

January 6, 2021

Dear Boston Public Schools Families:

Happy New Year! I hope you and your loved ones enjoyed a restful holiday break. I am writing to share some important information on housing stability in the City of Boston.

On **January 31, 2021**, the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) federal eviction moratorium will expire. At the same time, many people may be losing unemployment benefits. If you are a renter who is having trouble paying rent, or is worried that you and your family will soon be evicted, the Office of Housing Stability is here to help.

If you are behind on rent, the [City of Boston Rental Relief Fund](#) is **available and accepting applications**. The Fund assists residents who are experiencing difficulty paying their rent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It pays up to \$4,000 in rental assistance for overdue or future rent.

Immigration status does not affect Rental Relief Fund eligibility. The Fund is **not** considered in the federal "public charge" test. Assistance from the Rental Relief Fund is not one of the "cash" or "non-cash" benefits listed in the public charge rule.

You can also apply for state [RAFT funding](#), which offers up to \$10,000 of flexible financial assistance.

If you are a tenant in a Boston Housing Authority (BHA) building, the Mayor recently announced an extension on the moratorium on nonessential evictions for BHA public housing residents until March 1, 2021. The moratorium offers housing stability to BHA's public housing residents and reduces coronavirus risks associated with the processing of its nonessential eviction cases. Nonessential evictions include all eviction proceedings except for those related to criminal activity, and those that are necessary to protect the health and safety of BHA residents, employees, and others.

If you are a landlord and your tenants are having trouble paying rent, you should share this information with them.

The State also has [ERMA](#), which can provide up to \$10,000 of rental and mortgage assistance to households who have been impacted by the crisis and may not be eligible for RAFT.

If you are a renter who is being evicted, the Office of Housing Stability wants you to know that there is **free legal assistance available**. You should call the legal aid organizations listed below **as soon as possible at**:

- Greater Boston Legal Services; (617) 371-1234
- Harvard Legal Aid Bureau; (617) 495-4408
- Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School; (617) 390-2535



If your landlord has given you a Notice to Quit, you may choose to, but do not have to, move by the move out date your landlord has provided in the notice to quit. **Only the court can order you to leave your home.**

Your landlord should have also given you a [Notice of Tenants Rights and Responsibilities](#). This information is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Portuguese](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Cape Verdean Creole](#), [Haitian Creole](#), [Somali](#), [Russian](#), [Vietnamese](#), or [Arabic](#).

If you have received a Summons and Complaint and have a hearing scheduled, you may have access to a free lawyer. During your hearing, **you must ask to speak to this lawyer.**

The Office of Housing Stability can help you with all of these things, and do so in the language you speak. Visit [boston.gov/housingstability](http://boston.gov/housingstability), email [housingstability@boston.gov](mailto:housingstability@boston.gov), or call 617-635-4200 for help.

All my best,



Dr. Brenda Cassellius  
Superintendent