2020 NALHFA Awards of Excellence

Category: Single-Family Excellence

# Nevada Rural Housing Authority

# Home At Last<sup>™</sup> University (HAL U)

- Premier homeownership education and training brand
- Online and in-person platforms
- In-house brand development
- Proprietary digital platform
- Cross-channel marketing

Nevada Rural Housing Authority is an equal opportunity provider and employed

Est. 2006

Home At Last™

Transferrable across agency

internal communications)

83% conversion rate

vs. completions)

(HCV, community development,

(Homebuyer 101 registrations

•



NALHFA's Award of Excellence Program Nomination Category: Single-Family Excellence Project Name: Home At Last™ University (HAL U) Submitted By: Nevada Rural Housing Authority

# Summary

From the instant when homeownership is a twinkle in a buyer's eye, education should be the driver behind every decision made throughout the buying process. As all "housers" (that's what we like to call ourselves at Nevada Rural Housing Authority) know, the homebuying process is mega complex and results in one of the biggest transactions most of us will ever experience in our lifetimes. Data also tells us that education not only helps a homebuyer's success but also that of a housing finance agency and industry -- low delinquency rates point to the benefit and positive outcomes of solid homebuyer education. Home At Last™, a program of Nevada Rural Housing Authority, makes it a priority to provide valuable and relevant education to its homebuyers each step of the way (even beyond the close). In fact, because homebuyer education is a cornerstone of successful homeownership, Home At Last™ has made it a cornerstone of its entire program. Home At Last™ University (HAL U for short), is the premier education and training brand created for homebuyers, lenders and real estate professionals who are part of our Home At Last™ universe.



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# Introduction

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# The HAL U Brand

HAL U is a brand under which numerous tools live, grow and thrive. Home At Last<sup>™</sup> has helped 8,700+ rural Nevada families achieve their dreams of affordable homeownership since 2006, and since then, we have developed, tested and adjusted our approach to education.

Homebuyer education is a requirement for homebuyers seeking Home At Last<sup>™</sup> Down Payment Assistance and Mortgage Credit Certificates, but it is much more than a box to check on the homebuying to-do list. Since the program's inception, homebuyer education content has taken a step-by-step approach to guiding a buyer through the process, from learning about building good credit to how to be a responsible homeowner. Over time, inperson and online education options have evolved, recognizing that each buyer may learn best in different ways. Nearly 50,000 potential homebuyers have completed an iteration, whether online or in-person, of Home At Last<sup>™</sup> homebuyer education, and an additional 1,013 homeowners have completed an after-the-close education course. Education has also been a crucial component to onboarding and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with lender and real estate partners. Lenders and real estate partners are an important part of the Home At Last<sup>™</sup> family, as they are often the "front line" when a homebuyer begins the process; they are also influential ambassadors of our affordable financing options. Home At Last<sup>™</sup> aims to ensure our partners have the training and information they need to help people get into homes of their own -- thus helping Nevada Rural Housing Authority in its mission to promote, provide and finance affordable housing opportunities for all rural Nevadans.

While wildly successful in delivering valuable homebuyer education, lender training and real estate professional certification courses in the past, Home At Last™ provided these components siloed, which presented a major brand awareness building opportunity. Home At Last™ needed a brand under which all things "education, knowledge and information" could live, and thus Home At Last™ University, or HAL U, was born.

On July 1, 2019, the HAL U brand debuted, attached to a brand new, proprietary online education platform that was developed by Home At Last<sup>™</sup>. However, the brand hasn't abandoned its "old school" educational components; instead, the launch of a custom digital tool has expanded the educational opportunities Home At Last<sup>™</sup> has for reaching all audiences in the homebuying arena, wherever they may be and however they prefer to receive information. Education cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach.

