

# First Step Back Home PROCESS

## HOW TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS FROM TOTAL DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The first question I ask the client is, are you able to work, and will you work?  
Then I record pertinent intake information about them and their history.

The Seven Step Process starts with Love and Compassion for People

### A. Spiritual

1. The two best books a homeless client could use are in motel rooms all over America: the Bible and the phone book. The phone book is where you find temporary employment agencies.
2. Read the Bible and know God loves you and sent His only Son Jesus Christ to risk and sacrifice His life for His believers. This is what Love is: risk and sacrifice. We need to do this for others to love them. You have to transport clients in your own car and use a personal credit card to register them into a motel.
3. Now you're excited because you know the power of God is with you and your soul will live in Heaven with God forever.
4. So this builds faith in yourself so you can do this with God's help and learn how to support yourself in a relatively short period of time.
5. Then this strong faith, because of God's love, gives you hope and the assurance that God is always with you and will not let you fail if you totally trust in His Son Jesus Christ for all your needs.

### B. Shelter

1. A client cannot function properly and even think much about progress until he has the security of a roof over his head and a door to lock behind him.
2. So shelter is the beginning of his first step back home. This usually means a motel room because of the lack of government or any other agency shelters in the area.

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3. This usually costs \$32 a night or \$175 per week for a single person. (Budget Inn, Wentzville, MO)
4. There is usually not a shortage of motel rooms except during a holiday season or special event in town.
5. Because of my limited finances and time I can only promise the homeless 3 nights stay in a motel room in the beginning. Depending on their progress and my incoming donations, I may be able to give them more time.
6. The goal here is to encourage clients to pay for their own rooms ASAP. There has to be an end point in the near future to the giving, in order for me to call this a “hand up” program and not just a “hand out,” and to give them a sense of urgency of becoming self-sufficient. Also to stop the drain on FSBH funds.
7. With limited funds and time the sooner the better they can pay their own way, then the funds I do have can last longer and help more people.
8. This living in motels can’t go on forever because the \$700 a month spent on motels can be better used in paying for an apartment or a house. This amount could cover the rent of an apartment along with the cost of utilities etc.
9. So the homeless client must keep this in mind and always be thinking of how they can make the transition from the motel to the more permanent and affordable housing ASAP.

#### C. Food

1. Next to shelter, food is the most important thing a client needs, of course, to keep going.
2. They can get free food for a while from local food pantries and buy cheap canned goods and microwave food to live on until they start earning an increasing income that allows them to buy better food. Motel rooms usually have a small refrigerator and microwave oven. Some qualify for food stamps.

But my advice is to spend no money on food at first so they can save as much money as possible. My budget counseling is simple and consists of telling them to have tomorrow’s rent in hand today.

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I also have a survival food box program where volunteers can help by buying enough non-perishable food to get the client by for a couple of days and package it in a box. This usually costs about \$20 per box.

So the homeless client should not have to spend any money on food utilizing these benefits and this plan.

### D. Clothing

1. Usually clients only have a small bag of clothes with them, if that much, so we have to go to Mary Martha Thrift Shop in Wentzville to get them clothes for free or \$3 a bag for them to have work clothes etc. Clothing vouchers are needed.
2. Here too when they earn more money they can get better clothes.

### E. Health Care

1. Some homeless have existing health issues causing them to need certain medications or to see a doctor so they can remain healthy. We have nothing and can do nothing if we don't have good health.
2. For serious health problems the homeless client can go to an ER at any hospital for help and work out a long term payment plan.
3. For medications we can go to DFS or some Catholic charities to have these provided for free until they start earning money.

### F. Transportation

1. The final step is a job, but to get there and back the client first has to plan for transportation. If the client doesn't have his own, then I try to line him up with a ride. This is usually from a FSBH adopt-a-homeless family or someone staying in the motel who will take them places for gas money. FSBH usually has to pay for this at first.
2. The goal here is for the client to someday buy his own car and have enough income for insurance and maintenance. I have found cars for the homeless, which I buy if there are funds available, for \$300 or so, that are still running today. Another

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miracle from Heaven! Insurance and license fees are also expenses FSBH usually has to cover at first.

G.) Finally: A Job or Better Yet - A Career.

