Expand the RAFT Homelessness Prevention Program in Fiscal Year 2017:
Increase eligibility and 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 applicants to receive a maximum of $4,000 in flexible funds to assist with moving costs and/or preventative measures to reduce the chance of homelessness, such as rent, mortgage or utility arrears, first and last month's rent, utility startup costs, other household related expenses, and/or employment-related transportation costs. RAFT was established to provide short-term financial assistance to families with incomes at or below 50 percent of AMI, with at least 50% of the funds dedicated to families with incomes below 30% of area median income (AMI). RAFT is a program of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) that is administered by 10 regional agencies across the Commonwealth.

For FY 2017, the Coalition and partners are asking the Legislature to expand the RAFT definition of family to cover households of all sizes and configurations so as to allow unaccompanied adults and those without children in the household to also access homelessness prevention resources. We also are asking for an increase in overall funding to $18.5 million, up from the FY'16 funding level of $12.5 million.

- RAFT helps families who are at risk of experiencing homelessness and needing shelter to remain housed and to end their housing instability.
- RAFT currently provides assistance of up to $4,000 in a 12-month period to help families pay security deposits, first and last month’s rent, moving expenses, rent, utility and mortgage arrears, and other housing-related expenses.
- With $18.5 million, an estimated 6,346 households would be able to receive immediate resources to prevent homelessness, based on the average FY'15 RAFT expenditure of $2,915/family.