

HomeBASE 101





The HomeBASE



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Terms & Acronyms to Learn



People & Agencies

- EOHLC
- RAAs
- Participants
- EA shelters
- DV shelters
- DPH
- BSAS
- Providers
- Homeless Coordinator



Program & Benefits

- HomeBASE
- Emergency Assistance (EA)
- Diversion
- Stabilization
- RAFT
- ED
- SRI
- E2E (software)
- ETO (software)

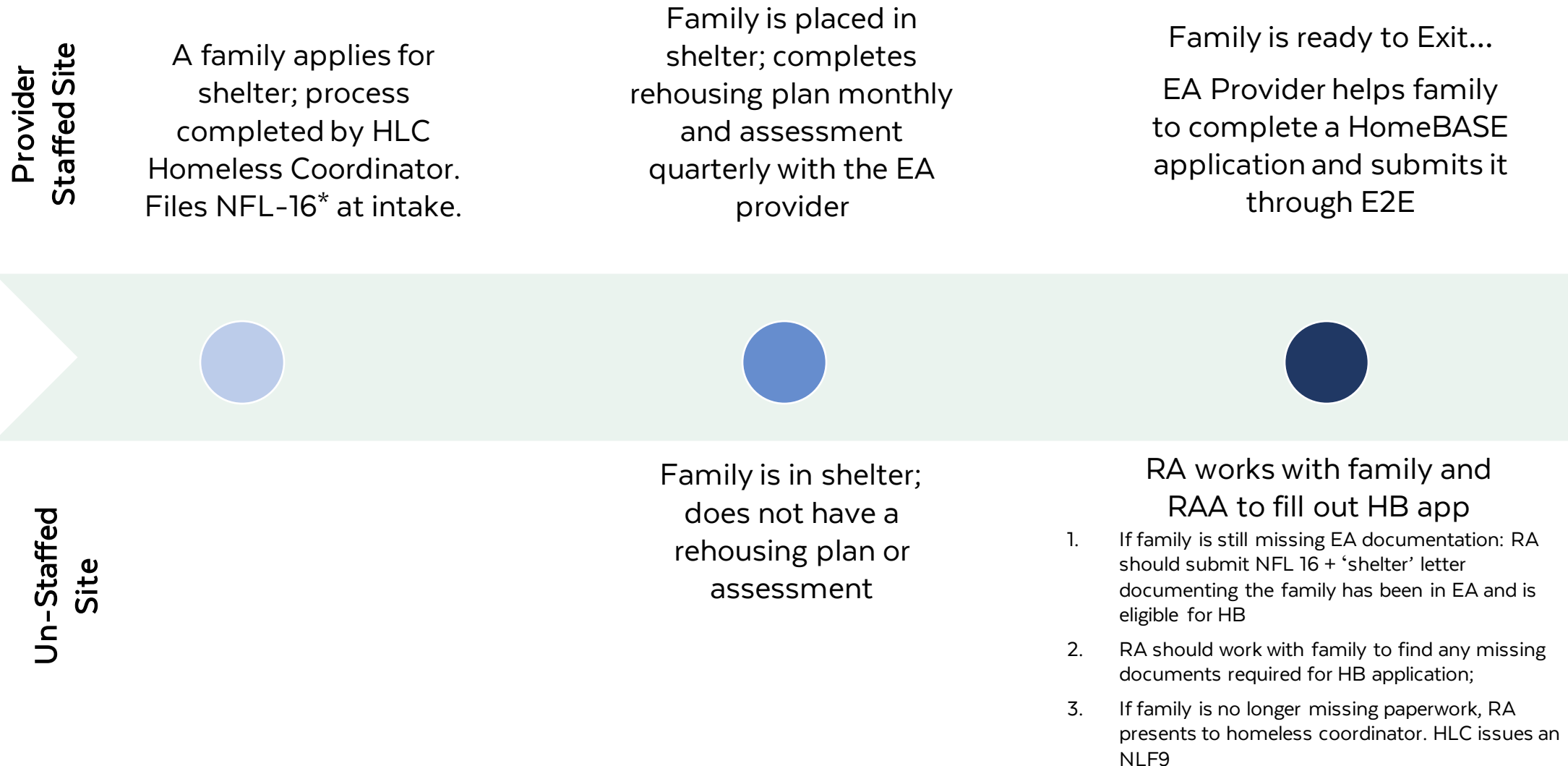


Income & Eligibility

- Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or Guidelines (FPG)
- Area Median Income (AMI)
- Stabilization Plan
- Feasible Alternative Housing (FAH)



EA / HomeBASE Eligibility



*NFL - 16: form indicates the family is presumptively eligibility for placement in shelter / HomeBASE

What is HomeBASE?



HomeBASE provides an **alternative response to shelter** through **flexible financial assistance for housing and stabilization** with the goal of rapidly ending homelessness and increasing economic self-sufficiency.





HomeBASE Overview

HomeBASE is a rapid re-housing program under EOHLC designed to support low-income families in securing long-term housing stability.

Who is eligible for HomeBASE?

Front Door Eligibility

Families experiencing homelessness who also **qualify for Emergency Assistance (EA)** temporary shelter

Back Door Eligibility

Families experiencing homelessness who are **currently housed in EA** temporary shelter

HomeBASE is administered regionally by Regional Administering Agencies (RAAs), in coordination with certain EOHLC and Diversion staff.



