



Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

DHCD Outreach Efforts

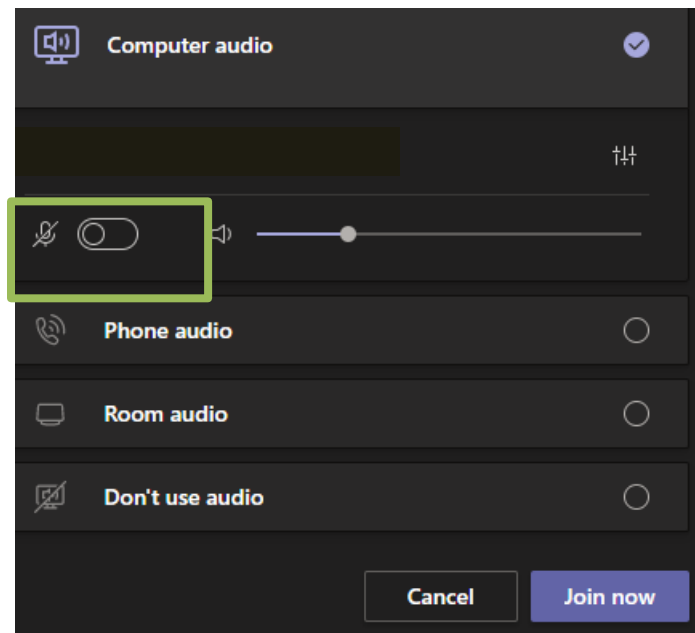
October 15, 2021



WELCOME

Please Mute

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

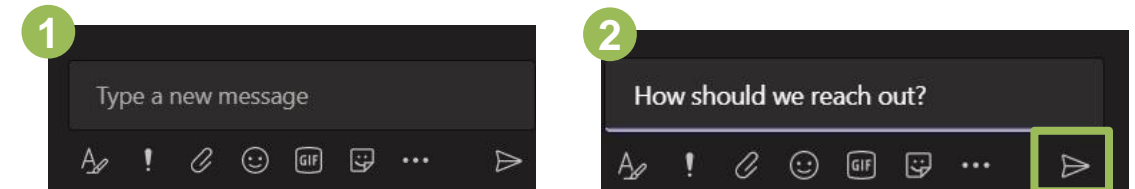


Engage During Meeting

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 throughout the session
- We will triage questions during designated checkpoints

THIS CALL IS BEING RECORDED





Our Journey Today

1 HOUR



Objective & Introduction

5 mins



DHCD Outreach Campaign Efforts



Questions

50 mins



Policy Reminder



Resources & Wrap Up

5 mins

Purpose



Overview of DHCD's latest outreach campaign to encourage eligible households to apply for emergency rental assistance

Goal



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



OUTREACH EFFORTS

Eviction Diversion Initiative (EDI): Focused Grassroots Outreach



- **DHCD has contracted with Archipelago Strategies Group (ASG) to conduct a 17-week long campaign of door-knocking in 235 census tracts in 22 municipalities across the Commonwealth.**
- **Campaign Goal:** Connect with eligible households that have not yet applied for emergency housing assistance, help them fill out and submit *complete* applications, so their applications can be processed by RAAs quickly and they can receive aid.
- **Communities targeted:** *Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Somerville, Springfield, and Worcester*
- DHCD selected communities and census tracts through a multi-criteria analysis:
 - # of cost burdened renters
 - # of racial/ethnic minority renters
 - # of renters employed in COVID-impacted industries
 - \$ amount of emergency housing assistance distributed

RAA's will start seeing Advocate applications with the following consistent information from ASG Call Center staff.

Advocate First Name: **ASG**

Advocate Last Name: **Agent #/ID**

Advocate Phone: **800-474-1822**

Advocate Email: **EDI@discoverasg.com**

Advocate Org: **ASG**

Advocate Consent Confirmation

- **ASG WILL** Check the box “Please check this box to confirm you have consent to submit this application on behalf of the applicant”
- **ASG WILL NOT** Check the box “Please check this box to confirm you have consent to communicate regarding this application on behalf of the applicant”

Advocate Information				
Advocate				
Name	Relationship	Language	Phone	Email
ASG Agent225	Advocate	Spanish	800-474-1822	EDI@discoverasg.com
Organization/Agency	Consent			
ASG	Submit			

