

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Suffolk County Department of Social Services

Application for Increase to Safety Net Single Shelter Allowance Supplement

Request Summary

As of October 23, 2017 SCDSS is providing Safety Net Assistance to 3200 Singles and/or childless couples, 577 of which are in Emergency Housing. Currently SCDSS is providing a Shelter Supplement to 42 Safety Net Single cases. 7 of these cases will be updated to reflect they are no longer receiving the supplement. 30 of the 42 cases are also receiving non-reimbursable shelter funds provided by SCDSS. The Temporary Assistance shelter standard of \$309 or current Safety Net Single Shelter Supplement amount of \$415 is far below the fair market value rent for Suffolk County. Therefore SCDSS is requesting an increase to the Safety Net Single Shelter Supplement to \$625 per month or \$210 more per month than the current approved supplement. Increasing the supplement will allow for single individuals in Emergency Housing to more easily attain permanency.

Justification of Need

Suffolk County housed an average of 551 singles (including legally married childless couples) in emergency housing each night thus far during 2017. This is a 14% increase since 2014 when the singles in emergency housing each night was 474. While the number of homeless singles traditionally dropped significantly during the summer months, this phenomenon did not occur during the past year with the months of June, July and August averaging 546 singles each night. As of October 23, 2017, there were 577 singles (including legally married childless couples) in emergency housing.

Of the approximately 577 homeless singles housed on October 23, 2017, 383 were in long-term emergency housing settings, 194 were in motels.

According to HUD's published Final FY 2016 Fair Market Rent Documentation System, the fair market rental rate for a one bedroom unit is \$1,533 per month and the fair market rental rent for an efficiency (studio) unit is \$1,230 per month, which is unaffordable for any of our Safety Net recipients with a shelter allowance including the existing Shelter Supplement Plan of \$415 (\$464 for couples). While less expensive, rooms with kitchen privileges are still unaffordable for our recipients with a shelter allowance of \$415 (\$464 for couples). The shelter standards imposed by regulation need to be supplemented even more so that clients are able to compete in the current housing market and are able to secure permanent housing.

Suffolk County is therefore requesting approval to increase our current Shelter Allowance Supplement to meet the permanent housing needs of homeless single adults and legally married childless couples.

Estimate of Cost Savings / Neutrality

As detailed below, Suffolk County expects to achieve significant cost savings per Safety Net Single / Legally Married Childless Couple receiving a shelter supplement:

	TA Household Size	Day	Month (30 Days)	Year (365 Days)	3 Years (1,095 Days)
Current Cost of Emergency Housing	Single Individual (1)	\$ 132.50	\$ 3,975	\$ 48,362	\$ 145,087
	Childless Couple (2)	\$206.50	\$ 6,195	\$ 75,372	\$ 226,117
Proposed Maximum Shelter Allowance	Single Individual (1)	\$ 20.83	\$ 625	\$ 7,604	\$ 22,812
	Childless Couple (2)	\$ 23.33	\$ 700	\$ 8,517	\$ 25,550
Cost Savings	Single Individual (1)	\$ 111.67	\$ 3,350	\$ 40,758	\$ 122,275
	Childless Couple (2)	\$ 183.17	\$ 5,495	\$ 66,855	\$200,567

Note: "Current Cost of Emergency Housing" figures shown above are based on an average daily rate of \$132.50

per person for emergency housing settings for singles and \$103.25 per person for couples.

Amount of Supplement

The proposed Safety Net Shelter Supplement for a Room (single occupancy) with Kitchen Privileges will be an amount up to the actual rent obligations but not to exceed \$316 per month.

TA Household Size	Standard Shelter Allowance	SN Shelter Supplement	New Shelter Maximum	Suffolk County Fair Market Rental Rates (2017) Source: HUD	
				# Bedrooms	Amount
1	\$ 309	\$ 316	\$ 625	Room w/ Kitchen Privileges	\$ 700
1	\$ 309	\$ 316	\$ 625	Efficiency (Studio) Apartment	\$ 1,230
2*	\$ 358	\$ 342	\$ 700	1	\$ 1,533

*Legally married childless couples

Types of Cases Covered by Supplement / Targeted Population

The proposed increased Safety Net Shelter Supplement will be available to any Safety Net recipient (single adults and legally married childless couples) who is in compliance with Temporary Assistance rules.

To be eligible for the supplement, a couple must be legally married and both individuals must be in compliance with the above requirements.

Applicants for Temporary Assistance will not be eligible for the supplement until they have been determined eligible for Temporary Assistance and their case is open. Eligibility for Temporary Assistance will be determined based upon the shelter standard, without regard to the supplement.

The Shelter Supplement Allowance will only be provided to single adults or childless couples housed or seeking housing in a rooming house (with kitchen privileges) or a furnished room with kitchen privileges.

Terms:

- Non-exempt SN recipients (single adults and legally married childless couples) who are in compliance with their assigned work activity and exempt SN recipients (single adults and legally married childless couples) who are in compliance with the Disabled Client Assistance Program (DCAP) will be eligible for the SN Shelter Supplement.
- Recipients must be eligible for Safety Net based on the New York Standard of Need without the supplement and in compliance with all eligibility requirements.
- Rent supplements are to be issued to single adults and legally married childless couples who are living on their own with no contribution from others.
- The single individual or legally married childless couple must reside in Suffolk County for a minimum of six (6) months prior to the application for the Shelter Supplement.
- Safety Net recipients will be required to request the supplement in writing, utilizing Suffolk County's prescribed form.
- The actual rent will be restricted up to the limits of the grant and paid directly to the landlord. Clients with income may be required to pay a portion of the grant directly to the landlord.
- Suffolk County will require documentation of property ownership from the landlord (e.g. tax bill, mortgage payment or rental permit), if this documentation is not already in the record. Under no circumstances can the recipient be the property owner or leasee of record.
- If any member of the household is sanctioned by Temporary Assistance or if the Temporary Assistance case is closed for any reason, the Safety Net Shelter Supplement will be immediately terminated.
- Shelter Supplementation will not be approved for persons residing in Section 8 supported housing or used in addition to any government provided shelter supplementation.
- Shelter Supplementation will not be approved if the recipient has lost Section 8 supported housing within the last two years without good cause.
- The supplement will be made available only while State and/or Federal reimbursement continues to be available at the current levels, and; Suffolk County has sufficient funds. Suffolk County DSS reserves the right to cancel the program for any reason with thirty (30) days' notice to NYS OTDA.

- SCDSS will not place a limitation on the number of participants the plan will serve.
- SCDSS anticipates this supplement will assist up to 30% percent of the single population currently in THA or 150 cases.

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?**

In Suffolk County, the Shelter Supplement Allowance will only be provided to single adults or childless couples housed or seeking housing in a rooming house (with kitchen privileges) or a furnished room with kitchen privileges. We will not allow the shelter supplement to be used for shared housing. For example, we would not allow two individuals to share the rent on an \$830 per month apartment. Since the individual or legally married childless couple would be renting a single room, the issue of non-legally responsible NTA persons in the household is not relevant.

- 2. Will SSI recipients or ineligible aliens residing in the household be expected to contribute towards rent cost? If so, how will this amount be determined?**

In the case of legally married childless couples where one spouse receives SSI or is an ineligible alien, the SSI recipient / ineligible alien will be expected to contribute their prorated share of the rent.

- 3. How will contributions towards rent from individuals outside the household be verified and what standards should be applied in determining whether such contributions can be sustained in the future? How will the district assure that third party contributors are not legally responsible relatives?**

In Suffolk County, the rent supplements are to be issued to single adults and legally married childless couples who are living on their own with no contribution from others.

- 4. 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?**

No. Suffolk County's shelter supplementation plan does not include any amounts for court costs, legal fees or late charges.

- 5. How will co-tenant of record lease arrangements be handled? Will leases be required of all tenants of record?**

No. Under no circumstances will the recipient be the tenant of record.

