



CASE STUDY

Carson Commons



“ The Oregon Multifamily Energy Program was instrumental in our decision to incorporate upgraded systems at Carson Commons. Working within a limited budget, the program’s incentives made it possible for us to select the most energy-efficient materials and equipment available.

— Kimberly Lyell, Deputy Director



PROJECT DETAILS



Project Name

Carson Commons



Location

Dallas, OR



Property Size

1 Building, 20 Units



Electric Utility

Pacific Power



Completion Year

2025



Project Type

New Construction



Program Pathway

Bundled Path



Owner

Polk Community Development Corporation



Energy Consultant

Earth Advantage



Incentive Amount

\$81,320



Electric Energy Savings*

71,590 kWh

Projects like Polk Community Development Corporation’s Carson Commons don’t appear out of thin air. They take a lot of planning, care, research, and collaboration to go from an idea on a drawing board to reality. Carson Commons opened its doors in September 2025 as a 20-unit affordable multifamily housing property home to a multigenerational community that reaps the benefits of modern, efficient, and affordable living.

The Carson Commons story began in 2021, when the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency came to Polk Community Development Corporation (Polk CDC) hoping to find a partner for a housing project that would serve young adults moving from supervised youth housing, aging out of foster care, or who have experienced homelessness. The mission spoke to Kimberly Lyell, Polk CDC’s Director of Operations, who set off to kickstart the project to serve people of all ages with low incomes.



The OR-MEP application is the most user-friendly application I’ve come across,” Lyell said. “The OR-MEP team is incredibly helpful and exceptionally knowledgeable.

*Energy savings are based on program modeling that compares projected electricity use to existing conditions before upgrades. Energy savings from any other fuels, such as gas, are not factored into OR-MEP energy savings and percent improvement calculations. This case study is provided as an example, and energy savings may vary for other projects depending on site specifics and existing conditions.

Lyell and team explored every funding opportunity we could find to make the project financially viable. Driven by her passion for sustainability, Lyell, working with Alpine Development Collaborative (formally GS& A), jumped at the chance to apply for Oregon Multifamily Energy Program (OR-MEP) incentives to incorporate energy efficiency into the Carson Commons design. OR-MEP selected the project for funding during OR-MEP Open Enrollment 2024 Round 2.

Polk CDC used OR-MEP incentives to help fund design choices that will make the building last as long as possible. “We have always prided ourselves on making sure we use the best materials within budget to improve energy efficiency and durability,” Lyell said. “Having additional funding sources such as OR-MEP allows us to implement even higher-quality, longer-lasting energy efficiencies in our new buildings.”

Lyell sees the big picture when it comes to how energy efficiency impacts residents. “Energy-efficient buildings help renters by lowering utility bills, keeping homes more comfortable year-round, and improving indoor air quality,” she said. “Plus, upgrades like better insulation and modern heating and cooling systems make apartments quieter, healthier, more comfortable, and more affordable to live in.”



Named after Letitia Carson, the first Black woman to legally own land in Oregon, Carson Commons is a healing, supportive home that provides a sense of independence to its residents. To honor Carson, a pioneer whose perseverance and determination continue to inspire, Polk CDC and the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency will connect residents to jobs, education, and healthcare resources tailored to individual needs. Oregon Black Pioneers, the state’s only historical society dedicated to preserving and presenting the experiences of African Americans, authored and contributed to the permanent exhibit depicting Carson’s story near the building’s entrance.

While pulling together funding sources for projects can take a lot of time, Lyell believes it’s always worthwhile to look into your options. Her experience working with OR-MEP is one she’d repeat. The OR-MEP application is the most user-friendly application I’ve come across,” Lyell said. “The OR-MEP team is incredibly helpful and exceptionally knowledgeable.

MEASURE SUMMARY

OR-MEP incentivized the following energy efficiency measures:



Windows



Wall Insulation



Ductless Heat Pumps



ENERGY STAR® Refrigerators



ENERGY STAR® Dishwashers



Get started today with the Oregon Multifamily Energy Program by filling out an interest form online at: oregonmultifamilyenergy.com