



Community Mediation

RAA Office Hours

March 11, 2022

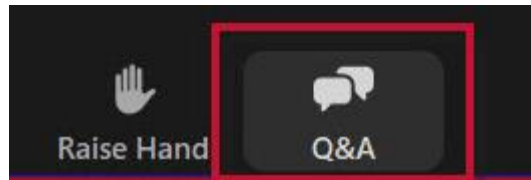


WELCOME

Asking Questions

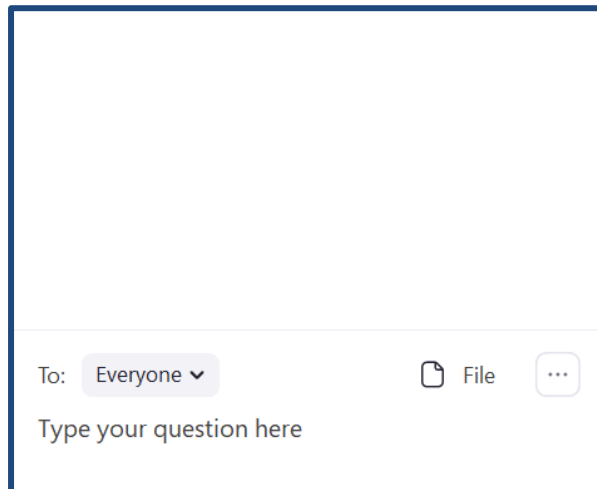
We will be monitoring the Q&A for questions

1



Click “Q&A” to submit a question (or “Raise Hand” to share a verbal question at designated breaks)

2



Enter your question into the “Q&A” box

We will follow up with answers to any questions that we don’t get to during the session

THIS CALL IS BEING RECORDED



Purpose



Discuss **community mediation** and provide reminders about situations in which RAAs should make **referrals**

Goal



Provide RAA staff with **guidance and continued support** related to ERAP, RAFT, and other EDI programs



Our Journey Today

60 MINUTES



Welcome, Goals, & Objectives

5 mins



Community Mediation

40 mins



Questions & Answers

15 mins



Support & Resources



COMMUNITY MEDIATION

WHAT IS COMMUNITY MEDIATION?



- Confidential process where a neutral, trained mediator helps people resolve differences based on what is important to them
- Part of the Eviction Diversion Initiative under the title “Housing Mediation Program” (HMP)
 - Website: <https://www.resolutionma.org/housing>
- Key features:
 - Pursuit of mutually agreeable solutions
 - Informed consent
- Benefits include:
 - Agreements reached collaboratively are more adhered to
 - Gives parties a chance to speak and be heard
 - Allows for creative, flexible solutions

EXAMPLE I COMMUNITY MEDIATION



A tenant received RAFT funds and decided to use them to move to a different apartment. The former landlord did not receive any payments toward the tenant's \$9,000 in accumulated arrears. The landlord was thinking about bringing the matter to court, but through mediation the tenant agreed to start paying the landlord little by little as soon as the tenant finished their work program and secured employment.

The parties were able to avoid court.



EXAMPLE 2 COMMUNITY MEDIATION



A tenant was in District Court for a non-payment summary process action brought by the landlord. The tenant had had to quit his truck driving job to care for his special-needs children at home due to his spouse's challenges with substance abuse.

His arrears soon reached over \$17,000. HMP staff were able to connect this tenant with resources which resulted in receipt of \$12,000 of rental assistance and the ability for him to find a new apartment. Critically, they also mediated a monthly payment plan with the prior landlord to continue bringing down the balance of the previous arrearage. This case lasted three months from start to finish.



HMP OUTCOMES



"Our mediator went above and beyond her duty with her dedication to assist both parties towards an amicable resolution. Through mediation, we were able to expedite the process to the satisfaction of both parties. A win-win outcome." – Landlord and Tenant

Through January 2022:

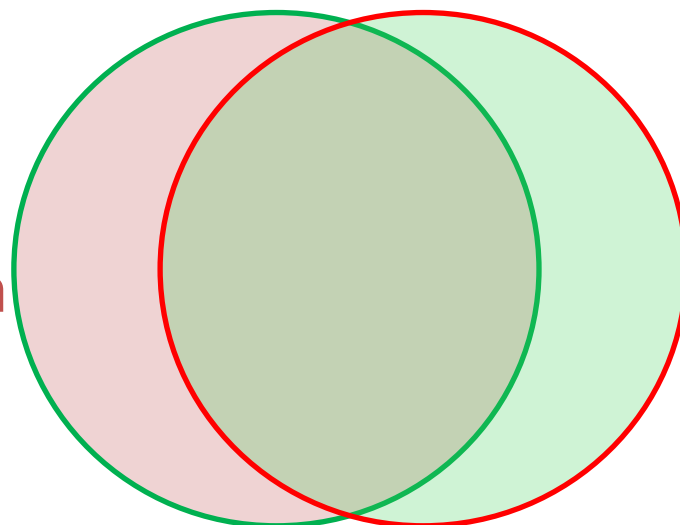
- 331 cases completed
- 80% reached full or partial agreement
- 66% resulted in tenancy preservation
- 98% of participants surveyed felt the outcome was fair
- 60% of participants surveyed felt that mediation helped them be open to alternative solutions



