

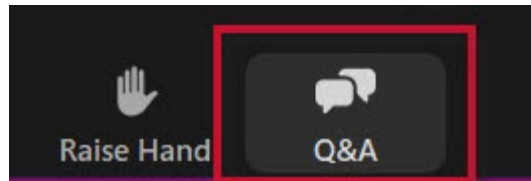


# WELCOME

## Asking Questions

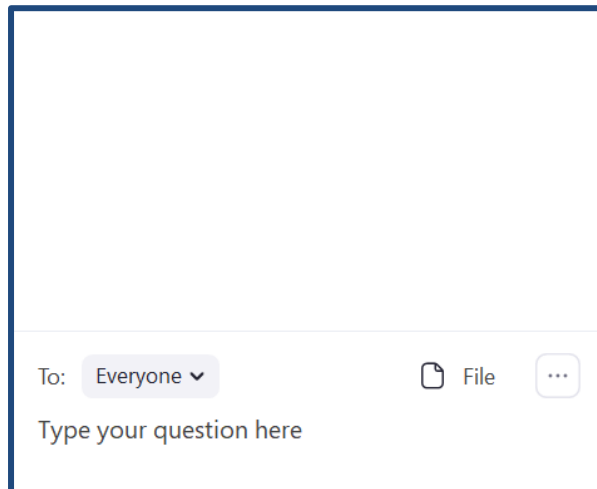
**We will be monitoring the Q&A for questions**

1



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

2



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



## Purpose



Discuss policy updates and reminders for ERAP and RAFT

## Goal



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



# Our Journey Today

60 MINUTES



**Welcome, Goals, & Objectives**

**5 mins**



**Hotel/Motel Guidance**



**Manufactured Homes Guidance**



**Advocate Notifications**

**40 mins**



**Denials Due to Policy Changes**



**Questions & Answers**



**Support & Resources**

**15 mins**



# HOTEL/MOTEL GUIDANCE



- New guidance issued Wednesday, 1/12 about households living in hotels and motels
- In most cases hotel/motel residents will not qualify for ERAP/RAFT rental assistance
- However, DHCD is now allowing ERAP/RAFT funds to be used for hotels/motels in limited cases
- If the household is approved, ERAP will cover arrears and stipends, just like at a rental unit

Applicants residing in a hotel or motel seeking ERAP or RAFT benefits to pay arrearages owed to the hotel or motel owner must meet all of the following criteria before receiving a rental assistance award:

- ✓ Received a Notice to Quit and/or a court summons and complaint for eviction
- ✓ Lived in the motel or hotel for at least 12 consecutive months
- ✓ Meet all other ERAP/RAFT eligibility, including providing proof of housing and proof of rent amount



# MANUFACTURED HOMES GUIDANCE



- Hotel/motel memo also included guidance on manufactured homes (mobile homes and houseboats)
- Some mobile homes or manufactured housing require rental payments or occupancy fees for:
  - The land these structures occupy (i.e., “pads”)
  - The water these structures occupy (i.e., houseboats)
  - The structures themselves
- ERAP/RAFT can cover **rental** fees for these buildings and/or the land/water they occupy, even if the applicant owns the mobile home or houseboat itself, as long as the rental agreement/amount is clearly documented
- Applicants in this type of housing may also be eligible for utility arrears and moving assistance (though not for funds to move the structure itself)



# ADVOCATE NOTIFICATIONS



## When should applicants be notified for application status changes?

Applicants must be notified in writing by phone, email, or mail at the below status changes. *Advocates must be notified at the same identified status change points as the applicant.*

- Receipt of application
- Upon review, if there is missing documentation
- Upon application close-out or denial, stating reason.
- Upon approval, copying the tenant on landlord terms of agreement to participate

Evidence of the notifications to the applicants, utilities, and landlords must be maintained in the files for audit purposes.



# Reminder: Advocate Notifications

- DHCD has received feedback that advocates are not always receiving follow up notifications
- Reminder that RAAs and the RAP Center **MUST include advocates in all status notifications** if the advocate has checked off that they have consent to communicate on behalf of the applicant

☒ Yes ☐ No

**Advocate**

**Advocate Name \***

First  MI  Last

**Relationship to Applicant \***

**Language Preference of Person You're Applying for \***

**Advocate Phone Number \***

**Advocate Email \***

**Agency/Organization Name**

**Advocate Consent Confirmation \***

☐ Please check this box to confirm you have consent to submit this application on behalf of the applicant.

