

To: All Owners/Agents

From: SHERA Program Team

Date: November 1, 2021

Re: Extension of SHERA Eligible Benefit Period and other Policy Updates

Effective November 1, 2021, the Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) Program will implement several important policy updates:

- The eligible benefit period will be extended beyond September 30, 2021
- Any given household may only receive up to 18 (consecutive or non-consecutive) months of assistance from SHERA
- Payments will be allowed for units which the tenant has already vacated

These changes are discussed below.

Extension of Eligible Benefit Period

The “eligible SHERA period” was previously defined as the 18-month period from April 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021. This period has been **extended** to an end date that is anticipated to be June 30, 2022 or an earlier date if funding is depleted. Given that the end date is not fixed, documents have been updated to refer to the “eligible SHERA period starting on April 1, 2020,” without the end date specified. Changes to the end date will be communicated by policy memo.

As a reminder, SHERA will only process claims for a given month after the first day of the following month. Claims seeking assistance for current and future months will not be processed. Example: Claims for October 2021 arrears will be accepted no earlier than November 1st.

18 Months Total Benefit

Owners may reapply for households who have already received SHERA payments provided that the new claims are for different months of assistance. 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 additional assistance. However, any given household may only receive **up to 18 months** of assistance across all claims. Since the eligible SHERA period has now been extended to encompass more than 18 calendar months, this is a pertinent limitation for owners to keep in mind. It does not matter whether the 18 months are consecutive.

Please note also that the 18-month cap on assistance applies to **combined** claims made to SHERA and the Commonwealth’s federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“ERAP”), which are funded from the same federal source. For example, if a household received ERAP payment for rental arrearages from April 2020 through June 2021 (15 months), the household could only receive up to 3 additional months of rental assistance, whether through SHERA or ERAP. This may be more difficult for owners to monitor than total claims made to SHERA; DHCD will monitor for claims from the same households between SHERA and ERAP and administer benefits accordingly.

There remains no dollar limit to total benefits per eligible household.

Past-Unit Arrearages

Previously, SHERA policy stated that only current residents were eligible to receive SHERA. This policy is being **changed** to allow payments for tenants who have moved out or intend to move out. Please note that owners must still obtain tenant consent to apply, regardless of the tenant's current residency status. SHERA payment will only be made for the months during which the tenant resided in their unit.

Revised Program Documents

All up-to-date materials reflecting the above policy changes may be accessed on the [SHERA Program Information Webpage for Owners](#) and are to be used effective November 1, 2021. In addition to the above policy changes, other language throughout SHERA documents has been updated to provide greater clarity. For example, several examples have been added of situations which would be considered "indirect" COVID-19 impact, which previously was not explained. Please make sure to use these updated documents moving forward. The inventory of updated documents includes:

- SHERA application template and instructions
- SHERA Overview
- SHERA Overview for Tenants (standard and LHA versions)
- SHERA Policy and Program Overview
- SHERA Eligibility and Requirements Summary
- SHERA Owner FAQs
- SHERA Ineligibility Letter to Tenants
- SHERA Tenant Administrative Review Outcome
- SHERA Tenant Certification Form