

ABC 30

Group working to help low-income Valley families become homeowners

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By: Dale Young



FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- The newest family in a southwest Fresno neighborhood just received their keys on Monday.

A year ago, they learned about down payment assistance programs and help available through the non-profit Realist of Fresno County.

"It's such a blessing to be able to see a family become a homeowner, and to know that they'll be able to have that stability that they need that roof over their head," says Aisha Allen with Realist.

In Fresno, 72% of white families own their home. The city's minority homeownership rate is just 52%.

Allen says the gap is much bigger among African-American families.

"Twenty-two percent of African Americans are homeowners, and that is a huge disparity," Allen said. "We just want to help increase the home ownership in those areas."

The Realist group is focused on offering assistance to low-income families of color.

On Saturday, it held a free HUD certification homeowners workshop.

Prospective buyers learned what steps they needed to take to someday qualify to buy a home.

The Fonseca family now moving into a \$325,000, four-bedroom home initially qualified for a \$215,000 loan.

"Now with our partners, Tri County Bank, Self-Help Enterprises and the City of Fresno, they all came together with the funding to be able to bridge that gap for where she was at and where she needed to be to be able to purchase that home," Allen said.

Many people who come to the workshops have no idea grants and loans are available.