City of Iowa City Housing Rehabilitation
Energy Efficiency & Sustainability Guidelines

Goals

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts.
2. Reduce energy costs to increase affordability for residents.
3. Improve indoor air quality.

Sustainability Priorities in Housing Rehabilitation Projects:

The following guidelines are used for city-assisted housing rehabilitation projects. The applicability of each item depends on a project's scope and budget.

1. Purchase energy efficient equipment and appliances
    a. Any appliances purchased will be Energy Star rated
    b. Electric stoves will be given preference over gas stoves
    c. Supply LED light bulbs.
2. Seal and insulate efficiently
    a. Seal air leaks through the home to stop drafts
    b. Add insulation to block heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer
        i. Add attic insulation (R-49)
        ii. If the drywall is being removed for the project, use closed cell spray foam in walls (R-20)
    c. Install Energy Star rated windows if replacing windows to mitigate unwanted air exchange
    d. New doors as needed to increase efficiency
3. Heat and cool efficiently
    a. If replacing HVAC units, purchase equipment that is Energy Star rated and "right-sized" for the home
        i. Furnace – 95% efficient or higher
        ii. Air conditioner: Minimum 15 SEER (threshold to get rebate)
        iii. Water heater: .67 EF and Energy Star qualified (natural gas)
    b. Educate homeowners about HVAC equipment maintenance and changing air filters regularly
    c. Install a programmable thermostat
    d. Seal heating and cooling ducts
4. Landscaping
    a. Work with Green Iowa AmeriCorps to identify appropriate areas for tree cover
    b. Work with Parks & Recreation staff to identify appropriate plant palette for the property

    c. Complete grading for stormwater management as needed
5. Other environmental considerations
    a. Use Low/No VOC paints, primers, adhesives & sealants
    b. When replacing flooring, install environmentally preferable flooring that is durable, long-lasting, made of recycled or renewable materials, and does not add toxins to the air inside the home
    c. Prevent mold with property ventilation of high-moisture areas
    d. Test for radon and install mitigation system if levels are high

Current Efforts through Neighborhood Services

1. Energy efficiency program: From September 1 to March 1 each year, Iowa City homeowners can apply for a loan to increase their home's energy efficiency. Eligible projects include replacing or upgrading heating systems, insulating and weatherproofing, and window replacement.
2. Healthy Homes program: Grant funding for home repairs to address asthma triggers and indoor air quality. Up to $7,500 available to rental and owner-occupied households with children under 18 with asthma. The program incorporates education to self-manage asthma and maintain and healthy home.
3. Energy audits: All housing rehabilitation projects must complete a free home energy audit prior to funding approval. The audit will measure the level of air coming into a home and perform basic weatherization, if necessary, to reduce air leaks. They also check insulation, gas lines, water heater, sink and shower aerators, and more to make sure everything is energy efficient and running safely. During the audit participant will receive 8 LED light bulbs, low flow aerators in kitchen and bathrooms, pipe insulation for water heater, taping of ducts in basement, and possibly extra weatherization based on a blower door test.
4. Radon testing & mitigation: The City completes radon testing and mitigation, if necessary, for UniverCity and South District Partnership homes. The City will begin providing grant funding for radon testing and mitigation in rental properties participating in the rental rehabilitation program.
5. Homeowner education opportunities: Homeowners or prospective homeowners can participate in free home maintenance and energy efficiency classes through the Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity.