

Governor's Committee to End Homelessness (GCEH) Action Plan 2018-2023

To achieve an end to homelessness, the GCEH supports the development of capacity in the eight Continuums of Care across the state to have a comprehensive response in place to ensure homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.

GCEH Goals

The GCEH aligns the **goals** of the State of Missouri plan to end homelessness with Opening Doors, the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homeless:

- End Veteran Homelessness
- End Chronic Homelessness
- End Family Homelessness
- End Youth Homelessness

The GCEH supports the following key strategies to accomplish the Goals of ending homelessness:

- Share national and local "best practices" to support planning to end homelessness
- Strengthen communication at all levels
- Encourage collaborations and cross-sector problem solving
- Review and share data to evaluate Statewide progress in ending homelessness
- Encourage development of specific strategies as needed to address unique needs of underserved populations

GCEH Action Strategies 2018-2020

Introduction:

Coordinated Entry is our communities' newest approach to ending homelessness. Instead of calling multiple numbers seeking assistance, each community has easily accessed phone or walk-in procedures for homeless persons to be assessed for housing services. Staff use standardized assessment tools for fair and equal access to homeless assistance. Once assessments are completed, households are either connected directly with services, or placed on housing prioritization lists based on their vulnerability and the severity of service needs. Households may also be connected with other housing or community services/options while waiting for housing assistance.

1) Support the development and functioning of *Coordinated Entry systems* in each CoC to:

- Quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness;
- Intervene to prevent and divert people from entering the homelessness services system through linkages with mainstream and community support services;
- Provide immediate access to shelter and crisis services. Quickly connect households to available housing assistance to help them achieve and maintain stable housing.
- Strengthen linkages between child welfare, domestic violence providers, early education, mainstream resources, public housing authorities, workforce development, state resources, faith based organizations, and Coordinated Entry systems.

➤ **Strategy to quickly identify and engage people at risk of and experiencing homelessness**

Leadership within each Continuum of Care or region will develop a Coordinated Entry process that is accessible and inclusive for the region served. Coordinated Entry access points with contact information will be advertised both within each Continuum or region, as well as on the GCEH website, www.endhomelessnessmo.org. MHDC staff will work with DMH housing staff to maintain the updated list of Coordinated Entry contacts on the www.endhomelessnessmo.org website.

- **Goal completion date:** August 2018

➤ **Strategy to strengthen linkages between state partners and Coordinated Entry systems**

Governor's Committee to End Homelessness (GCEH) members will reach out and engage state partners and stakeholders in the Coordinated Entry process. New stakeholders will be invited to participate in GCEH meetings or in local Continuum meetings around Coordinated Entry. GCEH leadership will initiate outreach to stakeholders at the state level. State agency partners will provide contact information for local Continuums to engage partners at the local level.

- **Goal completion date:** On-going. Initial review February 2019

2) Expand availability and accessibility of affordable permanent housing

Production & development

- Assess and communicate the impact of changes in funding for state affordable housing tax credits on the production of affordable housing in Missouri
- Provide feedback on the State Consolidated plan for affordable housing
- Track and communicate the number of affordable housing units developed, rehabbed, and funded annually through MHDC
- Promote statewide funding, construction, and/or subsidies for rental housing units
- Identify high need areas for affordable rental production. Share information with stakeholders and developers. Track rental occupancy/vacancy rates and areas of job growth to promote rental production in high need areas.

Rental subsidies

- Compile all state & federal rental subsidy resources and criteria for accessing subsidies, along with waiting lists, and share information statewide
- Map homelessness and waiting list data to highlight most needed areas for stronger resource coordination around rental subsidies.

➤ **Strategy to assess the impact of changes in funding for state affordable housing tax credits –**

Compare number of affordable housing units produced in Missouri prior to, and after reduced state tax credit funding for affordable housing. Communicate impact of funding cuts to legislators.

- **Goal completion date:** February 2019

➤ **Strategy to provide feedback on the State Consolidated Plan –** Invite DED representatives to share accomplishments and proposed changes to the state Consolidated Plan. Encourage GCEH representatives to give feedback on the plan through written comments and/or attendance at public hearings.

