

LINE ITEM 7004-9316

RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM



**Strengthen the RAFT Homelessness Prevention Program in Fiscal Year 2019:
Increase funding to help more low-income households avoid or exit homelessness**

The Residential Assistance for Families in Transition Program (RAFT, Line Item 7004-9316) is designed to allow eligible households to receive a maximum of \$4,000/year in flexible funds to help avoid or exit homelessness. Typical uses for RAFT include funds for rent, mortgage, or utility arrears, first and last months' rent, startup costs, moving expenses, related household expenses, and/or employment-related transportation costs. RAFT provides short-term financial assistance to households with incomes at or below 50% of area median income (AMI). At least 50% the funds are dedicated to households with incomes below 30% AMI. RAFT is a program of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and is administered by 11 regional agencies across the Commonwealth.

For FY 2019, 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'18 funding level of \$15 million, and to maintain FY'17/FY'18 language that expanded the definition of family. 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 expanded definition of family included since FY'17, including elders, people with disabilities, unaccompanied youth, and families without dependent children.

- **With \$18.5 million in FY'19, an estimated 5,685 households would be able to receive immediate resources to prevent homelessness**, based on the average FY'17 RAFT expenditure of \$3,254/household (including the \$539 administrative fee per household approved).
- In FY'17, the RAFT program served 3,980 families and 124 individual households statewide.
- RAFT provides families with children with an alternative to entering the Emergency Assistance (EA) shelter system. An added benefit of the program is that it also helps to stabilize families in need whose incomes, although very low, make them ineligible for shelter.
- RAFT continues to be a flexible tool for households with low incomes, helps households avoid or exit homelessness, and plays an important role in the Commonwealth's comprehensive approach to upstream homelessness prevention.

Please actively support increasing RAFT funding to \$18.5 million and maintaining expanded eligibility language for FY'19 to help more families and individuals across the Commonwealth to have a safe, stable place to call home.

For more information, please contact the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless: Tina Giarla, tina@mahomeless.org, 781-595-7570 x16 or Kelly Turley, kelly@mahomeless.org, x17 or the Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts: Maureen Fitzgerald, mfitzgerald@regionalhousing.net, 617-367-9798.



Current Organizational Endorsers:

Action for Boston Community Development, Action Inc., AIDS Action Committee, Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT), Allston Brighton Health Collaborative, Arise for Social Justice, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC), Boston Center for Independent Living, Boston Homeless Solidarity Committee, Boston Homeless Union Local 1, Boston Tenant Coalition, Bridge Over Troubled Water, Brockton Area Multi Services, Inc., Cardinal Medeiros Center, Center Board Lynn, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, City Mission Boston, Community Action Agency of Somerville, Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc., Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care, Community Health and Advocacy Subcommittee of the Student Leadership Committee, Ecumenical Social Action Committee, Family Promise North Shore Boston, Father Bill's & Mainspring, First Church Shelter, Friends of the Homeless North Weymouth, Habitat for Humanity North Shore, HAP, Inc., HomeStart, Housing Families Inc., Hunger and Homelessness Division of the Brandeis University Waltham Group, Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, Justice Resource Institute, League of United Latin American Citizens, Life Bridge, Lowell Transitional Living Center, Lynn Economic Opportunity (LEO), Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development, Lynn Shelter Association, Mandela Residents Cooperative Assoc., Inc. Massachusetts Association for Community Action, Massachusetts Alliance for HUD Tenants, Massachusetts Home Care, Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, Massachusetts Senior Action Council, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, Mission and Justice Ministry of Park Avenue Congregational Church UCC, My Brothers Table, North Shore Community Action Programs (NSCAP), Pax Christi USA - Beverly, Peabody Housing Authority, Pine Street Inn, Plymouth Taskforce to End Homelessness, Poor People's United Fund, Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts, River House, Rosie's Place, Samaritans Steps, Sojourner House, Somerville Homeless Coalition, Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services, South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness, South Middlesex Opportunity Council. Francis House, St. Matthew's United Methodist Church, Student Leadership Committee of the Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care, The Psychological Center, Those Who Can, For Those in Need, Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness, Women's Lunch Place, and Youth Harbors

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