



RAAP Campaign

*Prevent homelessness by funding the
Rent Arrearage Assistance Program*

LEGISLATOR CALL SCRIPT

Legislative offices receive numerous phone calls on any given day. The person who answers the phone will likely be a staff member working for your legislator, rather than the elected official, but might not be the best person to receive your message. When calling, first identify yourself as a constituent, and ask to speak with the staff member that deals with homelessness, housing, or poverty issues. Once you are on the phone with the right staff member, introduce yourself by sharing who you are and where you live. If you are calling on behalf of your organization, let the staffer know about your organization's mission and the communities you serve.

Example 1: "Hi, thank you so much for taking my call. My name is Jane Doe, and I live in Cambridge. I see the lack of affordable housing hitting my community every day, and many of us residents have nowhere to turn to for help when we fall behind on our monthly rent."

Example 2: "Hi, thank you so much for taking my call. My name is Joe Smith, and I work for a social services organization in Greater Springfield that seeks to address the material needs of low income people. We serve people in Springfield, West Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke. We see the high costs of housing having a negative impact on our clients on a daily basis."

Then, continue by sharing your support for addressing the housing instability that low income people across the Commonwealth experience, by restoring the rent arrearage assistance program.

"The intersection of rapidly increasing housing costs, an inadequate supply of affordable homes, and wages that aren't increasing fast enough leads to people with the lowest incomes living in homes they cannot truly afford. Across the Commonwealth, 60% of the lowest income renters pay more than half their limited incomes on rent. When an accident, emergency, or any other unexpected decrease in household income arises, vulnerable households can find themselves on a quick and traumatic downward spiral of missed rent or mortgage payments, eviction, and homelessness.

"The best way to prevent eviction, and the homelessness that can occur after an eviction, is to prevent that eviction from ever taking pace at all. That's why I am asking Representative [REP. NAME]/Senator [SEN. NAME] to cosponsor and help us advance House Docket 2395, introduced by Representative Marjorie Decker. House Docket 2395 will restore the statewide rent arrearage assistance program, and provide low income people who are behind on rent or mortgage payments with a cash assistance resource to help them stay in their homes, and avoid becoming homeless.

"Will Representative [REP. NAME]/Senator [SEN. NAME] cosponsor House Docket 2395? Would you like me to send you any follow up information? Thank you very much for your time and service in the State Legislature."

Continued on next page

LEGISLATOR CALL SCRIPT CONT.

If you have to leave a voicemail, keep it as concise as possible, to make sure your message gets across.

Example 1: “Hi, my name is Jane Doe, and I live in Cambridge. The combination of the high cost of housing, the lack of affordable homes for the lowest income people, and wages that don’t match the cost of living causes far too many people to struggle. Right now, we have nowhere to turn for help in staying in our homes when we fall behind on rent or mortgage payments. That’s why I’m asking Representative [REP. NAME]/Senator [SEN. NAME] to cosponsor and help us advance House Docket 2395, introduced by Representative Marjorie Decker. House Docket 2395 will restore the statewide rent arrearage assistance program, and provide low income people who are behind on rent or mortgage payments with a cash assistance resource to help them stay in their homes, and avoid becoming homeless. Massachusetts households with the lowest incomes cannot wait any longer for this crucial policy solution for preventing both eviction and homelessness. I hope I can count on the support of Representative [REP. NAME]/Senator [SEN. NAME] on House Docket 2395. Thank you.”

Example 2: “Hi, my name is Joe Smith. I work for a social services organization that provides material needs to low income people in Springfield, West Springfield, Chicopee, and Holyoke. We see the high cost of housing having a negative impact on our clients on a daily basis. Right now, there is nowhere to turn for help in remaining housed when people fall behind on rent or mortgage payments. That’s why I’m asking Representative [REP. NAME]/Senator [SEN. NAME] to cosponsor and help us advance House Docket 2395, introduced by Representative Marjorie Decker. House Docket 2395 will restore the statewide rent arrearage assistance program, and provide low income people who are behind on rent or mortgage payments with a cash assistance resource to help them stay in their homes, and avoid becoming homeless. Massachusetts households with the lowest incomes cannot wait any longer for this crucial policy solution for preventing both eviction and homelessness. I hope I can count on the support of Representative [REP. NAME]/Senator [SEN. NAME] on House Docket 2395. Thank you.”

After your call, please get in touch with the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, to let us know how it went. Sharing any information or feedback you receive from legislative offices well help us remain best equipped to advocate for House Docket 2395 and restoration of the rent arrearage assistance program.

Looking for names and phone numbers for your state legislators? Head to the website of the Massachusetts State Legislature at: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>. This lookup tool will provide the names and contact information for your State Representative and State Senator, based on a physical address. If you’re interested in contacting legislators on behalf of an organization, it’s possible that the cities and towns you serve are represented by more than one State Representative and State Senator. For help identifying your elected officials, or to make sure you’ve reached all legislators that represent the cities and towns you serve, call or send an email to the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless at the contact information below.

For more information, contact James Saucedo at james@mahomeless.org / 781-595-7570 x 33 or Kelly Turley at kelly@mahomeless.org / 781-595-7570 x17. The RAAP Campaign is a campaign of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. Learn more at www.mahomeless.org/advocacy.

