CONTINUUM OF CARE (CoC) BOARD

MARCH 17, 2021 | 3:00-5:00PM

ZOOM MEETING (LINK WILL BE SHARED VIA EMAIL)

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
3:00pm	1. Call to Order
3:01pm	2. Welcome/Introductions
3:05pm	3. Public Comment
3:10pm	4. Approval of Agenda (ACTION)
3:12pm	5. Approval of Minutes (ACTION)
3:15pm	6. Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Technical Assistance & Workplan for Washtenaw County – *Mercedes Brown, CSH*
3:35pm	7. Homelessness System Modeling Report – *Amanda Carlisle, Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA)*
3:55pm	8. Systems Mapping for Aging and Older Adults – *Jillian Rosen, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation*
4:10pm	9. COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) Program Updates – *Morghan Williams Boydston (OCED), Marla Conkin (Salvation Army), Rhonda Weathers (SOS Community Services)*
4:25pm	10. Winter Shelter Response Update – *Dan Kelly (Shelter Association of Washtenaw County), Marla Conkin (Salvation Army), Krista Girty (Ozone House)*
4:35pm	11. Recent Letters of Support Approved by the Executive Committee – *Anna O'Toole, OCED*
4:40pm	12. Washtenaw Housing Alliance Update – *Amanda Carlisle, WHA*
4:50pm	13. Board Member Updates/Issues
4:55pm	14. Public Comment
5:00pm	15. Adjournment

CONTINUUM OF CARE (CoC) BOARD

JANUARY 20, 2021 | 3:00-5:00PM

ZOOM MEETING (LINK WILL BE SHARED VIA EMAIL)

Board Members Present: J. Hieftje, A. Seipelt, A. Patiño, M. Conkin, T. Lee, A. Carlisle, R. Smith, K. Hoener, K. Wyatt, J. Monahan, T. Gillotti, J. Little, S. Dowling, R. Kraut, J. Rosen, K. Montgomery, R. Weathers, Z. Fosler, J. Mogensen

OCED Staff: A. O'Toole, M. Boydston, A. Kraemer

Members of the Public: W. Carty-Saxon, L. Velez, A. Bartha, J. Carey, C. Ledon, S. Collins, B. Niess-May, A. Payne, M. Creekmore, E. Chang, M. Jackson

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
3:00pm	**1.** Call to Order J. Hieftje called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm
3:01pm	**2.** Welcome/Introductions
3:05pm	**3.** Public Comment None
3:10pm	**4.** Approval of Agenda **(ACTION)** Motion was moved for discussion by M. Conkin; seconded by R. Smith. The motion carried with no opposition.
3:12pm	**5.** Approval of Minutes **(ACTION)** Motion was moved for discussion by A. Seipelt; seconded by R. Weathers. The motion carried with no opposition.
3:15pm	**6.** CoC Letter of Support for The Grove at Veridian **(ACTION)** – *Wendy Carty-Saxon and Lauren Velez, Avalon Housing* Motion was moved for discussion by R. Weathers; seconded by A. Carlisle Presented by W. Carty-Saxon and L. Velez: This project has been presented to this Board before, and adjustments have been made since then that Avalon would like to present to the Board. The property's tax credit application is due Feb 1. The Grove will have 50 total units, at least 13 of which will be PSH units. Avalon has site planning and zoning approved and are seeking CoC support today for the property's tax credit application. If all goes through, we will be starting construction in 2022 with move-in in 2023. J. Hieftje applauded Avalon for the perseverance to see this through over ten years. The motion carried with no opposition.
3:25pm	**7.** Selection of CoC Board Chairs & Secretary **(ACTION)** – *Anna O'Toole, OCED* Motion was moved for discussion by M. Conkin; seconded by A. Seipelt.

	A. O'Toole: Each year per the Governance Charter the CoC Board is required to select two chairs and a secretary, who will provide leadership to the Board and will sit on the Executive Committee. There were no volunteers. J. Hieftje, R. Smith, and D. Kelly have all agreed to continue in their roles. The motion carried with no opposition.
3:30pm	**8.** Delegation of Authority to the Executive Committee to Approve 2021 Letters of Support **(ACTION)** – *Anna O'Toole, OCED* Motion was moved for discussion by A. Seipelt; seconded by T. Lee. A. O'Toole: The board occasionally provides letters of support, and at times the timing for the letters of support does not align with the board meeting schedule. We are seeking permission for the Executive Committee to approve such letters if the timing is such that the full board does not have time to meet before the letter is due. The motion carried with no opposition.
3:35pm	**9.** 2021 Point-in-Time Count Update & Methodology **(ACTION)** – *Andrew Kraemer, OCED* Motion was moved for discussion by A. Seipelt; seconded by A. Carlisle. A. Kraemer: We are presenting this methodology for approval by the Board. The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is an annual census of people experiencing homelessness. This year our methodology is the same as previous years with one change to the unsheltered portion. The sheltered count will still take place through HMIS, with special arrangements made for DV providers. For the unsheltered count, HUD is emphasizing safety this year due to the pandemic. After consulting with street outreach and the wider community, we will be conducting an observation only unsheltered PIT count, instead of the detailed interviews that we usually conduct. We have already notified HUD of our intent to utilize a waiver for this purpose. The motion carried with no opposition.
3:45pm	**10.** OCED 2019 Year In Review & COVID-19 Response Report – *Teresa Gillotti, Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED)* T. Gillotti: Brief highlights of the year from OCED, including serving senior meals without interruption, and the incredible work of the Summer Works program for teens.
4:00pm	**11.** 2020 Continuum of Care System Data – *Andrew Kraemer, OCED* A. Kraemer presented on numbers served in 2020. Throughout 2020 overall, Washtenaw County saw a decrease in the number of families experiencing homelessness, an increase in chronic homelessness, a decrease in non-chronic

	homelessness, and a decrease in veteran homelessness. See packet for more details.
4:10pm	**12.** Winter Shelter Response Update – *Shelter Association of Washtenaw County; Marla Conkin, Salvation Army; Rhonda Weathers, SOS Community Services; Krista Girty, Ozone House* M. Conkin: On the family side, we housed 7 families in the hotel, 6 who are high risk and one that is waiting for space in a congregate setting. We are working with SOS Community Services for RRH, and they've already housed 2 families. The other family currently in the hotel will self-resolve. We're having regular meetings with the families staying in the hotel. A. Bartha (SAWC): We're still operating multiple individual sites, sheltering over 135 people per night across all nights. We've maintained a low positive rate, although with the recent surge we've seen some cases and needed to isolate people. SAWC staff are continuing their work on housing people as quickly as possible.

4:25pm	**13.** Discussion of Emergency Solutions Grant Written Standards – *Morghan Williams Boydston and Anna O'Toole, OCED*
	M. Boydston. We are looking to develop and update our ESG standards in light of the additional funds available this year. We went through a community process to develop these and identify areas to change.
	
