

2021-2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

District: Cortland County

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RSP Implementation Date: TBD, based on plan approval date

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 Cortland County Department of Social Services will administer the Rental Supplement Program in its entirety. At this time, we do not anticipate that we will contract with any other public or non-profit agencies to implement the program. We will coordinate with and include our COC to identify trends and data to assist us in a successful implementation of this program.

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: \$614 average projected payment per household, per month

Anticipated Number of Households to be Served: Approximately 20 households annually

Household size	Allowable number of bedrooms	100% FY2022 HUD FMR	85% FY2022 HUD FMR State Reimbursed	Max Supplement Amount	District Funded Amount
1	1	\$723	\$615	\$615	\$0
2	1	\$723	\$615	\$615	\$0
3	2	\$867	\$737	\$737	\$0
4	2	\$867	\$737	\$737	\$0

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).

Cortland County will share information about our program with local non-profit agencies who collaborate with us on similar housing issues, as well as coordinate with our Coordinated Entry Committee to seek referrals and appropriate applicants. We anticipate that Coordinated Entry, combined with our internal TA screenings, will be the primary source of referrals.

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.

Families/individuals who are housed by our agency will work with our internal homeless worker to complete and file the application and submit the required documentation. Applicants will complete the Agency RSP application form and provide requested documentation. The Agency will contact the landlord and make an eligibility determination within 30 days of the date the written application is received.

For individuals not being served by our agency who are working with Coordinated Entry or a community service provider, they will be linked directly with our internal homeless worker to assist with completion of the application, with the assumption that the referring agency will also assist in completion and gathering of the necessary paperwork.

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.

The following forms/notices are proposed to be used and have been attached:

- Application Form
- Denial Notice
- Approval Notice
- Discontinue/Change Notice
- Request for Verification/Documentation

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.

We define “imminent loss of housing” as having a rental expense higher than 30% of the household’s income and are at risk of being evicted. We will give priority to Cortland County residents who have experienced a loss or reduction of income within the last six months, with their rent being greater than 30% of their current income. Individuals will primarily consist of those being housed by our agency as homeless, and those at risk of homelessness being referred from community agencies and Coordinated Entry.

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.**

We will verify the household income to ensure that the household income is not over 50% of the Area Median Income. Based on the household income and 85% of rent paid by the program, we will calculate the household’s payment share, ensuring that it is 30% of their total income.

After a determination on the application is made, if approved we will notify the applicant and the landlord in writing what their supplement under RSP will be and what the household responsibility will be. Recipients will be informed that they need to report to us any income or household composition changes, and we will also verify income and rental charges at recertification, to determine ongoing eligibility and award amount.

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?** Yes.
- **How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not required?** We will allow the tenant to attest to this information, and will verify it through 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?** All residences need to meet appropriate building codes. Our agency is notified of any residence that is in violation of our local codes, and we will stop payment on any residences who are in violation.
- **How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?** Recipients will be required to notify DSS within 10 days of any changes to income, moves and household comp. For moves, the recipient will be required to reapply for the supplement. For all other changes, eligibility will be reevaluated upon notification.
- **What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move?** The recipient will be required to reapply for RSP.
- **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?** Recipients will be required to notify DSS within 10 days of any changes. Upon receipt, DSS will reevaluate eligibility.
- **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?**
We will allow applicants to attest to their income and any contributions toward rent from individuals outside of the household. Eligibility will be determined based upon this attestation, provided the information is consistent with information from the landlord.

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 continue for twelve months, contingent upon availability of funds and that the family continues to be eligible. If the family income reaches a level where rent is 30% or less of their total monthly income, supplement assistance will end. A recertification will be conducted every 6 months to verify ongoing eligibility.

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

Payment will be authorized by check, payable and mailed 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.

We will utilize existing fraud staff and internal procedures for referring possible fraud to our internal Investigation Unit. Investigation Unit staff will recoup funds if the Temporary Assistance case is ongoing.

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.

We will coordinate with local non-profit agencies who provide housing programs, including our Continuum of Care, to ensure that benefits such as ESG, STEHP, and Section 8 are not duplicated. Our local ESG and STEHP provider also has access to HMIS to assess for duplication of benefits.

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.

As our agency does not have HMIS, all relevant forms and documentation will be kept in hard copy in a separate filing cabinet in the office of our homeless services Senior Social Welfare Examiner. These records will be maintained for a minimum of six years following submission of the final expenditure report.

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 create a spreadsheet locally to track all applicants and recipients, their application determination, along with their demographic information such as address and household comp, as well as the amount of payments issued.

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**

Cortland County does not have an approved Shelter Supplement Plan.