



**NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office**

***Lee Harris, Mayor***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT REOPENS COVID-19 EMERGENCY RENTAL AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH MORE STAFF AND NEW TOOLS**

***These changes will expand access for county residents.***

**Shelby County, TN** – Applications for the COVID-19 Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program will reopen Tuesday, February 1, 2022 with a larger staff and new tools that expand access to the program for county residents. The program, which has already helped more than 13,500 Shelby County residents is administered by Shelby County Government and the City of Memphis.

Staff has been increased by 60 percent, with 38 full-time positions created to address the needs of more Shelby County residents. Applicants will be able to check the status of their applications online. In addition, new door-to-door canvassers will bring program information directly to residents. The canvassing will target communities that are COVID hotspots, have high utility cutoff notifications, increased eviction rates, and residents who meet the income guidelines.

The Emergency Rental and Utility Assistance Program (ERA) began accepting applications last March. It has assisted 13,566 Shelby County residents with rent and/or utility relief and dispersed a total of \$42.6 million.

Additionally, Shelby County's procedures have received recognition from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as a program with "Promising Practices."

**Division of Community Services Director Dorcas Young Griffin:** "For so many of our residents, the inability to work during the pandemic meant they couldn't pay their rent, utilities, or sometimes both. This lifeline has allowed them to keep their families in their homes. And I'm proud of the federal recognition we have received for our program innovations."

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Applications and additional information are available at [home901.org](http://home901.org) or by calling 211.

(End of Release)

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