Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

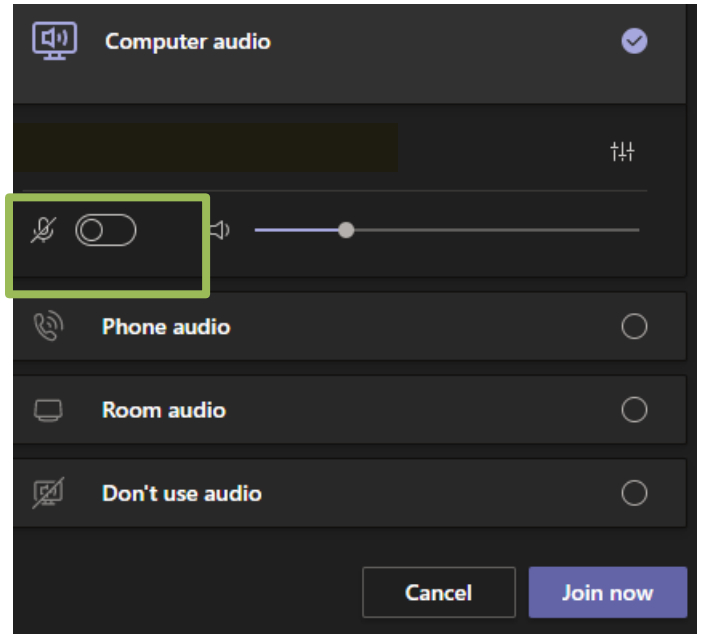
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

September 24, 2021

ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Please Mute

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

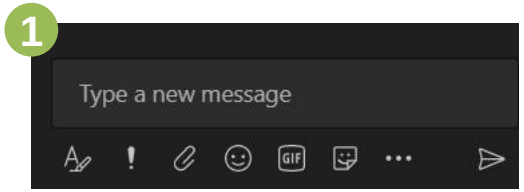


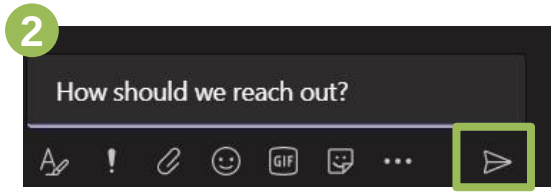
Engage During Meeting

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
Frequently Asked Questions: FAQs	30 mins
Central App Update	
Processing Goal Update	
Policy Update	
Questions	20 mins
Wrap Up	5 mins

TRAINING OBJECTIVE

Purpose

Review frequently asked questions and provide tips and best practices to ensure policy changes are being implemented efficiently and effectively

Goal

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

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Question # 1

Is an applicant eligible for rental or moving assistance if the applicant is currently renting a room in the same unit from a family member who owns the property?

There are no rules against renting from a family member, *but* RAAs should do their due diligence to confirm that the rental agreement is legitimate and documented.

Question # 2

Can ERAP be used by tenants to cover units with income-based rental subsidy? Is there a dollar limit on subsidized housing arrears and stipends for ERAP?

- Yes, ERAP can cover up to 18 months of arrears for the tenant-paid portion of rent in units with an income-based rental subsidy (e.g. Section 8 or MRVP)
- Remember that tenants with income-based rental subsidies are *not* eligible for any months of stipends, including first month's rent
- There is no dollar limit on assistance specific to those with income-based subsidies
  - The same restrictions outlined in the Admin Plan apply

Question # 3

If an applicant has received ERAP assistance in the past and has submitted a new application requesting additional assistance, should RAAs direct the applicant to recertify or reapply?

If an applicant who has previously received ERAP benefits is reapplying for additional assistance and meets the criteria for recertification, RAAs should accept their application and process it using the rules for recertification. However, if the applicant has not started another application, they should be directed to the Recertification Form.

Question # 4

Do first and last month's rent count as prospective rent or moving expenses?

First and last month's rent count as prospective rent. Therefore, they do count toward both the 3-month limit on stipends as well as the 18-month limit on total assistance.

Question # 5

Do you need a shutoff notice to provide utility assistance?

For **RAFT**, a shutoff notice **is required** since utility payments through RAFT can only be used to prevent a shutoff/resume service.

For **ERAP**, a shutoff notice **is not required**. You can cover any utility arrears the applicant has up to $2,500.