Primary Stakeholders

When processing HomeBASE Packets, fostering housing and stabilization plans, and working toward housing stability, there are several key stakeholders involved, including the families and the people who support them.

Families (Participants)		
Work toward re-housing goals, engages in stabilization plan, contributes toward rent, etc.		
Homeless Coordinators	Providers (EA, Diversion, Stabilization, RAAs)	RAAs
Process EA applications and refer eligible families to the Providers, in addition to updating family placement needs	Meet and collaborate with families to assist in the housing search, complete and process their HomeBASE Packet through End-to-End, identify a stabilization plan, ensure engagement.	Review, approve, and deliver funding as indicated in the HomeBASE Packets submitted by providers.

HomeBASE & EA Temporary Shelter



HomeBASE

- Supplemental financial benefits to subsidize stable housing
- Provides monetary support
- Income review for reallocation
- Aims to help families avoid shelter, where possible
- Referral- and application-based
- Coverage of certain expenses, in coordination with other supports
- Goal is permanent housing stability
- Directly supports continued leasing of housing
- Requires adherence to a Stabilization Plan

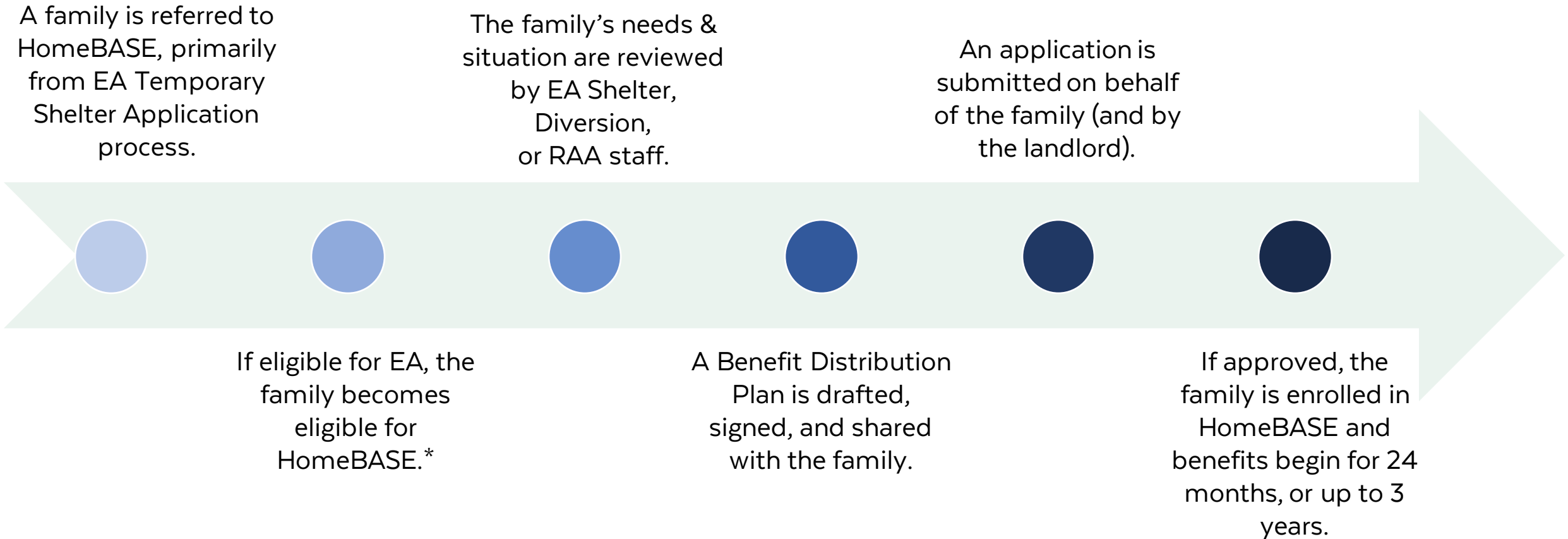


EA Temporary Shelter

- Temporary shelter when stable housing is unavailable
- Does not directly provide monetary support
- Income verification for (continued) eligibility
- Aims to help families *exit* shelter (via housing search, HomeBASE, etc.)
- Application-based
- A location-based tangible support
- Goal is temporary shelter until housing can be found
- Directly supports finding housing, via a Housing Search Worker
- Requires adherence to Uniform Shelter Rules



How does it work? The Big Picture:



*Eligibility verification process differs depending on how a family is referred to HomeBASE.

HLC Systems

HomeBASE relies on three software systems (via EOHLHC) for program management:



Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)

- EA eligibility determination
- Ongoing case management



End-to-End (E2E)

- HomeBASE Application intake & processing



Housing Pro (“HAPPY”)

- Issuing and tracking HomeBASE payments
- Generally used by RAAs



Referrals to HomeBASE





The “Doors” of Referrals

Families are *referred* to HomeBASE via entry points: **Front Door, Back Door**

Front Door

- **New Applicant(s) for EA emergency shelter**
- When found eligible for EA, also eligible for HomeBASE
- When elected in place of shelter, called “Diversion”
- Most referrals come through this “door” & work with a Diversion Provider

Back Door

- **Current Participant(s) in EA emergency shelter**
- Eligible for up to \$30,000 up to 24 months (and added \$15,000 for a 3rd year) upon leaving shelter
- Excludes families with pending termination or appeal, unless rehousing is imminent



Front Door Referral Process

When a family is applying for EA temporary shelter...

