

CHARLIE BAKER
GOVERNOR



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**Governor Baker Announces New Home Mortgage Loan Program for
Massachusetts Veterans**

Eligible borrowers include Active Duty Service Members, Reserve and National Guard Members, Veterans who served honorably and Gold Star Family Members

READING – Governor Charlie Baker today announced a new mortgage program designed to make it easier for Massachusetts veterans to purchase their first home.

MassHousing's *Operation Welcome Home* loan is available to active duty members of the Armed Forces, members of the Reserves and Massachusetts National Guard, honorably discharged veterans and Gold Star Family members.

"This Veterans Day, we honor the bravery of our servicemembers and their families by ensuring they have every opportunity to call Massachusetts home," **said Governor Baker**. "Through their service, they continue to defend the American Dream, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to now help them realize it on their own."

Qualified borrowers can receive up to 100% financing on a single-family home or condominium. Low downpayment options are also available for two-family and three-family homes.

"Massachusetts veterans have protected the American Dream, and with the help of this loan program they can live it," **said MassHousing Executive Director Thomas R. Gleason**. "Our new loan gives veterans another choice and an opportunity to buy

some properties that the VA loan might not allow.”

MassHousing developed the loan program after finding that VA loans have some restrictions that make it more challenging to use in Massachusetts than in other states. There are relatively few lenders in Massachusetts offering the VA loan.

There are approximately 380,000 veterans living in Massachusetts, of which approximately 30,000 are in the prime home buying age group of 18 to 35.

MassHousing’s loan will be particularly useful for purchasing a unit in a small condo development. VA loans can typically be used only in larger condo developments.

The announcement was held at the Reading home of the program’s first borrowers, Michael Stearns and Courtney Messenheimer. Their condo is one of three in a small condo association in downtown Reading and was not eligible for a VA loan. Stearns is a former U.S. Marine who served from 2009 to 2014 in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

“The two of us come from working-class families who reside in affordable housing developments in the city of Boston. Growing up, neither of us had white-picket fences or even a backyard,” **said Courtney Messenheimer**. “It has been the dream of ours to own our own home and start a family someday. The opportunity this loan grants us to settle into our first real home means the world to Michael and me.”

Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans Services Francisco Urena spoke about the benefits of the new program for veterans.

“MassHousing’s Operation Welcome Home initiative is indeed a welcome option for those veterans who don’t fit the standard profile of veteran first time home buyers,” **said Secretary of Veterans’ Services Francisco Urena**. “This is yet another example of the Commonwealth’s commitment to support our veterans who are working to make the American Dream a reality for themselves and their families.”

MassHousing has a long-standing partnership with Fannie Mae which makes the *Operation Welcome Home* program possible. Fannie Mae will purchase the 97% financing first mortgage loans, while MassHousing will retain the 3% second mortgage loans. *Operation Welcome Home* borrowers will make their monthly payments to MassHousing which will service the loans at their Boston offices.

“Operation Welcome Home is an important option for veterans and military families who are looking for an affordable, sustainable mortgage,” **said Jennifer Whip, vice president, customer engagement at Fannie Mae**. “Fannie Mae is proud to help

MassHousing serve veterans who have done so much for our country.”

Operation Welcome Home loans for which the borrower makes less than a 20% downpayment will include MassHousing’s MIPlus™ mortgage insurance. MIPlus includes unemployment protection at no additional cost to the borrower. The benefit will cover the borrower’s principal and interest payments up to \$2,000 for up to six months in the event of a job loss. For a member of the Reserves or National Guard, activation or deployment overseas will make them eligible for the unemployment benefit as well.

MassHousing is not a direct originator of loans and instead makes loans through 170 partner banks, mortgage lenders and credit unions across the Commonwealth.

Comprehensive information about how to qualify and apply for an *Operation Welcome Home* loan can be found on MassHousing’s website www.masshousing.com

About MassHousing:

MassHousing (The Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency) is an independent, quasi-public agency created in 1966 and charged with providing financing for affordable housing in Massachusetts. The Agency raises capital by selling bonds and lends the proceeds to low- and moderate-income homebuyers and homeowners, and to developers who build or preserve affordable and/or mixed-income rental housing. MassHousing does not use taxpayer dollars to sustain its operations, although it administers some publicly funded programs on behalf of the Commonwealth. Since its inception, MassHousing has provided more than \$17 billion for affordable housing. For more information, visit the MassHousing website at www.masshousing.com.

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