

TOP TEN FAQ'S:

FUEL ASSISTANCE
AND
WEATHERIZATION
INFORMATION
FOR LANDLORDS



VLP
LANDLORD

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE
NATIONAL CONSUMER LAW CENTER



DISCLAIMER

**THESE GUIDELINES ARE FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.
THE LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND REQUIREMENTS INFORMING
THESE GUIDELINES CAN CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.
WHEN PURSUING AN EVICTION CASE, PLEASE CHECK FOR THE
MOST UP-TO-DATE CITY, STATE, AND FEDERAL
(INCLUDING CDC) REQUIREMENTS.**



IN COLLABORATION WITH



"I'M A LANDLORD.
I WANT TO FILE AN EVICTION,
BUT MY TENANT'S UNIT
CURRENTLY HAS NO HEAT.
WHAT SHOULD I DO FIRST?"

It's best for you, the landlord, to address the heating problem first because lack of heat would give the tenant both a potential defense and counterclaim in the eviction case. See Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 239, section 8A. Section 8A is a complicated law, and a landlord planning to file an eviction case when there is not working heat in the unit should seek advice of legal counsel.



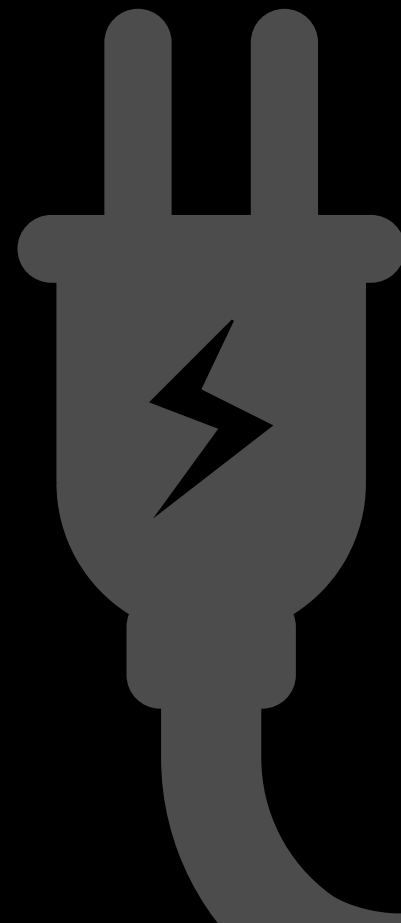
"I'M A LANDLORD.
MY FURNACE BROKE DOWN.
WHERE CAN I GO FOR HELP?"



During the winter, the landlord has the obligation to provide a working heating system. If you are a low-income landlord, there are programs that can repair or replace malfunctioning or inoperative heating systems. It is possible that in FY24, HEARTWAP, a program that provides heating system assistance, may be able to assist with true heating emergencies for low-income homeowners. Note that if a common heating system serves all units, HEARTWAP is not available to help. The Massachusetts sanitary code requires the owner to maintain that common heating system. If there are individual heating systems, tenants may be eligible for HEARTWAP. If you are not considered low-income, Mass Save might have incentives available, particularly if the landlord wants to switch to an air source heat pump.

