

## **Communications: Creative Media MassHousing Trade Publication Advertising**

While reaching consumers directly is important, housing finance agencies like MassHousing have many important business-to-business relationships. In order to provide affordable housing for residents, MassHousing must first market itself, its products and its services to developers, property management companies, realtors, lenders and the like.

Over the last several years, MassHousing has sustained a consistent, cost-effective and creative program of advertising in targeted trade publications that reach the businesses and thought-leaders in the rental housing, mortgage lending and realtor industries.

These trade publications include:

- *Banker & Tradesman*, a 138-year-old weekly newspaper with a print circulation of 5,000 readers in the real estate, investment, development, banking, finance and legal communities.
- *The New England Real Estate Journal*, a weekly newspaper covering all commercial development in Massachusetts and the New England region.
- *MassBanker Magazine*, the official quarterly magazine of the Massachusetts Bankers Association that is sent to all 212 banks in Massachusetts and has a circulation of 17,000.
- *Bay State Realtor Magazine*, the bi-monthly, official magazine of the Massachusetts Realtors Association that is sent to more than 25,000 realtors.
- *Bay State Apartment Owner* magazine, the official quarterly magazine of the Massachusetts Rental Housing Association, with a circulation of 6,650 rental housing professionals.

MassHousing's objective, which is the same for any advertiser, was to cut through the clutter of other ads and get noticed. The Agency believes it has been successful in doing this by producing ads with eye-catching design, provocative copy and compelling imagery.

The attached advertisements, while not all-inclusive, provide a sense of the variety of ads MassHousing produced and the approach taken to design and messaging.

Most often, the Agency endeavored to have the headline and image of the ad work in tandem, so that the reader would immediately be drawn to read more. One example is of a rental development with the word "Radical" above an architect's rendering. A closer read reveals that the project is undergoing an unprecedented green retrofit.

Another example shows The Harbor Loft Apartments in Lynn, Massachusetts with the headline “Financing for your lofty idea.” The ad speaks both to the pragmatic and idealistic tendencies in today’s affordable housing developer.

Another approach also appealed to the affordable housing industry’s idealism. It used quotes about architecture and social justice from luminaries like Frank Lloyd Wright, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Winston Churchill. The images communicated the high-quality architecture found in MassHousing-financed rental housing and help support acceptance of subsidized housing.

When MassHousing introduced a new website exclusively for the rental housing industry, ads were placed around the theme of streamlining, since the Rental Housing Association had suggested that some of the Agency’s oversight processes could be simplified. The small size of the ads required efficient use of space. The result was the simple headline “We’re streamlining” with images that suggested that word, such as cyclists whizzing past or a glider streaking across the sky, along with an invitation to visit the new website. MassHousing also noted in the ad that the site had been developed with the assistance of the industry.

For the lender and realtor communities, the objective was to remind them that MassHousing offered just the type of safe, secure and predictable loans that homebuyers are looking for these days. Thus one full-page ad in the realtors’ magazine shows a steaming hot cup of tea with the headline “The calming effect of a MassHousing loan.” The supporting copy then communicates the features of the Agency’s products that help provide peace of mind.

Another realtor-aimed ad gets at the idea of trust, which is central to the job of a realtor. The headline is simply “Trust” with an image of a handshake in front of a home. The supporting copy explains that realtors can earn the trust of their clients by referring them to reliable loans from MassHousing.

“Peace of Mind” is also the headline of an ad in the Massachusetts Banker’s Association trade magazine. It is paired with a photo of a woman clearly at peace as she meditates in a white, well-lit room. The supporting text conveys that MassHousing loans offer peace of mind to both borrowers and lenders who partner with the Agency.

In another ad in the banker’s magazine, a chocolate/vanilla swirl ice cream cone is paired with the headline “It’s both.” The reader mentally asks what this could possibly have to do with banking. They then read that by partnering with MassHousing they will enter into a profitable business relationship while simultaneously making good loans with a social purpose and earning customer trust.

The ads are innovative in that they break the mold of traditional trade publication advertising. Their unusual headlines and images are designed to raise questions in the mind of the reader and encourage them to read the rest of the ad. The ads also have a whimsical feel in some cases, or an idealistic, inspirational appeal in others. This is in contrast to more traditional advertising approaches which focus on brand identity or a menu of programs, products or services. The ads also excel at communicating a lot of information using minimal text and powerful images.

**HFA: MassHousing**  
**Entry Name: MassHousing Trade Publication Advertising**

This type of approach could be used by any housing finance agency which researched the various trade publications in its region. Ad rates are generally much more affordable than mainstream consumer-focused media outlets. A good eye for design, succinct copywriting, good design software and a library of images (or stock photography) are all that is needed. All design work was done in-house by MassHousing's communications team as were all interactions with the publications. No consultant or ad firm are necessary.