EDI Focused Grassroots Outreach: Campaign Details and Timing



- ASG will run a **17-week-long** grassroots outreach campaign (with breaks for Thanksgiving & winter holidays).
- Door-knocking teams consist of ASG staff, local residents, and community-based organizations.
- Door knockers will refer households to ASG's multilingual **call center** for help submitting **complete applications** (i.e. submitted with all required tenant documentation) for emergency housing assistance (ERAP, RAFT, ERMA).
- Call center agents currently spending ~1 hour per application
 - Time for completion will likely decrease as agents grow more accustomed to app
- ASG launched its campaign last Friday, 10/8/21, with an expected end date of 1/31/22

EDI Focused Grassroots Outreach: Multilingual Media Campaign



- ASG Multi-lingual Marketing



EDI Focused Grassroots Outreach: Door-Knocking and Call Center



ASG Door-Knocking

- ASG subcontracts with 3 non-profit CBOs to implement door-knocking in Central MA (Worcester Interfaith Coalition), Western MA (COGIC Family Services, Inc.), and North Shore (Women Encouraging Empowerment, Inc.). Other regions will be covered by door-knockers that are ASG staff or contracted local residents.
- ASG engages volunteer CBO partners across the state, provides them with digital media toolkits and other materials on the EDI Focused Grassroots Outreach campaign
- CHAPA offering funding to CBO's engaged in rental assistance work, deadline of 11/1/21

ASG Call Center

- **Primary goal of submitting COMPLETE APPLICATIONS for emergency housing assistance through new Central Application portal.** Agents will be submitting applications as "Advocates" and noting their affiliation with ASG.
- Staffed with agents who speak English, Spanish, French, Portuguese; access to language line with translation/interpretation services.
- Completed applications from ASG will ideally have all required documentation *except* for W-9 and owner/landlord documents. RAAs will follow-up with landlords during processing to secure needed documentation.
- Current completion time ~1 hour/application, expected to speed up as campaign continues

Rent Reminder Text Messaging Program



GOALS

1. Remind ERAP recipients of benefit expiry;
2. Direct recipients still struggling with rent toward resources (new web resource portal & 2-1-1)

