

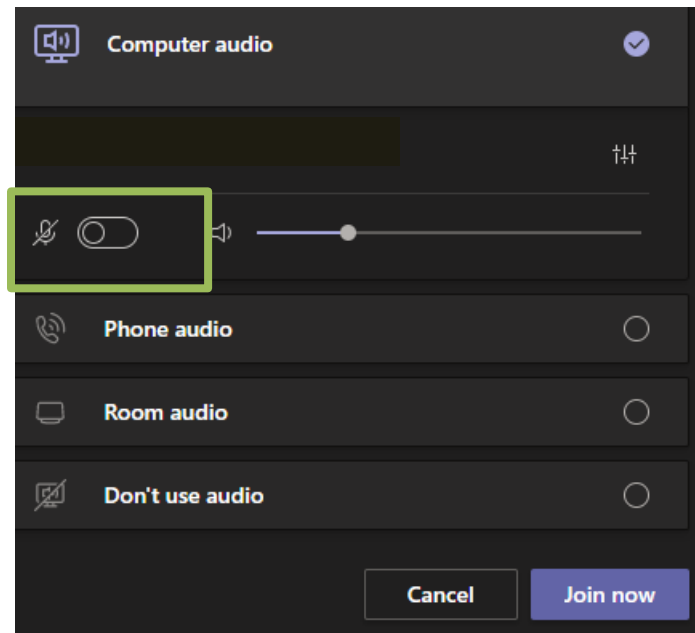


Central Application Refresher Session

October 8, 2021

Please Mute

Please join the meeting muted during the session to keep interruptions to a minimum

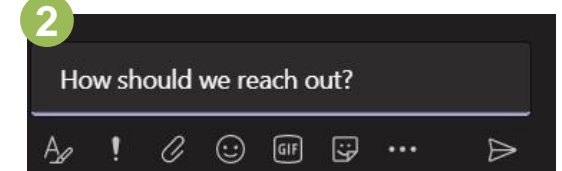
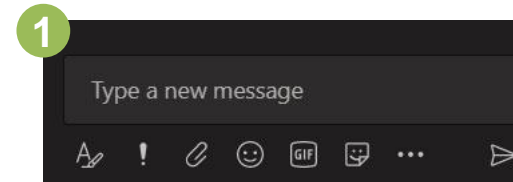


Engage During Meeting

1. Teams Chat

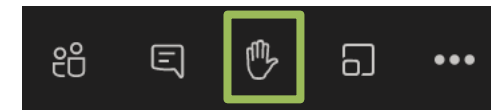
Send a message in the **Teams Chat** panel

1. Type in your **question**
2. Hit Enter



2. Questions

- We will be monitoring the Teams Chat for questions
- During the designated checkpoints for questions, **please come off mute** to ask your questions once the moderator calls on you
- You can also use the **raise your hand feature** via Teams and ask your question once the moderator calls on you





WELCOME

THIS CALL IS BEING RECORDED





Our Journey Today

60 MINUTES



Welcome, Goals, & Objectives

5 mins



Central App Review



New Process Details

30 mins



Technology Use



Support



Questions & Answers

25 mins



Review the **Central Application** & Process Changes



Learn what **enhancements are being made** so you can process more efficiently



Provide staff **a forum to ask questions** so they are prepared to support the community



CENTRAL APPLICATION REVIEW



The Central App is a single online location where Massachusetts residents (landlords, tenants, homeowners, and advocates) can apply for rental or mortgage assistance benefits regardless of where they live in the state.

All 11 RAAs are now live with the centralized link to access the application as of September 30th.

Through October 3rd, **over 12,250 Applications have been received** and **over 800 have received payments**

There have been a few updates for fields in HAPPY:

- ✓ Application ID is required to be entered into HAPPY
- ✓ If an Application reflects gender as “Other”, reflect this in HAPPY by entering an "O" into the HAPPY field for gender
- ✓ If an Application reflects Ethnicity as “Prefer not to answer”, reflect this in HAPPY by leaving all the Ethnicity check boxes blank

SELECTED PROGRAM UDF FIELDS			
TEXT	NUMBER	VALUE LIST	
	Monthly rent	1200	Housing Crisis PCRA
	Total rent arrearage amount	12000	Income 15-30
			Arrearage # Months Paid 10
			Earliest date of arrears paid C June -
Central App Application #	FAKE123456		
			# Times Recertified 01
	Formstack ID		Total #months paid(ARR+future) 16
			Recert Denial/Timeout
Landlord Door Y/N	N		
	DATE		
	Approval / Denial Date	3/18/2021	



POLICY UPDATES

- On the Central Application, **only the Head of Household will need to sign** the application
- Older Cognito applications and paper applications still request all adult household member signatures
- However, RAAs are allowed to process applications **without** adult household member signatures, as long as the head of household has signed
 - This is true even if the application was an “old” application, a Cognito application, or a paper application
 - Adult household members’ information (name, DOB, SSN if they have one, etc.) still need to be collected and their income still needs to be included in the household’s income calculation



- Landlords may use the Central App to apply on behalf of their tenant(s)
- The 20 unit maximum for using the landlord door **has been lifted**; there is no unit cap
 - Owners/operators of subsidized and public housing may continue to use the SHERA program
- Landlords must include a consent form signed by the tenant



“

Before it was longer... this was pretty easy...and it was pretty simple to fill out

My staff are finding it easier to navigate and process than before

We can finally have a statewide view of who is applying for Emergency Housing Payment Assistance

”



PORTAL

MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY HOUSING PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PORTAL



RAA staff will have access to a central portal and can log in to access additional tiles within the portal

Portal/Applicant View

This screenshot shows the user interface for the Portal/Applicant View. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a language selector, a 'Powered by Translate' logo, and the text 'Emergency Housing Payment Assistance Commonwealth of Massachusetts'. To the right of this bar are links for 'Home', 'Program Information', and 'RAA Login', with the 'RAA Login' link highlighted by a green box. Below the navigation bar is a large blue banner with the text 'WELCOME TO THE MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY HOUSING PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PORTAL' and a sub-header 'Use this portal to upload additional documents and see which RAA is processing your application.' To the right of the text is the Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Below the banner is a section titled 'Available Services' which contains three white tiles: 'Upload Documents' (with a document icon), 'Application Information' (with a building icon), and 'Need Help?' (with an information icon). Each tile includes a brief description and a 'More >>' button.

