

SUCCESS STORY

SOMAH Program Helps Bring Renewable Energy to San Jose Community



PROPERTY INFO

Don De Dios Apartments owned by EAH Housing

LOCATION

San Jose, Santa Clara County

YEAR BUILT

1972

UNITS

70

RESIDENT PROFILE

Family

JOB TRAINEES

Two, each receiving 80 hours of paid job training

INCENTIVE

\$247,618

ESTIMATED MONTHLY SAVINGS PER UNIT

\$45

SYSTEM SPECS

System size: **125.23 kW CEC AC**

Solar credit allocation: **91% tenant, 9% common area**

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Reduces 110 tons of CO₂ emissions per year

Reduces 2,200 tons of CO₂ emissions over 20 years

Background

Delivering clean energy to multifamily affordable housing is something that [EAH Housing](#) has a strong commitment to, with at least 40 of the properties across its portfolio having solar panels. So, it was not a surprise when it sought to install solar at Don De Dios Apartments. Located in San Jose, California, this 70-unit property is home to families of a South Bay community that, like others across the state, deals with both the economic and environmental realities of increasing utility costs and high pollution levels – and the need for sustainable renewable energy solutions to help mitigate them.

EAH Housing and solar provider [Sunrun](#) began planning solar for the Don De Dios property but faced challenges that required changes before the installation. This included rehabilitating buildings and relocating historical trees on its grounds to increase direct sunlight on panels and maximize their capability to harness solar power.

“The project has been challenged with finances, location and trees, but there are 70 units here where people are in need, and there is a willingness and will by EAH to put solar on the property. And being mission driven, [EAH Housing] wanted to focus on providing benefits to tenants.”

– Scott Sarem, Sunrun VP Multifamily Housing

In 2019, EAH Housing and Sunrun’s efforts led to Don De Dios enrollment in the SOMAH Program, culminating in a solar installation in 2020.



How Does SOMAH Make a Difference?

The installation of the 125.23-kW CEC AC system helps EAH Housing continue to fulfill its mission of providing affordable housing to communities with low incomes. “What better way to do that [keep rents low] than through reduced utilities’ cost?” asked Laura Hall, CEO of EAH Housing. Having solar panels now offers opportunities to expand electrification at Don De Dios, as Hall explained. “We’re looking at batteries next and thinking about what we can do to help make our communities safe and thrive for the future.”

Every SOMAH project engages the community with paid job training opportunities through SOMAH's [job training requirements](#). In the case of Don De Dios, the SOMAH PA connected the contractor to two job trainees through SOMAH's [network of local job training partners](#). The trainees (two) participated directly on the installation of the solar PV system and gained over 160 hours collectively of paid on-the-job training.

Residents of Don De Dios will receive approximately 91% of the solar energy credits (about \$45 a month per unit) on their utility bills and are excited to use the savings for long-term goals. The remainder of the credits will help EAH Housing reduce energy costs for common areas. Miguel Rios, who has lived at Don De Dios for the past 13 years with his parents and sister, plans to utilize the monthly savings toward a home he is building for his mother in Mexico.



"It might not seem like much, but in the long run it will be a good amount [of money] and a huge benefit and blessing all around."

– Miguel Rios, resident



"I'm most excited about [taking part in SOMAH], sharing with our peers and everyone else in affordable housing why participating in the SOMAH Program is an advantage to them. It's easy to do, we did it, it makes a difference, it's the right thing to do."

– Laura Hall, CEO of EAH Housing

SOMAH Leads the Way

The endeavor that EAH Housing and Sunrun began is complete with a 125.23-kW CEC AC system (91% tenant/9% common area split), 160 paid job training hours, an estimated \$45 in monthly savings for each of the 70 households (impacting about 300 people) and a reduction of 110 tons of CO₂ emissions per year. To celebrate this, a ribbon-cutting was held in May 2022, showcasing the successful partnership between EAH Housing, Sunrun, the community and the SOMAH Program. This ceremony highlighted the completion of the Don De Dios project and also served as an example and invitation for other affordable housing property owners in California to apply to the SOMAH Program and go solar.



The **Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing** (SOMAH) Program provides financial incentives for installing photovoltaic solar energy systems on multifamily affordable housing. The program delivers clean power and credits on energy bills to affordable housing residents. To find out how to bring solar to your community, visit CalSOMAH.org

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