



# BUILDING BLACK WEALTH

## Innovative Grant Model

### **Eliminating Barriers & Creating Access**

Private sector grant giving means homebuyers don't have unnecessary restrictions when writing offers.



*Own It  
co-founders  
Tiffany Malone  
and Sara Alvarado*

## Education, Mentorship, Post Closing Support

### **Centering Community Education**

Wealth Building and Homeownership courses are free, relevant, and taught by local experts. We offer one-on-one mentorship and post closing support and financial reviews to all Own It homeowners.

## Strategic Community Partnerships

### **Collaborating to Dismantle Inequities**

We partner with community organizations to ensure we are unapologetic about our mission and compliant with Fair Housing Laws. Our partners include: One City Schools, Centro Dane County, and Anesis Therapy. Grants are offered to affiliates of any race or ethnicity.

## Fund-Producing Model: Ambassador Program

### **Transforming Real Estate**

Our grants are funded by the community and the real estate and financial industries. Own It Ambassadors, Agencies, and home sellers contribute a portion or a percentage of their earnings from their sales.

# ABOUT OWN IT

Since the Fair Housing Act passed in 1968, the gap in homeownership rates between Black and white families has *increased*, not decreased. In Dane County, only 13% of Black householders are homeowners, compared to 64% of white householders.\*

Own It is a transformative initiative driven by community members and professionals in the real estate, banking, and financial sectors. This private-sector collaboration offers two critical components to select community partners: **a financial education program and access to \$19,000 down payment grants with fewer restrictions.**

Own It offers financial literacy and homeownership courses with a racial justice framework for free and provides a mentorship program and post closing support.

*\* Source: 2024 data from Dane County Regional Housing Report*

**27+**

families have  
purchased  
homes

**\$1M+**

dollars have been  
raised since  
2021

**350+**

people have taken  
education  
courses

**80+**

real estate  
professionals are  
Ambassadors

## How to Support Own It:

- **Contribute** to the fund as an Ambassador, on a monthly or annual basis, as a home seller from the proceeds of your sale. Donations are tax-deductible.
- **Pledge** to work with and refer Ambassadors when buying and selling.
- **Invite** Own It for a presentation or workshop.

**LEARN MORE**



**OWNITMADISON.ORG**



# EDUCATION OVERVIEW

The Own It education program was created with a racial justice framework and is designed to educate, empower, and support participants as they gain knowledge and confidence.

**We offer two courses focused on Wealth Building and Homeownership, a mentorship program for continued learning, and support post-closing.**

The courses and cohorts aim to:

- Foster financial stability by educating about credit, budgeting, and financial literacy;
- Demystify the home buying process and illustrate how to build equity and wealth through real estate and homeownership;
- Instill confidence and agency by learning about the real estate and financial systems;
- Mentor families as they navigate the home buying process, and take on the responsibilities of homeownership.

Own It also offers a free financial review with a financial advisor one year after they have purchased their home. There is still much to learn after participants become homeowners.



**350+**

Families who have enrolled in the Wealth Building Course

**75+**

Families who have enrolled in the Homeownership Course

**27+**

Families who have purchased homes with an Own It grant



The education and the budget information we learned is a good foundation and stepping stone to put us on the right path. From start to finish, we got support along the way... with mentors and the people who wanted us to succeed.

~ Elle Winters  
Own It Homeowner





# ROADMAP TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

Own It increases generational wealth in Black and brown communities through homeownership.



**Own It Partners:**

- One City Schools
- Anesis Therapy
- Centro Dane County



**Application Windows for \$19,000 Down Payment Grant:**

- February
- August



get matched with a mentor

**Learn More:**  
[ownitmadison.org](http://ownitmadison.org)



get continued support

# AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Real Estate and Financial Industries are now an active part of the movement to build generational wealth in Black and brown communities across Greater Madison.

## How it works:

Real estate professionals—including Realtors, Lenders, Appraisers, Insurance Agents, and Attorneys—commit to contributing a portion or percentage of their earnings from each transaction to the down payment fund. Brokerages, banks, credit unions, financial institutions, and other agencies also contribute systematically based on transactions or revenue. **Together, this fund-producing model helps more families achieve homeownership.**

The Ambassador program consists of:

- **Real Estate Ambassadors (individuals):** Commit a portion of their commission from real estate transactions.
- **Agency Ambassadors (organizations or teams):** Pledge ongoing contributions based on revenue or closings.
- **Participating Brokers (real estate brokerages):** Facilitate the donation process on behalf of their agents and staff who contribute individually.



