



DISCHARGE POLICY

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 5, 2011 (revised June 3, 2013)

POLICY

This policy addresses discharge planning for a variety of population in the eight continua in Missouri, including, St. Louis City, St. Louis County, St Charles (St. Charles/Lincoln and Warren Counties), Springfield (Greene, Christian and Webster Counties), Joplin (Jasper and Newton Counties), St. Joseph (Andrew, Buchanan and DeKalb Counties), Kansas City (Jackson County) and Balance of State (101 Counties, not included in another continuum).

DEFINITIONS

I. HUD Definition of "Homeless"

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a person is considered homeless if they are living in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings or on the street. In addition, persons are also considered homeless if:

- They reside in Emergency shelters.
- They reside in Transitional or Supportive Housing for persons who are homeless and who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.
- They came from any of the above places but are spending a short time (up to 90 consecutive days) in a hospital or other institution.
- They are being evicted within 14 days from a private dwelling unit and no subsequent residence has been identified.
- They are being discharged within a week from an institution, such as a mental health or substance abuse treatment facility or a jail/prison, in which the person has been a resident for more than 90 consecutive days and no subsequent residence has been identified.
- They are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence, and the person has no other residence and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

II. Guiding Principles

In order to develop recommendations for this discharge policy, the following guiding principles were developed:

1. Homelessness is unacceptable in Missouri.
2. Efforts to secure permanent housing shall be made prior to being discharged from a state or public facility, such as a mental health facility, substance abuse treatment facility, long-term care facility or jail/prison.
3. If “temporary” shelter placement is unavoidable, the reasons for this should be documented.
4. If after having exhausted efforts to engage the client in a discharge plan, if the client continues to refuse services, the efforts will be noted.
5. If a client receiving out-patient services becomes homeless, the state or public facility should work actively with available community resources to locate suitable housing.

III. PROCEDURES

1. Adoption of Guiding Principles: All agencies and institutions serving the homeless population in Missouri shall adopt the guiding principles outlined in II, above.
2. Agency Adoption of Discharge Policy: All agencies and institutions within Missouri shall develop and implement a discharge policy that includes the following:
 - a. Individual Discharge Plan: Where applicable or feasible, begin planning an individual discharge plan that includes client involvement and buy-in.
 - b. Collaboration and partnerships: A variety of forms of partnerships and collaborations are needed to achieve an effective discharge planning system. It is the responsibility of each agency to partner and collaborate with other agencies in their Continuum of Care to ensure the best outcome for Missouri residents.
 - c. Adequate information systems and tracking: Agencies receiving McKinney-Vento HUD funding are required to participate in the Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). For agencies not required, HMIS is preferred, but not mandatory, in order to improve communication, facilitate access to resources, and track completion of the discharge plan. Please note that Domestic Violence agencies are exempt from this requirement, as described in the Domestic Violence disclosure rules.
 - d. Integration of Community Resources: Agencies shall collaborate to reduce the duplication of services. Effective discharge planning procedures and policies shall be supported by all relevant community planning documents.

IV. FUTURE EFFORTS

Additional work is needed. Successful discharge planning policies to prevent homelessness are contingent upon identification of barriers and development of strategies to overcome those barriers. Some of the barriers identified by the committee include:

- Transportation
- Lack of Affordable and Accessible housing
- Access to SSI/SSDI and other benefits, including easier application or reinstatement in a timelier manner, both during and after release from incarceration.
- Money for medications
- Employment
- Domestic Violence Education
- High risk individuals, including, but not limited to, sex offenders, mental health clients, substance abuse and ex-offenders

**Memorandum of Agreement
Governor's Committee to End Homelessness
Discharge Policy**

I, _____, hereby attest that I am authorized by my Agency and/or Continuum of Care, _____, to commit that my agency and/or Continuum of Care has reviewed the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness Discharge Policy, and that my Agency will comply with this Discharge Policy, and that any policies and procedures developed, adopted and implemented by my Agency, will conform with this Discharge Policy. The Discharge Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness. Next review date is set for July 1, 2016.

For: _____
(Printed Name of Agency)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name and Title: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name and Title: _____