EOHLC Homeless Coordinator (HC) makes a referral to Diversion provider, along with NFL-9A through ETO & email

Diversion staff contacts the family for the benefit determination assessment

Diversion staff updates HC with family's decision to work with Diversion and shares screening tool

Depending on eligibility, the family may:

- continue with Diversion
- opt for EA shelter instead
- be ineligible or choose not to apply for EA



Front Door Referral Outcomes

Based on the results from the Diversion screening tool, a family may...

choose to work with Diversion & apply for HomeBASE:

- The housing search begins
- If a unit is found, the Diversion staff submits the HomeBASE application
- The Diversion staff helps the landlord apply

choose EA emergency shelter:

- They will be provided shelter placement, per EA policies, participation rules, and waitlist
- They are still eligible for HomeBASE upon exiting, if not terminated or pending termination or appeal

NOT be EA eligible and/or choose to forego EA application, & HCs should refer family to:

- SPI (if family is within 30 days of homelessness & meets 115% income eligibility)
- RAFT
- Other community resources, such as Housing Consumer Education Centers and Commonwealth's Community Action Agencies



Back Door Referral Process

When a family is already residing in EA temporary shelter...

EA shelter staff makes a HomeBASE benefit determination for families in EA shelter.

- Families in shelter are already deemed eligible for EA

Shelter housing search staff submit the HomeBASE application in End-to-End, then the landlord completes the landlord application in End-to-End.

The RAA receives both applications.

The RAA:

- Provides the EA shelter with requirements for a complete referral packet and ensures access to relevant forms
- Reviews the applications



Provider Responsibilities Overview (1/2)

Provider Type	Front Door Involvement	Back Door Involvement
EOHLC Homeless Coordinator (HC) @ DHS field offices or call center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ EA eligibility assessment✓ Referrals to Diversion or EA shelter placement	✗
Diversion staff @ EA shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Diversion assessment✓ Determine benefit level✓ Compile packet → RAAs✓ Draft Stabilization Plan✓ Provide Housing Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ TESI-only✓ Referrals from EOHLC placement unit✓ Determine benefit level✓ Compile packet → RAAs✓ Oversee Stabilization Plan✓ Provide Housing Search
Stabilization team @ EA shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Oversee Stabilization Plan	



Provider Responsibilities Overview (2/2)

Provider Type	Front Door Involvement	Back Door Involvement
Shelter staff @ EA shelters	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Determine benefits✓ Compile packets → RAAs✓ Oversee Stabilization Plan✓ Complete the Rehousing Plan & Housing Search
BSAS/DPH shelter (staff) @ BSAS/DPH programs	✗	✗
RAA staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Review/approve packet✓ Issue payments in HAPPY✓ Oversee Stabilization Plan if lease outside Diversion provider's region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Review/approve packet✓ Issue payments in HAPPY✓ Oversee Stabilization Plan if lease outside Diversion provider's region

Questions?



