



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

Media Contacts

Paul McMorrow: 617.854.1141 | pmcmorrow@masshousing.com
Tom Farmer: 617.854.1843 | tfarmer@masshousing.com

MassHousing Closes on \$22.8 Million to Create 23 New, Affordable Apartments, and to Renovate and Preserve the Affordability of 65 Existing Units, in Cambridge

Just-A-Start Corporation will combine two affordable housing communities and add new homes to create an 88-unit development called Squirrelwood

BOSTON – July 11, 2019 – MassHousing has closed on \$22.8 million in affordable housing financing to the non-profit [Just-A-Start Corporation](#) (JAS) for the new construction of 23 apartments and the renovation and preservation of affordability of 65 existing apartments in Cambridge.

JAS is combining the 45-unit Linwood Court and 20-unit Squirrel Brand affordable housing communities and will construct 23 new affordable units on a portion of its Linwood Court property. The new, 88-unit housing community will be named Squirrelwood and will be available to households earning a range of incomes, including 10 units of workforce housing for middle-income families.

“Just-A-Start and the city of Cambridge are deeply committed to providing quality affordable housing opportunities to lower- and moderate-income households in Cambridge, which has some of the highest housing costs in the country,” said **MassHousing Executive Director Chrystal Kornegay**. “MassHousing was pleased to be a partner in this transaction, which will preserve and create 88 homes that will be affordable to families who want to live and work in the city.”

MassHousing provided Just-A-Start with an \$8.2 million permanent loan, a \$13.6 million bridge loan and \$1 million from the Agency’s [\\$100 million Workforce Housing Initiative](#).

“With a wide range of units to accommodate families of all sizes and a variety of income levels, the Squirrelwood project is an important step in Just-A-Start’s mission to offer quality, inclusive housing to Cambridge residents. As housing costs in the city continue to rise, Just-A-Start is proud to work alongside its partners to preserve the affordability of these homes and create more access to secure housing in this community,” said **Just-A-Start Executive Director Deborah Ruhe**.

The transaction also resolved the expired Section 13A affordable financing on the 45 units at Linwood Court, creating residency protection for the existing 13A tenants.

The Commonwealth’s Section 13A program was created by the Massachusetts Legislature in the 1970s to provide low-interest mortgage financing to affordable housing communities. Today, 13A communities

MassHousing Closes on \$22.8 Million to Create 23 New, Affordable Apartments, and to Renovate and Preserve the Affordability of 65 Existing Units, in Cambridge

serve some of the lowest-income and most vulnerable populations in Massachusetts, including many elderly residents. The mortgages on these 13A housing communities are nearing maturity, and no federal resources are available for their preservation. In response, MassHousing and the [Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development](#) (DHCD) have committed a total of \$100 million in capital to help protect vulnerable residents and preserve affordable 13A units that otherwise could convert to market rates.

As part of the Squirrelwood transaction, DHCD provided \$4.7 million in Section 13A-specific financing as well as an additional \$1 million in affordable housing financing.

Other funding sources included \$14.9 million in federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity allocated by DHCD, \$4.1 million from the city of Cambridge's Affordable Housing Trust, a \$2.6 million seller note, \$700,000 in state Historic Tax Credit equity, \$300,000 from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, and \$140,000 in Cambridge Historic Commission grants.

Of the 88 units, 78 will be for households earning at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) with 24 units supported by the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program and 10 units be supported by federal Section 8 Housing Assistance Payment vouchers. The remaining 10 apartments will be workforce housing units for households earning at or below 100 percent of AMI. The AMI in Cambridge is \$113,300 for a family of four.

Squirrelwood's existing 65 units are contained in 10 buildings on three parcels of land located within block of each other. The 23 new units will be contained in three buildings – two of new construction - and overall there will be 3 studio apartments, 14 one-bedroom apartments, 32 two-bedroom apartments, 35 three-bedroom apartments, 2 four-bedroom apartments and 2 five-bedroom apartments.

Among the renovations planned by JAS on the existing properties are the replacement of kitchens, bathrooms, and flooring in individual units, as well as new siding, roofs, hot water piping, and windows. The buildings will be made significantly more energy efficient through the addition of new insulation, and new landscaping will be added to the site.

The contractor will be [Callahan Construction Managers](#), the architect is [Davis Square Architects](#) and the management agent is [Maloney Properties](#).

MassHousing has financed 15 rental developments in Cambridge involving 2,235 housing units and \$387 million in financing. The Agency has also provided home mortgage financing to 551 homeowners in Cambridge with \$68.5 million in financing.

About Just-A-Start Corporation

Just-A-Start is a community development corporation dedicated to building the housing security and economic stability of low- to moderate-income people in Cambridge and nearby communities. Through innovative, comprehensive, and integrated programs, JAS provides and preserves affordable housing, offers education and workforce training for youth and adults, and builds community engagement. JAS's vision is a better future for all of its constituents - a secure home, a sustaining career, and engagement in the community. For more information, visit their website at www.justastart.org.

MassHousing Closes on \$22.8 Million to Create 23 New, Affordable Apartments, and to Renovate and Preserve the Affordability of 65 Existing Units, in Cambridge

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 \$23.9 billion for affordable housing. For more information, visit the MassHousing website at www.masshousing.com, follow us on Twitter [@MassHousing](https://twitter.com/MassHousing), subscribe to our [blog](#) and Like us on [Facebook](#).

###