



2ND ANNUAL GREEN IMPACT REPORT

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA HOUSING
PARTNERSHIP

JANUARY 2014

GREEN-ING TO IMPROVE COMMUNITIES

SWMHP's commitment to green and sustainable business practices is about so much more than saving the environment. At its heart, it's about getting the most out of our mission of creating thriving place to live, grow and work.

This year, we've seen how going green helps to create safe and welcoming neighborhoods. Restoring properties like Nobles Square sets a standard and expectation for quality rental homes. Its revived outdoor areas utilize durable and recycled materials to create spaces that invite residents and neighbors to interact and get to know each other.

Our construction and rehab practices also supported local communities' waste and resource management

strategies. Better control of construction waste and runoff from properties help cities like St. Peter manage infrastructure maintenance costs and invest in other valuable community projects.

We've also learned that going green in our multi-family properties works best when tenants are engaged. Building relationships, leadership, and ownership takes time, but it makes healthy and sustainable homes principles stick. SWMHP and Lloyd Management are learning from its resident engagement pilot in Mankato and St. Peter, and we're looking forward to demonstrating progress in our 2014 report.

Find more on our green goals and outcomes in the 2013 Green Reporting Detail attached.



PARK ROW CROSSING, ST. PETER

Fall 2013 marked the beginning of construction, redeveloping the old hospital site. The property will provide energy efficient townhomes within easy walking distance of downtown businesses.



NOBLES SQUARE APARTMENTS, WORTHINGTON

Forty-eight families at Nobles Square Apartments had front-row seats to the installation of Energy Star windows and doors, durable new siding, and efficient plumbing fixtures. A new playground and picnic area encourages active, outdoor pastimes for residents. Restoring the property as safe and affordable housing in Worthington also keeps units available in a very tight housing market.

Photo above: **HOME MAINTENANCE CLASS, WILLMAR.** The class of Adult Basic Education and English Language Learner students practiced basic home maintenance skills, thanks to the help of the local Home Depot store.

NeighborWorks®
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HIGHLIGHTS



HOME REMEDY

A collaboration with Westbrook-Walnut Grove High School and the SW Clean Energy Resource Team created opportunities for students to share energy and water saving tips with SWMHP tenants while building presentation and job skills.



IN-OFFICE RECYCLING

The SWMHP Green Team and AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer teamed up to provide staff training on local recycling rules and more readily-accessible recycling containers to decrease the proportion of SWMHP office waste entering landfills.



SIBLEY PARK APARTMENTS, MANKATO

Leasing began at the new Sibley Park Apartments early 2013. The project featured clean-up and redevelopment of a former industrial site, low-impact landscaping, and easy access to Mankato's pedestrian trail system.



The Southwestern Mental Health Center office building in Worthington provides staff and clients a safe, healthy and attractive new service location. It also brings new life to the former Central School site.

GREEN-ING TO IMPROVE LIVES

SWMHP's choice to go green in our operations affects the lives of individuals as well as communities. To start, rehabilitation has improved energy efficiency, water conservation, and indoor air quality in scores of properties this year. For example, Small Cities Development Programs in Adrian, Rushmore, Winthrop, Renville, Montevideo, and other towns resulted in about 30 families with safer, more efficient homes.

For dozens of refugee families in Worthington and Willmar, green content in Home Maintenance classes have made living in a new country just a little bit safer, healthier, and friendlier. Students leave the class knowing how to improve air quality and furnace efficiency by changing filters, reduce toxins in the home by using safer cleaning products, and find the right

tools and materials to repair their homes. They also meet helpful employees at local home improvement stores, creating new connections to the broader community.

Beyond safety, health, and environmental benefits, SWMHP staff and customers have found that going green often opens up more choices for them. Improved insulation in the homes of low-moderate income families reduces utility costs, making money available for school supplies, clothes, and transportation. Inviting connections to outdoor spaces at multifamily buildings like Nobles Square make regular exercise an easier choice for adults and children.

Find more on our green goals and outcomes in the 2013 Green Reporting Detail attached.

GET MORE INFORMATION

Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP) is a nonprofit community development corporation based in Slayton, Minnesota. SWMHP is driven to create thriving places to live, grow and work through partnerships with communities. To learn more about SWMHP, visit our website at www.swmhp.org, explore our [Facebook page \(search: SWMHP\)](#), or follow us on [Twitter @SWMHP](#).

