

Facing the Mortgage Crisis A Public Media Community Engagement Initiative

Facing the Mortgage Crisis is a two-month pilot community engagement initiative led by KETC in St. Louis that leverages public media assets on-air, online and in the community. The purposes of the work are threefold:

- Connect people of the St. Louis region to foreclosure prevention resources through a network of trusted community partners mobilized by public media
- Raise awareness about the impact of the mortgage crisis on the entire community
- Deepen the significance of public media locally and nationally

About the Work

A trusted network of 25 partners formed the foundation of *Facing the Mortgage Crisis*. Public media assets were deployed on-air, online and in the community.

- **On-air**
 - **Interstitials** – As a way to direct viewers to 2-1-1 and provide simple mortgage-related tips we created a series of short 60-90 second messages. At the end of each interstitial we included a brief call-to-action to the 2-1-1 helpline and to our web site, which featured links to assistance. We produced 23 messages—mortgage spots aired 10 times every day (minimum)
 - **Living St. Louis** – Using our weekly magazine program, we raised awareness of the impact of the mortgage crisis using story-telling that focused on the impact of the crisis in local communities and how the crisis affects the region—these are 6-9 minute stories airing on Monday nights.
 - **Live, Call-In Programs** – 2 one-hour programs featured panelists from partner organizations who were available to answer questions fielded by phone, from the audience and via e-mail. During the show we received 109 phone calls from the community—most seeking assistance. Calls were answered by counselors from trusted housing counseling partners. Many callers were able to set up follow-up appointments with housing agencies. This type of call-in response shows we have the ability to be a catalyst to connect people to resources.
 - As a follow-up to the programs, we hosted an online discussion featuring a housing counselor to interacted with the over 100 participants.
- **In the Community** – For *Facing the Mortgage Crisis*, we developed a Community Presentation Toolkit to take into the community to connect with groups and organizations. We presented to more than 100 regional organizations. Each group widened our network by distributing Mortgage Crisis materials, linking to our website and distributing our e-blast to their networks.
- **Online** – Community partners have also helped to guide the online component of the project. The purpose of the website is to connect people to trusted resources both for residents of the St. Louis community and for our partner organizations. On the site we are featuring a blog that both highlights the efforts of our partners and follows the latest news and breaks it down into a digestible format for community members. The community resource map displays where trusted services are available and features the Living St. Louis segments in a geographic format. All of the video created for the project is available online via our site and

You Tube. We also leveraged social networking as a way to connect the dots and give people an outlet to talk.

Impact

A preliminary report from the assessment of the pilot indicates that KETC had significant impact on the community with *Facing the Mortgage Crisis*.

- There was a significant and sizable change in all outcomes tested.
- The assessment team from the University of Wisconsin at Madison:
 - Considers this work a case study of how a public media organization can empower a community around a specific issue
 - Are “astounded” with the results—that a public media organization in such a short time can have such a profound impact on a local community
 - Are impressed by how clear the respondents were in expressing that KETC was worthy of support because of the work around *Facing the Mortgage Crisis*.
- Preliminary outcomes:
 - People who were exposed to KETC’s work:
 - Better understood the local impact and severity of the mortgage crisis
 - Felt it was important that KETC help the community by taking on these types of important issues
 - Talked to other people about the ripple effects of the mortgage crisis
 - Were more likely to seek helpful information and tell others about this information
 - Were more likely to contribute and connect to KETC
- We commissioned as part of the assessment a time series modeling of our on-air efforts against the United Way 2-1-1 call center data. Looking at the charts in the attached graphic:
 - The airings of the interstitials (which start around June 1) coincided with a quite substantial increase in the number of calls to 211 about mortgages, from an average of about 20 calls per day to **four or five times** that much.
 - The one-day high in number of calls (170 calls in a day about mortgages) coincides with the day on which the long-form mortgage programming reached it's one-day high, a clear sign of correspondence.
 - Rough estimates suggest something around 5,000-10,000 additional calls to 2-1-1 about the mortgage crisis as a result of KETC's programming.

Additional information from the complete assessment, including the methodology employed will be available with the final report to be delivered to CPB on September 30.