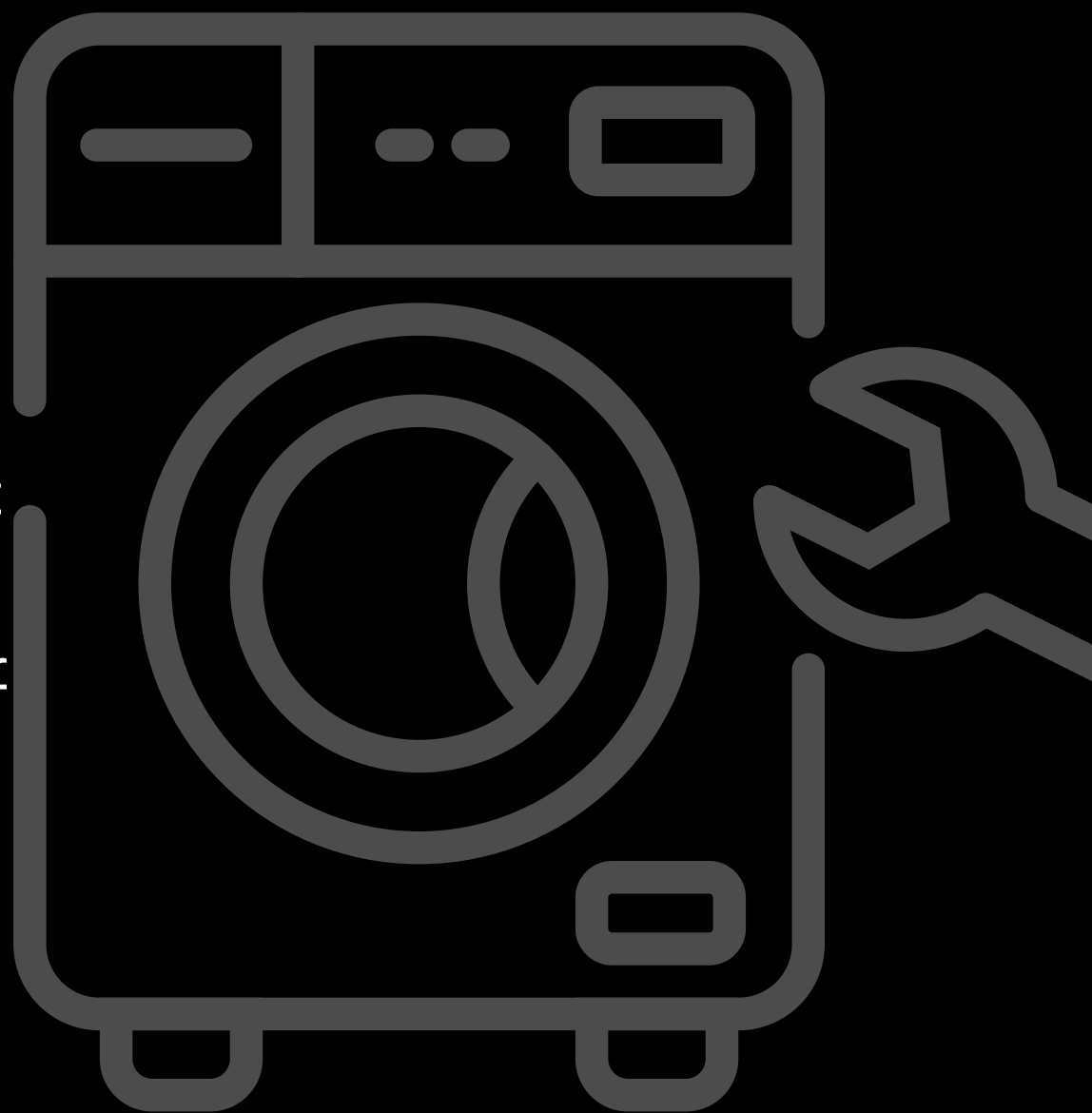
"I'M A LANDLORD.
WHERE CAN I APPLY FOR
UTILITY ASSISTANCE IN MY
TOWN?"

The Cold Relief brochure answers this, for each city and town in the state. The landlord is not eligible unless they are low-income and an owner occupant.