The HAL U "Course Catalog" includes:

- Homebuyer 101 Online FREE online homebuyer education course
- Homebuyer 101 en español FREE online homebuyer education course
- Homebuyer 101 In Person FREE, in-person homebuyer education course
- Homebuyer 101 en español FREE, in-person homebuyer education course with bilingual "professor"
- HUD-Certified Course Online and in-person through local HUD-approved counseling agencies and in partnership with eHome America
- After the Close FREE online homeowner education course
- Lender 101 Online FREE lender onboarding
- Lender 101 In Person FREE lender onboarding
- Lender 201 FREE, ongoing lender training updates
- Real Estate Professional 101 Online FREE online REALTOR® education
- Real Estate Professional 101 In Person FREE in-person REALTOR® education

HAL U's reach doesn't stop at training and education, though. Lenders and real estate professionals utilize the HAL U brand as a vehicle to engage their homebuyers and get them started down the homebuying path with one of the first requirements: homebuyer education. To support their outreach efforts, lenders and real estate partners may access marketing materials and leave behinds touting the benefits of HAL U and homebuyer

education, providing quick access to the tools, and serving as a reminder to get started on the homebuying journey (sample materials attached).

# The HAL U Tech

On July 1, 2019, the newly refurbished online course launched at: *https://education.nvrural.org/homebuyer-101* 

As we strategized for an overarching education brand for all Home At Last<sup>™</sup> audiences, it quickly became apparent that digital platform flexibility was key. If we wanted to ensure an enduring brand, we needed to be able to evolve and adapt our educational and training content on the spot. With the goal of making HAL U a function of brand communications, we knew that content would be king and tailored experiences based on audience need were paramount.

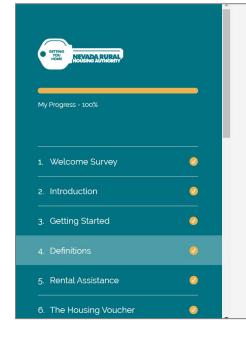
Home At Last<sup>™</sup> partnered with digital experts to design, develop and launch a training platform that aligns to all educational needs. The platform lets us create new modules based on audience, and each module can be customized to the need of the audience and educational material at hand.

The platform allows for unlimited module creation with custom learning materials, quiz questions and user certificates. The platform also allows for custom registration fields, ensuring we are able to collect important information from our users, and track and communicate with them during and after their coursework (for example, Home At Last™ follows up with those who have initiated but not yet completed Homebuyer 101 to ensure they're on their way). A "Welcome Survey" function can be added to a module, allowing for additional information collection about the user such as location, demographic and psychographic information that is used by the Home At Last™ team to provide a better, more tailored experience in future iterations and other module types. The module will automatically generate a certificate with a user's name, valid date and signature of authorized program personnel. Reporting functionality then allows the Home At Last™ team to verify completion of required courses, and even take the proactive step in providing a user's certificate to their preferred lender (in the case of a homebuyer education course). Reporting also provides the Home At Last<sup>™</sup> team important insights such as how a user heard about the brand/program, if they intend to use assistance, and average course completion time -- all of which can be exported within custom date ranges. Within the learning materials, we can build "chapters" or "lessons," add images, embed video/audio files, and link out to other relevant homeownership resources or partners, as needed. And if a user registers and then needs to leave the module and return to complete it at another time, they can do so by logging back in.

Home At Last<sup>™</sup> has used a variety of packaged platforms and subscriptions in the past, and used them with great success. However, the proprietary and custom platform allows us to best serve the needs of a variety of audiences; it also drives cost efficiencies because the agency owns the platform and doesn't pay a subscription fee. This innovative platform

makes us even more nimble in an ever-changing industry, and allows us to build out a truly comprehensive education and training brand that meets our audiences where they learn best.

The proprietary platform can also be used by others throughout our HFA -- because virtually everything within a module is customizable, we can use the platform for rental services (see screen shot below), community development and internal agency training purposes. The development investment will provide a return on investment tenfold, starting with the elimination of online platform subscriptions for Home At Last™ (in perpetuity) and leading to resource and time savings throughout the agency. As we're able to drive more efficiencies and of effective measures like this platform, Home At Last™ and Nevada Rural Housing Authority are able to redirect resources to other areas of need and serve Nevadans effectively.



# 4. Definitions

#### Housing Choice Voucher

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) is commonly called Section 8. The HCV program is the largest rental assistance program offered by NRHA. This program was established by Congress through the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and is administered by NRHA.