2013 SWMHP Green Team members: Kristie Blankenship (chair), Michele Clarke, Duane Hattendorf, and Jennifer Prins (Green Champion). SWMHP received its Green Organization designation in 2012 from NeighborWorks® America. More information on the Green Organization Program at nw.org/green.



ANNUAL GREEN REPORTING DETAIL

Progress made in 2013 toward SWMHP's commitments as a Green NeighborWorks® Organization is shown in green.

SECTION 1: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

1.1 BOARD RESOLUTION

The SWMHP Board of Directors will pass a resolution in support of obtaining Green NWO designation.

No change. Completed in 2011.

1.2 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

SWMHP will communicate publicly about its commitment and performance related to its green activities. External communications will incorporate and highlight green activities whenever appropriate and any written materials or reports will be made available on the organization's web site.

SWMHP's website includes a section on the organization's commitments as a Green NWO, including links to current programs and project profiles. The agency's Facebook page and e-newsletter also highlighted green project features and tips.

SECTION 2: OPERATIONS

2.1 SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

SWMHP will use sustainable business practices in its day-to-day operations as evidenced by achieving and maintaining at least the minimum number of items from the NeighborWorks Green Operations Checklist.

Responsible staff identified in the Green Management Plan reviewed and initialed the Green Operations Checklist to verify compliance with the items SWMHP committed to in its application for designation.

2.2 GREEN MANAGEMENT PLAN

SWMHP will adopt a Green Management Plan to ensure ongoing oversight and implementation of sustainable business practices in its day-to-day operations. The Plan will include clear roles and responsibilities, including designation of an individual to coordinate the organization's green efforts.

The Green Management Plan was adopted prior to application for designation. The Green Champion is Jennifer Prins. The Green Team is Kristie Blankenship (chair), Michele Clarke, and Duane Hattendorf. Duane will be replaced by Angeles Berjillos Castro in 2014.

2.3 EMPLOYEE AWARENESS

SWMHP will enact a clear and effective strategy for informing existing and new employees of the intent and implementation requirements of both green operations and green program areas.

SWMHP makes employees aware of the organization's green commitments through:

- *New employee orientation to Green Management Plan and other green organization commitments.*
- *Standing green agenda items at staff meetings.*
- *Regular "Green Days" organized by staff committee(s).*

SECTION 3: HOMEOWNERSHIP EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

3.1 HOMEOWNERSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULA

All SWMHP pre- and post-home owner education curricula will be consistent with healthy and sustainable homes principles. SWMHP's homebuyer education and counseling program will cover the core elements of healthy and sustainable homes: energy efficiency, water conservation, and healthy indoor environments. Each individual course or curriculum will cover the principles that are most relevant to the subject matter, but all core principles will be covered in the program as a whole.

The Director of Homeownership Services certified that the current curriculum continues to cover healthy and sustainable homes principles. SWMHP's curricula include:

- *Pre-purchase homebuyer education*
- *Post-purchase education*
- *Financial literacy*
- *Home maintenance and repair*

3.2 HOMEBUYER EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

SWMHP will ensure that at least 90% of clients reported in pre- and post-purchase education receive the green curriculum information either during class presentation, through distribution of materials in class, or in counseling sessions.

100% of clients in pre- and post-purchase education received green curriculum information. Each person completing education receives instruction on healthy housing, maintenance, and safety, and the "Home Remedy" brochure detailing energy and water conservation and green cleaning tips. Home Maintenance courses also demonstrate environmentally-friendly cleaning.

3.3 EDUCATOR TRAINING

SWMHP will ensure that each Homeownership Educator and Homeownership Program Manager is trained through an approved method within six months of moving into an educator role.

All educators have completed the NeighborWorks e-learning course HO290el: Being Green, Seeing Green: Counseling Clients to Maximize Energy Savings.

SECTION 4: LENDING

4.1 HOME IMPROVEMENT LENDING

When SWMHP controls loan product design, SWMHP will require that its rehab lending allow for green rehabilitation, including lead abatement/mitigation, energy-efficiency, home repair and improvement, and other green retrofits as allowable.

