



Department of **Human Services**
Monroe County, New York

Cheryl Dinolfo
County Executive

Kelly A. Reed
Commissioner

June 15, 2016

Phyllis Morris
Deputy Commissioner Center for Employment and Economic Supports
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
40 North Pearl St. 11th Floor
Albany, New York 12243-0001

Dear Deputy Commissioner Morris,

Monroe County received approval from your office to offer shelter supplementation to up to 125 TANF or SN-MOE families on May 21, 2015. We appreciate the support that your staff provided in moving that request through the State process last year. Unfortunately we have encountered significant difficulty in identifying landlords interested in the plan as written. Specifically, we found that once landlords had determined that it was appropriate to begin formal eviction proceedings against their tenants for non-payment of rent, that they were not interested in working with the tenant or Monroe County to stop the eviction.

We enlisted support from the University of Rochester in evaluating our shelter supplementation plan. In the fall of 2015 we provided a field placement for two public policy students to review our plan and identify opportunities for improvement. The students engaged TANF recipients in emergency shelters, emergency shelter providers, landlords and Monroe County staff in their review. They identified that the landlord-tenant relationship was so eroded by the time of formal eviction that a shelter supplement was insufficient motivation to retain the housing for the tenant. Instead the students suggested that we identify tenants who were in good standing with the Department and actively working towards self-sufficiency but struggled to pay their full rent on time. We have many TANF recipients who fall behind \$50 or \$100 monthly in their rent obligation and retain housing until they hit a sort of "tipping point" with the landlord and are eventually evicted.

We have restructured our Shelter Supplementation Plan to better support this group of TANF recipients. Please find our updated plan request for your consideration. This request takes into account the pillar approach to self-sufficiency developed by the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative; providing assistance in both the training and housing domains. You will note that the updated plan also leverages support from two important and evolving training programs in our community; the Young Adult Manufacturing, Training and Employment Program and the Health Professions Opportunity Grant managed by Action for A Better Community.

As with our original plan, this Shelter Supplementation Plan was structured in alignment with current Housing and Urban Development priorities of diversion from emergency shelters placements for families facing homelessness.

I want to again thank Greg Nolan from your office for the encouragement and guidance he has provided during the development of our plan. We are pleased to be able to present a shelter supplementation plan that will not only save TANF dollars but more importantly supports the Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative of reducing the unacceptably high rate of child poverty in our community by offering both training and housing assistance for our TANF families and their children.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the plan. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Forgue".

Nancy Forgue
Deputy Commissioner

Cc: Corinda Crossdale, Commissioner
Greg Nolan, OTDA
Jeff Gaskell, OTDA



Department of Human Services
 Monroe County, New York

Maggie Brooks
 County Executive

Kelly A. Reed
 Commissioner

Revised Application for Shelter Allowance Supplement
 Updated 6-8-16

Local District: Monroe County

Contact Person: Nancy Forgue – Deputy Commissioner

Telephone: 585-753-6635

Implementation Date: upon approval from OTDA -

Amount of Supplement (for example: Household Size, Shelter Maximum, Supplement Amount): *Please see attached for the full narrative of the plan.*

TANF household size	TANF Shelter allowance	maximum shelter with supplement	bedrooms	shelter supplement
2	298	500	2	\$202
3	343	525	3	\$182
4	374	550	4	\$176
5	405	575	5+	\$170
6	420	575	5+	\$155
7	438	575	5+	\$137

Type of Cases Covered by Supplement/Targeted Population:

(List eligibility criteria and how determined and documented including the following :)

The Shelter Supplement is designed to provide diversion from emergency shelter placement for up to 125 Monroe County families on an annual basis.

Goal: Promotion of housing stability for TANF and SN MOE families living in high needs neighborhoods by utilization of a shelter supplement to avoid emergency shelter placements due to eviction.

- Housing instability and frequent transiency often have a negative impact on school achievement for children and economic stability/employment outcomes for adults. Academic achievement is also a predictor of future income and employment.
- Landlords are motivated to maintain their properties and avoid costly tenant turnover by participating.

Expected Outcomes: Diversion of no more than 125 TANF and SN families at any point in time, from placement in emergency shelters by providing a monthly shelter supplement for up to 12 months allowing them to retain their current housing.

1. How much will non-legally responsible Non-Temporary Assistance (NTA) individuals residing in the same dwelling be required to contribute towards the excess shelter costs? (e.g., a prorata share of shelter costs, 30 percent of income, the lesser of these two variables, etc.) 30% of their gross income or a prorata share of rental costs – whichever is less.

Will SSI recipients or ineligible aliens residing in the household be expected to contribute towards rent cost? yes

If so, how will this amount be determined? 30% of their gross income or a prorata share of rental costs – whichever is less.

2. How will contributions towards rent cost from individuals outside the household be verified and what standards will be applied in determining whether such contributions can be sustained in the future? Households generally receiving contributions towards rent costs from individuals outside of the household will not be eligible for shelter supplementation

How will the agency assure that third party contributors are not legally responsible relatives? The agency utilizes a number of resources to verify household composition, legal responsibility, and income including field investigations, Lexis Nexis and internal computer applications that match address data. We will fully employ these resources to identify any legal responsibility for support of eligible TANF families – regardless of any stated “contribution” from these parties.

3. Will it be required that there be a court proceeding concerning the nonpayment of shelter cost prior to the family being determined eligible for supplemental shelter payments? NO
If not, how will the district assure that the shelter arrears are legitimate and the responsibility of the TA recipient? The landlord must confirm client/tenant report of inability to pay full monthly rent obligation and must give the agency a full accounting of any shelter arrears as part of the review process. The TANF recipient will be required to confirm the amount of arrears and will be required to repay any arrears payments the district makes to a landlord to retain housing/offer supplementation that amount to duplicate assistance.

4. How will co-tenant of record lease arrangements be handled? We do not generally see this type of case in Monroe County and will evaluate on a case by case basis to determine if one or both leases would be eligible for shelter supplementation.

Will leases be required of all tenants of record? No – but they will be encouraged to support housing stability and a commitment to the shelter supplement program.

5. Will shelter arrears for shelter supplementation cases be limited in monetary amount (e.g., \$3,000) or to six months of arrears? Yes – Shelter arrears will be limited to no more than the equivalent of three months of supplemented rent for the household size. – A household of three would be eligible for no more than \$1,575 in arrears payment.

6. How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, etc.)? The TANF household will lose the shelter supplement if moving for a reason not identified in our plan. Landlords are asked to accept the shelter supplement as payment in full of monthly rent for the duration of the supplement period (no more than 12 months)

What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move? Households required to move through no fault of their own may continue to receive a shelter supplement for the duration of the original 12 month approval period if that supplementation is necessary to retain housing and avoid placement in an emergency housing shelter.

Will the district require the recipient of the supplemental shelter allowance to report changes related to the

supplemental allowance timely as a condition of eligibility for the allowance? YES

7. Will any local forms be used to facilitate the supplementation process? NO

If so, copies must be provided with the plan.

8. Will there be any health and safety standards adhered to prior to paying supplemental allowances or arrears? Yes – the property must be free from any health and safety violations as determined by the City of Rochester and have had a successful lead safety inspection within the timeframes outlined in City Property Code.

9. Will the supplemental allowance be time limited in any way? yes – to 12 months.

10. Will the supplementation process include a onetime incentive payment to the landlord? NO

11. Districts that already have existing rent supplement programs that are not court ordered (such as the Human Resource Administration's Employment Incentive Housing Program and the Department of Homeless Service's Long Term Stayer's Rent Supplement Program) should consolidate all existing rent supplementation programs into one uniform submission. Explain how this is being done:

12. How will the district ensure that the existence of the supplement does not adversely affect the ability of non-TA recipient families (i.e. low income working families) to find and retain affordable housing? The shelter supplement is intended to provide sufficient funding to TANF and SN-MOE households so that they can secure and maintain appropriate safe housing at a competitive market rate in the area. The supplement is limited to those households experiencing homelessness due to eviction and is not intended to place TANF families and working families in competition.