Eligibility for HomeBASE



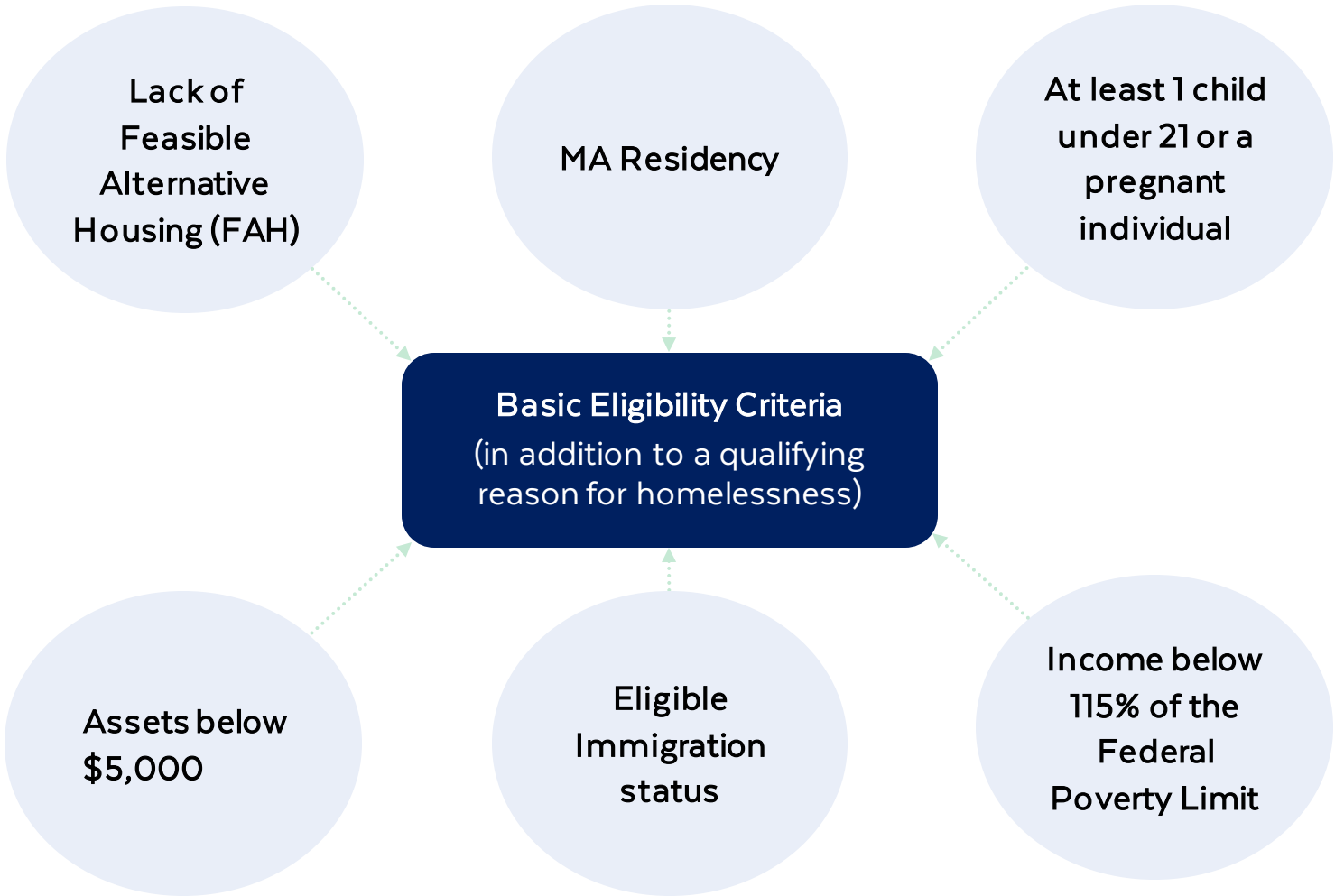
Eligibility Criteria





EA Eligibility = Front Door (Diversion) HomeBASE Eligibility

The Emergency Assistance (EA) Family Shelter program, along with other financial supports, is available to families who qualify. The eligibility criteria for households includes:



Important Note: Families can start working on their HomeBASE application once they have provided proof of identity and familial relationship(s) to child(ren), but they must prove all 6 pieces of EA eligibility prior to using HomeBASE funds when working with a Diversion Provider.



The “Doors” of Eligibility

The Front Door, & Back Door each have a specific eligibility determination process.

Front Door: A family must be fully EA eligible

- Eligibility is determined by Homeless Coordinators (EOHLC)
- When **presumptively eligible**, the family is referred to **Diversions** (based on verified identities & familial relationships)
- When **fully eligible**, families can access HomeBASE if approved **after leasing up**

Back Door: A family is already EA eligible

- Eligibility was previously determined to enter shelter, so the family is **assigned to shelter staff** (a case manager)
- When presumptively eligible, families can access HomeBASE if approved **after leasing up**
- Full EA eligibility is not required

*under 760 CMR 65

From Referral to Enrollment



Referral to Enrollment Flow (1/4)

1

Family is referred and deemed EA eligible



Front Door

referred by EA Homeless Coordinator
(determines EA eligibility directly)



Back Door

referred by EA shelter staff
(eligibility is pre-determined)

2

Diversion, RAA, or EA shelter Housing Search Worker supports the family in finding an available unit, also coordinating with applicable landlord(s).

If the family leases up, they can then move forward with the HomeBASE application.



Referral to Enrollment Flow (2/4)



4a

Diversion, RAA, or EA shelter provider staff completes a HomeBASE “Stabilization and Participant Agreement” with the EA Family. It includes:

- ✓ HomeBASE Data Collection Summary Form
- ✓ Stabilization Agreement Program Participant Obligations
- ✓ Voluntary Authorization to Release Information
- ✓ Appeal Rights
- ✓ HomeBASE Host Family/Guest Household Assistance Agreement (only required if the family is not going to be the primary lease holder and is moving into a co-share living situation)

3

Diversion, RAA, or EA shelter provider staff determine HomeBASE benefit distribution plan by considering whether it:

- ✓ Prevents family from entering shelter?
- ✓ Assists the family in exiting shelter?
- ✓ Is reasonable to resolve homelessness?

Review of information from:

- HomeBASE Provider Assessment and Disposition or DCF Health and Safety (HAS) Assessment
- Sources such as primary tenant, relatives, landlords, stabilization workers, etc.

Referral to Enrollment Flow (3/4)

4a

The EA Family receives a copy of the “Stabilization and Participant Agreement”



5

Diversion, RAA, or EA shelter provider staff completes additional documents:

- ✓ HomeBASE Checklist (embedded in End-to-End (E2E) application process)
- ✓ HomeBASE Data Collection Summary Form
- ✓ RAA-specific forms

6

Diversion, RAA, or EA shelter staff submit application in E2E tenant portal

- Submitting staff supports landlord with application into E2E landlord portal
- EA family and EA shelter staff notified by email of “Payment Disbursement Notice” on approval from E2E

Referral to Enrollment Flow (4/4)



7b

The EA Family accepts the distribution plan and benefits begin

- The RAA manages payments to providers
- Family abides by participation rules, including regular check-ins
- Family can leave program/end benefits early, but Stabilization Plan check-ins continue
- Family can apply for an additional 3rd year near end of initial 24-month period



