



Owner: Center for Community Alternatives & Syracuse Housing Authority | Location: Syracuse, NY
Completion Date: 2016 | Programs Achieved: Energy Star, LEED for Homes, NYSERDA

Imagine one day a gate opens and you're free, you have no place to live and an overwhelming pressure to acclimate to a world that struggles to understand you; add the possibility of a family waiting on the other side, the need for income and bills already adding up. Freedom Commons was built as a place to provide a safe and efficient space, stabilize and support for this very situation.

Without housing, people leaving incarceration will not access support, medical care, have a web of job opportunities, a safe place to be for not only themselves but also their families.

This not only helps people thrive after incarceration, but also studies have shown there is a significant cost savings to the community.

"Freedom Commons helps address a growing need in Syracuse for quality and affordable housing, coupled with resources to help formerly incarcerated residents reintegrate into the community. This project is a shining example of the burgeoning revitalization of the South Side (Syracuse) and will serve as a beacon of hope to those seeking a second chance."

— Ben Walsh, Mayor of Syracuse

Freedom Commons consists of 54 total apartments with 43 income-eligible units designated for individuals and/or

families with below 50% of the Area Media Income (AMI). 11 permanent supportive units designated for individuals and/or families whose income is at or below 30% of the AMI and who also have previously experienced homelessness and criminal justice involvement. In addition, the Freedom Common Academy provides 11 beds for temporary housing for adults returning home from incarceration. Participant-centered, comprehensive reentry services provide education, recovery, employment, civic restoration, housing support, and case management. The buildings include a computer lab and learning facilities, a community meeting space, laundry facilities, and a communal dining area.

The \$15 million project, a collaboration between the Center for Community Alternatives and Syracuse Housing Authority, is setting the stage for housing reform through





the country. This project was developed by Norstar Development USA, and designed by SWBR Architects. Freedom commons received funding from New York State Housing Trust Fund, OTDA Homeless Housing Assistance Programs, KeyBank and Key Community Development Corporation LIHC Equity, and NYSERDA Incentives.

The building creates an urban-residential character for the neighborhood, with a strong street edge pushing parking to the interior with inviting stoops to enhance the pedestrian experience. The building is constructed in durable materials including a brick base, metal panels, and fiber cement siding.

The program seeks to create a community based on restoration rather than retribution by serving the population with the highest risk of facing future incarceration. The future of this area is hopeful, Freedom Commons took on the task of being the first restoration in an ongoing implementation of redevelopment.

The building is LEED for Homes v4 Gold Certified complete with energy efficiency throughout the building.

Factors that support the LEED Gold Certification include:

- Located in the South Side of Syracuse on a previously developed site with access to transportation and services for all residents, with a small footprint.
- High performing mechanical system with high-efficient gas furnaces and central hot water systems.
- Super insulated building envelope including a combined R-23 combined wall insulation with R-5 continuous rigid insulation, and 2x6 walls with batt insulation.
- All LED lighting and Energy Star qualified appliances throughout the building.
- Low flow water fixtures with WaterSense labels throughout the building.
- Healthy indoor air environment with dedicated energy recovery ventilation, and individual mechanical system control for occupants.