Length of Time Supplement Offered to Individual Cases: 12 months
(e.g. 3 months, indefinitely)

Estimate of Annual Cost (Show all calculations): see below/attachment
Gross Federal State Local

Purpose/Justification: see attached plan

(Provide relevant statistics)

Additional Information: included below

Monroe County staff will ensure that ongoing temporary assistance (TA) benefits are provided with TANF or SNA and not EAF funds in accordance with 14 LCM 01.

Monroe County staff will ensure that the shelter type is properly identified on the Welfare Management System's (WMS) Automated Budget Eligibility Logic (ABEL) for families in receipt of ongoing TA benefits residing in Temporary Housing Accommodations such as hotels or emergency housing.

Staff will code families receiving shelter supplementation on ABEL using *PA Additional Allowance code 42* to insure that OTDA can properly track supplementation cases and monitor savings.

**Monthly Calculation for Emergency Shelter Costs for Families Receiving
TANF/SN -MOE**

Assumptions:

Monthly cost for 25 families in THA **\$67,500**
average household size of 3
\$90 daily cost per family (\$30/individual) for shelter
placements

cost for shelter supplements for 125 families monthly **\$65,625**
monthly shelter cost for a family of 3 is \$525 - \$343 monthly allowance and \$182
supplement

2015 actual costs for emergency shelter have been finalized.

Monroe County pays for emergency shelter "off line" through SAP.

We do NOT make payments via the BICS system on the client case

Therefore BICS reports do not accurately depict our emergency shelter costs.

A review of our emergency shelter claims indicates that :

For 2015 EAF claims for emergency shelter costs averaged \$135,000
monthly.

For 2015 TANF/SN-MOE claims for emergency shelter costs averaged \$177,000 monthly

**Shelter Supplementation Plan for Monroe County
Updated June 2016**

Monroe County Department of Human Services is pleased to submit a shelter supplementation plan for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Safety Net (SN) families facing imminent homelessness in accordance with directives outlined in 03 ADM 07.

Goal: Promotion of housing stability for TANF and SN MOE families living in high needs neighborhoods by utilization of a shelter supplement to avoid emergency shelter placements due to eviction.

- Housing instability and frequent transiency often have a negative impact on school achievement for children and economic stability/employment outcomes for adults. Academic achievement is also a predictor of future income and employment.
- Landlords are motivated to maintain their properties and avoid costly tenant turnover by participating.

Expected Outcomes: Reduction in the number of TANF and SN MOE families placed in emergency shelters in in Monroe County. This is a cost neutral proposal. However, Monroe County anticipates that providing shelter supplements to “eligible” TANF and SN MOE families will have significant benefits for the families, children, neighborhoods and property owners in the eligible communities including:

- Related increases in school attendance rates for children in the families receiving shelter supplements.
- Related improvements in employment activity participation for adults in the families receiving shelter supplements
- Improved relationships with landlords and development of quality housing stock in high needs neighborhoods
- Reduce the number of evictions for nonpayment of rent and emergency shelter placements for TANF and SN families by 5%
- Increased success in securing and maintaining unsubsidized employment for shelter supplement recipients. Expectation that 25% of shelter supplement recipients will secure unsubsidized employment by the 6th month of the supplement period reducing ongoing TANF expenses for New York State.

Background: The City of Rochester is the main metropolitan area in Monroe County. The City experiences one of the highest child poverty rates in the nation. Additionally the graduation rate within the Rochester City School District is notably low. The public benefit caseload in Monroe County is higher than would be expected based on per capita population of other large upstate NY counties also having a city center.

