



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

NEWS

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Governor Quinn Announces New Financing to Help More Military Families Afford Homeownership

Illinois Jobs Now! Financing to Help Additional 500 Families Buy a Home through "Welcome Home Heroes" Program

WESTCHESTER – November 12, 2012. In honor of Veterans Day, Governor Pat Quinn announced the investment of an additional \$5 million to the *Welcome Home Heroes* homebuyer financing package to make homeownership more affordable for more military families. This new *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital funding will allow an additional 500 military families to access a \$10,000 forgivable grant toward the purchase of a new home, as well as a mortgage tax credit worth up to \$20,000 over the life of the loan.

Standing outside the home of newlyweds Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Sereda, 34, and Sharon Sereda, 27, Governor Quinn emphasized his commitment to help Veterans, active military personnel, reservists and Illinois National Guard members transition to civilian life. *Welcome Home Heroes* enabled the couple to buy their first home – a three-bedroom ranch home in suburban Westchester.

"As we honor our Illinois heroes on Veterans Day, we are proud to invest in the *Welcome Home Heroes* program to help those who sacrifice so much buy an affordable home," Governor Quinn said. "The *Welcome Home Heroes* program offers a secure financing package that protects those who have committed their lives to protecting us. This program helps military homeowners and improves local real estate markets across Illinois."

Since Governor Quinn launched the financing package last December, *Welcome Home Heroes* has helped more than 550 military families achieve their dream of buying a home. *Welcome Home Heroes* originally was funded through \$5 million in *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital funds and \$5 million from the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The additional \$5 million investment announced today will stimulate statewide economic activity:

- 250 full-time jobs
- \$8.4 million from real estate-related industries
- More than \$6.7 million in economic activity for the state
- Additional \$2.7 million in other statewide spending

Administered by the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), *Welcome Home Heroes* is open to all qualified Illinois veterans. Active military personnel, reservists and Illinois National Guard members may also participate, but must be first-time buyers. The *Welcome Home Heroes* homebuyer financing package includes a forgivable \$10,000 grant for down payment and closing cost assistance, an affordable interest rate (3.25 percent as of today) for a secure 30-year fixed rate mortgage and a mortgage credit certificate worth up

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to approximately \$20,000 for the life of the loan. *Welcome Home Heroes* recently won national recognition from the National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA), which lauded the program's role in empowering buyers such as Sereda.

Previously stationed at a California fort in the Mojave Desert as a combat engineer, Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Sereda now works for the Army Reserves in suburban Arlington Heights as a career counselor after moving back to the area. A suburban native, Sereda returned to the Chicago area after the death of his father to help care for his family. He thought about renting before learning of the statewide program that could help him.

"We appreciate Governor Quinn tailoring a program to meet the needs of families like us. With the \$10,000 down payment assistance, we had extra money to plan our wedding and begin our new life together," Sereda said. "The housing interest rates are so low, and *Welcome Home Heroes* was just too good to pass up."

Veterans returning home from their service encounter a special set of obstacles to homeownership. Many are underemployed, and while they qualify for job training programs – conventional home loans feature heightened down payment and credit requirements. Nearly one million veteran homeowners face severe housing cost burdens, paying half or more of their income for housing, according to a 2010 American Community Survey analysis.

"Under Governor Quinn's leadership, *Welcome Home Heroes* will continue to eliminate barriers to homeownership that many Illinois military families face by providing a financial package that is one of the most substantial in the nation," IHDA Executive Director Mary R. Kenney said. "As the state's housing finance agency, IHDA has enabled nearly 60,000 low- to moderate-income families buy a home securely and this investment means we can help even more families."

Under Governor Quinn's leadership, IHDA also is working to increase rental housing opportunities that provide veterans who are at risk of homelessness with access to supportive services and skills that will help them live independently. Of the 700 new units of affordable rental housing that IHDA recently approved, more than one-third of the total units will help veterans and people with disabilities find stability in communities.

"Governor Quinn is a great supporter of our service members," said Maj. Gen. Dennis L. Celletti, the acting Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard. "He has instituted numerous programs to ensure our returning men and women in uniform have the resources they need to adapt to civilian life and to thrive in this great state."

"I thank Governor Quinn for this new financial commitment to help our military families transition to civilian life and establish roots in our Illinois neighborhoods," Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Erica Borggren said.

Welcome Home Heroes program builds on IHDA's existing affordable home loan program, *SmartMove*, also available through IHDA's lenders. The financing package applies to 1-2 unit residential properties located in the State of Illinois that are purchased as a primary residence.

Buyers must qualify based on income and purchase price limits, and can apply for the loan package through an IHDA lender. A list of participating lenders throughout the state is available at ihda.org/homeowner/heroes. For more information about programs for Illinois veterans and servicemembers, visit OperationHomefront.org.



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About IHDA

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (ihda.org) is an independent, self-supporting bonding authority that finances the creation and preservation of affordable housing throughout Illinois. Since 1967, IHDA has allocated more than \$11.1 billion to finance more than 221,000 affordable housing units for the residents of Illinois.

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