In Atlanta, a new partnership turns foreclosure challenges into green opportunities

The nation’s foreclosure crisis has decelerated community development from coast to coast. But in Atlanta, Enterprise, The Home Depot Foundation and Southface have teamed up with the City of Atlanta to generate momentum and funding incentives to create healthy, energy-efficient affordable homes.

The Green Home Advantage program ensures that all properties acquired through the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) in Atlanta meet a set of baseline green requirements developed by Enterprise and the City of Atlanta.

The program also offers technical assistance, trainings and the opportunity for green certification.

Developers rehabbing Atlanta’s NSP properties gain access to a range of tools and resources:

- Trainings cover the green baseline and more aggressive requirements
- A green checklist available to all Atlanta developers
- Green single-family rehabilitation specifications
- Grants for developers who want to surpass the baseline green requirements

A New Green Baseline

The new green baseline features common elements of the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria, the first national standard for green affordable housing. They also incorporate aspects of EarthCraft, the criteria developed by Southface, a leader in environmental sustainability and resource-efficient homes and communities throughout the Southeast.

The green baseline will improve the efficiency and quality of Atlanta’s anticipated 400 NSP homes. It also will provide critical data to inform and strengthen the city’s affordable green building initiatives.

“The best practices lower utility costs, conserve water and other resources. They also replace dilapidated, vacant structures with healthy, affordable homes and neighborhoods. The result will significantly improve the outlook for communities.”

— John O’Callaghan, President & CEO
Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership

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Helping Developers Exceed the Baseline

Developers who receive a Green Home Advantage Grant to exceed the green baseline requirements gain technical assistance from Southface. Grant recipients also can learn about energy performance testing, green building techniques and how to achieve EarthCraft certification.

The Green Home Advantage Grant helps developers integrate green building at the start of each project. Overall, the requirements aim to reduce energy consumption by 15 percent by incorporating stronger requirements for insulation, Energy Star appliances and lighting, and HVAC equipment. The requirements of the grant also improve ventilation and incorporate non-toxic paints, carpets and other materials that can prevent respiratory and other health risks for children and adults.

The above-baseline measures are expected to be incorporated into the rehabbing of an estimated 100 units. Grantees will receive EarthCraft certification and be eligible for certification through Enterprise Green Communities.

Building a Green Future for Atlanta

Enterprise will evaluate the impact of the Green Home Advantage program by examining energy and water performance one year from the date of rehab completion and occupancy.

In partnership with the City of Atlanta, Enterprise will also compare the performance between sample units meeting baseline green requirements and those that incorporate more aggressive measures.

While the program takes important steps to address Atlanta’s foreclosure challenges, its benefits extend beyond neighborhood stabilization by providing a set of green specifications available to all developers rehabbing Atlanta properties. The Green Home Advantage program also promises to strengthen the capacity of the city’s developers.

Ultimately, the program offers healthier homes for residents and a sustainable future for Atlanta.

“The Green Home Advantage Grants have allowed us to upgrade the energy efficiency and water conservation aspects of our NSP homes. The result will be a higher quality of life and long-term savings that will help improve stability and reduce foreclosure risks for Atlanta’s new homeowners.”

— Young T. Hughley Jr., President & CEO
Resources for Residents and Communities

Green Home Advantage: At a Glance

- A partnership between the City of Atlanta, Enterprise, EarthCraft and The Home Depot Foundation
- New baseline green requirements for all of Atlanta’s NSP properties
- Developer resources: site specifications, training, checklist, grants for exceeding baseline
- Overall results: new tools; increased developer capacity; greener, healthier homes and communities