



News from POAH

Preservation of Affordable Housing

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POAH launches green retrofit program at its DC property with \$1.5 million recovery act grant

HUD Secretary, local dignitaries join the celebration

Washington, DC- Preservation of Affordable Housing, an affordable housing nonprofit with properties in 9 states and Washington DC, has launched a green retrofit improvement program at its DC property that will reduce the property's carbon footprint and tenants' utility bills. The work will be funded with a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and DC Mayor Adrian Fenty joined POAH President Amy Anthony at the Garfield Hills Apartments in Southeast Washington, DC to announce the grant on Earth Day (April 22).

POAH's successful application for the grant is part of a broader strategy to implement energy, water, and resource conservation across the POAH portfolio by investing in efficiency measures and renewable energy. In addition to capital improvements at Garfield Hills, POAH is also implementing resident education efforts around conservation at multiple sites in the portfolio including the Hillcrest Village and Hillside Village communities in Rhode Island. All of these efforts are driven by the threat of climate change and make sound financial sense because they reduce operating costs and the burden of utility costs on residents.

"This is an example of the kind of long-term, fundamental impact the Recovery Act is having on America's economy through clean energy investments," said Donovan. The Secretary said the program was part of a larger effort "to ensure our children's futures are never determined by the zip code they grow up in."

Garfield Hills is one of the first multifamily affordable housing complexes in the country to be awarded funding under the Green Retrofit Program created through the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#) (ARRA). The program provides \$250 million nationally to reduce energy costs, cut water consumption, and improve indoor air quality. The Garfield award is particularly noteworthy because residents will benefit directly from lower tenant-paid utility bills.

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“The work we will do in retrofitting Garfield Hills will help us refine our strategy not only from a capital investment perspective, but also for our broader approach to green operations and maintenance practices and resident education,” said POAH President Amy Anthony.

“For residents the benefits are absolutely clear,” said Donovan noting that the total savings would total between \$25,000-\$30,000 a year at Garfield Hills. “These upgrades will not only help save our environment, they will help save money by cutting tenant utility costs fully by 20%.”

Garfield Hills, located in a section of Washington, DC with a high poverty rate, serves a particularly low-income population. Over 90% of the households living at Garfield Hills have household incomes less than 30% of the area median income.

The green retrofits will upgrade major systems and include the installation of EnergyStar thermostats, refrigerators and appliances, new high-efficiency gas furnaces, and upgraded energy efficient lighting. The building will also be improved with new exterior doors and siding, and water consumption reduced through new bathroom faucets and climate appropriate landscaping. POAH will improve air quality for residents, another goal of the Green Retrofit Program, through the installation of new, energy efficient kitchen range exhaust hoods and bathroom exhaust fans. Green floor coverings, formaldehyde-free bathroom cabinets, and the use of non-toxic paints, adhesives, sealants and other green construction materials will also improve indoor air quality. Finally, POAH will implement a green operations and maintenance program to extend the benefits of the program beyond simply the materials and products used in the capital improvements.

“I am deep into greening the United States beginning with greening homes,” said Rep. Norton, a co-sponsor of ARRA. “Greening DC starts at home and Garfield Hills is a terrific home to start in,” she added.

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About POAH: Preservation of Affordable Housing, based in Boston, is a mission-driven, entrepreneurial nonprofit committed to preserving affordable housing resources throughout the United States. Significant elements of America’s affordable housing inventory are at-risk due to mismanagement, neglect, financial misfortune or the threat of conversion to market rents. POAH acquires, preserves and stewards these resources with creative financial restructurings, physical rehabilitation or redevelopment and long-term management. POAH owns more than 6,600 apartments in nine states and the District of Columbia, serving the working poor, families, individuals, and seniors. Its founder, Amy Anthony, served as Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development in the Dukakis administration.