

# Launch of MassHousing's Downpayment Assistance Program

**MassHousing**

Communications: Creative Media

**HFA Staff Contact**

Nancy McDonald

[nmcdonald@masshousing.com](mailto:nmcdonald@masshousing.com)

**MassHousing**  
***Launch of MassHousing's Downpayment Assistance Program***  
**Communications / Creative Media**

Introduction

As 2018 began, would-be Massachusetts homebuyers faced a daunting housing market: The cost of homes and condos continued to rise while supply dwindled. The immutable laws of supply and demand kicked in. Between January 2016 and January 2018, the median sale price of a Massachusetts home, according to Zillow, rose by almost 9 percent from \$327,000 to \$356,000. And the inventory of homes was shrinking.

Back in September of 2006, there were 38,000 homes on the market in the state. In December of 2017, there were fewer than 10,000. It is as simple and as complicated as the comment offered by Eric Berman of the Massachusetts Association of Realtors, who was quoted in a March 2018 news articles as saying, "The problem is there are no homes for sale." In turn of course, the challenge is that when home prices increase, so does the required downpayment. A 10% downpayment on a \$356,000 home is \$35,600, while even a 3% downpayment – which MassHousing allows for its home mortgage loans on single-family homes and condos - is \$10,680.

As in so many states, the rise in home prices and required downpayments was putting the dream of homeownership further and further out of reach for low- and moderate-income renters.

Public officials and the real estate industry routinely look to MassHousing for solutions to housing affordability crises.

Since its creation more than 50 years ago, MassHousing has provided more than \$23.9 billion in total financing for affordable housing, \$12 billion of which has financed mortgage loans for 93,000 homebuyers and homeowners.

In late 2017, it was clear to MassHousing's leaders that thousands of potential homebuyers were staying on the sidelines because of their inability to provide a downpayment, even with MassHousing's low down-payment requirement of just 3%. The record-low inventory, rising home prices, high rents, and student loan debt all made it more difficult for the average Massachusetts household to save for a downpayment.

Conventional, for-profit lenders – constrained by stockholders and other institutional barriers – do not usually provide any relief on downpayments, other than offering some loans with downpayments of 3%. MassHousing saw an opportunity not only to meet its mission but also to establish a competitive advantage. As a public, mission-oriented organization, MassHousing is not constrained in the same ways as conventional lenders and was able to marshal the resources for a Downpayment Assistance (DPA) program.

The Agency's DPA program finances up to 3% of the purchase price of a home, allowing for 100% financing with a MassHousing first mortgage, for creditworthy, income-eligible borrowers. This 3% second mortgage is a fully amortizing 15-year fixed-rate loan, with an interest rate of 1%. The DPA second mortgage carries no additional fees and is due upon the sale or refinancing of the property. Downpayment assistance is capped at 3% of the purchase price, or up to \$12,000.

### Statement of Objectives

MassHousing's Communications and Marketing teams sought to:

- Increase public awareness of the program
- Drive prospective homebuyers to the MassHousing website
- Increase the number of subscribers to MassHousing's *Homebuyer Tips* email newsletter
- Increase lending volume to homebuyers

### Program Planning and Strategy

- Pitch the Boston Globe on the DPA program and seek an exclusive story from them
- Issue a press release, both locally and nationally
- Promote the program via social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Publish a new, DPA-specific web page on masshousing.com
- Produce a large postcard-style brochure for consumers to receive at homebuyer education classes and homebuyer fairs
- Publish stories about DPA in the monthly MassHousing Update email newsletter and bi-weekly MassHousing Homebuyer Tips emails to would-be homebuyers
- Incorporate the DPA program into an ongoing digital ad campaign
- Inform and educate our partner lenders who could promote DPA with their customers
- Run trade publication ads targeting partner lenders and Realtors®
- Develop a profile of a MassHousing customer who bought a home and used the DPA program

### Results Documentation

- On March 18, 2018, the Boston Globe newspaper published an exclusive story announcing MassHousing's DPA program with the headline, "New MassHousing Mortgage Program Requires No Downpayment." The story was accompanied by a sidebar piece with the headline, "Here's What You Need to Know About MassHousing's Zero Downpayment Program" that provided the key details of the DPA program.
- The Boston Globe article was posted on the MassHousing Facebook page and went on to be shared 696 times, reaching 31,627 people, with 8,846 engagements, and 231 likes.
- The post of the MassHousing press release on Facebook was shared 383 times, reaching 36,311 people, with 5,063 engagements, and 216 likes.

- In the first 10 days after the Globe stories and the MassHousing announcement, MassHousing received more than 1,600 sales leads from interested customers through the MassHousing website – including 500 alone the day after the Globe story ran. After that 10-day period we continued to receive about 100 leads per day.
- Our daily MassHousing website page views increased upwards of 25% from approximately 9,000 to 11,000 with 20,000 page views the day after the Globe stories ran.
- The DPA page on the MassHousing website has been viewed 53,000 times.
- MassHousing's Homebuyer Tips email subscriber list has gone from 1,771 recipients in March 2018 to 16,363 in March 2019, an increase of 824 percent.
- News stories of the DPA announcement were published in local and national media, including:
  - The Associated Press
  - Banker and Tradesman
  - CBS Boston TV
  - The Berkshire Eagle
  - Builder Magazine
  - National Mortgage Professional Magazine
  - The Sacramento Bee
  - The Boston University Daily Free Press
  - The Sampan (New England's only bilingual Chinese-English newspaper)
  - Next City (a nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire social, economic and environmental change in cities through journalism and events around the world).
- Most importantly, to date, 1,213 homebuyers have used MassHousing's DPA to buy a home with first mortgage financing totaling more than \$285 million and more than \$8.7 million in DPA financing. Beyond these numbers are more than 1,200 households from all walks of life who have been able to achieve the benefits of owning their own homes who may not have been able to realize the joys of homeownership without MassHousing's DPA program. Creating a new program is powerful – but without advertising and marketing – it can only go so far. MassHousing's marketing for this program made the difference.

## News Coverage

### New MassHousing mortgage program requires no down payment

By Kathleen Conib Globe Staff March 18, 2018, 5:00 a.m.



For many, the prospects of being able to buy a home in the Boston area are slim. (LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF/FILE)

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The past few years have been trying times for would-be home buyers hoping to gain entry to Greater Boston's red-hot housing market.

From a lack of homes for sale to overcrowded open houses to bidding wars, the chance for them to buy a house has become increasingly more remote. For many, even saving for a small down payment — never mind the recommended 20 percent — can be next to impossible.

It's an issue that MassHousing is hoping to tackle through a new program that would cover the down payment on a property — up to 3 percent — for some first-time home buyers. The quasi-public state agency said Sunday that under the program, income-eligible people using a MassHousing mortgage to purchase their first home will

Boston Globe, March 18, 2018

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2018/03/18/new-masshousing-mortgage-program-doesn-require-down-payment/hB4uBAiIcRbGCLrinP3O/story.html>

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### Down Payment Assistance Program Meets People Where They Are

SANDRA LARSON MARCH 27, 2018

(AP Photo/Eliac Amorosola)

When it comes to housing, Boston often finds itself unhappily among the top ranks on issues from astronomical rents to astounding racial disparities in wealth, which often is closely tied to home ownership.

Housing affordability issues extend beyond Boston proper as well, threatening the state's ability to attract and keep workers. Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker recently cited high home prices as one of the most serious impediments to the state's long-term economic growth.

Still, there's no shortage of people yearning to enter the

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Next City, March 27, 2018

[https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/down-payment-assistance-program-meets-people-where-they-are?fbclid=IwAR1kK5gdLXOUyKLH2X9cmckY\\_JNv9WIKGePIr7OkAMJAYCvpBvX-NhyTTzc](https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/down-payment-assistance-program-meets-people-where-they-are?fbclid=IwAR1kK5gdLXOUyKLH2X9cmckY_JNv9WIKGePIr7OkAMJAYCvpBvX-NhyTTzc)

## The Berkshire Eagle

Main menu

### Lowering barriers to home ownership: MassHousing offering new down payment program



MassHousing is offering a new home ownership assistance program that will allow those eligible to purchase a house without making a down payment.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Posted Tuesday, March 27, 2018 11:12 am

