

2021-2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

District: Steuben

Contact Person: Lise Reynolds – Deputy Commissioner
Jennifer MacPhail – Director of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Mackenzie Stratton – Clinical Coordinator/Director of APS and BILT

Telephone: 607-664-2208/ 607-664-2150/607-664-2102

Email: LReynolds@SteubenCountyNY.gov
JMacphail@SteubenCountyNY.gov
MStratton@SteubenCountyNY.gov

RSP Implementation Date: XX/XX/XXXX

Indicate whether the program will be administered using district mechanisms (e.g., direct administration or transfer of funds to county agencies) or by another public agency, contractor or non-profit organization. Administration of the RSP may be delegated in full or in part. Also indicate whether districts will coordinate with the local HUD-funded Continuum of Care, if applicable.

The Department will directly administer the program through the Department's BILT unit. This unit has routinely supported the application, eligibility and monitoring of the housing programs such as HPRP, STEHP, ESG-CARES and ERAP.

Steuben DSS houses a multidisciplinary team, BILT (Building Independence for the Long Term), a rapid response case management team comprised of staff with specialties in multiple skills, including housing, case management, employment, addictions, mental health, and domestic violence. Case managers expedite services and benefit determinations within DSS and other county departments. This team provides support within the community and to individuals presenting to the local Department. Case management services are available as well as evaluation and follow up for those presenting who have barriers. Clients also have the services of an employment case manager, to perform skills assessments, locate and refer to eligible training and job assistance programs, help find and secure employment towards longer-term self-sufficiency. The team includes a housing case manager, 3 homeless liaisons, a domestic violence advocate (DVL), a CASAC, Social Worker, and coordinates further services through Steuben County Department of Community Services.

We will continue in collaboration with the 501 COC and other community partners to address the issues of Homeless in our community, expand on the outreach through additional community forums across the County, further enhance the data and reporting available under HMIS through input of data.

Indicate the anticipated RSP supplement amount and the number of households expected to be served in the initial 12-month period. RSP supplement amounts are set at 85% of the local Fair Market Rent (FMR) values with a district option to pay up to 100% of FMR using local funds.

RSP Supplement Amount: **The Rental Supplement will not exceed 85% of the fair market value.**

Steuben County FMR 2022 (85%)				
Efficiency	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four-Bedroom
1-2 Person Household	1-2 Person Household	2-4 Person Household	3-6 Person Household	4-8 Person Household
\$529.55	\$553.35	\$653.65	\$867.00	\$1,046.35

Anticipated Number of Households to be Served: **55 households – it is anticipated to serve applicants at a year minimum.**

Describe the outreach mechanisms that will be used. Receipt of TA is not a requirement for determining eligibility for the RSP, but at least 50% of the supplements shall be allocated for households who are currently in shelter or experiencing homelessness (unless sufficient demand does not exist for such households within a district).

Steuben County DSS outreaches to the homeless population using local non-profit agencies as well as community and faith-based groups, including a contract with Catholic Charities to provide street outreach, and non-recurring assistance. Additionally, the Department contracts for 24 hour Informational and Referral line, 2-1-1 Helpline, which acts as a conduit for obtaining information and referral to many services across the County. The Helpline directs housing requests to the Department's on-call staff. The Department will deploy the housing case managers to the temporary housing locations to complete an intake on the homeless individual. The housing managers will then assess what the client's specific needs are and create an individualized plan with the client.

Additionally, the Department participates on multiple outreach committees including VOAD, McKinney Vento, Turning Point Advisory, the COC Homeless Housing Task Force, COC BOARD, COC Planning Committee, and Human Needs Task Force, where we collaborate with local agencies to address current concerns, and look to develop solutions.

Describe the application and determination process, including the length of time within which applications will be approved or denied. OTDA encourages districts/contractors to make decisions regarding applications within 30 days of the application date.

When clients present at DSS they complete a THA (Temporary Housing Assistance) assessment. This assessment covers multiple factors; Starting with approval of this plan, individuals will complete the COC coordinated assessment form to enable entry into HMIS. These individuals are then referred to the BILT team who provides not only assessments but also provides short-term interventions and referrals to appropriate service providers for housing, treatment, safety, and basic needs.

RSP applications will advance when the Fair Market Rental amount exceeds 30 percent of their income.

All applications will be processed within 14 days upon receipt of the application.

Verification will be requested if not already provided (i.e., eviction notice, proof of any earned or unearned income, landlord statement (including utility information), proof of household composition, proof of identity, etc.)

