

Steps on the Path to Sustainable Home Ownership: Protecting Your Asset

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Key Words

Sustainability, post-purchase education, home maintenance, bi-lingual, Spanish, community partnerships

Target Audience

The curriculum is designed in modules that cover home care and maintenance for homeowners and renters. It can easily be used with consumers of all income levels and also Spanish-speaking audiences.

Objectives/Purpose

The workshop objectives are to provide participants with skills and knowledge in: (1) building community housing partnerships; (2) developing programs that promote healthy, safe and sustainable home ownership; (3) meeting the housing needs of diverse populations; and (4) evaluating the impact of programs.

Content/Description

Home ownership brings with it many financial and maintenance burdens that can be especially challenging for homeowners who struggle financially. Sustaining home ownership is the primary goal of pre- and post-purchase education programs. Research shows that pre-purchase training can significantly reduce mortgage delinquencies (Hirad and Zorn, 2001). Post-purchase education focuses on topics such as physical maintenance, home repairs, working with contractors, home safety, budgeting for repairs, prioritizing debts, tax obligations, predatory lending and saving (Wiranowski, 2003). Post-purchase programs operate on the principal that new and at-risk homeowners are less likely to fall into foreclosure if they learn how to manage their finances and maintain their dwelling (Todd, 2005). While some anecdotal evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of post-purchase counseling, empirical evidence is limited and inconclusive. A study conducted by the National Insurance Task Force examined the impact of home safety education. They found 2,280 individuals received education in home-safety seminars; 839 home-safety inspections were conducted; and 314 home-safety loans and grants were made (Wiranowski, 2003).

Presenters will discuss the development of a home maintenance curriculum that focuses on asset protection by building knowledge in home maintenance, keeping one's home healthy, and good money management practices. The workshop will include reaching underserved populations with this information. The curriculum was translated into Spanish to meet the needs of participants in the *Voz de la Familia* (Voice of the Family) program. This program shows how a community with limited resources can work collaboratively to empower Latino families to improve their lives and keep their communities safe. The vision of *Voz de la Familia* is to provide comprehensive community outreach program that provides individuals and families with the tools, skills and knowledge they need to improve their quality of life.

References

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