RAA View

This screenshot shows the user interface for the RAA View. At the top, there is a blue banner with the text 'WELCOME TO THE MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY HOUSING PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PORTAL' and a sub-header 'Use this portal to upload additional documents and see which RAA is processing your application.' To the right of the text is the Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Below the banner is a section titled 'Available Services' which contains six white tiles arranged in a 2x3 grid: 'Submit Application' (with a document icon), 'Upload Documents' (with a document icon), 'Application Information' (with a building icon), 'Need Help?' (with an information icon), 'Staff Service Request' (with a speech bubble icon), and 'RAA Application Lookup' (with a magnifying glass icon). Each tile includes a brief description and a 'More >>' button. The entire 'Available Services' section is enclosed in a green border.

ENTERING PAPER APPLICATIONS

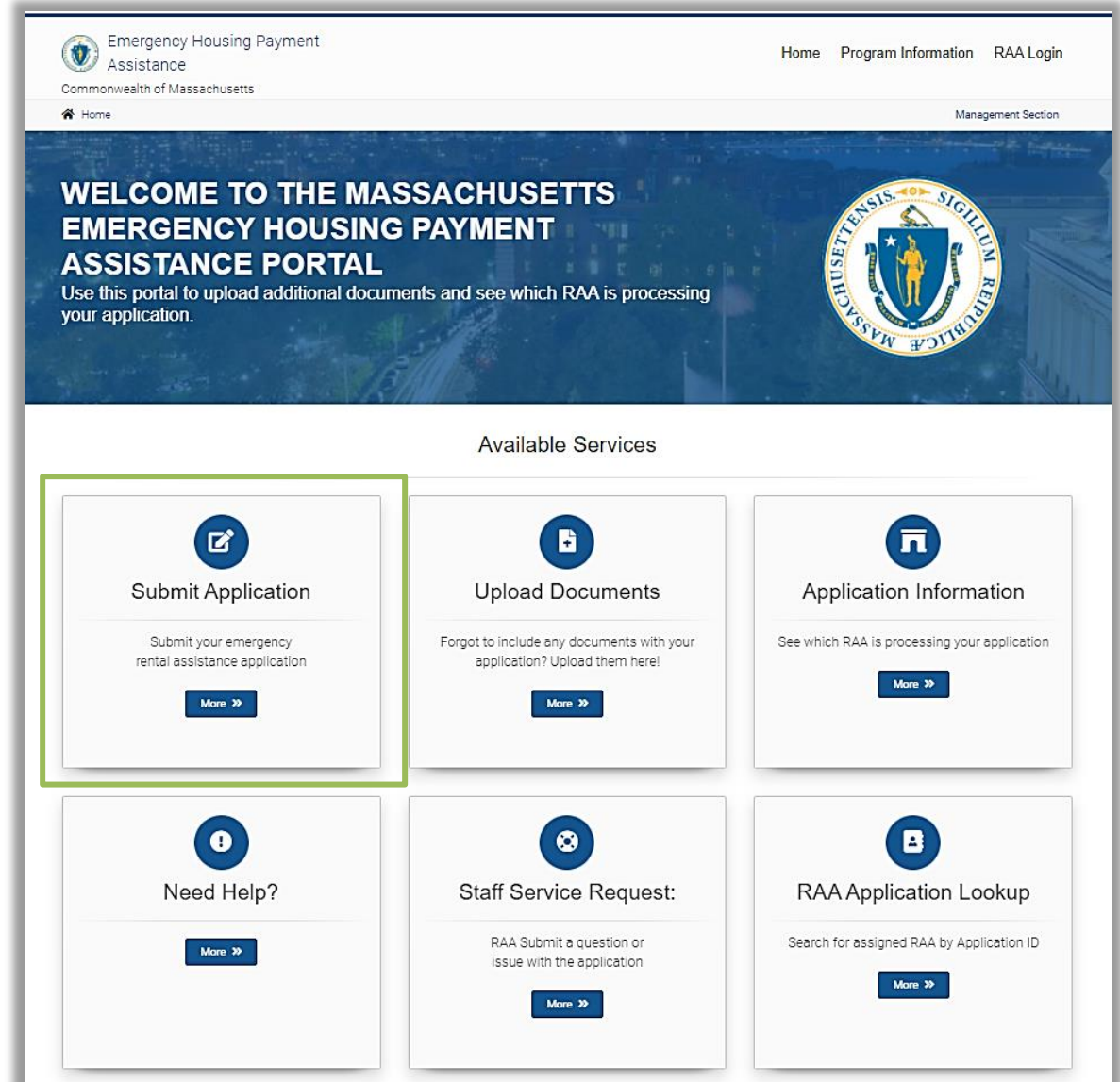


RAAs must manually key paper apps into the Central Application Portal.

RAAs should upload a scanned copy of the paper application when uploading documents for submission.

This allows DHCD and managers to track and monitor all applications.

Best practice to include under the Advocate Org: the RAA name + “Paper” (e.g., CMHA-Paper)



UPLOADING DOCUMENTS



RAA Staff, Applicants, and Property Owners will use the Portal to upload any additional documentation. The documentation can be a photo or PDF file.

Date of Birth or Resident Zip Code can be used with the Application ID to upload documentation.

Note: The Application ID is required to upload documents

The screenshot shows the 'Upload Documents' portal interface. At the top, there are three navigation buttons: 'Submit Application', 'Upload Documents' (highlighted with a green box and a blue arrow pointing down), and 'Application Information'. The main form area is titled 'Upload Documents for Tenants' and contains the following sections:

- Enter the information below:**
 - Field for 'Your Client ID/Entity ID or Application ID/Confirmation ID'.
 - Fields for 'Date of Birth' (format mm/dd/yyyy) and 'Resident ZIP Code', separated by 'OR'.
 - A 'Document Type' dropdown menu with the option '-- Please Select --'.
- Select Document:**
 - A 'Choose Files' button.
 - A note: 'Please Note: The maximum file size is 4MB. Acceptable files: PDF, JPEG, JPG and PNG.'
- Captcha Validation:**
 - A checkbox labeled 'I'm not a robot' next to a reCAPTCHA logo.
 - A note: 'This question is to test whether you are a human visitor or a robot. The reason for this validation step is to prevent automated spam submissions.'
- Submit Tenant Documents** button.