- **Goal completion date:** August 2019

3) Stabilize households prior to entry into the homeless delivery system using prevention, diversion, and reunification

- Identify and align federal and state funding available for homeless prevention and crisis intervention, to support households in keeping their current housing
- Encourage and support effective discharge planning from corrections, foster care, mental health, health care, and other institutional settings
- Share best practice information for homelessness prevention and diversion strategies to stabilize households prior to becoming homeless
- Communicate state and federal agency resources to support housing families in crisis to local Continuums of Care
- Promote training in case management focused on housing and income stability.
- Outreach to court systems, highway patrol and police departments to educate about Coordinated Entry processes

➤ **Strategy to align federal and state funding** – Assess and document resources, funding and strategies currently used by Department of Corrections, Department of Social Services, Department of Mental health, Missouri Housing Development Commission, Department of Health and Senior Services, domestic violence providers, VA providers, Public Housing authorities, and Community Action agencies to provide emergency shelter and/or supportive housing to households in crisis.

- **Goal completion date:** August 2019

➤ **Strategy to strengthen statewide discharge planning** - As part of the Discharge Policy, GCEH will create a resource tool to supply to corrections facilities, foster care staff, and mental health treatment centers about housing options, diversion programs, and reunification resources for their clients to utilize upon exit. Tool will be distributed statewide. Representatives from the GCEH, upon request, will can discuss the tool with center staff. Tool will be utilized to educate and build new partnerships.

- **Goal completion date:** August 2019

➤ **Strategy to share best practice information on homeless prevention and diversion** – GCEH members will work with MHDC staff to develop statewide standards for homeless prevention assistance. Information and links to homeless prevention and diversion best practices will also be shared on the www.endhomelessnessmo.org website.

- **Goal completion date:** August 2019

4) Use data to evaluate statewide progress and report on results

- Develop a simple GCEH data dashboard with indicators to track statewide progress in ending homelessness
- Engage stakeholders across state & federal agencies & nonprofits, to review data quarterly, communicate success, and recommend strategies to strengthen progress
- Specifically track state progress in ending veteran, chronic, family, and youth homelessness.

➤ ***Strategy to engage stakeholders to share and review data***

GCEH leadership will invite state partners and key stakeholders to share data at GCEH meetings. GCEH membership will recommend strategies for strengthening progress and communicating success.

- **Goal completion date:** August 2018

➤ ***Strategy to develop a statewide “Dashboard” on Missouri progress to end homelessness***

Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) will engage leadership in each Continuum to share HMIS data to show a statewide picture of homelessness and resources available to address homelessness. Through an ad hoc working group, local Continuum leadership will work with ICA homelessness. Data from state and federal partners will be integrated into the statewide dashboard as available and appropriate.

- **Goal completion date:** February 2019

5) **To strengthen communication, develop a statewide communications strategy to key stakeholders to:**

- Share and promote national evidence-based best practices
- Spotlight successes around the state
- Share data indicators of progress
- Share opportunities for education & advocacy
- Share resource information including sample MOUs, performance measurement tools, assessments, etc.

➤ ***Strategy to share opportunities for progress, promote resources and highlight successes and progress***

MHDC staff will use electronic communication “shout outs” (up to 3 per month) to share important information with GCEH members and key stakeholders. One “shout-out” each month will share resource information and links from stakeholders and GCEH members. The other two “shout-outs” will include the GCEH agenda, minutes, and information shared at GCEH meetings and follow-up meeting reminders. MHDC members should email resource information to MHDC designated staff for inclusion in the “shout-outs”.

Goal completion date: February 2019

➤ ***Strategy to share and promote performance measurement tools, assessments, sample MOUs, and evidence based best practices***

The GCEH will share and promote evidence based best practices, performance measurement tools, assessments, and the information to inform CoC progress through the electronic project management software “Basecamp”, as well as through month meetings of the GCEH subcommittee, MC2, is comprised of CoC staff leadership. Any member of the Basecamp sharing site may post information and resources.

