

# With You Every Step of the Way: Hispanic Homebuyer Outreach

**Colorado Housing and Finance Authority**  
Communications: Integrated Campaign

**HFA Staff Contact**

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In 2020, CHFA was proud to launch our Spanish-language homeownership microsite, [Mi Hogar](#). This site was the result of an extensive effort, beginning with market research and consumer focus groups. In 2021, CHFA conducted a grassroots media campaign to share this valuable resource with Colorado homebuyers.

This project kicked off after hearing from the Hispanic community that more educational resources were needed for Spanish-speaking Colorado homebuyers. The goals of this project were to better understand Hispanic Coloradans' perceptions about homeownership, build awareness of homeownership benefits, and increase Hispanic homeownership in Colorado.

As the needs of our target audience were identified, the scope of our plan greatly increased. We felt such scope growth was necessary to adequately address the concerns and needs heard from focus groups and interviews within our target audience.

### **Innovative Resources**

This integrated campaign was innovative for CHFA as it was the first time we developed an entire microsite and extensive resources in another language. This was also the first time that participating CHFA staff conducted scripted interviews and collaborated with housing counselors to conduct scripted podcasts in Spanish. Upon launch, we learned such an effort was innovative for our participating lenders and media partners as well, as they hadn't worked with another financing entity that provided such resources or conducted similar outreach.

### **Replicable Efforts**

We believe our efforts are replicable for any HFA. While the project lead did not speak Spanish, we invited internal Spanish-speaking staff to participate and developed a reasonable budget to hire a vendor with experience serving the Spanish-speaking community to conduct research; develop messaging, design, and outreach recommendations; and collaborate on strategic media outreach.

To kick off the project, a cross-divisional team including members from Home Finance, Marketing and Community Relations, Research and Strategy, and Legal and Risk Management was formed. Research and surveys of current Spanish-speaking CHFA customers and participating lenders helped the team learn who CHFA was serving, while illuminating gaps in outreach. The cross-divisional team committed to biweekly meetings with the vendor's team throughout the project. The microsite was built in-house, with design and content developed by CHFA's Marketing and Community Relations team and transcreation offered by a local translation company. Once the website and collateral were developed, additional staff members offered their time to vet the content, helping to ensure that it was appropriately transcreated. Finally, when media outreach was conducted, CHFA staff and homebuyer education providers volunteered to conduct interviews and podcasts.

### **Engaging the Target Audience**

To explore Hispanic-held perceptions about homebuying and homeownership, the vendor conducted five focus groups with 65 Spanish-speaking and bilingual renters and homeowners in 15 high Spanish-speaking population geographies. The vendor also conducted interviews with real estate professionals serving Spanish-speaking homebuyers.

We heard from participants that they wanted more information about our mission-based programs and homebuyer education offerings. We also learned their homeownership hopes, concerns, and perceived obstacles, as well as creative and messaging preferences (see [Appendix 1, Focus Group Feedback](#)). The insights gained gave us the foundation to move forward with developing branding, messaging, and tone. What started out as a plan to revamp one page of our site resulted in the buildout of a 13-page homeownership-focused microsite, as well as new marketing collateral and videos (see [Appendix 2, Mi Hogar Microsite](#), for more details).

We continued to engage our target audience in the development of these resources, including collaborating with Hispanic, Spanish-speaking video producers, local actors, homebuyer education providers, lenders, real estate agents, CHFA staff, and CHFA customers. The media outreach was conducted on trusted, community-based radio stations and the media office of a local school district whose student population is 85 percent Hispanic.

### **Using What We Learned: Delivering Tailored Resources to Meet Customer Needs**

In addition to transcreating overarching CHFA homeownership content and collateral, five major takeaways from our research resulted in tailored resource development and outreach messaging.

#### **1. The top driver/concern was a financial knowledge gap.**

Many participants cited a lack of homebuying in their family histories or utilizing common credit-building practices. Before obtaining this information, we planned to do an equal share of down payment assistance and homebuyer education messaging; instead, we primarily focused on education, specifically incorporating more general financial education elements.