On the right side, there is a sidebar titled 'Instructions for Tenants' with the following information:

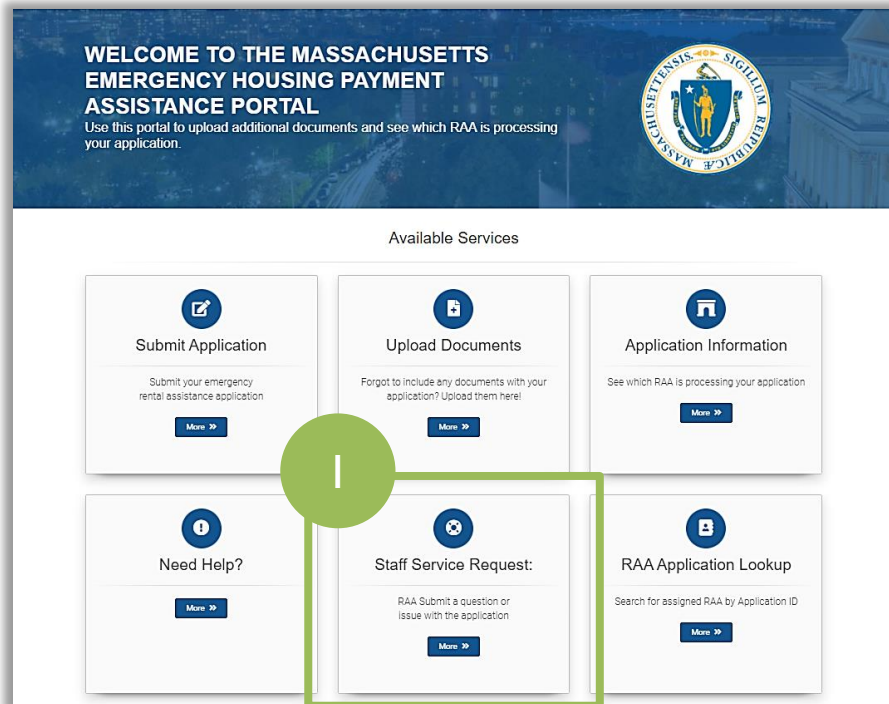
- Entity/Client ID:** This is the Client ID you have in the program. Please note that you might not have a Client ID. If that is the case, please use the Application ID.
- OR**
- Application ID:** After submitting your Application Form, you will receive an Application ID that you can use as a reference for your application.
- Date of Birth:** If applicable, you may need to enter the Date of Birth.
- Documents:** Select the documents you would like to submit. Important:
 - You can upload up to 5 documents at a time.
 - The maximum size per document is 4MB.
 - The only acceptable file formats are PDF, JPEG and JPG.

NAN MCKAY TICKET SYSTEM



Users who encounter a **technical issue** will be able to submit a ticket for remedy using the following system

1. Users will first click the “Staff Service Request” icon via the Portal
2. Then the user will complete the form with the required information
 - Including detail, will assist the team in providing a more comprehensive response to fix the problem



2

Home » View » service request.raa Management Section

Service Request RAA

RAA

Staff Name: Kaley Matchett Staff Email: kaley.matchett@accenture.com

Application ID

Name *
First Last

Use Applicant or Owner Name

Phone Email

Inquiry Type: Check Status What does this affect?: Application Sensitivity: Normal - 2 Business Days

