



SHERA Program Overview

June 17, 2021

Last Updated: July 7, 2021



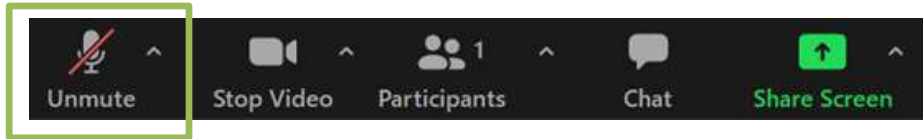
7/7/2021

ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES



Please Mute

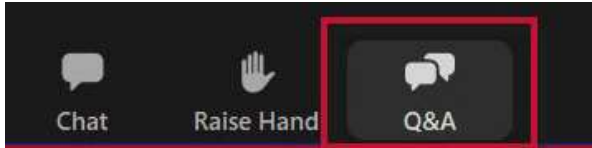
Please join the meeting muted during the session to keep interruptions to a minimum



Asking Questions

We will be monitoring the Q&A for questions

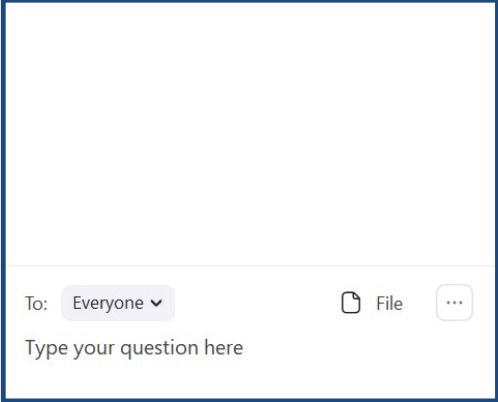
1



Click "Q&A" to open the chat window

A screenshot of meeting controls showing 'Chat', 'Raise Hand', and 'Q&A' buttons. The 'Q&A' button, which has a speech bubble icon, is highlighted with a red rectangular box.

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.

A screenshot of a chat input field. It shows a 'To:' dropdown menu set to 'Everyone', a 'File' button, and a text input area with the placeholder text 'Type your question here'.

THIS CALL IS BEING RECORDED



MEET YOUR FACILITATORS



Rob Muollo

Micqueen Clerger

TRAINING SUPPORT

Accenture





Our Journey Today

60 MINUTES



Training Goals & Objectives



SHERA Program Overview



SHERA Eligibility



Required Documentation



SHERA Pre-Screening



Reminders & Support



Questions





Purpose



Review the new **Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) Program** and provide an understanding of the 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](https://www.menti.com) on your smartphone or computer browser.
2. Enter the code **2071 7236** 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 on behalf of all their income-eligible residents** with rental arrears in a single application.



