

Application for Shelter Allowance Supplement

Local District: Columbia County

Contact Person: Lynn A. Kutski, Director of Income Maintenance

Telephone: (518)828-9411 ext. 104

Email: 10a209@dfa.state.ny.us

Implementation Date: July 1, 2011

Amount of Supplement (for example: Case Size, Shelter Maximum, and Supplement Amount):

The proposed Shelter Supplement will be an amount up to the actual rent obligation, but not to exceed the shelter maximum for that household size.

TA Household Size	Shelter Allowance Effective 11/03	New Shelter Maximum including Proposed Supplement	*Columbia County Fair Market Rental Rates	
			Bedrooms	Amount
1	\$191	\$511	1	\$731
2	\$221	\$541	2	\$862
3	\$254	N/A	3	\$1041
4	\$277	N/A	4	\$1110

*HUD – established Fair Market Rents for Columbia County

Type of Cases Covered by Supplement/Targeted Population:

This proposed Shelter Supplement would be available to single Safety Net consumers or childless couples who are homeless, living in motels, domestic violence shelters, or temporary housing.

Terms:

- Recipients must be Safety Net eligible based on the New York State standard of need without the supplement and in compliance with all eligibility requirements.
- No member of the family unit can be on sanction.
- The recipient must be tenant or co-tenant of record. Leases and/or written agreements with the landlord will not be a requirement.
- The recipient's full actual share of rent must be restricted and paid directly to the landlord.

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

1. How much will non-legally responsible Non-Temporary Assistance (NTA) persons residing in the same dwelling be required to contribute towards the excess shelter costs (e.g., a prorata share of rent costs, 30 percent of income, the lesser of these two variables, etc.)?

All non-SNA household members must contribute either their pro-rated share of the rent or 30 percent of their gross income, whichever is less.

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

If so, how will this amount be determined? SSI recipients and ineligible aliens will be expected to contribute either their prorated share of the rent or 30 percent of their income, whichever is less. All adults living in the dwelling will be required to verify their income.

2. How will contributions towards rent from individuals outside the household be verified and what standards will be applied in determining whether such contributions and be sustained in the future? Contributions towards rent from members outside the household will be verified and monitored by a statement from the recipient and from the individual making the contribution. The statement must include whether it is a onetime payment or the anticipated frequency.

How will the district assure that third party contributors are not legally responsible relatives? The recipient must be TA eligible in order to receive a rent supplement. Therefore, legal lines of responsibility will be reviewed during the initial eligibility.

3. Will the district require that there be a court proceeding concerning the nonpayment of shelter costs prior to the individual being determined eligible for supplemental shelter payments? Not applicable as Columbia County is not planning to utilize rent supplements to address back rent issues.

If not, how will the district determine that the shelter arrears are legitimate and the responsibility of the TA recipient? N/A

4. How will co-tenant of record lease arrangements be handled? The recipient must be tenant or co-tenant of record in order to be considered for the rent supplement program. Households that include both Safety Net and Family Assistance or SN MOE individuals will be budgeted as appropriate in regard to Temporary Assistance regulations for co-op budgeting.

Will leases be required of all tenants of record? Leases will not be required.

5. Will shelter arrears for shelter supplementation cases be limited in monetary amount (e.g., \$3,000?) or to a specific time period (e.g., six months of arrears)? Not applicable as Columbia County is not planning to utilize the rent supplement program to address back rent issues.

If yes, please detail: N/A

6. How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, etc)? Any modification (such as increase in rent, moves, change in income or household composition, etc) will require a reassessment and the shelter supplement will be adjusted accordingly.

What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue? following a move? Continued supplementation will be contingent on affordability, compliance with the program requirements and continued Temporary Assistance eligibility. Individuals choosing to move for any reason other than health and safety or issues outside of their control must be moving into a less expensive shelter situation.

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, all changes must be reported in a timely manner.

7. Will any local forms be used to facilitate the supplementation process? Yes, see attached.

If so, copies must be provided with the plan.

8. Will there be any health and safety standards regarding the housing that must be met prior to paying supplemental allowances or arrears? The dwelling must meet the appropriate city/town codes. Inspections will not be required except for individuals requesting a security agreement or in the event that a claim of health and safety violations is made under which circumstances the matter will be referred to local inspection officials.

9. Will the supplemental allowance be time limited in any way? The supplemental allowance will be limited to three (3) years as long as the recipient meets the eligibility requirements. Extension of the supplement will be handled on a case by case basis. Situations that would warrant an extension are when the following circumstances have occurred, and the client still cannot obtain affordable housing.

