



Creating Healthy Homes & Communities Throughout Minnesota

DEVELOPERS and APARTMENT MANAGERS

Healthy Housing is a Smart Investment

Healthy and green housing is not just a hot topic—it helps landlords provide desirable places for people to live, and is good for the bottom line. Apartment managers and owners can rest easy knowing that their apartments are safe and healthy for tenants, and that they will want to stay.

Tenants want healthy, comfortable homes with affordable utilities. Units can be rented faster and tenants will stay longer when they find healthy, affordable places to live. Healthy housing can also help landlords attract loyal tenants who will care about the quality of their living environment.

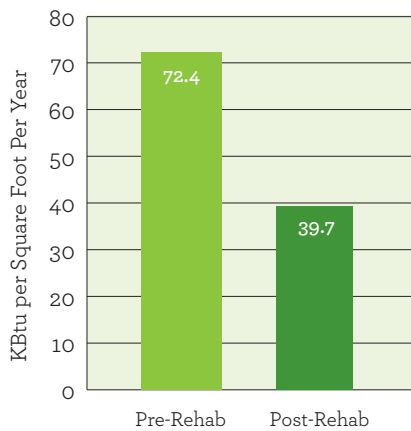
- Tighter homes with fewer air leaks are more comfortable, cost less to heat and cool, and reduce complaints about unwanted smells and noise from other units.
- Green features and modern upgrades appeal to tenants, especially when they reduce utility costs.

In a national Rent.com survey, nearly 86% of Americans said they would prefer to live in an eco-friendly space. Many said they would be willing to pay more in rent to do so. ¹

Healthy housing and green improvements increase cash flow and reduce the costs of owning and managing apartments in the long run and often have attractive paybacks over time.

Owner/Manager Benefits	Healthy Improvements
Lower utility costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiler controls, set-back thermostats, air sealing and insulating, efficient heaters, and changing air filters reduce energy usage. • Electricity usage is lowered with efficient lighting. • Low-flow shower heads, faucets, and toilets reduce water usage.
Reduce maintenance and repair costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry, well-ventilated buildings avoid expense of abating mold and last longer. • Investments in durable, healthy building materials recoup costs over time (e.g. one-piece shower enclosures, solid surface flooring, and LED exit lighting). • Integrated pest management (IPM) gets at the root of pest problems, is less costly over the long term, and leads to greater tenant satisfaction. • Smoke-free policies prevent turnover due to complaints of smoke, reduce cleaning and maintenance costs when units turn over, and lessen risk of fire. ²
Reduce liability risks with safety features and clean and well-maintained buildings.	<p>Safety features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grab bars, handrails on stairways, deadbolts, and radon testing. • Properly maintained smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. • Smoke-free buildings that cut the risk of fires.

Annual Energy Consumption • Viking Terrace • Worthington • MN



With efficient heating and cooling design and other green retrofits, the energy consumption of Viking Terrace was reduced by 45% after rehabilitation. Water usage also fell to about 43 gallons per person per day, compared to a national average usage of 69 gallons. Viking Terrace is a 60-unit building originally built in 1974.³ Viking Terrace (shown on front) was renovated in 2007 by Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership and is a Minnesota Green Communities demonstration project.



Most tenants prefer smoke-free homes.

*A 2009 Twin Cities metro survey found that three-quarters of renters would be likely to choose a smoke-free building over a similar one that allows smoking.*⁴

Healthy, Safe, Affordable Apartments are a Win-Win for Owners, Tenants, and Communities.

Renting is the right choice for many Minnesotans. Renting offers people greater flexibility in being able to move to jobs, limited maintenance responsibilities, and reduced financial risk compared to home ownership. Rental housing is in demand throughout Minnesota.

In responding to the need for rental housing, apartment owners and developers can provide high quality, healthy housing options for young adults starting out, working families, and older adults. Many landlords already provide healthy, efficient, high-quality homes where people want to live—homes that are valuable assets to our communities.

Lower operating costs and more competitive rents also benefit renters and apartment owners. When renters can afford their homes, they have more financial stability and can pay their rent on time. Landlords avoid high turnover and the expense and inconvenience of evictions, which helps prevent foreclosures. Affordable rents also make it possible for families to budget enough for other needs like education, food, and health care.

Thinking of Developing a New Building? Smart Location Matters.

- When developments are near transportation options, tenants can choose to walk, bike, bus, or drive.
- A successful development can transform entire blocks or communities and win support for future projects.

References

- ¹ Rent.com survey at <http://www.rent.com/press-room/media/green-living-infoflash-2-25-10.pdf>. 2010.
- ² Live Smoke Free, MN Smoke Free Housing at <http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org/landlords/benefits.html>.
- ³ Weber, Klossner, Chepie, & Carmody. *Building Outcome Evaluation and Monitoring: Viking Terrace, Worthington, Minnesota, 2009* and <http://www.mnshi.umn.edu/kb/casestudies>.
- ⁴ Live Smoke Free, MN Smoke Free Housing at <http://www.mnsmokefreehousing.org/landlords/benefits.html>.



The Alliance for Healthy Homes and Communities is a partnership of Sustainable Resources Center, Minnesota Housing Partnership, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, and the Minnesota Green Communities initiative of the Family Housing Fund and Greater Minnesota Housing Fund with the goal of creating a statewide alliance to promote healthy homes and communities in Minnesota. The Alliance was formed through a planning grant from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation. www.alliancehhc.org