### VASH

The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program is commonly called VASH. This program requires a partnership between the VA and NRHA. This program was established by Congress through the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and is administered by NRHA in partnership with the VA.

Tenant Based Rental Assistance

# **Results, Results, Results**

Home At Last<sup>™</sup> is not a "set it and forget it" kind of shop. We are consistently seeking innovative approaches to help more Nevadans into affordable homeownership -- HAL U was a product of this drive. The only way to know if an approach is benefitting a mission is to measure; HAL U uses consistent reporting to gauge engagement and success among its audiences, particularly within the digital platform and online promotion of the brand.

Since launching HAL U for homebuyers on July 1, 2019 (through February 2020), the module has seen 1,382 sessions initiated and 1,143 sessions completed (an 83% completion rate). A sample report is attached showing a deeper dive into:

• Sessions Initiated/Completed by Month

- User Source (where users came from to the HAL U landing page: organic search, email, organic social, paid social)
- Demographics (all reported in aggregate)
- Homebuying Details (size of family in home, intent to use DPA, working with a lender)

Our reporting also shows where a homebuyer heard about HAL U or the Home At Last™ program, which provides data to inform where and how we focus outreach and marketing efforts.

In the paid advertising realm, Home At Last<sup>™</sup> has a dedicated budget to promoting HAL U (and the Home At Last<sup>™</sup> brand overall) through digital ads on Facebook, Instagram and Google AdWords. The campaign is tracked consistently, reported on monthly (see sample report attached) and adjustments are made to the campaign as needed, whether through adjusted placements or messaging. With HAL U as the "final destination," we track where a potential homebuyer was first exposed to our messages online, and if they ended up in the platform to initiate the educational requirement.

# Visuals

All visuals are created in house by the Nevada Rural Housing Authority Communications and Home At Last™ teams.

HAL U Logo



# HAL U Marketing Piece (3"x3" business card, front and back)



## HAL U Homebuyer Education Module Screens

Welcome to	APrepare of Nevada Rural Housing Authority
HAL HAL	Getting You Home HomeAtLastHV.org First Name*
	Last Name'
Note for Returning Students: If you've already registared at HAL University <sup>®</sup> and need to continue your coursework, please click "Login" next to the Registration button on the right. We li send you a link so you can pick up where you left off!	Email Address*
Owning a home is life-changing – from planting roots to	
investing in your future, it will shape the way you live for years to	
come.	City*
It's our goal to make the process clear and straightforward by	
providing Nevadans with the tools they need to not only	
purchase a home, but to remain proud and responsible	ZIP Code*
homeowners, as well. As a newly enrolled student at HAL University™, part of the Home At Last™ homebuyer education	
program, we will walk you through the steps to homeownership	
and check for understanding along the way. This course will not	Mobile Phone*
only help get you on your way to successful and responsible	
homeownership. If you are participating in one of our Home At	
Last™ programs, completing this course is a requirement.	
	Register → Login

HOME AT LAST HomeAtLastNV.org	1. Tell Us About You Please provide us a bit more information about you! This helps us understand more about who you are and how to better serve you on your homebuying journey.
Progress - 0%	Question 1
Tell Us About You	<ul> <li>What is your household annual income (borrower(s) and</li> </ul>
	o all household members)?
etermine How Much You Can ford	O Under \$50,000
	B \$50.000-\$99.999
	C \$100,000-\$149,999
	D \$150,000-\$199,999
Make An Offer	C E More than \$200,000

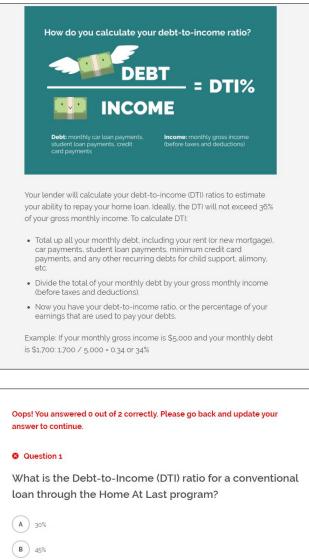


What does budgeting mean? Well, there's Webster's definition, of course (noun, budget: the amount of money that is available for, required for, or assigned to a particular purpose). We like to think of it as tracking what comes in, what goes out, and making adjustments to ensure there's more incoming than outgoing.



