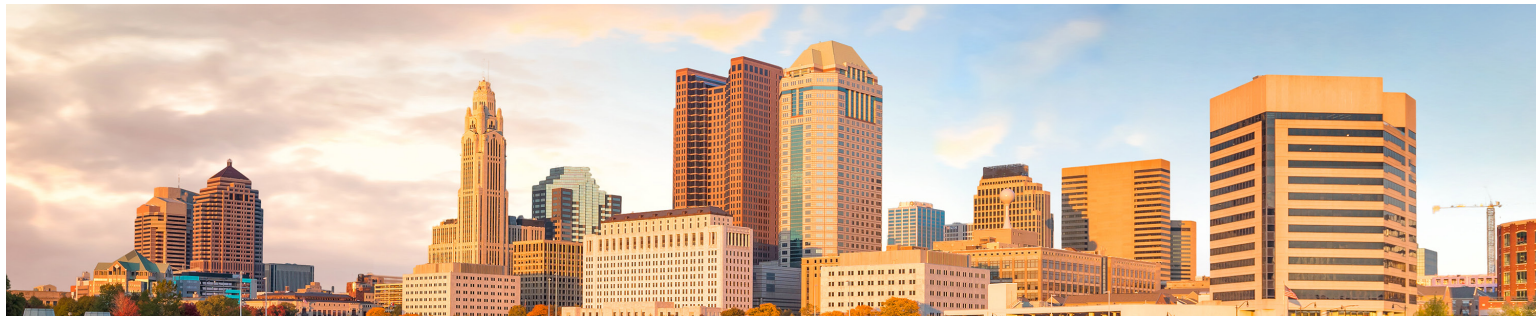




CASE STUDY

CONVERGENCE UNITING FOR HOUSING AFFORDABILITY COLUMBUS®

Don't Skip the Inspection: A Video Series for First-Time Homebuyers

CONVERGENCE Columbus led the development of a 16-part short-form video series to help first-time homebuyers better understand the role of home inspections in the purchase process. Launched under the Bloom614 platform and created in partnership with industry experts from Home & Commercial Inspections LLC, the series was designed to address a growing challenge in Columbus, Ohio's housing market: increasing pressure on buyers to waive inspections in competitive transactions. The production was supported by a sponsorship from First Merchants Bank. The initiative reflects an effort to expand access to practical, accessible homebuyer education.

THE PROBLEM: INSPECTION WAIVERS IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET

Housing counselors working with CONVERGENCE Columbus began raising concerns that clients were being advised to skip inspections as a strategy to strengthen their offers, often without a full understanding of the risks involved.

The consequences of waiving an inspection can be severe. Without a professional assessment, buyers may unknowingly inherit costly structural issues, faulty systems, or safety hazards. These hidden problems can quickly turn a wealth-building investment into a financial liability, threatening the very economic stability homeownership is meant to create. First-generation homebuyers may be especially vulnerable as they often lack a family network of homeownership experience to draw from during the purchase process.

At the same time, inspections themselves can be a barrier. In Columbus, they typically cost between \$400 and \$800 and can take several hours to complete after taking days or weeks to schedule. In fast-moving transactions, this can make inspections feel like a time-consuming expense rather than a protective tool. Faced with tight timelines and competitive pressure, many buyers perceive waiving inspections as necessary to remain competitive.

CONVERGENCE Columbus recognized that buyers needed clear, accessible information about why inspections matter, what they involve, and how to navigate them within real-world constraints.

THE RESPONSE: EDUCATION THROUGH SHORT-FORM VIDEO

Rather than relying on traditional formats such as webinars or written guides, the CONVERGENCE Columbus Outreach & Education workstream developed a short-form video series designed to meet prospective buyers where they already consume information.

Produced under the Bloom614 platform, the series focused on delivering concise, practical content about home inspections in an accessible, shareable format. This approach reflected a key insight from housing counselors: consumers respond to trusted voices, not just information.

CENTERING A TRUSTED COMMUNITY VOICE

A central component of the series was the selection of a trusted local expert to serve as the on-camera guide. CONVERGENCE Columbus partnered with James Jones, founder of Home & Commercial Inspections LLC, who brought both technical expertise and strong ties to the Columbus community.

With nearly 30 years of experience in construction and inspection, Jones was able to translate complex concepts into plain language. His reputation for educating clients — not just conducting inspections — aligned closely with the goals of the series.

This emphasis on a credible, community-rooted messenger highlights an important consideration for similar efforts: the effectiveness of educational content is closely tied to who delivers it.

DEVELOPING CONTENT FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS

The script development process was iterative. Early drafts relied heavily on industry terminology, making them less accessible to first-time buyers. Through collaboration between the CONVERGENCE Columbus team and Jones, the scripts were revised to prioritize clarity, relevance, and plain language.