Berkshire Eagle, March 27, 2018

[https://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/lowering-barriers-to-home-ownership-masshousing-offering-new-down-payment-program,535559?fbclid=IwAR0ZWojZFhvFvnsU1wJ8iC2XeyRKxxXUvAVtuRP\\_YLYCXb033405VC4uRa4](https://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/lowering-barriers-to-home-ownership-masshousing-offering-new-down-payment-program,535559?fbclid=IwAR0ZWojZFhvFvnsU1wJ8iC2XeyRKxxXUvAVtuRP_YLYCXb033405VC4uRa4)



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home > home ownership > home buyers > home buyer loans > down payment assistance

## Down Payment Assistance from MassHousing

Not enough savings for a down payment on a home? MassHousing can help!



MassHousing loans just got even more affordable! For qualified borrowers\*, MassHousing now provides down payment assistance for up to 3% of the purchase price or \$12,000, whichever is less.

- Down payment assistance is a 15-year, fixed-rate loan at 1% (Example: \$10,000 down payment assistance loan = 180 payments of \$59.85; 1.015% APR)
- Repayment of the down payment assistance is also due upon sale or refinance of the property prior to the end of the 15-year term

*\*Borrowers must be first-time buyers and income cannot exceed 100% of the area median income (AMI) which varies by region. Other eligibility criteria apply. Down payment assistance available on single family homes, condo and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).*

**We can help you move toward a MassHousing loan**

Thinking about applying for a home mortgage loan? Let us help. When you provide your information below, we'll help you identify our lending partners that will be able to assist you with obtaining a MassHousing loan. We can also answer questions and send you our homebuying tips.

First name\*

Last name\*

### RELATED PRODUCTS


- MassHousing Mortgage
- Operation Welcome Home
- Purchase & Renovation
- Down Payment Assistance
- Mortgage Insurance with MI Plus

**Interest Rates**  
MassHousing rates change daily. Please contact a [participating lender](#) for the current MassHousing interest rate.

**Mortgage Insurance**  
For loans that require it, MassHousing offers several [mortgage insurance options](#).

**Homebuying Tips**  
Subscribe to have helpful homebuying tips, news and information [delivered directly to your inbox!](#)

**STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?**



Do you have questions about the homebuying process or about our products and programs for homebuyers? Ask Mircia, MassHousing's resident mortgage and homebuying expert!

TEL: 888.843.6432 | [Email](#)  
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



## Homebuying Tips from MassHousing

While the recent weather might not suggest it, Spring is just around the corner! We've prepared another set of homebuying tips to help you get ready for the Spring homebuying season.

As mentioned in the previous homebuying tips, MassHousing has unveiled a new [down payment assistance program](#), along with several updates to our lineup of [affordable mortgage products!](#) Read on to learn more!

**Down Payment Assistance from MassHousing is Here!**



Not enough savings for a down payment on a home?



**Today's To-Do: Pre-Approval**

A pre-approval is a review and verification of your qualifications for a mortgage loan. A pre-approval is valuable in the homebuying process because it shows a Realtor and seller that a lender has



MassHousing.com Web Page  
<https://www.masshousing.com/dpa>

Homebuying Tips, March 15, 2019  
<http://conta.cc/2FOgVPC>



home: home ownership : borrower profiles : latisha steele

### Latisha Steele



Latisha Steele had looked on and off for a home of her own for five years. Now, thanks to her persistence, and help from a small but expert homebuying team and MassHousing, she's happily settled into a brand new townhome in Boston's Mattapan neighborhood.

"The experience was wonderful," Latisha said. "I'm so glad that MassHousing is there to help people like myself purchase a home."

Latisha purchased her home using an affordable [MassHousing Mortgage](#). By taking advantage of MassHousing's [Down Payment Assistance](#) program as well as down payment assistance from the City of Boston, Latisha closed on her home with minimal initial costs, and was able to pay off her mortgage insurance with a single, upfront premium. Because the loan is insured by MassHousing, Latisha still gets the added peace of mind that comes with [MI Plus mortgage payment protection](#).

A longtime resident of Boston, Latisha had been renting an affordable apartment with the assistance of a Section 8 voucher. She had completed a homebuyer education class multiple times but had been unable to find the right home.