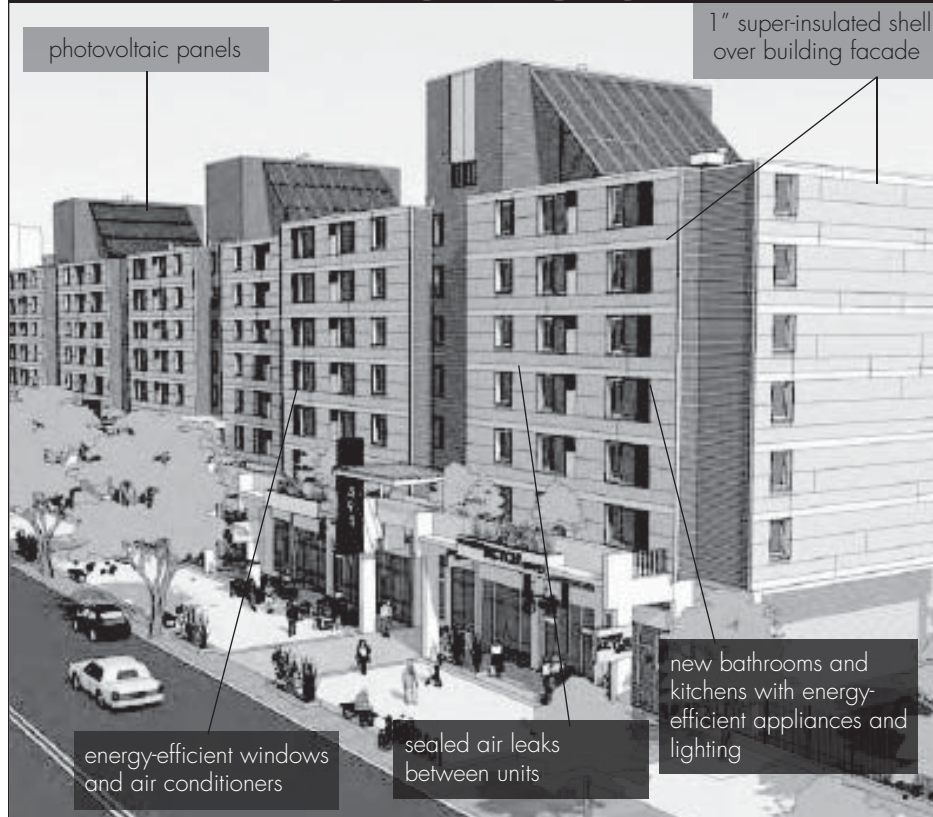
Trade publications are precisely targeted. By their nature, they are reaching readers who have a very narrow and defined interest; in this case developers, property managers, lenders and realtors – all of whom are critical partners for housing finance agencies.

Because the papers and magazines have a defined readership, MassHousing knows with precision how many people had the opportunity to view the ads. These are targeted publications where the Agency knows its business partners have a keen interest. While website hits for instance cannot be directly traced to these ads, there are other benefits. The ads are building increased awareness of the Agency and its ideals, and supporting trade groups with ad dollars. These results are somewhat less tangible but no less important.

The costs of advertising in trade publications are very manageable, although they will vary widely from region to region. Trade publication ads are also highly efficient. Consumer-focused ads require the consumer to remember your message and ask for your product. These trade publication ads remind partner providers of the Agency's unique programs and encourage them to provide them to the consumer, rather than putting the expectations on the consumer.

By using these creative and thought-provoking ads, the Agency's goal of getting its name, message and products in front of business partners more often has been achieved and these business-to-business relationships continue to thrive.