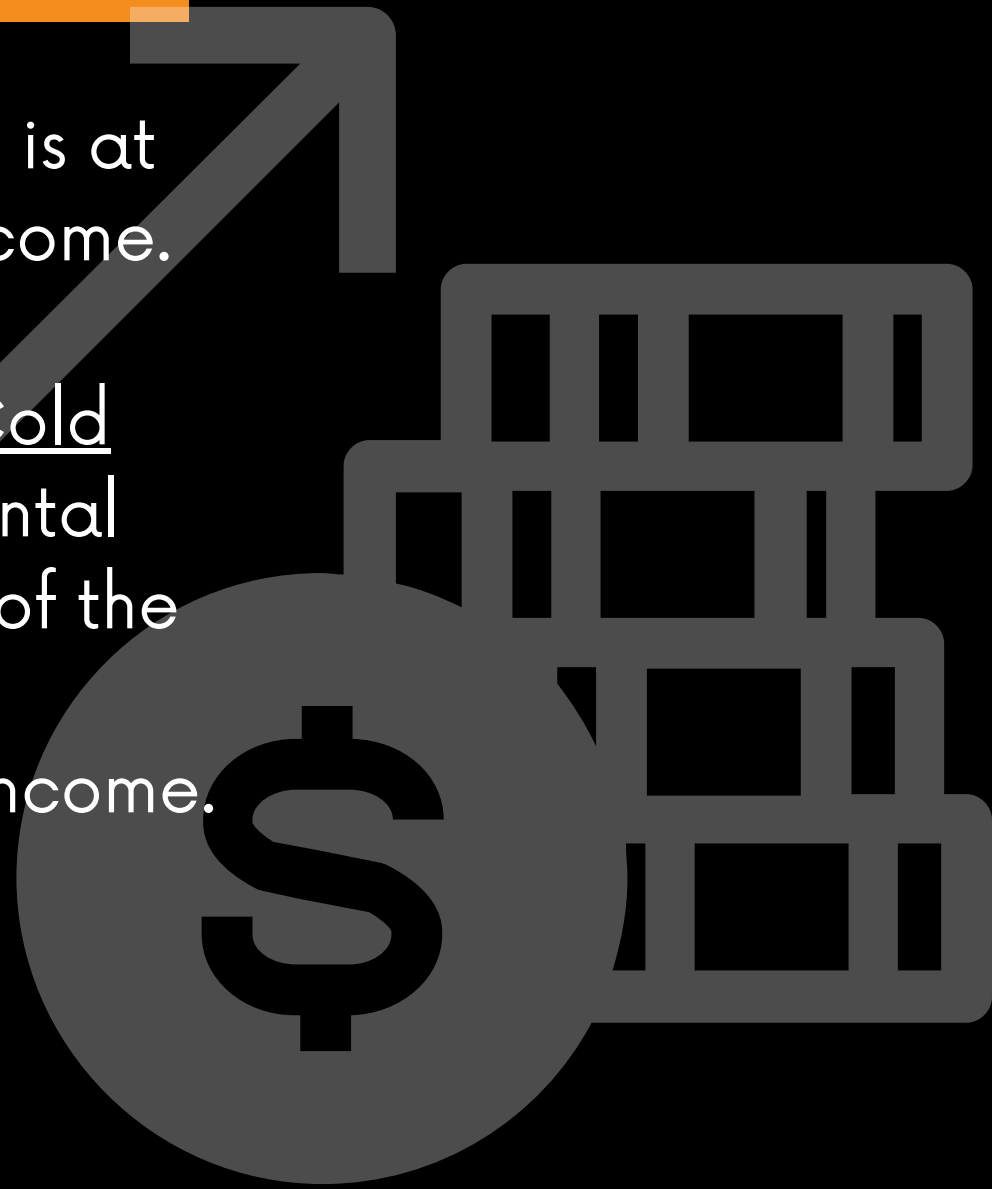
"I'M A LANDLORD.
WHAT WOULD IT COST
FOR WEATHERIZATION
ASSISTANCE?"

It's free for low-income tenants and for low-income owner-occupant landlords. Mass Save has incentives for non-resident owners/non-low-income owners. Costs of weatherizing vary widely by the size and configuration of the unit(s), the extent of existing weatherization, and other factors.



"I'M A LANDLORD.
ARE THE WEATHERIZATION
PROGRAMS ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA BASED ON MY
INCOME?"

Households are eligible if income is at or below 60% of state median income. The actual dollar amounts, by household size, are in the [FY 24 Cold Relief brochure](#). Eligibility in a rental property is based on the income of the tenants and, if there is an owner-occupant, including the owner's income.



