

# SELF-HELP ENTERPRISES

Final Seed Grant Report to the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley

## Sowing Seeds for Community Health

Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) was incorporated in 1965 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving living conditions for low income residents of the San Joaquin Valley. During this period SHE has assisted over 5,600 families in building their homes, another 5,600 in rehabilitating their homes, 1,200 families with purchasing their homes, and built over 1,000 units of rental housing. In addition, SHE has assisted over 140 communities with securing funding to improve drinking water and/or wastewater facilities for over 25,000 families.

We have found that in small, unincorporated communities, the economic hardships are even more acute than in the larger metropolitan areas of the Valley. Even the most basic amenities of modern life – dependable, clean water and sanitary sewage disposal – cannot be taken for granted by residents. In the cruelest irony of all, when community water and sewer services are available, it often carries a monthly cost burden that far exceeds their urban neighbors. However, much progress has been made.

During the past year and a half Self-Help Enterprises has utilized Partnership Seed Money Funds to assist many disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley. This funding plus other new funding allowed the Self-Help Enterprises Community Development Program to increase from two to five staff. This increased staffing has allowed Self-Help Enterprises to serve more small poor communities with drinking water issues in San Joaquin Valley counties. During this period staff reviewed grant and loan opportunities and after evaluating funding options with community boards, prepared applications for 20 communities for over \$21,000,000 in water system funding and over \$10,000,000 was approved by funding agencies to help these communities. Download [Funding Program Evaluation](#) and [Funding Source Comparison](#) located on the Partnership's Water Work Group page.

SHE's Seed Money fund was augmented by the \$25,000 infusion from the Partnership. In order to get community applications submitted and to provide the cash flow before long term funding dollars are available, over \$100,000 in seed money loans have been made during this period. We far exceeded our requirement for a 1 to 1 match of Partnership funds utilized for seed money loans.

To summarize, the infusion of the Partnership Seed Money Grant over the past year and a half combined with new State funding from the California Department of Public Health and Department of Water Resources has allowed SHE's Community Development Program to grow and become more sustainable with matched resources. Our ability to assist the neediest communities with water issues in the San Joaquin Valley has been greatly enhanced.