Topics across the 16-part series were designed to reflect the real questions buyers face, including what inspectors look for, how to interpret findings, and what steps to take after an inspection. The series also connects inspections to longer-term homeownership considerations, such as maintenance and financial stability.

This process reinforced the importance of designing content for the intended audience rather than for industry professionals.

VIDEO PRODUCTION AND INTEGRATION

To support credibility and consistency, CONVERGENCE Columbus partnered with a local videographer and aligned the series with the Bloom614 brand to reinforce the videos as a trusted resource. The total production spanned three to four months to complete.

While lower-cost approaches may be possible, investment in production quality was a strategic choice to signal the seriousness of the information and to build credibility with viewers.

The model also presents opportunities for partnership-based funding, including potential sponsorship from financial institutions or other stakeholders.

The video series was designed as part of a broader homebuyer support system rather than a standalone resource. Each video serves as a touchpoint that connects viewers to additional tools and services, including housing counseling, inspector selection guidance, and other Bloom614 resources such as mortgage readiness and down payment assistance tools.

Clear calls to action were incorporated to help viewers move from information to next steps, including:

- **Referrals** to housing counselors for personalized guidance.
- **A questionnaire tool** for home inspectors, helping buyers know what to ask and what to look for.
- **Integration** with the broader Bloom614 platform, including the mortgage readiness quiz, downpayment resource tool, and practitioner directory.
- **Clear calls to action** guiding viewers toward next steps rather than leaving them with information but no path forward.

usefulness. Partner adoption has been one of the most significant indicators of impact: Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority requested permission to incorporate the video series into mandatory training for its Housing Choice Voucher homeownership program. Housing counselors and real estate professionals now have a structured, credible resource to share with clients facing pressure to waive inspections. The series has also generated interest from partners who discovered it independently, further validating its accessibility and reach. Direct attribution of homebuyer behavior change remains difficult to measure with precision, though qualitative indicators — partner requests, social media response, and practitioner uptake — point to meaningful community reach.

EXPANDING REACH: ONGOING STRATEGIES

CONVERGENCE Columbus is exploring additional strategies to expand the reach of the series, including targeted neighborhood outreach, digital advertising, and distribution through its network of partner organizations. Efforts are also underway to align promotion with peak homebuying periods and to explore local media opportunities.

LESSONS LEARNED AND TIPS FOR REPLICATION

CONSUMER EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

- **Highlight Trusted Messengers:** Data and information alone rarely change behavior. Partnering with a community-rooted professional who buyers recognize, and respect dramatically increases the likelihood that content will be viewed, shared, and acted upon. Invest time in identifying the right messenger before developing the message.
- **Use the Format Your Audience Already Uses:** Traditional webinars and written guides reach people who are already motivated to seek out information. Short-form video meets buyers where they are; on the platforms they use daily. Format is not secondary to content; it determines whether content gets seen at all.



EARLY OUTCOMES AND OBSERVATION

The series has been well-received across multiple audiences, including real estate professionals and housing counselors. Engagement has remained steady throughout the series, and positive feedback has emerged organically on social media as viewers share content and comments on its



- **Prioritize Accessible Language:** The most accurate information is useless if it is not understood. Develop messages that include feedback from non-experts and be willing to revise content as needed to ensure accessibility and usability.
- **Connect Information to Action:** Every piece of consumer education should answer the question: 'Now what?' Connecting video content to housing counselors, tools, and referral pathways ensured that awareness translated into action.
- **Invest in Production Quality:** Presentation can influence how information is received. Polished, professional content communicates that the information and the organization behind it can be trusted. These costs can potentially be covered by obtaining sponsorships from partners.
- **Address Cost and Time Barriers Directly:** Acknowledging that inspections cost \$400 to \$800 and take time, while explaining what buyers risk by skipping them, is more effective than simply insisting inspections are important. Meet buyers in their real constraints and help them weigh the tradeoffs honestly.

CONCLUSION

The CONVERGENCE Columbus home inspection video series illustrates how consumer education strategies can be adapted to better align with how prospective buyers access and engage with information. By combining short-form content, a trusted local voice, and integration with broader support systems, the initiative offers one approach to addressing inspection waiver pressures in a competitive market.

Early indicators suggest that the series is contributing to practitioner engagement and expanding access to practical homebuying information. As the effort continues to evolve, it provides a replicable model for connecting education, delivery format, and support systems in ways that facilitate more informed homebuyer decision-making.

ADDRESSING INSPECTION WAIVER PRESSURES

- **Frame Inspections as Wealth Protection:** First-time buyers are more likely to prioritize inspections when they understand the connection to asset preservation and generational wealth, not just legal compliance. Connecting inspection education to broader homeownership stability goals makes the message resonate more deeply.
- **Equip Practitioners, Not Just Consumers:** Real estate agents, lenders, and housing counselors are the frontline advisors shaping buyer decisions. Training these practitioners with quality educational resources multiplies impact, ensuring the inspection message reaches buyers through multiple trusted touchpoints.