

The Porterville Recorder

Self-Help Enterprises to host free Water Managers Leadership Institute

February 27, 2019

To help build leadership capacity and acquire water management tools for valley communities, Self-Help Enterprises invites water board members and staff, water leaders, and residents from rural communities to participate in the 2019 Rural Communities Water Managers Leadership Institute.

The six-month Leadership Institute program is scheduled for March through August, with sessions held one Saturday per month at Self-Help Enterprises in Visalia.

The program is free of charge thanks to the generous support from the Central Valley Community Foundation, USDA Rural Development, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 and through an agreement with the State Department of Water Resources.

“Water planning is important to ensure that water sources are available over the long-term and during drought periods. However, disadvantaged communities have been disproportionately represented on the boards and committees of regional water management and planning programs, such as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program,” said Eva Dominguez, community development program manager at Self-Help Enterprises. “Through the Leadership Institute, water managers from disadvantaged communities will gain the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively participate and represent their communities in these regional water management programs.”

The Leadership Institute will consist of trainings, workshops, and educational tours focused on building and maintaining long-term water management expertise in rural communities. Curriculum for the program will focus on topics including, but not limited to: local and regional community water uses, challenges, and solutions; California water management and planning programs including, water management agencies, laws and regulations; effective community participation in water management and planning; available funding and financing; an educational water tour; and sustaining community participation in water management and planning, building community networks and recruiting/building new community leaders.

The Institute also offers an opportunity for water board members and community leaders to come together to develop skills and acquire tools to become more effective as decision makers.

“Participating in the 2016 Leadership Institute helped me gain valuable skills, including preparing and practicing how to structure a public presentation. This led me to gain confidence when communicating with the public and stakeholders”, said Jim Maciel, chairman of the Armona Community Services District. “Board Members and those involved in water at a local level will gain knowledge that will benefit small communities for many years to come.”

The application and more information is available online at <http://bit.ly/2019LeadershipInstitute>. Because space is limited and the program free of charge, it is asked that participants commit to fully participate and stay in the program the entire time.

Following the Leadership Institute, participants will stay networked to ensure small rural communities have a voice in California's regional water management, while they pursue resources needed to build sustainable, healthy water systems. To date, the Leadership Institute has trained more than 50 new water leaders in rural communities from Merced County to Kern County.

For questions, additional information regarding the program or assistance to complete the application, please contact Eva Dominguez at (559) 802-1634 or EvaD@SelfHelpEnterprises.org.