Question # 6

How can cases be approved that exceed $35,000? How about $50,000?

For cases above $35,000, contact Molly Butman; she will do a quick review and raise the limit in HAPPY, if appropriate

For cases above $50,000, submit the file to Compliance (Kathleen McNamara and Chhenlee Ly) via the Interchange for a full file review

Question # 7

Can applicants still use a paper application once their RAA goes live with the Central App?

Yes, a paper version of the Central App is available for those who need it. However, any paper apps that are submitted will have to be manually keyed in by RAA staff (through the Central App Portal).

While the paper app is available for those with no access to necessary technology, RAAs should strongly encourage applicants to apply online.

Question # 8

If an applicant indicates on their application that they have zero income, what additional documentation is required to verify this?

If an adult in the household has zero income, it may be self-attested in the application, as there is no way to substantiate a lack of income.

QUESTIONS

CENTRAL APP UPDATE

Central Application Release Plan (as of September 23)

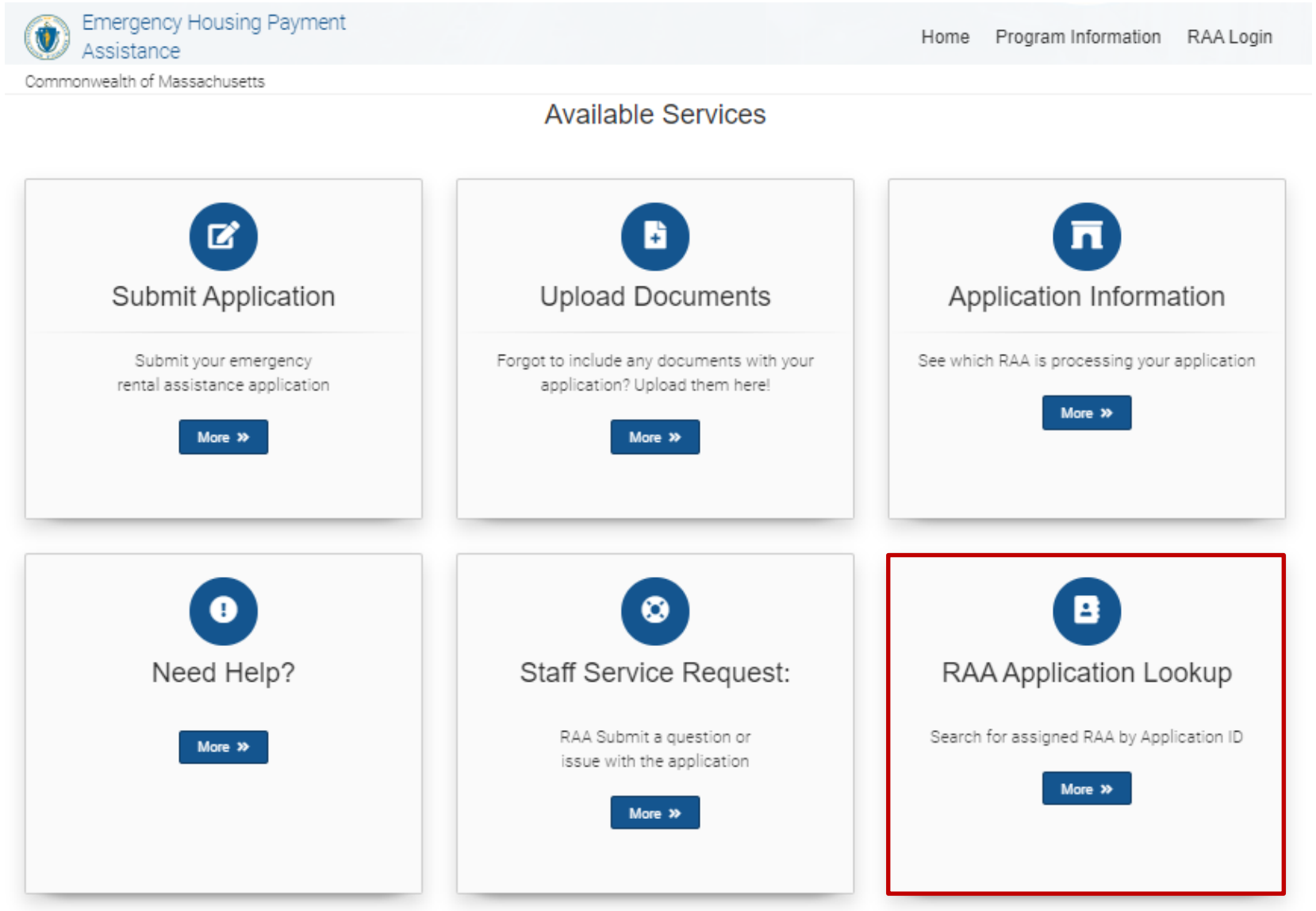
The pilot and Waves 1A – C are live and application processing is in progress. Remaining RAAs will go live in five waves through early October.

