

**2010 NCSHA Award Nomination—Ohio Housing Finance Agency  
Communications—Annual Report  
2009 Annual Report: Road to Home**

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The Ohio Housing Finance Agency's (OHFA) annual report provides a point-in-time snapshot of the Agency's fiscal and programmatic performance to ensure effective use of scarce resources while connecting partners and customers to our mission to "*Open the Doors to an Affordable Place to Call Home.*" In 2009, building trust was vital to positioning OHFA as an affordable housing resource during a statewide and national housing crisis. The Office of Communications and Marketing planned and executed an annual report that simultaneously evoked this trust and summarized an incredible and challenging year.

The circulation of the report, typically distributed at the end of September to the Governor, the Ohio General Assembly and legislative contacts was expanded to a wider audience, including marketing contacts. Using the piece as marketing collateral would provide more Agency name recognition while chronicling key milestones and successes. The 2009 OHFA Annual Report provided a succinct view of Agency accomplishments within *Road to Home*, a travel journal that took readers on a journey through a year filled with unprecedented obstacles, program developments and strategies used to respond to the changing housing marketplace.

Planning the design of the report required a variance from OHFA's traditional branding signatures that maintained core recognition but offered a warmer, more personalized look that would create a sense of trustworthiness. Using a sense of nostalgia—encouraging the thought that home lies at the end of even the most difficult roads—was imperative to creating the travel journal design that incorporated innovative design elements. At 5 inches wide and 10 inches high, the journal was created with uncoated, recycled card stock to give it an authentic feel. From black and white photography of customers and OHFA employees to the use of vintage postcards, torn paper that was graphically "taped" into the journal and notebook paper pages, the report incorporated elements that conveyed a personal feeling, as if the reader created the pages to document their own journey. *Road to Home* contained a graphic representation of customer quotes and was accompanied by a video of OHFA customer testimonials that described their trust in the Agency and its programs.

To create a connection to the mission and to make the piece a point of pride for internal employees, the Office of Communications and Marketing solicited photos of staff members as children, posing in front of or inside their childhood homes. Using these photos received a great response from not only OHFA employees but from external partners as well, building trust and conversation about staff members' impact on the Agency.

All copy, design elements and photos within the report were created in-house and were used for this and other Agency publications. The printing cost (the only external cost for the publication) was \$5,450 for 250 copies, allowing the Agency to create a specialized marketing piece that contained intricate and strategic elements. As a marketing tool for legislators, members of the media and external partners, *Road to Home* displayed the

HFA: Ohio Housing Finance Agency

Entry Name: 2009 Annual Report: Road to Home

Agency's effectiveness while seeking to garner trust across a diverse audience. The report provided the information and emotion necessary to elevate OHFA's position as a statewide and national affordable housing resource.