HOME		How
My Progress - 25%	-	
1. Tell Us About You	_	Debt: stude card p
2. Why Homebuyer Education?	•	Your lender
3. Determine How Much You Can Afford	•	your ability t of your gros
4. Get Pre-Approved	0	<ul> <li>Total up a car paym</li> </ul>
5. Understand Your Loan Options	0	payment etc.
6. Shop for A Home	0	Divide th     (before ta
7. Make An Offer	0	<ul> <li>Now you earnings</li> </ul>
8. Get Home Inspections & Appraisa	ιO	Example: If y
g. Shop for Homeowners Insurance	0	is \$1,700: 1,7





A	) 30%
B	45%
c	) 50%
D	54%

#### Question 2

On average, how much additional time can a homebuyer expect the lending process to take if using the Home At Last program?

A 2-3 business days

(B) 1 week

	HOME AT LAST HomeAtLastNV.org	
My	/ Progress - 100%	-
	Tell Us About You	0
	Why Homebuyer Education?	0
3.	Determine How Much You Can Afford	0
4.	Get Pre-Approved	0
	Understand Your Loan Options	0
6.	Shop for A Home	0
	Make An Offer	0
8.	Get Home Inspections & Appraisal	0
~	Shop for Homeowners Insurance	0

#### **Congratulations, Graduate!**

Please click on "Download & Print" at the end of this page to receive your "diploma" and be sure to save it in your files!

If you're already working with a Home At Last™ approved lender, we will send this to them on your behalf. If you've yet to connect with one of our fantastic lender partners or certified real estate agents, please visit our <u>Partner Search Tool</u> to find someone in your area who can help you start on your next chapter.

Note: In order to participate in a Home At Last™ program, you must use an approved lender partner or certified real estate agent.

Before we wrap up our commencement and officially kick off your new life journey, let's give a major shoutout to some very important partners who helped make HAL University™ a reality. Without these organizations, we wouldn't be here today, congratulating our latest grads. Thank you!



Nevada Rural Housing Authority is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



HAL U Ads (digital and broadcast video link)



GET A DEGREE IN:

"Finally getting him a dog because we make the rules around here."



"Cotting bold with a down

and finally paying a mortgage instead of rent!"



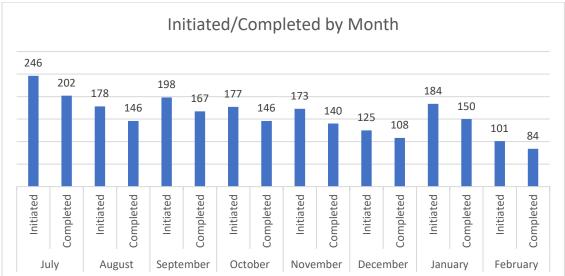
"Giving our kids stability by owning our home."



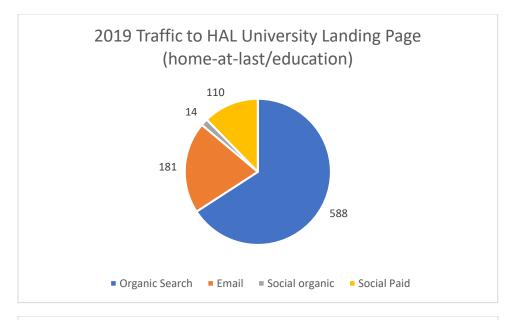
"Never having to move again because we're in our forever home."

