

2021-2022 New York State Rental Supplement Program Plan

District: Rockland County

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RSP Implementation Date: XX/XX/XXXX

A.

- 1. 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 will be administered by the Rockland County Dept. of Social Services. Rockland County is a member agency of the local Continuum of Care and will coordinate efforts using Coordinated Entry, HMIS and by attending the Continuum of Care monthly membership meetings.

- 2. 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 local Fair Market Rent (FMR) values with a district option to pay up to 100% of FMR using local funds.**

Rooms	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
FMR	\$2,018.00	\$2,054.00	\$2,340.00	\$2,952.00	\$3,173.00	\$3,649.00	\$4,125.00	\$4,601.00
85% FMR	\$1715.30	\$1745.90	\$1989.00	\$2509.20	\$2697.05	\$3101.65	\$3506.25	\$3910.85
Household Size	Shown below							

TABLE 1

Per person:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
50% - LOW INCOME	\$41,800	\$47,750	\$53,700	\$59,650	\$64,450	\$69,200	\$74,000	\$78,750

TABLE 2

It is expected that we can serve 25 to 30 households per 12-month period with the allotted \$700,000.

Rockland County will issue a voucher for a specific bedroom size, taking into consideration the family size and family composition, in determining the family's level of assistance. The subsidy standard provides for the smallest number of bedrooms needed without overcrowding and must be applied consistently for all families of like size and composition.

The following guidelines will be used to determine each family's unit size:
HOH = Head of Household

- **Zero Bedroom:**
 - HOH
- **One Bedroom:**
 - HOH
 - HOH, spouse/cohabitant
- **Two Bedrooms:**
 - HOH, 1 child/adult
 - HOH, 2 children/adults
 - HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 1 child/adult
 - HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 2 children/adults
- **Three Bedrooms:**
 - HOH, 3 children/adults

- HOH, 4 children/adults
- HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 3 children/adults
- HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 4 children/adults
- **Four Bedrooms:**
 - HOH, 5 children/adults
 - HOH, 6 children/adults
 - HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 5 children/adults
 - HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 6 children/adults
- **Five Bedrooms:**
 - HOH, 7 children/adults
 - HOH, 8 children/adults
 - HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 7 children/adults
 - HOH, spouse/cohabitant, 8 children/adults

Rockland County does not determine who shares a bedroom/sleeping room, but there must be at least one person per bedroom on the voucher. The subsidy standards for determining voucher size shall be applied in a manner consistent with Fair Housing guidelines.

3. 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).

In coordination with the Continuum of Care, Temporary Assistance and households assessed by Rockland County's Emergency Housing Unit, families and individuals will be identified as potential candidates. All households who are assessed by Emergency Housing will be entered into Coordinated Entry. Household may be referred to Emergency Housing community programs. The program will be advertised on the County Website.

4. 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.

Applicants will be screened for multiple programs including Emergency Temporary Assistance (Emergency Assistance Families and Emergency Safety Net Assistance), Emergency Rental Arrears Program (ERAP) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). The applicant's eligibility income level for RSP will be based off 50% AMI for household size (See Table 2). For an example for a household of one 50% AMI is \$41,800 yearly gross income.

The expectation is that application processing timeline will be 30 to 45 days. Approvals and denials will be processed within 30 days from the application date. If the application cannot be processed within 30 days, client must be notified in a timely manner.

5. **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.**

Households that are approved for RSP will be notified by an acceptance letter (attached). Both the tenant and landlord will be provided with the total monthly rent, tenant portion and RSP's amount approved.

A completed application (attached) includes household composition, citizenship status, proof of residence, income, available resources, and shelter expenses. Additional documents may include utility bills, school attendance and absent parent information. Additional forms will include a document requirement notice, Notice of Decision of approval and/or denial, notice to landlord and/or representative.

6. **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, individuals, and families with or without children. Rockland County will utilize Coordinated Entry to prioritize households.

Target population will be households that are homeless, in danger of homelessness, or eviction is imminent. Priority #1 will be given to homeless households with children under 18, households residing in shelters or temporary residences, homeless veterans, and homeless survivors of domestic violence (DV). Priority #2 will be households facing eviction and single homeless individuals.

B. Indicate how the following eligibility standards will be met:

1. **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.**

Applications will count all earned and unearned income in the household. Income will be counted monthly or using an average of the last 3 months. Rockland RSP will exclude earned income of a minor child under 17 years of age; adoption/foster care payments; one-time loans, gifts, lump sum payments or other non-recurring income; and childcare subsidy payments.

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

- 30% may be subsidized by a Temporary Assistance Grant for a 6-month time-period. UIB, qualifying unearned income (excluding the TA grant), and self-employment income are all acceptable means of the 30% contribution.

Average Median Income – 30% Contribution Rate (Yearly)

Incomes	1 Person HH	2 Person HH	3 Person HH	4 Person HH	5 Person HH	6 Person HH	7 Person HH	8 Person HH
50% - LOW INCOME (Yearly)	\$41,800	\$47,750	\$53,700	\$59,650	\$64,450	\$69,200	\$74,000	\$78,750
Rooms	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fair Market Rent	\$2,018	\$2,054	\$2,340	\$2,952	\$3,173.	\$3,649	\$4,125	\$4,601
30% Max Contribution Rate (Yearly)	\$14,010	\$16,020	\$18,015	\$20,010	\$21,615	\$23,220	\$24,825	\$26,415

TABLE 3

3. 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.