Please explain the inquiry/request

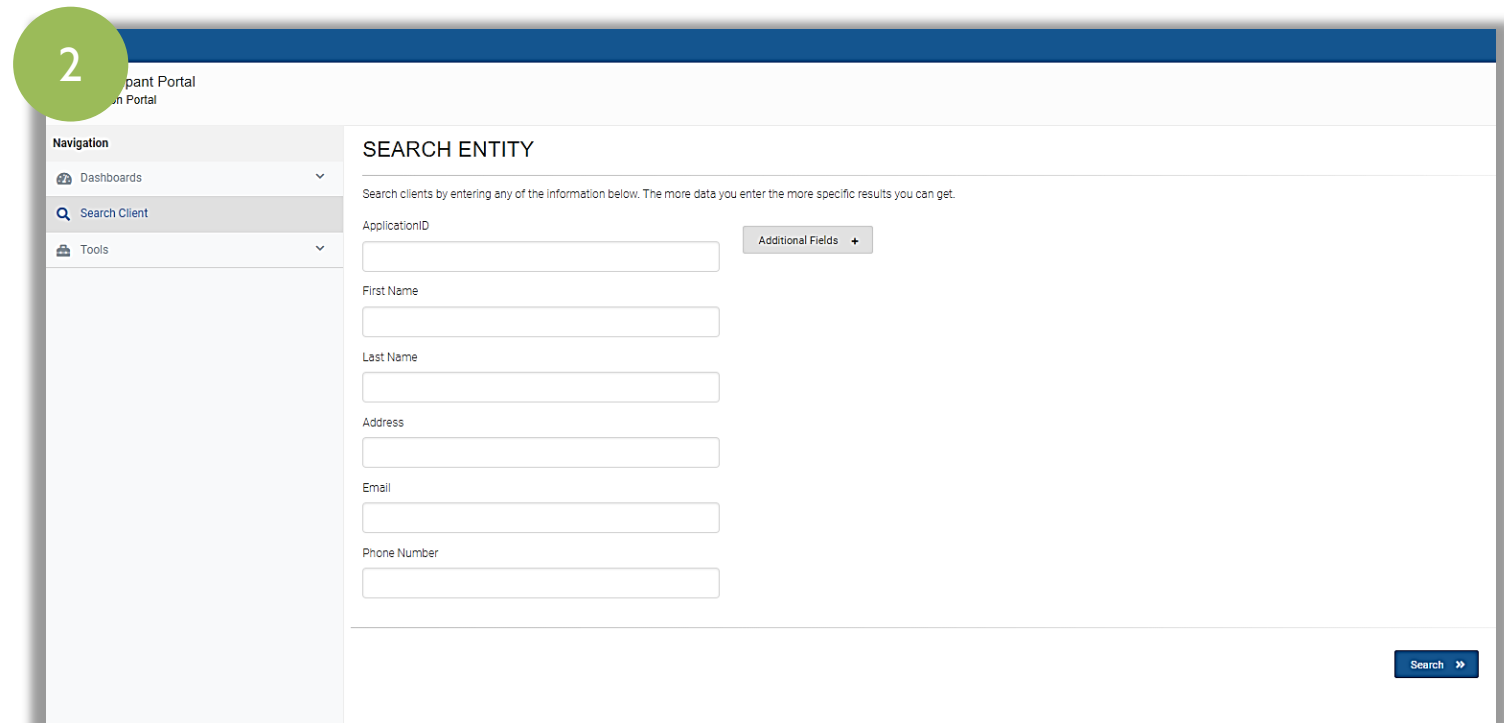
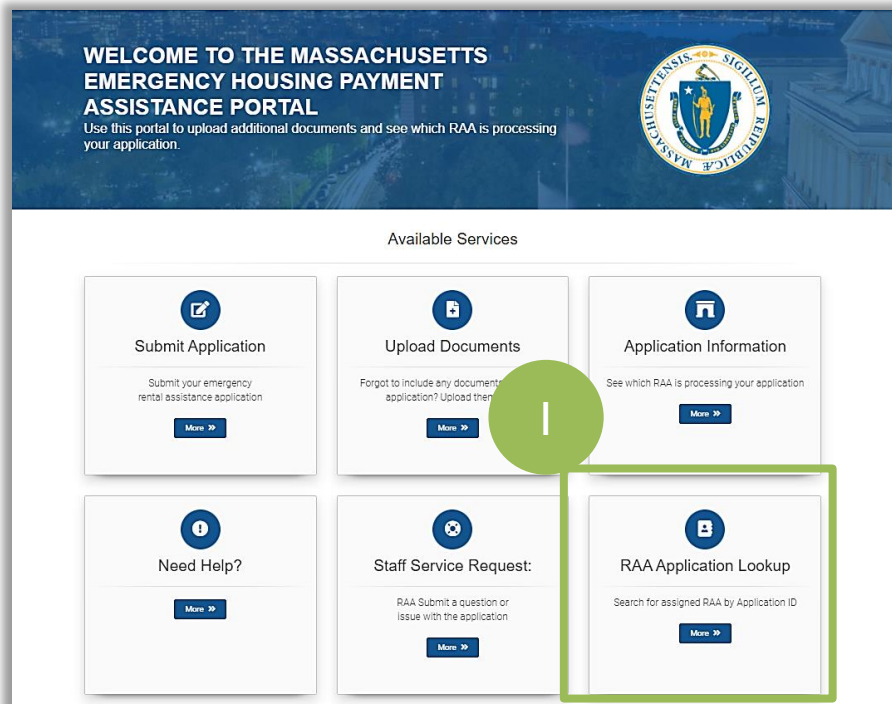
Submit

RAA APPLICATION LOOKUP



RAA staff who need to assist applicants to locate their application will use the following tool to search

1. Users will first click the “RAA Application Lookup” icon via the portal
2. Then the user will complete the search form with the known information
 - Including detail will assist in finding the application more quickly





VERIFICATION

SAVE TIME – CHECK IF YOUR ASSIGNED APP IS A POSSIBLE DUPLICATE



ME10146

	NMA Verifications	
Description	Verified	Results
Applicant Name		Unique Test-NWHS
Address		48 Spring St Hanson Massachusetts 02341
MAK	Yes	3373285249
BMAK	Yes	
Dup in Central based on same address	Yes	NWHS Unique Test-NWHS
Dup in Central based on same SSN	Yes	
Dup in SHERA based on same address	Yes	
Dup in SHERA based on same SSN	Yes	
DTA Mass Health Submitted	Submitted	Available once result received in a results PDF
RAA		NWHS

The left column **Description** provides a brief description of the item which is being assessed.

The middle column **Verified** indicates the items which have been duplication or income checked.

The right column **Results** indicates the outcome of the verification checks

A blank field indicates that there is no item identified as a duplicate

The details in this field will direct the case manager where the duplicate may exist

MASSHEALTH/DTA VERIFICATION



The following show examples of the MassHealth/DTA verification results.

1. There is neither a DTA nor MH match found to verify the applicant
2. The results show that the applicant is MH verified
3. The results show that the applicant is DTA Verified

MH/DTA verifications are taking longer; DHCD is working on a resolution. If it's been over 5 days, let your Readiness Coordinator know

1

Agency	Date of Report	File Number	Date of RAFT Application
NMA	6 Aug 2021	FILE_33	5 Aug 2021
Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	Unique ID
			MEN10984
DTA Verified	Start Date DTA	MH Verified	Start Date MH
No		No	
Aid Cat	Program Type MH		

2

Agency	Date of Report	File Number	Date of RAFT Application
NMA	23 Jul 2021	FILE_24	22 Jul 2021
Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	Unique ID
			MEN10056
DTA Verified	Start Date DTA	MH Verified	Start Date MH
No		Yes	18 Jun 2019
Aid Cat	Program Type MH		
6	STANDARD		

3

Agency	Date of Report	File Number	Date of RAFT Application
NMA	23 Jul 2021	FILE 24	23 Jul 2021
Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth	Unique ID
			MEN10126
DTA Verified	Start Date DTA	MH Verified	Start Date MH
Yes	7 Apr 2020		
Aid Cat	Program Type MH		



QUESTIONS



PROCESS UPDATES

NEW: CENTRAL APP NO LONGER REQUESTING INCOME DOCS



Few applicants need to submit income docs because they are receiving MH/DTA. Central App is finding **85%** of applicants to be receiving MH/DTA (and increasing).