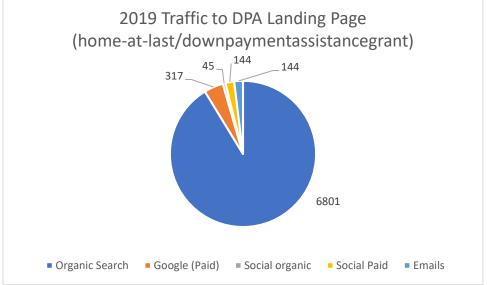
https://youtu.be/lKbGiGWlxh0



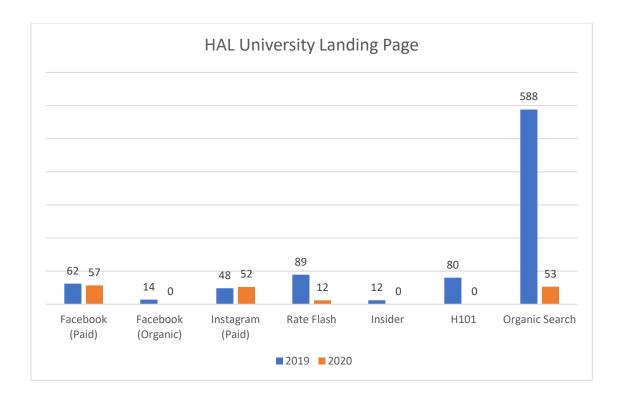


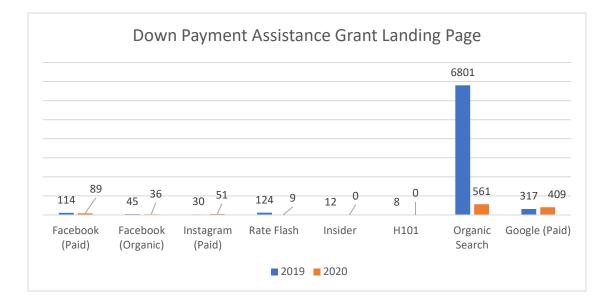
### 2019 Channels driving traffic to HAL DPA/HAL U Landing Pages





# Traffic by activity





## LOCATION DATA

#### **Previous Week Current Week** 426 Las Vegas Las Vegas Reno 233 Reno 125 Sparks Sparks Henderson 85 Henderson Carson City 65 Carson City Fernley 52 Fernley North Las Vegas 44 North Las Vegas Elko 32 Elko Fallon 29 Fallon Dayton 22 Dayton 22 Pahrump Pahrump Silver Springs 22 Silver Springs Sun Valley 21 Sun Valley Gardnerville 14 Gardnerville Winnemucca 13 Winnemucca 12 Yerington Yerington Lovelock 9 Lovelock Spring Creek 6 Spring Creek 5 Wells Wells 5 West Wendover West Wendover Minden 4 Minden South Lake Tahoe 4 South Lake Tahoe Wadsworth 4 Wadsworth Washoe Valley 4 Washoe Valley Carlin 3 Carlin 2 **Battle Mountain** Amargosa Valley 2 Beatty Battle Mountain 2 Bishop Beatty 2 Cold Creek **Bishop** 2 Corona Cold Creek 2 Elk Grove Corona 2 Elk Grove Ely 2 Fresno Ely 2 Hayward Fresno 2 Livermore Hayward 2 Orland Livermore 2 Orland Stagecoach 2 Stateline South San Francisco **Bonney Lake** 1 Stagecoach

**Boulder City** 

1

Stateline

448

238

129

85 71

58

47

35

29

23

22

22

22

14

14

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4 3

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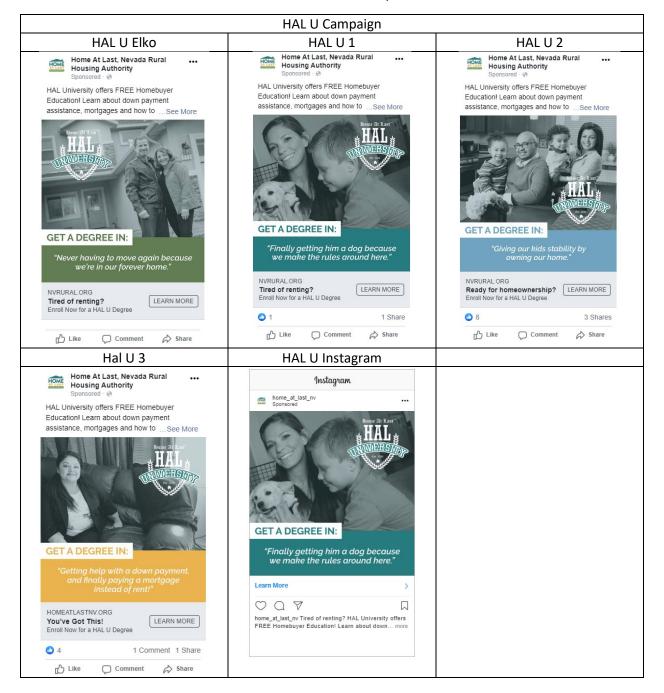
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2