To incorporate this takeaway, we developed reference documents including “[Understanding Credit](#),” a fillable [budget worksheet](#), and a sample credit report. We also highlighted Spanish-speaking housing counseling agencies, homebuyer education classes, and participating lenders on the website. When visitors are ready to pursue homeownership, [mortgage calculators](#) and reference documents, including “[Is Homeownership Right for Me?](#)” and “[The True Cost of Homeownership](#),” can help Hispanic buyers be aware of the larger financial scope of buying a home and homeownership. For our media outreach, financial and homebuyer education was a predominate element of our messaging.

#### **2. It’s a family affair!**

Even if only one person is signing on the dotted line, focus groups shared that often they have a multigenerational household involved in the decision. For this reason, we included printable PDFs in addition to the online options, so information is easily shared with other members of the family. Our media outreach included advertising and information sharing on broadcast radio, digital platforms, and social media to reach prospective homebuyers through a mix of new and traditional mediums.

#### **3. Peers, community organizations, and family members are the go-to information resources.**

We increased our original scope to include video interviews with two Hispanic [CHFA customers](#). By featuring a nuclear family in a single family detached home and a single mother and her daughter in a townhome, we were able to illustrate different examples of homeownership and provide real-life peer guidance on how CHFA helped them achieve their dreams. For our media outreach, we worked with

trusted community media outlets and partnered with housing counselors from within Spanish-speaking communities for financial education podcasts.

#### **4. They want to know CHFA is talking to them.**

Participants said messages were more effective if they reflected culturally relevant situations and culturally relevant language. Based on creative feedback, we featured warm color schemes and imagery of families, food, and social gatherings in our collateral and online resources. In our [Steps to Homeownership video series](#), a young homebuyer receives guidance from family members and family gatherings were featured as elemental to the story. While both English and Spanish were spoken, terms of endearment were always in Spanish, per vendor and participant feedback.

#### **5. They want a partner in the process.**

Being mission-based was important to the Spanish-speaking community. Focus-group participants advised us to use our whole name in lieu of the acronym to help customers identify us as a mission-based organization. Because they trusted us as such an organization—they wanted CHFA to be present throughout the homebuying process. We incorporated this takeaway by creating a focus-group-approved tagline, “CHFA le acompaña a cada paso del camino,” or “CHFA is with you every step of the way.” We also created the [Steps to Homeownership video series](#) with corresponding reference documents. The steps begin with the determination if homeownership is a good fit and conclude by discussing tips for successful homeownership. Corresponding reference documents include “[Lender Interview Questions](#),” “[Tips on Successful Homeownership](#),” and “[Preventative Maintenance Checklist](#).”

### **COVID-19: Shifting Media Outreach**

When the pandemic hit between our website launch and the start of media outreach, we paused to evaluate how the market was impacted. Once we felt that campaign was still timely and after conferring with our vendors and media outlets, we began outreach with a slight pivot. We continued with a three-prong messaging approach for our digital ads (highlighting the Mi Hogar website, homebuyer education, and down payment assistance) and shared our Steps to Homeownership videos but switched the focus of the interview and podcast series to a more general “financial fitness” focus, with subtle incorporation of how all topics related to homebuying. This approach reinforced CHFA’s brand as a homeownership resource, one the audience will turn to when they are ready. Please see [Appendix 3, Media Outreach Summary](#), for details.

### **Measurable Results and Benefits**

We believe that our efforts have resulted in success. Our overall goal was to increase Hispanic homeownership in Colorado by delivering information and resources in a culturally relevant way and through culturally relevant mediums. Our efforts resulted in target audience engagement, increased brand awareness, and have positioned CHFA as a trusted resource for homeownership. For more outreach results, please see [Appendix 4, Engagement Results](#). Perhaps the most significant measure of this effort is that CHFA’s Hispanic homeownership rate has increased significantly in the past year, reflecting a 1 percent increase to the overall Colorado Hispanic homeownership rate, a true success for all of Colorado.



# Appendix 1: Focus group Feedback



*financing the places where  
people live and work*

# outreach goals

- Increase awareness about the benefits of homeownership.
- Address concerns raised about the homebuying process.
- Talk to Colorado's Hispanic population about preparation for homeownership.
- Inspire more Hispanic homebuyers to visit the CHFA website to learn about the services offered.