	A. O'Toole: Some of the major changes include:
	• Shelter prioritization: Developed with shelter providers, new policy for ESG shelter (non-congregate only) prioritizes those at greatest risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19.
	• Homelessness prevention: Historically, we've only served Category 2 households, meaning those households within 14 days of losing their housing. HUD allows communities to also serve Categories 3 (homeless under other statutes) and 4 (fleeing DV) and people At Risk of Homelessness, which is a broad definition. After community discussion, we are opting to serve these additional categories of homelessness with prevention resources.
	    o We will also continue to use the prevention tool, starting with a data collection period to understand how the tool is working.
	    o We are also expanding the allowable costs under prevention. Historically, we've provided only rental assistance and security deposit; moving forward, we will provide additional assistance, including application fees, moving costs, and landlord incentives.
	    o We are removing the one time per year assistance cap; households can receive up to $3K total annually.
	• Rapid Re-Housing: We are continuing to serve Cat. 1 and 4 persons and following CHP Prioritization.
	    o We are specifying allowable costs for ESG RRH for the first time

	o Basically, if HUD allows it we will allow it to provide flexibility to providers to be able to house clients. • Due to the pandemic, with ESG-CV dollars we have flexibility with the Fair Market Rent (FMR) requirement and are allowing 110% of FMR during the pandemic, so long as units are still rent reasonable. • These standards are a living document and we anticipate making changes based on feedback from providers. We will bring it back to the Board for final approval at a later date. • These standards cover $4.1 million of ESG, and specifically $2.4mm from HUD ESG. Not all of that money is allocated to direct assistance. These amounts are part of the pandemic response on top of our base funding.
4:40pm	**14.** Recent CARES Act Funding Awards – *Anna O'Toole, OCED* A. O'Toole: This is an update on some funding decisions that were made since the last Board meeting. The Board had previously delegated authority to the Executive Committee to make this decision between Board meetings. The Funding Review Team (FRT) provided recommendations for the entirety of our Round 2 MSHDA ESG-CV allocation ($811,699) and a portion ($218,610) of CDBG-CV funds dedicated to homelessness response. The Executive Committee approved the FRT's recommendations. As part of the process, the FRT reviewed all of the applications previously received, as well as the MSHDA requirements and community needs. With all of this in mind, the FRT reached the recommendations in your packet, including administration funding for OCED; positions and prevention direct assistance at HAWC; a housing navigator position at WHA; and family rapid re-housing at SOS Community Services. The FRT also discussed funding year 2 of prevention work at Legal Services. Since ESG is more restrictive, the FRT opted to fund Legal Services with CDBG-CV funds, which will allow them to serve more clients further upstream. Lastly, the FRT recommended and the Executive Committee approved moving a small amount of prevention direct assistance to HAWC that had previously been allocated to Barrier Busters.
4:50pm	**15.** Board Member Updates/Issues J. Mogensen: The AATA plans are moving forward. In August, they are planning to restart. They will be looking at ridership more than coverage. They will be starting a process for public comment in February or March. Just a heads up because this is an important issue in the community to make sure people aren't left out of the conversation. M. Boydston: We've recently learned that we have around $20mm in rental assistance money from the Treasury Department. We have to hire at least 21 staff, and 75% need to be in place by March 15. We are hoping to start the

	program on a small scale by the beginning of March. We will have bilingual case managers and people to work with special populations. A. Carlise: The Biden administration has extended the eviction moratorium through the end of March and is looking to extend it to the end of September. There's a lot in the transition plan that would impact people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. There may be some advocacy opportunities coming up to support these plans.
4:55pm	**16.** Public Comment None
5:00pm	**17.** Adjournment J. Hieftje adjourned at 4:00pm.

State of Michigan's COVID Emergency Rental Assistance

Program Guidance

March 5, 2021

This guidance will be expanded upon or amended as the work continues.

Updates are highlighted throughout the document.

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PROGRAM SUMMARY

The State of Michigan's COVID Emergency Rental Assistance Program ("the Program") is designed to keep Michigan residents who fell behind on their rent and utilities during the COVID-19 pandemic in their homes. The program utilizes a collaborative community process to expedite rental and utility assistance to COVID-19 affected tenants and their landlords.

Rental, utility and internet assistance in the amount of $560 million will be distributed through MSHDA's network of Emergency Solutions Grant Fiduciaries and then sub-granted to Housing Assessment and Resource Agencies and other local service agencies. $62 million in program funds are available for housing stability services, case management, legal services and administrative costs. Service Agencies will work with tenants and landlords to provide rental, utility and internet assistance for eligible renter households. Legal services for renters will be provided by local legal aid organizations funded by grants made through the Michigan State Bar Foundation.

MSHDA is administering the Program and has convened a state leadership team comprised of staff from MSHDA, MDHHS, SCAO, Michigan Poverty Law Program and the Michigan State Bar Foundation. Their purpose is to guide the program's execution, monitor program outcomes, and distribute information within their respective agencies/areas of influence to aid in program effectiveness.

The Program is a partnership between multiple community organizations: Housing Assessment and Resource Agencies (HARA), Community Action Agencies (CAA), local Legal Services programs, judges and district court administrators. Other organizations can be added as necessary. These organizations will come together to design a local process whereby (1) tenants and landlords are served by the program so that tenants remain stably housed and landlords recoup rental arrears, (2) for court involved cases, the Landlord/Tenant docket is managed in a manner consistent with Michigan Supreme Court Administrative Order 2020-17 (as amended) and to facilitate service delivery by Legal Services and the HARA and (3) tenants and landlords are informed about the program, tenants are assisted by Legal Services and all parties work with the HARA to resolve eviction cases.

Partners will meet at least bi-weekly to design program operations, communicate results and other program issues, and discuss changes to improve processes and outcomes. HARAs will convene these meetings. HARAs will work with the courts and legal aid programs to distribute program flyers in Summons and Complaint mailings to share information on the program.

HARAs and other agencies involved in CERA utility assistance should contact utility providers to discuss CERA assistance and determine how to most efficiently serve tenants in need. When possible, arrangements for batch payments should be made with utility providers along with a plan for handling future utility assistance payments made on behalf of the tenants.

The expenditure deadline for the CRF funds is December 31, 2021. However, the US Treasury Department may recapture any funds not obligated by grantees as of September 30, 2021 if 65 percent of the funds are not obligated and reallocate/repay those amounts to grantees who, as of that time, have obligated at least 65 percent of their original grant. Grantees must then request an extension of up to 90 days after the end of 2021, subject to approval by the US Treasury Secretary if additional time is needed.

MSHDA will be closely monitoring the expenditure of funds throughout the state and will work with each Continuum of Care/Local Planning Body (CoC/LPB) to address any problems that may arise regarding the expenditure of the funds. If it appears that the funding needs for any CoC/LPB were overestimated, the amount of funding for that area may be reviewed and some funds may be moved to a CoC/LPB where the funding needs may have been underestimated.

Program characteristics and guidance may change at any time based on funding availability, program experience, or revised US Treasury guidance.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

- Grants will be made from MSHDA to the established fiduciary from the Continuum of Care (CoC) or Local Planning Body (LPB) for the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. The fiduciary will then sub-contract with the Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (HARA) and other local service providers.
- HARAs will, in collaboration with local stakeholders, design an eviction prevention, utility and internet assistance process where tenants and landlords are notified about the program and ideally cases are resolved using a Settlement Statement before a court filing, and filed cases are resolved as often as possible by Conditional Dismissal Orders.
- CRF Emergency Rental Assistance funds should be expended on eligible households before accessing any other sources of eviction diversion or utility assistance funding (i.e. ESG, CSBG, CDBG, etc.).
- Conditional Dismissal Orders, based on MCR 2.602, will outline the terms by which the landlord and tenant may resolve a dispute. Those terms will typically include eligible lump sum payments from the Program and other sources and the landlord's required waiver of late fees over $200.
- Tenants with incomes up to 80% of area median income are eligible for the rental and utility assistance.
- The Program is not compulsory for landlords and utility providers. If they refuse to participate, the rental and/or utility assistance payment will be made to the tenant so the tenant can pay the landlord and/or utility provider the amount due and any future payments if applicable.
- Using a Conditional Dismissal Order instead of a judgment will protect the tenant's credit history.
- Financial Status Reports (FSR) are required monthly to document program expenditures. Agencies may submit FSRs more frequently if needed to address cash flow issues. Agencies are also encouraged to establish a line of credit to assist with cash flow and timely program assistance payments.