Later this month, Central App will no longer request income documents because it is an unnecessary barrier for applicants.

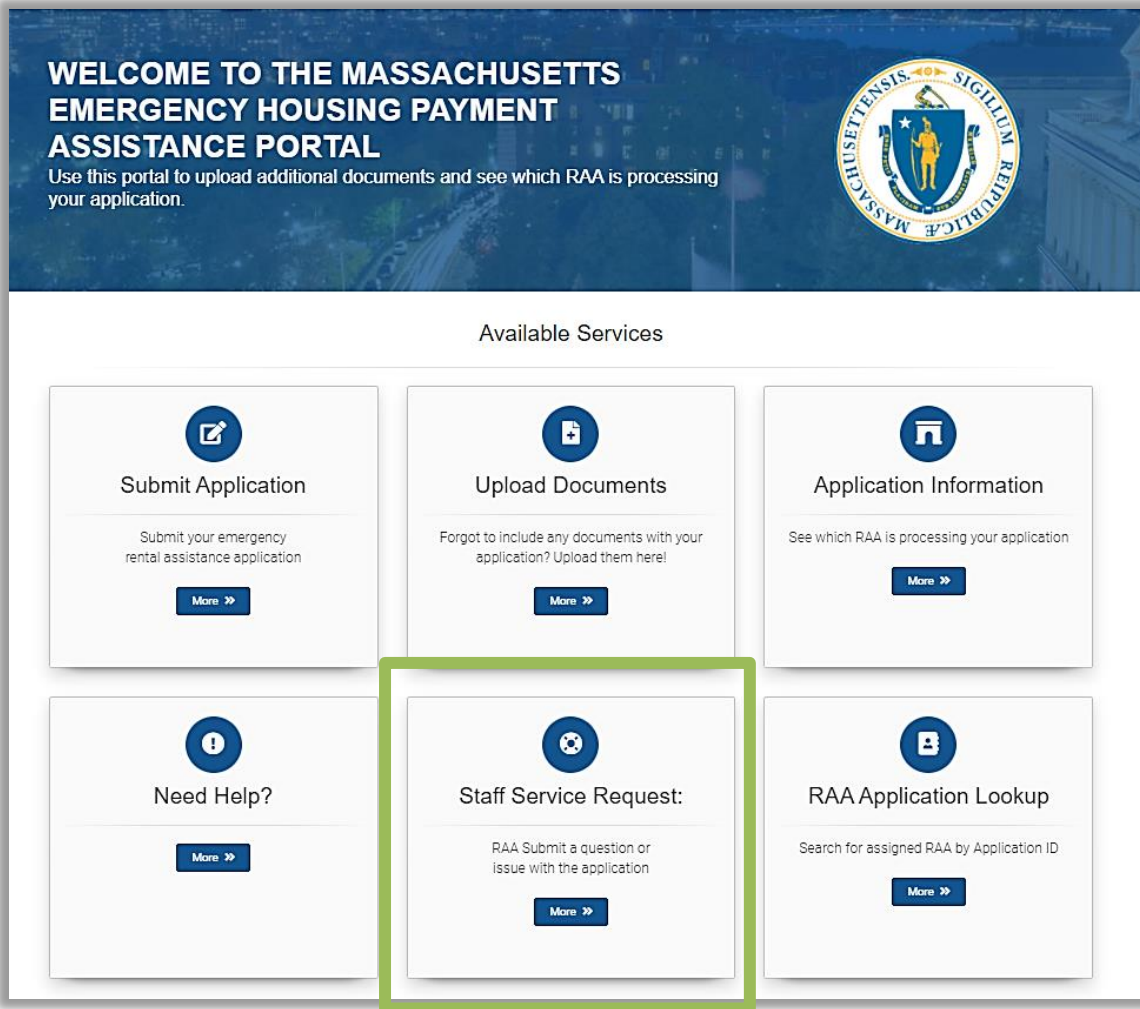
There is no change to income verification policy; only what the Central App requests from applicants initially.



Advocates submitting application on behalf of an applicant can electronically sign on the applicant's behalf



RAAs who are submitting paper applications can electronically sign as advocates do. Staff must also make sure to upload a PDF of the paper application with the client's signature



RAA staff must submit a staff service request ticket on the portal to ensure that staff applications submitted are rerouted to the RAP Center to avoid a conflict of interest

Upcoming enhancement:

Soon, there will be a question on the application asking if applicants work for an RAA. This will route RAA staff applications to the RAP Center.

STAFF APPLICATION – SERVICE REQUEST



For Staff applications, users will click the “Staff Service Request” tile and then complete a form with details of the need to reroute the staff application.

WELCOME TO THE MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY HOUSING PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PORTAL
Use this portal to upload additional documents and see which RAA is processing your application.

Available Services

 Submit Application Submit your emergency rental assistance application More >>	 Upload Documents Forgot to include any documents with your application? Upload them here! More >>	 Application Information See which RAA is processing your application More >>
 Need Help? More >>	 Staff Service Request: RAA Submit a question or issue with the application More >>	 RAA Application Lookup Search for assigned RAA by Application ID More >>

Home >> View >> service request raa Management Section

Service Request RAA

RAA

Staff Name: Kaley Matchett Staff Email: kaley.matchett@accenture.com

Application ID

Name *
First Last

Use Applicant or Owner Name

Phone Email

Inquiry Type: Check Status What does this affect?: Application Sensitivity: Normal - 2 Business Days

Please explain the inquiry/request

[Submit](#)

When clients contact you for help, be sure gather the following information:

- ✓ Client name
- ✓ Application ID
- ✓ Details of the concern
- ✓ Screenshots, *when possible*



DOCUPHASE NEW APPLICATIONS



To identify all new applications in DocuPhase, search using the following criteria:

- **RAA:** *RAA Name*
- **Document description:** “Application”
- **Document date:** Yesterday’s date (if weekend, include Sat/Sun too)
- **Location Ref:** “Cognito”

This will show all new applications from prior days. These can be input into other tools if needed (e.g. SMC CMS, DocuWare, etc.)

