



CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor

Martin J. Walsh

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City Celebrates Largest Public Housing Energy Efficiency Project in Nation's History

Project incorporated energy savings, public housing capital improvements and career opportunities in the building trades for BHA and low-income city residents

BOSTON – Mayor Martin J. Walsh today celebrated the completion of a \$66.7 million energy efficiency rehabilitation of 13 public housing properties owned by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA). The work completed by project contractor, Ameresco, includes millions of dollars in energy savings, capital upgrades to BHA's public housing portfolio, and the first-in-the-nation, public housing project-labor agreement, which provided an opportunity for BHA residents to embark on careers in the building trades through the Building Pathways Program. An event was held at the Charlestown Apartments, BHA's largest housing community for low- and moderate-income individuals and families, which saw \$27.4 million in improvements, impacting 1,100 apartment units.

“This project is truly what partnerships are all about – it took a comprehensive approach to saving taxpayer money, improving our city's public housing, and improving people's lives all at the same time through meaningful career training and subsequent employment,” said Mayor Walsh.

The upgrades completed as part of the largest public housing energy efficiency project in the nation's history, impacted 13 BHA public housing developments and over 4,300 housing units. Many of these structures are over 60 years old and in need of infrastructure improvements. A mix of 17 different energy and water efficiency improvements were employed in the rehabilitation with key measures including water conservation, energy efficient lighting installation, de-centralization of aging heating and hot water systems, the replacement of apartment temperature controls, and upgrades to energy management systems. The efficiency measures are estimated to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 13,000 tons annually.

The BHA anticipates that the upgrades will save the agency \$4.8 million annually in energy and water costs, with total savings expected to exceed \$100 million over the 20-year contract term, and allowing for the project financing to be paid off without any additional cost to the taxpayers.

Additionally, the BHA was able to refocus its limited Capital Funds to support other infrastructure improvements that are needed across its portfolio.

“We’ve proven that public housing can also be energy-efficient housing. We’re excited to be moving forward with green technology and upgrading our residents’ homes at the same time,” said BHA Administrator Bill McGonagle.

A resident education, training, and employment program will complement and reinforce the program over the life of the project.

“We are honored to have partnered with Mayor Walsh and the Boston Housing Authority on this significant project,” said George Sakellaris, President and CEO of Ameresco. “As a Massachusetts-based company, this is a remarkable opportunity to showcase the significant energy efficiency gains that can be achieved when you have strong, forward-thinking leadership and commitment at the local level. Ameresco is a national leader in this market, having developed over \$500 million in energy and water improvements in public housing across the country.”

The following BHA developments received energy upgrades as part of the project: Bromley Park and Heath Street in Jamaica Plain, Commonwealth and Washington Street in Brighton, Franklin Field and Pasciucco in Dorchester, Holgate and Whittier Street in Roxbury, Lenox Street in the South End/Lower Roxbury, Old Colony in South Boston, Roslyn Apartments in Roslindale, Torre Unidad in the South End, and the Charlestown development in Charlestown.

In addition, this project included the BHA’s first Project Labor Agreement (PLA), an agreement between Ameresco, the Building and Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District (MBBTC), and the BHA. It was the first public housing PLA of its kind since President Obama signed an executive order encouraging the use of PLAs in connection with large-scale construction projects.

Boston’s PLA created approximately 600 jobs for local union workers, public housing and low-income city residents, and small and minority owned businesses. During the three year construction period 103 BHA residents were hired, and twenty-five percent of those positions were with skilled trades, largely in labor or apprentice positions. In addition, the agreement created a groundbreaking pre-apprenticeship program funded in part by a \$60,000 contribution from Ameresco and a \$35,000 contribution from the Mayor’s Office of Jobs and Community Services that is open to BHA public housing and Section 8 residents, YouthBuild eligible participants, and very low-income Boston residents. Graduates who successfully complete the pre-apprenticeship training are given direct entry slots into apprenticeship opportunities through the Building and Construction Trades Council.

The BHA has subsequently entered into additional Project Labor Agreements and the pre-apprenticeship program continues today. Many of the 88 graduates have moved on to careers in the various building and construction trades.

BHA participated in two earlier energy performance contracts that saved the Authority more than \$17 million. Those contracts allowed the BHA to fully replace the original 1938 heating system at the Mary Ellen McCormack development in South Boston as well as upgrade heating and water systems at BHA state-funded developments throughout the city.

According to a recent study conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), public housing is, on average, less energy efficient on a per-square-foot basis than all other U.S. residential households. Reducing public housing energy costs by 10% could save nearly \$200 million per year in operating expenses.

The BHA was recently awarded accreditation for its efforts to implement energy efficient, healthy and green building practices in day-to-day operations as well as in long-term rehabilitation and redevelopment of its affordable housing portfolio. The award recognized BHA's integration of green initiatives with its healthy public housing initiatives and is considered to demonstrate best practices through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Affordable Green Initiative and the Sustainable Performance Institute.

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