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# City of Detroit

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TO: Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director   
Legislative Policy Division

DATE: April 4, 2022

RE: Processing of Wayne County Covid Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA)  
Applications.

The Legislative Policy Division, (LPD) has been requested by Council President Mary Sheffield to provide a resolution requesting the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) take actions to accelerate the processing of CERA applications filed in Wayne County.

Attached is the requested resolution. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

## A Resolution by Council President Sheffield

### Calling for accelerated processing of Wayne County Covid Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) Applications

- WHEREAS** The American economy continues its recovery from the devastating impact of the pandemic, millions of Americans still face deep rental debt and fear evictions and the loss of basic housing security. Many faced housing insecurities prior to the COVID-19, but it is undeniable that the housing crisis has been exacerbated by the pandemic, creating deep disparities.
- WHEREAS** The US Treasury Department's Emergency Rental Assistance Program was instituted with the goal of preventing an eviction crisis from hitting our country's most vulnerable families with the goal of helping renters stay in their homes by offering direct assistance, creating new state and local programs and partnerships with nonprofits and courts administering eviction diversion, access to counsel, and other housing stability services.
- WHEREAS** The State of Michigan's (CERA) program, administered by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) through various Wayne County housing service agencies has been overwhelmed by the volume of applications, struggling to process CERA applications fast enough to prevent evictions. As of December 2021, Wayne County lagged behind every other county in the state processing just 41% as of December 2021.<sup>1</sup>
- WHEREAS** Processing time for rental assistance applications in neighboring counties is 15 to 30 days, while the processing time for applications in Wayne County is 90 to 120 days. This disparity not only reflects the inability of MSHDA to effectively administer the program, but it serves to perpetuate the notion that persons of the lowest economic status are destined to receive substandard levels of service from our government.
- WHEREAS** One-third of all applications in the state originate from Wayne County, one would think as in any emergency, resources would be allocated where they are most needed. The over 52,000 applications submitted from Wayne County residents' and property owners demonstrates the critical need we have in our community to protect our lowest income residents from eviction, foreclosure, and utility shut offs, helping tenants stay in their homes and ensuring landlords can recoup owed rent. **THEREFORE, BE IT**
- RESOLVED** The Detroit City Council through Council President Sheffield calls upon MSHDA and its partners to immediately take the necessary steps needed to increase the CERA application processing rates in Wayne County by adding additional hires, training, innovation, and/or improved methodologies. **BE IT, FURTHER**
- RESOLVED** A copy of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Whitmer, Mayor Duggan, Wayne County Executive Evans, Acting Director of MSHDA, and the members of the Detroit legislative delegation.