

# THE BRIDGE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

JULY 2, 2012

## WELCOME TO *"The Bridge"*



Welcome to "The Bridge" Newsletter, a publication created to connect housing counseling information seekers with information providers throughout the Office of Housing, the Department of HUD and the Housing Counseling industry. Features of interest, testimonials, general information and announcements are welcomed. Respond to [thebridge@hud.gov](mailto:thebridge@hud.gov) with comments, articles, questions or suggestions.

# HOUSING COUNSELING ROCKS IN FLORIDA!

## TESTIMONIAL

**H. S.** (client) is married with children. He is a homeowner who had a conventional adjustable rate mortgage in the amount of \$ 223,555. The client's wife was in a bad car accident and was unable to work. As a result they fell eight (8) months behind on their mortgage payments.

William Rosenblatt, a certified housing counselor with Consumer Debt Counselors located in Winter Park, Florida, worked hard to assist the client. His hard work paid off when the clients were approved for a \$102,000 principal reduction. The client and his family will start their trial modification payments in July, 2012.

***Consumer Debt Counselors adopted the National Industry Standards.***

## TESTIMONIAL

Two married clients of Tampa, Florida are senior citizens living on fixed income. Because of medical bills, they fell seriously behind in their mortgage payments. They reached out to an attorney for help and became victims of a scam. The attorney was later disbarred by the State of California but the clients were unable to recover any of the money they paid the attorney to help them. Fortunately, the clients were made aware of Solita's House, Inc. in Tampa and sought counseling.

The client's loan was sold several times during the process of the agency requesting a modification. After persistent re-submissions, a loan modification was finally approved to cure the default, lower the payment from \$1194 to \$442, reduce the interest rate from 7.75% to 2.00% and reduce the principal from \$177,559 to \$47,750. The original loan was a non-GSE, non-FHA/VA with no PMI which means the investor was not obligated to participate in government sponsored assistance programs. The fact that these favorable terms were attained attests to the great work the counselor performed!

# THE OHC REORGANIZATION – Update in Brief



## Union Negotiations

Management and labor will commence negotiations the week of July 9, 2012.

## Manager Reassignments

The process for reassigning managers to positions in the Office of Housing Counseling and the Office of Single Family Housing is underway.

## Implementation Schedule

The following implementation schedule has been established to provide estimated timeframes when milestones will be accomplished. Dates are subject to change in response to unforeseen delays.

Milestones	Dates
Issue Memorandum to Solicit Expressions of Interest from Managers	June 2012
Receive Expressions of Interest from Managers	June 2012
Managers Notified of Reassignments	July 2012
Issue Memorandum to Solicit Expressions of Interest from Staff	July 2012
Receive Expressions of Interest from Staff	July 2012
Staff Notified of Reassignments	July 2012
Target Effective Date of Reassignments	July 2012*
Transition Period	August – September 2012
Realigned Single Family and OHC Fully Operational	October 2012

# OUT AND ABOUT

## **NCD A Meets in Palm Springs, CA**

On Thursday June 21, 2012, Jerrold Mayer, Director Program Support Division, SAHOC represented the Department at the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual conference of the National Community Development Association (NCD A) in Palm Springs, California. Jerry gave a 1 hour presentation to 110 local CDA Executive Directors and Community Development leaders from around the Nation on the landmark National Mortgage Settlement.

The settlement will provide as much as \$25 billion in relief to distressed borrowers and direct payments to states and the federal government. The agreement settles state and federal investigations finding that the country's five largest loan servicers routinely signed foreclosure related documents outside the presence of a notary public and without really knowing whether the facts they contained were correct. Both of these practices violate the law. The settlement provides benefits to borrowers whose loans are owned by the settling banks as well as to many of the borrowers whose loans they service.

Jerry's presentation included an overview of the provisions of settlement, a breakdown of the various disbursements and projected uses of the settlement money, enhancements to lender servicing requirements, protections for our veterans and active duty military personnel and how to find out more information about the settlement. The presentation was followed by a spirited question and answer session with the attendees that addressed various settlement funding issues and how partnering with HUD approved housing counseling agencies can help local community development agencies address the foreclosure crisis in their communities.

Find out more about the NCD A by visiting them online at: <http://www.ncdaonline.org/>



Learn about the National Mortgage Settlement by visiting: <http://nationalmortgagesettlement.com/>

## **NeighborWorks Center for Homeownership Education and Counseling (NCHEC) Convenes**

On June 19th and 20th, several representatives from HUD attended a meeting of industry stakeholders to discuss the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act) as it relates to statutory requirements related to the housing counseling industry. Stakeholders had an opportunity to discuss the Dodd-Frank Act and its impact on the industry. The two-day meeting convened by NeighborWorks was structured to share information on the requirements of the Dodd-Frank Act regarding housing counseling and to allow meeting participants to share their thoughts on how these requirements could be effectively implemented by HUD. The two main topics that were discussed at the meeting were individual counselor certification and industry standards for rental counseling.

HUD welcomes other opportunities to get feedback from industry stakeholders about the housing counseling requirements in the Dodd-Frank Act. In the near future, the Department will engage in a formal rulemaking process to implement Dodd-Frank Act requirements. The Department will be encouraging all stakeholders to use the formal rulemaking process to submit comments to the Department.



## **CHAMPIONS OF SERVICE – Inside and Out**

The Bridge is pleased to recognize Champions of Service who have provided exemplary service in the Housing Counseling arena, inside and outside of HUD. Nominations of persons both inside and outside of HUD are welcomed. Please send your nominations by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to [thebridge@hud.gov](mailto:thebridge@hud.gov).



