



Enterprise Community Partners and IWBI collaborate with national developers to create healthier and more resilient homes

March 22, 2022 - Owners Developers & Managers

Bronx, NY Enterprise Community Partners (Enterprise) and the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) have the first affordable housing development in the country to receive joint certification for healthier, more efficient and environmentally responsive homes and communities. Thessalonica Court, a Bronx, NY-based apartment building that was rehabilitated by Jonathan Rose Companies, achieved the joint certification under Enterprise Green Communities™ and the WELL Building Standard (WELL).

Jonathan Rose Companies is one of hundreds of developers nationwide that have opted to create more efficient, resilient and sustainable affordable homes that also prioritize health and offer well-being benefits rooted in science and design excellence by meeting the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria, the first national standard for green affordable housing. For the first time in the Criteria's 18-year history, developers meeting the Criteria now receive joint certification with IWBI's WELL framework. The pathway for joint certification signifies a commitment to addressing health equity challenges within affordable housing communities while marrying best practices to promote human and environmental health.

“By prioritizing resident well-being and building a collective commitment to environmental sustainability, Enterprise Green Communities fundamentally changed how developers create affordable homes,” said Rose Companies president Jonathan Rose. “Now, with joint certification from Enterprise and IWBI, properties like Thessalonica Court and thousands more to come have the framework and tools to meet our 21st-century challenges so that people and nature can thrive together.”

The newly rehabilitated Thessalonica Court apartment community encompasses 191 affordable homes in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx, New York, and incorporates a range of practices and materials that earned it this coveted Enterprise/IWBI joint certification. The new building owners prioritized the use of building products screened against harmful chemicals that can impact the health and well-being of residents, and improved the property's response to extreme rainfall events. Efficient water fixtures and lighting will save energy for both the owners and residents. New indigenous plantings, a community garden and an outdoor play area that reduces the urban heat island effect will make the complex an inviting home for families throughout the community.

Following the announcement of the partnership with IWBI in late 2019, Enterprise selected 20 affordable housing developments comprising more than 500 new and rehabilitated homes across 12 states and the District of Columbia to represent early adopters of the new joint certification program, which include a cross-section of developments that span urban, suburban and rural landscapes. Thessalonica Court and its peers are setting a new benchmark for healthy and sustainable affordable homes.

“As we confront the impacts of climate change, we must focus on communities like Thessalonica Court in conversations about sustainability and healthy homes, because designing interventions with affordable housing in mind makes them accessible to everyone,” said Priscilla Almodovar, Enterprise Community Partners president and CEO. “Enterprise congratulates Jonathan Rose Companies on this achievement, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with IWBI to bring the benefits of sustainable, healthy and resilient homes to every community.”

“The homes we live in can either compromise our health and well-being or help us flourish, and the COVID-19 pandemic has crystalized the brutal reality of the health inequities in our communities,” said Rachel Hodgdon, president and CEO of IWBI. “That’s why we are so excited to celebrate the availability of these green, healthy, affordable homes and this milestone moment in our collaboration with Enterprise. We commend Jonathan Rose Companies for its continued leadership to transform communities into places where everyone can thrive.”

By integrating WELL features into the 2020 Green Communities Criteria, Enterprise and IWBI created a best-in-class certification pathway that provides affordable housing developers a flexible roadmap for achieving higher levels of health and well-being benefits that are rooted in the latest scientific evidence and best practices. Highlights of the well-being benefits from the Thessalonica Court development include improved air and water quality, better lighting and sound environments, facilities that promote an active lifestyle, and operational protocols that focus on resident health and safety.

In the first cohort of developments pursuing joint certification, 25% intend to be all-electric, advancing critical decarbonization efforts to limit the impact of climate change. As part of the integrated certification effort, the developments are required to perform a multi-hazard risk and vulnerabilities assessment to gauge and improve their property’s ability to withstand an extreme weather event or emergency. These developers are also committed to advancing community resilience by meeting the requirements to form cultural advisory groups and conduct cultural-resilience assessments with and for their communities.