



SHERA Program Overview

April 21, 2021

Last Updated: July 7, 2021



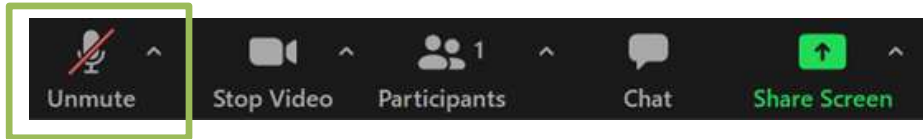
7/7/2021

ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES



Please Mute

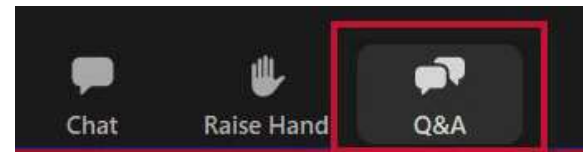
Please join the meeting muted during the session to keep interruptions to a minimum



Asking Questions

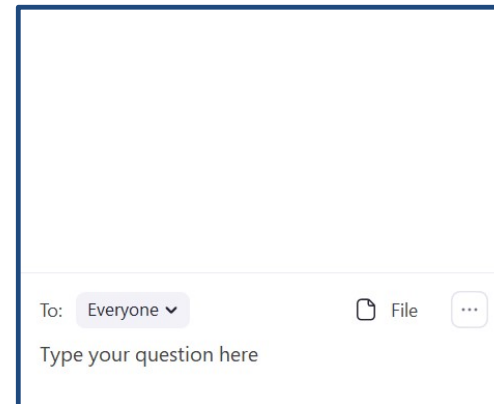
We will be monitoring the Q&A for questions

1



Click “Q&A” to open the chat window

2



Enter your question into the chat

We will follow up with answers to any questions that we don't get to during the session.

THIS CALL IS BEING RECORDED



MEET YOUR FACILITATORS



Henry Mukasa

Cynthia Mohammed

Robert Muollo

TRAINING SUPPORT

- Viva Consulting
- Accenture





Our Journey Today

60 MINUTES



Training Goals & Objectives



SHERA Program Overview



SHERA Owner Journey



SHERA Eligibility



Required Documentation



Questions



Reminders & Next Steps





Purpose



Review the new **Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) Program** and provide an understanding of the new program and policies

Goal



Provide guidance to better support property owners and tenants who are eligible for SHERA

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! MENTI LIVE POLLS



What ROLE do you play at your property / site?

How to Participate

1. Go to **Menti.com** on your smartphone or computer browser.
2. Enter the code **5686 3224** into the field shown to the right



Please enter the code

Submit

The code is found on the screen in front of you



SHERA PROGRAM OVERVIEW



The **Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) Program** is a federally funded emergency housing assistance program for renters impacted by COVID-19.



SHERA helps residents of public and affordable housing clear rent arrearages (unpaid back-rent) from the eligible SHERA period (18 months starting on April 1, 2020).



Eligible owners of rent-restricted properties will be able to **apply for assistance with their rental arrearage accounts on behalf of all their income-eligible residents** with rental arrears.

SHERA COLLABORATION



Leverage the Massachusetts affordable housing owner and property management network to help residents pay COVID-related rent arrears from the eligible 18-month SHERA period starting on April 1, 2020.

- Owner-based, online process to apply on behalf of multiple residents in a single application.
- Take advantage of the compliance work already done by owners of subsidized housing.
- Build on pledge of working with tenants to divert eviction due to rent arrearages.
- Support the existing emergency rental assistance delivery system.
 - Owners will continue to refer tenants to the RAAs for utilities and moving expenses

DHCD in partnership with MassHousing and Massachusetts Housing Partnership (“MHP”)



SHERA PROGRAM ROLLOUT OVERVIEW



We implemented a **“soft launch” (Pilot)** of the SHERA program, wherein pilot members were prepared to apply to the program through the system.

- Volunteer owner working group, comprised of private and public owners
- Geographic and property type diversity

Next, we opened the application to other owner groups:

Phase 1: MassHousing and MHP borrower relationship

Phase 2: Housing Authority portfolio and DHCD subsidy portfolio

Phase 3: 40B and 40R properties not included in the two previous groups



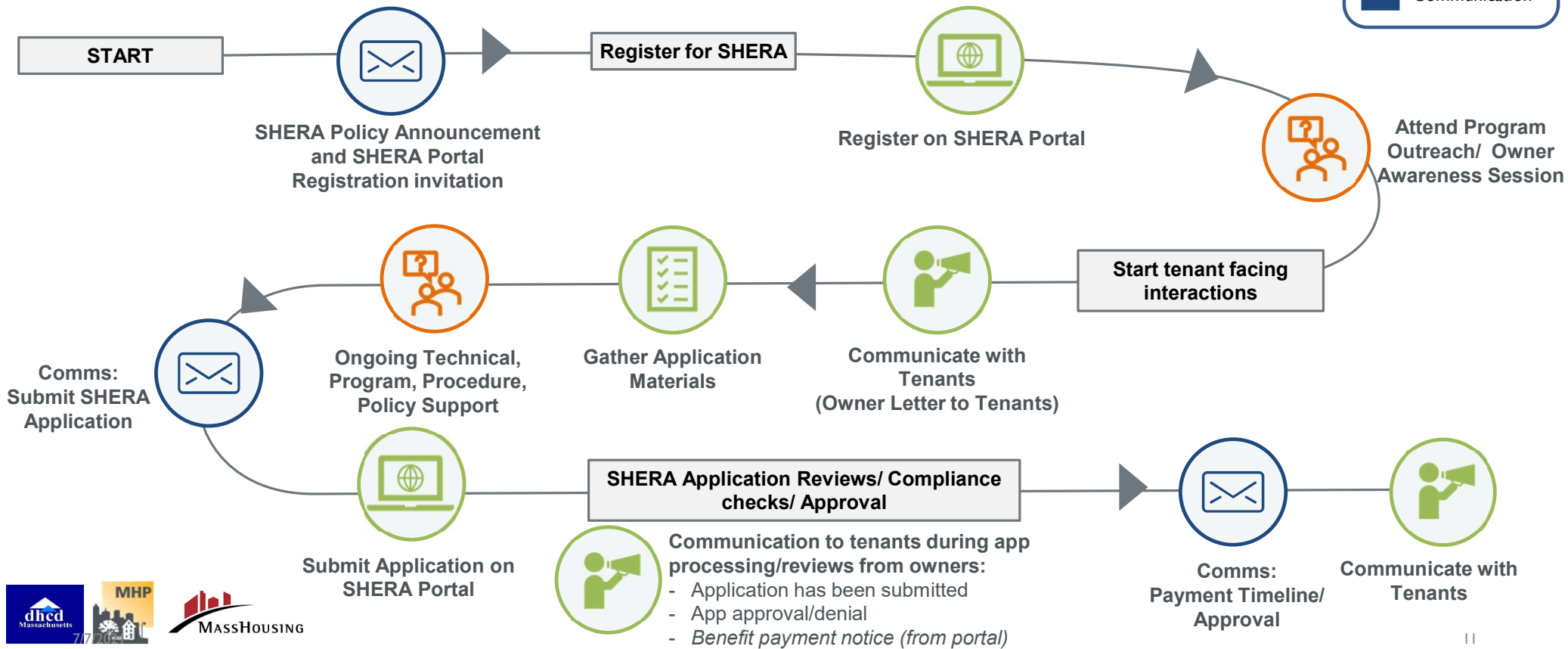
SHERA OWNER JOURNEY



KEY

- Actions
- Support
- Communication

Owners can generally expect to follow this journey if they're participating in SHERA once they're eligible to register and apply. **Note:** *not all owners will be eligible to apply at this time.*





OWNER ELIGIBILITY DEEP DIVE



7/7/2021

OWNER ELIGIBILITY: CRITERIA I – THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY



One of the following three conditions must be satisfied:

- 1** The owner has an existing borrower relationship with MassHousing or Massachusetts Housing Partnership AND their sponsor is in good standing with MassHousing and MHP; **OR**
- 2** Sponsor is a Public/Local Housing Authority; **OR**
- 3** The sponsor has at least one property subject to use restrictions due to participation in a state or federal program that has 20 or more rental housing units.



Criteria 2: In Good Standing

An owner is only eligible to participate in SHERA if its sponsor is in good standing, that is, if neither the owner nor its property is in active default with MassHousing, MHP, or DHCD. Sponsors with properties in forbearance are still considered to be in good standing.



Criteria 3: Compliance Experience

Owners or their designated representatives (for example, property managers) must have three years' compliance experience, and at least one staff member holding certification in compliance training recognized by the affordable housing industry. A list of approved compliance certifications is included at the end of the SHERA Policy Guidance discussed in the Resources and Next Steps section near the end of the presentation. P/LHAs are exempt from this requirement as administrators of public housing.