The screenshot shows the DocuPhase search interface. The top navigation bar includes the DocuPhase logo, a 'SEARCH' button, and a 'Global Search' input field. Below the navigation bar, the 'APPLICATION:' dropdown is set to 'MASS Central Test'. A 'Search' button is highlighted with a green box. The search criteria are as follows:

- RAA: LHAND
- Applicant ID: (empty)
- First Name: (empty)
- Last Name: (empty)
- Initial: (empty)
- Document Description: Application (highlighted with a green box)
- Document Status: -choose- (dropdown)
- Document Date: 09/21/2021 To: 09/21/2021 (highlighted with a green box)
- Member Name: (empty)
- Location Ref: Cognito (highlighted with a green box)
- Portal Confirmation: (empty)
- Split Required: -choose- (dropdown)
- Entry Number: (empty) To: (empty)
- FileImportID: (empty)
- SP ID: (empty)

At the bottom, the footer indicates 'Powered By DocuPhase' and 'Logged In As: Adam Schaffer'.

DOCUPHASE – UPLOADS FROM PORTAL



To Identify all new Portal uploaded documents in DocuPhase, search using the following criteria:

- **RAA:** *RAA Name*
- **Document date:** Yesterday's date (if weekend, include Sat/Sun too)
- **Location Ref:** "Portal"

The screenshot shows the DocuPhase search interface. The top navigation bar includes the DocuPhase logo, a 'SEARCH' button, and a 'Global Search' input field. Below the navigation bar, the 'APPLICATION' dropdown is set to 'MASS Central Test'. A 'Search' button is highlighted with a green box. The search criteria are as follows:

- RAA:** LHAND
- Applicant ID:** (empty)
- First Name:** (empty)
- Last Name:** (empty)
- Initial:** (empty)
- Document Description:** Application
- Document Status:** -choose-
- Document Date:** 09/21/2021 To: 09/21/2021
- Member Name:** (empty)
- Location Ref:** Cognitd
- Portal Confirmation:** (empty)
- Split Required:** -choose-
- Entry Number:** (empty) To: (empty)
- FileImportID:** (empty)
- SP ID:** (empty)

At the bottom of the interface, it says 'Powered By DocuPhase' and 'Logged In As: Adam Schaffer'.



KNOWN ISSUES AND ENHANCEMENTS

SHAREPOINT SPECIFIC DEFECTS



The following are known defects associated with SharePoint that the Central App Team is addressing. Please continue to log issues via RAA Portal Service Requests as they occur.



Report Information Missing

Daily data reports on SharePoint or OneDrive may be missing applicant data (or it may be delayed) for some applicants.



Duplicate Folders

In some instances, application folders may be duplicated in SharePoint. There will be more than one parent folder with the same application number and nearly identical names. These folders will contain different documents for the same applicant.



Application Documents Missing / Delayed

Some applicants may have missing documents such as the Application, Verifications, Document Uploads, etc. In some cases, if documents are missing in SharePoint, they may still be viewed in DocuPhase.



Prepopulated SharePoint Columns

For RAAs leveraging SharePoint, the main directory with applicant files contains columns with pre-populated information such as landlord email, phone, type of application, etc. Sometimes these columns may have missing information (or it may be delayed).



For RAAs using SharePoint to access files associated with the Central Application, **DO NOT CHANGE OR RENAME** columns or other settings within SharePoint.

If changes are desired, speak with the DHCD team first.

CENTRAL APP DEFECTS & ENHANCEMENTS STATUS



- *Sampling* of key items:
 - ✓ **Resolved**: Missing W-9/Ownership upload on Central App
 - ✓ **Resolved**: Brief Portal outage
 - ✓ **Resolved**: Added towns, villages to improve routing
 - **New This Week**: New, clearer COVID question
 - **New This Week**: Use DOB or zip (currently just zip) + Application ID to upload docs
 - **In progress**: Automated MH/DTA checks and checking all HH members
 - **In progress**: Route staff apps to RAP Center
 - **In progress**: Quick eligibility checker
 - **Future**: Texting confirmations to applicants
 - **Future**: Cease requesting income docs on Central App
 - **Future**: ACH and TIN verification
 - ❖ **Not pursuing**: Save and resume functionality

UPDATED CENTRAL APP QUESTION – COVID-19 IMPACT



- DHCD is rewriting the Central App question to allow all applicants (who are otherwise eligible) to use ERA1 or ERA2 *instead of RAFT*

Many households in Massachusetts have been financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please tell us what challenges you have faced since the pandemic started in March of 2020. You can check more than one box.

I, or someone in my household...

- ☐ Lost a job
- ☐ Collected unemployment benefits
- ☐ Had less income than usual (lower pay, fewer hours, or fewer clients if self-employed)
- ☐ Had to miss work, or stop working, or work fewer hours due to a health or medical need
- ☐ Had to miss work, or stop working, to take care of someone with health or medical needs
- ☐ Had to miss work, or stop working, or work fewer hours because my child's school or daycare was closed, or because my child had online school
- ☐ Had a roommate or household member move out, stop paying rent, or die, leaving me with higher housing costs
- ☐ Had higher bills than usual (for example, medical bills, transportation costs, childcare costs, funeral costs, rent, utilities, etc.)
- ☐ Had income that was too low to pay for basic household expenses (for example, food, clothing, rent, utilities, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- ☐ Other financial problem (please explain)

COVID-19 IMPACT ADDENDUM



- RAAs will use this new form to document a COVID impact for households who applied before the new question was live on the Central App
- If the RAA knows that the household experienced one or more of these situations, they are eligible for ERAP 1 and/or ERAP 2
- The form should be completed by the RAA and kept as part of the client file in case of a future audit

COVID-19 Impact Addendum

To be used with applications where the household inadvertently has not certified to an COVID impact (direct or indirect) on their application, and follow-up contact was made with the applicant (phone, email, text, or in person) and/or there was a review of the application materials and the applicant was found to have experienced a financial hardship due to or during COVID.

Applicant Name: _____

Prompt for discussion with applicant: "Many households in Massachusetts have been financially affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please tell us what challenges you have faced since the pandemic started in March of 2020." Check all that apply to the household. This serves as confirmation that the household may use ERAP 1 or ERAP 2 (if otherwise eligible).

I, or someone in my household...

- ☐ Lost a job
- ☐ Collected unemployment benefits
- ☐ Had less income than usual (lower pay, fewer hours, or fewer clients if self-employed)
- ☐ Had to miss work, or stop working, or work fewer hours due to a health or medical need
- ☐ Had to miss work, or stop working, to take care of someone with health or medical needs
- ☐ Had to miss work, or stop working, or work fewer hours because my child's school or daycare was closed, or because my child had online school
- ☐ Had a roommate or household member move out, stop paying rent, or die, leaving me with higher housing costs
- ☐ Had higher bills than usual (for example, medical bills, transportation costs, childcare costs, funeral costs, rent, utilities, etc.)
- ☐ Had income that was too low to pay for basic household expenses (for example, food, clothing, rent, utilities, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- ☐ Other financial problem (please explain) _____

Staff Name: _____ Date: _____



SUPPORT

SUPPORT STRUCTURE OVERVIEW



Staff should continue to leverage existing resources for policy, process, and non-Central App technology questions. Central App technology questions during the first four weeks of go live can be escalated directly to the Central App team via supervisors and the Issues and Enhancements Log.



RAA Resource Portal

Leverage existing resources in RAA Portal before escalating questions and issues



Policy, Process, and non-Central App Questions

Escalate questions and concerns to supervisors

- Policy questions can be routed to RAA support email
- Process questions will be addressed by RAA leadership
- Technical questions may be related to HAPPY or other case management tools



Central App Technical Questions

Short Term (Go Live – 4 Weeks Post)

Submit RAA Portal Staff Service requests for:

- Access requests
- Application transfers (i.e. conflict of interest apps)

Escalate issues to supervisors who will:

- Log issues / questions in Issues and Enhancements tracker
- Discuss in CA support calls

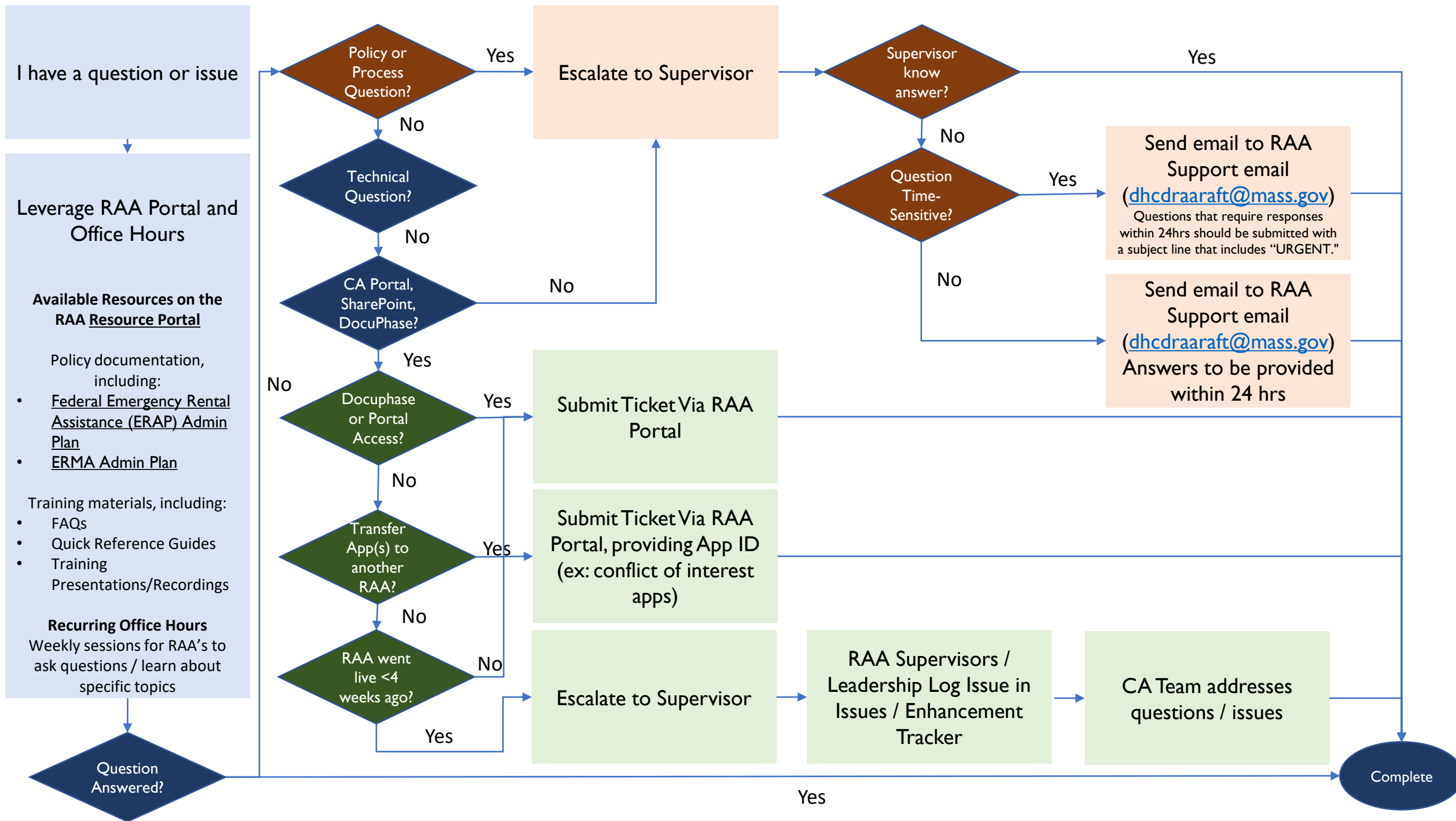
Long Term (After 4 Weeks Post Go Live)

Submit RAA Portal Staff Service requests for:

