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### **Village of El Portal Recognized for Advancing Solar Energy Growth**

The Village of El Portal is receiving a Bronze designation from the national [SolSmart](#) program for making it faster, easier, and more affordable for homes and businesses to go solar.

This designation recognizes El Portal for taking bold steps to encourage solar energy growth and remove obstacles to solar development. For companies looking to expand, a SolSmart Bronze designation is a signal that El Portal is “open for solar business.”

SolSmart is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. More than 200 cities, counties, and small towns have achieved SolSmart designation since the program launched in 2016.

“We are excited to be able to help residents and businesses go solar by participating in the SolSmart program,” says Village Manager Christia E. Alou. “This recognition is a testament to El Portal’s commitment to become a more resilient community.” As part of that effort and to encourage solar energy in the Village, the Village of El Portal will waive solar permitting fees for twelve months starting this month.

As a SolSmart designee, El Portal is helping solar companies greatly reduce the cost of installations and pass those savings on to consumers. This allows even more local homes and businesses to obtain affordable, clean, and reliable electricity through solar. The actions El Portal has taken will help encourage solar companies to do business in the area, driving economic development and creating local jobs.

To receive designation, cities and counties make changes to their local processes to reduce the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system. El Portal has trained planning, permitting, and inspection staff on best practices, reviewed local zoning codes to identify and remove barriers for solar PV development, optimized its permitting process, and has committed to waive permitting fees for the installation of solar systems in single-family residences for the next twelve months.

As part of the SolSmart program, a team of national experts provides no-cost technical assistance to help communities achieve designation. All cities and counties are eligible to join the SolSmart program and receive this technical assistance. Interested communities can learn more at [SolSmart.org](#).

SolSmart uses objective criteria to award communities points based on the actions they take to reduce barriers to solar energy development. Communities that take enough action are designated either gold, silver, or bronze.

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