OWNER ELIGIBILITY: CRITERIA 4 – OWNER OBLIGATIONS (1/3)



Owners participating in the program will be required to sign an **Owner Agreement** which outlines their responsibilities and commitments. Principal among these are the commitments to:

- ✓ Apply the benefit to the tenant account within 30 days of receipt of assistance payment;
- ✓ Suspend evictions and not initiate new evictions for non-payment of rent against households eligible for SHERA for at least 6 months after the last assistance payment is applied to a tenant's account in the same property (for P/LHA's, the 6 months start from the date the last assistance payment is applied to a tenants account in the P/LHA's entire portfolio);
- ✓ Reach out proactively to households who are behind in their rent;
- ✓ Engage proactively with residents in arrearage to create payment plans;
- ✓ Support and accept rental assistance payments;

OWNER ELIGIBILITY: CRITERIA 4 – OWNER OBLIGATIONS (2/3)



Owners participating in the program will be required to sign an **Owner Agreement** which outlines their responsibilities and commitments. Principal among these are the commitments to:

- ✓ Provide downward rent adjustments for income-based rents, as applicable;
- ✓ Encourage structured and interactive landlord-tenant mediation, including use of the state-funded no cost community mediation program
- ✓ Inform tenants when applications are submitted, when payments are received and applied, and if a payment is denied
- ✓ Instruct auditors to incorporate protocols into their 2021 property audits for review of SHERA funding applications and payments
- ✓ Repay SHERA funds, if such payment is duplicative or out of compliance

OWNER ELIGIBILITY: CRITERIA 4 – OWNER OBLIGATIONS (3/3)



Owners participating in the program will be required to sign an **Owner Agreement** which outlines their responsibilities and commitments. Principal among these are the commitments to:

- ✓ Obtain and retain required documentation on tenant eligibility
- ✓ Submit all required reports and requests through an online owner portal
- ✓ Certify with each submission that all information is correct and complete
- ✓ Be subject to compliance reviews



PROPERTY & HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBILITY



7/7/2021



Eligible owners will be invited to submit applications for properties meeting the following criteria:

- 1 Eligible properties are income-restricted affordable rental housing properties, owned by eligible owners, that:
 - (a) received state or federal subsidies for construction and/or rehab of income-restricted housing, **OR**
 - (b) currently receive project-based rental assistance under contracts administered by the Commonwealth or other state public or quasi-public agencies.
- 2 Eligible properties must be subject to an annual audit.

HOUSEHOLD ELIGIBILITY



For a household to be eligible for assistance through SHERA, the following criteria must be met:



Rental arrears must be from the eligible **18-month** SHERA period starting on **April 1, 2020**



The household has experienced a **financial hardship due to COVID-19**



The owner can demonstrate the renter household has **eligible rental arrearages**



The household has income **at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI)**

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION



If a tenant is eligible for **SHERA** assistance, the property owner must collect the following required documentation:

Income Certification Documentation

1. Most recent income certification
2. Alternative options for certifying income, if housing program recert is not required.

Tenant Certification

- COVID-19 Impact
- No Duplicative Assistance
- Permission for owner to apply on tenant behalf
- Assistance amount

Other

- **Last four of SSN.** Tenants do not need a social security number to be eligible.
- **Demographic Data** required by the Treasury



Owners notify tenant households on the application:

- Application has been submitted
- Requests for additional documents (if applicable)
- Application approval and payment to tenant account
 - The payment notice must specify the dollar amount of rental arrearages for which application has been made, the amount of reimbursement that the owner has received, and the months for which the payments have been applied to the tenant's account
- *Application denials will be provided by **DHCD***



RESOURCES & NEXT STEPS



7/7/2021



RESOURCES

- Review materials on the SHERA Portal Program Information tab <https://sherafunding.mass.gov/>
 - SHERA Policy Guidance



SUPPORT & QUESTIONS

- After reviewing the materials, if you have questions related to SHERA, please [submit a support ticket](#) on the Portal.

The screenshot shows the SHERA Home portal page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the email address SHERA@mass.gov, a language dropdown set to English, and links for Sign Up and Login. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "SHERA Home" with the subtitle "Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance". There are links for "Program Information" and "Home". A "Home" link with a house icon is also present. The main content area features a large blue banner with the text "WELCOME TO THE SHERA PORTAL" and a description of the program. A "Login Now" button is visible. Below the banner, there is a section titled "Steps to Complete the Application" and a note for "Attention Pilot Users". At the bottom, there is a section for "News & Announcements". The Massachusetts seal is visible on the right side of the banner.

NEXT STEPS



- 1 **READ** the [SHERA Program Policies](#) and the SHERA Owner Agreement
- 2 **REVIEW** the [SHERA application data fields instructions](#)
 - An [application template](#) is included on the SHERA website. This includes the information owners need to collect for tenants with rent arrearages to ensure a complete application. You may already have some of this data in your tenant management system.
 - Note: you will receive a notification when you are able to register and submit applications
- 3 **SEND/SHARE** the [Owner Letter to Tenants](#) and the [Tenant Certification](#)
 - The Owner Letter to Tenants is to inform residents about the program and the Tenant Certification is to verify eligibility and start collecting tenant permissions for the Owner to apply on their behalf. *These documents will be available in 7 languages.*





QUESTIONS



THANK YOU!



7/7/2021