☐ Please check this box to confirm you have consent to communicate regarding this application on behalf of the client.





# UTILITIES CLARIFICATION





- Under the new policies effective 1/1/22, households who are requesting **utilities only** should **not** be offered three months of rental stipends
- Future stipends are only available to **movers** or **households with arrears**



# DENIALS FOR HOUSEHOLDS AFFECTED BY RECENT POLICY CHANGES



# Denials due to recent policy changes

- Some RAAs have asked for sample “other” language in cases where they are denying households who no longer qualify because of the recent policy changes
- Here is some language you can use

Other: New policy effective 1/1/22 requires households to owe arrears before being eligible for rental assistance, unless they are moving.

Other: New policy effective 1/1/22 ended the ERAP recertification process. However, if you fall behind on rent again in the future and have not already used 18 months of ERAP, you may reapply at that time at [applyhousinghelp.mass.gov](https://applyhousinghelp.mass.gov).

Other: Effective 1/1/22, the RAFT program no longer serves homeowners. (Send with HAF referral letter that DHCD created for homeowners being denied RAFT, available on resource portal.)



# QUESTIONS



# SUPPORT & RESOURCES

# Summary and Reminders



The [RAA Resource portal](#) has been updated with a summary memo and new admin plans reflecting the **new ERAP and RAFT policy changes** that will go into effect on **January 1, 2022**:

1. Rent arrears required for “Pre-Court Rental Assistance” crisis (now called “Pre-Court Rental **Arrears**”) for both ERAP and RAFT
  2. ERAP Recertifications ending
  3. No RAFT after (or alongside) ERAP
  4. New RAFT Benefit Limit of \$7,000
  5. No RAFT for Homeowners
- Direct links:
    - [Memo of Summary of RAFT and ERAP Policy Changes](#)
    - [ERAP Admin Plan \(Effective 1/1\)](#)
    - [RAFT Admin Plan \(Effective 1/1\)](#)
    - [Eviction Legal Services Website](#)

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## RAA Resource Portal

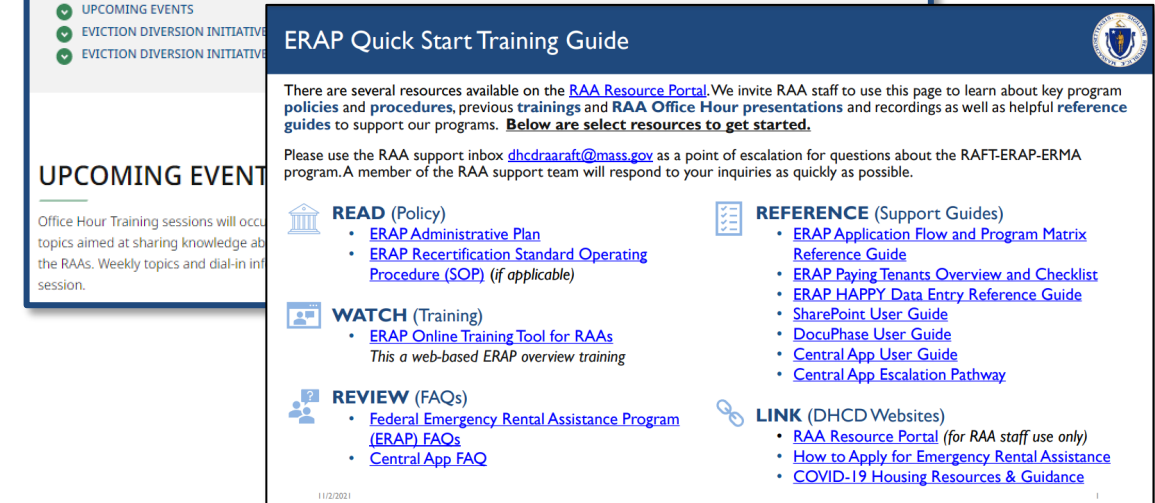
Central resource to provide RAA staff with key updates, training and learning opportunities, and helpful information to support programs

- [ERAP Quick Start Training Guide](#)

2

## FAQs

Comprehensive list of FAQs spanning a variety of topics





## Further Questions

Direct questions to your supervisor and then contact the **RAA** support inbox ([dhcdraaraft@mass.gov](mailto: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!

