



Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	24-LCM-02
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Employment and Income Support Programs
Date:	February 15, 2024
Subject:	2024-2025 New York State Rental Supplement Program Allocations
Contact Person(s):	Temporary Assistance Bureau (518) 474-9344 tabureau@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	Attachment A – 2024-2025 Rental Supplement Program Allocations Attachment B – 2024-2025 Rental Supplement Program Plan Attachment C – Rental Supplement Program Claiming Instructions

Section 2

I. Purpose

The New York State Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget appropriates \$100 million to provide rental supplements to individuals and families, both with and without children, who are experiencing homelessness or are facing an imminent loss of housing, regardless of immigration status. The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to notify social services districts (districts) of the option to participate in the New York State Rental Supplement Program (RSP) for the 2024-2025 program year. Additionally, this guidance provides the 2024-2025 RSP allocations and general program guidance. Districts choosing to participate in the RSP must submit a 2024-2025 Rental Supplement Program Plan (Attachment B) for approval which details the intended use of their allocation for the current program year, as well as an adjusted fair market rent chart for the new fiscal year.

II. Background

The RSP is a program established to provide vital rental assistance to individuals and families, regardless of immigration status, who are experiencing homelessness or are facing an imminent loss of housing. The RSP is available to eligible individuals and families both with and without children. Districts may choose to retain their allocation and use district mechanisms (e.g., direct administration or transfer of funds to county agencies) to operate this program, or may delegate the administration of this program, in full or in part, to another public agency, contractor or non-profit organization.

III. Program Implications

A. Program Activities and Services

Districts choosing to participate in the 2024-2025 RSP **must** submit a Rental Supplement Program Plan (Attachment B) to OTDA for approval that provides details regarding the administration of their local program and the intended use of their allocation. Districts are encouraged to complete and return Attachment B to OTDA **as soon as possible, but no later than March 29, 2024**. RSP supplements shall be made available in accordance with district plans, provided however that certain minimum eligibility requirements are established as outlined in this LCM.

Supplements provided through the RSP will not be part of the standard of need pursuant to Social Services Law §131-a for individuals or families applying for or in receipt of Temporary Assistance (TA), and therefore would not be considered by ABEL when computing financial eligibility for TA. When computing a budget for a TA recipient who is receiving an RSP supplement, the shelter cost not covered by the RSP, or any other program, must be entered into the budget unless the supplement covers the entire shelter cost. In addition, RSP supplements shall not be subject to recoupment or repayment unless there is a determination that the application submitted was fraudulent, or otherwise identified as ineligible, and the application should not have been approved.

B. Program Eligibility and Program Requirements

While districts have flexibility regarding the development of a local Rental Supplement Program Plan, the governing statute outlines some minimum requirements for participant eligibility as follows:

- Eligible participants are individuals and/or families, both with and without children, who are experiencing homelessness or facing an imminent loss of housing, regardless of immigration status;
- Household income shall be no more than 50% of area median income (AMI) at the time of application based on location and household size, with initial priority given to households who earn no more than 30% of AMI;
- Rental supplement amounts shall be set at 85% of local Fair Market Rent (FMR) values with a district option to pay above 85% of FMR using local funds;
- 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 the district;
- A household's financial contribution will be limited to 30% of their household's total earned and/or unearned income;
- Supplements are to be provided until a household's total monthly rent is 30% or less than their total monthly income, at which point the housing will be considered affordable for the individual/family and the supplement will end; and
- Receipt of TA is not a requirement for determining eligibility for the RSP.

Additionally, districts must make sure they have policies and procedures in place to:

- Establish that the supplement recipient is the primary tenant (e.g., require a lease or other documentation);
- Establish the rent obligation of the supplement recipient and how contributions from individuals outside the household will be taken into consideration;
- Take reasonable steps to prevent the duplication of benefits;
- Establish a process for handling fraudulent applications, including a procedure for recouping funds, if necessary; and
- Establish a process for reviewing and considering appeals of applications that are denied or vouchers that are reduced or ended.

Rental Supplement Program Plans must provide a comprehensive outline of each district's proposed program and must address, at minimum, the following:

1. Specific details regarding how eligibility for a rental supplement will be determined as well as any target populations identified;
2. The process for handling modifications (moves, rent increases, changes in household composition, etc.);
3. A description of 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 set forth in the district's plan, the denial/closing letter must support the decision by explaining the criteria and the district's decision that the household does not meet such criteria. 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, months/term included and any applicable tenant protections resulting from receipt of the RSP; and
4. An explanation of whether there will be any health and safety standards that must be adhered to prior to paying rental supplements at a specific location.

Eligibility is determined based on a household's current monthly income at the time of application. Applications are to be accepted on a first come, first-served basis according to the eligibility parameters set forth at the local level. Districts must establish a recertification process, including the length of the local recertification period, but recertifications shall occur at least annually.