TENANT ELIGIBILITY

- Tenant household income must be no more than 80% of Area Median, **and**
- One or more individual in the household currently or at some point after March 13, 2020,
  - qualified for unemployment benefits or
  - experienced a reduction in household income or
  - incurred significant costs or
  - experienced other financial hardship due directly or indirectly to the corona virus outbreak, **and**
- The household can demonstrate a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability which may include a:
  - past due utility notice or
  - past due rent notice (including a ledger showing rent arrears or a Notice to Quit) or an eviction notice
- Households may not receive CERA assistance to cover rental arrearages that were part of the landlord forgiveness for MSHDA's Eviction Diversion Program or paid for with MSHDA's Eviction Diversion Program funding (or any agency's eviction prevention program). Tenants may be eligible for CERA assistance to pay the balance due on the tenant repayment agreement from the Eviction Diversion Program if the tenant was not able to fulfill the repayment obligation to the landlord and the arrearages are from on or after March 13, 2020. A case note describing the situation and the outstanding balance amount should be included in the case file. The outstanding balance amount should be included on the CERA Program Worksheet on the "Total Rental Arrears after March 13, 2020" line.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- Proof of Income: The household's 2020 calendar year income or present income (past month) will be used to determine eligibility and assistance amounts. Income verification may be shown through:
    - 2020 calendar year income (first two pages of IRS form 1040) or
        - The Adjusted Gross Income on line 11 of the 1040 is to be used
    - SNAP/Food Assistance Program "Notice of Case Action" letter if it is dated January 2020 or later.
        - Families that have three or more household members and are currently enrolled in the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) with income determination/redetermination since January 2020 are categorically eligible per US Treasury.
            - Household with four or more members are not include as categorically eligible because the income limits for FAP are higher than 80% AMI in many counties.
        - The Notice of Case Action letter can be accessed in the applicant's MI Bridges account
    - paystubs for the past month for all income sources, W-2s or other wage statements, bank statements demonstrating regular income, or a statement from an employer.
    - Self-attestation accompanied by agency case notes as proof of income is acceptable only when all other verification options are not reasonably or readily available, not for applicant convenience or agency efficiency.
- ID: Tenant state ID (or an alternate form of identification, as necessary) is required for only the primary adult household member
    - Expired IDs are acceptable.
    - Alternate identification may include a birth certificate, military ID, student ID, Medicaid or other health coverage card, voter registration card, or any type of official documentation including verification from a DHHS worker.
    - Verification of residency as noted below will be required for any form of identification that does not state the unit address. If the family lacks a current state ID, the case manager should work with the family to set up a plan for the household member to obtain one .
- Proof of Address: If the tenant ID address does not match the address of the unit, the tenant must provide a recent utility bill, benefit statement, some other official documentation, or other reliable evidence verifying they occupy the unit for which the assistance has been requested. If the tenant has received any court filings, the court filings may be used as verification of residency.
- Proof of Occupancy: Copy of the lease agreement if a written lease was completed. Verbal lease agreements are also acceptable. Verbal lease agreements will need to be substantiated by utility bills in the tenant's name at the unit address, cancelled checks or other proof of prior rental payments such as a ledger, or other reliable evidence. Documents need to clearly place the tenant at the unit address during the time period assistance is being sought. If there is not a written lease and the tenant has a Complaint – Termination of Tenancy – Non-Payment of Rent, this document may be used as verification of occupancy.
- Tenant Application

- Required for all cases even if the landlord is applying on behalf of the tenant.
- Applicants cannot be denied Program assistance due to not providing a social security number for any member of the household.
- Paper applications must be provided to tenants that cannot or will not complete an online application.

- Landlord Application
  - A ledger can be attached to the application in lieu of completing the rental payment history.
  - Paper applications must be provided to landlords and tenants that cannot or will not complete an online application.
- Proof of Tenant Supplied Utilities: Copy of current utility bill(s) (gas, electric, water/sewer, trash removal and energy costs such as fuel oil) as stated in the lease as being tenant responsibility to pay.
  - Trash removal will only be paid if it is included within another utility bill such as water or sewer. If trash is billed separately it will not be paid.
  - If there is no written lease the utility bills must be in the tenant's name or the tenant must be able to show a history of having paid the utility bills in the past for CERA to provide utility assistance.
  - Utility bills do not need to show an arrearage for the tenant to be considered for future utility assistance.
- Proof of Internet Service: Copy of current internet bill showing service was in place or suspended due to non- payment at the time of program application, if tenant is requesting assistance with internet payments.
- Proof of Rental Arrears: Documentation showing tenant has rental arrears (statement from landlord, ledger, Notice to Quit, Complaint for Eviction or other court documentation)
- Proof of Court Costs: Court documentation verifying court costs if applicable.
- Rental Assistance Calculation Worksheet
- Landlord W-9 Form (if rent payment is made directly to the landlord)
- Proof of Agreement: Settlement Statement or Conditional Dismissal Order – All funds must be secured with a Settlement Statement or Conditional Dismissal Order in place before Program funds are dispersed to the landlord. By signing the application, the landlord and tenant are agreeing upfront to the Settlement Statement terms at the time of application. If a repayment agreement is part of the Settlement Statement or Conditional Dismissal Order, the tenant will be responsible for making those payments in the future as outlined in the Settlement Statement or Conditional Dismissal Order.
- Proof of COVID-Related Hardship: Documentation of one COVID hardship based on the chart below. Hardships must have occurred on or after March 13, 2020 and may have since been resolved.

Type of COVID Hardship	Best Documents to Show Proof	Alternate Documents to Show Proof
A member of my household qualified for unemployment after March 13, 2020	Unemployment Monetary Determination Letter OR screen shots from unemployment website showing payments and person's name	Signed letter from applicant stating the time period they received unemployment benefits
A member of my household has had a 10% reduction in income after March 13, 2020	Signed letter from applicant outlining your original hours and pay rate and reduced hours and pay rate during the COVID outbreak	
A member of my household has incurred significant costs (over $500) after March 13, 2020	Signed letter from applicant stating what type and amounts of increased expenses the household incurred during the COVID outbreak	
A member of my household experienced other financial hardship (over $500) after March 13, 2020	Signed letter from applicant stating what type of financial hardship they occurred during the COVID outbreak	