"Without [mediation] I would have been lost.... [Mediation] ensures that everyone is on the same level. They take the time to explain the process and make sure everyone understands what the next steps will be. They kept both party's best interest in mind and came up with a workable and sustainable solution. I will be forever thankful for the service I received." - Tenant

	Mediation	DHCD Legal Aid
Income limit	None	<200% FPL
Affiliation	Neutral	Tenant or landlord
Engagement	Any stage of conflict; pre-Notice to Quit or post-trial	Notice to Quit through Tier I
Spare capacity	Ample	Limited

**Cases suited
for mediation**



**Cases suited for
legal aid**



- Tenant owes more than RAFT or ERAP can cover
- Landlord and tenant disagree on the amount of rent owed
- Landlord and tenant are in conflict with each other
- Applicant has been denied RAFT or ERAP funds
- Applicant has not been denied RAFT or ERAP funds, but the landlord is not responsive to ongoing communication from the RAA

HCEC CONTACTS



Job aid: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/raft-community-mediation-services-reference-guide/download>

RAA	HCEC Resource	Contact Info
Berkshire Housing Development Corporation	Noah Barnes	noahb@bcrha.com
Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance	Antoinette Cabral	acabral@cmhaonline.org 508-791-7265 ext. 131
Community Teamwork, Inc.	Maria Mendes	MMendes@commteam.org
Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority	Jamie Jonassen	jjonassen@fcrhra.org 413-863-7981
Housing Assistance Corporation	Emily Harris	EHarris@haconcapecod.org
Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development	Ernesto Ayala	eayala@lhand.org 339-883-2332
Metro Housing Boston	Joana Abs	Joana.abs@metrohousingboston.org 617-925-0111
NeighborWorks Housing Solutions	Victoria Worth	vworth@nhsmass.org 781-422-4259
RCAP Solutions	Yvette Sanchez	ysanchez@rcapsolutions.org 978-630-6631
South Middlesex Opportunity Council	Heather Silva	hsilva@smoc.org 508-232-1346
Way Finders	Jennifer Santos	jsantos@wayfinders.org 413-233-1913

1. Have you made any referrals for community mediation?
2. What would help mediation or the mediation referral process work better?
3. Do you have any mediation client success stories to share?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! *MENTI LIVE POLLS*



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How to Participate

1. Go to **Menti.com** on your smartphone or computer browser.
2. Enter the code **7635 5638** into the field shown to the right



Please enter the code

12 34 56

Submit

The code is found on the screen in front of you



QUESTIONS



SUPPORT & RESOURCES

1

RAA Resource Portal

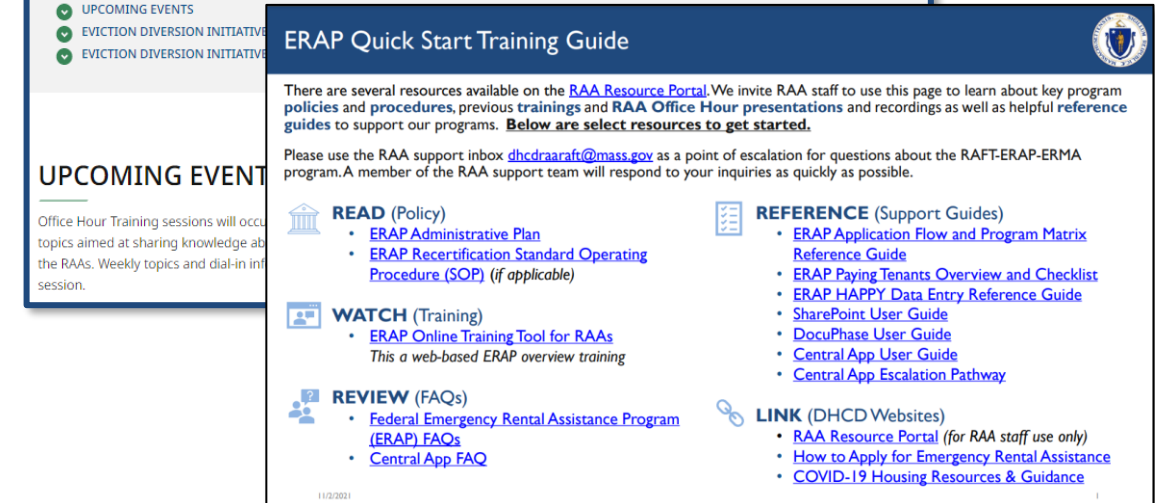
Central resource to provide RAA staff with key updates, training and learning opportunities, and helpful information to support programs

- [ERAP Quick Start Training Guide](#)

2

FAQs

Comprehensive list of FAQs spanning a variety of topics





Further Questions

Direct questions to your supervisor and then contact the **RAA** support inbox (dhcdraaraft@mass.gov) as a point of escalations for questions. A member of the **RAA Support Team** will respond.

- ***Time-sensitive Questions:*** Critical questions that require responses within 24hrs should be submitted with a subject line that includes “**URGENT.**”
- *Example:* Tenant is facing imminent loss of housing (24 hours) and applicant does not necessarily fit guidelines.



Best Practice

Please **specify the program** that you are reaching out about to ensure that the DHCD RAA Support team is best positioned to provide policy guidance.

THANK YOU!

