

NCSHA 2008 Annual Program Awards
Executive Summary
Category: Communications; Creative Media
Name of Entry: Minnesota Housing Ad Campaign to Promote Home
Ownership in Emerging Markets

Minnesota is a gateway for emerging markets whose population has doubled in the last ten years and is growing faster than the national average. Impacting the growth of diverse households in Minnesota over the last census was a 127 percent increase in foreign-born populations in that same time period. Given expected increases in population among diverse communities, both in Minnesota and nationally, emerging markets will have an increasingly significant impact on the real estate market.

While Minnesota continues to lead the nation with one of the highest overall homeownership rates, the rates of homeownership among African Americans, American Indians, Asians, and Latinos present market and community development opportunities to better prepare and serve these markets with access to homeownership. Minnesota has the fifth largest homeownership gap in the nation. Eight percent of non-Hispanic whites are homeowners, compared with just 46% of emerging markets. Given positive attributes of homeownership, which include helping households build wealth and strengthening overall communities, Minnesota's racial and ethnic homeownership gap harms the quality of life for all Minnesotans.

To help close this gap, Minnesota Housing has established an Agency priority to increase emerging market homeownership, with an internal goal of 555 emerging market loans this year. To support that effort, the Communications Division of the Agency launched a \$400,000 ad campaign in May targeted to emerging markets, promoting our safe, affordable, fixed-rate financing products. The campaign includes the tag line "Because Home Means Everything" and consists of television, radio and print ads that take a new turn in advertising for Minnesota Housing. Unlike previous campaigns, this campaign strategically advertises Minnesota Housing through its lenders, providing a more efficient vehicle for consumers--driving them directly to where they get their loans. This also creates an incentive for lenders to promote Minnesota Housing products, since all advertising is paid for by Minnesota Housing. In order to determine which lenders to feature in the advertising campaign, Minnesota Housing developed internal criteria for a featured lender pilot program that takes into account the number of emerging market loans (to demonstrate their ability to work effectively within emerging market communities) and quality control performance.

The television ads consist of 30-second spots shot in both English and Spanish, featuring Sandra Reyes, a single mother who recently purchased her first home with down payment and monthly payment assistance from Minnesota Housing. The ads are shot on location at the home of the borrower in a conversational style between the borrower and her bilingual loan officer. The ads are co-branded with a lender, and as other lenders increase their emerging markets effort, we plan to create additional spots with co-branding opportunities.

The first spot is in Spanish and shows various scenes of Sandra and her son inside and outside their new home and features a conversation between Sandra and her loan officer, discussing how

much it meant to Sandra to be able to buy a home for her and her son (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_tfgGUHPhM).

The second spot is in English and features Sandra's loan officer, Maria, telling the story of her first meeting with Sandra and how rewarding it was to be able to secure financing for Sandra. Video clips of Sandra and her son in their home are shown under Maria's voiceover (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6t_OFDF0cU).

Minnesota Housing has also begun to run a series of 30-second radio spots on local hip hop radio station B96. Each spot is co-branded with a different lender. The Agency has also recently added a weekly 15 minute segment on La Mera Buena radio, a popular Spanish language FM radio station. In addition to this weekly segment that features Minnesota Housing staff that talk to partners from the Home Ownership Center, lenders and other partners and has a call in portion, the Agency is also running ads throughout the week.