

# NGBS GREEN CASE STUDY

## Ruth Ellis Center



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### About the Project

**Project Type:** Four-story Multifamily, mixed-use development, 43 dwelling units

**Unit Size:** 791 sq. ft. per unit

**Location:** Detroit, Mich.

**Performance:** 2015 NGBS Green Certification – Silver Level (Jan 2023)

**Website:** [Ruth Ellis Center](https://www.ruthelliscenter.com)

### Project Team

**Builder/Developer:** Full Circle Communities, Inc.

**Project Coordinator:** Ashley Wendela, [LBBA](#)

**Architect:** [Jack Schroeder, LBBA](#)

**Verifier:** [Jeffrey Parker](#) & [Lindsey Elton, Eco Achievers](#)



### Overview

Named in honor of a resilient Detroit icon, the Ruth Ellis Center (REC) works to create a supportive environment and community with LGBTQ+ youth and young adult community. The REC is an affordable housing and support center serving the LGBTQ+ community by providing a safe and healthy space for those who have been mistreated in the past.

The center is in an urban infill on a greyfield lot with ample access to public transportation and job opportunities for residents. REC offers 43 dwelling units for housing-impaired youth, a health & wellness center, café, technology center, and several other community spaces.

A common mantra amongst the REC project team was "above and beyond is our baseline," so it is no surprise the mixed-use development earned Silver-level NGBS Green Certification.

## About the Ruth Ellis Center

The REC has established a national reputation in providing positive youth development, harm reduction, restorative justice, and trauma-informed services for lesbian, gay, bi-attractual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth and young adults. The center places an emphasis on the needs and support of young people of color experiencing homelessness, involvement in the child welfare system, and/or barriers to their health and wellbeing.

## NGBS Green Certified. A better place to call home

*“The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) recognizes projects that earn Silver-level National Green Building Standard (NGBS) Green Certification as a green policy compliance path. That was the impetus for this project to seek green certification, but what we love about the NGBS is not its ability to demonstrate compliance, but its ability to push project teams to excel and exceed requirements. The NGBS is a robust and rigorous Standard. That flexibility and rigor is valuable to projects and the community, as each tier of certification requires increased performance in all chapters, which speaks to the well-roundedness and comprehensiveness of the program and falls in line with the mantra of the project: above and beyond is our baseline.”*

- Lindsey Elton, NGBS Green Verifier and President, Eco Achievers

## Green Features/Practices

- Designed to support walking, bicycling, and mass transit use:
  - ◆ Located within 1/2-mile of a mass transit system
  - ◆ Walkable community near resources, retail, restaurants
  - ◆ Dedicated lanes/paved paths for bicycles
- Built on greyfield lot
- Lighting occupancy sensors installed in common areas
- Central hot water recirculation system
- Balanced exhaust/fresh air through rooftop energy recovery unit
- Low VOC paints and coatings

## The Architect Voice

*“The Ruth Ellis Center is invaluable to the LGBTQ+ community, and we wanted the exterior to be a visual presence of the underserved community the center supports. The goal of the REC was providing a home and property to be proud of, captured by the colorful mural and all the effort that went into creating a building that speaks to the community it serves. With its place in the city, housing center on the first floor, and the community kitchen, it is as inclusive as possible to serve the multi-needs of the community.”*

- Ashlee Wendela, LBBA

