

NCSHA 2016 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

Deadline: Wednesday, June 15, 2016

Visit ncsha.org/awards to view the Annual Awards Call for Entries.

Instructions: Type entry information into the form and save it as a PDF. Do not write on or scan the form. If you have any questions contact awards@ncsha.org or 202-624-7710.

Fill out the entry name *exactly* as you want it listed in the program.

Entry Name:

HFA:

Submission Contact: (Must be HFA Staff Member)

Email:

Please provide a 15-word (maximum) description of your nomination to appear on the NCSHA website.

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page:

HFA:

Entry Name:

Select the appropriate subcategory of your entry and indicate if you are providing visual aids.

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
Annual Report	Empowering New Buyers	Federal Advocacy	Financial
Creative Media	Encouraging New Production	State Advocacy	Human Resources
Promotional Materials and Newsletters	Home Improvement and Rehabilitation		Operations
			Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
Encouraging New Production	Combating Homelessness	Special Achievement	Yes
Multifamily Management	Housing for Persons with Special Needs		No
Preservation and Rehabilitation			

Keep Your Home California Video Testimonial Ad Campaign

Elaine was laid off from her job; then faced mounting medical bills as she battled breast cancer. She was in danger of losing her home to foreclosure until she qualified for \$81,500 from Keep Your Home California.

Michael and Hope were victims of the economic downturn, made worse by medical issues that left Michael unable to work for months. They were at risk of foreclosure, until they received \$92,000 from Keep Your Home California to reduce their mortgage balance and make their payments more affordable.

Emiliano was no longer able to afford his monthly mortgage payments and was turned down for multiple “refinances.” He feared he would lose his home to foreclosure, until he qualified for \$100,000 in mortgage assistance from Keep Your Home California, reducing his payment by \$400 per month.

These are just three of the more than 64,000 homeowners Keep Your Home California has helped so far, and every one of these real stories shows the impact of the program better than any speech, interview, talking points, or other piece of marketing collateral program staff can create. The difficulty for Keep Your Home California management has always been making these stories available to a wide audience.

From the beginning of the program, raising awareness about Keep Your Home California has been of paramount importance. As with any product or service, people want to know: Can I trust them and does this work? This sentiment is exaggerated when your target audience is comprised of distressed homeowners who are struggling with financial hardships, and, who are targets of scammers perpetuating fraud. Homeowners have rightfully become cautious about “solutions” that are presented to them.

Marketing the foreclosure prevention assistance available through Keep Your Home California is particularly challenging because homeowners must apply directly for the assistance – meaning they must develop a certain level of trust at the outset of the process.

Keep Your Home California’s management team recognized early on that testimonials from program beneficiaries could be among the most effective marketing tools. Within a year of the program’s launch, testimonials and images of homeowners who had qualified for the program were posted on the website and incorporated into marketing collateral. However, there was always a struggle to find short-form and engaging ways to share just how real homeowners were helped by the program.

Findings from annual marketing research surveys on the Keep Your Home California campaign confirmed that people wanted “success stories” from real homeowners readily available to help them determine whether they should trust Keep Your Home California and take action. It was up to the marketing team to find new and innovative ways to tell the real homeowner success stories.

BACKGROUND

Keep Your Home California is the State of California’s version of the US Treasury’s “Hardest Hit Fund” program. The housing finance agencies for 18 states and the District of Columbia that were hit hardest by the financial downturn were allocated funding to implement foreclosure prevention programs geared towards the needs of their region. California received \$2.36 billion.

The California Housing Finance Agency oversees Keep Your Home California, which was officially launched in February 2011. Struggling California homeowners can receive up to \$100,000 in free mortgage payment assistance to prevent foreclosure through Keep Your Home California. There are four unique first mortgage programs that make up Keep Your Home California, all designed to address

different aspects of the foreclosure crisis. Homeowners must meet eligibility criteria in order to qualify for assistance, and all Keep Your Home California services are provided free of charge.

INNOVATION

Throughout the history of the program, many homeowners have expressed their willingness to share their stories. However, typically they do not want their image to be featured with their story, do not want to talk about their experience in a public forum, and cannot make appearances at events or media interviews due to scheduling constraints.

It was with these challenges in mind that in early 2016, Keep Your Home California's marketing team made the strategic decision to develop short-form, animated videos that would show the homeowners' experiences with Keep Your Home California, with minimal impact to the homeowners themselves.

The testimonial videos feature a photograph of the homeowner at the very beginning, which is then transformed into an animated caricature of the homeowner. The animated format provides far more creative opportunities with the visuals. For example, a homeowner who is underwater on their home's value could have their caricature shown underwater. Virtually anything was possible with the creative elements, meaning the finished product could be more compelling. Plus, the homeowner never had to be filmed for the videos and the image included in the spot was photographed at their convenience.

The videos also include a voiceover, which describes the problems each homeowner faced and how Keep Your Home California helped them resolve the problems. Due to the large population of Spanish speakers in California, the videos were created in both English and Spanish. By choosing the voiceover option, it allowed the marketing team to coordinate production more efficiently, only needing to schedule with the English and Spanish voice talent to conduct the reads, rather than each of the homeowners.

The animated spots alleviated a lot of the common concerns homeowners had about participating in testimonials and resulted in a better, more accessible and engaging product – effectively solving the two biggest problems the program faced with sharing success stories.