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

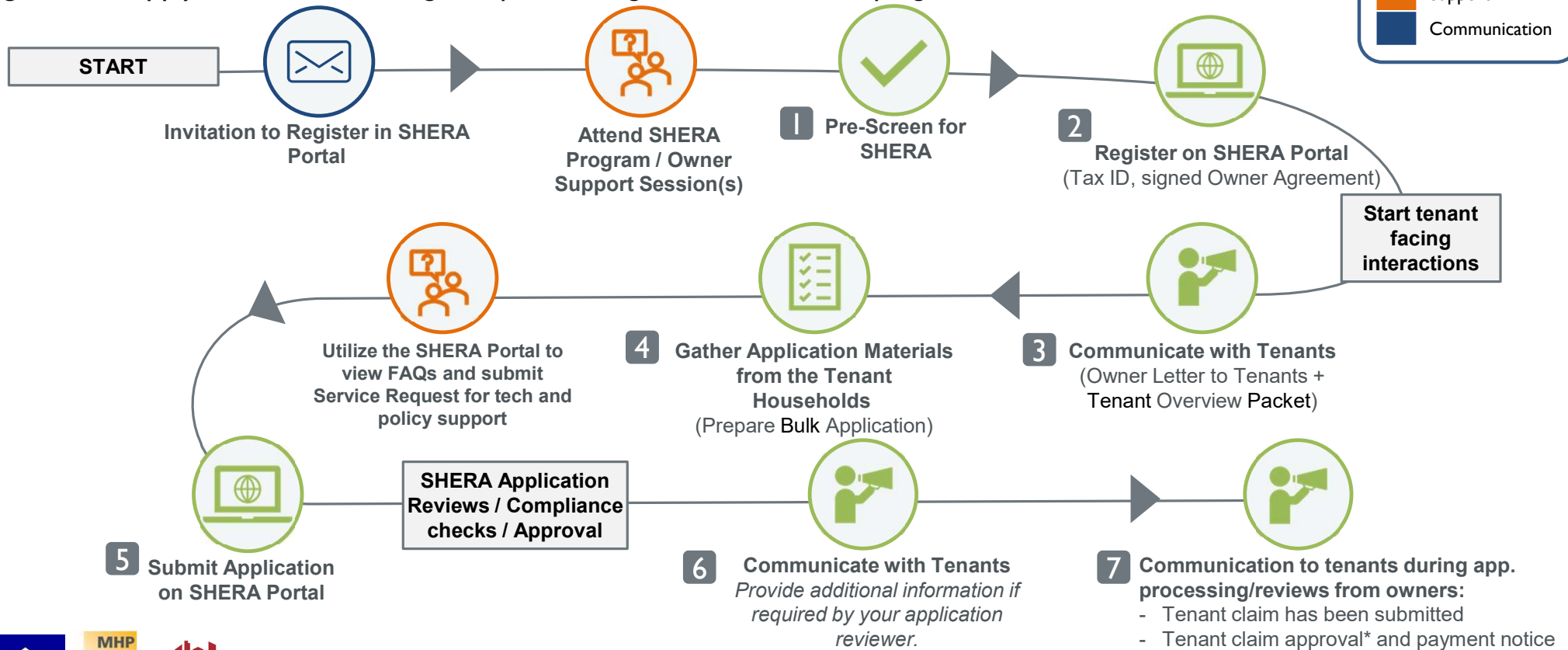
DHCD in partnership with MassHousing and Massachusetts Housing Partnership (“MHP”)



SHERA OWNER JOURNEY



Owners can generally expect to follow this journey if they're participating in SHERA once they're eligible to register and apply. **Note:** Pre-screening is required to register for the SHERA program.



*Tenant claim denials will be communicated to owners and tenants by DHCD



OWNER ELIGIBILITY DEEP DIVE



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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.

OWNER ELIGIBILITY: CRITERIA 2 & 3



Criteria 2: In Good Standing

Owners and their authorized property managers must be in good standing with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the federal government. The owner entity and its authorized management agent (if applicable) must submit a certificate of good standing from the Massachusetts Secretary of State. Entities will also be checked against state and federal debarment lists.



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.



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 currently in-process evictions and not initiate new evictions for non-payment of rent against eligible households that received SHERA for at least 6 months after the last assistance payment is applied to a tenant's account;
- ✓ Reach out proactively to households who are behind in their rent;
- ✓ Engage proactively with residents in arrearage to create payment plans;
- ✓ Promote program access to residents, support resident applications for rental assistance payments, and accept payments when made



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 pre-court 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



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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



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REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

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

Income Documentation

- Most recent income certification; or
- Documentation of benefits; or
- Documentation of income

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

INCOME CERTIFICATIONS



To certify income, owners can rely on:

Documentation already provided for the most recent recertification

If a recertification not completed and an exception was not provided, tenant household can provide:

Documentation of annual income

- A filed 2020 IRS Form(s) 1040 or 1040EZ, one covering each adult household member over 18, if filing separately

- OR -

Documentation of benefits

- A benefit letter dated January 2020 or later confirming any of the following benefits:
 - Veterans Chapter 115 benefits
 - DTA benefits
 - Subsidized childcare benefits
 - MassHealth benefits

- OR -

Documentation of monthly income for two months prior to application

- Unemployment benefit checks or bank statements
- Social Security benefit letter
- Two pay stubs
- Other proof of income

SHERA Tenant Certification of Rental Assistance Eligibility



SHERA Tenant Certification of Rental Assistance Eligibility form includes many of the data points that may not reside in the property management system

SHERA | Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance Program

CERTIFICATION OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) Program

PART 1: ASSISTED HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Property Name	Building Address	City/Town	Zip
Tenant Name (Head of Household)	Tenant Unit # (the "Unit")		
Tenant Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Last four digits of SSN		Office use only
Email	Phone		

