

## SHERA Notification to Tenant Instructions for Owners

Last Updated as of June 30, 2021

Owners and property managers are expected to use the model text within the notification documents found on the [SHERA Portal Program Information – Tenant Communications](#) section on their letterhead for distribution to tenants. Owners and property managers may also consider personalizing outreach communications for their residents, and should include clauses used in standard tenant correspondence including reasonable accommodation, right to an ASL interpreter, fair housing information and VAWA.

All model notification documents are also available in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer and Russian.

**IMPORTANT!** The owner is expected to communicate application status directly with tenants within a reasonable timeframe, not to exceed 30 days. This document includes standard form letters of each notification type that owners are expected to use for this purpose.

### Pre – Application and Re – Application Notices

***Tenant Outreach Letter for private owners.*** This letter must be distributed to all tenants with eligible arrearages. This letter explains the program, its eligibility requirements, and how to apply for assistance.

***Tenant Outreach Letter for housing authorities.*** This letter must be distributed by housing authorities to all tenants with eligible arrearages. This letter explains the program, its eligibility requirements, and how to apply for assistance. *The tenant outreach letter is available on the SHERA Portal.*

*Additionally, there is an outreach letter specifically for tenants with income-based rent who DO NOT have arrearages on record during the eligible SHERA period in participating properties. This letter explains that tenants who do not have arrears should come in for an interim recertification to report change in income since any previously owed rent could count as arrears and be covered by SHERA.*

***Notice of Application Submittal.*** Owners must inform each tenant in writing of the submittal date and the amount of assistance requested, broken out by month.

***Notice of Reapplication:*** This letter must be distributed to all tenants when requesting additional assistance beyond the original request with eligible arrearages. The household must be given 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 that time, the owner/property manager may then submit the additional claim through the SHERA Portal.

**Application Outcomes**

- **Notice of Payment.** Owners are expected to generate and send this notice to tenants once payment is received. This notice:
  - specifies 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.
  
- **Notice of Ineligibility (Non-Participation Record and Notice of Outstanding Arrearages)**  
 This notice documents the reasons(s) for ineligibility, identifies outstanding arrears still due, if the tenant is denied assistance, provides an opportunity to request an administrative review conducted by the owner, and includes information on other eviction diversion resources. This notice must be sent if:
  - a tenant or their representative declines to sign the tenant certification;
  - submits the tenant certification but does not meet the program eligibility requirements;
  - or
  - is otherwise unresponsive to the owner’s request to participate.
  
- **SHERA Administrative Review Outcome.** This notice describes the outcome of an administrative review conducted by the owner. Please see the [SHERA Administrative Review Procedural Guidance](#) for more details on when and how an owner should conduct an administrative review.

**REMEMBER: All tenant communications must be documented in the tenant file.** Owners may supplement, but not replace, any required notification letter with other methods (e.g., email, SMS text) available.

- **Application Denial.** If DHCD denied a tenant claim submitted by the owner (or the owner’s authorized representative), DHCD will notify the tenant and the owner of the assistance denial by letter. This letter includes reason(s) for denial, provides the tenant with an opportunity to request an administrative review by DHCD, and provides information for other rental assistance programs.

**Owner Non-Participation.** Owners are not required to participate in SHERA. For owners determined ineligible to participate, or who choose not to participate, or are non-responsive, MassHousing/MHP/ DHCD will provide information on ERAP, administered through RAAs, for owner distribution to tenants.

**Additional Documentation:** Depending on the application review, owners may need to request additional documentation from tenants, and may do so by phone, email, letter, flyer, or other method.

Additional resources to assist residents and owners are available on the SHERA Portal. These resources include program summaries for owners, tenants, and other stakeholders, FAQs and key points for discussing the program with residents.

