

# Model Legislation: Outreach and Services to Reduce Unsheltered Homelessness

*This model legislation provides states with practical, immediate steps to address rising rates of homelessness while laying the foundation for long-term solutions. Legislators often want to act quickly, but building new housing takes time. This template offers actionable alternatives:*

- **Section 1** establishes a grant program to fund outreach teams and short-term housing options such as vouchers and motels—critical tools for engaging people and providing immediate relief.
- **Section 2** directs the state to pursue a Medicaid waiver or State Plan Amendment to secure sustainable funding for housing-related services. It also creates a services fund to bridge gaps until Medicaid changes take effect and to cover non-Medicaid eligible expenses.
- **Section 3** offers a framework for managing street camping only when a ban is already in place. It removes tickets, fines, and arrests, requires coordination with outreach teams funded in Section 1, prohibits removal of personal property, and ensures extended engagement periods before any enforcement—prioritizing connection to housing and services.

*Together, these provisions help communities respond effectively now while building systems that support housing stability and constructive engagement.*

## **SECTION 1** – Establishes a Grant Program for Outreach and Short-Term Housing

Sec 1 - As used in this chapter, “authority” refers to (the state housing finance agency).

Sec 2 – As used in this chapter, “housing related services” refers to a range of services designed to help individuals and families gain, maintain, or improve their housing stability.

Sec 3 – As used in this chapter, “housing crisis” has the same meaning set forth in (state code/ if not code establish a definition based on state need)

Sect 4 – As used in this chapter, 'short-term housing' refers to any temporary accommodation that provides respite and designed to offer access to services and permanent housing options once they are available for individuals experiencing a housing crisis.

Sec 5 – The Authority shall, subject to the availability of funds appropriated for such a purpose, develop and implement a grant program for the purpose of awarding grants for outreach and short-term housing options. The program must include grants for the following provisions:

1. Outreach services to connect individuals experiencing a housing crisis with housing options; and
2. Short-term housing for individuals experiencing a housing crisis.

Sec 6 – The Authority shall adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this section. The regulations must prescribe, without limitations:

1. The criteria for eligibility to receive grant funding; and
2. Procedures for the submission and review of applications to receive grant funding.

Sec 7 – There is hereby appropriated from the State General Fund to the grant program created by Sec 5 of this act the sum of \$XX,XXX,XXX to carry out the grant program developed pursuant to Sec 5.

**SECTION 2** – Requires the State to Put Forward a Plan to Pay for Service – *the example below reflects updating a Medicaid Waiver. If that is not possible, then focus on the lead with section 2 only – the services grant program.*

Sec 1 – (state) Medicaid shall submit a/an amendment to the 1115 Waiver for approval to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service to ensure long-term access to home and community-based services, including housing-related services. This will:

1. Provide comprehensive support for individuals with serious mental illness, severe substance use disorders, traumatic brain injuries, or intellectual/developmental disabilities;
2. Facilitate access to services that promote independence and community integration; and
3. Include provisions for respite care, community transition assistance, supported employment, and other necessary services to meet the needs of eligible individuals.

Sect 2 - The Authority shall, subject to the availability of funds appropriated for such a purpose, develop and implement a supportive services grant program for the purpose of

awarding grants for supportive services. The program must include grants for the following provisions:

1. Housing Related Services for individuals experiencing a housing crisis with a serious and persistent mental illness, a chronic chemical addiction, or a serious and persistent mental illness with a co-occurring chronic chemical addiction; and
2. Training and capacity building to develop and sustain high quality service delivery and build administrative capacity to seek Medicaid reimbursement for eligible services.

Sec 3 – The Authority shall adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this section. The regulations must prescribe, without limitations:

1. The criteria for eligibility to receive grant funding; and
2. Procedures for the submission and review of applications to receive grant funding.

Sec 4 – On or before Dec 1 of each year that the program, the Authority shall submit a report to the legislature. The report must include:

1. Information on and feedback from grant recipients; and
2. Information on the use of grant money and participation in the grant program.

Sec 5 – The Authority may use a portion of the money in the supportive services grant program created by Sec 2 of this act to prepare the report required by Sec 4.

Sec 6 – There is hereby appropriated from the State General Fund to the supportive services grant program created by Sec 2 of this act the sum of \$XX,XXX,XXX to carry out the grant program developed pursuant to Sec 2 and the report required by Sec 4 of this act.

Sec 7 – The Authority shall provide up to twenty-five (25%) of the base allocation of funds as performance payments to a political subdivision or a nonprofit organization providing services under Sec 2 of this act for meeting predetermined goals on reductions of each of the following:

1. Days unhoused.
2. Days in jail or prison.
3. Days hospitalized, with the relative weight of days hospitalized to be determined by the authority.

Sec 8 - A political subdivision or a nonprofit organization may use grants received to conduct surveys to identify individuals with the greatest number of days unhoused, in jail or prison, or hospitalized, but these expenses shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total grant amount.

***Use Section 3 only when a camping ban has already been introduced and there is strong insistence on keeping that language during negotiations with the legislature.***

*This provision removes tickets, fines, and arrests; requires coordination with outreach teams funded in Section 1; prohibits the removal of personal property; and ensures extended engagement periods between law enforcement contact—prioritizing connection to housing and services.*

### **SECTION 3 – Prohibition of Street Camping**

Sec 1. (a) – A person may not camp, sleep, or use for long term shelter land owned by the state or a political subdivision.

1. If:
  - a. A person violates subsection (a); and
  - b. The person has not previously violated subsection (a)- the law enforcement officer who discovers the violation shall first give the person a warning and contact the nearest outreach team established in SECTION 1, Sec 5 to offer access to short-term housing, rental assistance, and/or services for individuals experiencing a housing crisis with a serious and persistent mental illness, a chronic chemical addiction, or a serious and persistent mental illness with a co-occurring chronic chemical addiction.
2. A person who knowingly or intentionally violates subsection (a) after:
  - a. having first received a warning under subsection (b); and
  - b. thirty (30) days have elapsed since the warning was given under subsection (b); shall be referred to a diversion program or offering of services in lieu of a citation.

Sec 2 - During the period between the first warning and any subsequent violations, no personal belongings of the individual shall be removed, provided the individual is actively engaging with the outreach teams established in SECTION 1, Sec 5.

Sec 3. – It is a defense to a prosecution under subsection (c) that there are no services or shelter available within five (5) miles of where the violation of this section occurred. Law enforcement officers must verify the availability of housing or services.