Head of Household information

- 1) Do you have difficulty understanding English?
 - Yes
 - No
- 2) Is English your primary language?
 - Yes
 - No. What is your preferred language? _____
- 3) What is your gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Nonbinary
 - Choose not to respond
- 4) What is your race?
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian or Pacific Islander
 - Black or African American
 - White
 - Some other race
 - Choose not to respond
- 5) Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Choose not to respond
- 6) In addition to receiving formal written notices on your application status, do you also want to receive updates by email or by SMS text message?
 - Yes – with the phone number I provided
 - Yes – with the email I provided
 - No, please only send me written notices through the mail
- 7) The undersigned hereby certifies that (check all that apply):
 - I am listed as a tenant or sub-tenant on the written lease for the Unit
 - The Unit is my primary residence (the place where I live all or most of the time)
 - At any time since April 1, 2020, due directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 outbreak, I or another person in my household:
 - qualified for unemployment benefits;
 - lost income;
 - had increased costs; and/or

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SHERA | Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance Program

had other financial hardship. Briefly explain: _____

I or another person in my household have been unemployed for at least the last 90 days

8) I owe rent for the following months (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> April 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> May 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> June 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> July 2020
<input type="checkbox"/> August 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> September 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> October 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> November 2020
<input type="checkbox"/> December 2020	<input type="checkbox"/> January 2021	<input type="checkbox"/> February 2021	<input type="checkbox"/> March 2021

9) I am applying for a total of \$ _____ to cover unpaid rent owed to my landlord for all of the month(s) checked above.

PART 2: HOUSEHOLD CERTIFICATION

- I certify under penalty of perjury that all information and answers to these questions are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.
- I certify that I have not received and will not receive any other government assistance to pay for the same unpaid rent that I have requested above.
- I consent that my landlord or another person authorized by my landlord, such as my property manager, may apply for Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance for me.
- I consent and agree that any information needed to process an application for this assistance can be shared with my landlord and property manager, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD"), the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency ("MassHousing") or Massachusetts Housing Partnership ("MHP"), as well as other people or agencies who have contracts with either DHCD, MassHousing or MHP to help process applications for assistance.
- I understand that if MassHousing or MHP (or their agents), the Federal awarding agency, or an auditing agency finds that I have received an improper payment, I may have to repay some or all of the assistance provided by DHCD, MassHousing, MHP, or my landlord.
- I understand that it is a crime to lie or provide false information in this certificate or my application. I also understand that my application may be turned down if I have made statements that are not true or accurate.

Typing your name in the signature field below means that you are signing this document electronically. An electronic signature has the same meaning, validity, and effect as a handwritten signature.

Head of Household Signature
Date

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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
- If owner applies and the application is denied by DHCD, the denial notice will be provided by DHCD.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS



Owners who determine at the preapplication stage that a tenant is ineligible to apply for SHERA are expected to work with tenants who ask for a review of ineligibility determinations.

Notify the Tenant Immediately

The Owner must:

- Accept the tenant household's self-attestation of financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- Immediately notify the tenant of the reasons for ineligibility by sending a *SHERA Tenant Ineligibility Notice*. This notice will provide the tenant with the opportunity to ask the Owner for an administrative review, in writing, within 15 calendar days.

Conduct the Administrative Review

Once the Owner receives this request, the Owner must designate someone who did not make the initial determination to review all submitted documentation to determine whether the tenant is eligible for SHERA within 15 calendar days of receiving the request.

Communicate the Outcome

- If the Owner determines the tenant is eligible for SHERA, the Owner must apply on behalf of the tenant through the SHERA Portal; to notify the tenant of the application submission; and to continue with the SHERA claim process on behalf of the tenant.
- If the Owner confirms that the tenant is ineligible for SHERA, the Owner must notify the tenant of the decision. In the redetermination notice, the Owner must include BOTH:
 - A statement encouraging the tenant to notify the Owner of any changed circumstances in the future in case the tenant may then be eligible for SHERA
 - A listing of available rental assistance resources, including information on the no-cost community mediation program.





