

Mary A. Vitale

1335 Redbird Drive

Florissant MO 63031 [mvitale50@charter.net](mailto:mvitale50@charter.net)**COVID RESPONSE**

Thankfully, the day-to-day activities for residents of Missouri habilitation centers is back to normal. Staff at these centers did a commendable job keeping residents healthy during the Covid pandemic.

**SHORTAGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

Staff shortages in the Missouri Department of Mental Health means that some people in need of services are suffering. They are stuck in hospitals, prisons, or are homeless on the streets not getting the help they need.

Missouri is affected by the nationwide shortage of Direct Support Professionals. To encourage this workforce Governor Mike Parson signed House Bill 14 authorizing an 8.7 percent cost-of-living pay increase for all state employees. Although the raises are appreciated some Missouri lawmakers see the raises as a bare minimum of what's needed.

In 2022 Department of Mental Health (DMH), Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD), developed *Missouri Talent Pathways*, a registered apprentice program to recruit and retain a highly skilled and dedicated workforce. Participants receiving a certificate as a Certified Direct Support Professional. As a registered apprenticeship intermediary, the Division and its community partners will have access to an expanded applicant pool, traditional workforce development programs, and a career ladder framework for direct support professionals.

For more information from the Department of Mental Health go to:

<https://dmh.mo.gov/dev-disabilities/service-providers/talent-pathways>

**NO NEW ADMISSIONS POLICY IN MISSOURI**

Missouri has had a policy of no new admissions to state run Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with and Intellectual Disability (ICFs/IID) (called habilitation centers in Missouri) since 2008.

Families, hospitals, and other social agencies do call habilitation centers for assistance with placement, but have to be directed to our Regional Office that only place persons in the community.

The current habilitation centers are: Bellefontaine, Higginsville, South County, St. Charles, and Southeast Missouri Resident Services at Poplar Bluff/Sikeston. The census of the habilitation centers continues to dwindle as older residents are passing away.

Family organizations continue to meet with the Missouri Department of Mental Health about opening up admissions, especially for older adults with intellectual disabilities so that they don't end up in nursing homes without the special care they need.

**MISSOURI ADVOCACY TO RETAIN 14C CERTIFICATES of the FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT**

Many federal agencies are promoting the elimination of 14c certificates that allow paying wages based upon productivity. Eliminating these special wages would put many sheltered workshops out of business. Missouri has a vibrant system of workshops. Websites concerning Missouri workshops advocacy include:

- Missouri Association of Sheltered Workshops:  
<https://www.moworkshops.org/index.html>
- Coalition for the Preservation of Employment Choice:  
<https://employmentchoice.org/>

**MISSOURI STATE REPORT**

**VOR 2023**

Mary A. Vitale

1335 Redbird Drive

Florissant MO 63031 mvitale50@charter.net

**MISSOURI DD COUNCIL 2022-2026 STATE PLAN**

<https://moddcouncil.org/about-us/state-plan/>

The 2022-2026 State Plan begins October 1, 2021, and ends September 30, 2026.

**Goal 1: Self-Advocacy Advances Rights and Inclusion**

Effective self-advocacy strategies secure the rights to self-determination and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities.

- Objective 1a: By September 30, 2026, the DD Network (MODDC, Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services, and UMKC Institute for Human Development) will develop five resources to build capacity for alternatives to guardianship.
- Objective 1b: By September 30, 2026, implement five best practices that will increase self-determination, leadership and participation of self-advocates in cross-disability or culturally diverse coalitions.

**Goal 2: Healthy, Educated, and Connected People Thrive**

Missourians with developmental disabilities live in safe communities that enhance the quality of life across the lifespan. This includes, but is not limited to, barrier-free access to transportation, technology, healthcare, education, employment, housing, social services, cultural activities, and recreation.

- Objective 2a: By September 30, 2026, implement three systems change activities that deliver enhanced equity of people with developmental disabilities.
- Objective 2b: By September 30, 2026, create and implement 10 promising practices that connect individuals with developmental disabilities across the lifespan with inclusive networks.

**Goal 3: Informed Leaders Make Change Happen**

People with developmental disabilities and family members guide changes to Missouri laws, policies, and practices by informing decision-makers and educating the public about challenges and solutions.

- Objective 3a: By September 30, 2026, provide ten grassroots activities that inform people with developmental disabilities and their family members of current systems barriers and opportunities so they become more informed leaders in their communities.
- Objective 3b: By September 30, 2026, implement recommendations that resulted from Latinx Seeds grants and Partners Latinx work, to develop two projects that will result in solutions to eliminate challenges and barriers experienced by the Latinx community.
- Objective 3c: By September 30, 2026, educate and advise policymakers on at least 15 federal or state bills, executive orders, or regulations that impact people with developmental disabilities.