



Managed by the Montcalm County Housing Commission, Mulberry Estates is an affordable housing community for seniors and people with disabilities.

Home improvement

Housing facility Mulberry Estates has made crucial energy efficiency upgrades through DTE's Multifamily Program.

Multifamily buildings face unique challenges and opportunities when it comes to energy use. DTE's Multifamily Program is specially designed to help managers and owners of such buildings take advantage of energy-efficient upgrades and incentives designed for multiunit properties.

"The program offers a no-cost energy assessment where we educate property managers on energy-saving opportunities available to their specific property," says program lead Sereen Dababneh.

Customers receive a free, no-obligation assessment. If you choose to move forward, the program includes rebates

for upgrades in both individual units and shared spaces. With a focus on high-impact improvements like insulation; air sealing; and efficient heating, cooling, water heating and lighting, you can boost comfort for residents while potentially cutting energy costs for property managers.

In July 2025, Mulberry Estates, a 20-unit affordable housing community for seniors and people with disabilities, completed energy upgrades through the Multifamily Program with the support and approval of the Montcalm County Housing Commission board. These upgrades

Mulberry Estates received ~\$129,000 in total incentives for upgrades

MULTIFAMILY, continued on page 11

“[The DTE account manager] was right on top of things. If we had questions about the rebates, we could call him, and that helped immensely.”

—BRUCE MACTAVISH, MAINTENANCE MANAGER FOR MULBERRY ESTATES





"I'm very skeptical when they tell you something that seems to be too good to be true – it usually is. I thought, 'There's going to be a catch here someplace.' But as we got going into the process, it was very easy. I was surprised and very pleased."

—BRUCE MACTAVISH, MAINTENANCE MANAGER FOR MULBERRY ESTATES

Left to right:
Donna Kellogg, Jean
Longoria, Debra
Armstrong and Bruce
MacTavish pose at
the housing facility.



Mulberry Estates insulated its attic (above) and replaced boilers and water heaters (right).



reduced energy costs and enhanced resident comfort.

Bruce MacTavish, maintenance manager for Mulberry Estates, says he first learned about the program at a housing conference some years back.

"I'm very skeptical when they tell you something that seems to be too good to be true — it usually is," he says. "I thought, 'There's going to be a catch here someplace.' But as we got going into the process, it was very easy. I was surprised and very pleased."

MacTavish and his team worked with a contractor they had hired before who was familiar with DTE's Multifamily Program.

"DTE is helping buildings become more energy efficient because this leads to a more comfortable, healthier and safer environment — especially for the seniors living at this property."

—SREEN DABABNEH,
DTE PROGRAM LEAD

"[The DTE account manager] was right on top of things," MacTavish says. "If we had questions about the rebates, we could call him, and that helped immensely."

The Howard City, Michigan, affordable housing facility, managed by the Montcalm County Housing Commission, replaced its water heaters and 22 boilers with high-efficiency models.

MacTavish says that Mulberry's old boilers were operating at just 15% to 20% efficiency; the new boilers are up to about 90%.

The property also received rebates to weatherize the attic with air sealing and insulation and install 12 to 14 inches of insulation in the hallways above the units.

"With rebates, it was great; it helped us out a lot," MacTavish says.

In the end, the projects qualified for about \$129,000 in total incentives.

"DTE is helping buildings become more energy efficient because this leads to a more comfortable, healthier and safer environment — especially for the seniors living at this property," Dababneh says.

MacTavish notes that Mulberry residents are already enjoying the benefits of the upgrades. Added insulation kept units cooler through the summer and warmer well into the fall, reducing the need for extra heating or cooling. As a result, many residents are reporting noticeable drops in gas usage — proof that the improvements are delivering real comfort and savings.

"It's been very good, positive feedback," MacTavish says.

And to other property managers and owners who may be leery and questioning the process like he was: "It was very easy. It was a great experience." 🇺🇸

TOOLBOX

For more information or to schedule a free energy assessment,

📞 **call 866.796.0512 or**

🌐 **visit dteenergy.com/multifamily.**