2 2

#### Facebook/Instagram Paid Data

#### December 4 - January 6



# Facebook/Instagram Paid Data (cont)

Ad Name	Ad Set Name	Likes, Comments, Shares	Engagement Rate	Reach	Impressions	Clicks
I AM HAL 5 image Carousel	I AM HAL 18+ Nevada	28.00	3%	16728	41127	454
HAL U Instagram	HAL U 18+ Nevada Instagram	11.00	0.38%	25712	46828	86
I AM HAL 18+ Nevada Instagram	I AM HAL 18+ Nevada Instagram	9.00	0.43%	21268	36939	82
I AM HAL 5 image Carousel Eastern Nevada	I AM HAL 18+ Eastern Nevada	32.00	3%	2332	9680	43
HAL U 2	HAL U 18+ Nevada	11.00	1%	6582	12133	84
HAL U 3	HAL U 18+ Nevada	6.00	2%	2585	3683	35
HAL U 1	HAL U 18+ Nevada	1.00	1%	3845	6402	37
HAL U Elko	HAL U 18+ Eastern Nevada (Elko)	0.00	0.00	22	25	0

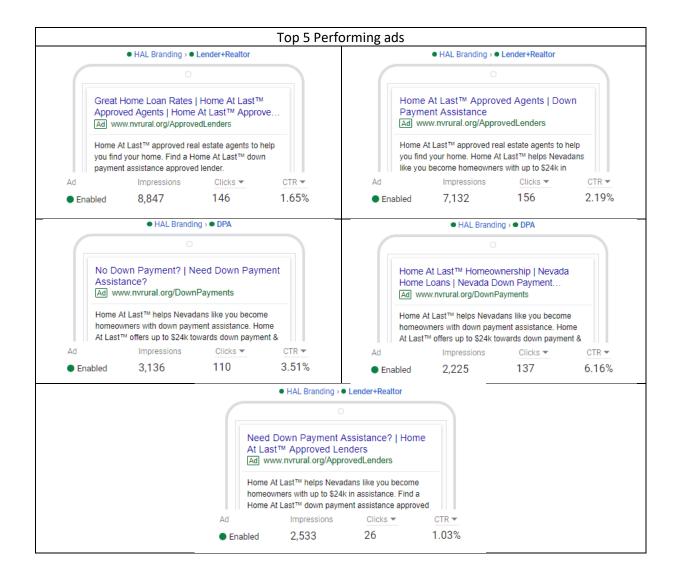
# Individual Ad Performance

\*Underperforming

#### **Google Search Ads**

Campaign	Results
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Clicks (HAL DPA)	Impressions	CTR	Cost
596	25,083	2.38%	509.79



#### **Google Search Ads (cont)**

#### Top 20 performing Keywords Keyword **Clicks** Impressions CTR Cost real estate 247 14,163 1.74% 240.25 53.47 real estate real estate 64 3,786 1.69% nevada down payment assistance 36 282 12.77% 24.29 home loan 32 1,154 2.77% 25.34 30 7.28% down payment on a house 412 21.13 loan home 26 837 3.11% 18.51 24 266 9.02% 17.61 down payment assistance programs how to buy a home 19 576 3.30% 15.65 home realtor 555 14 2.52% 15.52 VA 12 1,085 1.11% 9.31 first time home buyer programs 12 178 6.74% 8.36 first time home buyer 10 152 6.58% 8.83 no down payment 10 176 5.68% 7.62 1st time home buyer grants 8 80 10.00% 7.49 8 9.88% fha down payment grants 81 5.64 USDA 8 177 4.52% 5.04 6 no money down 161 3.73% 4.77 5 first time buyer 70 7.14% 2.9 first time home buyer loan 5 90 5.56% 3.61 home loan rates 4 233 1.72% 2.37

#### HAL U Email Reengagement & Survey