SHERA PRE-SCREENING



5/5/2021



SHERA PRE-SCREENING OVERVIEW

Owners of 40B, 40R, or LAUs are required to pre-screen for the SHERA program. Pre-screening will provide the SHERA program with required contact information and confirm that the property is eligible to participate in the SHERA Program by asking owners to:



Confirm property information, auditing frequency and that the owner is in good standing with the Massachusetts Secretary of State.



Certify compliance monitoring and that each participating property has an affordable housing restriction in effect



Provide an IRS Form W-9



May need to provide:

- Evidence of sponsor portfolio size (if property has fewer than 20 units)
- An address list (if property has multiple buildings with different addresses)



APPROVAL AND SHERA PORTAL ACCESS



Owners of properties that successfully pre-screen will receive an email with the following information to register in the SHERA Portal:



Instructions on how to register and submit bulk applications in the SHERA Portal



Links to training and key support materials engaging with tenants and participating the SHERA program



The unique Project ID of each property that successfully pre-screened

Note: If documentation is missing or is otherwise not approved based on the criteria above, the user will receive an email confirmation, including the reason(s) the owner entity / authorized agent is not eligible for SHERA, and additional emergency rental assistance options available for residents.





REMINDERS & SUPPORT



7/7/2021



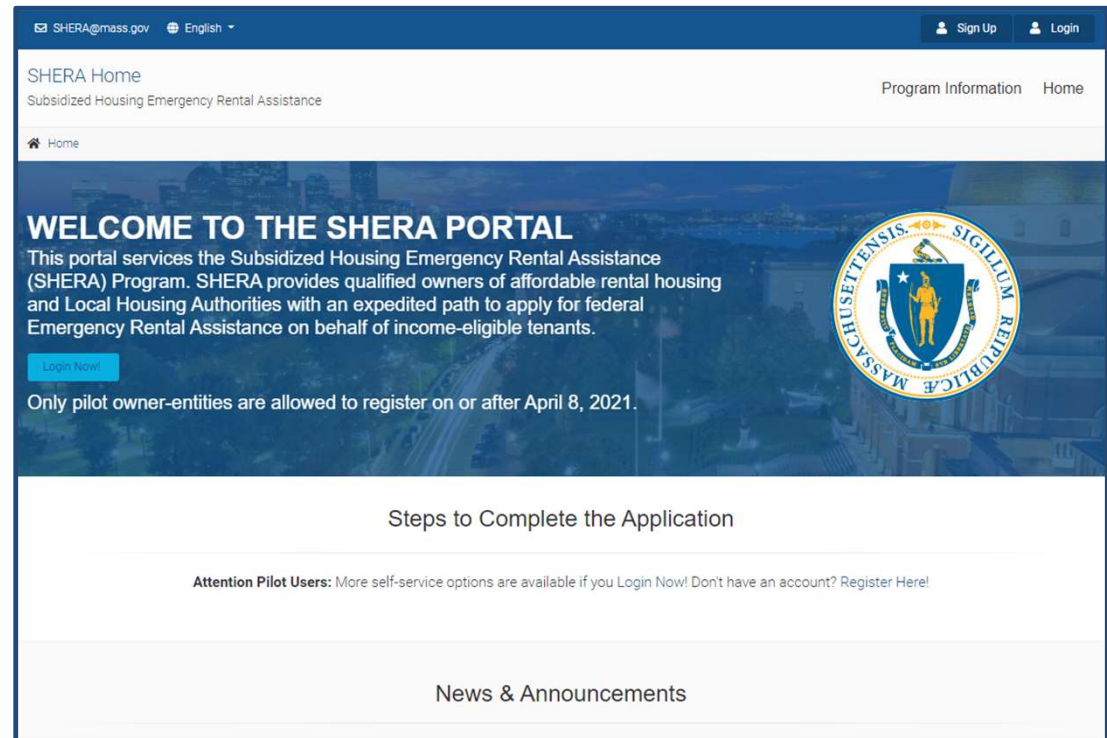
RESOURCES

- Review materials on the SHERA Portal Program Information tab <https://sherafunding.mass.gov/>
 - SHERA Policy Guidance
 - SHERA Notification to Tenant Instructions and Form Letters



SUPPORT & QUESTIONS

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





QUESTIONS



7/7/2021



THANK YOU!



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