TARGET POPULATION

ERAP recipients who have reached the 18-month cap

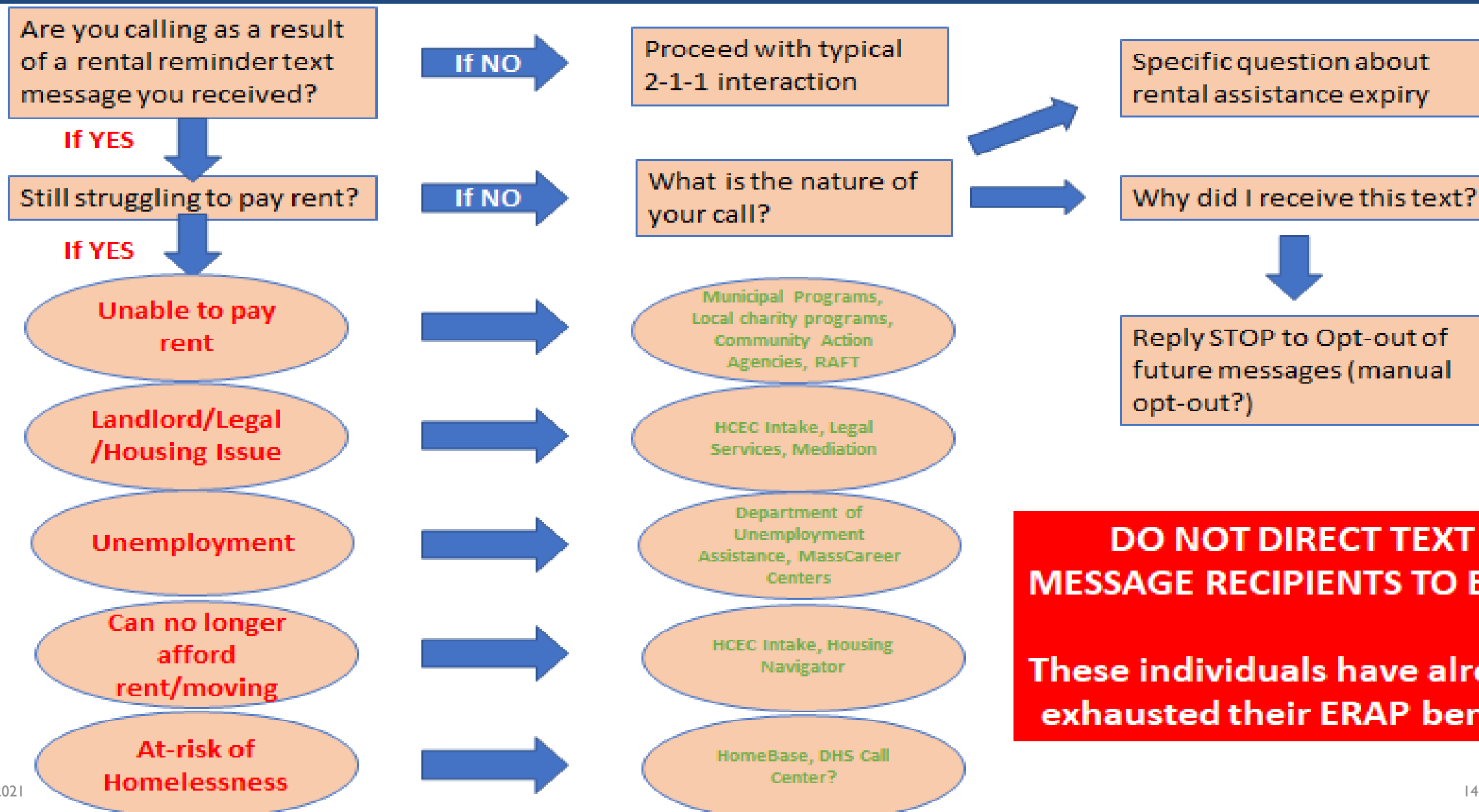
MESSAGES

1. **2 weeks before first rental payment is due** – *Mass.Gov: Your rental assistance benefit may be ending soon. If you are struggling to pay rent, please visit (website URL) or dial 2-1-1 for help.*
2. **1st of the Month** – *Mass.Gov: Your monthly rental assistance may have ended. If you cannot pay your rent this month, please contact your landlord to discuss a payment plan. Reply STOP to opt-out. (Will go out monthly until Opt-out)*

Preferred Language Support in Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole and Khmer

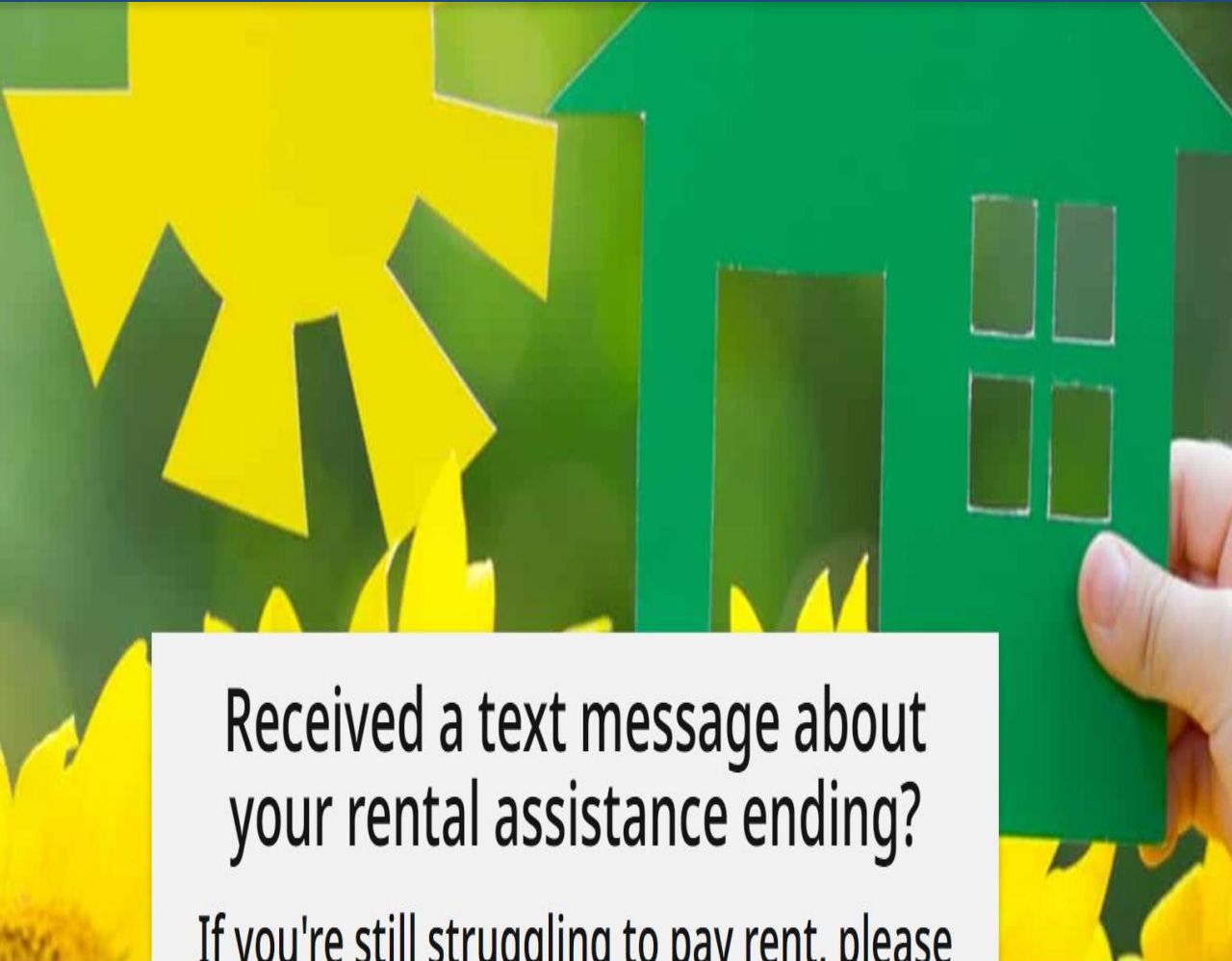
First text message will go out next week to ~900 ERAP recipients with November 1 benefit expiry