80+

Brokers, agents, and real estate professionals who signed up as Own It Ambassadors

[LEARN MORE](#)



“

Own It aims to empower future homeowners of color to create 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**

*Own It Ambassador, City RE Realtor*

# WHY IT MATTERS

## Home Seller

As I realized what the sale of my house would mean for me — elimination of student loan debt, equity in my new house, plus money in the bank — I knew that I could not make a deposit in my account without giving a portion of my net proceeds to Own It.

Because, while I faced significant economic hurdles before building equity, the privileges my whiteness has afforded me — not only as I navigated my first mortgage approval — but throughout my entire life and lineage — is undeniable.

**This is not a donation. This is a tiny step toward repair. I personally benefit every day from the culture and resilience of Black communities.**

And as I settle into my beautiful new home, situated in a historic neighborhood where my great grandparents settled 100 years ago — my commitment to reparations and visionary community development feels more rooted and expansive than ever.

~ Kristin Forde  
*Own It Donor*



## Real Estate Professional



I'm so excited about the Own It: Building Black Wealth program! Educating and making down payment funds available helps

lay a solid foundation for home ownership to black and brown families and works to close the racial wealth gap. **I'm honored to be an ambassador and to be part of something that truly is making a difference.**

~ Kathy Bartels *Realtor with Stark Company*

## Lending Professional



What can I say? This is kind of a big deal! People involved in Own It aren't just talking, they are doing.

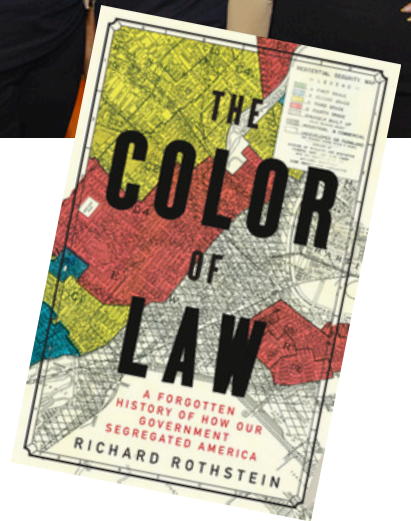
I've been in a world of talkers for so long, it feels amazing to be part of a group that takes action, using our experience, knowledge, and connections to create change. **Own It is more than just down payment grants. They're educating and inspiring.**

~ Sara Whitley *Mortgage Loan Officer with Johnson Financial Group*

# MORE WAYS TO SUPPORT

## YOU can play a pivotal role in supporting Own It:

- **Donate** to grow the Down Payment Fund so more families can buy their first home.
- **Spread the word** by telling neighbors and friends about Own It.
- **Engage your network** by encouraging real estate professionals and bankers you know to become Ambassadors.
- **Commit to giving** monthly or annually. All donations are tax-deductible.
- **Contribute at closing** by giving a portion of the proceeds of your home sale or purchase.
- **Choose Ambassadors** by pledging to work with and refer Own It Ambassadors when buying and selling real estate.
- **Invite us in** by hosting an Own It presentation at your workplace, faith community, or neighborhood group.
- **Subscribe** to Own It email updates.
- **Read the book** "The Color of Law" by Richard Rothstein.



Thank you everyone for this great opportunity! As a single mom of two, this grant means a lot to me and my family. This program has taught me so much about building and maintaining wealth. I always wanted to own my own home. This is a dream that came true.

~ Raghi B.

*Own It Homeowner*



# SUCCESS STORIES



“Purchasing a first home is overwhelming, but Own It made the process clear and manageable. Their step-by-step guidance and financial education were incredibly helpful. Having access to counseling and a supportive team made a meaningful difference—we felt prepared, supported, and confident throughout the process.”

~ Karma  
Own It Homeowner



“Through the education we received from the Own It 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.”

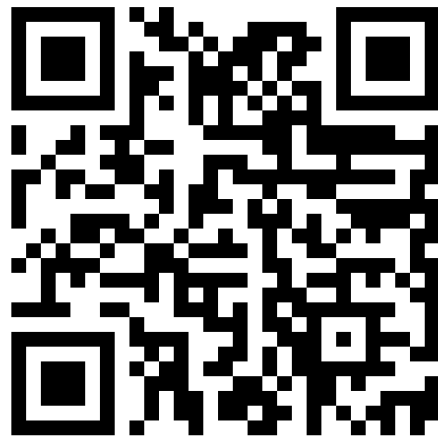
~ Heidi and Oscar D.  
Own It Homeowners



# THANK YOU

**Own It: Building Black Wealth is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.**

**DONATE**



Donations can be made online at [ownitmadison.org/donate](https://ownitmadison.org/donate) or via check mailed to:

**Own It: Building Black Wealth**

6709 Raymond Road, Suite 110  
Madison, WI 53719



BUILDING BLACK WEALTH

[ownitmadison.org](https://ownitmadison.org)  
[info@ownitmadison.org](mailto:info@ownitmadison.org) | 608.438.5005