



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Racial justice in real estate.

Madison / Dane County • Wisconsin

Own It: Building Black Wealth is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

RACIAL DISPARITIES & INJUSTICE

Own It acknowledges the systemic racism embedded within real estate and financial systems, and is committed to creating real change. The lack of access to homeownership and mortgage financing is a persistent and grave injustice that Black and brown families continue to face in Madison and Dane County.



PHOTO: COLIN DROSTER

Own It Co-Founders Sara Alvarado and Tiffany Malone.

13% of Black families in Dane County are homeowners compared to 64% of white families. (1)

20% of Black families in Madison are homeowners compared to 50% of white families. (2)

+2.8% is the increase in Black homeownership rates from 2013 to 2023, lagging behind increases seen by other racial groups. (3)

21% of Black applicants and 17% of Hispanic applicants are denied a mortgage, compared to 11% for white and 9% for Asian applicants. (4)

36x is the average net worth of a U.S. homeowner compared to a renter. (5)

Own It is dedicated to **eradicating these barriers** and **reversing the impacts** of racial discrimination in the Greater Madison area. Our vision is racial justice in real estate.

References: (1) Dane County Regional Housing Report, 2024; (2) City of Madison Housing Snapshot, 2025; (3) Snapshot of Race and Home Buying in America, 2025; (4) Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, 2023; (5) Survey of Consumer Finances, 2022.



MISSION

Own It's mission is to increase generational wealth in Black and brown communities through homeownership.

Through **\$19,000 down payment grants** with fewer restrictions and an **education program** led by people of color, Own It collaborates with community partners to help families build wealth and overcome systemic barriers to homeownership.



I always wanted to own my own home. It was a dream that came true.

Raghi B.
Own It Homeowner

EDUCATION

Own It offers homeownership and financial literacy courses with a focus on racial justice. Taught by local experts, these courses help families boost their financial knowledge and learn how homeownership can build long-term wealth. Our education program is online, self-paced, and includes a mentorship program and post-closing education and support.

This course has given me hope and tools to start making progress.

Own It Wealth Building Course Participant

GRANTS

First-time homebuyers are awarded a \$19,000 down payment grant toward the purchase of a property. The Own It grant is unique in that it is pre-approved with no additional inspections and acts similarly to family gifting, removing typical barriers that come with traditional down payment assistance programs.

CLOSINGS BY YEAR

2025 9

2024 8

2023 2

2022 8



LASTING IMPACT

Own It's education program and down payment grants create real, measurable change for families of color in Dane County.

OWN IT	2025	ALL TIME
HOMES PURCHASED	9	27
EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS	130	368
NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTORS	125	300
FUNDS RAISED	\$250K+	\$1.2 MILLION+
REAL ESTATE OWNED	\$3.1 MILLION	\$7.6 MILLION



Through the education program, we began to see that becoming homeowners was not only possible—it was something we could pursue. We owe this incredible milestone to the community of people who stood by us, guiding and supporting us every step of the way.



Heidi & Oscar
Own It Homeowners



This is not a donation. This is a tiny step toward repair.

Kristin Forde
Own It Donor



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Own It collaborates with community partners who share resources, knowledge, and connections so families can build wealth and overcome systemic barriers to homeownership.

Our wealth-building and homeownership courses guide participants toward financial stability, homeownership, and long-term wealth. The program is available to our select partners who are committed to the well-being of people of color in Madison and Dane County.



PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT 2025

2025	EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS		DOWN PAYMENT GRANTS		
	Partners	Wealth Building	Home-ownership	Applicants	Awardees
ANESIS	34	10	4	4	3
CENTRO	27	18	7	7	3
ONE CITY	74	22	4	2	3
TOTAL	135	50	15	13	9



BUILDING BLACK WEALTH

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

80+
AMBASSADORS

10+
AGENCY
AMBASSADORS

The Ambassador Program is Own It's private-sector, fund-producing model, engaging real estate and financing professionals, institutions, and home sellers alike to contribute to the down payment fund systematically, tied to their closings and revenue.

It gives the industries that profit from real estate a meaningful, easy way to directly support increasing homeownership in Black and brown communities.

Own It also provides learning opportunities about how racism is embedded in real estate, creating awareness and inspiring change.



Own It aims to enable future homeowners of color to be able to create generational wealth and show future generations that homeownership is possible. I love the community collaboration to right the wrongs of the past, one home at a time.

Katie Kolakowski
City RE, Ambassador



AGENCY AMBASSADORS



Lake Ridge
Bank



PARK BANK



summit
CREDIT UNION



ALVARADO
GROUP



CITY RE



HUSKY
HOMES



ROOTED
REAL
ESTATE



Stark



RE/MAX
Preferred

COMPASS

CENTURY 21
Affiliated



REALTY
EXECUTIVES
COOPER SPRANSY

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Own It began in 2021 as an idea—a possible way to address what hasn't been addressed in such a specific and clear way. What would it look like if the community became the family wealth that Black and brown families have been explicitly denied for so long? With a fiscal sponsor, we piloted the program, and success came fast.

Our 501(c)(3) nonprofit status was approved in January 2025. We shifted our energy to build the infrastructure so our pilot program could become a full-fledged nonprofit organization able to sustain growth, innovation, and impact as we expand.

INVESTING IN OUR TEAM. GROWING OUR IMPACT.

We collaborate within and across industries in ways that aren't common—because changing the system requires all of us.

STAFF TEAM

Sara Alvarado, Co-Founder,
Executive Director

EDUCATION TEAM

Grace Trewartha, Education Program
Co-Creator, Instructor, Mentor

Jonathon Ferguson, Instructor,
Mentor

Kristina Riley-Rowell,
Mentor

Jara Rios-Rodriguez, Mentor,
Bilingual English/Spanish

Michelle Yanes, Mentor,
Bilingual English/Spanish

Jeanne Wolz, Education
Program Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tiffany Malone, Co-Founder,
Co-Chair

Justice Castañeda, Co-Chair

Liza Waters, Treasurer

Rich Henderson, Secretary

Robert Procter

Ian Bowers

Kristin Rucinski

ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Ashley Bergren

Sarah Campagna

Jonathon Ferguson

Darin Harris

Debbie Hodge

Katie Kolakowski

Jodie Pope

Narik Riak

Sara Whitley

Elle Winters

Gail Wiseman



SUCCESS STORY

Meet Elle Winters, featured on a cover story of *In Business* in 2025.

An Own It homeowner and Advisory Council member, Elle describes Own It as “a symbol of hope and change.” The program has already inspired her and changed the trajectory of her future: “Instead of just surviving, I feel like I can thrive now.”

This is why we do the work.

Read more success stories at ownitmadison.org/updates. Thank you for your support!



Tax-deductible donations can be made online at ownitmadison.org/donate or via check mailed to:

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