



For Immediate Release:

State College Community Land Trust receives \$125K from West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund

Monies will be used for the first Passive House multifamily renovation in Pennsylvania

April 11, 2023 -- The State College Community Land Trust (SCCLT) has been awarded a \$125,000 grant from West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund (WPPSEF) to support the renovation of an affordable housing duplex located at 1505/1507 University Drive in State College, Pennsylvania. This innovative renovation is a deep energy retrofit constructed to Passive House standards—the first Passive House multifamily renovation in Pennsylvania and the second Passive House multifamily renovation in the US. Other key partners are the Borough of State College and Centre County Government.

Colleen Ritter, Executive Director of SCCLT, said, “For over 26 years, we have created permanently affordable homeownership opportunities for low- and middle-income households in the Borough. Through the collaborative efforts of many, our GreenBuild project (the construction of two net-zero energy homes sold to middle-income households) showed us how green technology in new buildings positively impacts housing affordability with reduced energy bills. The subsequent Energy+ pilot incorporated energy efficiency into the scope of rehabilitating existing housing. We learned how to increase a home's affordability by reducing the energy burden and in turn, lowering energy bills. The grant from WPPSEF allows us to take this knowledge even further with the energy-focused retrofit of a 1970s duplex in the Borough of State College, slated for sale to two households at <50% Area Median Income. Homeownership opportunities are virtually nonexistent for our neighbors in this income bracket, and this project will ensure that the homes remain both energy efficient and affordable in perpetuity.”

Joel Morrison, Director of West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund, said “WPPSEF is pleased to support SCCLT’s cutting-edge renovation of the University Drive duplex to a Passive House standard to reduce the energy cost burden of its affordable housing program. This funding will create long-term impacts, improving the lives of its occupants and the community, and potentially laying the groundwork for future program standardization and serving as a workforce builder and blueprint to strengthen sustainability in the Centre Region and beyond.”

In February, project contractor Envinity, Inc. began construction, first removing the siding to install outrigger framing that will support new exterior insulation to seal up the building envelope. New roof trusses were installed that will allow for maximum solar collection when the solar PV panels are installed later this year. A highly efficient HVAC system and high-performance windows, coupled with a tightly sealed building envelope and extensive insulation will help meet Passive House certification requirements, ensuring that heat loss is minimized, and energy usage stays low. In addition to extensive energy efficiency updates, each home will be equipped with a new kitchen and bathroom, wood deck, and finished basement. The renovation will serve the community as a reference for anyone, from architects to developers to homeowners, looking to reduce energy usage in similar-aged housing throughout the region. Thanks to corporate and individual donors, Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) funding awarded by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), Centre County CASH grants and State College Borough Inclusionary Housing funds, many partners have made this state-of-the-art project possible, reflecting the community's commitment to affordable housing and leadership in green technology solutions.

Maureen Safko, Senior Planner at the State College Borough, said: "Most homes in State College Borough were built without the benefit of modern, energy conservation practices and materials. Many households that manage to afford a home in the Borough can struggle with high heating and electricity bills. The Borough is grateful to invest Inclusionary Housing Ordinance funds to support the SCCLT and WPPSEF in this innovative Energy+ project that will create two permanently affordable homeownership opportunities and that will serve as a model to modernize aging housing stock with insulation and solar energy to conserve natural resources and promote climate resiliency in our community."

More information is at: scclandtrust.org

About

The **State College Community Land Trust (SCCLT)** is an independent nonprofit organization that works to sustain the vibrancy and diversity of State College's neighborhoods by preserving affordable housing and promoting first-time homeownership. The land trust has enabled over 77 first-time homebuyers to purchase homes near employment, schools, entertainment, and transit since 1996. With the median price of a home in the Borough at \$329,800, many individuals from low-, moderate-, and middle-income levels face challenges in purchasing a home in the Borough. With a small staff and many dedicated volunteers, SCCLT works to bring more community members home to the Borough. Visit scclandtrust.org for more information.

The **West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund (WPPSEF)** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that invests in the deployment of sustainable energy technologies that benefit West Penn Power ratepayers in Pennsylvania. WPPSEF investments are focused in three broad categories:

- ✓ Deployment of sustainable and clean energy technologies;
- ✓ Deployment of energy efficiency and conservation technologies; and
- ✓ Facilitating economic development, environmental betterment, and public education as they relate to sustainable energy deployment in the WPP service region.

Visit <http://www.wppsef.org> for further information. [YouTube](#) – Listen to what our project partners have to say about us.

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