



FY2016 Legislative Budget Priorities: Residential Assistance to Families in Transition

Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT) (Line Item: 7004-9316)

Recommendation:

- Preserve language that dedicates funds to families that are most at-risk of becoming homeless.

FY2015 funding:	\$11 million
FY2016 Governor's budget recommendation:	\$11 million
FY2016 CMHA budget recommendation:	\$14.5 million

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) is a statewide homelessness prevention program that provides flexible funds to very low-income, at-risk families avoid homelessness or re-establish tenancy. RAFT is a better and more cost-effective alternative to emergency shelter, which costs the Commonwealth an average of \$100 per family per day (\$21,000 per average stay). RAFT often runs out before the end of the fiscal year, just as the number of families accessing shelter increases.

RAFT helps families who are behind on rent, mortgage payments, or utility bills. Funds can also be used to pay for security deposits, first month's rent, utility start up costs, and basic furniture. RAFT can even be used to pay for car repairs to ensure that a household member can get to work. Eligible families may receive up to \$4,000 within a 12-month period.

In FY 2013, RAFT was redesigned and expanded to provide extremely low income families facing housing emergencies with a better, lower-cost alternative to shelter and was funded at \$8.76 million. The funds were fully expended statewide by April of 2013. In FY 2014, funding was increased to \$10 million with \$500,000 earmarked for temporary accommodations and was again depleted by April. The FY15 allocation increased to 11 million and is expected to be depleted over the next few weeks.

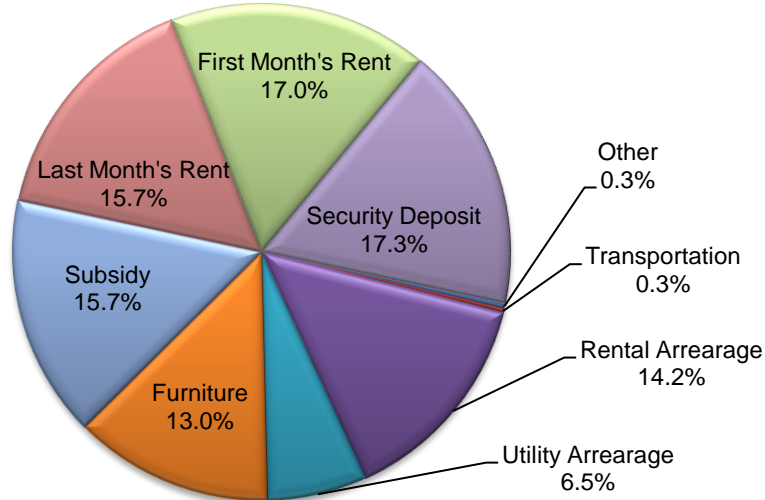
Our Request: Increase funding to \$14.5 million allowing for the funds to last through the fiscal year instead of being depleted just as the number of families accessing shelter increases. Preserve the language that allocates 90% of the funds to extremely low income households with incomes below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI), protecting a vital resource to the most at-risk households who are more likely to enter shelter. Within current guidelines, 100% of the allotment was expended before the end of the fiscal year in FY13, FY14 and is expected to be depleted in the next few weeks for FY15 showing an underserved need by this population.

In Worcester County: RAFT is administered by two providers: the Central MA Housing Alliance, Inc. and RCAP Solutions. Combined, these agencies distributed a total of \$795,881 in RAFT funds during Fiscal Year 2014. With \$332,223 in RAFT funds distributed by CMHA, 113 households were assisted with an average grant amount of \$3,002 per household.

(See reverse for more RAFT information)

For more information regarding this item, please contact:
Grace Carmark of the Central MA Housing Alliance at gcarmark@cmhaonline.org

CMHA RAFT Allocation FY14



Funding Allocation	
Number of Households	113
Number of Persons	413
Adults	175
Children	238
Cash Assistance	
Average Assistance	\$3,002
Total Assistance Amount	\$332,223.12
Household Location	
Cherry Valley	1
Clinton	1
Douglas	1
Fitchburg	2
Gardner	1
Leicester	1
Lunenburg	1
Milford	1
Northborough	1
Paxton	1
Shrewsbury	1
Southbridge	3
Webster	3
West Boylston	1
Worcester	94
# of Housing Subsidies	23
Composition of Assisted Households	
Head of Household	
Female	89.4%
Male	10.6%

Composition of Assisted Households Cont	
Average Age	33.3
Employed	50.4%
Disabled	23.9%
Avg. Gross Annual Income	\$18,950
Marital Status	%
Divorced	6.2
Domestic Partnership	10.6
Married	10.6
Separated	5.3
Single	65.5
Widowed	1.8
Average Family Size	3.7
% Single Parent Household	66.4
Ethnicity	%
African American / Black	20.4
Asian	0.9
Client Refused / Unknown	0.0
Hispanic	46.9
American Indian	0.9
Other	0.9
White	30.1
Education	%
Certificate	0.9
College Degree	8.0
Did not Complete High School	36.3
High School or GED	42.5
Some College	12.4

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