

Orange County Department of Social Services Proposal for Revised Shelter Supplement

The rising cost of housing in Orange County has made it extremely difficult for low - income TA clients to retain or secure affordable housing. Therefore, Orange County is requesting approval for a revised Shelter Supplement Program to meet the needs of families that are homeless or facing homelessness. Implementation of this plan will take effect as soon as approved by OTDA.

Federal Housing and Urban Development Fair Market Rents in Orange County

Year	Efficiency	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom
2008	\$872	\$901	\$1,103	\$1,352	\$1,441

The proposed Shelter Supplement will be an amount up to the actual rent obligation but not to exceed the shelter maximum for that household size.

TA Household size	Shelter Allowance eff. 11/03	New Shelter amount including proposed supplement
1	\$292	\$684
2	\$298	\$742
3	\$421	\$942
4	\$473	\$1,046
5	\$527	\$1,154
6	\$551	\$1,202
7	\$574	\$1,248
8+	\$574	\$1,248

This proposed Shelter Supplement would be available to families with children under 18 (or under 19 and a full time student) with a legitimate verifiable threat of eviction or families who are homeless, living in a hotel/motel or shelter (including Domestic Violence shelters) for 15 days or more due to an emergency situation. Additionally, Orange County seeks to continue its practice of allowing the Shelter Supplement for families receiving preventive or protective services within its Children's Services Division. The 15-day requirement may be waived by the Chief Examiner or her designee.

Terms:

- Recipients must be TA eligible based on the New York State standard of need *without* the supplement and in compliance with all eligibility requirements.
- No member of the family unit can be on sanction.
- For the Shelter Supplement to retain housing the family must have resided in the residence for six months prior to application for the supplement.
- The client must be tenant or co-tenant of record and have a lease or written agreement with the landlord assuring housing for a minimum of twelve months.
- Any arrears paid to prevent eviction will follow 18NYCRR 352.7(g)(3) and (4) and Orange County's policy (attached).
- Inspections are required for the cities of Port Jervis, Middletown and Newburgh.
- The full actual rent must be restricted and paid directly to the landlord.
- Households must apply for Section 8 and accept it if offered.

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- All non-TA household members must contribute either their pro-rated share of the rent or 30% of their gross income, whichever is less. Household members who are not eligible for TA due to immigration status, without income, will not be expected to contribute.
- If a family relocates or if there is a change in household composition or income the supplement will be re-evaluated and adjusted accordingly.
- Any contributions towards rent made by individuals outside the household (non-legally responsible) will be evaluated and verified when considering the ability of the household to pay future rent.
- The Supplement will not be time limited as long as the client meets the criteria.

In addition to the categorical eligibility outlined above, individuals and families receiving Preventive, Protective, or PINS Diversion services may be eligible to receive Supplemental Housing Assistance if some or all of the following conditions exist:

- They are homeless due to an inability to pay rent at existing market rates and are not currently receiving any other housing subsidy (Ex. Section 8; \$300.00 preventative housing subsidy as defined in 18NYCRR 423.2 (b)(16).
- A lack of permanent housing creates risk to children and increases the likelihood that one or more children may enter foster care.
- A family is at high risk of losing their adequate permanent housing due to an inability to pay rent and children may be at increased risk for placement into foster care.
- A family is sharing housing with others in an unsafe and/or overcrowded dwelling due to an inability to afford adequate housing independently and there is an increased risk of placement into foster care for one or more children.
- Substandard (unsafe) housing creates increased risk to children and increases the likelihood of placement into foster care.
- Parenting individuals under age 21 whom, if made to remain in the home of their own parents (financially responsible for them and their children), may place the children at risk of harm.
- Families with one or more children ready for discharge from foster care to their parents or relative, with the only barrier to discharge being the family's ability to afford adequate housing.

Justification:

The rising cost of housing in the County of Orange, coupled with the recent downturn in the economy has created a dynamic where homeless cases throughout the County have been increasing dramatically over the course of the past year. Families placed into emergency housing placements have increased from an average of 12 per month to 23 per month in the past twelve months. While Orange County maintains a progressive series of preventive and emergency services for consumers who are determined homeless, our Housing Resource Centers located in the County have become increasingly unable to prevent homeless through our enhanced diversion services structure. These services include the: co-location of DSS staff and non profit staff from our community action agencies working seamlessly to prevent evictions, the co-location of legal services, co-location of two housing specialists (case managers), mental health services, substance abuse assessment services and access to priority referrals to essential community support services.

The Family Assistance Shelter Supplement continues to provide additional financial support to at-risk families while remaining below the Fair Market Rent. Additionally, the Supplement will be available to a maximum of twenty families with a clear expectation that families who receive the Supplement will be impendent from the Supplement within a period of one year.

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As of August 2008, Orange County averaged 23 families per month in hotel / motels or our Emergency Housing Shelter. This is an increase from an average of 12 families per month during 2007 and an average of 11 families per month during 2006. The average cost of providing services to a homeless family in 2008 equaled \$157 per day (\$4,710 per month) when we consider both placements in hotel / motels and placements at our local Emergency Housing Shelter. For the 23 families placed throughout the month of August 2008, the monthly cost for their placement exceeded \$100,000.

Considering an average family size is 3, the proposed Shelter Supplement would cost \$942 per month. On a case by case basis the cost savings of using the Family Shelter Supplement would equal \$3,768 per month.

Orange County family cases are 72% FA (11) and 28% SNA (17)

	GROSS	FEDERAL	STATE	LOCAL
15 Families FA	\$169,560	\$84,780	\$42,390	\$42,390
5 Families SNA	\$ 56,520		\$28,260	\$28,260

The inability to afford housing results in placing families or extending the length of stay in hotel/motels or shelters. Additionally, the Supplement may be an incentive for clients to comply with employment requirements and become self-sufficient.