Determination process will include a twice-weekly meeting comprised of members of the Temporary Assistance unit, Building Independence for the Long Term (BILT) unit and the accounting unit collectively where eligibility of any and all applications submitted will be reviewed and a decision will be made. During the determination process, we will determine whether or not applicants are already in receipt of another program assisting the client with their rent (i.e. ERAP, ESG-CV). Applicants/recipients can receive additional benefits, as long as they do not duplicate benefits.

- Inspections will be performed prior to approval for households with children under 6, local code inspection or current certificate of occupancy will be acceptable for all other households.

Describe the forms and/or notices that will be used to facilitate the application and determination process. When households requesting a supplement do not meet the criteria established by the district, the denial/discontinuance letter must support the decision by explaining the criteria and the district's decision that the household does not meet such criteria. When a supplement is approved, an award letter must be provided to both the tenant and landlord and must detail the amount approved to be paid on a monthly basis and the months/term included.

Please see attachments 1-8

- Collaborative Release
- RSP Denial Letter
- Landlord Approval Letter
- RSP Assessment Form
- HMIS Release
- RSP Income Declaration Template

- RSP Approval Letter (Application\Modification\Recertification)
- RSP Closure Letter

Indicate the anticipated target population, including prioritization of certain households (e.g., those with children under the age of six, single individuals, veterans, individuals and families experiencing domestic violence (DV) and non-DV victims of violence). Eligible participants include individuals and/or families, regardless of immigration status, who are experiencing homelessness or facing an imminent loss of housing, including individuals and families with or without children.

- Target population is homeless individuals with 30-50% AMI,
- Priority given to those with children under the age of six, single individuals, veterans, individuals with families experiencing domestic violence (DV), and non-DV victims of violence.
- Priority given to those with income below 30% AMI

Indicate how the following eligibility standards will be met:

- Households must earn no more than 50% of area median income (AMI) at the time of application (using current monthly income for the household and excluding earned income of a minor child; adoption/foster care payments; one-time loans, gifts, lump sum payments or other non-recurring income; and childcare subsidy payments) based on location and household size, with initial priority given to households who earn no more than 30% of AMI;
- A household's financial contribution will be limited to 30% of their households' total earned and/or unearned income; and
- Supplements are to be provided until the household's income reaches 30% or more of their monthly rent, at which point the housing will be considered affordable for the individual/family and the supplement will end. After it is determined that the household has reached 30% or more of monthly rent, the household will be provided a 30-day notice that their supplement will end.
- A calculation will be done to determine the rental amount responsible for the recipient to cover, which will be no greater than 30% of their income. Households are eligible for RSP until their income increases to a level where their monthly rent is at or below 30% of their total income.
- Recipient will attest to their Income and any changes thereto at the quarterly case management visits. Any changes reported in income that increases such household income to a level where their monthly rent is at or below 30% of the income will initiate a case reevaluation and verification of income.

List any other established eligibility criteria and indicate how each criterion will be determined and documented. Include the following:

- Will leases be required of all tenants? **Not required.**
- How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not required? **Landlord statement will determine that the rental costs are legitimate.**
- Will there be any health and safety standards regarding the housing that must be met prior to paying the supplement at a specific location? **Inspections will be performed prior to approval for household with children under 6, local code inspection or current certificate of occupancy will be acceptable for all other households.**
- How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)? **A new application will need to be completed within 10 days if one of these modifications is needed.**
- What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move? **A new application will be completed prior to the relocation, if time allows, following the above-mentioned standards. The application will be processed within 14-days of the filing and the monthly income and supplement level will be re-determined for every new application (if applicable).**
- Will the district/contractor require the recipient household to report changes related to the supplement within a set timeframe as a condition of continued eligibility for the supplement? **Reported changed will be accepted at any time. At a minimum, recipients will be subject to a home case management visit once per quarter. Any changes can also be reported at these visits. Changes will be addressed as needed.**
- How will contributions towards rental costs from individuals outside the household be verified and what standards will be applied in determining whether such contributions can be sustained in the future? **If an applicant/recipient receives a contribution from an outside source, for example a gift, an attestation from the grantee would be requested to provide proof that the contribution was a gift and indicate what recurrence the contribution will be gifted.**

Indicate the length of time the supplement will be offered to households (e.g., three months, six months, indefinitely, etc.) and whether there is a recertification process for the supplement.

The supplement will be offered to households until the household's rent is 30% or less of their total monthly income. Change reporting and attestations to any changes being attained will be addressed during the quarterly case management home visit. Any reported changes will require a reevaluation of the application to ascertain the continuation of the grant. Complete applications and verifications will be completed yearly. No recertification during that year will be required. After the one-year mark, each client will be required to reapply and be reevaluated pending RSP funding from New York State.

