

SHERA Notification to Tenant Instructions for Owners

Last Updated as of May 19, 2021

Because owners are applying for assistance on a tenant’s behalf, 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.

PLEASE REMEMBER: All tenant communications must be documented in the tenant file.

Owners and property managers are expected to use the sample text within the notification letters found on the [SHERA Portal Program Information – Tenant Communications](#) section on their letterhead for distribution to tenants. Owners and Property Managers should also include standard clauses used in standard tenant correspondence including reasonable accommodation, right to an ASL interpreter, fair housing information and VAWA. All sample notification documents are also available in Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer and Russian. Owners may supplement, but not replace, any required notification letter with other methods (e.g., email, SMS text) available through the portal.

Tenant Outreach Letter. Owners must distribute this letter to all tenants with eligible arrearages. This letter explains the program, its eligibility requirements, and how to apply for assistance. *There is a P/LHA specific tenant outreach letter that is available on the SHERA Portal.*

P/LHA’s Only: Additionally, there is an outreach letter for P/LHAs to distribute to all tenants who DO NOT have arrearages on record for the time period between April 2020 and March 2021 in participating properties. This letter explains that tenants even if they do not have arrears should come in for a recert to report change in income since then any previously owed rent could count as arrears and be covered by SHERA.

Notification to Tenants: Application Submittal. Owners are expected to inform each tenant in writing of the submittal date and the amount of assistance requested.

Application Outcomes:

- **Payment.** Owners are expected to generate and send this notice as a formal letter to tenants once payment is received. 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.
- **Notice of Ineligibility (Non-Participation Record and Notice of Outstanding Arrearages)**
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, the owner shall send the tenant a notice

documenting the reason(s) for ineligibility, identify outstanding arrears still due, and if denied assistance, an opportunity to request an administrative review by a staff person that did not make the initial determination, and provide information on other eviction diversion resources.

- ***SHERA Administrative Review Outcome.*** This notice should be used to describe 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.
- ***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 will include reason(s) for denial, provide the tenant with an opportunity to request an administrative review by DHCD, and provide 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 will be provided during the duration of the program to assist owners and residents. These resources include a program of frequently asked questions, key points for discussing the program with residents, and eligibility and requirement summaries for owners, tenants, and other stakeholders.