	Wave 0 - Pilot	Wave 1A	Wave 1B	Wave 1C	Wave 1D	Wave 2A	Wave 2B
RAA(s)	NWHS (SP)	SMOC (SP) Berkshire (DP)	Metro (SP)	CTI (SP)	HAC (SP)	Way Finders (DP) CMHA (SP) RCAP (SP)	LHAND (DP) Franklin (SP)**
Application Launch*	July 20	August 19	September 2	September 16	September 21	September 23	September 30**
RAA Go Live**	July 22	August 30 September 7	September 9	September 23	September 21	September 30	October 7

*Application available to public and routed to RAP Center; current application links will be changed to the Central Application links for RAA wave participants

** RAA begins receiving and processing

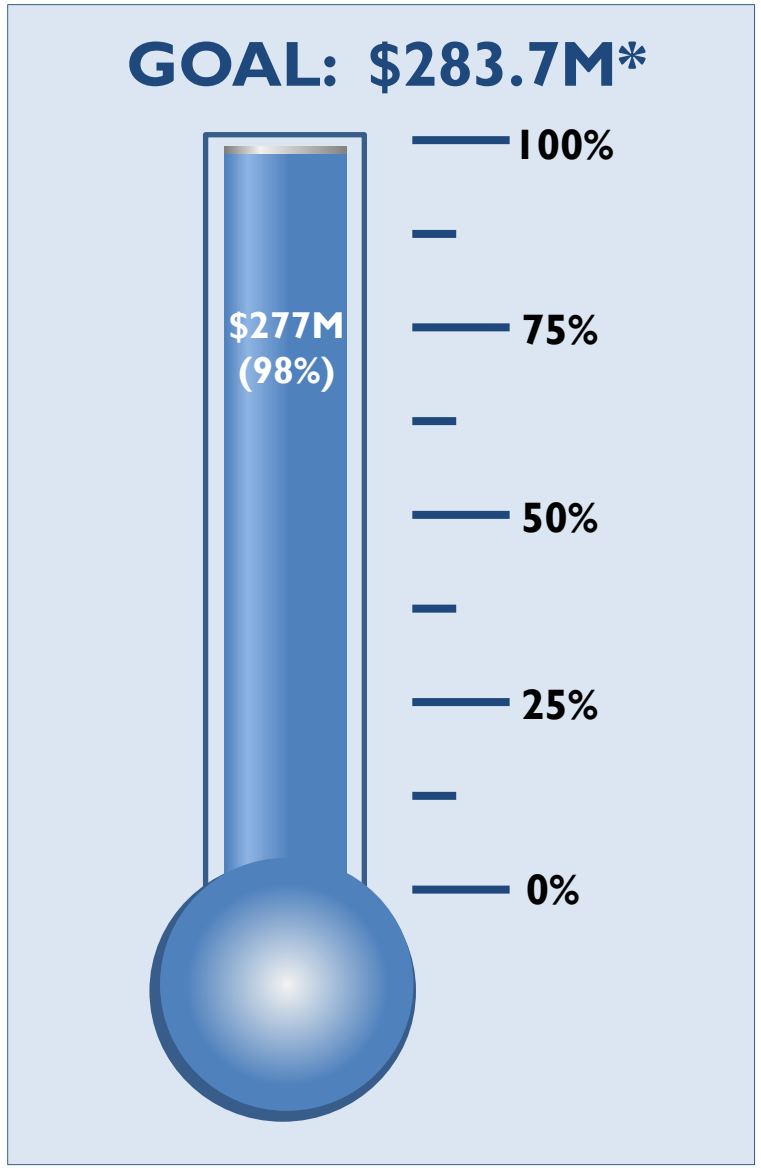
Central App Portal: New Feature Demo



DRAFT FOR POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

PROCESSING GOAL UPDATE

Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program Spending Goal by Sept. 30th



