

The SEPS Rent Supplement Program

Fact Sheet

What is the SEPS Rent Supplement Program?

The City's Special Exit and Prevention Supplement (SEPS) Program can help eligible individual adults and adult families (families without children) at risk of entry to shelter and those already in shelter to secure permanent housing. The number of households that can be approved to receive the SEPS Rent Supplement will be limited due to available funding. Potentially eligible individual adults and adult families will be connected with SEPS providers (community-based organizations), which will assist the household in completing an application and locating housing. For households in shelter, New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) housing specialists and case managers will also be available to provide assistance.

What are the eligibility requirements?

First, the household must fall into one of these four groups:

1. Include a member who: (1) resided in a DHS shelter at any time between 1/1/16 and 3/31/16 and currently resides in a DHS Shelter for Single Adults, or (2) currently resides in a DHS Shelter for Adult Families, and:
 - within the 12 months prior to entering the DHS shelter system, has been evicted or left a residence in New York City that was the subject of an eviction proceeding or had to leave such a residence because of a vacate order issued by a City agency or a foreclosure action or for health and safety reasons as determined by a City agency, **OR**
 - has previous or current United States military service; **OR**
 - (Single Adults only) was discharged into the DHS shelter system from a residential substance abuse treatment program, residential program or facility licensed or operated by the New York State Office of Mental Health or the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, foster care placement or correctional institution.
2. Include a member who is a survivor of domestic violence as certified by the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) and either resides in a DHS Shelter for Single Adults or a DHS Shelter for Adult Families but has not refused placement in an HRA shelter or resides in an HRA shelter and has reached the maximum time limit for residence in an HRA shelter and is at risk of entry into a DHS Shelter for Single Adults or a DHS Shelter for Adult Families.
3. Be at risk of entry into a DHS Shelter for Single Adults or a DHS Shelter for Adult Families and within the last 12 months has been evicted or has lived in a residence in New York City that was or is the subject of an eviction proceeding, a vacate order issued by a City agency or a foreclosure action, or was or is required to leave such a residence for health or safety reasons as determined by a City agency.
4. Include a member who is risk of entry into a DHS Shelter for Single Adults or Adult Families and has previous or current United States military service.

Second, the household must have:

- An Active or Single Issue Public Assistance case; and
- A total household income that does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level.

Finally, the household must obtain a lease for, or agreement in writing to rent, a residence with a rent that is within SEPS rent levels and is protected from rent increases for at least one year except as authorized under rent stabilization laws and rules or U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development regulations.

How long does the program last?

So long as funding for the program remains available and the household remains eligible, after the first year of the program, the household may receive up to four one-year renewals of SEPS rent supplements; and additional one-year renewals indefinitely provided the household includes a member:

- who receives social security disability (SSD) or supplemental security income (SSI) or is receiving recurring Public Assistance and is potentially eligible for such benefits based on a documented disability; **OR**
- who receives federal veterans disability benefits.

How much does an eligible household have to pay toward rent?

A household enrolled in the SEPS program must contribute 30% of its household income, if any, towards the rent. The amount of the household's contribution for the year is set at the time of lease signing and will not change for the first year in the SEPS program, but will be reviewed at the time of annual renewal for the program. Total household income includes employment earnings and unearned income, such as SSI/SSD.

You **should not** pay rent that is more than your monthly contribution amount, nor should you pay any security deposit or broker's fee. (The City is issuing the security deposit and broker's fee, if applicable.) Such payments are called side deals and are **prohibited** under the SEPS program. If anyone asks you to make such a payment, you should call 311 or 929-221-0043.

What is the amount of rental assistance available?

The SEPS program has considerable flexibility and can support a household moving into a leased apartment or a rented room. If you are moving into an apartment, the amount of your SEPS Rent Supplement will depend on your household income and how many people are in your household. The maximum rent amounts are listed in the chart below. Please note that landlords are not allowed to charge you any fees other than what is legally stated in the lease. Landlords are prohibited from charging extra for heat and hot water. All leases are between you and your landlord, and the City is not a party to the lease.

SEPS Program Maximum Rent Chart				
Household Size	1	2	3	4
Max Rent	\$1,213	\$1,268	\$1,515	\$1,515

SEPS Example

The following is a sample tenant contribution and rent supplement amount. The household's contribution and maximum rent will be based on household income and family size.

Family Size:	2
Maximum Rent:	\$1,268
Monthly Household Income:	\$1,320
Monthly Tenant Contribution	\$396
Monthly Rent Supplement:	\$872

If you are moving into a rented room:

The maximum rent for a rented room is \$800 and the SEPS rent supplement amount will be the difference between the actual rent (up to \$800) and the household's monthly tenant contribution (which will be equal to 30% of household Income).

How does a household find an apartment or room and sign a lease or other rental agreement?

The SEPS Provider will explain SEPS in more detail to clients and will assist them in locating a qualifying SEPS apartment or room. For households in shelter, their housing specialist and case manager are also available to provide assistance.

If a household is renting a room, the rental must meet the following criteria:

- The apartment cannot have more than 3 bedrooms and no more than 3 unrelated adults (including the SEPS household) can live in the apartment.
- If the room is rented from a landlord, the room cannot be in an apartment subject to Rent Stabilization.
- If the room is rented from the primary tenant of an apartment, the primary tenant must live with the SEPS household in the apartment and the rent cannot be more than the SEPS household's proportionate share of the rent based on the number of bedrooms.

Households who are approved for SEPS may be eligible to receive a furniture allowance and should work with their case manager at their shelter to arrange for moving assistance. Landlords renting apartments will receive four months up-front rent (or one month full rent and an additional three months up-front rent supplement), as well as a security deposit voucher.

What help can landlords and families receive once they are participating in the program?

- HRA's Rental Assistance Call Center, reachable at 929-221-0043, can help both landlords and tenants with program information, aftercare referrals and payment inquiries.
- Households who have left an HRA shelter should call 929-221-7270 to be connected to a community-based nonresidential program.

The information in this program description provides a general overview of the SEPS rent supplement program. It is not intended to provide full details concerning the operation of the program.