



DEPARTMENT OF
Appeals & Hearings

To: Mary Sheffield, President, Detroit City Council
From: Miriam Blanks-Smart, Esq. Director
Department of Appeals & Hearings
Date: March 24, 2023
Re: Responses to DAH Budget Hearing Questions

Please find below responses to your questions sent on March 15, 2023, regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget for Department of Appeals & Hearings.

- 1. How many hearings does the department conduct annually? The goal of the department is to conduct \$60,000 per year between July 2023 and June 2024. What does the department plan to do to achieve this goal?**

The Department of Appeals and Hearings (DAH) will exceed its goal of 60,000 hearings conducted in FY 2023. As of 3/22/23, the DAH has conducted 56,063 hearings and is targeted to conduct over 76,000 hearings by the end of FY 2023 and expect this upward trend to continue in FY 2024.

- 2. What practices does the department take to ensure that property in Detroit is maintained free of blight?**

The DAH's main role in blight enforcement is to conduct timely and fair hearings on blight tickets issued. The department will conduct over 75,000 hearings on blight tickets in FY 2023. Moreover, the DAH is responsible for processing and encouraging payments on blight tickets and judgments. One of the ways the DAH encourages payment is the department's processing of "blight clearance applications" that ensure that applicants who: (a) apply for building permits, certificate and variances and (b) seek tax auctioned property have paid any outstanding blight judgments to be eligible.

- 3. What educational and informational programs does DAH provide to residents that informs them of your services regarding blight tickets, refund eligibility, compliance requirements and DAH digital court?**

The DAH's web page provides the ability for residents to look-up blight tickets by ticket number, owner name and property address. The website also has information, forms and instructions on how to attend a hearing, appeal a blight judgment, apply for a refund and a BSEED compliance toolkit, the Top Ten Blight Violations and a pamphlet 6+ with photos of certain blight violations.



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4. Does the department have any staff vacancies?

Currently, the department has one (1) vacancy for a Business Systems Support Specialist II position. The DAH is currently in the interview process to fill this position.

5. There is a \$35,654 increase in salaries and wages between FY 2023 and FY 2024. However, we see a \$15,280 decrease in employee benefits in that same timeframe. What is the reason for inverse relationship?

The inverse relationship is caused by general wage, step and merit increases offset by a citywide reduction of its fringe rate.

6. What programs or initiatives does DAH provide/plan to provide that supports citizens' ability to appeal certain administrative decisions made by other departments?

The DAH has a robust, user-friendly web page with specific information on the administrative appeals process, including how to file an administrative appeal, the kinds of administrative appeals and links to instructions and forms to file administrative appeals: <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/department-appeals-and-hearings/administrative-appeal>

Signature: _____

Miriam Bland-Smar

Date: _____

3/24/23