7a

The EA Family can contest the benefit distribution plan

- Submit an appeal in writing to the RAA within 14 days of receipt
- Hearing is scheduled and conducted per appeals process



HomeBASE Assistance



HomeBASE Assistance Types



Benefit Limits



General

- Benefit capped at \$30,000 within 24-month period
- Additional \$15,000 for a 3rd year, based on need
- Applies also to families who use assistance to divert shelter entry or exit EA shelter
- 24-month period begins on the lease start date for HomeBASE household ("Stabilization start date")
- Participants must wait 12 months after last payment to reapply for EA

Terminations

- **Categorical Terminations:** If household is terminated from HomeBASE, they cannot reapply for 12 months
 - Begins on date of termination
 - May reapply after month 12
- **Single Incident Terminations:** If terminated for cause, family must wait 24 months after date of receipt of last benefit to reapply

Shelter Re-entry

- If at risk of homelessness (& benefit is insufficient to prevent it), family may apply for EA shelter and/or RAFT
- If landlord does not renew for year 2 or 3, provider must assist family in finding a new unit (possibly using remaining HomeBASE funds)
- These households may only access remaining amount for the 24-month or 3rd year limit (stabilization services suspended if family returns to shelter)
- Reapplication does not guarantee same type or level of assistance



Eligible Uses of HomeBASE Funds

Incentive Payments

- To host renters (with permission) or homeowners able to allow families (up to 50% of costs)
- For households in co-share lease arrangement; HomeBASE participant pays equal proportion of costs (up to 50%)
- Landlord bonuses to execute a lease (= 1 month rent)

Rental Stipends

- Partial rent or co-share contribution (family must pay 30%+ of gross income toward rent share)
- Paid directly to property owner (who is informed of rules, benefit type, and level of assistance)
- NOT for subsidized housing or out-of-state moves

Furniture, Utilities, and Debt

- To maintain or establish tenancies
- Furniture: \$2,500 cap, type restrictions & exceptions apply); Families can request a cap waiver
- Arrears: for outstanding debt (rent/utility arrears) that directly interfere with new lease; capped at \$5,000



Eligible Uses of HomeBASE Funds

Moving Assistance (requires lease/availability verification)

- In-state: first/last/security, storage, moving vans, bus tickets
- Out-of-state: NOT out of country; requires most economical strategy by providers; covers bus/air travel; no ongoing assistance (lifetime cap of one-time HomeBASE use) One move per 24 months (exception for no fault subsequent move)
- Broker fees: additional conditions (broker cannot be landlord or immediate family of)

Education, employment, other goals

- Needs EOHLC approval
- To meet stabilization goals and requirements related to education, employment, or training
- Payments directly to vendor/third party



Benefit Payments

Timing

One-time payments

On-going assistance payments over 24 months from lease start date (or for up to 3 years, if approved)

Timing depends on family's distribution plan

Mode

Directly to participating vendors on family's behalf

Direct deposit may be required over paper checks

RAA Responsibilities

Making payments

Entering data into Housing Pro ("HAPPY")

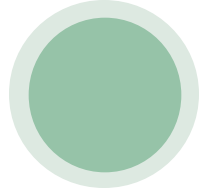
Reporting to EOHLC on benefit use among participants

Communicating with referring provider about family's status & documentation



Supplementary Housing Assistance

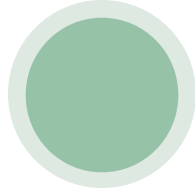
Other emergency housing assistance programs (flexible financial benefits) in Massachusetts may be available to HomeBASE families:



Enhanced Diversion (ED)

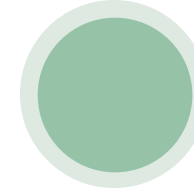
For **Front Door** households with complex rehousing needs working with a Diversion provider

When additional funds exceeding HomeBASE allowances are necessary to avoid shelter entry



Strategic Rehousing Initiative (SRI)

For **households in shelter** where additional funds exceeding HomeBASE allowances are necessary to rapidly exit shelter



Rental Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)

For **households with incomes at/below 50% AMI** & facing imminent risk of homelessness

Up to \$7,000 per 12-month period

Covers: moving costs, rent arrears, utility arrears, rental stipends, financial incentives (for primary tenant hosts)

No combined award limit across RAFT & HomeBASE

Questions?



HomeBASE Funding & Allocation Determinations





Benefit Distribution Plans

Determined and reallocated by EA Shelter, Diversion, RAA, and Stabilization staff **in collaboration with** the EA Family.

Based on **individualized needs**:

- Benefit amount
- Distribution plan
- Correspondent to housing stability needs
- Driven by goal of rapid rehousing
- Subsidized housing or moves out-of-state may not require full maximum benefit amount



Income Verification for Rental Stipends & Progress

Income may be reevaluated to redetermine needs & reallocate remaining HomeBASE funds

- Earned Income (only required to include one of the following documents):
 - ✓ Most recent month of Pay Stubs (most recent 2 if paid bi-weekly or 4 if paid weekly)
 - ✓ Most recently received W-2s
 - ✓ Letter from employer confirming pay rate and average number of hours worked per week
- Benefit Income Statement (only as applicable):
 - ✓ Social Security Benefits
 - ✓ Unemployment or Workers Compensations
 - ✓ Veterans
 - ✓ Child or Spousal Support
 - ✓ TAFDC and/or EAEDC
 - ✓ Other
- Statement of Zero Income
- Self-Attestation of Income (if unable to provide verifications listed above)

Income is not used to
redetermine *eligibility* for
HomeBASE



Benefit Determinations

Diversion, EA shelter, and/or RAA staff conduct assessments to determine benefit allocation (up to cap), based on family situation.



