

Multifamily Upgrade Program

Turning Vacancy into an Energy-Saving Opportunity

Case Study: Spruce Street Apartments, Berkeley, CA

When Oscar Rojas, Co-Founder and Principal of Cohen Rojas Capital Partners, purchased his 3-story, 24-unit Spruce Street property in Berkeley, half of its units were vacant and in disrepair. However, after hearing about the Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) Multifamily Upgrade Program, a program designed to help multifamily building owners upgrade the overall energy performance of their properties, he realized there was a significant opportunity at hand.

Healthy Skepticism Met with a Helpful Partner

Like many building owners, Rojas's decision to upgrade came with many questions, due to unfamiliarity with the program and its process.

However, his rater answered all questions and maintained great communication, shouldered administrative tasks—and of course, delivered results.

With the vacant units, we already knew we had to make certain upgrades. But because of the program we were able to do a more thorough project.

– Oscar Rojas

“The rater explained the process and how it works. The more things happened as he explained it, the better I felt. Everything happened according to plan, so it worked out great.”

– Oscar Rojas

Satisfied Residents and Shareholders

After completing a comprehensive energy efficiency upgrade including a new furnace, windows, appliances, domestic hot water heating, and interior and exterior lighting, Rojas says that residents are excited about their new and improved home. What's more, investors and community members are pleased with Rojas and partners' proactive, environmentally-friendly approach, which is projected to generate 41 percent energy savings over the building's pre-upgrade performance.

Offered on behalf of



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CASE STUDY

Project Name
Spruce Street

Location
1525 Spruce Street
Berkeley, CA

Building/Units/Stories
1 building/24 units/
3 stories

Year Built
1925

Owner/Developer
Cohen Rojas
Capital Partners

Rater
Mark Stout, Apollo
Energies

Contractor
Brent Bracelin, Bracelin
Company

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Spruce Street is a 24-unit, 3-story multifamily property built in 1925. The building, located in North Berkeley, serves a variety of residents spanning from long-term renters to graduate students. When Cohen Rojas Capital Partners purchased the community, nearly half of the building's units were in a state of disrepair. Knowing there was already a need for major renovations, the firm took advantage of Pacific Gas & Electric's Multifamily Upgrade Program to make comprehensive energy efficiency upgrades.

ENERGY UPGRADES

Cohen Rojas Capital Partners addressed a number of items to improve building energy efficiency. First, they replaced the building's central boiler with a new gravity wall furnace, and improved all domestic hot water heating via a new ENERGY STAR® unit. In addition, they installed all new windows and wall insulation for an airtight outer envelope, replaced interior and exterior lighting with LEDs, and installed new, energy-efficient refrigerators and dishwashers in units.

RESULTS

- Overall building energy use reduced by an estimated 41%, leading to significant cost savings and \$46,200 in program incentives
- New heating systems give residents more control while delivering major energy savings
- Whole-building upgrades have made previously vacant units profitable, while improving the operational efficiency of the entire building

“Whenever we can, we try to do right—using new technologies and taking environmental factors into account. Being able to provide our tenants with newer, better technology while earning incentives and sharing the improvements with the community and our investors is great for our company across the board.”

– Oscar Rojas, Co-Founder and Principal, Cohen Rojas Capital Partners

It's your turn to make your building more efficient and profitable.

To learn more about upgrades through the Multifamily Upgrade Program, go to multifamilyupgrade.com.