



Housing Mediation Program

EOHLC Office Hours

Thursday, December 4, 2025



WELCOME



Asking Questions

We will be monitoring the chat for questions

- If at any point throughout today's session you have any questions, please send those in the chat. We will have a question break at the end of today's session as well
- You can also raise your hand during our question break if you would prefer to come off mute and share your question verbally
- We will make sure to share today's presentation with everyone after the session

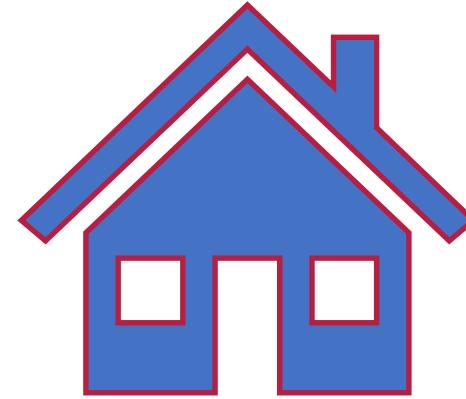
AGENDA



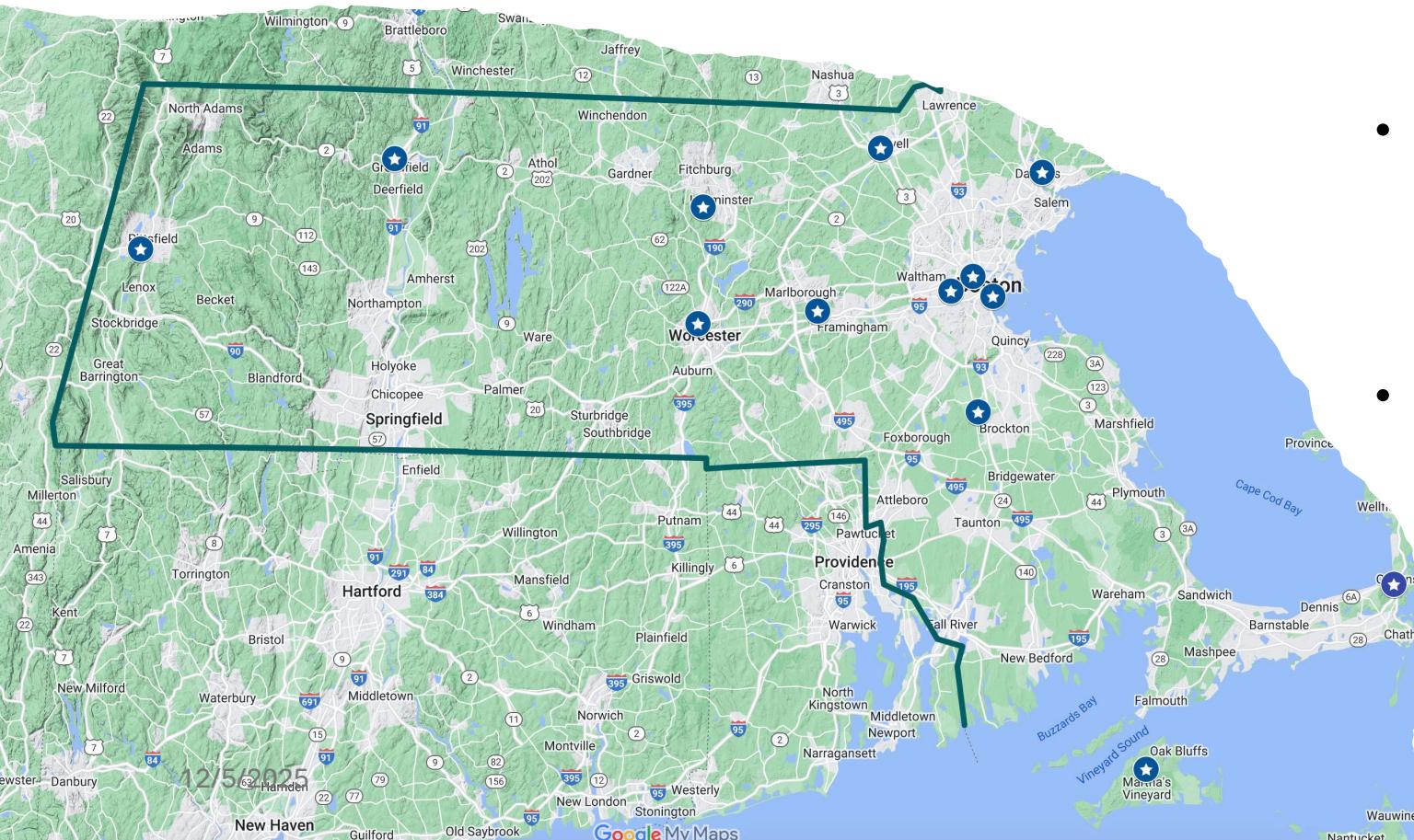
- Massachusetts Housing Mediation Program
 - Welcome our presenter Jarling Ho from the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration's Housing Mediation Program
- Question Break

Massachusetts Housing Mediation Program

Trained mediators can help landlords and
tenants find a workable solution for
everyone



Community Mediation



- Provides dispute resolution services to all 14 counties in the Commonwealth
- Local organizations that serve local communities
- *Free housing mediation services for landlords and tenants for any housing related disputes that could lead to loss of housing or eviction*
- No income limitation to access services

Legal representation not required

What is Community Mediation?

- Process where neutral third party helps parties have a conversation about their issues and what's important to them
- Confidential
- Voluntary
- Prioritizes self-determination and informed consent

Benefits of Community Mediation

- Mediation services complement and can occur in parallel to other processes (legal disputes, RAFT application review, housing search)
- Adherence – parties are more likely to abide by agreement when reached collaboratively
- Gives parties a chance to speak and be heard, improve communication, and often helps to stabilize relationship
- Allows for creative, flexible solutions with a high rate of success

When Can I Refer Individuals to Mediation?

- Landlord and tenant disagree on the amount of rent owed
- There is a disconnect between landlord and tenant on housing-related items (i.e. condition of premises, utility bills, etc)
- RAFT-related issues
 - Tenant owes more than RAFT can cover
 - Applicant has been denied RAFT
 - Applicant has not been denied RAFT, but the landlord or tenant is not responsive to ongoing communication from the RAA

What Other Situations Can Benefit from Mediation?

- High level of conflict between the parties – relationships are frayed
- Communication problems exist between the parties
- Different levels of knowledge and access to information
- Issues are complex, involve multiple parties and/or require specialized expertise
- People are broadly in agreement but need help working out the details

Think of mediation as...

- A complement to other resources such as RAFT, housing search assistance, and legal advocacy/representation
- A process that helps landlords and tenants figure out a way to move forward
 - Address tangible issues (rental arrears, move outs, noise, property damage)
 - Address intangible issues (relationships, communication, trust)

When in doubt – refer it out!

Still not sure? Just reach out and ask!

Case Study 1

Landlord-tenant dispute over a \$50 carpet-cleaning charge related to mess from a leaking trash bag in common area. Landlord states there is video footage showing that tenant caused the mess; tenant has not seen the video. There are additional concerns about interaction between tenant and property manager, issues with tenant's ESA dog being off-leash, and neighbor complaints.

Case Study 1

Possible topics for mediation:

- Carpet cleaning charge / common areas
- ESA dog

Additional issues:

- Relationship
- Communication

Case Study 2

Tenant has been asked to leave unit, and landlord has refused to issue a Notice to Quit. Tenant has located a potential unit but cannot afford moving costs without applying for RAFT. Tenant is nearly six months behind on rent.

Case Study 2

Possible topics for mediation:

- Rental Arrears
- Receiving proper notice
- Coordinating Timelines
- Exploring RAFT

Additional issues:

- Communication
- Loss of trust

Case Study 3

Tenant lived in grandmother's home for ten years and never paid rent. Recently, grandmother's health has declined and tenant has become the sole caretaker. Other family members are pressuring the grandmother to sell the home and move to a nursing facility, which would displace the tenant. There are broader family disputes regarding the property and finances.

Case Study 3

Possible topics for mediation:

- Clarify expectations
- Discuss next steps for the home
- Address family concerns and balance grandmother's needs

Additional issues:

- Communication
- Relationship

Case Study 4

Landlord reports that, since tenant moved in, tenant has consistently paid rent late – fully but in installments. Tenant has not paid current month's rent, so landlord issued a 14-day eviction notice. Landlord has attempted to discuss a payment plan but, per landlord, tenant is combative and unwilling to agree to a plan.

Case Study 4

Possible topics for mediation:

- Payment plan
- Timely rent payments

Additional issues:

- Communication
- Relationship
- Loss of trust

Case Study 5

Tenant is currently unemployed and received a Notice to Quit one month ago. Tenant is 12 months behind on rent with a total arrears of \$10,200. Tenant is receiving unemployment and is actively job searching; tenant also applied for RAFT but was denied.

Case Study 5

Possible topics for mediation:

- Payment plan
- Alternative solutions
- Additional resources (housing, financial)

Additional issues:

- Communication
- Relationship

Community Mediation Takeaways

- Mediation services can be used alone or in conjunction with other support, such as legal proceedings, RAFT assistance, housing applications and searches
- Mediation can help parties figure out how to move forward; to address housing issues. Mediation can also help to rebuild trust, and/or smoothen frayed relationships
- Our community mediation centers have capacity to handle more cases

How Do I Make A Referral?

1. RAFT/HCEC staff refers client to a Community Mediation Center

*NOTE: No need to get landlord consent, **only need verbal consent from tenant/referring party***

- Ask client if you can refer them to mediation (verbal consent is fine)
- Determine local CMC through referencing RAA/CMC guide
 - *For more city/town specific info, you can use <https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net>*
- Fill out mediation referral form
- Email designated contact (see slide for CMC contacts)

2. Coordinator will then reach out to both individuals to explain mediation, determine eligibility, and schedule it if everyone agrees to participate.

HCEC & RAA/Community Mediation Center Contacts List

HCEC/RAA	Associated Community Mediation Center	Contact Information
Hearthway	UpSide413	Lynn Wallace: lynnw@upside413.org 413-344-4810
Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA)	Family Services of Central MA	Romina Ortiz: rortiz@sevenhills.org 508-796-1963 Wairimu Macharia: wamacharia@sevenhills.org 508-796-1971
Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI)	The Resolution Center (<i>Essex County</i>)	Arnold Armas: Arnold@resolutionnorthshore.org 978-219-9317
	Middlesex Community College Law Center (<i>Middlesex County</i>)	Michael Healey: healeym@middlesex.mass.edu 978-656-3342
Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority	Collaborative Resolutions Group	Kenzie Helmick: khelmick@crg-collab.org 413-636-1183
Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC)	Martha's Vineyard Mediation Center	Paula Reidbord: admin@mvmediation.org (508) 693-2199
Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development (LHAND)	The Resolution Center	Arnold Armas: arnold@resolutionnorthshore.org (978)219-9317
Metro Housing Boston (Metro/MHB)	Community Dispute Settlement Center	Sooty Heng, cdscintake@communitydispute.org 617-876-5376
NeighborWorks Housing Solutions	Greater Brockton Center for Dispute Resolution	Nancy Sarcevicz: nsarcevicz.gbcdr@gmail.com 508-897-2867
	Martha's Vineyard Mediation Center (<i>Bristol County</i>)	Paula Reidbord: admin@mvmediation.org (508) 693-2199
RCAP Solutions	Mediation Services of North Central MA	Teena Juby: Housing@mediationncm.org (978) 466-9595
South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC)	MetroWest Mediation Services	Li Morrison: li@metrowestmediation.org (508) 960-9336
	Metropolitan Mediation Services (<i>Norfolk County</i>)	Madeleine Duchene: Madeleine.Duchene@metromediation.org 617 241-0300 x2
Way Finders	UpSide413 (<i>Hampden County</i>)	Lynn Wallace: lynnw@upside413.org 413-344-4810
	Collaborative Resolutions Group (<i>Franklin, Hampshire County</i>)	Kenzie Helmick: khelmick@crg-collab.org 413-636-1183

HMP Community Mediation Centers

Community Mediation Center & Center Location	Names	Title	Email	Phone
UpSide413, Pittsfield (formerly Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority)	Kayla Allen Lynn Wallace	Program Director Case Coordinator	kayla@upside413.org Lynnw@upside413.org	413 344-4812 413-344-4810
Collaborative Resolutions Group, Greenfield	Alyssa Hunt Kenzie Helmick	Executive Director Case Coordinator	ahunt@crg-collab.org khelmick@crg-collab.org	413-774-7469 413-636-1183
Community Dispute Settlement Center, Cambridge	Pedro Spivakovsky-Gonzalez Sooty Heng	Executive Director Case Manager	pedro@communitydispute.org cdscintake@communitydispute.org	617-876-5376 351-220-8087
Family Services of Central MA, Worcester	Sabrina Allfrey Romina Ortiz Wairimu Macharia	Director Case Coordinator Housing Coordinator	Sallfrey@sevenhills.org Rortiz@sevenhills.org wamacharia@sevenhills.org	508-796-1949 508-796-1963 508-796-1971
Greater Brockton Center for Dispute Resolution, Brockton	Ron Fredey Nancy Sarcevicz	Coordinator HMP Coordinator	Rfredey@gmail.com nsarcevicz.gbcdr@gmail.com	508-897-2868 508-897-2867
MetroWest Mediation Services, Framingham	Seth Izen Li Morrison	Executive Director Coordinator	Seth@metrowestmediation.org li@metrowestmediation.org	508-872-9495 508-960-9336
Middlesex Community College Law Center, Lowell	Michael Healey	Executive Director	healeym@middlesex.mass.edu	978-656-3342
Mediation Services of N Central MA, Leominster	Lisa Wood Teena Juby	Executive Director Case Coordinator	lwood@mediationncm.org Housing@mediationncm.org	978-466-9595 978-728-9686
Metropolitan Mediation Services, Brookline	Antonio P. Castro Aranda Madeleine Duchene	Executive Director Case Coordinator	Antonio.Castro@metromediation.org Madeleine.Duchene@metromediation.org	617-241-0300 x6 617-241-0300 x2
Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program, Vineyard Haven	Paula Reidbord	HMP Case Manager	Admin@mvmediation.org	508-693-2199
The Resolution Center, Beverly (formerly, North Shore Community Mediation Center)	Anya McDavitt Arnold Armas	Executive Director Case Manager	anya@resolutionnorthshore.org Arnold@resolutionnorthshore.org	978-232-1212 978-219-9317



QUESTION BREAK



Resources

RAA Resource Portal

Only for RAA staff, this resource provides key updates, training and learning opportunities, and helpful information to support programs including FAQs.

Zendesk Training Materials

Only for RAA staff, this resource offers helpful info on processing within HHH/Salesforce

RAFT Public Resource and Training Portal

Resources are available for **public** community-based organizations and other partners with information about the RAFT program.



THANK YOU!

