

The *Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts*
has been in existence since 1978. It comprises a network of ten regional housing agencies and administrative staff in Boston and Northampton. For over 35 years, member agencies have been providing housing and related services on a regional basis in every part of Massachusetts.

It is a network whose members, as **housing** industry leaders, provide a multitude of options to their local citizens:

- **Rental Assistance:** Network members provide rental assistance to over 21,000 families and individuals across the state.
- **Housing Development and Management:** Members have developed thousands of units of affordable family, farm worker, elderly, and accessible rental housing as well as new single family housing, single room occupancies, housing with support services, and community residences for people who are disabled.
- **Housing Consumer Education Centers:** Members offer tenants, rental property owners, and homeowners assistance in resolving housing difficulties. They are the front line for housing crisis response and offer information on, and help in, applying for financial assistance for rent, utility, and other emergency needs.
- **Property Owner Services of the Housing Consumer Education Centers:** Members offer training in property management and landlord law through workshops, manuals, and financial counseling.
- **Home Ownership:** Members assist first-time homebuyers through pre-purchase counseling, first-time homebuyer workshops, and help in obtaining low-cost mortgages. They have run sweat equity programs in rural areas. They also provide services to existing homeowners such as home modification resources and foreclosure counseling.
- **Housing Rehabilitation:** The member agencies help lower income homeowners and small landlords finance the cost of repairs, lead paint removal, weatherization, and energy conservation.
- **Homeless Services:** The agencies provide legal and other assistance to help families avoid homelessness. Member agency staff are active participants in regional efforts to end homelessness. Staff assist homeless families in finding housing and many members operate shelters for families and individuals. All of the member agencies participate in administration of Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT), one of the state's homelessness prevention programs.
- **Technical Assistance:** Member agencies help community groups, municipalities, and housing authorities develop affordable housing programs. Mechanisms include assistance with concept development, grant writing, staff training, and other start-up support.

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