The family receives a copy of the “Stabilization and Participant Agreement,” including:

Outlined HomeBASE participation expectations

Language pertaining to appeal or grievance hearings



Staff must support households in reasonable plans to end homelessness.

Staff submits the HomeBASE packet in End-to-End for review.

RAA reviews proposed amounts to ensure rent coverage (after family’s contribution) & housing stability for minimally 24 months, up to 3 years.



Families may accept, upon receipt of notice of their Benefit Distribution Plan.

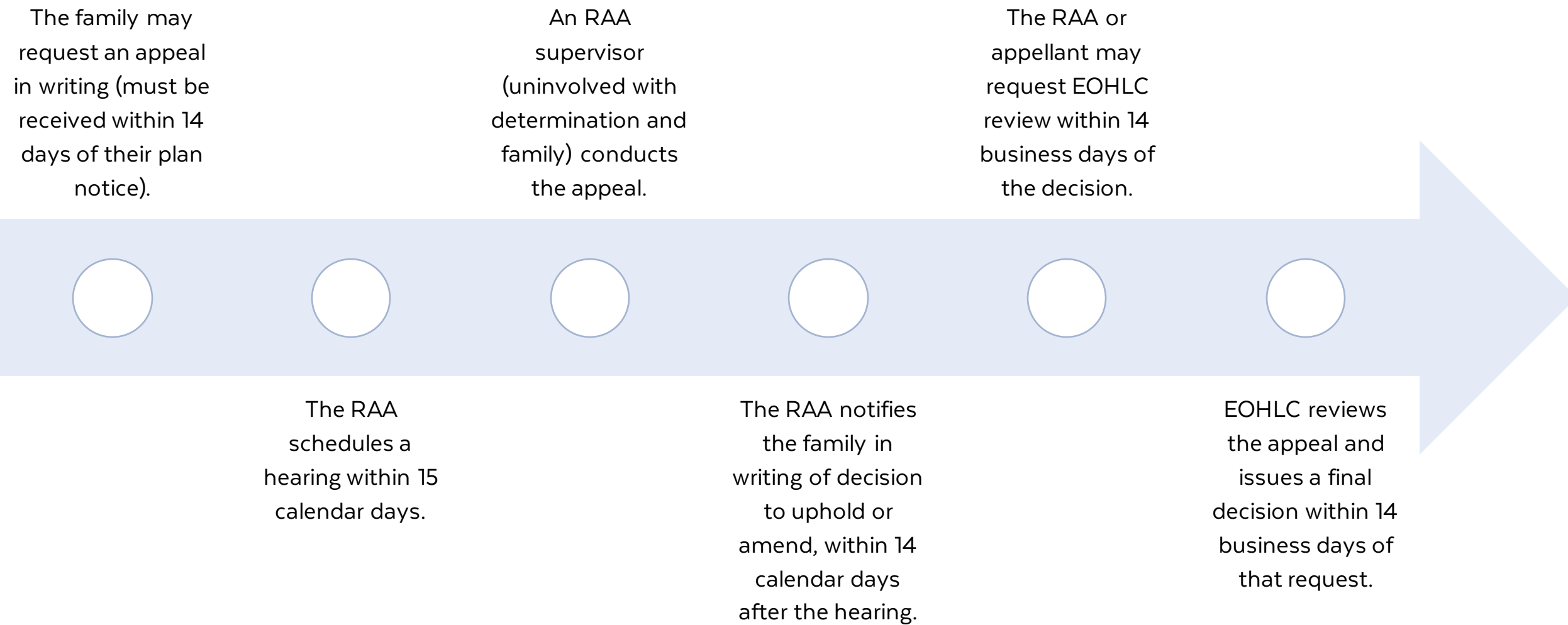
They may also appeal the determination in writing.

Their appeal must be received by the RAA within 14 days.



Eligibility or Benefit Level Appeals

For an EA-eligible (HomeBASE-eligible) family to appeal benefits...





Documentation & Verification

Notice(s) to participants:

- Ensure awareness by families, landlords, and primary tenants about participation requirements
- Establish staff contact of service providers and vendors (utilities, childcare, etc.) for facilitation of payments

Co-share households:

- Verify program expectations with host or co-tenants about expectations

Leasing documents:

- Request letter of lead compliance for buildings built before 1978
- Verify a place to stay for out-of-state moves (lease/tenancy agreement, landlord/tenant contact)
- Verify availability of new unit in-/out-of-state (signed lease copy, contact information for property owner, proof of ownership, completed W-9)

Transfer of administration
(family moves to another
jurisdiction):

- Complete transfer of benefits administration within 24 hours of packet completion
- New RAA assumes HomeBASE functions, payments, stabilization

Additional documentation
(examples below but are not
exhaustive):

- A town-specific inspection requirement
- Additional documentation verifying proof of ownership by landlord