Goal completion date: On-going. Re-evaluate February 2019

➤ ***Strategy to share data indicators of progress, spotlight successes around the state, and share best practice information on ending homelessness with key stakeholders.***

The GCEH leadership will review and recommend updates to the www.endhomelessnessmo.org website for the purpose of sharing key information and resources on ending homelessness with key stakeholders. MHDC staff will work with GCEH leadership on updating and maintaining the website.

Goal completion date: On-going. Re-evaluate August 2019

The State of Missouri Program Standards for ESG- Funded Rapid Re-Housing Programs

The State of Missouri developed the following ESG-funded Rapid Re-Housing Program standards to ensure:

- Program accountability to individuals and families experiencing homelessness
- Program compliance with HUD and State of Missouri rules
- Program uniformity
- Adequate program staff competence and training, specific to the target population being served

DEFINITIONS:

Rapid Re-Housing – A program designed to help individuals and families exit homelessness as quickly as possible, move to permanent housing, and achieve stability in that housing. Rapid re-housing assistance is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety), and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household. The core components of a rapid re-housing program are housing identification and relocation, short-and/or medium-term rental assistance, move-in (financial) assistance, and case management and housing stabilization services. [24 CFR 576.104](#) & *Core Components of Rapid Re-Housing*, National Alliance to End Homelessness

Homeless – For the purposes of Rapid Re-Housing, homeless means: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: (1) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; (2) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); (3) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution; or (4) Any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence; and has no other residence and lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family friends, faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing. [24 CFR 576.2](#)

Family - includes, but is not limited to, regardless of marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or gender identity, any group of persons presenting for assistance together with or without children and irrespective of age, relationship, or whether or not a member of the household has a disability. A child who is temporarily away from the home because of placement in foster care is

considered a member of the family. [24 CFR 5.403](#).

Housing First- an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.

Homeless Management information System (HMIS)- The information system designated by the Continuum of Care to comply with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards and used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at-risk of homelessness. [24 CFR 576.2](#)

Coordinated Entry- a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs

PERSONNEL

STANDARD: The program shall be adequately staffed by qualified personnel to ensure quality service delivery, effective program management, and the safety of program participants.

CRITERIA:

1. The program provides training to all paid and volunteer staff on both the policies and procedures employed by the program and on specific skill areas as determined by the program.
2. All paid and volunteer service staff participate in ongoing and/or external training and development to further enhance their knowledge and ability to work with individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or other issues that put individuals or families at risk of housing instability.
3. For programs that use HMIS or a Comparable Database, all users must abide by the standard operating procedures found in the HMIS/Comparable Database Policies and Procedures manual provided by the HMIS/Comparable Database vendor. Additionally, users must adhere to the privacy and confidentiality terms set forth in the User Agreement.
4. All staff have a written job description that at a minimum addresses the major tasks to be performed and the qualifications required for the position.
5. The program operates under an affirmative action/civil rights compliance plan or letters of assurance.
6. Agency staff review current cases and individual service plans on a regular and consistent basis to ensure quality/coordinated services.

CLIENT INTAKE PROCESS

STANDARD: The program will be an active member in the Coordinated Entry system. The program will have minimal entry requirements to ensure the most vulnerable of the population are being served. The program will assist participants in locating safe, affordable housing that meets participants' needs in accordance with client intake practices and within ESG guidelines for Rapid Re-Approved by the Missouri GCEH: 07/02/2018

Housing Programs.

CRITERIA:

1. All Program participants must meet the following program eligibility requirements:
 - a. The household must meet either category 1 or category 4 of the homeless definition, set forth by HUD in [24 CFR 576.2](#).
2. Programs cannot disqualify an individual or family because of evictions or poor rental history, criminal history, credit history, or on the basis of domestic violence history.
3. The program explains the services that are available and the expectations for participation. A copy of the program expectations are given to the household prior to program entry.
4. The program will maintain a Release of Information that allows the sharing of information with relevant people and/or agencies. Program participants will be offered copies of all Releases of Information that they have signed, and have the right to revoke any Release of Information without penalty.
5. For each individual and family determined ineligible to receive Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) assistance, the record must include documentation of the reason for that determination. [24 CFR 576.500](#)

PRIORITIZATION

STANDARD: Programs will determine and prioritize which eligible families and individuals will receive Rapid Re-Housing assistance.