SELF-ATTESTATION OF INCOME and OTHER FACTORS

- While seeks to be flexible about documentation requirements and to avoid undue documentation burdens, self-attestation should be used as verification as a last resort under limited circumstances.
- Self-attestation is acceptable only when all other options of verification are not reasonably or readily available, not for applicant convenience or agency efficiency.
- Applicants should be notified that self-attestation may delay the processing of their application because additional information may be required.
- Self-attestation is not acceptable verification of utility or internet bills.
- Agencies may not have more than 25% of their cases use self-attestation to verify income unless additional fraud prevention measures have been implemented by the agency and a description of these measures has been provided to and approved by MSHDA in writing.
- Zero income is considered self-attestation if there is no verification showing the loss of income.
- Situations when self-attestation may be relied upon:
    - To accommodate applicants with a disability
    - Extenuating circumstances related to the pandemic or household circumstances
    - Lack of technological access
    - Imminent eviction (within 14 days) and standard verification is not immediately available
    - Various income sources and/or self-employment that are cash payments and/or may not have a standard paystub such as babysitting, lawn care and plasma donations and the income source does not or will not provide written verification of the income.
- Case notes describing why self-attestation was used must be included for all cases with self-attestation. The case notes must include an analysis of why verifications could not be obtained and why it was acceptable to use self-attestation. For example:
    - Applicant babysits for cash and does not have any form of recordkeeping. Applicant states parents of children are not willing to write a statement of the income provided to applicant therefore self-attestation of this income was accepted.
    - Applicant has a disability that impedes ability to obtain verification; has a final court date in 10 days for eviction. Applicant is not able to locate paystubs, does not have a phone with a camera to screenshot electronic paystubs and does not have immediate access to a computer and printer to print paystubs. Employer will not provide another printed copy of paystubs to applicant therefore self-attestation of this income was accepted.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Rental assistance does not need to be provided to assist with utility, energy, or internet costs.
- Landlords and owners may apply on behalf of tenants meeting the eligibility requirements, so long as:
    - the tenant cosigns the application and provides required documentation to the landlord to be included with the application,
    - the landlord provides information on the rental assistance payment to the tenant and
    - the payments are used to satisfy the tenant's rental obligation to the owner.
- Rental, utility, and internet assistance can only be paid for amounts due on or after March 13, 2020.
- If a tenant has arrearages from before and after March 13, 2020 and some payments have been made during that time, those payments should be applied to the oldest arrearages, charges and fees regardless of the date the payments were made. For example, if a tenant did not pay rent for March and April and then paid rent in May, the tenant payment made in May should be applied to March rent.
- To calculate the number of months in arrears, take the total rental arrears (less late or other fees that were applied after March 13,2020) and divide it by the monthly rent due and round that number up. For example, if the household has arrears (without late fees) of $5,000 and their monthly rent is $800, they are 7 months in arrears because $5,000/$800 = 6.25 months.
- When calculating total rental arrears, late fees applied prior to March 13, 2020 do not need to be removed. Ideally the landlord will forgive these late fees. If the landlord will not forgive late fees applied prior to March 13, 2020 they will be the tenant's responsibility to pay. The landlord and tenant will need to agree upon a payment plan if necessary.
- 70% of the rental assistance will be reserved for households at or below 50% AMI.
    - Grantees must track their spending by tenant income category so that they ensure at least 70% of funds are spent on households at or below 50% AMI.
- Tenants will only be eligible to participate in the CERA program one time unless there are insufficient applications to fully spend down the funding.
- SER applications are <u>not</u> required to qualify for Program assistance.
    - SER applications are encouraged for households that are below 50% of AMI and have rental arrearages that exceed program limits.
- College students are eligible for Program assistance so long as they are named on the lease.
- If the tenant and landlord are related, the case manager should investigate to ensure that the tenant has actually been living in the unit and past rent has been paid to the landlord.
- When calculating the tenant's monthly or bi-weekly income their paystubs should be averaged. That averaged amount should be used when calculating their annual income in the calculation worksheet.

Zero Income

- When interviewing the tenant it is important to inquire about all types of income, earned and unearned.
- If the household has zero income this must be noted on the tenant application and the family will be considered below 50% AMI.

Types of Housing

- Mobile Homes: Tenants living in mobile homes may be assisted with Program funds. If the tenant is renting the mobile home and the lot, apply the FMR for the number of bedrooms in the unit (if there is only one person in the household apply the one-bedroom FMR regardless of the number of bedrooms in the unit). If the tenant owns the mobile home and is only renting the lot, the MH FMR should be used.
- Cooperatives: Tenants living in cooperatives are eligible for Program assistance.
- Land Contracts: Persons buying a property on a land contract are NOT eligible for assistance. Tenants renting a property from a land contract buyer are eligible for assistance.
- Motels: Tenants living in motels are NOT eligible for assistance. These households should be evaluated for ESG assistance.
- Commercial Buildings: Tenants living in commercial buildings (stores, warehouses, etc.) are NOT eligible for assistance.
- Subsidized Housing: An eligible household that occupies a federally subsidized residential or mixed-use property may receive assistance, provided program funds are not applied to costs that have been or will be reimbursed under any other federal assistance. If an eligible household receives a monthly federal subsidy (e.g., a Housing Choice Voucher, Public Housing, or Project-Based Rental Assistance) and the tenant rent is adjusted according to changes in income, the renter household may receive ERA assistance for the tenant-owed portion of rent or utilities that is not subsidized. The agency must review the household's income and sources of assistance to confirm that the Program assistance does not duplicate any other assistance, including federal, state, or local assistance provided for the same costs. Agencies may rely on an attestation from the applicant regarding nonduplication with other government assistance in providing assistance to a household.

Tenants Renting a Room

- Obtain the following information and submit the request to MSHDA-CERA@michigan.gov for a determination:
  - Is there a lease?
  - Is there verification of past payments made to the landlord?
  - Are the tenant and landlord related and if so, what is the relationship?
  - Has the tenant ever lived in the unit without being required to pay rent?
- If MSHDA determines that the tenant can be assisted with Program funds, 0-bedroom size unit should be used for the purpose of FMR.

Roommate Situations

- Review documentation verifying the rent arrearage for the name(s) of the person(s) applying for assistance.
- Household income is calculated based on the income of the adult(s) listed on verification of past due rent.
- Unit size is based on the number of bedrooms the persons listed occupy unless there is only one roommate using one bedroom being evicted. If there is only one roommate being evicted and that person only occupies one of the bedrooms, use 0 bedrooms for FMR.
- If the person being evicted has children, the number of bedrooms used by the children need to be added to the number of bedrooms for FMR.