- The client has proven their ongoing search for affordable housing
- The client has complied with all requirements of the Employment Unit
- The client if required, has applied for and followed through on the application for Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income

10. Will the supplementation process include a onetime incentive payment to the landlord? A onetime incentive payment to the landlord will be determined on a case by case basis. Onetime payments will be authorized in extreme situations where the applicant/recipient has exhausted every other avenue and the landlord is requiring additional payment based on the clients poor rental history.

Authorization of such payment requires approval of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner or Director of Income Maintenance.

11. How will the district ensure that the existence of the supplement does not adversely affect the ability of non-TA recipient individuals or childless couples (i.e. low income working individuals or childless couples) to find and retain affordable housing? The district does not anticipate the shelter supplement having an adverse affect on Non-TA recipient or low income working individuals or childless couples as the benefit provided will be lower than the HUD standards.

Length of Time Supplement Offered to Individual Cases: (e.g. 3 months, 6 months, indefinitely etc.)

The shelter supplement will continue for three (3) years as long as the individual or childless couples continue to meet the eligibility requirements. Extensions will be granted on a case by case basis with the approval of Administration.

Columbia County Shelter Supplement - Estimate of Cost Savings/Neutrality

Since January 1, 2011 the Agency has housed an average of 72 people per night in 52 motel rooms. Of the 72 people an average of 43 are single individuals/childless couples. This population averages 42 motel rooms per night. The average cost of a motel room is \$75.00 per night or \$2,250 per month.

Cost of Motel rooms per month for Single individuals/childless couples

42 rooms x \$75.00 per night = \$3,150 per night

\$3,150 x 30 nights = \$94,500 per month

Cost of Shelter Supplement per month for Single individuals/childless couples

42 shelter supplements x \$320 per month = \$13,440 per month

Cost of motel rooms = \$94,500 per month

Cost of Supplement = \$13,440 per month

Monthly Savings = \$81,060 per month x 12 months = \$972,720 Annual savings

Purpose/Justification

The rising cost of housing in Columbia County and the economic decline has made it increasingly difficult to meet the housing needs for a significant part of our Safety Net population. Our homeless population has increased by 41.18% since 2008. Over the past several years, Columbia County lost a considerable amount of “affordable housing”. Apartment buildings that once served to house many Temporary Assistance clientele have been sold, rehabbed and are now utilized as one family dwelling for the owners. This transition has contributed to the increased homelessness within the County.

The maximum total grant for a single childless Safety Net recipient is \$357.00 per month with heat included. According to HUD the fair market rental rate for a one bedroom apartment in Columbia County is \$731.00. The fair market value is significantly higher than the \$191.00 Temporary Assistance shelter allowance. An individuals entire Temporary Assistance grant of \$357.00 would not even cover half of the monthly rental expense of \$731.00. These figures make it increasingly difficult for Safety Net individuals to find and retain housing.

Columbia County does not have a homeless shelter or any official Emergency Housing. The homeless clientele are placed in the local motels which is not a desirable solution. Utilizing motels for Emergency Housing creates a variety of challenges such as those listed below:

1. Extensive financial cost.
2. Most locations are rural with no public transportation making it difficult for the individuals to look for employment or affordable housing, to access treatment providers and to go grocery shopping.

3. There is an inadequate amount of motels in Columbia County; therefore motels in contiguous counties must be utilized. (Understandably the other counties are not pleased with this solution).
4. The environment of a motel is not conducive for long term housing.
5. Local motels will not accept registered sex offenders.

The approval of this Shelter Allowance Supplement would allow Columbia County to avoid the costly Motel placements and would result in a potential gross savings of approximately \$972,720.00 annually.

The shelter supplement will continue for three (3) years as long as the individual or childless couples continue to meet the eligibility requirements. Extensions will be granted on a case by case basis with the approval of Administration. Situations that would warrant an extension are when the following circumstances have occurred, and the client still cannot obtain affordable housing.

- The client has proven their ongoing search for affordable housing
- The client has complied with all requirements of the Employment Unit
- The client if required, has applied for and followed through on the application for Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income

In addition to the potential cost savings, the Supplement will also allow single recipients to access permanent housing within a reasonable timeframe and reduce the length of stay in a motel. Homeless recipients that are placed in a motel, struggle to achieve stability. It is difficult to find employment when you are not sure where you will be sleeping each night and it is difficult to find permanent housing when you don't have a job to pay for it. Homelessness creates a significant barrier to becoming self-sufficient. Providing a shelter supplement will allow recipients the stability of permanent housing and in turn allow them to overcome various barriers and gain self-sufficiency.