1. The best place to start for this is LaborFinders temporary agency in O'Fallon. This is the only agency I have found locally that will pay a client daily. This is the perfect solution for the homeless because they have no money of their own.
2. The temporary agencies also have a program in place that when a client works successfully with one particular company for 30 days they are eligible to become full time employees with the company and not have to work through the temp agency any more. This is called a temp to perm position.
3. The amazing thing is that there are 32 temp agencies alone in St. Charles County. So you can spend all week just going to temp agencies.
4. I set a goal of applying for 15 jobs a day for the client to establish a "we mean business" attitude and also to make it more possible to obtain a job in three days. Many businesses are right next door to each other.
5. If the client proves uninterested in getting a job by not completing these required applications then I have to tell them I can't help them if they can't complete a small task like that. I get a lot of grumbling but most of them get it done.
6. If at the end of 3 days they still don't have a job but have completed 45 applications then I will still work with them. The amount of time I can work with them also depends on funds and time I have available.
7. I have found that 50% of the homeless clients that come to me can get a job in three days or less following this program. This is another miracle from God!
8. Education is also necessary to get a better job. The local community colleges usually provide free education for homeless clients.

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### Conclusion

A homeless client can be minimally self-sufficient, living in a motel making \$8 per hour because that usually means his take home pay is about \$250 per week. After the \$175 for rent he has \$75 left. Along with a part time job the client can usually save \$100 or so a week if he sticks to the plan. This means no eating out or buying anything he can get for free or cheaply.

At this rate of saving then an apartment or house is not out of the question, especially with some governmental housing grants that are available for the homeless. The key is to remain working and work the plan constantly and consistently. Any major disruption means he has to start all over again at step one, which most don't do because once climbing out of the black hole they don't want to go there again! But if they do fail the first time at least they know there is still hope because they have done it before and know they can do it and what it takes to succeed the next time. (See the pit story)

I am not a brain surgeon and anyone can do this. I raise my own finances and schedule my own time so I am dependant only on God to keep the donations coming and give me enough time to help at least one homeless per day. One at a time and no more than a total group of 5 to 10 at the same time, I have found is my limit to remain effective. I hope to be able to do this full time someday, finances permitting, and show other states, counties and towns how to do this. I figured I can help 1/3 of the homeless population become self-sufficient with this program, it just takes love and compassion for people and a few successes to encourage them to keep on going! The other 2/3's are substance abusers or don't have the determination to become successful.

It is also rewarding to encourage the ones who make it and instruct them to look for a brother or sister in need and show them the way to succeed from total deficiency to self-sufficiency and then watch them pass on the knowledge and experience they have to others so they may become self-sufficient also.

Our Lord Jesus' main concern in life is our love for God and others and to carry each other's burdens, so this should be our goal also. In the Greek "burden" means a "crushing load". There are not too many other worse crushing loads a person can carry than being homeless. Also the Bible says that doing this fulfills the whole law of Christ. So why should we do anything else until we love our neighbors in need.

Looking at the big picture, our society is heading on a downhill slope to increasing poverty and homelessness for many. The government has failed in the last 25 years to decrease homelessness and it has gotten worse. Already I saw an article on the state of Rhode Island stating that over 50% of the state is homeless. They may not be destitute but they can't afford a house or an apartment of their own. The reason for this is the cheapest apartment is \$1100 per month and businesses are still paying \$8 per hour to their employees when a living wage is \$15 to \$17 per hour! I am not saying the poor have not made bad decisions in life to get them there, but it is the duty of "We The People," not the government or social agencies, to come alongside and work with people to help

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them make better choices so they may experience the American dream of being self-sufficient as we do. The Constitution should read “ Life, liberty and the pursuit of self-sufficiency.” No one can be happy if they can’t pay their own bills.

All government. and social agencies are overwhelmed with clients, understaffed and underfunded so they have waiting lists of months and years. A homeless person needs help today not in weeks or months. The sooner they get help the sooner they can get on their feet and become self- supporting productive citizens again!

As far as I can tell Missouri is not far behind Rhode Island. I have found the figures to show there are 6 million people in MO and half are already in the not self-sufficient category, meaning ½ of the people can’t pay their bills every month. That leaves 3 million that are doing well who are able to help the others. In a perfect society this would happen and there would be much less poverty and homelessness. This probably won’t happen until Jesus comes back, but we can make a good dent in the damage control of the most poor of Americans.

Many people ask me what are the needs of the First Step Back Home Ministry. I answer with this: we need more volunteers to become adopt-a-homeless families most urgently, then donations to keep the program going and also help with transportation of the homeless clients and follow up of their progress. Some are like teenagers and need constant supervision and some just need the encouraging word of someone who loves and cares for them, like we all need, which is provided by God and His teaching.

I do have figures to show the costs to give 450 people shelter and see 250 of them become self-sufficient for at least a month. I have received about \$50,000 in donations in 14 months and have about \$5000 left. This does not include any salary a paid social worker may earn. I have drawn no salary and rely on the income from my handyman business to pay my bills.

Call me if you can help. 636-561-3179.

Thank You,  
God Bless You!  
Paul Kruse