

SUCCESS STORY

# The Benefits of Solar from a Resident's Perspective



“ I firmly believe in **solar** panels and the use of **solar** power as a clean source of energy ”

PROPERTY INFO

**Emerald Cove owned by Jamboree Housing**

ROOFTOP SOLAR

**Yes**

LOCATION

**Huntington Beach, Orange County**

YEAR BUILT

**1986**

UNITS

**164**

RESIDENT PROFILE

**Seniors**

PAID JOB TRAINEES

**Two, each receiving 80 hours of training**

INCENTIVE

**\$344,707**

IOU TERRITORY

**Southern California Edison**

SYSTEM SPECS

System size: **188.9 kW AC**

Solar credit allocation: **92.9% tenant, 7.1% common area**

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

**Reduces 133 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year**

# Background

The cost of living in California is expensive and choosing which costs to prioritize adds to the financial pressures that many residents face. These priorities vary from household to household, but a common concern is rising utility costs.

While the state is investing in the development and implementation of broad renewable energy solutions, its actions are not always equally applied across communities. Some have had limited access to options such as solar panels, energy efficient appliances, or electric vehicle charging stations. However, that is changing through the efforts of environmental justice organizations and some policymakers who advocate for the creation of initiatives including the Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing (SOMAH) Program. SOMAH seeks to ensure affordable housing and environmental justice communities have access to solar panels that provide direct economic benefits to residents living in participating properties.

In 2021, [Jamboree Housing](#) and the residential solar panel company [Sunrun](#) collaborated on the installation of a 188.9-kilowatt (kW) AC rooftop solar system via the SOMAH Program at Emerald Cove Apartments in Huntington Beach, Calif.

## SOMAH's Impact

Emerald Cove Apartments is a 164-unit affordable housing community that is home to 179 senior residents. Many of the seniors are retired and live on a fixed income, so the prospect of the energy bill credits generated from solar power was welcomed and highly anticipated.

"I was very happy when I received the letter from Jamboree Housing saying they were going to install solar here at Emerald Cove," resident Gerry Payton shared with excitement. She went on to explain that while she supports the use of solar energy and has wanted solar panels installed for some time, the decision to do so was in the hands of the property owner.

*"I would not have been able to take advantage of a program like this if the property owner (Jamboree Housing) had not had the foresight to have the solar panels installed."*

*-Gerry Payton, resident*



To help Emerald Cove residents understand the impacts of solar after the project's completion, the SOMAH Program Administration (PA) team, with the support of the [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#) (CEJA), facilitated a Continued Tenant Education workshop and held office hours at the apartment building for one-on-one consultations with residents. The two-session workshop and in-person meetings answered questions such as "Can solar credits cover my whole bill?" (Depends on one's usage and the energy generated, standard energy fees will remain) or "Will discount rates, like CARE or FERA, be impacted?" (No, CARE, FERA will not be impacted) and "Is SOMAH the same entity as Southern California Edison?" (No, SOMAH is a statewide program, and works with SCE to get solar on MF housing).

The workshop was a success, as participants indicated session facilitators provided "good explanations that were clear and easy to understand." For the SOMAH PA, the workshops were evidence of the value and need to engage tenants both before and after solar installations have occurred. Tyler Valdes, SOMAH Program Manager for CEJA and workshop facilitator, gave his takeaway about continuing education for tenants.

"I was surprised by the overwhelming amount of gratitude we received from tenants for demystifying their energy bills and exploring ways to save energy with them. It illustrates the positive impact tenant education has on affordable housing residents when we meet them where they are at, both literally and with respect to their lived experiences." -Tyler Valdes, CEJA



## SOMAH Leads the Way

The partnership between Jamboree Housing and Sunrun yielded a solar system that allocates 92.9% of bill credits to residents and 7.1% to common areas.

Beyond the economic benefits for residents and the property owner, the project provided paid job training for two of the system installers (hired from job training organizations) via SOMAH's job training requirements. Also, it will help to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 133 tons a year, equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of 26 homes.

While Payton supports the solar installation for its environmental impacts, she is also delighted about being able to bring some joy to the vibrant Emerald Cove community.

"I am extremely frugal with the use of my energy, but with the solar panels I look forward to utilizing the lights in my backyard more at night. The neighbors enjoy it, it adds to the ambience and I get the chance to splurge a bit," she exclaimed with excitement.



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](https://CalSOMAH.org)

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