

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND HOUSING RESILIENCE

MADISON, WISCONSIN



ELEVATE

WHAT IS THE EFFICIENCY NAVIGATOR?

The Efficiency Navigator helps small to medium-sized apartment housing become more efficient, affordable, and resilient while reducing operating costs for owners and energy cost for residents.

The program is for renter-occupied buildings with rents affordable to residents at or below 80% Area Median Income. This housing stock is known as naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH).

The program provides free building energy assessments and upgrades such as efficient lighting; improved heating, ventilation and air conditioning; better insulation; water softener optimization, tune-ups or replacement; water conserving fixtures; and recommendations to improve home health. Participants agree to maintain affordable rents for at least five years.

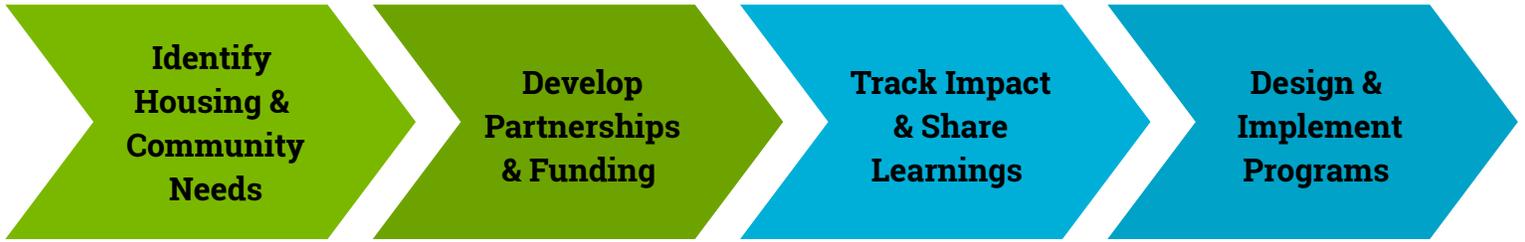
SUPPORTING MADISON

[Madison's Sustainability Plan](#) states that energy efficiency is necessary for housing affordability alongside healthy indoor air quality and safe building materials in new and existing homes.

In 2022, 19% of greenhouse gas emissions in Madison came from residential buildings. Through energy efficiency upgrades the Efficiency Navigator reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves the quality of existing multi-family homes. The program supports Madison's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing quality, affordable housing.



THE PROCESS: FROM IDEA TO IMPACT



Applications Recieved in 2025

396
Units

99
Buildings

Thanks to coordinated outreach with the City of Madison, we saw an increase in applications and interest. This high level of interest demonstrates the big opportunity to make a positive impact on home energy efficiency, health, and safety across the community. However, the annual program budget is not large enough to fund upgrades to all interested buildings in a single year. We worked as a team to prioritize the properties in order to best service the needs of the community.

Collaboration with property owners who care deeply about their communities has been at the heart of the program. The process starts with a building energy assessment to identify the most impactful energy efficiency measures. The program then obtains bids from contractors and identifies potential Focus on Energy incentives. Finally, we help navigate the timely implementation of the identified measures and track the impact.

The Efficiency Navigator pays the cost of building upgrades, removing the financial barrier to action and making improvements possible at scale. In exchange, owners lock rents at fair market rates according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Changes in the availability of federal funding required significant pivots and problem solving in the second half of 2025. Project work was reallocated across multiple funding sources to meet varying requirements. The City of Madison’s continued support, guidance, and funding in a changing landscape have allowed the Efficiency Navigator to continue making a positive impact.

How the Process Works

Assessment

We offer building assessments to identify energy, health & saftey, and solar opportunities

Scope of Work

We provide step-by-step technical support to navigate contractor engagement and incentive programs

Implement Measures

We help owners navigate the timely implementation of the identified efficiency measures

IMPACTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2025

90

Residents

23

Children & Seniors

40,825 kg

Annual CO₂
Emissions Savings

34

Energy Efficiency Measures

19

Health & Safety Measures

101,617

Vehicle Miles Traveled
Avoided



“
The Efficiency Navigator is real-life sustainability. It keeps our focus on allowing the building to stay affordable and resilient for long-term residents.
— Madison Property Owner
”

CASE STUDIES



Location: **Madison, WI**
Number of units: **4**



Avoided CO₂ emissions:
4,064 kg



42% energy savings



CO₂ equivalent vehicle
miles traveled: **10,432**
miles



10-year cost savings:
\$10,090.00



Completed Improvements:

- Air Sealing
- Boiler Inspection & Tune-up
- Attic Insulation
- Bathroom Fans
- ENERGY STAR Refrigerators Installation
- Water Heater Re-venting
- Chimney Liner Installation
- Mold Remediation



Location: **Madison, WI**
Number of units: **20**



Avoided CO₂ emissions:
9,738 kg



16% energy savings



CO₂ equivalent vehicle
miles traveled: **24,149**
miles



10-year cost-savings:
\$18,790.00



Completed Improvements:

- Attic Insulation
- Ventilation
- Air Sealing
- ENERGY STAR Window Installation

IMPACTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2022-2025

256

Families

158

Energy Efficiency Measures

57

Health & Safety Measures

121,643 kg

CO₂ Emissions Savings

ALL MEASURES INCLUDE:

- AC Upgrade
- Air Sealing
- Attic Insulation
- Dual Fuel Air Source Heat Pump
- Electrical
- Electric Heat to Air Source Heat Pump
- Fix Gas Leaks
- Gas to Electric Stove
- Gas Water Heater Replacement
- Heat Pump Water Heater Replacement
- Lighting
- Heating and Air Conditioning Upgrades
- Mold Testing and Remediation
- Pipe Insulation
- Refrigerator Replacement
- Wall and Rim Joist Insulation
- Solar
- Ventilation
- Water Softener Repair and Replacement
- Window Replacement

“We are so appreciative, and impressed with the quality and speed of the work. When we went into the units, we could tell how much warmer it was and how much tighter the airflow felt in there.”

— Madison Property
Owner

KEY ADVICE FOR OTHERS

- **Build strong relationships with contractors** early and provide clear program specifications to ensure alignment and quality. Continue to seek out and engage additional contractors, particularly those with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- **Plan for contingency funding** to address unforeseen additional safety or health needs once the building work begins.
- **Track the impact** of the work such as CO2 reductions, cost savings, and health/safety improvements in order to share benefits with others.



FUNDING & PARTNERS

Funding has been provided by a variety of sources including Public Service Commission Energy Innovation Grant, American Rescue Plan Act, HUD Community Block Grant, EPA Community Change Grant, DOE Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, and City of Madison.

- **The City of Madison:** Engagement, Funding, & Oversight
- **Elevate:** Technical Expertise & Implementation
- **Sustain Dane:** Engagement, Partnerships, Education, Implementation, & Reporting



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LOOKING FORWARD

Over the past four years, the Efficiency Navigator has made a positive impact on over 250 families in Madison. The Efficiency Navigator will continue to move forward with important energy efficiency and health and safety improvements in a new cohort of buildings for 2026.

As Madison moves toward its goal of quality and affordable housing, continued investment and partnership are essential. We invite city leaders, community organizations, and residents to stay engaged, to share their lived experiences, support local initiatives, and champion efforts that ensure every household will live in a comfortable, efficient, safe and resilient home.



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