

## **NCSHA Entry Description**

Florida Housing Finance Corporation

Communications/Promotional Materials and Newsletters Category

### **Description of the project-** Florida Housing's 2008 HomeBuyer Expo

June is National Homeownership Month (NHOM); as part of celebrating homeownership in our state, Florida Housing hosted the 2008 HomeBuyer Expo at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando. This annual event gives Florida Housing the opportunity to promote affordable homeownership programs, connect prospective first-time homebuyers with lenders, Realtors, builders, credit counselors, home inspectors and others involved in the home-buying process.

### **When and Why it Was Undertaken**

Florida Housing's 2008 HomeBuyer Expo was developed and implemented to promote state-funded affordable homeownership programs and to provide one-stop shopping for prospective first-time homebuyers. After attending the Expo, prospective first-time homebuyers should have a better understanding and knowledge of available mortgage and down payment assistance programs for which they may be eligible. As Florida is a large state, the central area of Orlando was chosen as the location for the event. The Expo also provided an opportunity for area housing advocates, affordable housing developers, non-profit organizations, Realtors, lenders, and others to network and promote their products and services.

This event was held on Saturday, June 7, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Orlando, Florida, at the Orange County Convention Center.

### **What Has it Accomplished**

The 2008 HomeBuyer Expo drew more than 4,000 consumers from the Central Florida and surrounding areas, each of which left with valuable information about affordable homeownership, including the vitally important role their credit history plays in the process. Nearly 100 exhibitors participated in the Expo; in addition, Florida Housing partnered with an Orlando-area non-profit organization to host homebuyer education courses (required to participate in Florida Housing's programs), in which 1,500 individuals participated. In addition, Florida Housing also provided a free, on-site credit counseling area, where more than 350 credit reports were pulled and individual counseling sessions were held.

As a result of this event, we expect that homeownership numbers in the Central Florida and surrounding areas will remain high; and we know that the homebuyer education courses benefit prospective homebuyers by arming them with the knowledge they need to make sound decisions regarding purchasing their first home.

### **Why it is Meritorious**

When the Expo began five years ago in 2003, there were less than 30 exhibitors participating and only 500 consumers attended. As mentioned previously, the 2008 HomeBuyer Expo broke attendance records with more than 4,000 consumers—an 800 percent increase in attendance! This event has grown and continues to grow; it is now considered to be an annual tradition in Central Florida and Florida Housing has service marked the Expo as “The State's Largest Affordable Housing Exposition.” The HomeBuyer Expo truly impacts the lives of many Floridians by getting them several steps closer to achieving the “American Dream” of homeownership.