# focus groups

- 5 focus groups conducted: Nov/Dec 2017
- 65 participants; English- and Spanish-speaking; owners/renters; incomes up to \$75k
- 15 geographies: Aurora, Brighton, Commerce City, Denver, Eaton, Edgewater, Federal Heights, Fort Lupton, Greeley, La Junta, Lakewood, Montbello, Pueblo, Rocky Ford, Westminster
- 5 real estate professional key informants interviewed
- Purpose: Explore Hispanic-held perception about homebuying

# why do you want to buy a home?

- Safety, Security (16 participants)
  - Adequate parking, fences, streetlights, and remaining in your home as you age.
- Good neighbors (14 participants)
  - Participants expressed a desire to be a part of a community.
- The ability to make changes/modifications to your home (11 participants)
  - “I love dreaming about how I would decorate the kids’ rooms.”



# homeownership obstacles

- Maintenance (cited by 11 participants)
  - Participants shared “horror stories” of people who had bought a home, only to find a major repair issue.
- Lack of adequate/good credit (cited by 10 participants)
  - “I am here seeking education, to avoid ignorance. We are working with a company to repair our credit, so we can buy a home. It is worth it; it has brought our credit scores up.”
- Lack of homebuyer education (cited by 9 participants)
  - “We need more of the good stuff CHFA puts out there.”

# what the professionals said

- 5 Key informant interviews
- 2 lenders
- 3 realtors
- All Hispanic-serving



- *The homebuying process is complicated*
- *Homebuyer education is needed*
- *Credit issues hamper the homebuying process*
- *People don't think they can qualify for a home*

# recommendations: messages

- Talk about the security of owning your own home
  - “A lady I work with, she is 93 and has a little condo. She is in her own home with her garden and all her little things around her.”
- Talk about the accomplishment of achieving homeownership
  - “I am maturing now... Dreaming about owning a home takes me out of the poverty mindset I was raised with. Now I have pride knowing I am mature enough to handle the responsibility.”

# recommendations: messages

- Ease the fear of hidden maintenance issues
  - In homebuyer education, stress safeguards such as home inspection and home warranties.
- Address credit issues early and often
  - “I didn’t have a family example. My parents aren’t from here. I don’t want to struggle like they have had to do.”
  - “We don’t have those conversations with our kids. We should be the ones learning, so we can teach our kids.”

# additional feedback

- Imagery: “We want to see someone who looks like us”
- Communication:
  - Translations are not sufficient—need to transcreate
  - Want more information
- CHFA as a resource
  - They want to know CHFA is there to help
  - CHFA is trustworthy
  - CHFA is an advocate for them
- Peer-to-peer learning in focus groups was consistent activity



# understanding the audience

- It's a family affair!
- More than just the homebuyer
- Multigenerational family where everyone needs buy-in
- Spanish- and English-speaking audience



# what are their drivers/concerns?

- Little understanding of credit
- Little to no family history of buying a home
- Homeownership is a lifelong goal—how do I get there?
- Safety and security of homeownership—something to hand down to their kids



# what is the message?

- Homebuyer education > down payment assistance
- Peer/Community/Family-driven: A trusted source of information
- CHFA is talking to me
  - Backgrounds reflect culturally relevant situations
  - Culturally relevant language is used
- We want a partner in the process:
  - Tagline: “CHFA is with you every step of the way.”





## Appendix 2: Mi Hogar Microsite

# pages include

- Landing page
- Steps to Homeownership
- About CHFA
- How to Get a CHFA loan
- Homebuyer Education
- Online Homebuyer Education Providers
- Customer Testimonial (videos)
- Down Payment Assistance
- Homebuyer FAQs
- Find a CHFA Participating Lender
- Mortgage Calculators
- Income Limits
- Current Customers
- Contact us



# videos include:

- Thinking about buying a home?
- Be prepared and understand your credit
- Take homebuyer education
- Loan programs and down payment assistance
- Contact a CHFA Participating Lender
- Choose a real estate agent
- Close on your home
- Tips on successful homeownership



# pdf resources include

- Is Homeownership for Me? (Pros & Cons)
- Beyond the Mortgage (True Cost of Homeownership)
- Sample Experian Credit Report (English-only)
- Spending Plan Worksheet - fillable PDF
- Understanding Credit
- Pre-approval vs. Prequalification
- Lender Interview Questions
- Finding a Real Estate Agent
- Loan Closing Documents
- Tips on Successful Homeownership
- Preventative Maintenance Checklist



## Appendix 3: Media Outreach Summary



# outreach themes (sept 2020 – march 2021)

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## Homebuyer Education

- Preparing to buy a home
- Financial fitness

## Down Payment Assistance

- You don't need 20% down
- Second mortgage and grant available when ready

## Mi Hogar Microsite

- Steps to Homeownership videos
- Financial fitness and homebuying prep tools

# hispanic media outreach

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La Buena Onda  
(1150AM)

La Buena Onda (1150AM)

ayuda con el pago inicial

CHFA le acompaña a cada paso del camino



colorado housing and finance authority

6 live interviews (1/mo)  
w/CHFA staff

Rodolfo Cardenas  
*Hablemos Hoy*  
7:30am or 8:30am

Through March 2021

Eight 60-second “Steps to  
Homeownership”  
vignettes  
(2 ads/day)

FB posts

Link back to Mi Hogar

# hispanic media outreach

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KBNO  
(1280AM & 97.7FM)

6 live interviews (1/mo)  
w/CHFA staff

Fernando Sergio  
*La Voz de Pueblo*  
11:35am

Through March 2021

Eight 60-second “Steps to  
Homeownership”  
vignettes  
(2 ads/day)



FB posts  
Link back to Mi Hogar

# hispanic media outreach

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Denver Public  
Schools Office of  
Multicultural  
Outreach (OMO)

5 pre-recorded podcasts  
w/HBE providers

Roberto Gaytan-Payan  
*Educa Radio*

FB posts

Unique advert opportunity to  
sponsor Hispanic Heritage  
Month productions



Steps to Homeownership  
videos on OMO YouTube  
and Vimeo

# interview and podcast topics

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## Radio Interviews: Homebuyer Financial Ed

- Understanding Credit
- Budgeting and Saving
- True Costs of Homeownership
- Homebuyer Education

## Podcast: Financial Fitness Series

- Credit
- Debt
- Budgeting
- Saving
- Is it the right time to buy?

# bonus outreach

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- We received the additional free opportunities:
  - La Buena Onda – 2 additional live interviews
  - Office of Multicultural Outreach:
    - Community Conversation podcast sponsorship
    - Hispanic Heritage Month video series sponsorship



# Appendix 4: Engagement Results



# results: 10,131 Mi Hogar website visits

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As of 04.28.2021

# la buena onda media outreach

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- Facebook ads posted weekly
- Rotating Steps to Homeownership vignettes 2-3x daily
- Banners rotate daily on the Hablemos Hoy website

Please note: this station does not have reporting capabilities.

# Kbno media outreach results

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- Steps to Homeownership vignettes: 2x/day
- Digital ad impressions: 20.3k (as of 03.01.21)
- Facebook ads: 24.5k views; 3k clicks (as of 02.01.21)
  - Facebook visitors per month: 19,600
- Interviews (1/mo (Dec to May):
  - 2,798 people listen per month
  - 4,500 impressions per month after posted on site

# dps office of multicultural outreach results

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- Podcasts: 1,192 clicks; 9 social shares
- Vimeo Steps to Homeownership video showcase: 1,645 views
- Coffee Conversation Video sponsorships: 838 views; 19 shares
- Facebook flyer posts: 548 clicks

# website video engagement: customer testimonials

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- Posted November 2020
- Views: 215
- Impressions: 1,309
- Total time watched: 11,113 minutes

# website video engagement: steps to homeownership

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- Posted April 2020
- Views: 473
- Impressions: 5,858
- Total time watched: 11,648 minutes

# hispanic households: production results

## outreach aligns with increasing investment

Since 2018, CHFA has been conducting outreach to the Hispanic community to better understand its housing experiences and needs, while providing information about homeownership. Through focus groups, advertising, a Spanish-language website, radio interviews, podcasts, and other resources, CHFA has increased awareness of homeownership opportunities for Hispanic Coloradans and served more Hispanic homebuyers as illustrated below.

Hispanic or Latino Households			
Year	Percent of Loan Count	Loan Count	Production
2011	26%	556	\$73,519,080
2012	25%	514	\$73,635,950
2013	24%	560	\$89,186,722
2014	29%	691	\$114,617,711
2015	28%	1,041	\$200,401,198
2016	28%	1,617	\$358,334,043
2017	30%	2,274	\$555,403,384
2018	34%	2,583	\$689,684,652
2019	35%	3,240	\$925,214,520
2020	37%	3,455	\$1,048,588,214
2021 (through March 31)	38%	644	\$201,085,614