While districts have flexibility in determining the overall design of their local RSP, they are encouraged to make extra efforts to ensure prioritization of certain households, such as those with children under the age of six, single individuals with a history of housing instability, veterans, individuals and families experiencing domestic violence (DV), and other victims of violence. Though TA eligibility is not a factor in determining eligibility for the RSP, operators are encouraged to refer RSP applicants for assistance applying for applicable benefit programs, such as TA, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

Notifications regarding eligibility determinations (e.g., approvals, denials, and closings) must be maintained in the case record for a minimum of six years following submission of the final expenditure report.

C. Allocations

A total of \$100 million is available annually to support the RSP. While all funding is subject to legislative enactment each year, continuing funding support for the RSP is expected. The program year 2024-2025 RSP district allocations are listed in Attachment A and have been determined based on each district's relative share of TA households as of March 31, 2022, as well as the distribution of renter households under 30% of the local AMI, based on the US Census Bureau 2015-19 Public Use Microdata Sample. RSP allocations may be adjusted in future award years based on factors including statewide utilization and ongoing local rental supplement needs.

D. Reporting Requirements

As part of their participation in the RSP, districts must keep data about each household that participates in the RSP program, from the point of application throughout participation in the program and must submit the Excel RSP Reporting Workbook each quarter. These quarterly reports are the basis for the annual report required by the RSP legislation. These quarterly

reports will also allow districts and the State to answer questions, many required by the RSP legislation, about how the RSP is being implemented in each district and to inform future programs to support those in need of housing in New York State.

While OTDA is not requiring districts to submit household-level data at this time, OTDA has provided a template with the household-level data elements that are required to complete the Excel RSP Reporting Workbook. The Excel RSP Reporting Workbook must be submitted as long as there are still clients receiving a supplement through this program.

The RSP Reporting Workbook is due on or before July 10, 2024 (for the period April 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024); October 10, 2024 (for the period July 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024); January 10, 2025 (for the period October 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024); and April 10, 2025 (for the period January 1, 2025, through March 31, 2025).

The Excel RSP Reporting Workbook and instructions for 2024-2025 will be distributed to districts under separate cover. While the reporting requirements described in 23-LCM-07 will be largely the same, OTDA will provide new guidance and a new Excel RSP Reporting Workbook that consolidates information from earlier quarterly application cohorts.

Coordination with the local HUD-funded Continuum of Care (CoC) is encouraged, in order to support each district's ability to track services and outcomes related to participation in the RSP. Additionally, coordination with the CoC will assist districts in avoiding a duplication of benefits with other supplement programs that may exist in each local area.

Districts and/or program operators, as applicable, are required to provide OTDA or its designees access to the program records during the course of the project. RSP projects will be monitored by OTDA on a regular basis and may include onsite visits as well as regular telephone contact and/or case reviews. The goal of monitoring is to ensure the terms of the RSP are being met in accordance with State legislation. In addition, monitoring enables OTDA to provide technical assistance, where necessary, to assist the district and/or program operator to meet the overall intent of the RSP. It is the responsibility of the district to monitor any and all subcontracts. Districts must ensure the confidentiality of records concerning project participants.

IV. Reimbursement Structure and Allowable Costs

District allocations will be paid as claims are submitted to substantiate payment. Districts that did not opt to participate in the RSP during the initial year may be able to receive an advance of 25 percent of the district's RSP allocation payments for the initial 12-month period.

RSP funding is made available for districts to provide vital rental assistance to eligible households and as such, it is expected that a minimum of 85% of the funds will be used toward rental supplements (including, in limited instances, rental arrears and security deposits) in accordance with the guidelines outlined herein. OTDA has set a 15% spending limitation on administrative costs.

Agencies should limit the amount of administrative costs necessary to operate the RSP to maximize both the amount of funds available to pay rental supplements and the number of households enrolled. The use of RSP funds for administrative purposes must be directly related to the provision of rental supplements to eligible individuals and families.

For districts opting to assign all or a portion of their RSP allocation to another public agency, contractor or local nonprofit organization, districts will be held liable for assigned funds not used in a manner consistent with the purpose of the RSP allocation.

Districts are required to submit all claims for reimbursement through the Automated Claiming System (ACS) regardless of whether they elect to operate the program in-house or transfer the administration to another entity. RSP claims must be for services provided from April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025, and must be claimed in a timely manner after provided. Additional claiming information is included in Attachment C.

V. Necessary Action

Districts who elect to receive this funding must also complete and submit the Rental Supplement Program Plan (Attachment B). Districts are encouraged to complete and return Attachment B to OTDA as soon as possible, but no later than March 29, 2024.

Plans must be submitted on the template attached to this LCM. In order to expedite the review and approval of plans for districts who operated RSP programs during the 2023-2024 program year, OTDA encourages those districts to submit their plans with any changes from the previous plan noted by highlighting or italicizing the changes to review.

Issued By:

Name: Barbara C. Guinn

Title: Acting Commissioner

Division/Office: Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance