



Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Overview & Q&A Session

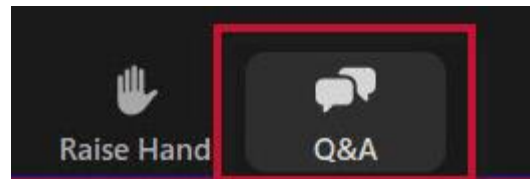
RAA Office Hours

July 15, 2022

Asking Questions

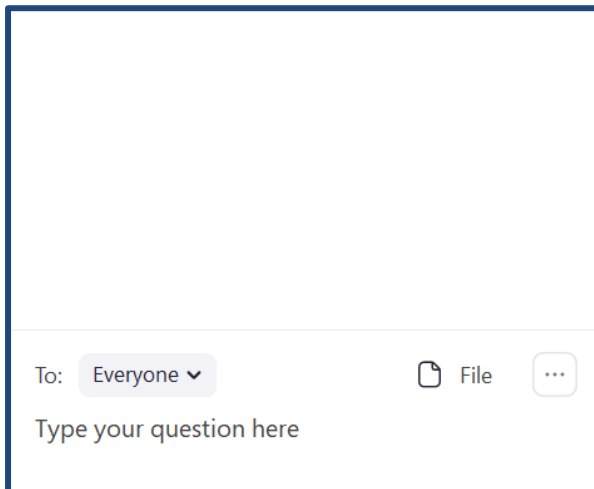
We will be monitoring the Q&A for questions

1



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

2

A screenshot of a Q&A submission form. It features a large white text area for entering a question. Below the text area, there is a 'To:' dropdown menu set to 'Everyone', a 'File' button with a document icon, and a three-dot menu button. At the bottom, there is a placeholder text 'Type your question here'.

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





WELCOME

MEET YOUR FACILITATORS



Amy Mullen



Jestina Walcott



Tanya Raymond



Natalie Goodman

Purpose



Discuss **RAFT policy overview** and **answer questions to continue to support community members** with administering RAFT

Goal



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

Our Journey Today

I HOUR



Welcome, Goals, & Objectives

5 mins



ERAP/RAFT Retrospective

30 mins



Menti Poll



Helpful Reminders | RAFT Policy



Questions



RAA Support & Resources

5 mins



ERAP/RAFT RETROSPECTIVE

INTERNAL TRACKING: RAFT, ERAP, SHERA, & ERMA Spending



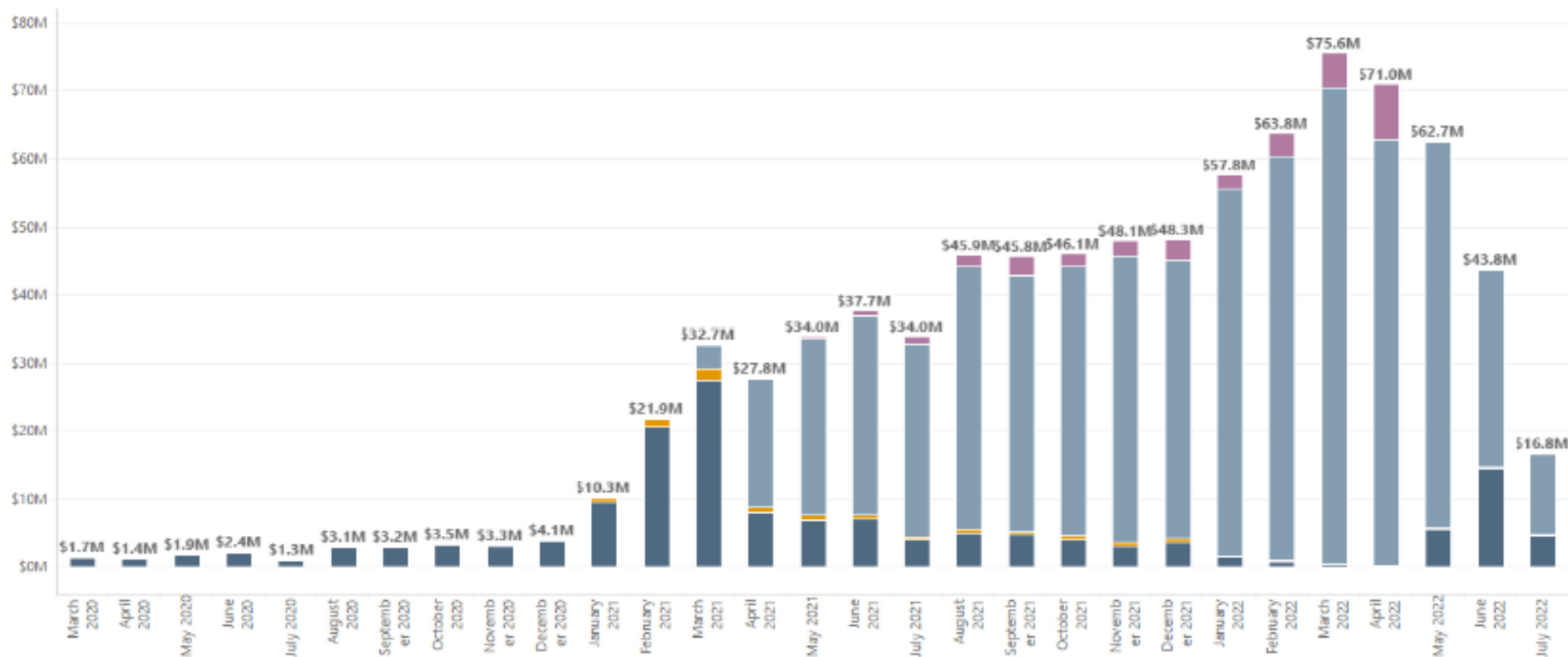
\$849.9M

Total Amount of Funds Distributed

* 8,626 households were assisted with \$40.3M of ERAP (formerly paid by RAFT) prior to official ERAP launch date.

Total Amount of Funds Distributed by Month

RAFT ERMA ERAP SHERA

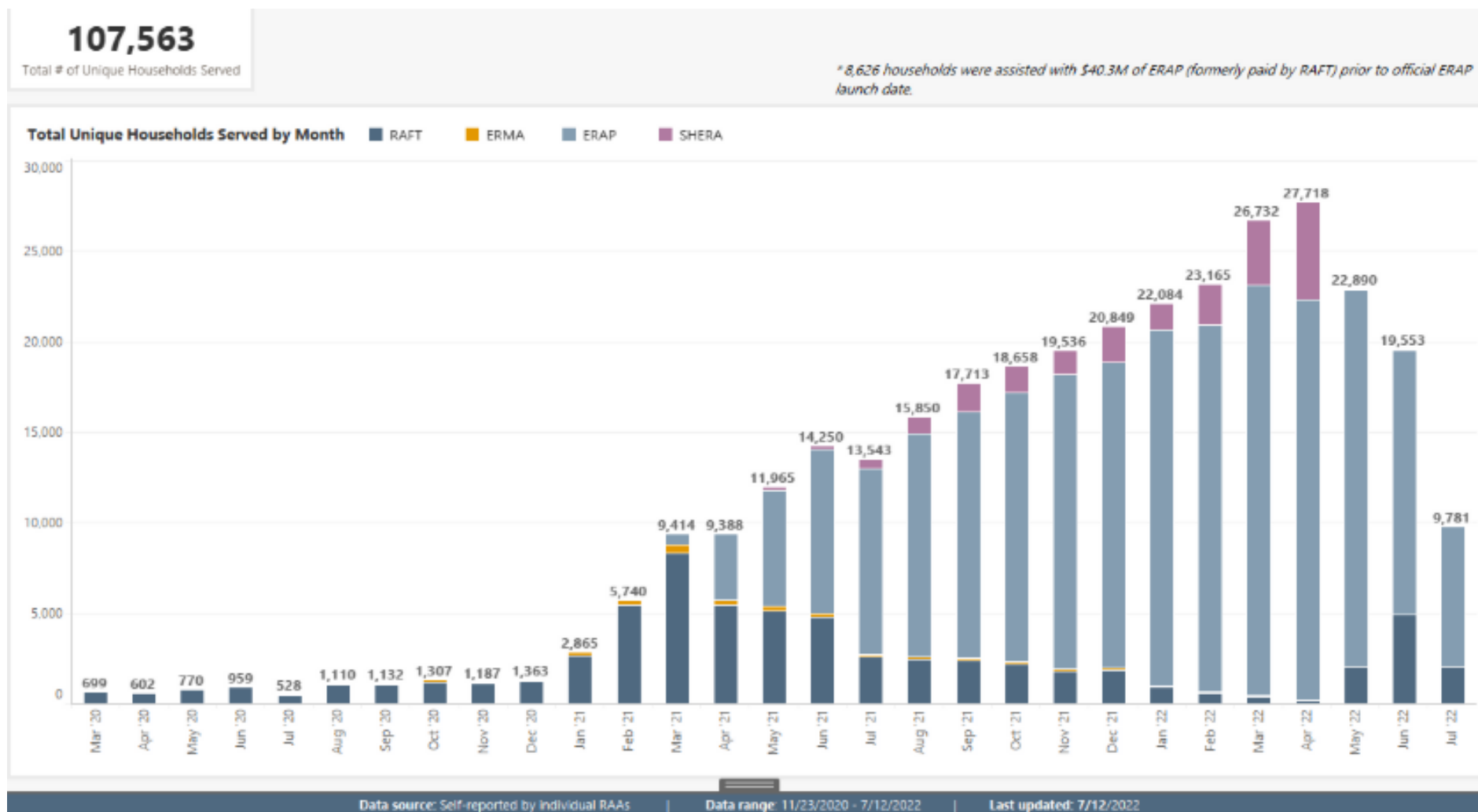


Data source: Self-reported by individual RAAs

Data range: 11/23/2020 - 7/12/22

Last updated: 7/12/22

INTERNAL TRACKING: RAFT, ERAP, SHERA, & ERMA Households Served



Note: Total # of Unique Households Served (top left) is deduplicated across all months. Total # of households served in a single month are unique to that month; however, some households may have received a payment for more than one month (stipends).

ERAP by the Numbers



Top 10 Cities Served (Dollars)

- Boston (\$121.6M)
- Springfield (\$37.6M)
- Lawrence (\$33.3M)
- Quincy (\$26.7M)
- Revere (\$21.4M)
- Worcester (\$18.3M)
- Braintree (\$16.4M)
- Brockton (\$14.8M)
- Lynn (\$14.6M)
- Holyoke (\$13.6M)

Top 10 Cities Served (Households)

- Boston (19,857)
- Springfield (6,106)
- Lawrence (2,775)
- Quincy (2,724)
- Worcester (2,440)
- Holyoke (2,436)
- Agawam (1,783)
- Braintree (1,761)
- Revere (1,738)
- Chicopee (1,537)

Total HH's served with ERAP:

65,493

Most unique HH's served with ERAP in a month (March-22):

22,651 HHs

Total HH's that received ERAP for **arrears**:

55,904
(\$353.7 M)

Total HH's that received ERAP for **stipends**:

45,846
(\$238.4 M)

Total HH's that received ERAP for **utilities**:

21,896
(\$27.1M)

Most ERAP funds distributed in a month (Mar-22):

\$69.9M



Reflecting on your work the past year with ERAP/RAFT, what are you most proud of?

How to Participate

1. Go to **Menti.com** on your smartphone or computer browser.
2. Enter the code **7153 7713** 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



RAFT POLICY REMINDERS



- Since July 1, 2022, households who already received the maximum ERAP benefit and reapply for additional assistance *can* be considered for RAFT
 - This applies to new applications, as well as applications already in the queue that have not been processed
 - Maximum ERAP benefit is 18 months of rental assistance or \$2500 of utility assistance
- As a reminder, households who are still eligible for ERAP and are seeking assistance beyond what ERAP can cover cannot use RAFT to supplement ERAP in the same award
 - These households may be awarded ERAP *only* (instead of a combination of ERAP and RAFT)

Since April 15, 2022, the RAFT stipend policy is as follows:

- Households may receive one (1) stipend equal to full monthly rent if they meet the following criteria:
 - Household selects “Future Rent” as an assistance need on the Central Application*
 - Household does **not** have an income-based rental subsidy
 - Payment of a stipend will not cause the household to exceed the maximum benefit limit
- Rental stipend should always equal one month’s rent, unless the household does not have enough funds left over before hitting the maximum RAFT benefit amount
 - In these cases, the household should receive the difference between the maximum RAFT benefit amount and the arrears/moving costs award

*Household may also receive one stipend if they communicate to the RAA/RAP Center that they need future rent assistance, even if they did not select that option on the application. This communication should be documented in the client file.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH INCOME-BASED RENTAL SUBSIDIES



Reminders regarding RAFT applicants with income-based rental subsidies (e.g. Section 8, MRVP, public housing, etc.):



Households with income-based rental subsidies *cannot* receive payment for more than 6 months of rent arrears

- If more than 6 months are owed, RAA should select the months when there was a demonstrated, eligible crisis and good cause



Households residing in subsidized housing must demonstrate good cause for nonpayment

- Hardship or increase in expenses would be considered good cause
- Good cause is required for assistance with arrears only, not other benefit types



Households in subsidized housing cannot receive a stipend via RAFT

- As a reminder, for RAFT first and last month's rent are *not* considered stipends or prospective rent. Thus, moving households with income-based rental subsidies can receive first, last, and security deposit with RAFT (*this differs from ERAP*)



Required verification includes:

- Current utility shut off notice;
- Verification from utility company that services are at risk of shut off;
- Proof service was disconnected already, *OR*;
- Proof utility assistance is needed to turn on service at new unit (if moving to new housing due to risk of homelessness)



The maximum RAFT benefit is the same regardless of benefit type, including utilities



RAFT covers the minimum amount required to prevent the shut off or restore service, i.e. typically 25% or 50% of past due balance



Applicants can still apply for and receive assistance with utility arrears if that is the only housing crisis



QUESTIONS

1

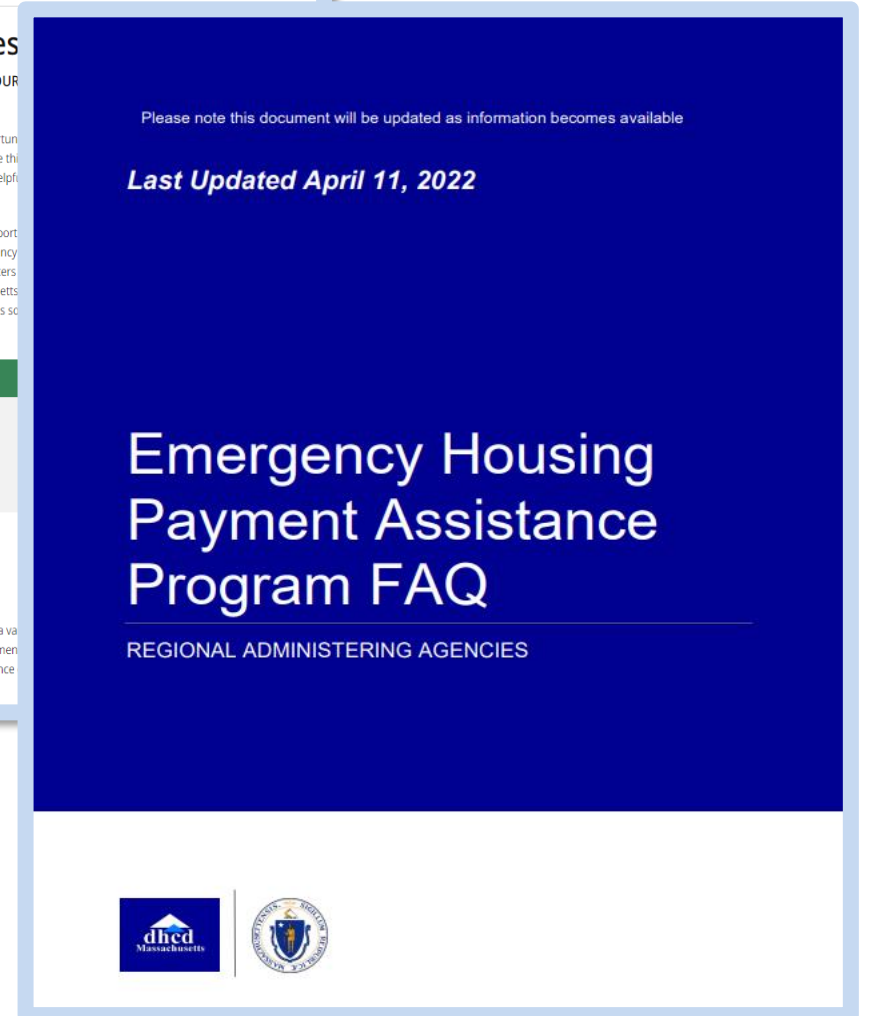
RAA Resource Portal

Link to central resource that provides RAA staff with key updates, training and learning opportunities, and helpful information to support programs

2

Frequently Asked Questions

Link to frequently asked questions that provide a policy overview and concise program guidance





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.**”



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!

