



**To: All ISS Housing Subsidy Provider Agencies  
All Fiscal Intermediary Provider Agencies  
All Care Coordination Organizations  
OPWDD Regional Office Staff**

**From: Program Implementation, Regional Offices**

**Date: February 11, 2021**

**Re: Expectations for Initial and Continuing Access to the OPWDD Housing  
Subsidy beginning January 1, 2021**

Background:

OPWDD is standardizing the process for the review and approval of OPWDD Housing Subsidy certifications and recertifications. The following information and timelines apply to individuals receiving OPWDD Housing Subsidies (formerly known as Individual Supports and Services) whether through a Housing Subsidy provider or a Self-Directed Budget.

Process:

Initial requests from individuals seeking an OPWDD Housing Subsidy should be accepted and reviewed throughout the year under the established process. Individuals whose new Housing Subsidies begin on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> must be reassessed per the criteria in this document. New Housing Subsidies beginning on or after October 1<sup>st</sup> do not have to complete a recertification for the first applicable calendar year. For example, if a person receives an initial housing subsidy in July, then the documentation is required to be re-submitted in November of the same year (see below), and the reassessment is submitted to the DDRO in November for all subsequent years. However, if an individual receives an initial subsidy in October, then the reassessment is not required until November of the next calendar year.

Individuals must have an annual recertification packet completed and submitted to the Developmental Disabilities Regional Office (DDRO) by November 15<sup>th</sup> of the calendar year.

Recertification packets must include:

- A QA Checklist completed within the last 12 months by paid staff of an OPWDD approved provider (e.g., Housing Subsidy Agency staff, Fiscal Intermediary staff, Support Brokers, Care Managers, or Community Habilitation staff);
- A Participation Agreement completed within the last 12 months;
- Review of the individual's budget template which must include either:
  - Evidence that the individual's budget template was reviewed if there were no changes to the budget; or
  - A Budget Template completed within the last 12 months and all documents supporting the information in the Budget Template;

And

- A copy of the lease meeting OPWDD's criteria.

Although other paid staff may help in the completion or collection of the required documents, the Fiscal Intermediary (FI) or Housing Subsidy provider is ultimately responsible for submitting the completed packet to the DDRO. FI and Housing Subsidy providers must submit additional information to the DDRO upon the DDRO's request. The DDRO will issue an approval or denial to the individual and the FI or Housing Subsidy provider once the complete packet is reviewed.

#### Updates Between Annual Recertification Periods:

If changes occur to the individual's income, housing costs, etc. after their renewal information is submitted, the Housing Subsidy provider must contact DDRO staff as soon as possible, as their subsidy may need to be revised. An individual's Housing Subsidy must be updated when the individual:

- Has a budget change resulting in a difference of at least \$50/month (e.g., significant income or housing cost changes);
- Moves to a new residence (even if there is no change in the individual's budget or rental amount);
- Has other occupants move in or out of the apartment;
- No longer lives in a subsidy-eligible situation (e.g., the individual is incarcerated, moves home with family, or moves to a certified setting);
- Wishes to terminate funding; or
- Experiences any other urgent need or change that could result in a change in a housing subsidy allowance.

If the individual no longer resides in the apartment that is being funded by the OPWDD Housing Subsidy for any reason for 30 days or more, the DDRO must be notified so the appropriateness of the subsidy can be assessed.

Please contact the DDRO for guidance on specific situations. Questions can also be sent to the Home and Community Living unit at [housing.initiatives@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:housing.initiatives@opwdd.ny.gov).