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PHIUS receives grant from John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to support energy-efficient standard for affordable multifamily housing projects

Not just for houses any more, passive buildings gaining mainstream adoption

Chicago, – September 29, 2015 – On the heels of its 10th Annual North American Passive House conference, Passive House Institute US (PHIUS) today announced a major initiative, funded by a grant from the [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#), to support the development of affordable housing that meets the stringent PHIUS+ 2015 passive building energy performance standard.

Buildings that meet the PHIUS+ standard use 60 – 80 percent less energy for heating and cooling compared to comparable conventional buildings, which makes the standard a perfect platform for successful affordable housing. Passive buildings are extremely comfortable, provide superior indoor air quality, and—they're resilient. A passive building can maintain comfortable conditions for days, even during power outages.

Over the past 10 years, PHIUS has made significant progress in developing a solid design methodology and energy performance standard appropriate for North American climates and construction practices. Until recently, however, passive house remained something of a boutique niche for forward-thinking single-family homeowners. Not any more.

PHIUS+ Passive building certification is being adopted for large-scale buildings ranging from apartment buildings (both affordable and market rate developments), mid and high-rises, professional offices to licensed health care facilities. For example:

- [Stellar Apartments](#), 6 units
- [Kiln Apartments](#), 18 units
- [Uptown Lofts](#), 24-unit affordable project developed by [Action Housing](#)
- [Orchards at Orenco](#), a 57-unit affordable housing project developed by [REACH Community Development](#)
- [Sunshine Health Facilities Resident Building](#), 32 units

Government and Housing Finance Agencies and major organizations like Enterprise Communities are accelerating the push by embracing PHIUS+ certification guidelines. For example:

- In its most recent criteria, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Authority awarded bonus points for implementing passive standards in its process for awarding Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).
- Enterprise Green Communities, which provides guidance to more than 20 states and affordable housing agencies, recently included PHIUS+ certification in its updated 2015 criteria.
- Seattle has passed a code change: multifamily projects that earn PHIUS+ certification qualify for a larger Floor Area Ratio (FAR) than buildings that don't.

With this growth in adoption has come a growth in demand for technical support (for design software and design guidance) and for PHIUS+ Certification and Quality Assurance services. To help PHIUS meet the demand, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation generously has provided financial support on two fronts:

- The Foundation funded the recent 10th Annual North American Passive House Conference in Chicago. The support enabled PHIUS to shape its program around large-scale, multifamily housing development, with multiple workshops and track sessions devoted to the topic. The conference was an enormous success, drawing 500+ architects, engineers, policy makers, educators. The conference exhibit hall showcased leading high-performance building component manufacturers including Mitsubishi and Owens Corning.
- Ongoing Foundation support will fund the development, publication and distribution of design and quality assurance manuals, and to increase staff to meet demand for technical support for the energy modeling software—WUFI Passive—required to design passive buildings.

About PHIUS

PHIUS is a 501(c)3 organization committed to making high-performance passive building the mainstream market standard. Founded in 2003, PHIUS has trained more than 2000 architects, engineers, energy consultants, energy raters, and builders. It also is the leading passive building research and information provider in North America. PHIUS recently released the new PHIUS+ 2015 climate-specific, cost-optimized passive building standard. The new standard was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. PHIUS has also established strategic partnerships with key organizations including RESNET, Carnegie Mellon University, Habitat for Humanity, Rocky Mountain Institute and others.

Through its Passive House Alliance US (PHAUS) program – a membership/chapter organization, PHIUS is building a robust support network of local regional passive building communities. PHAUS has 400+ members, 13 regional chapters, and dozens of corporate sponsors—and the numbers are growing.

About the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society. More information is at www.macfound.org.