- 6. Will shelter arrears for shelter supplementation cases be limited in monetary amount (e.g. \$3000.00) or to a certain period of arrears (e.g. six months)?**

Payment of rent arrears will be limited to three (3) months' rent, with recovery from the client's grant when appropriate. Arrears will also be subject to LDSS review regarding the client's ability to meet future rent payments. An administrative review by LDSS will be required if a client applies for a second payment of rent arrears within three (3) years. If special circumstances arise, LDSS may determine to pay the arrears, with recoupment when appropriate. LDSS will not require that there be a court proceeding when a client is requesting arrears; we will accept a notarized statement from the landlord accompanied by a written request from the client. No rent arrears will be authorized for any period during which the client was sanctioned.

- 7. How will the district handle modification (e.g. moves, rent increases, etc.)? What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move? Will eligibility be limited to individuals/couples in rooming houses so that moves to other private housing will not be allowed? If other than rooming house shelter will be considered, then the question from 09-ADM-10 that involves Non Temporary Assistance (NTA) people in the household must be addressed.**

When planning to relocate, a recipient must submit a new request for rent supplementation if the supplement is needed to meet the new rent.

Recipients must also reapply for the shelter supplement when they are requesting a rent increase up to the \$625 rent ceiling (\$700 for couples).

The shelter supplement will only be provided to individuals housed or seeking housing in a rooming house (with kitchen privileges) or a furnished room with kitchen privileges. Since the individual is only renting a room, the issue of Non Temporary Assistance (NTA) people in the household is not relevant.

- 8. 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?**

Recipients must report changes in their case circumstances to their worker within 10 days to remain eligible for the shelter supplement. If the recipient does not report changes timely, the shelter supplement will be terminated and recovery will be initiated.

- 9. Will any local forms be used to facilitate the supplementation process? If so, copies must be provided with the plan?**

Yes – see attached form.

- 10. Will there be any health and safety standards regarding the housing that must be met prior to paying supplemental allowances or arrears?**

All properties where Safety Net Shelter Supplementation is requested will be inspected by the Suffolk County Department of Social Services to determine that the housing meets health and safety standards according to all relevant state regulations. The inspection will be limited to the recipient's room and any/all common living areas.

- 11. Will the supplemental shelter allowance be time limited in any way?**

The Shelter Supplement will continue for three (3) years as long as the individual or legally married childless couple continues to meet eligibility requirements. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis with the prior approval of Administration 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 Employability Unit, and;
- The client, if required, has applied for and followed through on the application for Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income, or Social Security Retirement Benefits.

Approved supplements will remain in effect until the recipient moves or the Temporary Assistance case is closed. When planning to relocate, a recipient must submit a new request for rent supplementation if the supplement is needed to meet the new rent. Recipients must also reapply for the shelter supplement when they are requesting a rent increase up to the \$625 rent ceiling (\$700 for couples).

12. Will the supplementation process include a one-time incentive payment to the landlord?

In Suffolk County, the shelter supplementation allowance will NOT include a one-time incentive payment to the landlord.

13. 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?

Suffolk County will not be making one-time incentive payments to landlords. The average Fair Market Rental for Suffolk County rentals exceeds the proposed "New Shelter Maximum Allowance". The New Shelter Maximum Allowance is also lower than the HUD standards.



**SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
SAFETY NET-SHELTER SUPPLEMENT APPLICATION**

CENTER:	DATE:	
CASE NAME:	CASE NUMBER:	CATEGORY
CURRENT ADDRESS: _____	*PROPOSED ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT): _____	

DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER:

A shelter supplement can only be paid to a landlord who is the property owner, or his or her designee. Acceptable documentation: Tax bill, original letter from the town, copy of the recorded deed, letter from a commercial mortgage holder.

