

## Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance Program (SHERA) Training for COVID Eviction Legal Help Project (CELHP) and Community Mediation held on July 23, 2021

### Questions and Responses

1. **If a landlord has accepted a SHERA payment for a particular tenant, are they required to move to dismiss a pending eviction case for that tenant?**

*Yes. Per the [SHERA Owner Agreement](#), owners must suspend pending evictions for non-payment of rent for each household that has received ERA payments under SHERA. [The SHERA Policy and Program Overview](#) provides detail on the non-eviction commitment.*

2. **Do HCECs provide SHERA information and support to tenants and landlords?**

*HCECs have been provided with key SHERA documents available on [this website](#) to share with tenants and landlords.*

3. **If a landlord has filed a Summons and Complaint for non-payment of rent, will SHERA assist with court costs accrued before the case is dismissed?**

*No. SHERA can only pay for eligible rent arrears.*

4. **If SHERA does not assist with court costs, is the landlord still required to file for a dismissal of the eviction case?**

*Yes. Per the Owner's Agreement, landlords must suspend pending evictions for non-payment of rent for each household that has received ERA payments under SHERA. Owners participating in SHERA are expected to work with tenants at a participating property to forgive or otherwise waive all costs, fees and charges incurred as a result of non-payment or partial payment of rent during the eligible period.*

5. **Are there program materials a tenant can share in court?**

*Yes. Please visit [this website](#) to find SHERA Program requirements and reference guides for residents living in eligible public housing and privately-owned subsidized housing.*

6. **If there are arrearages left unpaid after a tenant receives SHERA assistance, when can that tenant apply for ERAP?**

*A tenant can apply for other rental assistance, such as ERAP or RAFT, at the same time as the SHERA application is in process, or after SHERA assistance has been provided, only if the other assistance requested is for different costs (e.g., moving costs, rental arrearages prior to April 2020, or other expenses which cannot be paid with SHERA). If a tenant has already applied elsewhere they should continue with that process and NOT apply for SHERA.*

7. **How can tenants check their SHERA application status?**

*SHERA policy requires that landlords notify tenants in writing when: 1) an [application is submitted](#); 2) if any additional information is required to complete an application; 3) if the owner/property manager determines the tenant is [ineligible or non-responsive](#); and, 3) when an [application is approved and paid](#). Tenant advocates may email [SHERA@mass.gov](mailto:SHERA@mass.gov) to obtain an update on their client's application status. The email must include the tenant's application ID, but no personal identifying information.*

**8. If a tenant is unwilling to participate in SHERA, can a landlord still move forward with a SHERA application for that tenant?**

*No. A tenant must return a completed and signed [Tenant Certification of Rental Assistance Eligibility](#) to the landlord, and the landlord must document the household's eligibility before they can apply to SHERA on a tenant household's behalf.*

**9. Will SHERA send notification directly to the tenant upon approval and/or payment, or is that the sole responsibility of the landlord? What happens if the landlord fails to send notice?**

*It is the landlord's responsibility to provide a [Payment Letter to Tenants](#) for approval and payment. DHCD may investigate legitimate claims of non-compliance with SHERA policy.*

*SHERA provides a notification email to the tenant once payment is approved. DHCD is working with its vendors to provide a SMS text message to tenants that do not wish to be contacted by email, and a letter for tenants that do not wish to be contacted by text or by email. These additional notices do not supplant the landlord's notification responsibilities.*

**10. Does the tenant know how much the landlord is applying for on their behalf?**

*Yes. The landlord is responsible for providing a [SHERA Submission Letter to Tenants](#), which includes the submittal date and the total amount of rent arrears requested broken out by month.*

**11. Are courts receiving training on SHERA?**

*Yes. DHCD is providing a training for staff from the Housing Court, District Court, and Boston Municipal Court on August 19th.*

