

ENERGY STAR® CASE STUDY: AVANATH ENERGY TREASURE HUNT

The simple
choice for
energy
efficiency.



October 2022

Avanath Overview

[Avanath](#) is an investment firm that creates high quality, affordable residential communities in major metropolitan and suburban areas across the U.S. As an ENERGY STAR® Partner, Avanath believes that energy efficiency is crucial to the health and well-being of its affordable housing communities. To achieve its energy performance goals, Avanath has developed +*Amplify*, a comprehensive environmental, social, and governance (ESG) program to guide its operations. Avanath also utilizes free resources provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), including the ENERGY STAR Treasure Hunt, to identify and implement efficiency upgrades across its portfolio.

What is an ENERGY STAR Treasure Hunt?

[Energy Treasure Hunts](#) are collaborative events that engage cross-functional teams in identifying opportunities to reduce energy, operating, and maintenance costs at commercial and industrial buildings. During an Energy Treasure Hunt, teams walk around a facility looking for quick and low-cost ways to save energy, without significant expenditures or capital investments. Since 2019, these quick fixes have led to significant savings. Hundreds of organizations have used Energy Treasure Hunts to reduce their facilities' energy use by up to 15 percent.

Discovering Energy Savings

In 2022, Avanath held its first ENERGY STAR Treasure Hunt to identify energy savings opportunities at its Cascades Village property.

The Treasure Hunt gathered a group of twenty participants from Cascades Village including Avanath property managers, regional managers, and community members to discuss onsite efficiency improvements and create an action plan for implementing the findings.

This event was conducted with the support of upper management to deepen program engagement and empower



Avanath and RE Tech Advisors meet to discuss energy savings at Cascades Village in Sterling, VA

building operators and employees to take ownership and ensure completion of energy savings projects.

During the walk through, teams leveraged ENERGY STAR resources including the ENERGY STAR [treasure map for multifamily housing](#) and the [detail sheet](#) to track opportunities and complete an energy savings checklist. After the walk through, teams reconvened to discuss and quantify energy savings opportunities.

The results of the inaugural Treasure Hunt included multiple actionable property upgrade plans, increased energy efficiency awareness among community members, and community stakeholder alignment.

Calculated Energy and Cost Savings

- Total building savings: \$7,000 - \$8,500 per year
- Savings per unit: \$50 per year
- Payback: 5 – 6 years
- Carbon reduction equivalency: ~30 MTCO_{2e} per year

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Treasure Hunt Findings

Energy Efficiency Opportunities

- Upgrade thermostats in residential units and shared spaces to smart technology
- Replace wall units with a central AC system
- Add occupancy and daylight sensors

Education and Training Opportunities

- Educate residents on how to use programmable thermostats and other system upgrades
- Educate residents on energy and water conservation best practices in their homes
- Market onsite energy efficiency measures to current and prospective tenants
- Organize onsite workshops for residents

Future Improvements

- Implement a smart irrigation system
- Regularly assess indoor air quality
- Establish a compost program
- Contact waste hauler to understand and implement a recycling plan
- Contact the utility to see what rebates or bulk buying programs are available
- Distribute energy efficiency tips to property managers
- Hold climate risk trainings for property managers

Integrating Energy Efficiency Across Avanath's Portfolio

Avanath is committed to further reducing its energy and water consumption and is exploring opportunities to replicate the Energy Treasure Hunt at Cascades Village across its building portfolio. As a result of the knowledge and information gained through this event, Avanath is training its employees to identify and implement energy and cost savings measures as a cost-effective method of achieving its energy efficiency goals. Avanath is also incorporating the knowledge gained from this event into its ESG program.

One of the takeaways from the Energy Treasure Hunt has been the development of customized checklists that can be used by employees to increase efficiency, promote health and safety, and reduce operating costs. The checklists are tailored by climate and season, and include operations and maintenance checks for building equipment, lighting, and systems in private and common areas. By regularly conducting performance checks, Avanath is limiting expensive emergency repairs.

These solutions are part of Avanath's goal to create safer and healthier communities for its residents and employees, enhance resident benefits, and provide best-in-class affordable housing.

"This was a great event to bring together our community and learn about energy efficiency as a team. We truly enjoyed the event and can't wait for the rollout at other communities."

- Tikia Johnson, Avanath Regional Manager