

Campaign is administered locally by the Family Housing Fund, a nonprofit organization with a 29-year history of preserving and producing affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families. The campaign has raised \$1.75 million since its launch, including \$600,000 from the Family Housing Fund, and has been supported by more than 50 individuals and private and public entities.

From 2003 to 2006, the campaign focused on preventing predatory lending through a multimedia campaign and helpline. Tens of thousands of individuals were reached through the campaign's public education and outreach efforts. More than 1,350 consumers received one-on-one assistance through the information and referral help line (612-312-2020) that was hosted by the Greater Twin Cities United Way.

In 2006, a new trend emerged, with an increasing percentage of callers facing foreclosure or in a predatory lending situation that could lead to foreclosure.

Don't Borrow Trouble Campaign Begins to Focus on Foreclosure Prevention

In 2007, given the rise in foreclosure related issues, the Family Housing Fund reached out to the Minnesota Home Ownership Center to host the information and referral line. While the help line number stayed the same (612-312-2020), callers seeking answers to questions or information related to predatory lending and foreclosure now speak directly with the Center—an organization with great capacity to answer questions related to homeownership and foreclosure in Minnesota. The issues facing DBT callers are very familiar to the Center. For this reason, and through linking the DBT callers more closely to the statewide network of homeownership educators and counselors that partner with the Center, the transition of the DBT help line to the Center was a natural fit.

Given the dramatic rise in foreclosures in the Twin Cities and nationwide, staff from the Family Housing Fund, the Minnesota Home Ownership Center, and the Minnesota Foreclosure Partners Council joined forces in 2008 to revamp the Don't Borrow Trouble Minnesota messages to have a stronger focus on foreclosure prevention. Due to the growing number of foreclosures in the Hispanic/Latino population, several of the materials were also developed in Spanish.

The Don't Borrow Trouble Multimedia Campaign

The Fund worked with media partner Strongsuit Media to create a public education campaign to get the messages out and generate calls to the Home Ownership Center for 2009. The new media plan incorporates bus kings (ads on city bus sides), light rail station advertising, and community neighborhood billboards. The campaign focused its efforts on many of the neighborhoods in the Twin Cities (with an emphasis on Minneapolis neighborhoods) that had been hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis. In addition, ads ran in ethnic media and senior publications throughout the metro area.

Through the media buys, the Fund secured a one to one match of paid advertising to free ad space provided, with all of the light rail advertising at no cost. Moreover, due to the slow economy and the excellence of the materials (advertisers wanted to use our materials when space was unsold), the campaign received much more free advertising than originally anticipated. For example, in the first ten months of the campaign, it was

estimated that the campaign received an average of over 16 free community billboards per month (compared to the ten promised), or approximately \$165,000 worth of additional free media.

Staff recommending this program

Staff is recommending that the city invest \$100,000 in this already recognized program. Resources will be focused according to the carefully developed and implemented plan used over the last two years.

These resources have already been appropriated as part of the 2009 budget process and are a part of CPED's business plan. All \$100,000 will come from fund 01400 (CDBG and ESG Programs).