No funds were available in 2013 for SWMHP-controlled rehab projects. However, 29 single-family home repair projects were completed through other programs, addressing all eligible energy efficiency, safety, lead, and mold issues found in the homes.

4.2 MARKETING AND AWARENESS

SWMHP will market the availability of its home lending products to potential borrowers so that they know the benefits of green homes and are aware of the availability of financing. SWMHP will utilize or otherwise produce marketing and educational materials that are available at SWMHP's office and described on the website.

In communities where SWMHP operates home rehabilitation programs, lending products are marketed on social media and in flyers at social service agencies, banks, City offices, community centers, education programs, general contractors, and others. The "Home Remedy" brochure and MN Department of Health's educational pieces on lead, mold, etc. are used as applicable.

4.3 FUNDING AND RESOURCES

SWMHP will make available resource information relevant to the local market and include any programs made available by state or local governments, utilities, or similar programs that can be used to help fund or finance green home improvements.

In communities where home rehabilitation programs are funded and available, SWMHP provides a list, by county, of resources for homeowners to contact for more funding sources.

SECTION 5: NEW CONSTRUCTION

5.1 GREEN BUILDING PROGRAMS

SWMHP will ensure that a minimum of 50% of newly constructed single-family homes and 50% of multi-family properties will meet certification standards as defined by the Minnesota Green Communities standards.

In 2013, construction was completed on three (3) single-family homes and one multifamily property, Sibley Park Apartments in Mankato. All properties met Minnesota Green Communities standards.

SECTION 6: MULTIFAMILY REHABILITATION

6.1 GREEN REHAB PLANNING ASSESSMENT

For at least 50% of rehabilitation projects or units completed, SWMHP will conduct a green rehabilitation planning assessment to determine opportunities for incorporating the healthy and sustainable homes principles into the rehabilitation scope of work.

One multi-family rehabilitation project was completed in 2013, Nobles Square Apartments in Worthington. A CNA completed on the project to identify green rehabilitation opportunities. The rehab included water conserving fixtures, Energy Star appliances, recycled flooring, and construction waste management methods.

6.2 GREEN REHAB SCOPE

For at least 50% of rehabilitation projects or units completed, SWMHP will ensure that the scope of work addresses the core requirements of the healthy and sustainable homes principles, including a minimum 15% energy efficiency improvement over existing conditions, and elements addressing water conservation and healthy indoor environments.

On Nobles Square Apartments (rehab described in 6.1 above), Home Energy Rating System (HERS) testing was conducted after rehabilitation, resulting in a rating of 84 in building 2175 and 85 in building 2195.

SECTION 7: SINGLE-FAMILY REHABILITATION

7.1 GREEN REHAB SPECIFICATIONS

On single-family rehab projects where SWMHP controls the scope of work, SWMHP will use Minnesota Green Communities rehabilitation specifications to address the healthy and sustainable homes principles and will refer to these specifications on at least 90% of all home rehabilitations completed.

In 2013, one single-family rehab project was completed where SWMHP controlled the scope of work. It was rehabilitated to Minnesota Green Communities standards.

7.2 PERFORMANCE TESTING

For units using the energy efficiency components of the rehabilitation specification, SWMHP will ensure Home Performance testing is conducted pre- and post-rehab on at least 15% of the rehabilitated units.

On the one single-family rehab noted in 7.1 above, a blower door test completed and compared to test prior to rehabilitation to document improved energy efficiency.

SECTION 8: ASSET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

8.1 GREEN ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

SWMHP will put in place a full-spectrum green asset management strategy for its rental housing portfolio, including:

- Strategies to incorporate green practices for 100% of properties within 3 years from date of application.
- Portfolio and property-specific goals, issues, and priorities.
- Utility data tracking plan to inform property needs priorities.
- Protocols for green operations and maintenance and specific priorities for green capital improvements for the portfolio).
- Staff/management capacity to implement green goals.

SWMHP's portfolio asset management plan has green property management, maintenance, and resident education goals. Additionally, each property-specific asset management plan has green property management and maintenance goals listed along with water conservation efforts, as applicable. Capital Needs Assessments and utility consumption data inform each property's asset management plan.

8.2 UTILITY CONSUMPTION TRACKING

SWMHP will collect and analyze owner-paid energy and water consumption data across at least 50% of its rental portfolio. Analysis will be done at least annually for all owner-paid utility accounts using data on monthly or quarterly utility consumption, and will identify intensive energy or water uses and any consumption anomalies and their potential causes.

