



Entry Form 2018 Annual Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Deadline: Friday, June 15, 2018, Midnight ET

Each entry must include a completed entry form. Please complete a form for each entry your HFA is submitting. The completed entry form will become the first page of your entry.

This form is a fillable PDF. Type your information into the entry form and save it as a PDF. Please do not write on or scan the entry form. **Questions: Call 202-624-7710 or email awards@ncsha.org.**

Entry Title: Enter your entry's title exactly as you wish it to be published on the NCSHA website and in the awards program.

Category:

Subcategory:

Entry Summary: A 15-word (max) summary of the program, project, or practice you are entering.

HFA:

HFA Staff Contact:

Phone:

Email:

Visual Aids:

Are you mailing to NCSHA 10 copies of any visual aids that cannot be included in your entry PDF? Yes No

Payment:

My HFA is mailing a check to NCSHA.
My HFA is emailing the credit card authorization form to awards@ncsha.org.

Guide to Home Ownership Interactive Game

While the NC Housing Finance Agency offers mortgage products to help millennials overcome affordability issues, research has shown us that *misconceptions* about the affordability of home ownership, as well as *lack of knowledge* about the home buying process can be even bigger roadblocks to a home purchase. Knowing that buyer education needed to be quick and fun for a generation weaned on video games and smart phones, the Agency developed the *Guide to Home Ownership* interactive online game as the crux of its 2017 National Home Ownership Month campaign. After deployed it heavily throughout the summer, the Agency saw its loan reservations jump 30% over summer 2016, a jump that contributed heavily to our overall 2017 mortgage activity passing the \$1 billion mark for the first time.

This intriguing game highlights valuable information about home buying in a novel way and creates a dialogue between potential buyers and our Agency's real estate and lending partners. Its content marketing approach is one that could be replicated by other states who already have valuable home buyer content available.

Development

The Agency tapped Brasco Marketing in Raleigh, NC to help develop an interactive and exciting way to educate first-time buyers. This marketing firm's philosophy to "Be Authentic" is one that resonates with the millennial audience that wants authentic and engaging interactions that encourage them to make choices based on their own information and research.

The idea of the [Guide to Home Ownership game](#) has its seed in our *Home Matters* blog. This blog has more than 100 posts and garners approximately 9,000 unique views per year, and accompanied by occasional infographics, focuses on home ownership education on topics as varied as down payments and mortgage insurance to home inspections and more. We also have other existing resources such as quick online contact forms for home buying partners and affordability and mortgage payment calculators.

Our marketing objective was to increase visibility of the Agency's mortgage products to boost our loan production. To achieve that, we set a goal of educating potential home buyers so that we could position ourselves as a credible avenue for information and a trusted partner when it comes time for them to take action. Brasco leveraged our existing resources into an interactive game in a popular retro style to grab our audience's attention, provide valuable home buying and ownership tips and help our demographic transition from renter to home buyer.

Ready, Player 1?

The game begins with the user choosing a character. Then, much like the *Game of Life*, the *Guide to Home Ownership* leads the character through the board where he or she receives advice, reads funny notes and is prompted to learn more by clicking links to infographics, videos, mobile apps and more. This information is provided in the form of game cards with

trendy hashtags and ideas like grabbing coffee before an open house and having a bad case of #FOMO (fear of missing out) when a friend buys a home.

The format also lets users contact a participating lender or preferred real estate agent. This call to action gives players direct access to our partners and in turn provides our partners with another avenue for leads, further strengthening our relationship with them. What's more, users can share the game directly to their own social media, boosting its reach to even more potential home buyers.

It is only at the game's end, after consuming valuable content to help prepare them for home ownership, that players are prompted to learn about the Agency's home buying products. This passive, content-marketing approach has proven to be effective with the millennial demographic and with other groups of first-time buyers who are constantly inundated with sales pitches and don't respond to conventional advertising methods.

Measurable Results for the Agency

The benefits of the *Guide to Home Ownership* game far outweigh the development costs. While originally developed for Home Ownership Month, the game itself and the content it provides is timeless, allowing year-round use. The total cost came to \$9,375, with costs minimized by repackaging existing content. This one-time investment garnered big results for our Agency.

The Story of Success

Since the official launch June 1, 2017, the game has garnered 10,000 page views, with 6,000 unique users. Forty percent of all users were between the ages of 25 and 34 with a demographic breakdown of 60 percent female and 40 percent male. Twenty-one percent of all users were from Charlotte, NC, a metropolitan market where many millennials are beginning their careers and thinking about buying homes.

While the analytics surrounding the Guide to Home Ownership game are impressive, the increase in loans made by the NC Housing Finance Agency in connection with this resource tells the true story of the game's success. This marketing approach contributed to a spike in loan volume that ultimately resulted in 8,810 new homeowners in 2017 and \$1.2 billion in mortgage activity, an all-time high for our Agency.

And the *Guide to Home Ownership* continues to pay dividends. Its evergreen content means that we can continually deploy it with new would-be home buyers to educate them about the home buying process in an innovative way that resonates with their interests. We update content as needed to address changes in the housing market, achieving our objective of helping more North Carolinians become successful long-term homeowners.

To play the game, go to www.homeownershipquidenc.com.

HOME

Ownership

There's a lot to know when it comes to buying your first home but the NC Housing Finance Agency is here for you every step of the way. Journey through our "Guide to Home Ownership" to learn how to make the home buying process as easy, efficient and exciting as possible.

Select a character below to start.



RECEIVE RENEWAL NOTICE. LEASE IS UP IN 3 MONTHS

There are many reasons why buying instead of renting might be the best option for you. Check out [this infographic](#) to help you make an informed decision.

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Rent or Buy?

Don't go it alone!
Find a Preferred Real Estate Agent today.

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Take a Break



NC Home Advantage MORTGAGE™

WELCOME HOME!

Once you've unpacked, take a few minutes to make sure you know the **7 basic skills every homeowner should have**.

[Learn more](#) about home buying and how our mortgage products can help you get there.

Also, Stay Connected With Us On Social Media



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