

2021-2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

District: Niagara County

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RSP Implementation Date: XX/XX/XXXX

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.

Niagara County Department of Social Services will administer the Rental Supplement Program in its entirety. We will coordinate with our local Continuum of Care.

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:

	0 Bedroom	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4 bedroom
HH Size	HOH	HOH	HOH & 1 child / adult	HOH & 3 children/adults	HOH & 5 children/adults
		HOH & Spouse	HOH & 2 children/adults	HOH & 4 children/adults	HOH & 6 children/adults
		HOH & Cohabitant	HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 1 child/adult	HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 3 children/adults	HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 5 children/adults
			HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 2 children/adults	HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 4 children/adults	HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 6 children/adults
FMR Payment Standard:	\$774	\$812	\$963	\$1190	\$1334
85% of FMR =	\$657.90	\$690.20	\$818.55	\$1011.50	\$1133.90

Anticipated Number of Households to be Served: 67

Niagara County allocation \$742,819 minus 15% Administrative costs (\$111,422) = \$631,397 for rent supplement. Average \$785 per month per household X 12 = \$9420 per year per household.
\$631,397/\$9420 = 67 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).

Niagara County will work directly with our local shelters to prioritize their guests in addition to providing our current clients with information about the program. The CoC will also be engaged for outreach assistance and our county website and social media platforms will promote the program. We will also work with our coordinated entry team to identify potential applicants.

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.

Niagara County will use a specific application for RSP. A determination will be made on all applications no later than 30 days but as soon as possible after an application is filed.

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.

Please see attached forms and notices:

- Rental Supplement Application
- Rental Supplement Housing Assistance Award Letter
- Rental Supplement Notification of Denial
- Rental Supplement Recertification

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.

Shelter residents will be our priority population with a minimum of 50% of funds allocated to this group. All populations, including singles, couples and families will be eligible to apply for the supplement. We will work with our coordinated entry team to identify potential applicants.

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.

As part of our eligibility determination process:

- We will verify the applicant(s) household income from all sources by reviewing all documentation submitted. This review will verify that the household income is not over 50% of the Area Median Income. We will prioritize applications for households with income at or below 30% of the Area Median Income.
- Based on applicant's income and the 85% of rent paid by the program, we will calculate the household's payment share, ensuring it is 30% of the household's total income.
- A determination will be made within 30 days of application, and households will be required to contribute 30% of their earned/unearned income towards their rent.
- Clients will be required to report changes to their income within 10 days, at which time their eligibility to continue receiving the supplement will be re-evaluated.
- We will verify income and rental charge at recertification for 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?** Yes or the applicant will need to provide another form of documentation that verifies they are legally residing at the address and are the responsible party. (rental agreement, receipts, etc.)
- **How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not required?** See above
- **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 confirm with code enforcement that the apartment is not condemned.
- **How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?** Clients will be required to report changes to their income within 10 days, at which time their eligibility to continue receiving the supplement will be re-evaluated.
- **What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move?** If the client moves, they will need to reapply for RSP funds
- **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, all changes will need to be provided and verified to DSS 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 will be verified by a statement from the recipient and from the individual making the contribution. The statement must include if this is a one-time payment or if ongoing contribution the anticipated frequency of this. If ongoing we will require proof of income and contact information from the rent contributor.

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 12 months with the potential to be extended if funding is available and there have been no significant changes where the family/individual would no longer be eligible (move to a new unaffordable housing unit, significant increase in income where their rent is at or below 30% of total income, etc.) We will conduct a recertification every 6 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.

A check 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.

Applicants determined ineligible will receive a denial letter. Program Integrity staff will handle all fraudulent activities.

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.

Working with our CoC, other local providers and our DSS systems, information will be requested to determine if other benefits have been provided to the applicant. We will also utilize HMIS.

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.

If we are able to upgrade our current system to include RSP we will do so. If not, paper files will be created and stored for six years following the submission of our final expenditure reports

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 utilize the report template from OTDA. We will also utilize HMIS.

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**

N/A