Her luck changed when she entered a lottery to purchase one of the new homes at Olmsted Green, part of a multi-phase mixed-income rental and homeownership development on the former site of the Boston State Hospital. MassHousing contributed financing for the creation of homeownership units at Olmsted Green through its Workforce Housing Initiative.

Latisha's number in the lottery was so far down the list that she didn't think she would get the chance to purchase a unit at Olmsted Green. But her number came up and now she and her daughter, a nursing student at Quincy College, are settled into their new home.

#### MASSHOUING BORROWERS



home: home ownership : borrower profiles : jordan banach

### Jordan Banach



A good friend and an affordable mortgage from MassHousing helped Jordan Banach achieve his dream of homeownership.

A member of the Marine Corps Reserves, Jordan used an [Operation Welcome Home](#) loan to purchase a condominium in Salem. Key to his homebuying success was [CrossCountry Mortgage](#) Loan Partner/Loan Officer Joseph Kim, who Jordan has known since college.

"Joe was phenomenal," said Jordan. "He was constantly looking out for my best interests, giving me advice at every step. To have Joe on my side throughout the process was a big help."

Originally from Great Barrington, Mass., Jordan attended UMASS Amherst. During his sophomore year, he took a break to complete Marine Corps boot camp, then returned to school as a member of the Marine Corps Reserves.

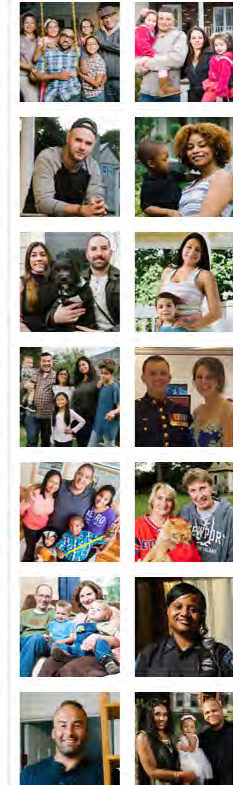
After completing college, Jordan moved to the Boston area. He saw other classmates purchasing homes with Joe's help, and enlisted his friend in his own home search.

Joe knew that Operation Welcome Home would be an excellent option for Jordan, and told his friend he would be able to close on his condo with minimal upfront costs. With [Down Payment Assistance](#) from MassHousing, Jordan completed the transaction paying about \$700.

"It really was the down payment assistance," said Joe, who noted that this was the first Operation Welcome Home loan closed by CrossCountry. "I knew it would work out for Jordan, and it did work out for the best."

Operation Welcome Home provides affordable financing for members of the National Guard and Reserves.

#### MASSHOUING BORROWERS



### DPA Borrower Profile

[https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/borrower\\_profiles/355/latisha\\_steele](https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/borrower_profiles/355/latisha_steele)

### DPA Borrower Profile

[https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/borrower\\_profiles/355/jordan\\_banach](https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/borrower_profiles/355/jordan_banach)

# Sample Social Media Posts

**MassHousing** @MassHousing

Down payment assistance from MassHousing is here! [ow.ly/t73330jyPca](http://ow.ly/t73330jyPca)

Not enough savings for a down payment on a home?

2:30 PM - 24 Apr 2018

1 Retweet 3 Likes

Add another Tweet

**MassHousing**  
Published by Deepak Karamcheti (?) - March 19, 2018

BOSTONGLOBE.COM  
**New MassHousing mortgage program doesn't require a down payment - The Boston Globe**

31,637 People Reached 8,846 Engagements **Boost Post**

Barb Ferguson, Lakia Ellison and 229 others 84 Comments 693 Shares

Like Comment Share

Most Relevant

Write a comment...

**Joanne Ventura** I would love to own my own house with my kids and fiancé  
Like Reply Message · 1y

**Angel Ace Vasquez** Jennifer Chapman  
Like Reply Message · 1y 1

1 Reply

View more comments 2 of 62

**MassHousing**  
Published by Hootsuite (?) - March 19, 2018

**MassHousing Announces Down Payment Assistance Program**  
<http://ow.ly/uWmg30j20tg>

36,345 People Reached 5,065 Engagements **Boost Post**

Chynna Murphy and 213 others 89 Comments 380 Shares

Like Comment Share

Most Relevant

Write a comment...