# Radical.

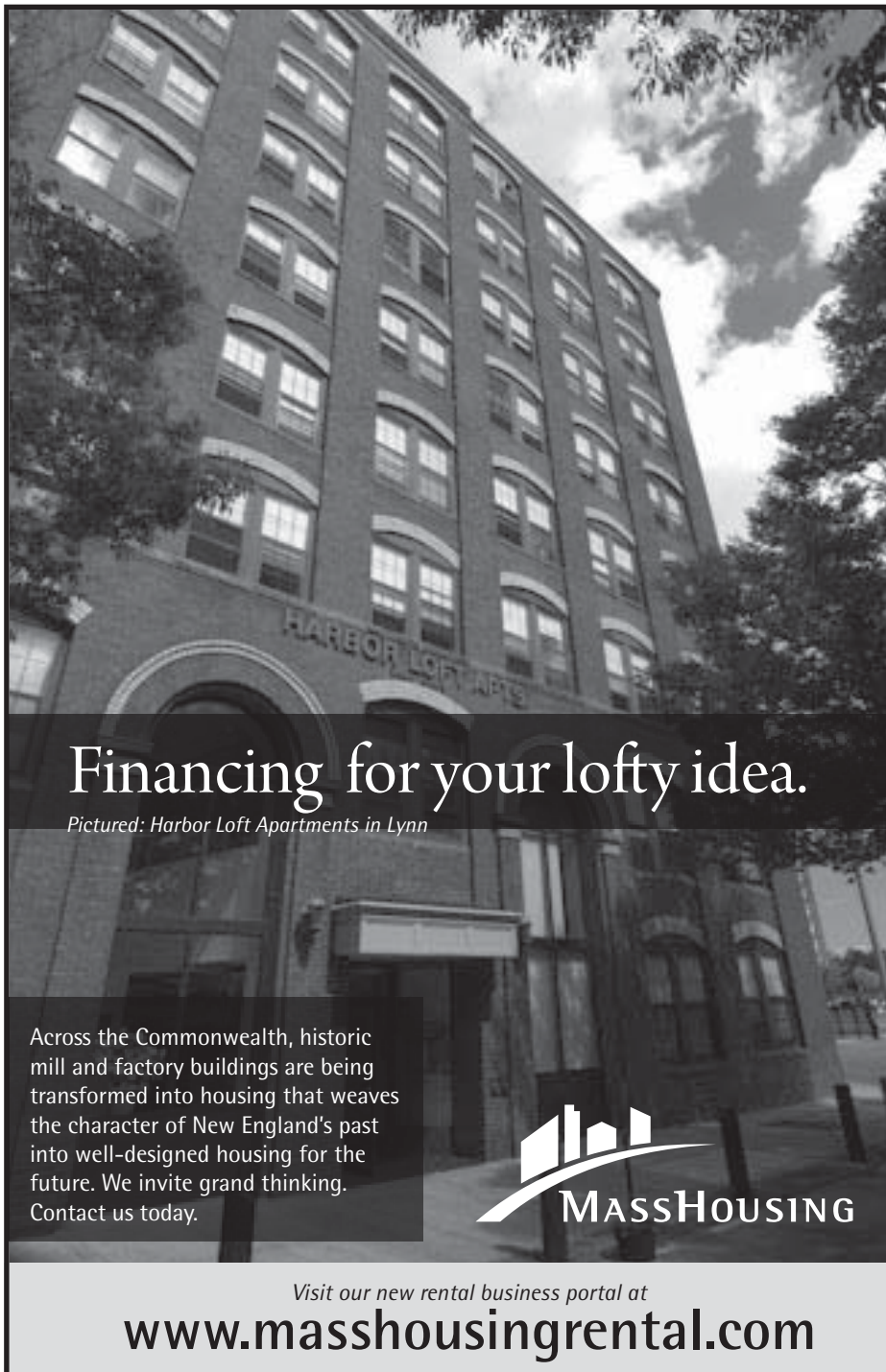


With \$54 million in loans from MassHousing, Castle Square Tenants Association and WinnCompanies will be able to achieve radical energy savings (a **72% drop** from current consumption) while updating aesthetics and bringing quality of life upgrades to residents.



Visit our new rental business portal at

[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)



# Financing for your lofty idea.

*Pictured: Harbor Loft Apartments in Lynn*

Across the Commonwealth, historic mill and factory buildings are being transformed into housing that weaves the character of New England's past into well-designed housing for the future. We invite grand thinking. Contact us today.



*Visit our new rental business portal at*

**[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)**



“All fine architectural values  
are human values, else not valuable.”

*- Frank Lloyd Wright*

Congratulations to The Planning Office for Urban Affairs on the recent completion of The St. Aidan in Brookline. MassHousing was pleased to provide more than \$2 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for the project.

*Visit our new rental business portal at*

**[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)**




“ The great thing in the world is not so much  
where we stand as in what direction we  
are moving.” - *Oliver Wendell Holmes*


Mission-driven lending for affordable housing.

Contact us about a comprehensive menu of financing options  
for affordable rental housing.

*Visit our new rental business portal at*


[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)



  
MASSHOUSING

“We shape our buildings,  
then our buildings shape us.”

- *Winston Churchill*



Before

Congratulations to the Boston Housing Authority and Trinity Financial on completing Phase 1 of the transformation of the Washington Beech public housing project.

*Visit our new rental business portal at*

**[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)**





**We're Streamlining.**

*Visit our new rental business portal at*

**[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)**

*designed with the help of the RHA*



# We're Streamlining.

*Visit our new rental business portal at*  
**[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)**  
*designed with the help of the RHA*



Anxious buyers look to you for expertise. You have the power to calm them when you refer them to MassHousing's safe, affordable, fixed-rate loans. Serviced locally with fast decisions on all applicants, our loans come with protection in case of job loss and low interest rates. MassHousing even has a purchase and rehabilitation loan option. Everyone can relax now.

