



fitwel® Case Study: Multifamily Residential

The Pearl

Fitwel Rating: ★ ★

Aquaterra: Green Roof Amenity
Photo Credit: John Harrington. Courtesy of The Tower Companies

The Tower Companies

Fitwel Champion



The Pearl in Silver Spring, Maryland, becomes the first residential building to earn Fitwel Certification.

Why The Tower Companies Chose to Become a Fitwel Champion

For generations, The Tower Companies has strived to create a positive and meaningful impact on people, community, and business. The Tower Companies became a Fitwel Champion in early 2018, supporting their commitment to not only build and operate healthy commercial and residential properties, but to also inspire the real estate industry to prioritize health in the design and development process. Since achieving a Fitwel 2 Star Rating for The Pearl, The Tower Companies has started applying Fitwel to its commercial office properties in Maryland.



Lobby Stairwell
Photo Credit: Morgan Howarth
Courtesy of The Tower Companies

The Pearl

The Pearl is a 317,000 square foot, multi-family high-rise building with 284 units that promotes sustainability, health, and wellness for over 400 residents. This building offers a unique living experience where residents feel connected to the natural world, despite the urban setting. In order to maximize daylight, the building massing was strategically adjusted to be responsive to the natural height of the street, allowing for maximum solar exposure within the courtyard and unobstructed views to the nearby Rock Creek Park. Highlighted below are strategies at The Pearl that support resident health:

- **Open and green space for residents**, including a courtyard with restorative gardens, a playground, and fitness equipment
- **On-site Urban Farm** supplying fresh produce through a resident basket-sharing program. The program is currently oversubscribed, supporting over 30 families
- **Floating 2-story fitness center** that includes a yoga and cycling studio, cardio center, and cross-fit zone
- **Views of the outdoors** throughout amenity spaces and in the corridors on each floor
- **Full kitchen available to all residents 24/7** that features regularly scheduled healthy cooking demonstrations from professional chefs, often using produce from the Urban Farm



Applying Fitwel to Promote an Active and Healthy Lifestyle

Fitwel provided The Tower Companies' sustainability team with tools to enhance health and wellness for its residents, specifically assisting with the development of signage designed to motivate residents and guests to adopt a healthier lifestyle. For example, several signs promoting stair use, both at elevator call areas and the main glass stairwell in the lobby were newly installed. These prompts encourage residents to opt for the stairs, by conveying both the health and environmental benefits of making the active choice. The Tower Companies also developed more inclusive smoke-free signage, transitioning The Pearl into a tobacco, vapor, and smoke-free community both indoors and in all outdoor spaces. This built on the original policy, which simply banned smoking indoors and within 25 feet of all building entrances.

Fitwel also advised The Pearl on how to design and adopt an Indoor Air Quality policy. The project team used an existing policy from another multifamily development and updated it with more stringent pollutant and moisture control language. This policy will now be applied across other properties owned and managed by The Tower Companies to prepare them for Fitwel Certification in the future.



Employees at The Pearl

The Tower Companies

“Our healthy community is a great benefit to all employees and residents. The Pearl encourages you to move and it has many spaces for physical activity. There is so much green and open space to enjoy and fresh air to breathe both inside and outside. As employees, receiving the first multifamily residential Fitwel certification in the world is rewarding because we have the opportunity to share it with our residents and be leaders in the industry.”

Key Milestones in the Certification Process

- November - December 2017:** The Tower Companies begins an initial benchmark analysis of The Pearl and registers the project on the Fitwel Portal.
- December 2017 - January 2018:** The project team begins process of interpreting credits and collecting necessary documentation. The Tower Companies announces its commitment as a Fitwel Champion in January.
- January - March 2018:** The Tower Companies moves forward with instituting necessary changes for Fitwel Certification, including development of signage and internal operational policies.
- March 30, 2018:** The project team submits final documentation to the Fitwel Certification Team.
- April 10, 2018:** The Tower Companies is awarded the first Fitwel multifamily residential certification in the world.
- May 2018 - Present:** The Tower Companies shifts its focus to certifying its commercial office properties in Maryland for the next phase of certification.

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[First residential building certified to the Fitwel standard](#)

How The Pearl is Impacting Resident Health



77% of selected strategies
Impact Community Health



86% of selected strategies
Reduce Morbidity + Absenteeism



84% of selected strategies
Support Social Equity



78% of selected strategies
Instill Feelings of Well-Being



55% of selected strategies
Provide Healthy Food Options



78% of selected strategies
Promote Occupant Safety



75% of selected strategies
Increase Physical Activity



Urban Farm outside The Pearl
Photo Credit: John Harrington
Courtesy of The Tower Companies