

To: All Owners/Agents

From: SHERA Program Team

Date: July 1, 2021

Re: SHERA Benefit Period Extension to 18 Months

Effective July 1, 2021, the Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) Program will extend benefits from 12 to 18 months. SHERA will cover tenant-share rent arrearages due between April 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021.

SHERA will only process claims for a given month after the first day of the following month. Current and future months will not be processed.

Example: Claims for July 2021 arrears will be accepted no earlier than August 1st. Claims for August 2021 arrears will be accepted no earlier than September 1st.

Eligible SHERA Benefit Period

The “eligible SHERA period” is defined as the 18-month period that starts April 1, 2020. The new 18-month extended benefit period replaces the previous program period, which paid up to 12 months of rent arrears accrued through March 31, 2021. There remains no dollar limit to total benefits per eligible household.

SHERA will continue to pay the equivalent of the monthly tenant-share of the rent for any given month. Fees and charges are not eligible and will not be paid by SHERA.

Reapplications for Additional Assistance

Owners may apply multiple times for a single tenant household, provided that the claims are for different months of assistance. Owners may also resubmit a claim if it was previously denied, provided the claim has been corrected.

Households that have already signed a *Tenant Certification of Rental Assistance Eligibility* for the owner to apply to SHERA on their behalf do not need to complete a new certification to receive assistance beyond the original April 1, 2020 – March 2021 SHERA eligibility period.

If an owner/agent intends on requesting additional assistance for households beyond March 2021, they must first notify the household of their intent to do so (see language below). The household should have at least five (5) days to respond if it wishes to decline the additional assistance. If the household does not opt out of the additional assistance within those five (5) or more days, the owner/agent may then submit the additional claim through the SHERA Portal. The letter should contain the following language:

This letter is to inform you that we will be applying to the Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) program for more rental assistance on your behalf. The application will be requesting a total of \$ _____ in rent that you owe for [insert month(s)].

If you have any questions or wish to decline the additional rental assistance, please contact _____ within [at least 5] days of the date of this letter. If we don't hear from you by then, we will submit the SHERA program application on your behalf.

For assistance understanding this letter, for language assistance, or for reasonable accommodations, please contact _____.

Use of monthly, point in time income documentation is only acceptable for a single application of rental arrearage assistance. A yearly certification of income or use of 2020 IRS Form 1040 would not require the tenant to submit new income documents.

SHERA Claims

Frequency of Submission: Owners have flexibility in the frequency of filing claims. For example, owners may choose to submit tenant claims every three months or submit claims each month over multiple months. Owners may continue to upload one or many tenant claims in a single bulk application.

Claim already submitted, pending approval: These claims will be processed for payment. Owners must submit new claim(s) in the SHERA Portal for any new months of assistance requested for each household.

Example: A claim is submitted in the SHERA Portal for April 2020 thru March 2021 arrears totaling \$5,000 and is pending approval. The tenant household also has rent due for April, May, and June 2021. The owner/agent may submit claim(s) for these additional arrearage amounts starting July 1, 2021.

Claim already approved: Households with a SHERA claim that was approved under the initial April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021 period may apply for additional months through September, 2021.

Example: A claim is submitted in the SHERA Portal for June 2020 thru February 2021 arrears was approved. The tenant household also has rent due for August 2021. The owner/agent may submit claim(s) for these additional arrearage amounts starting September 1, 2021.

Claim already denied: Households with a SHERA claim that was denied under the initial April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021 period may re-apply.

Example: A claim submitted in the SHERA Portal was denied because the household was over 80% AMI. The household circumstances have changed (job loss), and the household is now also behind on June 2021 rent. The owner has collected monthly income documents (or conducted a new annual recertification showing income loss) to verify income eligibility, and may submit claim(s) for the full arrearage amount.

Claim not yet submitted: Owners should review each claim to determine if the household is eligible for the additional months of assistance prior to submission.

Example: A property manager was preparing to submit tenant claims in the SHERA Portal for April 2020 thru March 2021 arrears. Now that the new policy is effective on July 1, they are reviewing the tenant arrearages from April – June 2021 sending a notice of reapplication to each household, and updating the tenant claims accordingly to include arrearages from April 2020 thru June 2021.

Non-Eviction Commitment

By participating in SHERA, the owner is committing to a six-month suspension of any pending eviction and a six-month period of not initiating a new eviction for nonpayment of rent for a household receiving SHERA benefits. This commitment begins when the last month’s assistance payment is applied to the household’s account.

If a household that previously received SHERA funds receives additional assistance for this extended benefit period, the six-month non-eviction commitment period will run for six months from the date the last month’s payment of the additional assistance is applied to the household’s account.

<i>Examples of the non-eviction commitment for non-payment of rent</i>		
Last Month of Arrearage	SHERA payment applied to tenant account	Expiration of non-eviction commitment
June, 2021	July 1, 2021	December 31, 2021
September, 2021	October 1, 2021	March 31, 2022

Additional Benefits

SHERA provides benefits to cover past non-payment of tenant rent. The program is not intended to provide or promise the availability of future benefits. Tenants should continue to pay rent, unless they have specifically made alternative arrangements with owners.

Owners should emphasize that while eligible arrearages will be covered through the end of September 2021, in the future the program may or may not be able to provide additional assistance for rent payments due later than September 2021. If this additional assistance does become available, it may be subject to prioritization or benefit caps in the future, based on overall rental assistance need.

Revised Program Documents

DHCD has revised materials to reflect the new benefit period. All up-to-date materials may be accessed on the [SHERA Program Information Webpage for Owners](#), and should be used effective July 1, 2021. These documents include but are not limited to:

- Tenant Outreach Letter template (including P/LHA versions), simplified with model language
- Updated Application Template and Instructions
- Notice of Reapplication for residents that qualify for additional assistance
- Tenant Certification of Rental Assistance Eligibility