

2021-2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

District: Oneida 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.

The Oneida County HOMES (Housing Opportunities Made for Ensuring Success) Program will be administered through the Oneida County government and will not be contracted through an outside agency. The Income Maintenance division will administer the program to the public through assessment of applications by the Temporary Assistance examiners. While this program is not a Temporary Assistance program, the usage of examiners dedicated specifically to this rental supplement program will allow the benefit of staff with knowledge of how to navigate referrals to other assistance programs should such needs be noted, i.e. food insecurity.

Oneida County is an active partner with the NY-518 Continuum of Care/Mohawk Valley Housing and Homeless Coalition. The Oneida County HOMES Program was presented separately to the CoC Planners and in a Plenary meeting, with confirmed intentions for coordination to impact those eligible for this rental supplement.

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.

FY 2022 Utica-Rome, NY MSA Fair Market Rent for All Bedroom Sizes				
Efficiency	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom
1 person	1-2 people	2-4	3-5	4-6
<i>Apartment size will be determined based on household composition and gender of children.</i>				
\$676	\$680	\$863	\$1,067	\$1,238
RSP \$574.60	RSP \$578	RSP \$733.55	RSP \$906.95	RSP \$1052.30

Anticipated Number of Households to be Served: 115 1-bedroom apartments

Families with children will be prioritized for this supplement, due to a mission of prioritization of child welfare and a current increase in homelessness noted within the family unit. However, based on data review of an average client population, it is anticipated that usage of this supplement will be concentrated on single-person households; therefore, the estimate of usage is based on this concentration.

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 a shelter or experiencing homelessness (unless sufficient demand does not exist for such households within a district).

Membership with the NY-518 CoC will allow the opportunity to network and share the rental supplement information with approximately 40 community partners, in addition to a partnership with the Coordinated Entry process to target those currently experiencing homelessness. The 2-1-1 staff will also be educated on the program in order to make appropriate referrals upon receiving communication regarding homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness. Supplemental advertising will be conducted through items such as flyers, palm cards, and application packets, to allow immediate communication materials to be available for other outreach sources such as hospital discharge units and street outreach teams.

Internally, if applicable, assessment of eligibility of the Oneida HOMES Program will be conducted if a TA application is denied.

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.

Social welfare examiners will be utilized to assess initial applications. Although TA is not a requirement, this process has been determined to be the most linear for people, due to the similarity with the TA process. Documentation will be maintained separate from TA records. A determination will be made within 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.

- An Oneida County HOMES Program Application has been developed which will assess household composition, resources, and any conditions that could potentially affect successful housing stability.
- An Addendum outlines to the tenant the program and the expectations for compliance with the program.
- In order to provide a degree of support to recipients of the supplement, tenants will complete a type of ILP with staff, entitled Independent Living Maintenance Plan (ILMP), which is unique to this program. Information obtained during the application process will be valuable in the implementation of this support tool toward the goal of housing stability. This will be updated every six months upon in-person recertification.
- A Landlord Agreement relays payment and contact information.
- A Guarantee Letter relays the Department's commitment to provide the rental supplement. This letter explains to the landlord how payment will be made, with a copy to the tenant.
- A status check-in by Department of Family and Community Services staff will be conducted every 60 days to ensure the health and safety of the tenant and to assess for any changes to residency. The Verification of Residence Letter verifies continued residency of the tenant.
- A Conciliation Letter is sent with a minimum of a 30-day warning if the tenant is at risk of the supplement ceasing due to noncompliance, such as lack of response for requested appointments, lack of requested documentation, or not recertifying every six months. This letter gives the tenant notification of their missed communication and the need to meet with staff to show good cause and ascertain an avenue of immediate recertification.
- A Termination Letter is sent when the rental supplement will no longer be provided. An effective date and reason is provided within the letter.

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.

This supplement will prioritize a person or family who is homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, for whom it is determined ineligibility or lesser assistance would be deemed through other rental assistance resources. An example of this locally is a higher quantity of resources for people with diagnoses of mental health and/or substance use, but less availability of assistance to those with no diagnosis. Another example is someone who has already utilized or been noncompliant with a local resource and is no longer eligible for that program. Families with children who are school age or younger will receive priority status. Within this group, further priority will be given to those earning no more than 30 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).

This targeted population will show lack of fixed adequate nighttime residence, a residence not meant for human habitation, or temporary living arrangements (including motels paid for by government programs or exiting an institution). At least 50 percent of the supplement shall be allocated to individuals and families currently experiencing homelessness.

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 the AMI;**
- **A household’s financial contribution will be limited to 30% of their household’s 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.**

Financial eligibility will be determined through assessment upon application and recertification. Per HUD, area median income for 2022 for the Utica-Rome, NY region is **\$82,400**, outlined through the chart below:

FY 2022 Income Limit Category	1 Person in Family	2 People in Family	3 People in Family	4 People in Family	5 People in Family	6 People in Family
Very Low (50%) Income	\$28,350	\$32,400	\$36,450	\$40,500	\$43,750	\$47,000
Extremely Low Income	\$17,050	\$19,450	\$23,030	\$27,750	\$32,470	\$37,190

Supplements will be provided until the household’s income reaches 30% or more of the monthly rent, as follows utilizing the 2022 Fair Market Rent:

Apartment Size	Rent	Income Not to Exceed
Efficiency	\$676	\$878.80
1-bedroom	\$680	\$884.00
2-bedroom	\$863	\$1121.90
3-bedroom	\$1067	\$1387.10
4-bedroom	\$1238	\$1609.40

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?** Leases will not 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?** A landlord statement will be required with every supplement award.
- **Will there be any health and safety standards regarding the housing that must be met prior to paying the supplement at a specific location?** If it is brought to the attention of the DSS that there are specific health and safety concerns regarding a property, a discussion will ensue with the tenant requesting authorization for a referral to the local Codes department. Should there be Codes violations cited on the property, rental supplement will be held.
- **How will the district handle modifications (e.g. moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?** RSP application and landlord agreements will include verbiage indicating agreement to alert DSS of any changes. Additionally, Department staff will conduct a check-in every 60 days to review current circumstances. If the tenant does not attend the 60-day appointment, a conciliation letter is sent to the tenant. If the tenant does not respond to or attend the conciliation appointment, the supplement will be discontinued at the end of the following calendar month. Circumstances would subsequently be assessed on an individual basis for appropriate action.
- **What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move?** Moves would be assessed individually to determine if supplement could continue, i.e. residential location within or outside of county, new landlord documentation. A tenant receives notice in the Verification of Residence Letter that they must notify both the Department and the Program within ten calendar days of a move from the residence, and the landlord receives notice in the Guarantee Letter that they must notify the Department within ten calendar days of a tenant’s move.
- **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? Changes will need to be reported within ten days of occurrence of change.

- **How will contributions towards rental costs for individuals outside the household be verified and what standards will be applied in determining whether such contributions can be sustained in the future?** Upon application, the tenant will communicate all sources of financial contribution toward rent. Outside resources, both formal and informal, will be recorded and verified with the collateral contact. During every 60-day check-in by the Department staff, an overall health and welfare assessment will be conducted, at which time staff can determine any changes to outside contributions and the potential impact of the changes. If the tenant does not attend the 60-day appointment, a conciliation letter is sent to the tenant. If the tenant does not respond to or attend the conciliation appointment, the supplement will be discontinued at the end of the following calendar month.

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.

A supplement will be offered indefinitely, as long as eligibility is maintained, upon every 60-day check-in and 6-month recertification process. If the tenant does not attend the 60-day appointment, a conciliation letter is sent to the tenant. If the tenant does not respond to or attend the conciliation appointment, the supplement will be discontinued at the end of the following calendar month.

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 two-party check, for signature by the landlord and tenant, will be submitted 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.

The initial report goes to the Resources department for review. The Resources department has an agreement with the Oneida County District Attorney's Office to investigate fraudulent cases, which are assessed for subsequent recouping of funds. Recoupment is based on the severity of the infraction and resultant advice of the District Attorney, as well as the willingness of the person to make reconciliation. If it is determined that a landlord has misrepresented information necessary to determine a rental supplement amount, the Department will reduce the ongoing rent by the appropriate amount and recoup past overpayments.

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.

Within the landlord statement, the landlord will indicate rent received from other sources. Both the tenant and the landlord will sign agreements that DSS will be notified of any changes, and communication will take place with the tenant during every 60-day check-in and 6-month recertification.

Additionally, utilization of the Coordinated Entry process upon application would produce an additional safeguard to ensure no 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.

A separate internal data storage system will be created through the Oneida County Information Technology department that will allow shared confidential documentation between relevant DSS staff, as well as uploading capabilities of documents.

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.

Monitoring will take place through the internal data storage system indicated above. Staff will conduct a check-in with each recipient every 60 days, with in-person recertification every six months. While this will encourage accountability on the part of the tenant, it will also allow staff to assist with any support needs that are noted upon the 60-day check-in meetings. If the tenant does not attend the 60-day appointment, a conciliation letter is sent to the tenant. If the tenant does not respond to or attend the conciliation appointment, the supplement will be discontinued at the end of the following calendar month. Verbiage will be in the application's addendum to indicate tenant's agreement to this process, as well as an agreement to communicate changes to Department staff within ten days of the event of the change.

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**

The District does not currently have a Shelter Supplement Program.