* A Suffolk County Housing package must be attached if you are requesting assistance to move to a new address. All housing must be inspected prior to approval for agency assistance with cash security or a security agreement, Broker's fee or moving expenses. If you move into the housing before approval is given, payment may be denied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOUSING TO BE SUPPLEMENTED:

1. MONTHLY RENT \$ _____
2. HEAT INCLUDED SEPARATE CHARGE (LIST TYPE) _____
3. UTILITIES INCLUDED
 SEPARATE CHARGE FOR: electric natural gas bottled gas water

DO YOU CURRENTLY RECEIVE A SHELTER SUPPLEMENT FROM SUFFOLK COUNTY?

NO YES PLEASE LIST THE SOURCE OF THE SUPPLEMENT: _____

HAVE YOU BEEN A SUFFOLK COUNTY RESIDENT FOR 6 MONTHS OR LONGER?

NO YES, HOW LONG? _____

WHY ARE YOU APPLYING FOR A SHELTER SUPPLEMENT?

- IN EMERGENCY HOUSING AND NEED ASSISTANCE TO RELOCATE
- NEED TO RETAIN EXISTING HOUSING
- NEED TO RELOCATE AND AM UNABLE TO FIND HOUSING WITHIN THE SHELTER STANDARDS

ARE YOUR SHELTER PAYMENTS IN ARREARS AT YOUR PRESENT ADDRESS?

NO YES, list the amount of your shelter arrears

MONTH/ YEAR _____	AMOUNT \$ _____
MONTH/ YEAR _____	AMOUNT \$ _____
MONTH/ YEAR _____	AMOUNT \$ _____

HAVE YOU MADE ANY PAYMENTS FOR YOUR SHELTER IN THE MONTHS FOR WHICH THERE ARE ARREARS?

- NO (STATE WHY) _____
- YES, list the amounts and the months paid. Attach receipts if available or a statement from your landlord.



**SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
SAFETY NET-SHELTER SUPPLEMENT APPLICATION**

CASE NAME:	CASE NUMBER:
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CONDITIONS AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The SN-Shelter Supplement program has certain eligibility requirements that must be met before approval can be granted. Continuing eligibility for the supplement can be lost if all conditions are not met.

1. You must be eligible for Temporary Assistance without the inclusion of the shelter supplement. Eligibility for the supplement is lost once the TA case is closed for any reason.
2. You must be a Suffolk County resident for **a minimum of 6 months prior to applying for the shelter supplement.**
3. The supplement can only be granted if it will remove your household from emergency housing, prevent your placement into emergency housing or to retain your present housing.
4. You must be the tenant of record. This can be verified by a copy of your lease listing all household members, or a statement from your landlord listing all household members, the SCO/IM-221 Housing Verification Form can be used for current housing or the Housing Request Form SCO-506 for relocations.
5. You cannot share the proposed supplement room/apartment with another person.
6. You must submit documentation that proves ownership of the proposed supplement dwelling (tax bill or deed).
7. You must be willing to have the entire shelter costs restricted and paid directly to the landlord. If the grant is lower than the full shelter cost, you must be willing to have SCDSS pay the full grant towards the shelter allowance and document that you have paid your portion of the rent each month.
8. Your household cannot include anyone who is sanctioned. If a member of the household becomes sanctioned in the future, this will cause the loss of the supplement.
9. All SSI recipients who have legal lines of responsibly must contribute their pro-rata share of the rent
10. No Third party contributions will be allowed for the SN-Shelter Supplement program.
11. If you have rent arrears, there must be an approved plan on how these will be paid before the supplement can be granted.
12. Receipt of a Shelter Supplement will result in a reduction in your Food Stamp benefits.
13. Shelter supplements are limited to the TA household shelter standard or applicant's actual shelter cost after the shelter standard and all contributions are deducted, whichever is less.
14. No member of your household can have lost Section 8 or Public Housing without good cause in the past 2 years.

I have read these conditions of eligibility for the rent supplementation program. I understand that I must be in compliance with these requirements in order to be approved for a shelter supplement. I further understand that I must report changes in my case circumstances within 10 days in order to continue my ongoing eligibility.

Client Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature of husband, wife or protective payee

Date: _____