

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

District: Lewis County

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RSP Implementation Date: TBD

**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.**

RSP funds will be dedicated in full to Lewis County Opportunities (LCOI). LCOI is a private non-profit agency whose mission is to work with people in need to provide a higher quality of life in our community. LCOI currently manages the Section 8 – Housing Choice Voucher Program, which makes them the best candidate to manage RSP funds in our jurisdiction. LCOI is a current partner with the CoC and their housing staff currently participates and will continue to participate in Coordinated Entry Meetings ( a CoC function) to expedite housing placements.

**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:** \$100,000 Lewis County is choosing the option to pay up to 100% of the FMR utilizing county funds.

NYS Rent Supplement Lewis County						
Unit Size	0 Bedroom	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 Bedroom	5 Bedroom
FY22 Fair Market Rent	647	658	838	1052	1266	1466
85% of FMR Calculation	550	559	712	894	1,076	1,246
County Share	97	99	126	158	190	220
Household Size to bedroom allocation * See below for additional considerations	HOH	HOH HOH, Spouse/cohabitant	HOH, 1 child HOH, 2 children HOH, Spouse/cohabitant, 1 child HOH, Spouse/cohabitant, 2 children	HOH, 3 children HOH, 4 children HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 3 children HOH, spouse,cohabitant, 4 children	HOH, 5 children HOH, 6 children HOH, Spouse/cohabitant, 5 children HOH, Spouse/cohabitant, 6 children	HOH, 7 children HOH 8 children HOH, Spouse/cohabitant, 7 children HOH, Spouse/cohabitant, 8 children
Adult cohabitants share a bedroom						
Same gender dependents share a bedroom (two per bedroom), unless special circumstances merit alternative arrangement subject to approval by LCDSS.						
Opposite gender dependents do not share a bedroom						
Tenant Furnished Utilities per 2022 HUD Housing Allowances will be added to contract rent.						

**Anticipated Number of Households to be Served: 10**

**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).**

Outreach will be through a number of mechanisms. LCOI will utilize the Lewis County Priorities Council for general outreach and referrals to the RSP program. Further, Lewis County Department of Social Services, LCOI and a number of other local organizations will regularly review the Housing CoC Coordinated Entry list for individuals and families who are currently in shelter or experiencing homelessness. In addition, LCOI will utilize other outreach methods including social media, website, local informational booths, and others to publicize the RSP program.

**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.**

1. Consumer will obtain an application. Applications can be sent from LCOI, or downloaded from the LCOI website (<https://www.lewiscountyopportunities.com/housing>)
2. Once application is received by LCOI, a letter will go out to the consumer requesting the documentation needed to complete the application (proof of income, lease, etc.).
3. Once LCOI has received all the necessary documents, the application will be reviewed, and eligibility determination is made.
4. If the consumer is determined ineligible, a denial letter explaining the reason for denial will be sent to the consumer.
5. If consumer is determined eligible, a packet of information is sent to the landlord as well as the consumer, and an appointment is made to inspect the unit. Once the unit passes inspection, notification is sent to both the consumer and the landlord detailing the monthly amount approved and the term end date.

The entire process should not take more than 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.**

- Attachment A: Application
- Attachment A2 Applicant Certification
- Attachment B: Request for additional documentation
- Attachment C: Award Letter
- Attachment D: Landlord Packet

Attachment D1 Landlord Notification Letter  
Attachment D2 Owner Agent Data Form  
Attachment D3 Direct Deposit Authorization  
Attachment E: Denial Letter  
Attachment F: Verification of Support Contribution  
Attachment G: HQS Inspection form

**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.**

The RSP target population will 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. Priority will be given to those with children under the age of six, single individuals, veterans, individuals and families experiencing domestic violence (DV) and non-DV victims of violence. No other arbitrary limitations are being added to ensure maximum feasible participation.

**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.**

Verification of income will be obtained as part of the application process, followed by annual reassessments. The household income will be compared to the area median income (AMI) to determine if the consumer is at 50% or less. Supplements are provided until income reaches a point where rent is 30% or less of the total monthly income.

If at any point consumer income changes, a rent adjustment letter is sent to both the landlord and consumer, notifying them of the new supplement 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, a lease will be required.
- **How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not required?** Lease will be required
- **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 "Housing Quality Standards" will be adhered to as stated in the NYS Housing Quality Standard handbook. Initial and annual inspections will be performed to assure ongoing compliance.
- **How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?**  
Consumers are instructed to notify LCOI staff prior to any change in income or circumstance (which includes a move), in order to allow for a coordinated entry into the new location. Landlords are instructed to give 60-day notice of any change in rate.
- **What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move?**  
If all rules have been followed, and income/circumstance has not changed, supplementation will be continued.
- **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?** Yes. Consumers should call LCOI at 315-376-8202 within 10 business days of a change in circumstance.
- **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?**  
A "Verification of Support Contribution" form will be completed for any contributions lasting longer than 1 month and will be counted as income until the contribution ends. At that time, a new "Verification of Support Contribution" form will be signed stating that the contribution has ended.

**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.**

Supplements will be offered indefinitely as long as the consumer circumstance falls within the parameters of the program. Annual recertification and unit inspections will be performed to ensure that both consumer and landlord remain in compliance. Periodic verifications throughout a year will only be performed at the request of the landlord or tenant.

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

Monthly checks or bank transfers will be made 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.**

All fraudulent complaints must be received in writing. Once received, an investigation will be done by LCOI staff. If complaint is substantiated, a repayment agreement will be made (using current HCR Housing Repayment Schedule shown below) to recoup funds that were given fraudulently. If the consumer does not comply with this repayment agreement, all future supplements will be cancelled.

<u>Amount Due</u>	<u>Maximum Term</u>
\$600 or less	6 Months
\$601 - \$1,200	12 Months
\$1,201 - \$1,800	18 Months
\$1,801 - \$2,400	24 Months
\$2,400 or more	36 Months

**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.**

A “Lewis County Coordinated Entry” committee, a subcommittee of the CoC Coordinated Entry Committee; has been formed which includes representatives from local jurisdiction agencies working with housing awards in Lewis County. This includes Lewis County Department of Social Services, LCOI, Snow Belt Housing Company, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living, and Transitional Living Services. This committee will meet regularly to keep each other informed, identify potential participants, ensure that households do not receive duplicate benefits, and ultimately work toward housing all homeless individuals in the jurisdiction.

The use of HMIS for data tracking homeless individuals is required.

**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.**

Consumer records will be entered into the LCOI database (CAPTAIN), and all paper files will be maintained in a secure location for a period of 6 years per the LCOI Document Destruction Policy.

**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.**

Consumer changes in the program will be monitored continually and reported quarterly using the specified template. HMIS is used as a standard practice to track progress during the course of enrollment in the Rental Supplement Program.

**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**

Although the application process will be the same, there are factors which will indicate whether RSP or the Lewis County DSS Shelter Supplement (LCSSP) are used.

1. The NYS Rent Supplement Program can be used for singles or families, whereas the LCSSP can be used for singles or childless couples only.
2. The NYS Rent Supplement Program has no immigration status requirement, while the LCSSP requires legal immigration status.
3. The NYS Rent Supplement Program is available to anyone meeting income criteria regardless of TA eligibility status while the LCSSP requires ongoing Temporary Assistance Eligibility.
4. The NYS Rent Supplement Program requires a lease while the LCSSP does not require a lease.
5. The NYS Rent Supplement Program has no durational limit while the LCSSP has a maximum limit of 3 years.