A total of fourteen (14) videos were created of six (6) unique homeowners' stories told in thirty (30) second videos, in Spanish and English, as well as two (2) fifteen (15) second videos in English. The spots were produced in high quality so they could be aired as television spots, as well as be utilized online and in other formats. The spots began airing in rotation on television, in media markets across the state, during the last week of April 2016.

REPLICABILITY

One of the most attractive elements of utilizing the testimonial videos as the centerpiece of the 2016-17 Keep Your Home California marketing campaign is that the same videos can be used in so many different ways. Once the testimonial videos were complete, they were posted on the Keep Your Home California YouTube Channel. This provided anyone with internet access with the ability to view and/or share the videos. In addition to television spots, Keep Your Home California also utilizes a comprehensive digital media campaign to market the programs. The testimonial videos were leveraged in the digital campaign, appearing as online ads, in social media posts, as part of the electronic newsletter, and linked on other organizations' websites. This was all achieved without any additional production costs.

DEMONSTRATE EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

All of the video testimonials were created from existing stories on the Keep Your Home California website, which meant there was minimal effort to coordinate with the homeowners. Each of the stories selected led to two completed videos - English and Spanish. Since the exact same visuals were used for

both English and Spanish videos, production costs were mitigated and the approach ensured consistency in the stories across languages.

Another valuable resource to the Keep Your Home California marketing team was the “brand” the program had established during its 2015-16 marketing campaign. The videos that had been running for the television and digital campaign during the previous year were done in the same animated style, but with generic information about the programs instead of real stories. It was important to Keep Your Home California management that the testimonial videos kept the look and feel of the past campaign, so as to not compromise the credibility and trust the program had already built.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Keep Your Home California is a statewide program available to low to moderate income homeowners who are facing financial hardships. The marketing team has a large target they must aim for, which is why television spots are in markets across the state. The digital campaign allows Keep Your Home California to be more selective in the audience it pursues. A profile of a Keep Your Home California candidate is developed, based on the online behavior of individuals, and those that fit the profile receive online ads across various formats. The testimonial videos are applicable to all audiences, no matter how broad or narrow, which means they can be utilized across all mediums.

RESULTS

The videos have been out for just over a month, but preliminary results are encouraging and the video testimonials seem to be resonating with viewers. Every person who contacts the Keep Your Home California call center is asked, “How did you hear about us?” Responses are tracked to inform marketing decisions. In May 2016, the only month for which there is data available for the testimonial videos on television, “TV Commercial” was the second highest response for all callers – which was the highest “TV Commercial” had ever finished for any single month since program inception – and “TV Commercial” was the number one response for Spanish callers.

BENEFITS THAT OUTWEIGH COSTS

The total production cost of all fourteen videos was \$168,000. It is difficult to measure the benefits against the costs so early on in the life-cycle of the video testimonials. While \$168,000 is a lot of money, the ability to share these real homeowners’ stories in so many different ways is a huge benefit for the program and thus, a very worthwhile investment.

To put the numbers in some sort of perspective, the average amount of Keep Your Home California assistance provided to each qualifying homeowner is about \$23,000. Based on historic pull-through rates, in order to get a “100 fold” return on the video testimonials production investment, the videos will need to cause approximately 3,000 homeowners to contact Keep Your Home California. Considering the video testimonials will be seen by millions of Californians on television and online, it is reasonable to project at least 3,000 homeowners will contact Keep Your Home California – and the 100 fold return is attainable.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Keep Your Home California management is confident that strategic objectives are being met with the new testimonial videos. While there is not a long history of performance, the fact that these videos are exposing the program to more homeowners, encouraging trust, and causing homeowners to contact Keep Your Home California for foreclosure prevention assistance is already a success. An added benefit the marketing team anticipates in the future is the video testimonials encouraging more homeowners to share their stories which will create a “snowball effect,” extending the reach to more homeowners and further building the program's credibility and brand.

VISUAL AIDS

2016-17 Keep Your Home California Video Testimonials:

Marycruz



• [English](#) • [Spanish](#)

Karen



• [English](#) • [Spanish](#)

Carrie



• [English](#) • [Spanish](#) • [15 Second Version](#)

Michael & Hope



• [English](#) • [Spanish](#)

Emiliano



• [English](#) • [Spanish](#) • [15 Second Version](#)

Elaine



• [English](#) • [Spanish](#)

All fourteen 2016-17 Keep Your Home California Video Testimonials can also be accessed in the “Playlist” on the Keep Your Home California YouTube Channel at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9u89QzLfNCK42BleP1GCNxDftZp8Ifx6>

2015-16 Keep Your Home California Television Spots



English: • [30 Second Version](#) • [15 Second Version 1](#) • [15 Second Version 2](#)
Spanish: • [30 Second Version](#) • [15 Second Version 1](#) • [15 Second Version 2](#)

The 2015-16 Keep Your Home California television spots are included to demonstrate the “Brand” the program had established in the previous year.

Keep Your Home California May 2016 Newsletter

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs157/1114697301312/archive/1124848449534.html>

The May 2016 electronic newsletter includes Keep Your Home California’s announcement about the new Video Testimonials.

KYHC Success Stories Webpage

<http://keepyourhomecalifornia.org/testimonials/>

All success stories from beneficiaries of the program, including the homeowners featured in the Video Testimonials, are posted on the Keep Your Home California “Success Stories” webpage.