- If one or more roommates are assisted at the same time, any other roommates in the unit are not eligible to apply for Program assistance for the same time period/rental arrearage.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Rental Assistance will be based on income level with households at lower income levels being offered longer periods of rental assistance.
- Rental arrears attributed to late fees charged on or after March 13, 2020 are capped at $200. Landlord must forgive any remaining late fees charged on or after March 13, 2020.
- Actual court costs of up to $150 incurred on or after March 13, 2020 may be included for cases that have already filed for eviction.
- Tenant is responsible for late fees charged prior to March 13, 2020.
- Tenant is responsible for arrearages and any other charges from prior to March 13, 2020.
- Tenant responsibility arrearages may be put into a payment plan agreed upon by the tenant and landlord with payments generally being split over a 12-month period.
- Tenants at or below 50% AMI can be considered for ESG, SER, CSBG, CDBG or other funds if these funds are necessary to fully pay the rent arrearage.
- Monthly rental assistance will be capped at 150% of HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) levels adjusted by county and unit size. Tenants are not disqualified from the program if their monthly rent exceeds this amount, but Program assistance is capped at 150% of FMR based on the unit size.
- A single tenant's maximum rental assistance will be 150% of the one-bedroom FMR regardless of actual unit size.
- For households with more than one person, assistance is based on the number of bedrooms in the unit, not the number of people in the household. For example, two people living in a three-bedroom unit would be assisted up to 150% of the FMR for a three-bedroom unit.
- Utilities will not be included when determining the FMR.
- Tenants are responsible for monthly rental amounts over 150% of FMR and must pay the landlord this portion. This may be done through a payment plan if agreed to by the landlord and tenant.
- The tenant is not required to accept the future rent assistance; however, this decision must be made by the tenant, not the agency providing Program assistance. If the tenant declines future rent assistance it must be noted on the worksheet that the tenant has specifically expressed that they do not want future rent to be paid.
- The tenant must be living in the unit at the time the Program assistance funds are disbursed. Persons temporarily away from the unit (e.g., hospitalization, family visit) are eligible for assistance.
- Agencies must make payments directly to a landlord on behalf of the eligible household unless the landlord does not agree to accept the payment, in which case the agency may make payments directly to a member of the eligible household. Agencies must make reasonable efforts to obtain the cooperation of landlords to accept payments from the Program. The final outreach attempt or notice to the landlord must be documented. The cost of contacting landlords would be an eligible administrative cost. Outreach will be considered complete if:
    - a request for participation is sent in writing, by mail, to the landlord, and the addressee does not respond to the request within 14 calendar days after mailing; or
    - the agency has made at least three attempts by phone, text, or e-mail over a 10 calendar-day period to request the landlord participation; or
- a landlord confirms in writing that the landlord does not wish to participate. Future rent payments may be made on a monthly basis or in one lump sum based on agency preference.

- Tenants living in units with imminent threats to health and safety due to the unit being in poor repair (no heat, no water, no hot water, raw sewage, black mold and/or significant holes in the roof where there are significant amounts of water in the unit every time it rains or snows, or other conditions that present an immediate and significant threat to household health and safety) may be assisted by the Program but the rent payments should be held by the agency or put into escrow until it has been verified in writing (receipts or verification from a contractor or local code compliance) and verified with the tenant that the repairs have been made.
  - If during the course of processing the case the tenant states one or more of the imminent threats listed above is present in their unit, the tenant needs to communicate with the landlord in writing (mail, email, text) to advise the landlord of the problem.
  - If the tenant has a court case the tenant should be referred to Legal Services.
  - If the tenant does not have a court case the agency will contact the landlord regarding the need to make necessary repairs and provide verification to the agency that the repairs have been made. The landlord must be notified that the agency will withhold the payment until the repairs have been verified.
  - Partial rent assistance payments (up to 50%) may be made to the landlord if the funds are needed to cover the expense of completing the repairs.
  - If the landlord will not make repairs, with MSHDA approval, the family may possibly be assisted with a security deposit, application fees an up to 3 months rent to relocate. Details of the situation should be sent to mshda-cera@michigan.gov for a determination.
  - Tenants living in units without heat, water or hot water due to unpaid utility bills may be assisted because it may be presumed that the payments will allow for the utility arrearages to be paid so the utility services may be reinstated.
- If the landlord will not participate in any part of the of application process and the tenant cannot provide a copy of the lease, the tenant must have some type of proof of the amount of rent that was paid to the landlord in the past. If the tenant cannot provide proof of the amount of rent paid to the landlord, the agency must use FMR as rent amount.
- If the household AMI has increased from up to and including 50% AMI to 51-80% AMI by the time the household returns for the additional three months of rental assistance, the household will still be eligible for up to 15 months of rental assistance if they meet other eligibility requirements.

Rental Assistance

Tenant AMI	**Total Full Months Rental Assistance (including up to 3 months future rent assistance)**	**Late Fees**	**Court Costs and Court**
Up to and including 50% AMI	12 months	$200 maximum	$150 maximum
51-80% AMI	10 months	$200 maximum	$150 maximum

- **An additional three months of rental assistance may be provided if necessary for housing stability, but is subject to availability of funds.**
- **Rental assistance is capped at 15 months total for households up to and including 50% AMI.**
- **Rental assistance is capped at 13 months total for households 51-80% AMI.**

Rental Assistance Examples

Up to and including 50% AMI:

- Example #1
  - 9 months of arrears on or after March 13, 2020
  - Tenant eligible for 9 months of arrears and 3 months future rent (12 months total)
  - Tenant may be eligible for one additional assistance block of three months future rent based on availability of funding and redetermination of eligibility through recertification process
- Example #2
  - 6 months of arrears on or after March 13, 2020
  - Tenant eligible for 6 months of arrears and 3 months future rent (9 months total)
  - Tenant may be eligible for one additional assistance block of three months future rent based on availability of funding and redetermination of eligibility through recertification process
- Example #3
  - 10 months of arrears on or after March 13, 2020
  - Tenant eligible for 10 months of arrears and 2 months future rent (12 months total)
  - Tenant may be eligible for one additional assistance block of three months future rent based on availability of funding and redetermination of eligibility through recertification process
- Example #4
  - 12 months of arrears on or after March 13, 2020 and 4 months of arrears prior to March 13, 2020
  - Tenant eligible for 12 months of arrears for the arrearage amount from on or after March 13, 2020
  - Refer tenant to other sources of funding to assist with the 4 months of arrears prior to March 13, 2020 or the tenant and landlord can resolve the balance due
  - Tenant is immediately eligible for 3 months future rent based on availability of funding
- Example #5
  - 16 months of arrears on or after March 13, 2020
  - Tenant eligible for 12 months of arrears
  - An additional 3 months of arrears may be provided based on the availability of funding
  - Refer tenant to other sources of funding to assist with the 16th month and any additional months not covered by CERA due to funding limitations or the tenant and landlord can resolve the balance due
  - Tenant is not eligible for any future rent assistance
- Example #6
  - No rental arrears
  - Past due utility bill
  - Tenant eligible for 3 months of future rent assistance
  - Tenant may be eligible for one additional assistance block of three months future rent based on availability of funding and redetermination of eligibility through recertification process

- Example #7
    - No rental arrears
    - No past due utility bill
    - Tenant is not eligible for any CERA assistance

51-80% AMI:

- Example #1
    - 5 months of arrears on or after March 13, 2020
    - Tenant eligible for 5 months of arrears and 3 months future rent (8 months total)
    - Tenant may be eligible for one additional assistance block of three months future rent based on availability of funding and redetermination of eligibility through recertification process
- Example #2
    - 14 months of arrears on or after March 13, 2020 and 3 months of arrears prior to March 13, 2020
    - Tenant eligible for 10 months of arrears from after March 13, 2020
    - An additional 3 months of arrears may be provided based on the availability of funding
    - Refer tenant to other sources of funding to assist with the 3 months of arrears prior to March 13, 2020, the 14th month of arrears from after March 13, 2020, and any additional months not covered by CERA due to funding limitations or the tenant and landlord can resolve the balance due
- Example #3
    - No rental arrears
    - Past due utility bill
    - Tenant eligible for 3 months of future rent assistance
    - Tenant may be eligible for one additional assistance block of three months future rent based on availability of funding and redetermination of eligibility through recertification process
- Example #4
    - No rental arrears
    - No past due utility bill
    - Tenant is not eligible for any CERA assistance

Additional Three Months of Rental Assistance

- Tenants with arrearages on or after March 13, 2020 greater than 12 months (up to and including 50% AMI) or greater than 10 months (51-80% AMI) are immediately eligible for the additional 3 months of assistance based on the availability of funding.
- Tenants that have not reached the rental assistance cap may apply for one additional three-month block of assistance up to 45 days before the rent payment is due.
    - Tenant must complete a recertification application and submit:
        - income verification from the past month
        - statement of need
    - Recertification worksheet must be completed to determine assistance amount
    - Future rent payments will be made on a monthly basis rather than in one lump sum.

