

SUCCESS STORY

# Suisun City SOMAH Project Offers Much-Needed Relief to Families



PROPERTY INFO

**Cottonwood Creek Apartments**  
Owned by BRIDGE Housing

LOCATION

**Suisun City, Solano County**

UTILITY TERRITORY

**PG&E**

YEAR BUILT

**2008**

UNITS

**94**

RESIDENT PROFILE

**Family**

ESTIMATED SAVINGS PER UNIT

**\$47**

SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS

System Size: **228.182 CEC-AC**

Solar Credit Allocation: **100% tenant allocated**

Carport Included: **Yes**

INCENTIVE

**\$474,904**

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

**Equivalent to saving 230 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year**

## Background

As the cost of everything from fuel to food continues to increase dramatically, families across California are struggling to afford the essentials, let alone plan for the future. The pressures of rising costs have a compounding effect on low-income families, like many of the residents of Cottonwood Creek Apartments in Suisun City. Cottonwood Creek's property manager, Durelle Kurlinski, who is a resident of the 94-unit affordable housing complex, explained that many residents are living paycheck to paycheck, "sometimes that means they're wondering which bill they're going to pay—their rent, PG&E, their groceries, their child's birthday or whatever else."

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*"Clearly, the implementation of solar is a win-win for our residents, as well as for the environment."*

*—Katherine Fleming, BRIDGE Housing*

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To offset some of the tenants' monthly expenses, Cottonwood Creek's developer BRIDGE Housing partnered with Sunrun to install a rooftop and carport solar photovoltaic (PV) system through the SOMAH Program. Beyond the economic benefits for tenants, the partnership aimed to reduce long-term operating costs, spur local solar job opportunities and reduce the complex's environmental impact by generating renewable, sustainable energy for the community.

## SOMAH's Impact

SOMAH builds community buy-in for the solar installation project and empowers residents to get involved through tenant educational offerings. Prior to the installation, residents received educational materials focusing on energy efficiency, how solar works, expected changes to their utility bills and on-site job training opportunities.



Faliz Nonan, a resident at Cottonwood Creek since it was built in 2008, has seen the building go through many changes and upgrades over the years. The apartment building was originally developed with rooftop solar, but because it was only offsetting common area electricity consumption, residents had not been personally impacted by it. She said she had heard about the benefits of solar, but as a renter, never thought she would have the opportunity to experience the benefits herself. "It makes me happy to see the investment in solar at Cottonwood Creek," Nonan said. Thinking beyond the temporary relief of the utility bill credits, she said . . .



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*"It gives us the chance to save for the future and help our families with essential needs, especially as the price of everything is going up."*

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After their existing solar system brought a 10-15% reduction in the common area's utility costs, the property developers and asset managers at BRIDGE were excited for tenants to finally see savings.

Katherine Fleming of BRIDGE Housing said, "I love that it's a requirement to offset resident electricity as well, that it's not just benefitting the common areas or the overall property expenses, but it's a direct benefit to our low and moderate income residents."

BRIDGE set a goal for 85% of their properties to adopt solar by the end of 2022. To help reach that target, their asset management team will continue to evaluate feasibility for solar across their portfolio and apply for SOMAH incentives in as many properties as possible.

## SOMAH Leads the Way

In December 2021, Cottonwood Creek hosted a ribbon-cutting event for their solar array attended by leadership from BRIDGE Housing, Sunrun, SOMAH and the California Solar and Storage Association with special guest Martha Guzman Aceves, former California Public Utilities commissioner. They celebrated the completed installation of a 228.182 CEC-AC rooftop and carport solar system. With one hundred percent of its solar credits allocated to Cottonwood Creek tenants, each household is estimated to save \$47 per month.

Asked about the impact the savings could have on the residents, property manager Kurlinski said, "SOMAH is going to give them that little bit of extra cushion. Between the pandemic, and everything else, that is going to make them a lot less anxious . . . The solar that you have helped get on to this property is going to be massive in its ability to help the residents to navigate life."



The **Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing Program** provides financial incentives for installing solar photovoltaic energy systems on multifamily affordable housing. The program delivers clean power and credits on energy bills to people who are among the least likely to afford solar on their own. To find out how to bring solar to your community, visit [CalSOMAH.org](https://CalSOMAH.org)

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