Program Participation, Termination, and Appeals



Participation Requirements



Participation



Check-ins (initial 12 months):

- To confirm continued housing stability
- At minimum, monthly with family, landlord/host
- In-person once every 2 months (6x / 12 months)

After approval by the RAA, the family then moves into their unit (move-in should NOT be before approval)

“Stabilization and Participant Agreement” completion / sign-off

The family meets with their Stabilization Worker to begin their Stabilization Plan, which, per HomeBASE program rules:

- Is required on/before date of first benefit payment
- May be updated or “tweaked” based on assignment with this new Stabilization Worker

If a family has no ongoing stipend, achieves permanent housing stability, and choose to discontinue services:

- May request to decrease stabilization check-ins (but cannot “opt out”)
- Minimum quarterly (4x / 12 months) check-in frequency to still ensure rental payments and fulfillment of other obligations
- The family can still access remaining HomeBASE funds later if needed, during the program timeframe



Continued Engagement affects Eligibility

Key Elements of a Stabilization Plan (760 C.M.R. § 65.03 (6))

- ✓ Family must contribute to and follow the written plan
- ✓ Ongoing lease compliance (check-ins with landlord)
- ✓ Housing search activities with support of staff
- ✓ Regular check-ins with stabilization staff
- ✓ Job placement or training activities (if un- or underemployed)
- ✓ Maintain primary healthcare contacts for all family members
- ✓ School attendance or achievement plan for each child
- ✓ Family budgeting training program
- ✓ Open and/or maintain bank account
- ✓ Work toward GED or HiSET (if applicable)
- ✓ File federal and state income tax returns yearly & on time



Reallocation of HomeBASE Funds

A family's income is central to determining a need for reallocation (a family's budget should reflect that need for reallocated funds)

- After HomeBASE approval, income is not a factor for termination or eligibility, and should only inform needs-based reallocation

Families may request reallocation of funds as needed based on their situation

A case manager should check in with the family to ensure funds are meeting their needs and obligations (per their Stabilization Plan)

All conversations about income and sources of funds should be centered around a plan for long-term housing stability (not eligibility for the program)

Stabilization staff are expected to be knowledgeable about:

- a family's *individualized* needs
- what local resources exist to assist the family with meeting their identified needs
- connecting with and leveraging all possible support through other community organizations

A case manager can submit a request for a redistribution of funds with a proposed budget and appropriate supporting documents, based on the family's available remaining funds

Terminations & Appeals





Reasons for Termination from HomeBASE

Single Incident Terminations

- Engagement in drug or criminal activity
- Threatening health/safety of provider staff/landlord
- Eviction for nonpayment or “other cause” (760 CMR 65.05(p))
- Vacation without proper procedures
- Fraud
- Destroying property
- Illegally subletting their rental
- Allowing unauthorized residents beyond the shorter of lease terms or for longer than 12 days (consecutive or accumulated)
- Possessing firearms in the unit (760 CMR 65.05.(1)(h))

Categorically Ineligible Termination

- Happens when a family becomes ineligible for the program, such as if there is no longer a child under 21 in the household.
- Termination may be immediate if a family reunification plan is not established with DCF or Probate within 60 days.
- A family is eligible to reapply per program policies, where allowable.

NOTE: Participant non-engagement is NOT a direct reason to be terminated, but it may lead to Single Incident Termination reasons, such as nonpayment of family’s contribution to rent.

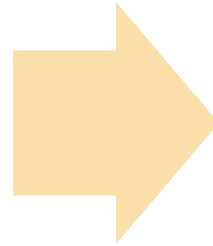


Notice of Termination & Review

Only the RAA can administer HomeBASE Termination:

Stabilization staff submits a request for termination and discontinuance by emailing to the RAA:

- Completed Notice of Termination
- Supporting documentation



The RAA must review the Notice:

- If request is deemed inadequate, the RAA may request additional supporting documentation.
- If there is not a reasonable cause, the RAA will communicate this back to the requesting staff.
- If there is reasonable cause, the RAA may mail the Notice (including appeal process) to the family, cc'ing stabilization staff

Note: the RAA must report terminated families to EOHLC for the previous month by the 10th of each month.



Notifying Families of Termination

In the event of a requested termination, families must receive a written notice informing them of the conduct in questions (a copy must be placed in their file)

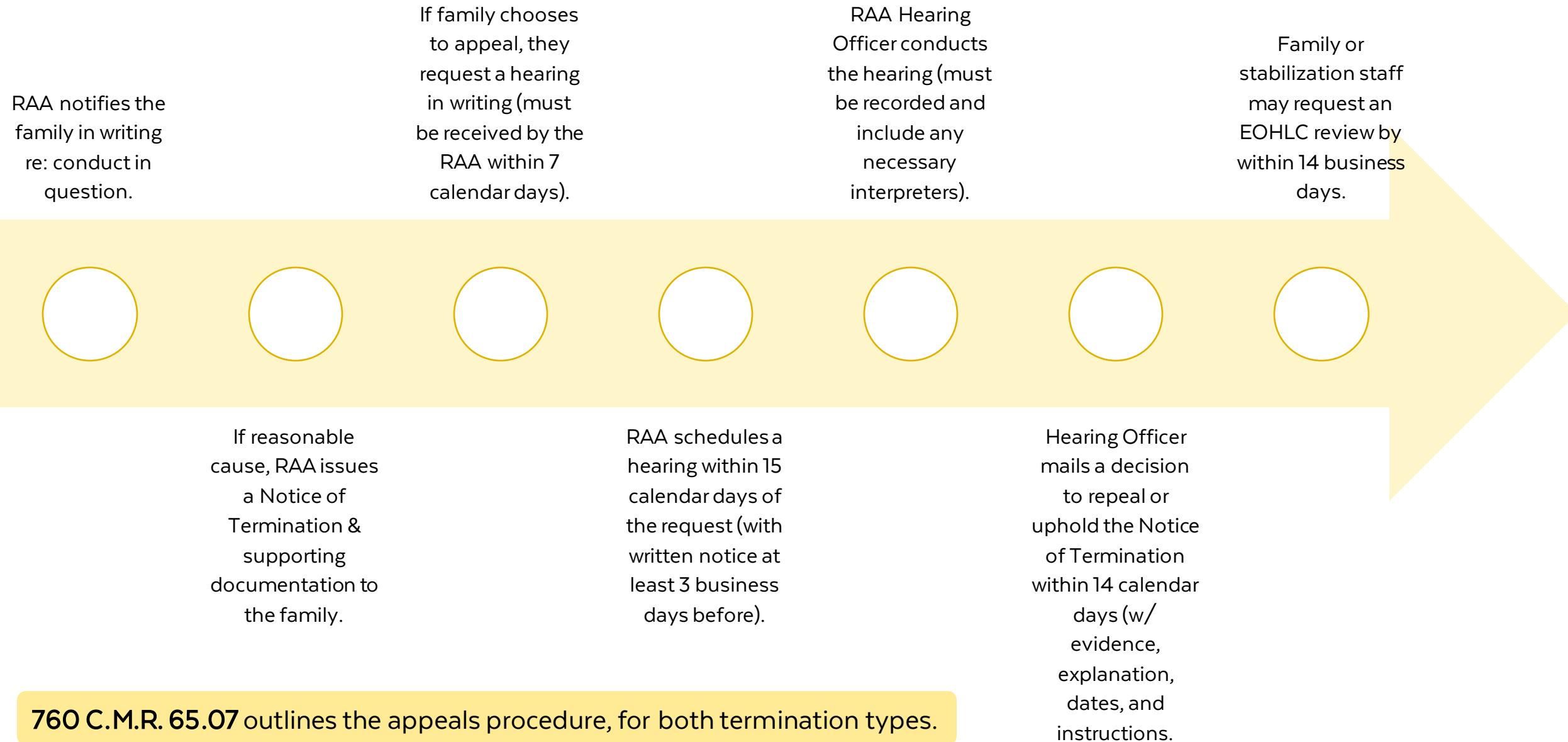
Any notice must include the date that it is being issued.

Acceptable forms include, but are not limited to:

- Notice from a landlord regarding late or nonpayment of rent, or violation of lease (provided compliance with lease obligation is written into the Stabilization Plan).
- Notice of nonpayment or late payment of utilities (provided compliance with utility payments is written into the Stabilization Plan).
- HomeBASE incident report (used in situations where the participant may not otherwise receive written notice of a violation of the lease, program participation agreement, and/or Stabilization Plan).
- A written notice of noncompliance or violation of program rules and regulations on the stabilizing agency's letterhead.



Termination Appeal Overview



Records





HomeBASE Family Files

To ensure each HomeBASE family is effectively working toward permanent housing stability, records are key.

The RAA for a family is responsible for maintaining a file for each HomeBASE family.

While this is not managed directly by the EOHLC, it is important to understand these record requirements to effectively work with RAAs.



File Contents (2/2)

Referral Documents, including:

- Release of Information Form
- A copy of the EA eligibility letter (NFL-9) (Front Door households), shelter letter (EA or motel households), or approved referral form signed by EOHLC HomeBASE Coordinator (DV or BSAS households)
- Income verification

Vendor Payments:

- Documentation of vendor payments on behalf of household including
- Contact information for vendors
- Copies of invoices for all approved expenditures (such as furniture, moving expenses, transportation, and/or utility arrearage payments)
- Form W-9 and all necessary taxpayer identification information

Grievance and Termination:

- All documents, letters, notices, and case notes associated with any grievance and termination procedures



File Contents (2/2)

Participant Documents:

- Payment Disbursement Notice
- HomeBASE Host Family/Guest Household Assistance Agreement, if applicable
- Emergency Contact Information
- HomeBASE Program and Stabilization Participation Agreement
- Signed Stabilization Plan
- Stabilization Case Notes – starting in April of 2012 all notes must be entered into ETO
- (recording visit times and dates and length of visit) and phone calls with client or to client
- All correspondence on behalf of HomeBASE household
- Copies of referrals to community providers and correspondences to HomeBASE household
- Income verification documents

Leasing Documents:

- Property Owner Agreement to Participate in HomeBASE, if applicable
- De-leading certification (if deemed necessary), including Letter of Interim Control or 1/1/78 or later building permit, if applicable
- Proof of ownership of property to be leased, if applicable
- Form W-9 and all necessary taxpayer identification information

Questions?