**Kathleen Brenner-Brenda Cuoco & Associates/Real Living Realty Professionals** This is a great program for buyers to take advantage off I am an agent in Hampden/Hampshire counties if anyone needs assistance I'd be glad get you started with amazing lenders working with this product.  
<https://m.facebook.com/KBSellsRE/>  
Like Reply Message Remove Preview · 1y

**Mish Jackson** I have been having trouble in regards to finding something affordable because of student loans. Most banks ask for a coborrow which I don't have. Any suggestions for folks like me ?  
Like Reply Message · 1y

2 Replies

View more comments 2 of 63



# Ad Campaign Components

Down Payment Assistance. Because we believe in you.

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MUÉSTRAME



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One low-cost mortgage. Multiple down payment options.

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28 1 Comment

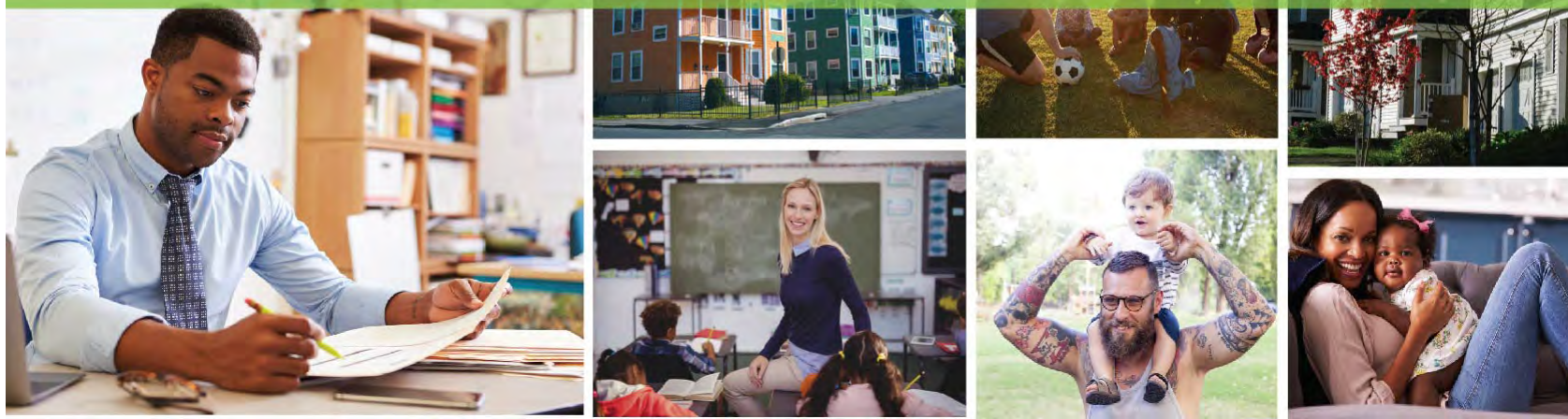
Like Comment



# Postcard produced in English, Spanish and Portuguese



Not enough savings for a down payment on a home?



¿No tiene suficientes ahorros para el pronto de una vivienda?



Não tem poupança suficiente para dar entrada na casa própria?

**MassHousing can help!**

MassHousing loans just got even more affordable! For qualified borrowers\*, MassHousing now provides down payment assistance for up to 3% of the purchase price or \$12,000, whichever is less.

- Down payment assistance is a 15-year, fixed-rate loan at 1%.  
*(Example: \$10,000 down payment assistance loan = 180 payments of \$59.85; 1.015% APR)*
- Repayment of the down payment assistance is also due upon sale or refinancing of the property prior to the end of the 15-year term.

\* Borrowers must be first-time buyers and income cannot exceed 100% of the area median income (AMI) which varies by region. Income limits can be viewed at [www.masshousing.com/loans](http://www.masshousing.com/loans). Other eligibility criteria apply. Down payment assistance available on single-family homes, condos and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

For more information and to begin your journey to affordable home ownership, visit [www.masshousing.com](http://www.masshousing.com) today!

**About MassHousing**  
MassHousing is an agency that was created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1969. Our focus is housing opportunities for Massachusetts residents. To find out more, please visit [www.masshousing.com](http://www.masshousing.com).

MassHousing does not lend directly to consumers and offers its loan products through MassHousing approved lenders.

