

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

**District:** Wyoming County Community Action

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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.**

Funds will be administered to the local Social Services office (SS) and filtered to Wyoming County Community Action organization (WCCA). WCCA will submit vouchers to SS and SS will reimburse WCCA for expenditures. WCCA will administer the RSP fully. WCCA currently collaborates with the local Continuum of Care (CoC). WCCA is also the designated Fair Housing Authority for Wyoming County.

**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:** \$85,000

**Anticipated Number of Households to be Served:** 25

# Wyoming County Fair Market Rent

Effective 12/1/21

	<b>0 BR</b>	<b>1 BR</b>	<b>2 BR</b>	<b>3 BR</b>	<b>4 BR</b>
<b>Full</b>	\$572	\$575	\$757	\$994	\$1,027
<b>85%</b>	\$486	\$489	\$643	\$845	\$873
<b>Household Size</b>	1	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8

**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).**

WCCA already has partnerships with the local SS and other entities in the community, such as the Continuum of Care. WCCA attends multiple monthly meetings where we will inform our partners of the RSP. WCCA will also advertise in our newsletter, as well as, on our social media sites.

WCCA has experienced an increase in calls from households requesting assistance with their rent. The number of households facing eviction has started to rise, as the eviction moratorium has been lifted. In January 2022, WCCA provided emergency assistance in the form of rent to 12 households.

**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.**

Any requests for assistance with rent will be administered by the Community and Family Services Division of WCCA. An intake application is completed. After a thorough assessment and eligibility interview, a decision is made within 30 days. Upon approval, a letter will be sent to the landlord and the applicant. Checks will be sent to the landlord 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.**

WCCA utilizes a two-page intake application to determine eligibility. All information is entered into an electronic database which tracks case notes, income verification, correspondence and services provided. An approval letter or denial letter will be sent within 10 days of the decision. After verification and approval, a contract will be executed and signed by WCCA, tenant, and landlord. No payments will be issued until the signed contract has been received by WCCA.

**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.**

WCCA allows any and all individuals to apply for services and be heard. Financial support is provided to residents of Wyoming County, ages 18 years of age and older. Priority is given to those with children, single parent families, seniors, veterans, disabled, victims of domestic violence and those that are homeless or are facing an imminent loss of housing. WCCA will review all cases for opportunities to maximize other programs and resources to support the household as they stabilize their financial situation. WCCA will work with DSS or Independent Living to obtain a list of individuals who come through the HMIS for assistance with prioritization.

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.**

WCCA will have the applicant sign a consent form for release of information to request any necessary information from outside sources to verify income, including the Department of Social Services for budget sheets, paystubs, award letters for social security, comp/disability statements, or any other necessary information they have on file. WCCA then will calculate the household monthly income and verify whether or not it is more than 50% of AMI based on the AMI charts and FMR charts for Wyoming County.

WCCA will confirm with the landlord the amount for monthly rent. The household's contribution will be 30% of their total monthly income. The recipient will sign a contract stating that the recipient must report any changes in income and/or household.

RSP payments will be discontinued once the household's income increases to a level where their rent is 30% or less than their total monthly income.

**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?**
- **How will the district/contractor ensure that the rental costs are legitimate and the responsibility of the recipient if a lease is not 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?**
- **How will the district handle modifications (e.g., moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.)?**
- **What standards will be followed in determining whether supplementation will continue following a 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?**
- **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?**

WCCA will utilize the current system of verification the agency utilizes when paying rent. A copy of the lease or a letter from the landlord stating the monthly rent amount and any arrears owed is required, along with a signed W-9.

As a Section 8 Leasing Authority, WCCA is already partnered with landlords and code enforcement to understand rental properties in Wyoming County. Health and safety standards must meet or exceed Housing Quality Standards used by Section 8.

When changes are reported in household composition or income, there will be an adjustment made to the RSP. The landlord and tenant will be notified of the change and a payment change will take effect by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month.

If an individual moves, their situation will be reassessed and the CFS Director will determine if subsequent rent payments will be made and/or continued. The recipient will be required to notify WCCA of their move within 10 days of the move. WCCA will continue supplement payments for the month of the move and the next month.

WCCA will request verification of an outside contribution from the outside source with questions regarding sustainability.

**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.**

This will be determined on a case-by-case basis until funds are depleted. Rental supplements will be continued until the household's income reaches a level where rent is 30% or less than total income. WCCA is open to assisting with rental arrears to avoid eviction, as well as, assisting with supplements for future rent for one month moving forward through indefinite support (as money is available) and will be reassessed each year via recertification. This may include security deposits if all other funding sources have been exhausted. WCCA is also the local administrator for Section 8 and will look at eligibility and work to transition the applicant to the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program or subsidized housing options. WCCA will follow the agency's mission in making these determinations: "Community Action for Wyoming County is dedicated to fighting the causes of poverty and providing support through programs and services for those needing help to overcome life's challenges."

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

Payments will be provided by WCCA in the form of a check and are always paid to the landlord directly.

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

If it is determined that a recipient has committed fraud, they will be terminated from the program and not be eligible for future RSP funding for a period of three (3) years. WCCA will state in the RSP Approval/Agreement letter (contract) that a repayment agreement will be established. If fraud is suspected, WCCA will work with Social Services to determine if charges should be pursued.

**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.**

If WCCA suspects or receives information that a recipient is receiving duplicate benefits, WCCA will investigate using a signed Authorization of Release to contact other local agencies to verify if any duplication of services exist. This will be a collaborative effort determining what programs the applicant could be eligible for and determining if they have applied for these other programs. This is part of our standard intake process. WCCA has established a system of checks and balances with the local SS to ensure there is no duplication of benefits. This could include collaboration with Independent Living, as they coordinate the local CoC. Both DSS and Independent Living have access to 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.**

Client records will be a combination of paper files and electronic records. WCCA is in the process of maintaining all files electronically in a database called imPowr. imPowr is locally owned by Continual Care, and WCCA contracts with them on a monthly basis for continued development and support. Files will be kept for a minimum of six years.

**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.**

All individuals served will be entered into the electronic imPowr database. Staff will utilize system reminders to follow up with recipients on a quarterly basis. The CFS Director will compile and submit the quarterly reports on the template provided.

**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