CRITERIA:

1. The program will prioritize each applicant household using the CoC Coordinated Entry process.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS

STANDARD: The program will assist participants in locating and stabilizing in safe, affordable housing that meets participants' needs.

CRITERIA:

1. In locating housing, the program considers the needs of the individual or family experiencing homelessness.
2. Programs will assess potential housing for compliance with ESG requirements for habitability, lead-based paint, and rent reasonableness and fair market rent standards prior to the participant signing a lease with the landlord, and the program signing a rental assistance agreement with the landlord.
3. The program provides assistance in accessing suitable housing.
4. The program may provide assistance in accordance with the ESG [CFR 576.105/106](#). Eligible costs may include rental application fees, moving costs, temporary storage fees (up to 3 months), security deposits (up to 2 months), short and/or medium term rental assistance, utility deposits, utility payments (including up to 6 months arrears), rental arrears (one-time payment of up to 6 months arrears), credit repair, and legal services related to obtaining or retaining permanent housing.
5. The program signs a rental assistance agreement with the landlord which must set forth the

terms under which rental assistance will be provided, which meets all the requirements of the ESG Funder, and as outlined in ESG [CFR 576.106](#)

6. The program participant must sign a legally binding written lease with the landlord which must include a lease provision or addendum that includes all requirements that apply to tenants, the owner, or lease under 24 CFR part 5, subpart L (Protection for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, or Stalking)
7. The program staff and the participant work together to develop a housing stabilization plan, which may include financial goals, periods and amounts of assistance, meeting schedules, employment goals, and a program exit strategy. [24 CFR 576.105](#)
8. Assistance will be tailored to individual client needs in order to reach housing stabilization.
9. Agencies should have standards for client income contribution which cannot exceed 30%. If an agency has income contribution standards they must apply to all program participants.
10. Individual case management is offered to program participants at least monthly. Case management includes the following:
 - a. **Housing Stability Case Management** assists participants in locating and obtaining suitable permanent housing, which may include:
 1. Assessment of housing barriers, needs, and preferences
 2. Development of an action plan for locating housing
 3. Housing search
 4. Outreach to and negotiation with owners
 5. Tenant support and/or counseling
 6. Assessment of housing for compliance with ESG requirements for habitability, lead-based paint, and rent reasonableness
 7. Assistance with submitting rental applications
 8. Understanding leases
 9. Arranging for utilities
 10. Making moving arrangements
 11. Monthly documented contacts with RRH participants.
 - b. **Ongoing Case Management** services include assessing, arranging, coordinating, and monitoring the delivery of individualized services to facilitate housing stability for a program participant who has obtained permanent housing through the Rapid Re-Housing program by:
 1. Developing an individualized housing and service plan, including planning a path to permanent housing stability
 2. Developing, securing, and coordinating services
 3. Obtaining Federal, State, and local benefits
 4. Monitoring and evaluating program participant progress
 5. Providing information about, and referrals to, other providers
 6. Conducting re-evaluations to determine on-going program eligibility
11. Other eligible services may be provided including:
 - c. **Legal Services** to resolve a legal problem that prohibits a program participant from

obtaining or retaining permanent housing, including:

1. Client intake
 2. Preparation of cases for trial
 3. Provision of legal advice
 4. Representation at hearings
 5. Counseling
 6. Filing fees and other necessary court costs
- d. **Mediation** between the program participant and the owner or person(s) with whom the participant is living
- e. **Credit Repair**, including:
1. Credit counseling
 2. Accessing a free personal credit report
 3. Resolving personal credit problems
 4. Other services needed to assist with critical skills related to household budgeting and money management
12. The program will re-evaluate the household for continued eligibility a minimum of every 12 months. To continue to receive Rapid Re-Housing assistance, the household must demonstrate:
- f. Lack of resources and support networks. The household must continue to lack sufficient resources and support networks to retain housing without program assistance.
 - g. Need. The program must determine the amount and type of assistance that the household needs/wants to (re)gain stability in permanent housing.
 - h. Income. The household's annual income must be at or below 30% AMI.

SERVICE COORDINATION

STANDARD: The program will assist program participants, pursuant to [24 CFR §576.400](#), in attempting to obtain appropriate supportive services and other Federal, State, local, and private assistance available for such individuals as needed and requested by the household. Staff should be knowledgeable about mainstream programs and services in the community.

CRITERIA:

1. Arrangements shall be made as appropriate and available with community agencies and individuals for the provision of education, employment, and training; schools and enrichment programs; healthcare and dental clinics; mental health resources; chemical dependency assessments and treatment; legal services; budgeting and credit repair; and other assistance requested by the participant, which are not provided directly by the program.
2. Other homeless and mainstream resources for which, if eligible, a client may be assisted in obtaining, include: Emergency Financial Assistance; domestic violence shelters; local Housing Authorities, public housing, rent subsidies and subsidized housing; temporary labor agencies; childcare resources and public programs that subsidize childcare; consumer credit counseling service agencies; youth development and child welfare; Community Support Programs; WIC; SNAP; Unemployment Insurance; Social Security benefits; Medicaid/Medicare.

TERMINATION

STANDARD: Termination is expected to be limited to only the most severe cases. Programs will exercise

judgment and examine all extenuating circumstances when determining if violations are serious enough to warrant termination.

CRITERIA:

1. In terminating assistance to a program participant, the agency must follow the due process provisions set forth in [24 CFR 576.402](#), as well as the following process: (1) providing the program participant with a written copy of the program rules and the termination process before the participant begins to receive assistance; (2) written notice to the program participant containing a clear statement of the reason for termination; (3) providing a review of the decision, in which the program participant is given the opportunity to present written or oral objections before a person other than the person (or a subordinate of that person) who made or approved the termination decision; and providing (4) prompt written notice of the final decision to the program participant.
2. Termination under this section does not bar the program from providing further assistance at a later date to the same individual or family.
3. Programs are encouraged to re-house, rather than terminate assistance to households that are evicted from their housing while participating in the Rapid Re-Housing program.

FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

STANDARD: The program shall attempt to provide a continuity of services as necessary to all participants following their exit from the program. These services can be provided directly and/or through referrals to other agencies or individuals.

CRITERIA:

1. The program develops exit plans with the participant to ensure continued housing stability and connection with community resources, as desired.
2. It is recommended that a program attempt to follow up with phone or written contact at least once after the client exits the program. A program may provide follow-up services that include identification of additional needs and referral to other agency or community resources in order to prevent future episodes of homelessness.

CLIENT FILES

STANDARD: The documentation necessary for the effective delivery and tracking of service will be kept up to date and the confidentiality of program participants will be maintained.

CRITERIA:

1. The file maintained on each participant must, at a minimum, include information required by HUD and the funder, homeless documentation and backup, housing stabilization plans, and case notes.
2. Client information must be entered into HMIS or a Comparable Database in accordance with the data quality, timeliness and additional requirements found in the HMIS/Comparable Database Policies and Procedures manual provided by the vendor.
3. The program will maintain each participant file in a secure place and shall not disclose information from the file without the written permission of the participant as appropriate except to project staff and other agencies as required by law.
4. All records pertaining to ESG funds must be retained for 5 years after the expenditure of all

funds from the grant under which the program participant was served. Copies made by digital scanning, photocopying, or similar methods may be substituted for the original records. Records pertaining to other funding sources must adhere to those record retention requirements.

EVALUATION AND PLANNING:

STANDARD: Ongoing program planning and evaluation will be conducted.

CRITERIA:

1. The program has written goals and objectives for its services to meet the outcomes required by HUD, the local Continuum of Care, and the funder.
2. The program reviews the case management, housing, and follow-up needs of program participants and the existing services that are available to meet these needs. As appropriate, revisions to goals, objectives and activities are made based on program evaluation.
3. The program exhibits due regard for participant privacy in conducting and reporting its evaluation.