Each household will receive a minimum 30-day notice before supplements end.

C. List any other established eligibility criteria and indicate how each criterion will be determined and documented. Include the following:

1. Will leases be required of all tenants? Yes

- 2. How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not required?** Acceptable documents will be a lease, landlord letter, or another type of contract verifying rent amount, address, and household composition. Rent cost will be based on HUD Emergency Housing Voucher program standards.

Rockland County Rental Payment Standard
Rent amounts based on HUD Standards
(Please see Table 1)

- 3. Will there be any health and safety standards regarding the housing that must be met prior to paying the supplement at a specific location?** New and existing apartments will need to pass inspection for appropriate size and safety such as smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and working outlets. The Department performs inspections of residences at the request of the [Rockland County Department of Social Services \(DSS\)](#). Referrals for inspection are made directly to the Department of Health by DSS on behalf of their client(s). All proposed DSS residences must be in full compliance with the housing hygiene and occupancy requirements as set forth in the County Sanitary Code and approved by the health inspector. Rockland County Health, Center for Codes Investigations/Housing Programs (RCI) information can be found here: <http://rocklandgov.com/departments/health/center-for-rockland-codes-investigations1/>
- 4. How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?**

Moves will need to be requested 30 days in advance to allow time for the Health Department to conduct an inspection of the new apartment. The apartment will need to pass all of safety standards as described in Section 3. Rent increases need to be submitted ahead of any lease change and the case would need to be re-assessed to determine affordability. Household composition changes must be reported within 10 days and a re-assessment will be completed via phone or face to face interview.
- 5. What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a move?**

If the household was approved to move by the RSP coordinators; the household must remain within Rockland County and the new housing location must pass the Department of Health safety inspection (see above # 3 for more information). Landlord would need to complete the required landlord information and accept the subsidy dollars.

6. **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, households must report all changes within 30 days of the change. If the change was reported timely, the family will receive the supplement until end of the authorization period. If the information was not reported with 30 days, the supplement may be terminated if the family no longer falls within the income guidelines.

7. **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 thorough review of the household's income will be conducted to ensure affordability. The family's share is the sole responsibility of the household. Income contributions from individuals outside the household will be counted as unearned income. Any non-payment will be in violation of the program and the household will be at risk of losing the benefit. Verification of payment may include printed receipts, photos and/or digital copies.

D.

1. **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 supplemental program will be authorized for 1 year. It will be required for households to recertify their case yearly to continue with RSP. Supplements will end when the household's income increases to a level where their total rent is 30% or less than their total monthly income.

All families with income are required to have check-ins every 6 months. Families with income and without income will receive quarterly check-ins that will include but are not limited to discussions regarding household budgeting, healthy living skills, and connections with community resources.

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

The rent supplement will be paid via check directly to landlord. The landlord must submit a valid W-9 to the agency's Accounting Unit and be set up as a vendor to get paid.

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

The household will be responsible to repay any overpayments made by the agency, including the entire subsidy that was paid out due to the fraud. The eligibility team will send notice to the household regarding the overpayment, the amount and timeframe.

The case will be referred to the agency's collection unit. If the case remains eligible for assistance, the overpayment amount may be deducted in equal amounts to the end of the RSP authorization period to recoup the difference.

4. 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.

At intake assessment will be conducted before opening all cases. Agency workers will verify in WMS, HMIS or Coordinated Entry if the household is in receipt of any other supplemental programs. The agency's Accounting Unit will verify the landlord information, what payments were sent to this landlord and any other program payments that are contained within this agency.

5. 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.

Client records will be kept in a secure drawer at the worker's desk, county secured shared drive and HMIS.

6. 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.

- Families and individuals will be tracked using case files and a spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel).
- Each file will include the amount of the approved rental supplement, all payments, certain demographic information including receipt of benefits such as Temporary Assistance, household composition, documents, notices, and other correspondences.
- Progress notes will be kept with each case and will indicate all referrals for job search and job development (job zone), mental health and substance abuse services as well as referrals to Social Security.
 - DSS will follow up on employment, training, treatment, and any other barriers to self-sufficiency and progress made.
- DSS will engage each family at least on a quarterly basis via phone, electronically and/or in person.
- The main goal is to assist households to become self-sufficient and have the ability pay their own rent in full.

E.

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:

1. How the RSP will be different from their current approved Shelter Supplement Plan

Our TA-funded shelter supplement plan is limited to homeless singles moving into permanent housing. RSP is available to individuals and households with children. Each application will be referred to the Emergency Housing Unit using Coordinated Entry and HMIS. Applicants will be considered by their need of service and willingness to be case managed and agreeable to receiving services and assist in becoming self-sufficient. RSP income eligibility guidelines are based off 50% AMI compared to Temporary Assistance which is based off Federal Poverty Level. RSP will be administered by the local district when comparing this program to Emergency Housing Voucher which is administered by HUD.

2. The process established to ensure funds are not duplicated

Tracking of cases will be done via Excel Spread Sheet. All applications will be cross referenced with other supplemental programs before approval. Cross referencing will include WMS look-up, Coordinated Entry and HMIS look-up. Accounting Unit has cross checks regarding landlords receiving duplicate checks from Social Services.

3. How participating households will be distinguished

Using an application process, Coordinated Entry, assigning case numbers and creating separate cases from Temporary Assistance cases with case notes and documents that will distinguish each case from one another.