

2021-2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

District: Fulton

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RSP Implementation Date: Upon Approval of the 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.

Fulton County DSS (FCDSS) will direct administer this program full time. Administration will include acceptance of referrals, eligibility determinations, assistance in documentation collection if needed, visit to apartment prior to approval of rental supplement, coordination with landlords as appropriate and periodic visits by a caseworker following approval of the rental supplement if needed. Frequency of caseworker visits will be determined based on recipient need and likelihood of future homelessness. FCDSS will continue to work with the Continuum of Care as a source of referrals and to discuss local needs.

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.

The district will calculate rental supplement amounts in accordance with the FY 2022 HUD FMR criteria as outlined in the table below.

Household Size	Allowable Number of Bedrooms	100% FY2022 HUD FMR	85% FY2022 HUD FMR State Reimbursed	Max Supplement Amount	District Funded Amount
1	Efficiency	\$653	\$555	\$555	\$0
2	Efficiency	\$653	\$555	\$555	\$0
1	1	\$692	\$588	\$588	\$0
2	1	\$692	\$588	\$588	\$0
3	2	\$862	\$733	\$733	\$0
4	2	\$862	\$733	\$733	\$0
4+	3	\$1,066	\$906	\$906	\$0
6+	4	\$1,255	\$1,067	\$1,067	\$0

RSP Supplement Amount: DSS anticipates an average supplemental rent payment of \$500 (most to be within the range of \$400 to \$600). At initial writing of this plan, local rents for those we serve were around \$700 - \$1100 depending on the size of the apartment needed. Comparing that with the TA

grant and income of those we serve, it was determined that \$500 would be the average supplemental amount a family/individual would need to reach their rent cost while staying within the 30% income standard.

Anticipated Number of Households to be Served: 23-25 households.

This number is based on the average supplemental rent payment of \$500.

DSS anticipates using \$100,000 for supplemental rent payments and \$16,749 (14%) for administrative cost.

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 will notify our community partners of the availability of this program. The eligibility guidelines associated with the funding, qualification process, and agency point of contact will also be shared. FCDSS Immediate Needs Unit will refer undomiciled individuals upon finding permanent housing using their existing TA application. FCDSS Financial Assistant Units which is made up of Public Assistance, SNAP and Employment will also refer clientele who meet the requirements for the program. DSS will coordinate with the BOS-COC to further promote the program and receive referrals. FCDSS will create a log to capture the number of rent supplement recipients who were in shelter or experiencing homelessness at the time of receipt to ensure at least 50% of recipients fit that criterion.

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 locally designed application (submitted for approval with this plan) to any interested party for NYSRSP. Upon completion of the application an interview will be conducted. Documentation to determine eligibility will be requested at that time. An eligibility determination will be made within 30 days of the application date.

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 use a locally designed application (submitted for approval with this plan) to obtain household information and assess eligibility. A locally designed Document Requirement form (submitted for approval with this plan) will be utilized to request required documentation specific to each case.

Each applicant will receive written notice of acceptance or denial utilizing a locally designed acceptance/denial letter (submitted for approval with this plan). This letter will describe in detail the reason for denial or acceptance including the monetary award approved for the household. The award notification will also include the duration of the award.

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 the undomiciled population, SSI recipients, Temporary Assistance and SNAP recipients. FCDSS will also assist Fulton County residents who apply that are income eligible who are not currently receiving assistance from FCDSS. The CoC Coordinated Entry list is expected to be a key source of referrals.

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;**

FCDSS will review each application for income eligibility based on the AMI percentage set by NYSRSP. FCDSS will require each applicant to provide all earned and countable unearned income for an eligibility determination.

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

FCDSS will require each applicant to provide all earned and countable unearned income to the agency after completion of their eligibility interview. A review of the total income will be compared to the allowable AMI as set forth in the program guideline.

- **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.**

Recipients will be notified to contact DSS if their income exceeds 30% of the monthly rent amount. DSS will provide notice of this amount in written format.

As a formal review, each recipient will be required to contact FCDSS every 6 months for reassessment. These contacts will be scheduled by FCDSS. Each recipient will be mailed an appointment letter with a specific date and time for this assessment. The household will be required to provide their current earned and countable unearned income for eligibility redetermination.

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?**

No.

- **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 require a locally designed Shelter Verification form (submitted for approval with this plan) to be provided as a condition of eligibility. The form will provide the necessary information to determine validity. This information will be compared to the Fulton County Tax Map system, using the Fulton County Image Mate system.

- **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 view each apartment being considered for a rent supplement. This review will consider basic health and safety standards such as working electric, water, heat, and sewage. No uncovered wires or obviously unsafe conditions (i.e.: windows that can't be shut securely if a child is in the home; unsafe stairs). An inspection checklist (submitted for approval with this plan) will be used during the visit.

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

At the time of the approval of the rent supplement, the recipient will be provided written information regarding modifications that need to be reported to the Department.

Should a recipient notify the district of modifications, or the district become aware of modifications through another avenue, DSS will review the modification and its impact on eligibility for a supplement. If the modification makes the recipient ineligible for a supplement, the supplement will be terminated within 30 days of the Department's knowledge of the modification.

Funding availability will be a primary determinate in upward supplement modifications. If all funds are pledged to other recipients no increase will be considered.

Moves to a higher rent apartment without valid justification (i.e.: landlord cut the water or sewage service; individual's developmental delays contributed to the individual's eviction etc.) will likely be denied.

Downward supplement modifications will be made as warranted.

Factors to be considered in modification will include: reason for eviction, failure to pay rent, failure to follow reasonable home hygiene and cleanliness expectations, structural damage of apartment, landlord's failure to resolve safety or code violations, inability to find unsupplemented housing for recipient, general rental/housing stock availability, market costs for rentals, housing disruption results primarily from developmental delay or serious mental health condition.

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

An assessment of the affordability of the apartment will be completed along with the necessity of the move and reason for the move. IE: did the client not pay their portion of the rent without reason and has been evicted. An individual/family could be denied a further supplement if evicted for good cause. Risk of homelessness and mitigating factors will be considered in deciding to continue supplement.

- **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 the FCDSS of any changes within 10 days of their notification of any changes that would affect the allocation.

- **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 request documentation of such contributions at the time of application. If at any times these funds can no longer be contributed to the applicant, this agency will make a redetermination of allocation.

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.

Full state funding of the Rental Supplement Program is a primary determinate in the length of time a family/individual will receive a supplement. DSS will administer the program in accordance with governing regulations when such funding is available. DSS understands per 21-LCM-24 that “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;” which has been clarified by NYS OTDA representatives as meaning “supplements are provided until a household’s earned and unearned income increases to a level where their monthly rent is at or below 30% of their total income, at which point the housing will be considered affordable”. Recipients will be made aware of the 30% threshold standard (as noted above) and that supplements will be discontinued when funding is unavailable. Recipients will be notified if funds become unavailable.

Supplements certified for 6 months or more will be undergo a recertification process every six months to verify continued eligibility. If the supplement is certified for less than 6 months (due to funding deadlines) and the supplement is subsequently extended, recertification will be required at six months.

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 issue payments direct to the landlord/property owner 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 utilize its current agency process to refer cases for possible fraud to our Investigative Unit. This Unit is charged with determining if false information was provided. Serious instances of fraud may result in criminal persecution.

Recoupment and recovery will occur in a method consistent with current Department recoupment practice where, and if, permissible by law and/or regulation. Civil and criminal procedures may also be used for recovery of costs where warranted.

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.

DSS will ask the recipient of any other funds being provided. FCDSS will work with our internal programs as well as community partners to assist in the prevention of duplicate benefits. DSS will work with CoC partners to consider a referral process to minimize duplication.

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 intends to store files in paper form in a file cabinet(s) designated for RSP. The cabinet will be in a secured location not accessible to the public.

Retention rules that are currently in place by OTDA will be followed by FCDSS.

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.

FCDSS will utilize a Microsoft access database to track our recipients progress and dollar amounts spent and or available. Queries will be developed to track activities and to submit necessary reporting information. If a HMIS or CoC database can provide RSP reports, DSS may utilize those reports instead.

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: Fulton County doesn't have a Shelter Supplement Plan.

- **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**