Great for first-time homebuyers!

**MASSHOUSING**

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

¿No tiene suficientes ahorros para el pronto de una vivienda?

Não tem poupança suficiente para dar entrada na casa própria?



Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency  
One Beacon Street, Boston MA 02108  
TEL 617.854.1000 | FAX 617.854.1091 | VP: 857.366.4157 | [www.masshousing.com](http://www.masshousing.com)

#### Media Contacts

Paul McMorrow: 617.854.1141 | [pmcmorrow@masshousing.com](mailto:pmcmorrow@masshousing.com)  
Tom Farmer: 617.854.1843 | [tfarmer@masshousing.com](mailto:tfarmer@masshousing.com)

## MassHousing Announces Down Payment Assistance Program

### *New loan program will allow creditworthy low-, moderate- and middle-income households to achieve homeownership without making a down payment*

BOSTON – March 19, 2018 – Today MassHousing announced the launch of a new down payment assistance program designed to lower the barriers to achieving homeownership working households face. MassHousing's new down payment assistance program will allow qualified first-time homebuyers to finance up to 100 percent of the purchase price of their first home.

MassHousing is now the only entity offering a down payment assistance program for low-, moderate- and middle-income buyers throughout Massachusetts, and the only entity in Massachusetts offering a sustainable, conventional mortgage product allowing buyers to achieve homeownership without making a down payment.

"Record-low inventory levels, rising home prices, high rents, and student loan debt are all making it more difficult for the average Massachusetts household to afford to purchase a home," **said MassHousing Executive Director Chrystal Kornegay.** "MassHousing's new down payment assistance program will help ensure that homeownership remains accessible to working families, by allowing creditworthy homebuyers to buy their first home with little to no down payment requirement. By boosting the buying power of low-, moderate- and middle-income households, MassHousing will support investment in neighborhoods, help the state's workforce remain rooted in Massachusetts, and advance the Agency's mission of confronting housing challenges facing the Commonwealth, to improve the lives of its people."

MassHousing is making down payment assistance loans available to first-time homebuyers with annual household incomes at or below the area median income, using MassHousing financing to purchase a single-family home or condominium unit. The area median income varies by county. Eligible households will earn \$103,400 or less in eastern Massachusetts, \$85,700 in Worcester County, and \$67,200 in Berkshire County.

Homebuyers accessing down payment assistance must still meet MassHousing's underwriting criteria, including minimum credit score and debt-to-income qualifications, and attend a homeownership education class.



## MassHousing Announces Down Payment Assistance Program

MassHousing mortgages currently finance up to 97 percent of a home purchase price. The Agency's new down payment assistance program will finance up to an additional 3 percent of the purchase price, allowing for up to 100 percent financing for creditworthy income-eligible borrowers.

Down payment assistance will be a fully amortizing 15-year, fixed-rate second mortgage, with an interest rate of 1 percent. The down payment assistance loan will carry no additional fees, and will be due in full upon the sale or refinancing of the property. Down payment assistance will be capped at 3 percent of the purchase price, up to \$12,000.

Down payment assistance loans will be internally subsidized by the strength of the Agency's existing single-family portfolio. The program will not require any additional allocation of funds, or the diversion of funds from other Agency uses. MassHousing does not use taxpayer dollars to sustain its operations.

MassHousing finances home purchases through a network of more than 160 banks, credit unions and mortgage companies. Down payment assistance will launch alongside a simplification and consolidation of the Agency's mortgage products. The new mortgage products, including down payment assistance, are available to consumers immediately.

The new down payment assistance program for low-, moderate- and middle-income households complements MassHousing's ongoing efforts to support workforce housing. The Agency has also created a \$100 million [workforce housing fund](#) to spur the creation of 1,000 new apartments affordable to middle-income renters. In partnership with the Baker-Polito Administration's [Housing Choice Initiative](#), MassHousing is advancing measures to boost the production of new housing, and deliver 135,000 new housing units by the year 2025.

### ***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 \$22 billion for affordable housing. For more information, visit the MassHousing website at [www.masshousing.com](http://www.masshousing.com), follow us on Twitter [@MassHousing](#), subscribe to our [blog](#) and Like us on [Facebook](#).

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