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A picturesque town in southern Italy is offering to pay new residents' rent for two years in order to boost population numbers.

Teora in Campania is taking a different approach to the numerous Italian towns that have tried to attract fresh blood by offering houses for €1, as it says this just encourages outsiders to purchase holiday homes rather than settle down full-time.

Newcomers will receive €150 per month to go towards the cost of renting a place for two years. Alternatively, the town will give them €5,000 to buy a property.

As Teora is most interested in attracting families, only those who already have one child are invited to apply. The scheme also requires applicants to commit to living there for at least three years.

"I don't believe in selling empty houses for €1, that doesn't incentivize people to stay in town," Teora's mayor, Stefano Farina, told CNN Travel.

"They just come a few months a year as holidaymakers. That's not the solution. But taking up residency and enrolling kids at the local school, that does breathe new life."

The town's population never recovered after an earthquake in 1980, and has dwindled to just 1,500 residents. According to Mr Farina, on average two babies are born in Teora each year compared to 20 deaths, mostly from old age.

"I want to invert this negative trend," he said. "Children are our future, new families will be the building blocks of our shrinking community, so we encourage those with more kids to apply."

With the town's contribution, newcomers' rent won't quite be free, but it will be significantly reduced. Rental properties are available for around €200, meaning participants in the scheme would pay just €50 a month.

Those who opt to buy will find houses available for €30,000, which, when including the town's €5,000, will cost just €25,000.

And, unlike the €1 house initiatives, properties here are in good condition and don't require expensive renovation work.

Although much of the town's cultural and historic heritage was damaged or destroyed by the last earthquake, there is still an amphitheatre, fountains, a water mill and an ancient church with an open-air altar.

Teora itself is set in lush, green hills, surrounded by countryside.

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