Text Messaging Resources Flow Chart



DO NOT DIRECT TEXT MESSAGE RECIPIENTS TO ERAP

These individuals have already exhausted their ERAP benefit



Received a text message about
your rental assistance ending?

If you're still struggling to pay rent, please
look below for resources to help.

Landlord / Legal / Housing Issue

HOUSING CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

COVID EVICTION LEGAL HELP PROJECT (CELHP)

MASSLEGALHELP

NEED HELP WITH AN EVICTION? LEARN MORE: HOUSING MEDIATION PROGRAM

Unemployed?

DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

MASSHIRE CAREER CENTERS



QUESTIONS



POLICY REMINDERS

REMINDER: COVID-19 IMPACT QUESTION & FORM



- DHCD added a new COVID Impact question to Central App on October 12th
- This allows all applicants (who are otherwise eligible) to use ERA1 or ERA2 *instead of RAFT*

Massachusetts Emergency Housing Payment Assistance Application

- ① Instructions ② Living Situation ③ **COVID-19** ④ Housing Crisis ⑤ Subsidized Housing ⑥ Applicant Information
⑦ Household Income ⑧ Request for Assistance ⑨ Owner Information ⑩ Your Required Documents
⑪ Application Certification and Contract

COVID-19

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 problems

Back

Next

REMINDER: COVID-19 IMPACT QUESTION & FORM



- RAAs should use the [COVID Impact Form](#) (linked on the RAA Resource Portal) to document a COVID impact for households who applied for assistance ***before*** the new COVID question was live on the Central App
- If the RAA knows that the household experienced one or more of the situations noted on the previous slide, they are eligible for ERAP 1 and/or ERAP 2
- The form should be completed by the RAA (i.e. a staff member should complete, *not* the client) and kept as part of the client file in case of a future audit



- On the [How to Apply for Rental Assistance Site](#) the Quick Eligibility Checker is now live!
 - Asks if applicant is on MassHealth or DTA, if not, asks questions about income

What you need

[How to apply](#)

[More info](#)

[Contact](#)

Check your eligibility using this tool:

Let's see if you might be eligible for Emergency Housing Payment Assistance.

This optional form will ask you a few questions to see if you might be eligible for Emergency Housing Payment Assistance.

It is not a guarantee of eligibility, and you must submit a complete application and documentation before receiving assistance. You don't have to fill this form out before applying.



