



**In underserved areas, homeownership can be life-changing ... and
Kearny Bank's Jacqueline Gibbs has a plan for helping people get there**



Jacqueline Gibbs

FAIRFIELD, NJ (Feb. 3, 2025) – Purchasing a home can be difficult, but from Jacqueline Gibbs' perspective the benefits are worth the struggle.

A 1st Vice President / Fair Lending Officer for Kearny Bank, Gibbs' professional focus is on increasing homeownership in low- and moderate-income areas and underserved communities. After joining Kearny Bank in 2022, she was instrumental in revamping the bank's [First Time Home Buyer program](#), which features a team of mortgage advisors and realtors helping clients overcome challenges that historically made homeownership seem out of reach. At that time, Gibbs began to participate regularly in informational seminars, with emphasis on her hometown of Newark, as well as Irvington, Orange, Paterson, and other nearby cities.

"Owning a home is essential in building true, generational wealth," she explains. "When I was growing up in Newark, most people in my neighborhood rented. But my parents owned a three-family residence and I learned from that experience. Basically, I got an education on accumulating wealth."

The youngest of four children, Gibbs graduated from Newark's Science High School. Then, she earned a full academic scholarship to prestigious Wellesley College, outside of Boston.

"I was the only one in my family to go to college, and it was always a goal of mine," she says. "Looking back, I was quite fortunate. Lots of people helped me along the way, particularly my teachers."

Passionate about [making homeownership affordable](#), Gibbs points out that there are many hurdles facing families and individuals beyond limited financial resources and credit issues.

"I often ask people, 'Why rent?'" she says. "I tell them we have a great program that can help them reach their goals. But they're often uncomfortable talking about their background – afraid of being stereotyped because of past problems and mistakes. I explain that sharing information is a necessary part of the process ... and, after all, everyone deserves another chance."

Gibbs, who notes proudly that all three of her siblings have purchased a home, is careful never to sugarcoat the degree of effort involved in buying a residence.

"When I'm meeting with someone, I start off by explaining they need to be actively employed and must commit to an ongoing process," she says. "It doesn't happen overnight – it requires hard work and can take a year or even two to resolve problems that may exist. But our program is well-suited to those who need it; you have a down-payment as low as 5% and aren't required to contribute all the funds yourself. Plus, there's mortgage insurance paid by the lender. These benefits can be a big help."

Gibbs notes that while gentrification is reducing prospective buyers' options in some areas, there remain significant opportunities in communities throughout New Jersey. And she consistently sees that people have a strong desire to [transition from renting to ownership](#). One of the very first homebuyer seminars, in Newark, drew a crowd of hundreds.

"Buying a home is a springboard to so many opportunities you otherwise would probably never have," she says. "And that's not an exaggeration. Look -- everyone deserves an opportunity to change their story. When you buy your own home, it can be truly life-changing."

About Kearny Bank

Combining the finest traditions of community banking with the industry's latest, most effective financial products and services, Kearny Bank provides business and personal clients with the tools for success. Established back in 1884, and now operating from corporate offices in Fairfield, NJ, Kearny Bank's footprint covers most of New Jersey, along with Brooklyn and Staten Island. Additional information is available at kearnybank.com or by visiting Kearny Bank's social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Kearny Bank's homeownership services

Committed to helping individuals and families become home-owners, Kearny Bank offers the following resources.

- **Explore Our Mortgage Options:** Flexible lending solutions include low down payment options and lender-paid mortgage insurance, to meet the needs of first-time homebuyers and beyond.
- **Home Loans FAQ:** Answers to common questions both about rates and financing options.
- **First-Time Homebuyer Tips:** Strategies and practical tips to make purchasing a first home more affordable and less stressful.