- 63.5% of ERA1 funds have been spent or committed as of 9/17 ($277M)*
  - Includes $40M admin
  - $6.4M stabilization
  - $6.8M SHERA
  - $40M COVID RAFT allocated to ERA1 in June
  - **The majority—$183M—is from ERAP**
- Gap of $6.3M to be made up by 9/30 to hit 65% goal
- In addition, 7% of ERA2 funds have been spent or committed ($25M, with **$19M** from ERAP)

**65% of ERA1 funds must be spent or committed by September 30, 2021*

QUESTIONS

RESOURCES

RESOURCES

1

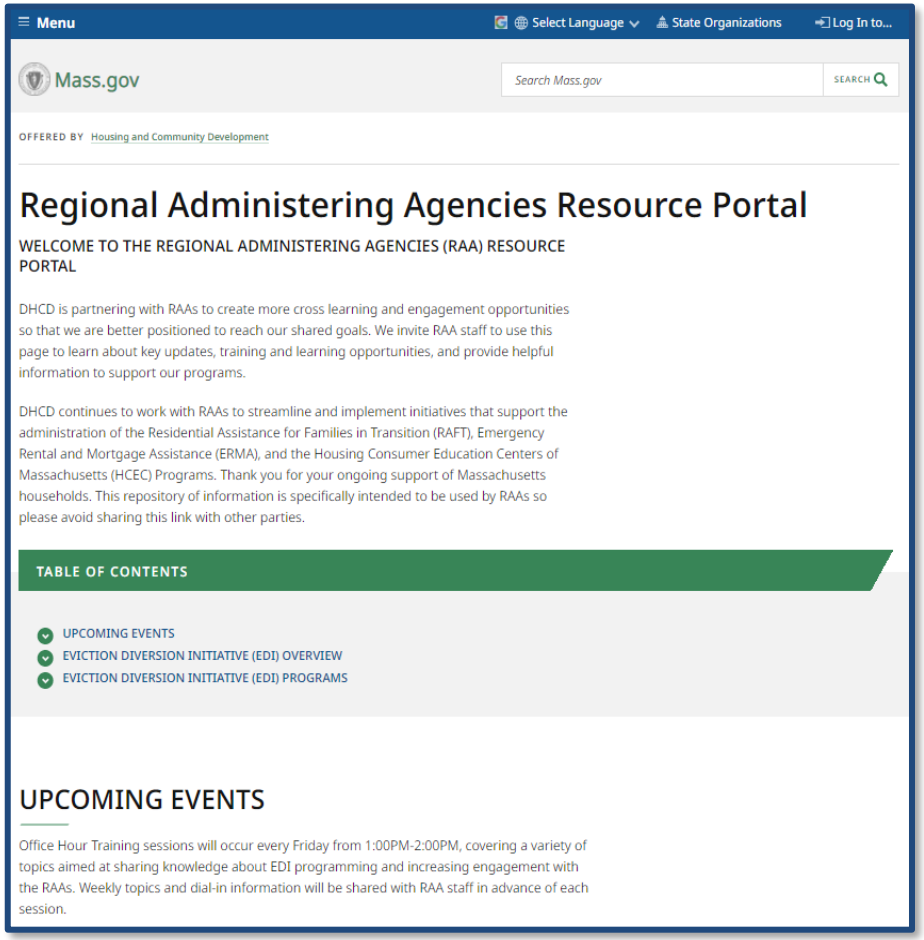
RAA Resource Portal

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



QUESTIONS

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!

dhcd
Massachusetts
RCAP Solutions
Resources for Communities And People
Metro Housing
BOSTON
SMOC
EVERYBODY MATTERS
HRA
DEVELOPING BETTER COMMUNITIES
cmha
Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc.
Leading the way home
COMMUNITY TEAM WORK
Housing Assistance
BERKSHIRE HOUSING
Development Corporation & Housing Services, Inc.
NeighborWorks®
HOUSING SOLUTIONS
LYNN HOUSING AUTHORITY
& NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT