Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)
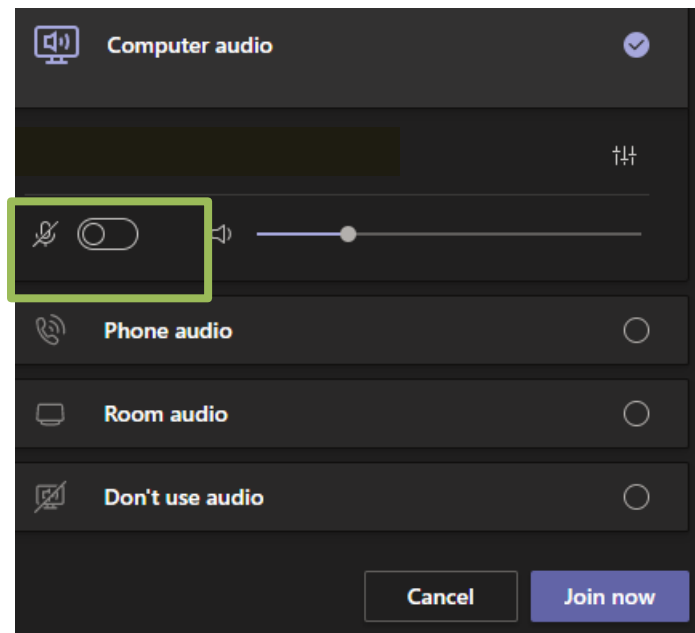## *Data Quality*

April 23, 2021

Last Updated: 4/23/2021

ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Please Mute

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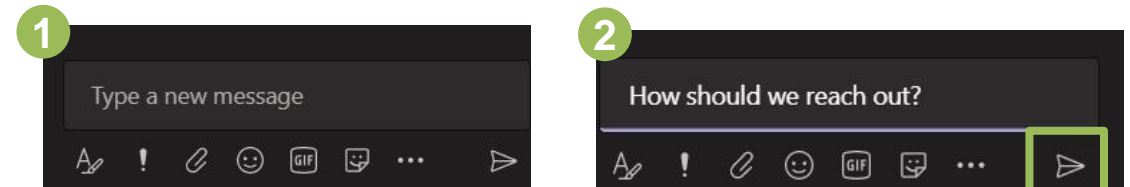

Engage During Meeting

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

WELCOME

Our Journey Today
1 HOUR

📋 **Objective & Introduction**	5 mins
🖊 **Data Quality**	
📄 **ERAP Helpful Policy Reminders**	20 mins
❓ **Questions**	
⇨ **Wrap Up**	25 mins

Purpose

Review guidance related to data quality to support **overall data quality and accuracy**

Goal

Provide RAA staff with **guidance and continued support** during the implementation of ERAP

DATA QUALITY

DATA QUALITY OVERVIEW

Data quality is a **critical input to effective compliance**; without complete and accurate data, it is very difficult to determine program eligibility, compliance and fraud.

WHAT

Data Quality refers to quality management techniques to proactively monitor, measure and improve data accuracy, completeness and timeliness.

All RAA staff responsible for entering data in HAPPY are responsible for ensuring that the data is accurate and complete prior to payment processing or when new information is provided that may impact an applicant's program eligibility.

WHY

Maintaining data quality is critical for:

Program eligibility: ensure all program eligibility determinations are accurate

Compliance: ensure DHCD adheres to federal and state guidelines

Fraud Detection: ensuring DHCD can monitor and detect fraud using data available

Reporting: ensure DHCD can meet Treasury reporting requirements, in addition to internal operational, compliance, and general program reporting needs

BENEFITS OF DATA QUALITY

Benefits of good data quality:

Increase trust, accuracy, and confidence in data

Enable more informed decision-making

Improve efficiency of application processing, given decreased time spent returning to correct errors

Key metrics for data quality include:

1   Percentage of processed payments with complete data- all required applicant data documented in HAPPY

2   Percentage of processed payments with accurate data- no applicant data errors

DATA DIMENSIONS DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

Data quality can be measured on several key dimensions.

Accuracy

The degree that data correctly represents the documentation and information provided.

Completeness

Certain fields are always assigned values or that all appropriate rows in a dataset are present.

Consistency

Ensuring that data values in one data set are consistent with values in another data set.

Timeliness

Required data is entered prior to eligibility determination and payment processing.

Uniqueness

No entity exists more than once within the data set.

Relevance

The degree to which information is relevant to the information provided.

DATA QUALITY | COMMON ERRORS

DHCD reviewed 926 processed payments and their corresponding applicant files to understand the most common data quality errors.

ERAP HAPPY Field	ERAP Data Errors Identified	Valid Field Criteria	Percentage of Sampled Files with Data Error (N=926)*
Earliest Date of Arrears	Earliest Date of Arrears field does not include year or is missing.	Earliest Date of Arrears field should include month and year	19%
ERAP Status	Errors include missing data or status other than "A" for a tenant with a processed payment.	Field should contain one of the following: "A" (Approved), "I" (Ineligible), "E" (Eligible- in process), "M" (Referred to Mediation), "CI" (Closed out/Timed out).	14%

*Processed payments made between 03/25/21 and 04/01/21 (N=926). Tenant IDs corresponding to the processed payments were used to identify applications for HAPPY data quality review.

DATA QUALITY | COMMON ERRORS

DHCD and RAAs will work together to monitor data quality on a weekly basis in order to understand common data quality pain points and trends over time.

ERAP HAPPY Field	ERAP Data Errors Identified	Valid Field Criteria	Percentage of Sampled Files with Data Error (N=926)*
Total Arrearage	Total Arrearage is missing or zero.	Total Arrearage should not be missing and should be greater than zero if 'Arrearage: # of Months' Paid is >0.	**14%**
Housing Type	Housing Type is missing or Homeowner (ERAP recipients should not be homeowners).	The following HAPPY codes are valid for ERAP recipients: MRVP, No subsidy, Other, Public Housing, Section 8, Tax Credit (LIHTC).	**10%**

*Processed payments made between 03/25/21 and 04/01/21 (N=926). Tenant IDs corresponding to the processed payments were used to identify applications for HAPPY data quality review.

PRACTICES TO AVOID DATA ERRORS

✓ Confirm that the Application Approval/Denial Date occurs after the Application Start Date.

✓ If 'Total Arrearage' is greater than zero, the 'Arrearage: # of Months Paid' field should not be blank.

✓ ERAP recipients should never have a 'Housing Type' of Homeowner or 'Payment Type' of MST (mortgage stipend) or MOR (mortgage arrears)

✓ If an applicant's 'Housing Type' is MRVP, Other, Public Housing, or Section 8, 'Payment Type' should not be a stipend (FLM, FMR, STP).

✓ The 'Notes' field should not be used to capture any data that should otherwise be captured in a required field.

✓ Ensure ERAP Status is set to Approved before processing payments.

A list of all required HAPPY fields and valid data entries can be found here:
https://www.mass.gov/doc/happy-data-dictionary/download

DATA QUALITY BEST PRACTICES

Relevant HAPPY Field(s)	Best Practices
Housing Type **Monthly Rent**	▪ If an applicant's **Housing Type** is Public Housing or Section 8, and the applicant's monthly rent is greater than ~$1,500, double-check the file to ensure both selections are true, as these housing types should mean lower monthly rent amounts. ▪ If an applicant's **Housing Type** is No Subsidy, the applicant's **Monthly Rent** should not be zero and typically should not be under ~$500.
Total Arrearage **Arrearage: # of Months Paid**	▪ If an applicant has **Total Arrearage** listed, **Arrearage: # of Months Paid** should not be zero. ▪ If an applicant has **Arrearage: # of Months Paid** greater than zero, **Total Arrearage** should not be zero.

Practice three cases in data quality.

How to Participate

1. Go to **Menti.com** on your smartphone or computer browser.
2. Enter the code **9026 2041** into the field shown to the right

Mentimeter

Please enter the code

12 34 56

Submit

The code is found on the screen in front of you

ERAP POLICY REMINDERS

COVID-RELATED HARDSHIP

Households need to select the checkbox and provide a brief description of the hardship to certify that they have experienced a COVID-related hardship. The applicant does not need to prove their hardship beyond that.

SELF-REPORTED INCOME

Applicants can now self-certify their cash income as a last resort. RAAs must attempt all methods of income verification before allowing self-certification of income.

INCOME DEFINITIONS

For ERAP, RAAs should use the ERAP and HUD Income definitions.

For RAFT and ERMA, RAAs should use the RAFT/ERMA Income Definitions.

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.

Friday, April 30th

Next week's Office Hours topic will cover ERAP Utilities.

QUESTIONS

THANK YOU!