Indicate the payment mechanism (e.g., check, transfer of funds, etc.) and whether the supplement will be paid to the tenant or the landlord.

Arbor Housing and Development will be issuing checks. The checks will be mailed to the landlord on a monthly basis.

Indicate how fraudulent and/or cases determined to otherwise be ineligible will be handled, including the procedure for recouping funds, if necessary.

Suspicion of fraud will initiate a referral to the Fraud and Legal unit within the Agency to review and determine if the recipient is ineligible due to fraudulent reasons. If applicable, the case will then be referred to the District Attorney's office of the local district for criminal prosecution and restitution. Improper payment issued to landlord will be recovered administratively. If a recipient is found to have been in receipt of fraudulent benefits, the prosecution will determine how restitution is recuperated. Confirmed fraud makes you ineligible for future receipt of RSP benefits.

Describe how the district/contractor will ensure that households do not receive duplicate benefits from other sources that may assist with paying future rent/ongoing rental supplements.

The department enters all homeless data into the HMIS system. The district will also review State-provided ERAP data for current benefit grant data and complete a review and assessment of each application to determine the best program to serve the applicant including local ESG-CV or other local housing authorities providing section 8 and/or housing assistance.

The local district will review upon determining RSP eligibility that recipients are not in receipt of other rental assistance by checking within CoC database, ERAP County data file and local district records. Recipients can be granted funds from multiple sources as long as the grants are not duplicated.

Currently, Steuben County is also in receipt of ESG-CV funding. These monies are considered a Shelter Supplement Plan. ESG-CV offers a wide variety of program expenses, including Security Deposits, moving expenses, outreach costs, utility arrears, utility deposits, landlord incentives, transportation costs, rental supplements, etc. whereas the RSP is limited to Rental Assistance supplements only. RSP also allows recipients to be responsible to pay up to 30% of their income towards rent and allows for the grant to pay up to 85% of the Fair Market Rental Value with any remainder local funds payment to be made at the discretion of the Department.

The existing recipients of ESG-CV will continue to receive assistance under ESG-CV as long as they are eligible. With new recipients, the case manager will assist in

determining which program is most suitable to meet client needs. The same case management team will be utilized to review both programs and as such is knowledgeable about both programs.

The local district will review upon determining RSP eligibility that recipients are not in receipt of duplicate assistance by checking within CoC database, ERAP County data file and local district records. Recipients can be granted funds from multiple sources as long as the grants are not duplicated.

Participating households will be distinguished in HMIS as we will request an additional identifier in the HMIS system.

Indicate how client records will be maintained (e.g., paper file cabinets, electronic records, or a combination of both) and whether any specific software or system will be used. Notifications regarding eligibility determinations (e.g., approvals, denials and discontinuances) must be maintained in the case record for a minimum of six years following submission of the final expenditure report.

The department enters all homeless data into the HMIS system. A paper file will be maintained until such a time an electronic records system can be developed. *

*If clients are in receipt of Temporary Assistance, then partial client records may be kept in IEDR (state-run image repository system) to keep from storing duplication of information.

Indicate how the progress of those served in the RSP will be monitored. Reports that describe the progress of RSP activities and those served will be required on at least a quarterly basis. A report template will be provided. Minimally, reports must include the amount of rental supplement payments provided, the number of households served and certain demographic information including receipt of TA and household composition.

On a quarterly basis, recipients will be subject to an in-home case management visit where they will attest to any changes or modification to original application. Quarterly, the adult recipient(s) in the household will be required to take a minimum of one class offered by the Cornell Cooperative Extension located at the local district offices (including but not limited to financial literacy, SNAP Education, etc.). If recipients are working full-time this requirement may be waived with proof of full-time employment. If recipients fail without good cause* to attend said class, an initial warning will be given, and the recipient will be rescheduled for another class. If the recipient misses said class twice, a 30-day discontinuation letter will be issued.

Anyone not employed or under employed will be referred to contract agency for job search and resume building. Reporting is kept by the contract agency and submitted to the Department once a month.

***Good cause is identified as a verified sickness, verified appointment or job interview.**

To the fullest extent possible, RSP funding should not be used to supplement existing Shelter Supplement Programs. Districts who currently have an approved Shelter Supplement Plan must indicate the following:

- **How the RSP will be different from their current approved Shelter Supplement Plan**
- **The process established to ensure funds are not duplicated**
- **How participating households will be distinguished**