[Switch account](#)



[Next](#)

[Clear form](#)



RESOURCES

1

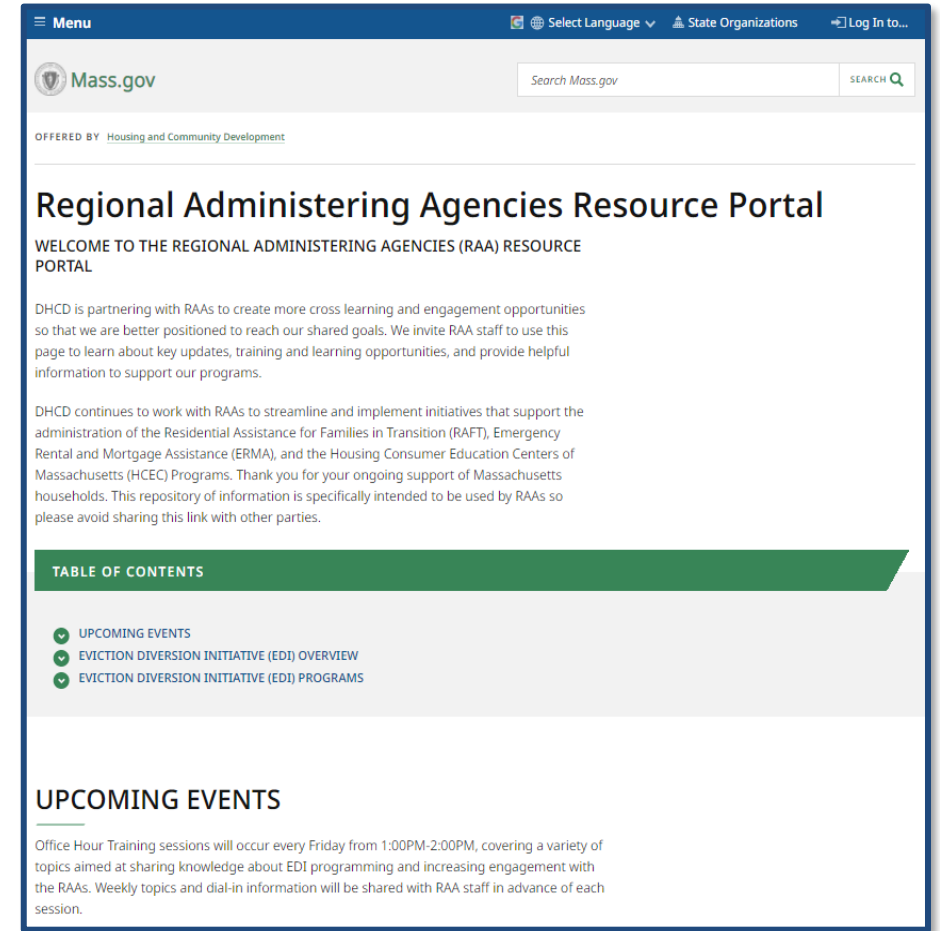
[RAA Resource Portal](#)

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

2

[FAQs](#)

Comprehensive list of FAQs spanning a variety of topics



The screenshot displays the 'Regional Administering Agencies Resource Portal' on the Mass.gov website. The page header includes a 'Menu' button, 'Select Language' dropdown, 'State Organizations' link, and a 'Log In to...' button. The main content area features the 'Mass.gov' logo, a search bar, and the text 'OFFERED BY Housing and Community Development'. The title 'Regional Administering Agencies Resource Portal' is prominently displayed, followed by a welcome message: 'WELCOME TO THE REGIONAL ADMINISTERING AGENCIES (RAA) RESOURCE PORTAL'. A paragraph explains that DHCD is partnering with RAAs to create cross-learning and engagement opportunities. Another paragraph states that DHCD continues to work with RAAs to streamline and implement initiatives supporting 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. A 'TABLE OF CONTENTS' section lists three items: 'UPCOMING EVENTS', 'EVICTION DIVERSION INITIATIVE (EDI) OVERVIEW', and 'EVICTION DIVERSION INITIATIVE (EDI) PROGRAMS'. The 'UPCOMING EVENTS' section is expanded, showing that Office Hour Training sessions occur every Friday from 1:00PM-2:00PM, covering topics aimed at sharing knowledge about EDI programming and increasing engagement with the RAAs.



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!