UTILITY ASSISTANCE PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Households under 50% AMI are eligible for an additional $500 beyond the household size limit if this is necessary to fully pay all utility arrears.
- The tenant must be living in the unit at the time the Program assistance funds are disbursed. Persons temporarily away from the unit (e.g., hospitalization, family visit) are eligible for assistance.
- Agencies must make payments directly to a utility/home energy provider on behalf of the eligible household unless the utility/home energy provider does not agree to accept the payment, in which case the agency may make payments directly to a member of the eligible household. Agencies must make reasonable efforts to obtain the cooperation of utility providers to accept payments from the Program. The final outreach attempt or notice to the utility provider must be documented. The cost of contacting utility providers would be an eligible administrative cost. Outreach will be considered complete if:
    - a request for participation is sent in writing, by mail, to the utility provider, and the addressee does not respond to the request within 14 calendar days after mailing; or
    - the agency has made at least three attempts by phone, text, or e-mail over a 10 calendar-day period to request the utility provider's participation; or
    - a utility provider confirms in writing that the provider does not wish to participate.
- If the lease states the tenant is responsible for utility payments and the utilities are in the landlord's name, the utility payment may be made to the landlord.
- Utilities and home energy costs that are covered by the landlord will be treated as rent.
- If the tenant is eligible for utility assistance but is not behind on the utility bills, and the utility company will accept payment, the payment must go to the utility company and the tenant will have a credit with the utility company.
- The tenant is not required to accept the future utility assistance; however, this decision must be made by the tenant, not the agency providing Program assistance. If the tenant declines future utility assistance it must be noted on the worksheet that the tenant has specifically expressed that they do not want future utility payments made on their behalf.
- Late fees charged by utility providers may be included in the utility assistance payment.
- A utility priority list should be developed on the local level to determine how to apply utility payments when tenants have arrearages with multiple utility providers for a total amount greater than the maximum program utility assistance allowed. For example, it may be determined that gas and electricity will be prioritized over other utility assistance because locally there is another program that assists with water and sewer bills.
- Tenants with arrearages in amounts greater than the maximum program utility assistance amount should be referred to SER and other resources for possible additional utility assistance payments.

Utility Assistance

Household Size	Maximum Total One Time Utility Payment (Includes Future Payment)	Maximum Future Utility Payment as a Credit
1-2 persons	$1,500	$300
3-4 persons	$2,000	$500
5+ persons	$2,500	$500

Tenants up to 50% AMI are eligible for an additional $500 if needed to fully pay utility arrears.

Utility Assistance Examples

- Example #1
  - 1 person household under 50% AMI
  - Utility arrears $750
  - Utility assistance payment $750 + $300 future payment = $1,050
- Example #2
  - 6-person household 51-80% AMI
  - Utility arrears $2,200
  - Utility assistance payment $2,200 + $300 future payment = $2,500
- Example #3
  - 3-person household under 50% AMI
  - Utility arrears $2,600
  - Utility assistance payment $2,500
  - Refer household to SER and other resources for possible assistance with the $100 arrearage not covered by the program
  - No future payment available
- Example #4
  - 3-person household 51-80% AMI
  - Utility arrears $2,600
  - Utility assistance payment $2,000
  - Refer household to SER and other resources for possible assistance with the $600 arrearage not covered by the program
  - No future payment available
- Example #5
  - 3-person household, either income category
  - Household has utilities in their name but no utility arrears
  - Household has rental arrears
  - Household eligible for $500 future utility payment
- Example #6
  - 3-person household, either income category
  - Household has no utility arrears
  - Household has no rental arrears
  - Household is not eligible for any CERA assistance

INTERNET ASSISTANCE PAYMENT INFORMATION

Internet assistance will be structured as follows:

- Internet assistance may be provided to a residence if it is a service that allows renters to engage in distance learning, telework, telemedicine and/or to obtain government services, or other significant life activity.
- Tenant must have a current internet bill showing service was in place or suspended due to non-payment at the time of program application.
- Eligible households will receive a one-time payment of $50/month for internet services for six months (total $300) paid directly to the applicant household member in one payment at the time eligibility is determined. The assistance is a fixed amount regardless of the actual cost of the internet service.
- The program will not pay for internet service acquired after the time of program application.

THE ASSISTANCE PROCESS

- Generally, the HARA will be the first point of contact for the tenant. The tenant's first contact may also be with legal aid or a court, which should refer the client to the HARA.
- Landlord and tenant applications will be completed.
- The HARA will collect the required documentation to determine eligibility.
- Every tenant with a court case should be evaluated for Legal Services. This should be relayed to the tenant as part of the Program process.
- Tenants without court cases may still be evaluated for Legal Services if the HARA believes there are any significant repair issues with the housing, or disagreements between tenant and landlord about terms of the lease or amount owed. This should be relayed to the tenant as part of the assistance process.
- The HARA and Legal Services (if involved in the case) will work with the Court and the landlord on the proposed resolution.
- The resolution will be documented either in a Conditional Dismissal Order (through the court) or Settlement Statement (pre-court cases).

Additional Information

- The HARA staff are not required to participate in hearings unless ordered to do so by the Court. This is something that should be discussed with the local court on how to best interact with the court system. It may be beneficial in certain areas or situations to have the HARA participate in the hearings or be available to speak with Legal Services and/or tenants during hearings.
- Amounts not covered in a rental arrearage payment are considered the tenant's responsibility and must be provided for in a Conditional Dismissal Order or Settlement Statement before a Program Assistance Payment is made.
- Tenants may attempt to secure additional financial assistance from other eviction prevention programs to pay for any arrearages not covered by the Program. These should also be reflected in the Conditional Dismissal Order or Settlement Statement if available at the time those documents are executed.
- The Conditional Dismissal Order or Settlement Statement will document the payment terms/dates by all parties. The Program worksheet may be attached to these documents to provide additional details.
- Ineligible applicants should be referred to other eviction prevention resources that may be able to assist, including Legal Services.
- Households may be assisted by the Program one time only, except in the case of additional future rent payments for which the household may be eligible.

Pending Cases

- A pending case
    - is an application lacking necessary information or documentation for a determination to be made and
    - lacks response from the tenant (or landlord if the landlord is applying on behalf of the tenant) for 30 days.

- Care should be taken to follow up with tenants and landlords frequently and by any means possible (telephone, email, mail, fax, text, etc.) to obtain required documentation.
- Applicants with cases in a pending status should be sent written notice using the agency's standard request for information form. The notice should specifically list the missing documents and state that the case is in a pending status until the required documentation is submitted.