Table 1.

County	Total Population	TANF and SN-FP recipients (source 6/1/16 WST002 SMS report - OTDA published caseload data)	SN – FNP recipients	PA Caseload as a percentage of total County Population
Monroe	749,600	13,559	12,108	3.4%
Erie	919,070	16,970	12,554	3.2%
Onondaga	468,463	8,907	5,597	3.1%

In 2015 Governor Cuomo provided unprecedented support for Monroe County families living in poverty by providing both financial and programmatic support for the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI). Throughout 2015 RMAPI evaluated the high child poverty rate in Rochester and Monroe County and developed a framework to provide the supports necessary to move low income families out of poverty and to self-sufficiency. Quality and affordable housing and targeted training and employment programs were both identified as key “pillars” required to support families through the transition.

Monroe County is actively involved in both the local Continuum of Care and Homeless Services Network. We have contracts with several emergency housing shelters allowing for over 400 shelter beds available on any given night. The primary cause for homelessness in our community continues to be eviction. Seventy-five percent of all episodes of homelessness are the result of eviction (either by primary tenant or landlord).

Our homeless data indicates that many families experience more than one episode of homelessness in a given year and it is not unusual for families to be moved between shelters and hotels several times during their placement. On average, Public Assistance families experiencing homelessness spend between 17 and 25 nights in placement for each episode of homelessness. Many other families receiving public assistance may not experience homelessness and emergency shelter placements but do frequently move to avoid eviction for non-payment of rent as they seek to locate suitable affordable housing.

The Rochester-Monroe County Continuum of Care and the Rochester Homeless Services Network are collaborating with local shelters and homeless service providers to significantly change the strategy for provision of services to high needs and homeless families from a longstanding focus on shelter placements to one of diversion from homelessness and rapid rehousing.

The 2013 Action for a Better Community, *Community Assessment* indicates that Monroe County family structure, particularly in the City of Rochester, differs significantly from local, state, and national patterns. The report states that Rochester has half the rate of married couple families and 2X the rate of single female-headed households. The report also points out that single mother are more likely to be in poverty than any other family type with 32.3% of female headed households living in poverty between 2007 and 2011 as compared to 13.7% for male headed households and 3.2% for married-couple households.

Solution: Leverage shelter supplements for TANF families to support the mission of the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative to increase housing quality and stability for low income residents and align with the Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) focus on diversion and rapid rehousing.

Monroe County is requesting approval from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for a shelter supplement for TANF and SN-MOE families facing homelessness or eviction for inability to pay shelter expenses. We will provide shelter supplementation for approximately 125 families annually to keep families stable in their current homes or support a move to housing free of health and safety violations for instances where the current dwelling is found to be substandard and the family otherwise faces placement in a shelter.

Monroe County Department of Human Services will actively partner with the Young Adult Manufacturing, Training, and Employment Program (YAMTEP) and Action for A Better Community's (ABC) Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG) to support participants in these programs in securing and maintaining quality housing. YAMTEP is a pilot training program that has evolved from the RMAPI initiative. Monroe County has been an active participant along with the City of Rochester, Tru-Form Manufacturing, Pathstone Development Corporation, and Rochester Works! in developing a twelve-week work experience/on the job training program for individuals and families living in poverty in Monroe County. YAMTEP provides basic training in manufacturing and job skills and has graduated two cohort classes in 2015. The job placement rate for individuals completing YAMTEP from these first two classes was over 75%. There is a high demand for light manufacturing employees in the Monroe County area and YAMTEP has proven successful in providing the training and skills required for individuals to secure and retain employment in this and other entry-level fields. Successful YAMTEP graduates will be able to move off of public assistance and pay their own rent in full.

