

Last Updated: January 8, 2021

RAFT Policy Guidelines Summary

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition



Policy Guidelines

The key updates to the RAFT program (as of 1/11/2021) are outlined below. Managers/staff should read the entire Administrative Plan to gain a thorough understanding of the RAFT program policies.

1. Maximum benefit level increased



The new maximum benefit limit is **\$10,000** for all types of RAFT and housing crisis options

There is no longer a combined benefit limit between RAFT and HomeBASE

2. Sustainability requirements no longer in effect



No more “6-month rule”

No more “presumption of future sustainability”

3. Simplified housing crisis list



Now categorized into 10 groupings:

- 1) Pre-court rental assistance
- 2) Eviction
- 3) Overcrowding
- 4) Health & safety
- 5) Pre-foreclosure mortgage assistance
- 6) Foreclosure
- 7) Domestic violence
- 8) Fire/flood/natural disaster
- 9) Utility shutoff
- 10) Other crisis that will result in imminent housing loss

4. Expansion of all housing crisis types



All eligible housing crisis options receive the same RAFT benefit

Benefits can be used to:

- a) stay in current housing, or
- b) move to new housing

5. Consolidation of programs



“Upstream RAFT” pilot program merged into Standard RAFT program.

RAAs must distinguish between Standard RAFT and COVID RAFT, tracked on the application

6. Automatic income eligibility



Income limits are 50% area median income (AMI), bumped to 60% if affected by domestic violence

DTA/MassHealth recipients are automatically income-eligible

Non-DTA/MassHealth households must verify income

7. Streamlined approval processes



RAAs are encouraged to re-examine approval processes

RAA management works with RAA to ensure two sets of eyes review each application

8. Reduced reporting requirements



Denials are tracked in HAPPY and RAAs can provide **limited** data for ineligible households in HAPPY

9. Introduction of the Rental Assistance Processing (RAP) Center



Assist RAAs with overflow and application backlog