



The ANHD Reader

...of Housing and Community News...

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New York Mortgage Coalition Helps First Time Homebuyers

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Today's lending market for affordable homeownership is a good news, bad news story: The good news is that because of the ongoing housing slump real estate prices are among the most competitive in recent memory with interest rates still hovering at historical lows. However, the bad news is that delinquencies and foreclosures have forced banks to tighten lending standards, particularly credit scores. The need for higher scores is now being felt throughout the city's low- and moderate-income (LMI) neighborhoods being served by Acorn, NHS, and the New York Mortgage Coalition (NYMC).

At NYMC our primary focus is to expand homeownership opportunities for first-time LMI buyers through pre-purchase counseling, prequalification, and mortgage placement. With stricter lending guidelines, our counselors now report that clients with scores in the mid-600s, sufficient for approval as recently as 6 to 12 months ago, are often denied financing, with the exception of FHA and SONYMA.

Though a variety of factors such as employment, cash reserves, and debt-to-income ratio are involved in the underwriting decision, it is the credit score that makes the borrower's all-important first impression on the lender and it is the credit score that remains a key driver in determining both mortgage-readiness and the interest rate that is ultimately charged.

For the housing counselors working out of NYMC's eight community groups, improving credit scores is an ongoing challenge. Our clients have homeownership dreams but often have little or no savings and credit scores below 600. On average 2 out of 3 clients are 6 months or more from being "mortgage-ready," which in today's lending environment typically translates as follows:

- A minimum 680 score
- At least 11% of purchase price saved towards down payment (5%) and closing costs (6%)
- At least 2 months cash reserves for PITI (principal, interest, taxes, and insurance)

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housing are 4,007 individuals with HIV/AIDS who are stably housed through HASA supportive housing program," Branca told the City Council's General Welfare Committee at a May 26th budget hearing. The Mayor's proposed cuts, she explained, will "risk the health and housing stability of thousands of New Yorkers dealing with the devastating effects of living with HIV/AIDS."

The Network estimates that the \$1.876 million funding reduction would result in an estimated 32% cut in on-site case management, reducing the number of case managers working with these tenants from 198 to 135. "If these cuts remain, each case manager would be responsible for assisting 30 of the most challenging tenants served in supportive housing, a 50% increase compared to the current 20:1 caseload ratio," said Branca.

The proposed cuts are premised on an assumption that the City's own case managers at HASA offices make the on-site supportive housing case managers at least partially redundant.

"HASA case workers play an important function, including coordinating benefits for their clients, but it is the on-site case managers that maintain the health and stability of this vulnerable population," said Branca. "For people living with HIV/AIDS, health crises do not only occur during office hours. Supportive housing case managers work in the residences and are available when tenants need assistance. Preliminary research by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) shows that 93% of supportive housing programs provide 24-hour access to staff. Conversely, HASA case managers are only available across the city, usually by appointment only, and only during office hours."

Information from New York Non-Profit Press:

<http://www.nynp.biz/index.php/breaking-news/981-taking-the-support-out-of-supportive-housing>

VOLUNTEERS FOR THE LEADERSHIP SERIES

The Center for Nonprofit Success is looking for six volunteers to serve as greeters at the registration table of the New York Leadership series. Volunteers interested in this great networking opportunity should complete the volunteer registration form at:

<http://www.cfnps.org/VolunteerRegistrationNew.aspx?S=77>

ROBIN LEBARON GOES TO ENERGY PROGRAMS CONSORTIUM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Hope Community has announced that Robin LeBaron will step down as executive director at the end of June to accept a position with a consulting firm in Washington D.C. Jay Marcus, a highly respected figure in the community development field and a recipient of a Hope Community Service Award in 2008, will lead the organization on an interim basis.

"Hope is stronger than it was two and a half years ago," said board chair Ann C. Henderson. "Under the guidance of Robin LeBaron, Hope has improved its property management operations and continues to move forward as a housing developer with projects that include membership on the team to develop the major East 125th Street site and the first refinancing of a "Year 15" project in New York City. We will miss him and wish him the best in his new endeavors."

During the search process, Jay Marcus

will serve as the Hope's interim executive director. Mr. Marcus, is taking a leave of absence from his position as Director of New York Programs for NCB Capital Impact

WHEDCO WINS NATIONAL GREEN HOUSING AWARD

The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCo) has received the 15th Annual Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Award in Green Housing at a national awards ceremony on Capitol Hill.

The award recognizes WHEDCo's new Intervale Green, the largest affordable multi-family ENERGY STAR certified building in the country.

"WHEDCo is honored to receive this important recognition of excellence from the affordable housing community," said Nancy Biberman, WHEDCo founder and president. "We are proud that Intervale Green has emerged as a replicable model of green affordable housing that incorporates the highest aesthetic and design standards."

"When the opportunity arose to nominate one of our projects for this prestigious award, I confess that WHEDCo's Intervale Green was at the top of the list of candidates," said Marc Jahr, President of HDC. "We at HDC are very proud of our partnership with WHEDCo and honored to bring this award home."

Intervale Green was built on an abandoned lot in the South Bronx. Today, the complex brings over 1/2 an acre of vegetation to the community, including three green roofs for vegetable and flowering gardens. Offering 128 family apartments for low-income and formerly homeless families, the complex was built with environmentally friendly, healthy materials and boasts energy-efficient appliances to help keep utility bills low for the new residents. Green technology throughout the building will help improve the environment and help keep money in the hands of the residents. Residents already struggling to make ends meet are expected to save 30% on utility bills.

For more information visit the website at:
<http://www.whedco.org/home.php>