Denials

- Tenants may be denied Program assistance for four primary reasons:
    - Tenant is over income
    - Tenant does not have past due rent or past due utilities
    - Tenant has not experienced a financial impact since March 13, 2020
    - Tenant is facing eviction for reasons other than non-payment of rent, unless payment of CERA assistance will resolve the eviction threat
        - Agencies should evaluate the situation to determine if assistance should be considered if the tenant is not otherwise at fault for the eviction, for example the landlord has decided to not renew the lease. Providing assistance may prevent a judgment against the tenant.
        - Agencies should send details of the case to mshda-cera@michigan.gov for exceptions to this type of denial.
- Tenants denied Program assistance should be sent written notice using the agency's standard denial form. The denial form should provide details about the agency's appeal process.
- Tenants should be referred to other eviction prevention resources, including Legal Services.

GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDNG THE ROLE OF LEGAL SERVICES

COVID Emergency Rental Assistance and the role of the Legal Services provider (“LSP”) will vary in each Continuum of Care (“CoC”)/Local Planning Body (“LPB”) based on previous eviction diversion program activity, any agreed upon arrangement between Housing Assessment and Resource Agency (“HARA”) and the LSP, and other variables. Regardless, the intent of CERA is that most participants with a court case (and occasionally tenants without court cases) will benefit from the LSP being involved in their case.

In general, the role of the LSP is to advocate for tenants in the CERA process, and to ensure that tenant interests are served and their rights protected and secured. Among the ways the LSP will perform this role are:

- Notify the HARA if there’s a need to change the total rent arrearage amount stated in the calculation worksheet for any reason;
- Consultation with tenants (and the HARA, as necessary) about any legal defenses and claims (such as repair issues) and any other issues relevant to their cases;
- Represent the tenant, as necessary, in negotiation or mediation of the dispute with the landlord, and possibly formally appear for the tenant in an eviction court case;
- Negotiate terms of Conditional Dismissal Order or Settlement Statement between the tenant and the landlord/landlord’s attorney.

In some areas and situations LSP staff will be present in the courthouse meeting (in-person or via Zoom) directly with tenants as they move through the CERA process. In other areas, the arrangement will not allow for the LSP to make immediate contact with a tenant, requiring that the HARA refer the tenant to Legal Services. This referral should be made as soon as practicable (including in cases where a court complaint has not been filed); while not necessary, a written referral is preferred. Upon referral, the LSP should follow up with the tenant to provide information about CERA related services it can provide. The tenant may decline LSP assistance, and the LSP may also decline assistance if there is a conflict of interest or other valid reason the LSP cannot assist the tenant. The LSP will determine what level of service the tenant will get, ranging from advice only to full representation.

The HARA should recommend that the tenant meets with the LSP so that they understand the legal issues related to the eviction, including potential defenses. If the tenant declines the offer of legal assistance, the HARA, to the extent possible, shall perform the roles outlined above.

If established in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), in some parts of the state, mediation services may be provided by an additional agency. Agencies providing mediation services may do so as a subgrantee of the HARA. Mediation should only be used if the tenant is represented by a lawyer or has expressly agreed to proceed with mediation without a lawyer. For mediation services, the HARA may choose to use up to 1/6 of its case management/admin funding to support these services. Mediation services are not a substitute for legal services.

Eviction Prevention for Immigrants – Michigan Poverty Law Program

The Michigan Poverty Law Program (MPLP) has limited capacity to assist immigrants facing eviction who are not eligible for help from other legal aid programs. Many, but not all, immigrants are eligible for help from their local LSP; this program is for those immigrants who cannot be helped by their local LSP. Eligible persons will receive legal advice (and possibly representation) to help avoid an eviction, regardless of immigration status. Services are available statewide. HARAs should consider making referrals of these tenants who need legal assistance and cannot be helped by their local LSP.

To make a referral, contact: edp-mplp@lsscm.org or 734-714-3237.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Admin costs can be incurred starting January 1, 2021.
- Case management costs can be incurred starting March 8, 2021.
- Financial Assistance funds may be used for rental, utility and internet assistance.
- Financial Assistance funds **can** be used for relocation to a new rental unit if the current unit is in an uninhabitable condition (examples: no heat, extreme plumbing issues like sewage backups, significant roof leaks, etc.) or is extremely unsafe (for example history or threat of domestic violence).
- Case Management funds may be used for:
    - any staffing costs for staff directly providing service to clients (this includes phone staff giving initial information as well as staffing reviewing client eligibility) and those providing supervision
    - interpretation services – an invoice for services is sufficient for financial reporting
- Administrative costs may be used for:
    - <u>direct costs related to</u> technology purchases, both hardware and software, printing/supply costs, office supplies, telephones, travel or other typical administrative costs.
    - staffing costs that are not directly related to housing stability services (accounting/finance department staff).
    - line of credit interest and fees
- Indirect administrative costs CANNOT be billed to this program.

FORMS

- Tenant application
- Landlord application
- Calculation worksheet
- Settlement Statement
- Monitoring Checklist

Signature Requirements

- Electronic, typed and verbal signatures are acceptable on all Program documents and should be noted with the tenant's name, type of signature, case manager's initials and date:
    - Electronic: John Smith – electronic CM 3-31-21
    - Typed: John Smith – typed CM 3-31-21
    - Verbal: John Smith – verbal CM 3-31-21

FUNDS AND AGENCY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Engage in meetings and webinars with MSHDA staff
- Respond to requests for periodic check-in information
- 70% of the rental assistance will be reserved for households at 50% AMI and below. The fiduciary will be responsible for monitoring and tracking to ensure that at least 70% of the assistance is provided to households at or below 50% AMI.
- Agencies must complete 1099 forms for any landlord receiving rental assistance through the program.
- All applications must be entered into the online application system once it becomes available.
- Paper applications received after the online application system becomes available must entered into the online application system within 5 business days of receipt.

CERA: Financial Status Reports Guidance

- Fiduciaries will submit FSRs on a monthly basis on the 15th of each month, beginning in April.
- FSRs will include documentation of how funds from advances were expended and/or provide documentation for expenses to be reimbursed. Each document should be named in MATT as it is uploaded. Required FSR documents are as follows:
    - FSR spreadsheet
    - General ledger that clearly denotes grant name (i.e. CERA) and budget category for all expenses
    - Any other documents an agency may use to track tenant-level financial assistance
- The grant allows for both advances and reimbursements. Grantees will start with a 15% advance and additional 10% advances with each monthly FSR.
- Any questions related to FSR submission should be sent to MSHDA-CERA@michigan.gov

COMMUNICATIONS AND OVERSIGHT

Program Communications

- COVID Emergency Rental Assistance local workgroup meetings
- Periodic Check-In Meetings with MSHDA and/or written response to check-in questions
- FAQs
- mshda-cera@michigan.gov
- MSHDA's Website

Additional Information

- Send problems, concerns, success stories and helpful tips to share with other CoC/LPB groups to mshda-cera@michigan.gov

CERA: Monitoring Guidance

MSHDA will select number of tenant files each month to review for accuracy and compliance. Fiduciaries are responsible for resolving issues with any audit findings.

