

## 2021-2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

**District:** Columbia

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**RSP Implementation Date:** Upon approval of plan

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.

Columbia County will administer using direct administration. This district will coordinate with our local HUD- funded COC for referrals to the Program as well as St. Catherine's.

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:** Columbia County will pay up to the 100% of the FMR

	100% FY2022 HUD FMR	85% FY2022 HUD FMR State Reimbursed	District Funded Amount	Max Supplement Amount
<b>1 Bedroom</b>	\$860	\$731	\$129	\$860
<b>2 Bedroom</b>	\$1012	\$860.20	\$151.80	\$1012
<b>3 Bedroom</b>	\$1302	\$1106.70	\$195.30	\$1302
<b>4 Bedroom</b>	\$1372	\$1166.20	\$205.80	\$1372

Household Size	# Of Bedrooms
1 Person/Couple	1 bedroom
Parent(s) and Child	Up to 2 bedrooms
Parent(s) and 2 Children of same sex*	Up to 2 bedrooms
Parent(s) and 2 Children of different sex	Up to 3 bedrooms
Parent(s) and 3 Children*	Up to 3 bedrooms
Parent(s) and 4 Children*	Up to 3 bedrooms
Parent(s) and 5 Children*	Up to 4 bedrooms

**\*The number of bedrooms is contingent on the rooms being able to accommodate the required number of beds.**

**Anticipated Number of Households to be Served:** 8 – 11 households

**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).**

Columbia county currently contracts with St Catherine's and makes referrals to them from our homeless program. We will continue to utilize those referrals to identify the households that are currently homeless. Our Services unit also refers families, that are not currently housed homeless, to St. Catherine's to assist with housing issues such as homelessness or imminent eviction and such. This will also help us identify candidates for this program. Columbia County will also utilize our local COC to possibly identify candidates.

**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.**

Columbia County has developed an application for RSP. When submitted, an LDSS staff person will review the information provided to determine eligibility. If needed a document request will be sent and due back within 10 days for any further information needed to determine eligibility. Upon receipt of all documentation, income will be review for affordability and criteria set for eligibility. We will make a determination within 30 days.

**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.**

Columbia County has developed an Application, Action Taken letter, Landlord letter and Request for Documentation for RSP. (Forms submitted)

**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.**

Columbia County will specifically target families with children who are currently experiencing homelessness or facing imminent homelessness. We currently have a Safety-net supplement for our S/CC population. This program will be better suited for the families that we have been unable to assist in the past in these identified situations due to a lack of supplement for Families in Columbia County.

**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;**

In reviewing our current homeless caseload and those in imminent danger of being evicted, we found that their incomes are less than 30% of the AMI for our area. These are the households we anticipate assisting first.

- **A household's financial contribution will be limited to 30% of their households' total earned and/or unearned income; and**

If eligible, the RSP will pay 85% of the FMV and Columbia County will pay the 15%. The client will be responsible to pay 30% of their household's income.

- **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.**

At recertification and when changes are reported, the worker will review the income to determine if the monthly rent is at or below 30% of their income. If it is, the housing would be considered affordable, and a discontinuance letter will be sent.

**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?**

Leases will be required but accommodations can be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the availability of rentals and landlord's circumstances in our area.

- **How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not required?**

If a lease is not required, the Landlord will need to complete a shelter verification form and we will have collateral contact with the Landlord.

- **Will there be any health and safety standards regarding the housing that must be met prior to paying the supplement at a specific location?**

We will have our investigators do inspections as we currently do for security deposits through TA, looking for areas of concern specific to health and safety.

- **How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?**

We will handle modifications by redetermining eligibility at any change, based on the criteria set forth and apply them appropriately. We will have contact with the landlord and re-evaluate income to re-determine eligibility.

- **What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move?**

If a recipient moves to another county, we will work with that county to see if RSP is available to the recipient.

- **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?**

All changes regarding the Household must be reported within 10 days.

- **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?**

Contributions toward rental costs from individuals outside the Household require a written statement from the person providing the contribution. It must include the amount contributed each month and the anticipated length of time it will continue.

**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.**

Columbia County will authorize the supplement for 6 months at a time with a recertification at that point. As long as the recipient remains eligible and funding is available, the supplement will be authorized indefinitely in six-month intervals.

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

The supplement will be paid by check directly to the landlord.

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

Any discrepancies found during the eligibility process will be referred to the Resource Unit for review. If the Investigator determines the case involves fraud, it will be referred to the Agency attorney for guidance and possible repayment.

**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.**

When eligibility is determined it will be reviewed by the Accounting unit to determine if the household has applied for or received ERAP funding. If so, worker will, make sure that payments are not duplicated. In addition, St. Catherine's is the administrator of our ESG funds, and they are located in our office, so we will verify with them as well. We will be getting releases from each household for St Catherine's so we can get the referral from them and any needed information regarding acceptance of ESG.

**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.**

We will keep paper files of each application located in a filing cabinet. When each case closes, we will send them down to our records department for storage for the minimum of six years. This could be updated if we are able to get all the staff handling the RSP access to HMIS.

**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.**

We will keep a thorough spreadsheet of all households served through this program. We will document the head of household, address, landlord, supplement amount, income, and progress of becoming self-sufficient.

This district will also keep track of denials should we later identify a household that has become eligible for comparison of information.

**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**

The RSP is different as it does not require Safety Net eligibility and does not have a resource limit. The guidelines of this program will allow some individuals and couples that are working the opportunity for rental assistance that would not have been available before, as they did not qualify for Safety Net.

We currently keep a spreadsheet of our current safety net supplements, and it will be reviewed prior to authorizing RSP funds to ensure there is no duplication.

We will have a separate spreadsheet document as stated above to keep track of those households that are participating in RSP.