

## 2010 VAHC Annual Conference – Wrap-Up Session

### Session: Are You Ready to Take it to the Next Level?

*Date:* April 29 10:30- 11:45 am

*Purpose:* To provide an opportunity to share opinions, strategies, tactics, new creations, outcome assessments, and brainstorm for the annual conference

*Facilitators:* Denise Crews and Shawn Washington

### Question # 1 – After attending this conference, how ready are you to take it to the next level?

Thirty participants responded to the question by plotting their status on a wall chart. Options were 1) In the valley; 2) On the upswing; 3) All the way to the top.

Category	Number of Responses	Percentage of group
In the Valley	1	3%
Between the Valley and Upswing	2	7%
On the Upswing	15	50%
Between the Upswing and the top	3	10%
All the way to the top	9	30%

### Question #2 What does the phrase “moving to the next level” mean to you?

Much of the discussion surrounded the influx of new clientele from the mainstream (higher incomes, higher educations, professionals) reflecting the changing economic horizon. Specific ideas are captured below:

- If you are green, you are growing
- Accept, embrace, and respond to change
- Learn to listen more
- Don't make assumptions based on socioeconomic demographics
- Stay up-to-date (training, creativity, best practices)
- Don't take it personally
- Establish, develop, and nurture partnerships
- Get back to basics
- Find resources
- Be flexible in shift from homeownership to rental counseling

### Question #3 What tools and resources do you need to get you to the next level?

Much of the discussion surrounded enhancing the VAHC website to provide a forum for discussion and information sharing. Specific items mentioned including both web and non-web based resources are listed below:

- Establish regional roundtables
- Blog on VAHC website
- Access to All Regs/guidelines (Allregs.com)
- Online training (HUD/Neighborworks)
- Locate free resources
- Personal Commitment
- Personal Care (De-stress)
- Monthly Newsletter (VAHC)
- FAQs on Website (Updates/Alerts)
- Standardized templates that can be adapted for consumers on website

- Periodic trainings for outside agencies to help them understand the role of housing counselor (Shelters, social service agencies, community services boards)
- Scholarships for agencies identified above to participate in the annual or fall conference
- Definitions of types counselors on the website (credit, housing, financial, foreclosure)

**Question #4: What additional training and opportunities do you need?**

- Client Management Systems
- Powerpoint
- Exhibitions of service providers
- Lender trainings (ie, submitting a useful loss mit. packages)
- VHDA Foreclosure Certification
- How to get the Board on board (Influencing leadership)
- Volunteer management
- Change management (Who Moved My Cheese?)
- Fundraising
- How to empower clients
- Working with difficult personalities/clients
- Cultural diversity
- Reverse mortgage
- Servicing Workshop (VHDA, FHA HAMP, Conventional, MHA)
- RESPA/TIL Training
- Networking events

**Question #5: What sessions helped you the most?**

- Fair Housing
- Grantwriting/Review
- Tenants Rights
- Financial Literacy
- Mortgage Scams & Fraud
- Hands on Banking
- Life after Bankruptcy
- Counselor Burnout
- Outreach Programs

**Question #6: Have you come up with any new ideas or ways to work differently?**

- Utilize handouts
- Websites & curricula
- Better understanding of changes
- Ways to make workshops more appealing
- Ways to relate to customer behavior
- Client Feedback Form
- Networking
- One bite at a time