Monitoring Checklist – COVID Emergency Rental Assistance

Tenant Name: ____

Landlord Name: ____

Assisted Unit Address: ____

Requirement Checklist:

- ○ Rental assistance sought now was not covered by the Eviction Diversion Program
- ○ Tenant has not received CERA assistance
- ○ Tenant Application
- ○ Landlord Application
- ○ Copy of tenant state ID (or alternate form of ID) for the primary adult household member only
- ○ Verification of tenant address if the ID address does not match the unit address
- ○ Copy of lease agreement (or substantiating documents if there is no written lease)
- ○ Copy of COVID Hardship documentation/statement:
    - ▪ Qualification for unemployment benefits OR
    - ▪ Reduction in household income OR
    - ▪ Incurred significant costs or other financial hardship
- ○ Copy of verification of risk of homelessness or housing instability:
    - ▪ Past due rent notice, notice to quit/demand for possession, court ordered summons, complaint, judgment or conditional dismissal OR
    - ▪ Past due utility notice
- ○ Copy of income verification:
    - ▪ 2020 calendar year income (first two pages of IRS form 1040) OR
    - ▪ FAP/SNAP award letter OR
    - ▪ Paystubs for the past month for all income sources OR
    - ▪ Tenant self-attestation when allowable under program guidance
- ○ Case notes regarding use of self-attestation, if applicable
- ○ Copy of current utility bill(s) for CERA to provide utility assistance, if applicable
- ○ Copy of current internet bill for CERA to provide internet assistance, if applicable
- ○ Copy of court documentation verifying court costs, if applicable
- ○ Assistance has been provided based on the rent and utility assistance chart
- ○ Subsidy does not exceed 150% of the FMR based on unit size (one bedroom for single person households)
- ○ Assistance Calculation Worksheet
- ○ Settlement Statement and/or Conditional Dismissal Order
- ○ Landlord W-9 Form (if rent payment is being made directly to the landlord)

Important Reminders:

- CERA funds cannot cover rent arrearages incurred prior to March 13, 2020.
- Tenant should be referred to Legal Services if the landlord has filed for eviction or if tenant reports significant repair issues or disagreement with landlord over lease terms or amount owed.

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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January 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of Morghan Boydston's application to the Michigan Homeless Policy Council.

Morghan serves as the Human Services Manager for the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development. In her role, she manages a portfolio of over ten million dollars of state and federal funds that provide programmatic assistance to those experiencing homelessness. She is responsible for securing and maintaining programs that address the needs of the aging population, low- income communities, and those facing food insecurity. Lastly, she oversees the work related to the role of the Community Action Agency (CAA) for Washtenaw County and manages the local funding source titled Barrier Buster's Unmet Needs Fund.

Among many successes, Morghan has worked closely with community and colleagues to leverage Barrier Buster's Unmet Needs funding resulting in 1:1 match of programmatic funds, thus allowing the program to extend the time and amount of financial assistance available to community. She has worked in collaboration with homelessness providers and the CoC Board to implement and adapt a racial equity statement. This has set the stage to provide the opportunity for twelve organizations to receive technical support and access to the Michigan Nonprofit Association's Diversity Equity and Inclusion assessment tool, in hopes of moving the local equity work forward systemically. Lastly, Morghan led the local CoC administrative team in drafting and piloting a homelessness prevention tool that, once implemented, will allow community to better prioritize prevention resources.

Morghan is skilled in working with community to address and implement policy change. She has a proven track record and success in leveraging funding and partnerships resulting in the creation of access for those most in need. Morghan would be an excellent addition to the Michigan Homeless Policy Council.

If you have any questions, please contact me at jhieftje@umich.edu.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
John Hieftje
3C4942765486485...

1/7/2021

John Hieftje
Board Chair
Washtenaw County Continuum of Care

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January 7, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Gabriel Parra's application to serve on the Michigan Homeless Policy Council. Mr. Parra has served Homeless adults, families and Veterans in Washtenaw County for the last ten years. Mr. Parra's experience with Homeless outreach and his training in evidenced base best practices of Motivational Interviewing, Critical Time Intervention, Harm Reduction, Stages of Change Theory and his promotion and use of the Housing First Philosophy, makes him a strong candidate for the Michigan Homeless Policy Council.

Mr. Parra is a thoughtful individual who demonstrates a collaborative approach to problem solving, problem identification and quickly generates ideas for solutions on macro and micro levels. His experience in building partnerships with Federal, State, County and Community partners has positively impacted the lives of Homeless Veterans in Washtenaw and multiple other counties in Michigan.

Mr. Parra has experience/participates in/with Coordinated Entry, Homeless By Name Lists, street outreach, Point in Time Counts and provides supportive services to Homeless and Formerly Homeless in multiple settings including; supported housing projects, streets, shelters, Bridge Housing Programs, permanent housing and from hospital to home.

We believe Mr. Parra will bring both personal and professional knowledge, as a man of color, to the Council, assuring that Homeless Citizens of color are represented and supported in the policy development process.

If you have any questions, please contact me at jhieftje@umich.edu.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
John Hieftje
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1/7/2021

John Hieftje
Board Chair
Washtenaw County Continuum of Care

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Collaborative solutions for a promising future

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Submitted via ***kemmisl@michigan.gov***

February 25, 2021

Michigan State Housing Development Authority
Lisa Kemmis, Policy Manager
PO Box 30044
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Re: Proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Annual Public Housing Authority Plan and Administrative Plan

Dear Lisa Kemmis:

The Washtenaw County Continuum of Care (CoC) Board would like to recommend that MSHDA adopt a Housing First approach across its housing programs and modify its administrative plan to only use the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s minimum criteria for voucher program eligibility. We believe that doing so will allow people with criminal backgrounds to obtain permanent, affordable housing and advance racial equity in the housing system.

Washtenaw County's CoC is grounded in the principles of the Housing First model, which is an evidenced-based approach emphasizing quick connections to permanent housing, without preconditions or barriers to entry, for households experiencing homelessness. Under Housing First, admissions policies are designed to "screen-in" rather than screen-out applicants with the most significant barriers to housing. When implemented with fidelity, this approach makes permanent supportive housing (PSH) attainable for households who may otherwise be difficult to house and experience long-term homelessness. In order to achieve both local and statewide goals of ending homelessness, MSHDA must adopt a Housing First approach in all of its housing voucher programs and no longer screen out tenants prioritized by the CoC for PSH.

Specifically, MSHDA's intent to continue layering additional eligibility criteria for its voucher programs beyond HUD's minimum criteria will significantly and negatively affect households with criminal histories. Prohibitive voucher eligibility criteria further reduce the already-limited resources available to those with criminal histories, perpetuating homelessness for the hardest-to-house and disregarding evidence supporting the effectiveness of Housing First. Our CoC providers have repeatedly expressed the detrimental impact that such criteria have had in prior years on the households they serve. Using only HUD's minimum eligibility criteria for the voucher program would ensure that as many households as possible have low-barrier access to permanent housing.

Furthermore, the additional layers of eligibility criteria must be removed to address the overrepresentation of Black and African American clients in our system. In Washtenaw County, Black residents make up 12% of the population; however, 61% of clients served are Black and African American. To begin addressing this disparity, in the Fall of 2019, we held Racial Equity Focus Groups to better understand how Black and African American clients experience the local homelessness response system and to explore racial inequities in CoC programs and services. The focus groups revealed that participants felt discriminated against due to their criminal histories. Layering additional eligibility criteria on top of HUD's minimum criteria perpetuates such discrimination and significantly reduces permanent housing opportunities for our minority communities who are historically over-represented in the justice system.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on 2021-2022 Annual Public Housing Authority Plan and Administrative Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact Morghan Williams Boydston, Human Services Manager at Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (williamsm@washtenaw.org, 734-544-6762), for further information.

Sincerely,

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2/25/2021

Renee Smith
Board Chair
Washtenaw County Continuum of Care