



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570 Phone: 573-751-6400 FAX: 573-751-6010
RELAY MISSOURI for Hearing and Speech Impaired and Voice dial: 711

Paula F. Nickelson
Acting Director



Michael L. Parson
Governor

Elder Justice Coordinating Council
Remarks by Tim Jackson, Section Administrator
Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services- Section for Adult Protective Services
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Good morning Chairwoman Barkoff and members of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council. My name is Tim Jackson and I'm the Adult Protective Services Administrator for Missouri. I work for the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services/Division of Senior & Disability Services/Section for Adult Protective Services. I'd like to thank the Elder Justice Coordinating Council and the Administration on Community Living for this invitation. I'm very excited to speak today about Missouri's APS Direct Services Program, an exciting initiative that we've undertaken with the use of our APS Coronavirus Response and Relief funds and one that we plan to continue with American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Our program is focused on overcoming gaps in available community resources by paying for interventions such as needed goods & services that are otherwise unavailable or for which there is inadequate or lacking funding. By linking APS clients with all of the interventions they need, not just the ones for which there are community resources, Missouri APS is able to address the root causes of the abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation and fully provide wrap-around services and supports to significantly reduce the APS client's risk of future harm.

But we cannot accomplish this important work without our partners, Missouri's 10 Area Agencies on Aging. The AAAs play a pivotal role in the delivery of this program by providing case management and purchasing the needed interventions for the APS client. The Area Agencies on Aging, along with their association, MA4 (Missouri's Association of Area Agencies on Aging) worked closely with APS to create the infrastructure to make this program work... one of the most important pieces being an online platform called Cumulus that unifies APS & the AAAs into one online referral & case tracking system.

So I'd like to lay out the basic process for how the program works.

First off, Missouri state APS staff receives the report of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation. They complete an assessment of the APS client's level of risk and needs while also simultaneously gathering evidence in regards to any potentially criminal acts. Missouri APS staff addresses the needs that can be addressed through available community resources while also identifying other needs and interventions for which no resources or funding exists.

Once APS staff determines that interventions are needed for which there is no funding, they then refer the client to the network of AAAs through the Cumulus system. Cumulus routes the referral to the appropriate AAA based on the location of the AAA client.

AAA staff or subcontractors then engage with the APS client to provide case management and coordinate setting up the services, goods, etc. for the individual. If additional needs are identified, AAA staff seeks approval from APS to provide the additional interventions if deemed necessary. Once the services are delivered or the goods are obtained, AAA staff completes a satisfaction survey with the client, reports the outcomes of their case actions to APS via Cumulus, and invoices the Department for reimbursement of their expenses.

Here's a list of some of the types of assistance provided through this program. It's important to note that most of these interventions, the goods and services provided through this program, are most associated with the needs of self-neglect cases. Because these services are focused on reducing risk and keeping the APS client safe, many of the services provided pertain to environmental safety or improving the home environment to reduce risk. Other interventions, like temporary delivered meals or personal hygiene, are more focused on the individual's personal needs. It's important to remember that there may be other community resources available to pay for or provide these services. If so, those resources are utilized or exhausted first before accessing this program.

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We started this program in early July of this year. In just 16 weeks, the program has amassed over 260 referrals. The most needed services or interventions are Home Modifications, followed by Pest Control, Nutritional Assistance, Environmental Cleanup, Assistance with Housing or Relocation, and Assistance with Utilities. These were not surprises for our APS staff as housing-related issues such as pest infestations, unsafe housing, and utility assistance are common challenges that our clients face. Our hope is that by addressing these root issues of risk, the client will be able to live safely and independently for as long as they wish.

I mentioned that the AAAs do a survey with the client at the end of their engagement. Of the results thus far, the vast majority of clients impacted by this program are satisfied with the assistance they received and feel they received all the services they needed.

As far as sustainability goes, Missouri has devoted a heavy segment of its APS Covid Relief and American Rescue Plan Act funding to the continuation of this program. While we are planning for this to be a short-term/time-limited program, we do hope to be able to prove the program's value and the need for continued funding to support it.

And finally, we also hope to utilize the data we gain from this program to give us a more comprehensive understanding of the resource gaps in Missouri. With this information in-hand, we can pursue and support efforts to expand community resources and support services in the areas of greatest need.

Again, I'd like to thank the Elder Justice Coordinating Council and the Administration on Community Living for the invitation and opportunity to speak about Missouri APS' Direct Services Program. Thank you.