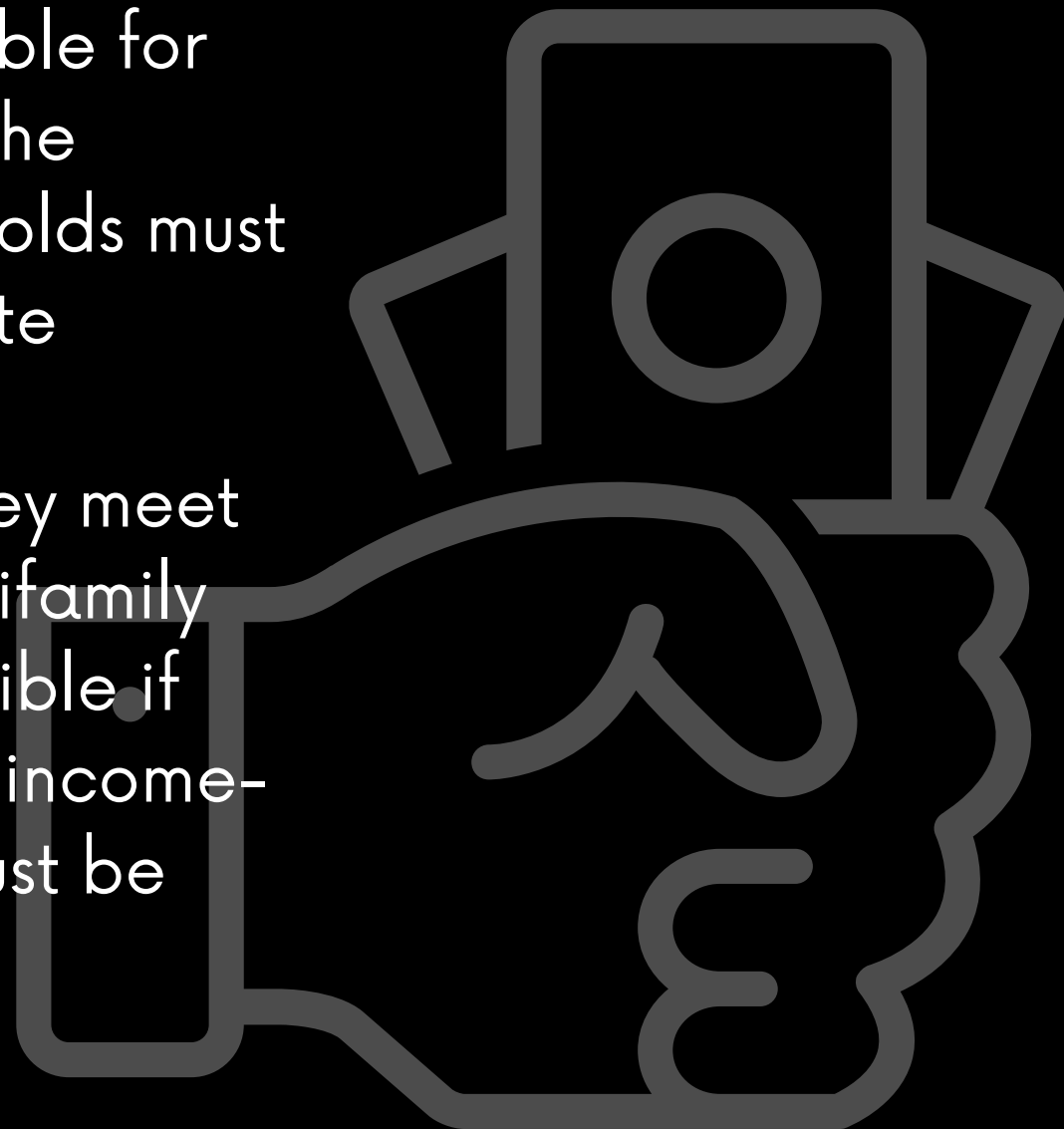
"I'M A LANDLORD.
ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS
THAT ASSIST WITH DAMAGED
PROPERTY?"

We do not have information about this,
but if you have homeowner's insurance,
we suggest contacting them.



"I'M A LANDLORD.
WHAT DO I NEED
TO DO TO QUALIFY
FOR WEATHERIZATION
ASSISTANCE?"

For anyone to be income eligible for free weatherization services, the income of the relevant households must be at or below 60% of the state median income. Low-income homeowners are eligible, if they meet that income requirement. Multifamily buildings with tenants are eligible if 50% or more of the units have income-eligible tenants (but 2 units must be eligible in a 3-unit building).



"I'M A LANDLORD.
HOW CAN I SEPARATE MY TENANT'S
UTILITIES FROM MY UTILITIES?"

Contact your utility company about specific metering installation options. Separate meters for each apartment in a multi-unit building are possible whenever the tenant is legally required to pay the utilities for an apartment while the Landlord pays for all other utilities that service the common areas (hallways, front steps, etc.)

A rental property may have (1) A master meter where you, the Landlord, pay all utility service (electric and/or gas); or (2) a master [Landlord-paid meter] for some utility service (e.g., a common gas-fired heating system that services the whole building) and individual tenant meters for electric usage. Utility service and related billing are separated, or combined, based on the metering configuration.

The law requires that a tenant must agree in writing if the expense of utilities is to be the tenant's responsibility.



"I'M A LANDLORD.
DOES THE WEATHERIZATION
PROGRAM ASSIST WITH
BROKEN APPLIANCES?"

The low-income energy programs include a component to replace or upgrade old appliances (primarily, refrigerators) but the tenants must be income eligible, as noted previously.



"I'M A LANDLORD.
WHAT PROGRAMS CAN ASSIST ME
WITH RENTAL ARREARAGE?"

The Massachusetts government runs a program called RAFT that provides financial assistance to tenants. In some cases, it can also help cover expenses like security deposits for new apartments or moving expenses. However, the money provided by RAFT does not go directly to the tenants. It goes to landlords, movers, or other people the tenant owes money to. As of August 2023, RAFT will provide up to \$7,000 for a family in a one-year period. For more information and to learn how to apply for RAFT, visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/how-to-apply-for-raft>



**IF YOU NEED LEGAL ADVICE OR ASSISTANCE
CALL 857-320-6452
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