



# Welcome Home Massachusetts

## Support local housing initiatives

The *Welcome Home Massachusetts* campaign emerged from clearly affirmed grassroots support for access to affordable housing throughout the Commonwealth. Since 2010 there has been a strong desire on the part of housing advocates, civic and business leaders, religious institutions across all faiths, service organizations, municipal and elected officials and others to continue to build popular support for affordable housing. In response, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) is launching *Welcome Home Massachusetts*.

Over the course of three years, *Welcome Home Massachusetts* will: (1) increase the amount of affordable housing in urban, suburban and rural communities, and (2) provide support to local groups so they can advance affordable housing initiatives in their communities. The concept for *Welcome Home Massachusetts* emerged from 14 community meetings across the state, attended by over 300 people. Participants determined the best way to advance affordable housing at the local level is through an organized, statewide campaign. The campaign will be overseen by a diverse steering committee representing key stakeholders.

*Welcome Home Massachusetts* will focus on three primary strategies:

**Communications and Messaging:** Based on focus groups and polling, the campaign will develop a statewide messaging and media campaign highlighting the need for affordable housing. Written and online materials will be made available and tailored to build local support among municipal officials, town meeting members, civic leaders, and local media. Resources such as the "faces and places" of affordable housing and the connection between affordable housing and a vibrant economy will be created. A statewide "call to action" will elevate awareness of affordable housing needs and solutions in every city and town.

**Education and Information:** At our community meetings, participants voiced a strong need for clear information about housing tools. The Welcome Home web site, set to launch this spring, will feature an extensive online guide to implementing local housing strategies. The online guide will highlight the housing development process, how to build local support, zoning options, and funding opportunities. Other features of the web site will include fact sheets on the importance of affordable housing; photos and descriptions of exemplary developments; connections to an active statewide network of supporters (including use of social media); links to localized housing and census data for every municipality; updates on local activities and meetings; and a directory of local housing committees and trusts.

**Local Support:** The campaign will add capacity to community-based groups that will champion affordable housing at the local level. If funding allows, the steering committee will select several communities across the state to receive in-depth assistance in order to achieve local affordable housing goals. Assistance may include funding a local organizer, assisting with a media strategy, or developing educational materials. We will evaluate the progress of these local campaigns to determine what strategies have been most successful. Beyond the target communities, we will make resources available on-line and will provide limited technical assistance to others seeking to advance affordable housing.

For more information, please contact Carol Marine at CHAPA - [cmarine@chapa.org](mailto:cmarine@chapa.org) or 617-742-0820.

### Accomplishments...

- Over 350 individuals and organizations have endorsed the Welcome Home Massachusetts campaign to create more affordable housing!
- Endorsers include housing advocates, civic and business leaders, faith based organizations, service providers, municipal employees, low income tenants and homeowners, elected officials, and others.
- Watch for the launch of the Welcome Home Massachusetts website this spring!