

January 30, 2017

As you know the Coalition and allies were at the forefront of the fight for deeper investments in upstream homelessness prevention services. In FY'17, due to your support, our expansion language to the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program was adopted and the program was given an additional \$500,000 to begin serving applicants who do not have dependent children under the age of 21.

Thank you so much for supporting our efforts to expand access to RAFT last year. For FY'18, the Coalition and partners are asking the Legislature to deepen the overall investment in RAFT by increasing funding to \$18.5 million, up from the FY'17 funding level of \$13 million. We recommend that \$14.5 million be dedicated to families with dependent children under the age of 21, and \$4 million be dedicated to applicants who are eligible under the new definition of family included in the FY'17 budget, including elders, people with disabilities, unaccompanied youth, and families without dependent children.

According to the 2015-2016 RAFT report published by the Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts, investing \$12.5 million into RAFT in FY'16 saved the Commonwealth an estimated \$137 million, by avoiding the higher costs of emergency shelter. By accessing RAFT assistance, households remained stable on average 351 days (11.5 months) before having to access another resource dedicated to prevent or address homelessness. More than half of RAFT funding went to assist families with rent arrears, first and last month's rent, and security deposits. After receiving assistance, 95% of RAFT households used the aid to better their living situation without the need for more RAFT aid in the subsequent year.

Please join our efforts to adequately fund RAFT at \$18.5 million by signing on as an organizational endorser. Your support is vital when speaking to State Representatives and State Senators when asking them to speak up for increased RAFT funds for FY'18 to help more families and individuals across the Commonwealth to have a safe and stable place to call home.

Sign on by easily filling out this form -- [FY'18 Organization Endorsement](#)

Thank you for continuing to support our efforts of working toward ensuring everyone has a place to call home. I look forward to working with you throughout this fiscal year.

Sincerely,

Tina Giarla

To read the report, RAFT in Massachusetts 2015 – 2016: A survey of the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program in its entirety, please visit: <https://goo.gl/wu8hxl>