ACCESSING RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES IN TRANSITION (RAFT)

RAFT allows 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). There may be additional funding and expanded eligibility in the coming weeks and months.

LYNN HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
39 Curwin Terrace, Lynn, MA 01905 | Phone 339-883-2342

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Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program and COVID-19 State of Emergency
The new funding of $5 million enables the RAFT program to create a special program for households facing instability as a result of a COVID-19 related housing crisis due to a loss of wages or increase in expenses (e.g. medical expenses).

Moratorium Extended
Due to financial constraints occasioned by the lockdown and similar initiatives meant to curb the spread of the coronavirus, Eversource, National Grid and Columbia Gas of Massachusetts are suspending the collection of payments up to the month of April. Those with outstanding bills are required to speak with the utility companies to come up with a payment plan. Customers will still have to clear the debts accrued once the state of emergency is lifted. The COVID-19 outbreak has led to an increase in scam activity. Be wary of any unsolicited calls that threaten to disconnect your utility service and that demand payment by unusual means. Utility companies will never ask for your personal information over the phone in this manner and do not accept payments via gift cards or other common tools used by scammers.

Eversource is supporting their customers through this challenging time, by:
• Suspending disconnection of service for non-payment.
• Eliminating late payment charges.
• Offering a special, flexible payment plan— with no down payment – for any past-due amount.
• Providing energy saving tips and resources to help you manage any potential increase in your energy use and costs now that many families are spending their weekdays at home.

For additional details, go to eversource.com

National Grid is suspending disconnections and late fees during COVID-19. National Grid is temporarily suspending collections-related activities including service disconnections, to lessen any financial hardship the COVID-19 pandemic may have on customers. These policies are effective immediately and will be in place through the end of April. They will evaluate their continued need at that time. Regular billing will continue for all customers.

For additional details, go to nationalgridus.com