



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Charles D. Baker, Governor ♦ Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor ♦ Janelle Chan, Undersecretary

FY20 RAFT Rent Arrears Pilot

In FY20, a pilot program aimed at preventing homelessness upstream allows the RAFT administering agencies to screen households under three new housing crises:

1. Upstream Rent Arrears – Market Rent
2. Upstream Rent Arrears – Subsidized Rent
3. Upstream Mortgage Arrears

Households applying under these housing crises must provide all of the following verifications, in addition to all other documentation required as part of a RAFT application:

1. Notice of rent arrears issued by the rental property owner *or* notice of mortgage arrears issued by mortgage lender
2. Demonstration of a financial hardship (reduction in revenue, increase in expenses, and/or subsidy calculation issues that cannot be resolved) that caused the nonpayment of rent
3. Demonstration that payment of the arrears will allow the household to retain their housing

A portion of the \$21M FY20 appropriation has been designated to assist households through this pilot program. Up to \$4,725,768—the funding allocated in the FY20 legislative language from the Housing Preservation and Stabilization Trust Fund—is allocated to serve households who qualify under the Upstream Rent Arrears or Upstream Mortgage Arrears housing crises. In addition to the above criteria, households must meet all other RAFT eligibility criteria outlined in the Program Guidance in order to be approved for funds through the upstream prevention pilot. The upstream prevention pilot funds have been designated for the Traditional Population and the Expanded Population in proportion to the overall amount of assistance allocated for each of these populations.

RAFT Upstream funds may only be used to pay rent or mortgage arrears. They may not be used for other RAFT payment types such as rental stipends, security deposits, furniture, etc

Households may only receive RAFT Upstream funding one time in a 12-month period. If RAFT Upstream fails to prevent the household from developing a “downstream” RAFT housing crisis, the household can apply for RAFT with that housing crisis. However, the total amount of funding issued over a 12-month period cannot exceed the RAFT benefit limit of \$4,000 per household.