

In Minnesota, the affordable multifamily housing market has been difficult to reach with energy efficiency retrofits and upgrades, despite representing a sizeable portion of the overall housing stock in some areas. As a result, tenants, owners, and communities are not realizing the full benefits that energy efficiency can bring to their buildings, budgets, and health. In the past, energy and housing stakeholders have not always connected or coordinated on this issue, resulting in work that fails to maximize the opportunities available to increase energy efficiency in this market.

Purpose

The purpose of the Minnesota Multifamily Affordable Housing Energy Network (MMAHEN) is to increase energy efficiency and conservation in multifamily buildings of five units or more in Minnesota by improving and expanding the use and equitable access of available resources.

- MMAHEN believes that a unified, collaborative approach has the greatest potential to develop and implement effective solutions to enhance the efficiency of multifamily housing in Minnesota.
- MMAHEN's activities aim to build on existing partnerships, foster the development of new connections, and make full use of the extensive skills and expertise among its members.

Deliverables

MMAHEN works to identify and address:

- Regulatory barriers that should be removed;
- Opportunities for improved coordination among efficiency programs and affordable housing funders;
- Gaps in financing options for energy efficiency retrofits and upgrades;
- Methods to increase building owner demand for energy efficiency retrofits and upgrades, including improved education;
- Methods to increase tenant demand for, and understanding of, improved energy saving opportunities in their buildings; and
- Other avenues for increasing the efficiency of affordable multifamily housing.

MMAHEN communicates its findings and recommendations to utilities, the Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and other relevant audiences as appropriate.

Project Background

- Network activities are facilitated by Fresh Energy and Minnesota Housing, in partnership with the many participating stakeholders, including rotating Work Group co-chairs. MMAHEN currently consists of 46 members from 33 organizations.
- MMAHEN aims to connect stakeholders from the energy efficiency and affordable multifamily housing sectors, and explore strategies for increasing energy efficiency in multifamily housing. Activities, including in-person meetings of the full Network and phone/in-person meetings of Work Groups, are designed to tackle specific “Action Areas.”
- The Network is affiliated with the national Energy Efficiency for All initiative, including national partners Energy Foundation, the National Housing Trust, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Elevate Energy: www.ee4a.org.

Action Areas

Reliable Data Access and Benchmarking: works to promote greater access to building utility data and promote and encourage energy and water benchmarking

Multifamily Efficiency in Greater Minnesota: works to expand energy efficiency program opportunities in Greater Minnesota by engaging with cooperative and municipal utilities and other stakeholders

NEW Multifamily Renters Initiative: works to prepare renters to advocate for themselves to ensure energy efficiency in multifamily housing in rental properties.

Energy Efficiency Financing: works to explore potential of existing financing mechanisms for multifamily housing in Minnesota and promote awareness of available financing tools

Health-Energy Efficiency Nexus: works to explore opportunities for coordination between health, energy efficiency, and housing stakeholders

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