Utility tracking began in 2013 for all SWMHP properties, with analysis to begin in 2014 when comparison data is available. Current utility tracking is limited owner-paid utilities. In 2014, staff pilot utility tracking for resident-paid utilities in two properties.

8.3 GREEN OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE PLANS

SWMHP will have green operations and maintenance plans in place for at least 75% of its rental portfolio. The plans will include:

- Unit turnover checklists
- Maintenance and materials
- Limiting toxic pest management practices
- Landscaping and irrigation (if applicable)
- Appliance/fixture replacements specifying Energy Star and WaterSense or equivalent
- Staff training requirements
- Annual evaluation and review protocols

Green operations and maintenance plans are in place for all SWMHP rental properties. In 2012, property management firms working in SWMHP properties received green property management and began using a green unit turnover checklist and replacement product specifications. In 2013, SWMHP began a collaboration to develop an online green property management and maintenance certification program. The program will be beta-tested in 2014. SWMHP is also working with a consultant to determine best practices for resident engagement in green activities.

8.4 GREEN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

SWMHP will enact a process to ensure consideration of healthy and sustainable homes principles in its capital improvement planning for at least 75% of properties. The plans will include:

- Specific consideration of healthy and sustainable homes principles.
- Identification of the most intensive project components from a consumption and/or environmental perspective.
- Lifecycle cost analysis of the budgeted improvements.

SWMHP is conducting Green Capital Needs Assessments (CNAs) on 100% of its owned portfolio. As of 2013, over 75% of properties have CNAs and capital improvement plans in place. In 2013, SWMHP will begin a pilot to integrate resident health measures into its CNA process.

SECTION 9: OWNER AND RESIDENT AWARENESS

9.1 HOMEOWNER AND BUYER EDUCATION

SWMHP will ensure that at least 90% of homeowners purchasing or occupying a home built or rehabilitated with green practices are provided written materials and in-person education on healthy and sustainable homes principles, including information on how to properly operate the green features of the home.

100% of new homeowners do a walk through with an SWMHP Construction Manager, who identifies and explains green products/systems and answers homeowner question. Each homeowner also receives a Warranty Booklet that has all instructions and warranty information for the home.

9.2 RENTAL PROPERTY RESIDENT EDUCATION

SWMHP will incorporate healthy and sustainable homes principles into resident communication and education programs for at least 75% of its rental properties.

All properties with green features have Resident Manuals provided to residents at lease-up. SWMHP piloted a resident education program with the Southwest Clean Energy Resource Team in 2013, conducting short presentations and materials for residents of SWMHP properties in Pipestone, Luverne, and Windom. Resident engagement practices are being developed for portfolio-wide implementation in 2014 and 2015.

SECTION 10: COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ORGANIZING

10.1 GREEN PLANNING AND ACTION

SWMHP will undertake a participatory planning process that identifies green issues facing the community, and will develop a specific agenda for its role in working on at least one of the community's green priority issues.

SWMHP develops plans in response to community requests, integrating green issues into needs assessments and program design whenever possible. In 2013, participatory planning for Small Cities Development Program applications addressed home energy and safety needs in six (6) communities.

10.2 RESIDENT EDUCATION

SWMHP staff or partners will provide education or training events for residents of the local community on green topics.

SWMHP partnered with Westbrook-Walnut Grove school to educate residents in Windom, Pipestone, and Luverne about saving money through energy efficiency and water conservation.

10.3 RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

SWMHP will facilitate volunteer and leadership opportunities for residents to participate in projects that establish public priorities and plans on green issues, or engage in a local green activity. SWMHP will provide volunteer opportunities for residents in at least one activity during the course of the year, and will encourage resident leadership in addition to general resident participation.

SWMHP's partnership with Westbrook-Walnut Grove schools provided volunteer opportunities for 18 students in 2013. The students developed leadership skills by exploring green and sustainable home principles, practicing their presentation skills, crafting meaningful outreach messages, and representing their school at three community home shows.

10.4 GREEN BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY

SWMHP will document the benefits of its green activities to the community it serves.

SWMHP will make this annual report available on its website after review by the Board of Directors. Property and program profiles and other impact reports also note green impact when available.