

2021 – 2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

District: Franklin County Department of Social Services
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RSP Implementation Date: to be determined based 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.

The Franklin County Department of Social Services (FCDSS) would administer the RSP program directly and not contract with other organizations. FCDSS would utilize a Case Service Aide, Casework Supervisor, and Director of Financial Services to provide direct case management and financial assistance to the recipients of RSP.

FCDSS currently works in coordination with the local Continuum of Care and would continue to ensure collaboration of services.

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: FCDSS would supplement 85% of the FMR

Bedroom Size	Household Size	FMR	85%
0	1	\$518.00	\$440.30
1	2	\$679.00	\$577.15
2	3	\$780.00	\$663.00
3	4	\$1,016.00	\$863.60
4	5	\$1,058.00	\$899.30

Commented [HJ(1)]: Please revise the table to include household sizes.

Anticipated Number of Households to be Served: FCDSS would like to serve between 30 – 40 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).

FCDSS utilizes the Coordinated Entry system and will utilize this program to the best of its ability, however, because most community agencies within our district who work with the low income and at-risk population do not utilize the program, FCDSS will provide written notice to Community Agencies. FCDSS is also able to utilize social media and the local newspaper to provide outreach to the general public. FCDSS has a Homeless Unit, Children and Adult Services, and is able to coordinate between these Units and the RSP to serve households who are currently in a shelter or experiencing homelessness. FCDSS expects that there is enough of a need for financial assistance in the form of rental subsidy to provide at least 50% of the supplement to households who are currently in a shelter or homeless.

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.

FCDSS will provide a referral form and program eligibility guidance to Community Agencies and the Units within FCDSS to start the determination process. Households will also be able to self-refer to the RSP program. The household would be added to Coordinated Entry if they are not already a part of that program.

FCDSS also intends on making an intake application to capture all needed information to determine eligibility for the program. Information being captured will be name, address, income, shelter cost verification (such as letter from landlord). Once a referral is received, the RSP Staff will request the needed verification and intake forms will be completed and signed by the household. A determination will be made within 30 days of receiving an intake application.

A denial notice will be sent if the household does not provide the required verification, refuses to complete and sign the application intake paperwork, if the household exceeds the income guidelines or if the rent is less than 30% of the household income.

Once all of the information is submitted, and the household has been determined to be eligible for the rental supplement, a notice will be sent to the household and the landlord.

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.

FCDSS will create and use the following forms through the RSP:

1. Referral form – Submitted by Homeless Unit or Community Agency to start the process. Households will also be permitted to self-refer to the program.
2. Intake Forms:
 - a. Application - The application will be completed by the head of the household and include demographic information of all household members, income of all household members, and any programs or services already being provided to that household.
 - b. Consent to release information – The head of household will need to sign a consent form for the RSP to exchange information with any programs that the household is already currently enrolled in.
3. Notice of Decision
 - a. Approval – If a household is approved and admitted for RSP an award letter will be sent to the household and the landlord detailing the amount that will be paid on a monthly basis and the length of time that the payments will be made.
 - b. Denial – if a household is denied for RSP a denial letter will be sent. The denial letter will indicate the decision made by FCDSS, which will explain the criteria and the decision that the household does not meet such criteria.

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.

FCDSS will prioritize households who have been accepted into RSP in the following order:

1. Households who are currently homeless and utilizing shelters
2. Households who are currently homeless and staying with friends/family on a temporary basis
3. Households who are at risk of homelessness with children ages 0 – 6
4. Households who are at risk of homelessness with children who are over the age of 6
5. Households who are at risk of homelessness with Veterans who are not eligible for the current VA Housing Subsidy
6. Households who are at risk of homelessness with or without children who are experiencing Domestic Violence
7. Households who are at risk of homelessness with elderly individuals
8. Households who are at risk of homelessness that are comprised of only adult individuals, with no elderly or children in the home

As FCDSS participates in the Coordinated Entry program, all households will be placed in the program and prioritization of all recipients will be prioritized by the list above.

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 currently 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;**

1. FCDSS will utilize the 30% Low Income Limits to prioritize households eligible for RSP

1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
\$16,100	\$18,400	\$23,030	\$27,750	\$32,470	\$37,190	\$41,910	\$46,630

2. FCDSS will utilize the 50% Area Median Income as adjusted by HUD to provide RSP assistance to households who are eligible.

1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
\$26,850	\$30,700	\$34,550	\$38,350	\$41,450	\$44,500	\$47,600	\$50,650

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

1. A Household will report and verify income to the FCDSS every 6 months unless there is a change in the interim to ensure that their contribution of the rental amount will not be over 30% of their household's total earned income. FCDSS will work with the landlords to limit the rental amount to the HUD FMR prior to a lease or contract is being signed to ensure that the housing is affordable and sustainable for the household.

- **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.**

1. A Household will report and verify income to the FCDSS every 6 months unless there is a change in the interim to ensure that their rent remains under 30% of their monthly income. FCDSS will provide the rental assistance to households until their income reaches 30% and is affordable for the household to pay without the supplement.

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?** FCDSS will require that there is a signed lease, or the landlord submits a signed letter indicating the monthly rental amount and what is included in the rent.

- **How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not required?** FCDSS will accept a signed statement from the landlord indicating the total rent and what is included.
- **Will there be any health and safety standards regarding the housing that must be met prior to paying the supplement at a specific location?** FCDSS will inspect the housing for safety and appropriateness before a recipient moves in to be sure the dwelling meets health and safety standards.
- **How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?** Any changes in the case, including moves, rental increases or changes in the household composition must be reported to FCDSS within 15 days. FCDSS will evaluate and make appropriate changes on a case-by-case basis.
- **What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move?** If the household moves, FCDSS will re-evaluate that the eligibility requirements regarding the household income and determine that the rental amount still falls under the guidance for RSP. A new health and safety inspection will be performed. If the household no longer meets the eligibility requirements or the rental unit does not meet the health and safety inspection guidelines, the case will be closed with a 10-day notice provided to the household.
- **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?** FCDSS will require that the household report any household changes to FCDSS within 10 calendar days. Failure to report changes to FCDSS may result in a loss of eligibility or a referral to the Fraud Unit.
- **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?** FCDSS will require written notification from any resource who is making a contribution towards rental costs for the household. The written notice shall include who is making the contribution, the amount, and the length of time that the contributions will be made.

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.

FCDSS would like to provide temporary rental assistance to households for six months at a time at which time an application/recertification would be completed and supporting documentation such as income submitted and another six months authorized unless there is a change in the household that renders them ineligible to continue receiving RSP supplements.

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

FCDSS will provide direct payment of rental supplement to the landlord via check.

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

FCDSS will refer any household who is determined to be ineligible and has received any excess supplements to the FCDSS Fraud Unit. Any evidence of fraudulent actions made by the recipient will be referred to the Franklin County District Attorney's Office for criminal charges. Any money that is recovered from overpayments will be credited to the RSP. FCDSS will maintain a detailed spreadsheet to track overpayments and any monies that are recuperated.

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.

As part of the intake and assessment process, FCDSS will follow up with community agencies to ensure that the household is not already receiving HUD or any other forms of rental assistance.

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.

FCDSS will utilize paper files that will be kept in a secure location for client records. FCDSS will utilize current records management systems to store all records in a County Building for six years following the submission of the final expenditure report.

Indicate how the process 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.

All recipients who receive a rental supplement will be provided with Case Management from a Case Service Aide through FCDSS. Case Management will provide the household with referrals to appropriate services and will maintain monthly contact. The Case Service Aide will complete case notes documenting the status and any changes in the case. A record of all rental supplements will also be kept and reported on a quarterly basis via the provided reporting template.

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.** N/A
- **The process established to ensure funds are not duplicated.** N/A

Attachment B

- **How participating households will be distinguished.** N/A