- Access requests
- Application transfers (i.e. conflict of interest apps)

Supervisors and RAA leadership may still escalate issues to DHCD for issues that stop or severely impact application processing – more details forthcoming

GO LIVE SUPPORT





QUESTIONS



RESOURCES

1

Portal:

The training presentation from today, as well as helpful job aids, can be found under the Central App Section on the Portal: [RAA Resource Portal](#)

RAA FAQs

SharePoint User Guide

DocuPhase User Guide

How to Close a Cognito Form for RAAs

Portal Guide for Applicants

Central App User Guide for Applicants

2

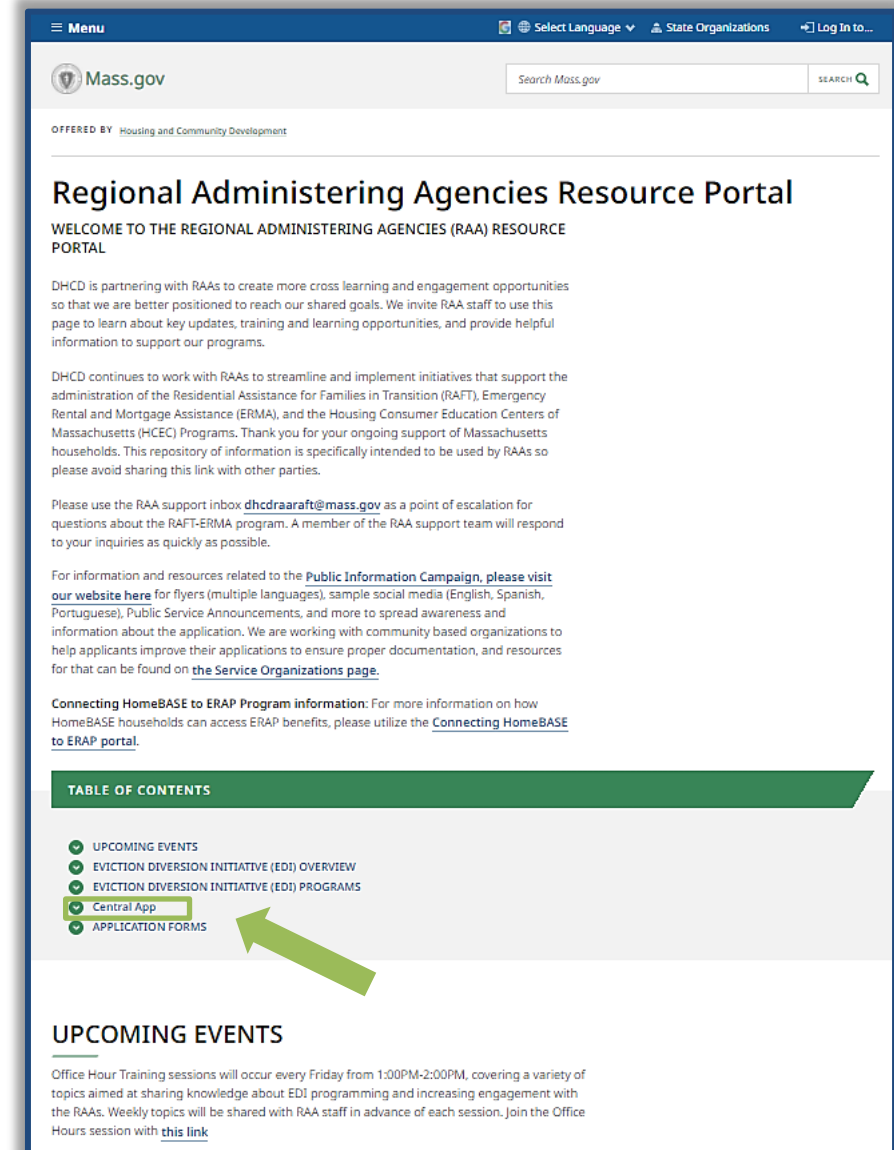
Email your Questions:

You should continue to reach out to your direct supervisor for program questions.

3

Office Hours

The office hours sessions will continue to be offered as a resource to ask questions.



Menu Select Language State Organizations Log In...

Mass.gov Search Mass.gov

OFFERED BY Housing and Community Development

Regional Administering Agencies Resource Portal

WELCOME TO THE REGIONAL ADMINISTERING AGENCIES (RAA) RESOURCE PORTAL

DHCD is partnering with RAAs to create more cross learning and engagement opportunities so that we are better positioned to reach our shared goals. We invite RAA staff to use this page to learn about key updates, training and learning opportunities, and provide helpful information to support our programs.

DHCD continues to work with RAAs to streamline and implement initiatives that support the administration of the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA), and the Housing Consumer Education Centers of Massachusetts (HCEC) Programs. Thank you for your ongoing support of Massachusetts households. This repository of information is specifically intended to be used by RAAs so please avoid sharing this link with other parties.

Please use the RAA support inbox dhcdraaft@mass.gov as a point of escalation for questions about the RAFT-ERMA program. A member of the RAA support team will respond to your inquiries as quickly as possible.

For information and resources related to the [Public Information Campaign](#), please visit [our website here](#) for flyers (multiple languages), sample social media (English, Spanish, Portuguese), Public Service Announcements, and more to spread awareness and information about the application. We are working with community based organizations to help applicants improve their applications to ensure proper documentation, and resources for that can be found on [the Service Organizations page](#).

Connecting HomeBASE to ERAP Program information: For more information on how HomeBASE households can access ERAP benefits, please utilize the [Connecting HomeBASE to ERAP portal](#).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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- EVICTON DIVERSION INITIATIVE (EDI) OVERVIEW
- EVICTON DIVERSION INITIATIVE (EDI) PROGRAMS
- Central App
- APPLICATION FORMS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Office Hour Training sessions will occur every Friday from 1:00PM-2:00PM, covering a variety of topics aimed at sharing knowledge about EDI programming and increasing engagement with the RAAs. Weekly topics will be shared with RAA staff in advance of each session. Join the Office Hours session with [this link](#)



THANK YOU!