
Communities



TECHNOLOGY:

Heat Pump Water
Heaters and Heat
Pump HVAC



LOCATION:

Los Angeles,
California

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This program is part of the TECH Quick Start Grants (QSG) program, designed to fund targeted, innovative projects that test approaches to overcoming market barriers to heat pump space and water heating adoption.

Key Learnings

Key learnings suggest that scaling heat pump adoption in multifamily housing in lower-income communities depends on incentivizing building owners to retrofit both common areas and residential spaces, regardless of meter and utility payment structures.

A successful engagement strategy included highlighting the benefits of programs, rebates, and incentives to future-proof sites against legislative changes impacting natural gas use while providing no-cost project support for piloting fuel-switching projects. Critical components of a holistic program targeting multifamily housing in disadvantaged communities include:

- providing funding to subsidize installations,
- no-cost technical support for measuring the projected impact of retrofits on utility costs and return on investment,
- project scope development for retrofits in residential spaces during tenant turnover, and
- consideration of occupant comfort and resident satisfaction.

USGBC-LA plans to continue refining the installation strategies developed under this project and incorporate further energy use assessments and greenhouse gas emissions reduction calculations into both planning and reporting on heat pump installations.

Next Steps

- Continued engagement with participating properties and portfolio managers engaged with under this Quick Start Grant.
- Carry key lessons learned from this project to other Quick Start Grant stakeholders working inside TECH Clean California – heat pump installations performed under USGBC-LA’s 2022 Quick Start Grant with Climate Resolve.
- Continue to develop USGBC-LA’s role of Designated Applicant to build expertise in TECH Clean California program requirements.
- Continue to build outreach strategies for engaging directly with single family property owners in lower-income communities.

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