Monroe County Department of Human Services also supports the Action for A Better Community's Health Professions Opportunity Grant recipients. ABC received a substantial federal grant to providing training and supportive services for low income individuals interested in careers in the health care field. The grant requires

that 25% of participants be TANF eligible. The HPOG program in Monroe County will be fully operational with training participants beginning in the fall of 2016. Monroe County will offer shelter supplementation for those TANF recipients enrolled in HPOG training who otherwise meet the shelter supplementation eligibility criteria.

This approach; providing shelter supplements for those TANF and SN-MOE families experiencing housing instability and actively engaged in short and mid-term training programs for high demand professions, will align Monroe County's efforts with the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative "Pillars" approach. We fully expect that most families receiving the shelter supplement will not only secure unsubsidized employment but also move away from dependency on public benefits programs by the end of the twelve months supplement period.

Need and Cost Estimates:

Monthly Calculation for Emergency Shelter Costs for Families Receiving TANF/SN -MOE

Assumptions:

Monthly cost for 25 families in THA average household size of 3 \$90 daily cost per family (\$30/individual) for shelter placements	\$67,500
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Eligibility Requirements for Shelter Supplementation:

- The family must be facing homelessness or experiencing housing instability and meet normal criteria for shelter placement.
- To support the shelter supplement the TA recipient/resident must take Monroe County's "Tenant Accountability Training" within 60 days of moving into the unit.
- Landlords renting to TA recipient/residents requesting and meeting the criteria for a shelter supplement would be required to attend a monthly landlord informational meeting.
- For residences housing ONLY TA recipients the landlord must agree to accept the monthly shelter payments for each household size as "payment in full" for the unit.
- Non TA household members will be required to contribute to shelter costs as follows: 30% of their gross income or a pro rata share of rental costs – whichever is less.
- All units must be free of any health and safety violations and have passed a lead safety inspection in accordance with all City of Rochester building code requirements.
- All units must have a Move in inspection conducted by the MCDHS contractor (currently The Housing Council) with both the recipient/resident and the landlord present to be eligible for the shelter supplement.
- Rent will be restricted and paid by direct voucher to landlord.
- No member of household may be in any type of sanction status.
- All adults in household must be either employed to capacity or actively participating as assigned in a work activity. Monroe County will partner with two local training and employment initiatives to fully support TANF heads of households applying for shelter supplements. I
- Family must be eligible for TA based on standard of need without regard to the supplement.
- TA recipient/applicant must be the tenant of record.
- The household cannot have willfully lost Section 8 or other rental subsidy within the past two years.
- Households receiving or eligible for section 8 or other rental subsidy are ineligible for shelter supplement.
- The household must apply for Section 8 subsidy and accept if offered.
- The household will be eligible for the supplement until the date on which the individual becomes ineligible for TA but in no case for more than 12 months. TA Recipients receiving the subsidy will be encouraged to achieve self-sufficiency and utilize the 12 months of subsidy as a support in their self-sufficiency efforts.

Loss of Shelter Supplementation:

TA households receiving a shelter supplement will lose the supplement upon:

- Move to another County/Social Services district
- Loss of temporary assistance eligibility
- Significant change in TA household size – increases or decreases by more than two individuals that cannot be accommodated in the current unit.

Additionally, TA households receiving a shelter supplement will lose the supplement upon moving to another residence/unit **unless** the move is necessitated by:

- Termination of lease agreement/tenancy by the landlord for reasons beyond the control of the TA client. Reasons considered **within** the control of tenant are household composition, housekeeping and general upkeep of the unit, illegal or questionable activities within the unit (police activity, noise, nuisance calls, pet violations, etc.
- Acceptance of rental subsidy available in another unit/dwelling

The Monroe County Department of Human Services Community Homeless Coordinator will train the emergency housing staff (emergency housing specialists and examiners) in proper eviction prevention protocols and eligibility requirements for approval of shelter supplementation. Monroe County staff will consistently apply the criteria outlined above in determining eligibility for the shelter supplement and we will not offer or approve shelter supplementation if there is any indication of misrepresentation or abuse from either the TA recipient or the property landlord.

