

# THE PORTERVILLE RECORDER

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## Self-Help Enterprises launches The Gateway: Your Path to Homeownership

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By: Porterville Recorder Staff

### **Program to increase opportunities for San Joaquin Valley families**

Homeownership is a dream most families share. It's also one of the most important decisions and the largest purchase families are likely to make.

To help families navigate housing options and turn this dream into a reality, Self-Help Enterprises, a HUD certified counseling agency, has launched The Gateway: Your Pathway to Homeownership program, an improved homeownership education program.

Serving as a "one-stop" for families looking to start their housing search or to access one of Self-Help Enterprises' homeownership programs, Self-Help Enterprises' homeownership counselors will walk families through the different types of mortgage rates, the effect credit scores have on being approved for a loan, how much down payment is needed for purchase, and what kind of home is affordable.

A tailored action plan will then be developed to assist families in achieving their financial homeownership goals. Individuals and families will participate in an in-person or online homeownership education class, available in English and Spanish. The homeownership education course covers key topics including:

- Importance of Credit
- The Mortgage Process
- Working with a Realtor
- The Purchase Process
- Mortgage and Down Payment Assistance Programs
- Affordable Housing Opportunities

Homebuyers who take this class have a better understanding of the process, ask smarter questions, and make better informed decisions.

To get started, prospective homebuyers will need to contact Self-Help Enterprises via phone at 651-1000 or via email at [gateway@selfhelpenterprises.org](mailto:gateway@selfhelpenterprises.org). An initial counseling appointment will be scheduled and a \$50 fee will reserve the appointment.

The fee covers a credit report and a portion of the homeownership education class fee. Upon completing an intake form, providing requested documents, and attending the counseling appointment, homebuyers will be enrolled in the homeownership education class.

As part of the Gateway Program, Self-Help Enterprises partners with local municipal governments, realtors and mortgage lenders in an effort to provide a range of homeownership opportunities for families residing in Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Stanislaus and Tulare Counties.

Self-Help Enterprises' housing programs include:

t First-Time Homebuyer: Resources and down payment assistance for families looking to become homeowners through traditional avenues.

t Self-Help Housing: Eight to twelve families are grouped together and help each other build their houses with skilled onsite supervision and guidance of Self-Help Enterprises' construction staff. "Sweat equity" serves as the down payment and monthly mortgage payment is based on the household's income.

t Manufactured Housing: Assistance to eligible, first-time homebuyers in purchasing manufactured housing units.

t Housing Rehabilitation: Funding assistance to make important health and safety repairs to a home.

Because the programs provide affordable and stable low-interest loans for homebuyers, sustainable homeownership has become a reality for many under-served families in the San Joaquin Valley who may not afford a home otherwise.

Together with launching The Gateway program, Self-Help Enterprises has been designated a NeighborWorks Homeownership Center. This designation assists Self-Help Enterprises with resources and coordination essential for delivering comprehensive, high quality homeownership services and expanding homeownership opportunities in the San Joaquin Valley.

To date, Self-Help Enterprises' housing programs have resulted in successful homeownership for over 24,000 hardworking families. For more information about Self-Help Enterprises, visit [www.SelfHelpEnterprises.org](http://www.SelfHelpEnterprises.org).