# The Calming Effect of a MassHousing Loan



[www.masshousing.com](http://www.masshousing.com)



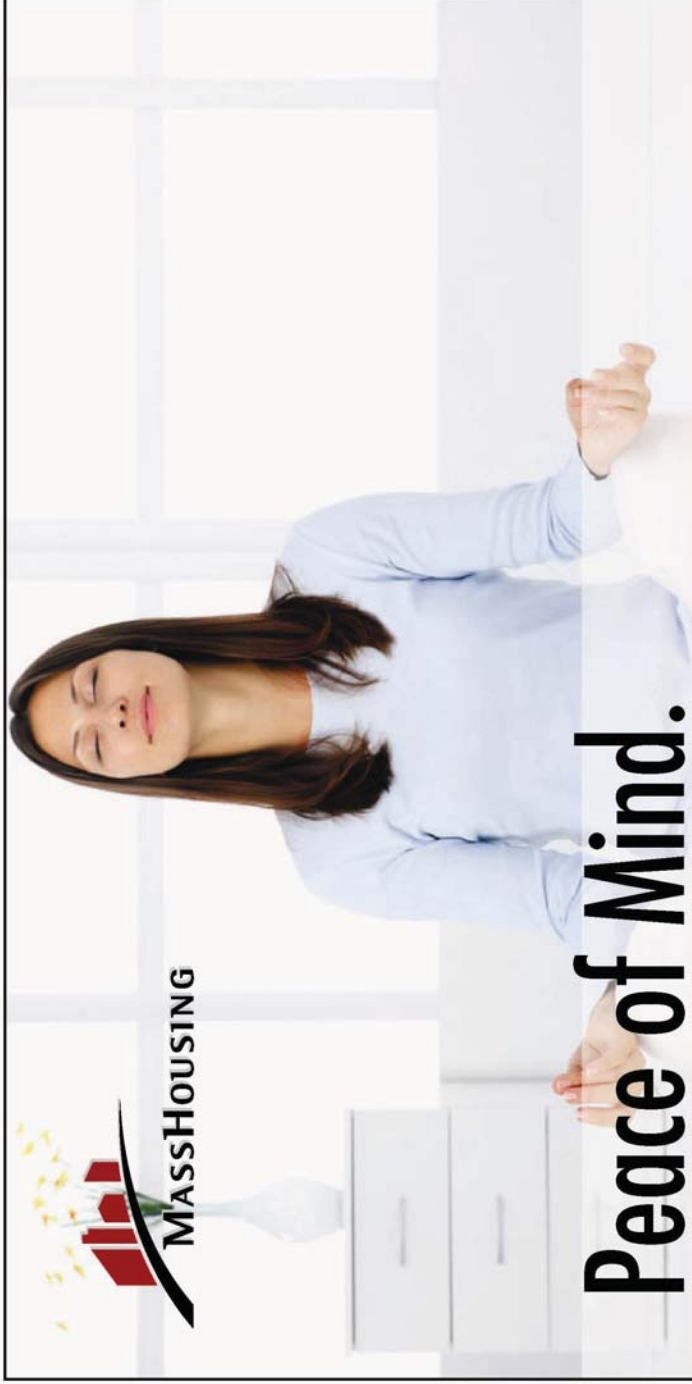
MASSHOUSING  
WHERE OPPORTUNITIES RESIDE



# Trust.

It's what you work so hard to earn from your clients. Keep their trust by referring your homebuyers to MassHousing, the #1 source of low-cost financing for qualified buyers in Massachusetts. **Up to 100% LTV financing available; Job-loss protection insurance; In-state servicing; 30-year fixed rates.**

Visit [www.masshousing.com](http://www.masshousing.com) for more details.



# Peace of Mind.

It's what borrowers hope for in a mortgage loan. It's what lenders want in a business relationship. At MassHousing we offer both. Learn more about our affordable home mortgage loans for low- and moderate-income first time homebuyers. [www.masshousing.com/lenders](http://www.masshousing.com/lenders).



# It's both.

It's what borrowers hope for in a mortgage loan.

It's what lenders want in a business relationship.

An experience with MassHousing is both good things swirled into one.

Learn more about our affordable home mortgage loans for low- and moderate-income first time homebuyers.

[www.masshousing.com/lenders](http://www.masshousing.com/lenders).





## Yeah, we financed that.

MassHousing has provided more than **\$5.6 billion** in financing for more than 550 rental properties in Massachusetts. No matter how unique your idea, no matter what your needs, **we can tailor a financial package that works for you.**

*Pictured: Trolley Square in Cambridge.  
The development's energy needs were  
cut in half as a result of "green"  
building techniques.*



*Visit our new rental business portal at*

**[www.masshousingrental.com](http://www.masshousingrental.com)**