

The Homeownership Community Heroes Initiative

New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority
Special Achievement: COVID-19 Response

HFA Staff Contact

Grace Lessner

glessner@nhhfa.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING

The Homeownership Community Heroes Initiative

Category: Special Achievement – COVID-19 Response (new)

2022 NCSHA Awards for Program Excellence

Entry Summary (500 character maximum)

(New Program) During the COVID-19 pandemic, NH Housing established the Community Heroes Initiative to provide first responders, educators and other frontline workers with a \$3,000 closing cost grant to help purchase a home. This initiative was established with \$600,000 of self-generated funds to show appreciation for these essential workers, and to make their homebuying process easier (and in some cases, possible). We estimate the program will help about 200 Community Heroes purchase their first home.

The Community Heroes Initiative: Innovative and Timely

As it did in other states, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the NH economy, workforce, and citizens hard. Throughout the worst days of the pandemic and beyond, hospital workers, daycare and elder care workers, firefighters, police officers, first responders, teachers and active military members provided essential and critical services to keep businesses and hospitals operational and our children educated.

To show appreciation to these workers who were first-time homebuyers, NH Housing established the Community Heroes Initiative (CHI). This initiative has provided frontline workers with a \$3,000 closing cost grant to help them purchase a home. NH Housing allocated \$600,000 of internal resources to create the initiative and help these essential workers purchase their new home. In addition to getting a CHI \$3,000 closing cost grant, many of these homeowners also were able to tap NH Housing's other mortgage programs, including downpayment cash assistance and our Homebuyer Tax Credit (mortgage credit certificate) program.

Since launching the initiative in March 2021, NH Housing has provided 174 grants (as of May 2022) to eligible CHI homebuyers, and we anticipate all allocated funds will be expended by June 2022.

Supporting Information (please click on links)

- **[Community Heroes Initiative Fact Sheet](#)**
- **[Community Heroes Initiative Flyer \(English\)](#)**
- **[Community Heroes Initiative Flyer \(Spanish\)](#)**
- **www.NHHomeownership.org/heroes**

NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING

The Homeownership Community Heroes Initiative

Category: Special Achievement – COVID-19 Response (new)

2022 NCSHA Awards for Program Excellence

Along with many other housing markets across the country, New Hampshire has seen unprecedented housing cost increases. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed those housing costs even higher over the past two years, making homeownership extremely challenging for many low- and moderate-income homebuyers to achieve. NH Housing saw a need and an opportunity to thank and assist essential workers by providing a closing cost grant that would help them purchase a home in this very tight and expensive housing market.

For example, after looking for years for a home for their family, first-time homebuyers Taylor (a teacher) and her husband Jaron (a marketing professional) were able to purchase a home. With the assistance of the CHI program, our dedicated lender partners, and a combination of several other programs NH Housing offers, Taylor and Jaron purchased a home in northern New Hampshire. [Watch Taylor and Jaron tell their story.](#)

Eligibility for the Community Heroes Initiative

- Must be a first-time homebuyer
- Must use one of our existing first mortgage products and second mortgage downpayment assistance programs; and
- One borrower must be currently employed, either full-time or part-time, in one of the following fields:
 - Healthcare Workers (an employee of a licensed or accredited medical/mental/healthcare provider, including hospitals, doctors' offices, labs (nurse, LPN, personal care assistant, lab technician, administrative staff, maintenance staff, addiction treatment and pharmacy workers)
 - Daycare/Eldercare Workers (employee of a licensed or accredited daycare or eldercare facility)
 - Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, and First Responders (employee of a law enforcement agency, a correctional institution, emergency medical response, or fire department administered by a federal, state, county, or local government)
 - Educators (employee of a K – 12 public or private school system (including teachers, bus drivers, administrative and maintenance staff)
 - Active Military Service (members of the Armed Services (active military, National Guard and reservists)

Community Heroes Initiative: Successful and Sound

By dedicating resources to the CHI program, NH Housing was able to provide a statewide public benefit, assist new homeowners, and generate loan volume. Data collected over 12 months of the program show that the CHI program assisted a wide segment of the frontline worker population (see chart below). In particular, health care workers and those in the field of education have received the most grants.

NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING

The Homeownership Community Heroes Initiative

Category: Special Achievement – COVID-19 Response (new)

2022 NCSHA Awards for Program Excellence

COMMUNITY HEROES INITIATIVE GRANTS (March 2021 to March 2022)

Occupation	Number of CHI Grants	Average Purchase Price	Average Income	Avg. HH Size
Health Care	91	\$ 260,966	\$ 83,319	3
Daycare	3	\$ 320,225	\$ 73,809	3
Eldercare	4	\$ 227,900	\$ 60,702	3
Firefighter	3	\$ 254,333	\$ 63,852	2
Law Enforcement	8	\$ 242,025	\$ 96,642	2
First Responder	3	\$ 249,966	\$ 75,828	2
Educator	40	\$ 283,531	\$ 81,465	2
Active Military	2	\$ 220,250	\$ 83,952	3
Total	154	\$ 257,400	\$ 77,446	3

The Community Heroes Initiative: An Important Benefit That Achieved Intended Results

The Community Heroes Initiative responded to a state need by showing that New Hampshire values the hard work of those frontline COVID workers during a time of crisis for our country. The launch of the program was coordinated with direct outreach to Community Heroes employers at hospitals, health care facilities, police and firefighter associations, and teachers. The initiative launched with a news release, memorable program graphic, website landing page, marketing materials in both English and Spanish, as well as a statewide digital marketing campaign.

NH Housing already had the industry partners in place to promote the program (lenders, real estate professionals, non-profits) and systems in place. As a result, the CHI program was relatively easy to implement, low-cost, and was well-marketed. Responses from lenders, real estate professionals, and homebuyers has been very positive.

All CHI funds are expected to be allocated to eligible borrowers by the end of June 2022: this means there will be about 200 Community Heroes who are now homeowners as a result of this initiative!