

# Energy efficiency upgrades lead to big improvements at Albany Sarang Fellowship

## Case Study

Sector:  
Small Commercial

Company:  
Albany Sarang Fellowship

Location:  
Watervliet, NY

Energy Savings:  
\$8,620 in energy costs annually

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— Billy Carter Spokesman for Sarang Fellowship

## Background

It didn’t take much for the leaders of the Albany Sarang Fellowship, a community center in Watervliet, to realize they had a serious energy problem on their hands. All they had to do was open their monthly bill. The bills were way too high, even for a building of its size.

Formerly a school, the 1900-era building was purchased by the Korean Methodist Church in 2008, which now uses it to operate the Albany Sarang Fellowship, a resource that serves the community.

## Energy assessment

Church leaders heard that the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) helps small businesses and not-for-profits improve energy efficiency.

Through NYSERDA, the Fellowship was eligible for a free small commercial energy assessment, based on its not-for-profit status and energy demand. An energy assessment focused on the whole building, on the attic insulation, the hot water system, the steam boiler and distribution system, and how well the building is insulated, and sealed.

## Findings

The energy assessment revealed a number of shortcomings. The existing boiler was old, inefficient, and a heavy consumer of oil. The attic—all 6,000 square feet of it—didn’t have any insulation at all. Finally, the steam distribution lacked proper controls, so it was stifling hot in some areas and icy cold in other areas, making it very uncomfortable for the occupants. The assessment recommended upgrading the heating and cooling system and lighting, improving building sealing, and installing insulation.



## Implementation and financing

The estimated cost was \$52,000. The Fellowship didn't have the upfront capital to cover the cost of the project, so they turned to NYSERDA. The Fellowship was approved for a participation loan in which NYSERDA provided half of the project cost at a below-market interest rate, and the Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region, a lender participating in the program, provided the other half of the project cost at the market interest rate. Dorian Wells, lending officer for the Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region, says "by partnering with NYSERDA, the Community Loan Fund is able to add additional value to its technical assistance offerings and loan products for the benefit of small business and not-for-profit clients."

By working together, Community Loan Fund and NYSERDA reduced the Albany Sarang Fellowship's borrowing costs, helping them access the financing necessary to improve the energy efficiency of their community center. These improvements will help reduce the Fellowship's operating expenses and allow more resources to be used for community programs."

## Results

The project is projected to save \$8,620 per year in energy costs, with a payback period of about six years. The Albany Sarang Fellowship now can enjoy increased comfort without keeping thermostats set uncomfortably low when the building is occupied.

**"They chose the complete package of recommended energy efficiency measures. Support from NYSERDA financed the improvements, lowering the Fellowship's energy bills and reducing their carbon (CO<sub>2</sub>) footprint within the community."**

"The energy efficiency measures planned for our Community Center have already been realized," according to Billy Carter, spokesman for Sarang Fellowship. "The building, although a 'dinosaur' has had a manicure, so it's much more comfortable and less costly to operate. We are pleased and grateful. The building is 'greener' and less of a drain on resources."