### **Robin Penick, Louisville Field Office, Program Support Division – Champion of Service**

HUD Louisville Field Office Housing Program Specialist, Robin Penick is to be commended for her efforts that helped to save an FHA borrower's home. Mrs. Penick's diligence in a Kentucky bankruptcy court case not only led to \$40,000 in legal fees being dropped from the homeowner's workout plan, her actions increased awareness of FHA's Loss Mitigation programs and helped protect the FHA insurance fund. The lender attempted to roll over these fees into the workout agreement which without Mrs. Penick's involvement would have been transferred to the borrower. Because of her concern for the borrower, Mrs. Penick voluntarily attended the bankruptcy trial and upon doing so, she heard contradictory testimony from the lender than what was submitted in writing. Mrs. Penick brought this to the attention of the attorneys and it was her diligence that led to the submission of correct documentation that was entered as evidence during the trial. It was this action that assisted the court in making its final decision in ruling that \$40,000 in legal fees on an FHA-insured loan were excessive; thereby saving the FHA consumers from foreclosure. Mrs. Penick serves as a shining example of a HUD Champion of Service.



### **Ruth A. Trembley, Atlanta Homeownership Center, Program Support Division – Champion of Service**

Atlanta Homeownership Center, Management Analyst, Mrs. Ruth Trembley developed training designed to enhance Region IV employee's knowledge of FHA's Loss Mitigation and Making Homes Affordable programs. Mrs. Trembley created a PowerPoint presentation explaining these programs and conducted four webinars designed to reach *all* employees in Region IV. To date, approximately 550 employees participated in the webinars. The presentations informed HUD employees of ways to prevent foreclosure so they could help themselves if facing default or foreclosure. Additionally, the training equipped HUD staff in answering questions from the public, friends and family members regarding foreclosure prevention options. The training not only covered information for borrowers with FHA mortgages, it also provided available options to assist borrowers with conventional mortgages. The PowerPoint was shared with the other three Homeownership Centers (HOCs), the National Servicing Center and HUD-Headquarters in hopes that the training can be provided to all HUD employees. Mrs. Trembley's efforts in helping to mitigate foreclosures in Region IV go way beyond these activities mentioned. On almost a daily basis, this Champion of Service receives calls from consumers seeking information on avoiding foreclosure. Mrs. Trembley's activities in providing excellent customer service both internally and externally are demonstrative of a HUD Champion of Service.

# CHAMPIONS OF SERVICE – Inside and Out



**Denise Bench, Certified Housing Counselor**  
**Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Springfield, MO – Champion of Service**

Denise Bench started with Consumer Credit Counseling of Springfield, Missouri, in 2006. She has always placed customer service as her number one priority, treating her clients as she would want to be treated. Denise is a Certified Housing and Credit Counselor with the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) and NeighborWorks Center for Homeownership Education and Counseling (NCHCEC). She has completed several Foreclosure Intervention/ Prevention and Default Counseling Programs. She is a member of the Continuum of Care for the Homeless, Resources Unlimited Network for Non-Profits and Chairman's Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, Springfield, Missouri. Before working for CCCS, Denise worked for two local banks in their Trust Departments bringing 15 years experience in the financial & investment industry.



**Anita Olsen, Minneapolis Field Office, SF Housing Program Specialist – Champion of Service**

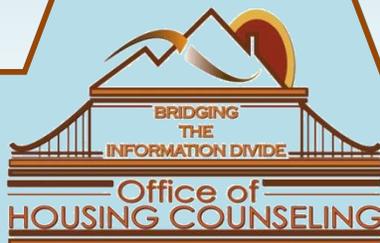
Anita Olson, Housing Program Specialist located in the Minneapolis, MN field office, is highly qualified for the Champions of Service inside HUD award. She is the sole point of contact for all issues involving single family housing in the state of Minnesota, and is responsible for monitoring, reviewing, and assisting 37 Housing Counseling agencies in Minnesota. Anita has recently volunteered to monitor 17 Housing Counseling grants to Minnesota agencies, totaling \$450,752. In addition, Anita is always involved in special project, the latest two being the lead for the Minnesota Field Working Group and the co-chair of the Impact Team dealing with HUD's national computer systems for Housing Counseling monitoring. Finally, Anita is very involved in state-wide outreach efforts and is a great source of information and assistance to her co-workers and clients.



**Gary Thacker, Acting Branch Chief, Program Support Division, Denver Homeownership Center – Champion of Service**

The Denver Office wants to recognize Gary Thacker for stepping up to serve as the Acting Branch Chief of Program Support Division, Denver Homeownership Center, in December 2011 subsequent to the Branch Chief retirement. Gary immediately took charge serving as the Project Manager for the 2012 Grant Team and under his leadership; the grants were processed in record time. He has shown outstanding performance in both providing ongoing training and expert guidance to the out stationed PSD staff and technical assistance to the Housing Counseling Community over the past six years. Gary is retiring in August 2012 and will be missed by all. The Denver Office honors his commitment to the Housing Counseling Agencies and wishes him the best in retirement.

# OHC Talent Search



Consider a Career with the  
Office of Housing Counseling

**APPLY TODAY!**

**[MP Vacancy](#)**

**<http://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/318466500>**

**[DE Vacancy](#)**

**<http://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/318520400>**

**COMING SOON...**

**OHC WEBSITE!**

**PLEASE STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**