

ST. LOUIS PROMISE ZONE PROGRESS REPORT

2023

ST. LOUIS
PROMISE
ZONE

STLPARTNERSHIP





**THE ST. LOUIS PROMISE
ZONE CATALYZES A
MORE **EQUITABLE,**
THRIVING REGION
THROUGH RADICAL
COLLABORATION,
ALIGNMENT AND
INTENTIONAL, STRATEGIC
INVESTMENT IN OUR
MOST DISADVANTAGED
COMMUNITIES.**



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A Note From The Promise Zone

This year has marked remarkable strides for organizations within the Promise Zone—those dedicated to living, working, and effecting change. In our annual report, we're thrilled to spotlight some of these inspiring organizations, hoping their programs resonate with you or offer valuable resources.

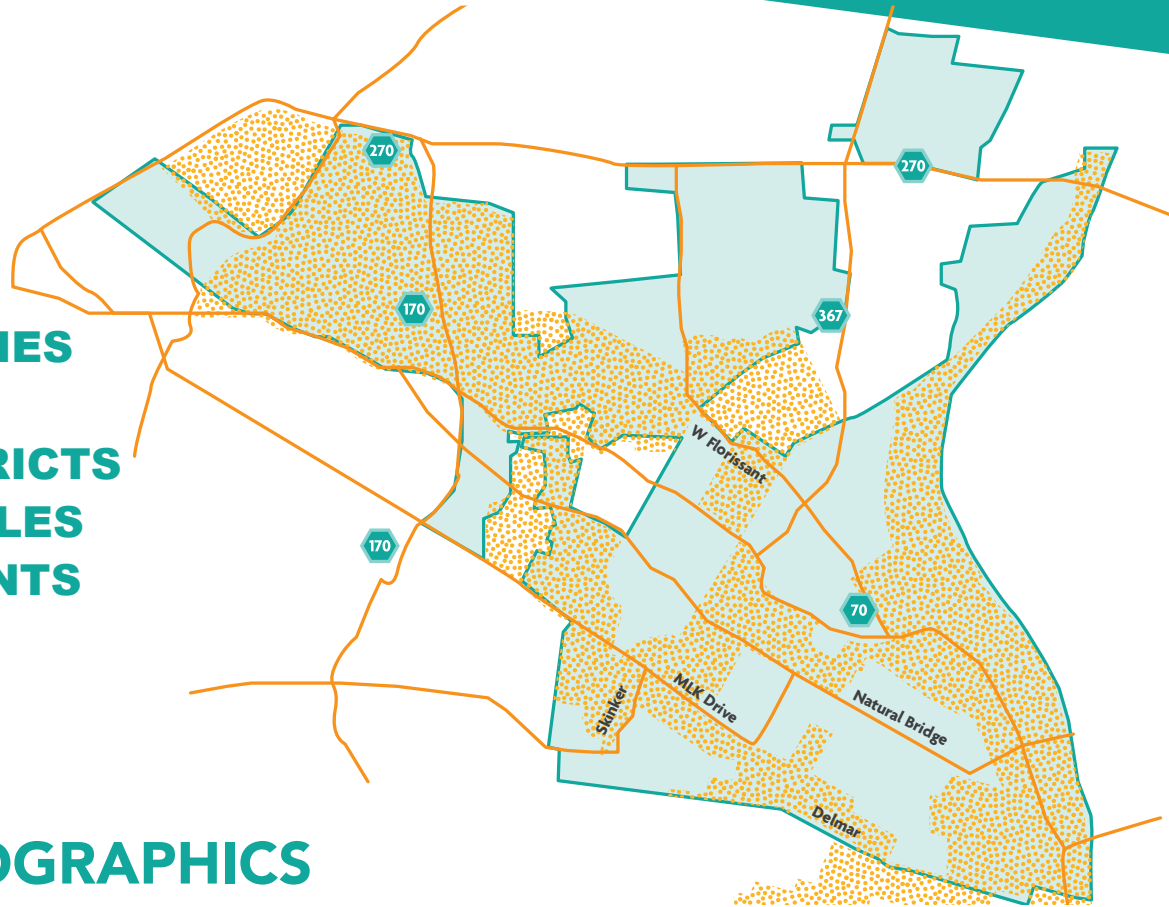
Among these developments, our team participated in the impactful 2023 Racial Equity Summit. Representatives from various departments and projects within the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership attended, returning with diverse insights and reflections on inequity. This experience heightened our awareness, not only of disparities in St. Louis but also across the United States. It left us inspired, educated, and motivated to channel this newfound knowledge towards fostering positive change in our region.

As we approach 2024, we eagerly anticipate the prospect of collaborating with you once more or perhaps forging new partnerships. We're excited to witness the possibilities that the coming year holds.

St. Louis Promise Zone Team

OVERVIEW

25 ZIP CODES
28 MUNICIPALITIES
11 CITY WARDS
7 SCHOOL DISTRICTS
56.8 SQUARE MILES
161,209 RESIDENTS



BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS



87,877

Total Housing Units



34.9%

Owner Occupied Housing Units



\$165,095

Median Home Value



35.1

Median Age



23.7%

Vacant Housing Units



2.3

Average Household Size



5,078

Total Businesses



\$11,810,378

Total Sales (millions)



72,373

Total Employees

STL PROMISE ZONE BOUNDARY
 OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Data in this section is pulled from American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates, ESRI Community Profile and Business Summary Report Forecast 2023, and MCDS Portal.

THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR MISSION: The Promise Zone catalyzes a more equitable and thriving region through radical collaboration, alignment, and intentional, strategic investment in our most disadvantaged communities.

161,209 Residents

25 ZIP codes

100+ Strategic Partners

17 Police Departments

7 School Districts

150+ Neighborhood Leadership Fellows and ReCAST delegates

70.7 yrs Avg. Life Expectancy

28.8% Avg. Poverty Rate

79.6% Avg. High School Graduation Rate

THE GOALS

Increase Economic Activity

Expand the pipeline to jobs in the Promise Zone by strengthening high-potential business clusters, developing job hubs, and assembling land for commercial use.

Reduce Serious & Violent Crime

Achieve consistent annual reduction in the rate of violent crime across the Promise Zone through holistic public safety strategies that target resources to high crime areas, greater collaboration among police departments, and community policing.

Improve Educational Outcomes

Ensure students in the Promise Zone are college and career-ready by improving schools. Schools will return to accredited status and provide wrap-around services to support children from birth to post-graduation.

Create Sustainable Mixed-Income Communities

Design and implement a collaborative strategy for large-scale, mixed-income, mixed-use development that will foster transformative, sustainable communities.

Improve Health and Wellness

Address systemic needs and implement individual interventions to reduce disparities in the life-expectancies of Promise Zone residents.

Increase Workforce Readiness

Stimulate the economic self-sufficiency of residents living in low-to-moderate income areas by connecting unemployed and underemployed residents to high-growth job sectors through job readiness training, apprenticeships, and placement opportunities.



OUR VISION: Strong, sustainable, and healthy mixed-income communities where all residents have access to opportunity.

LEVERS OF CHANGE

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Grow local skill and leadership to implement and sustain resident, organizational, and municipal solutions that actualize a shared vision for inclusion, racial equity, and economic mobility



INTENTIONAL INVESTMENT

Connect goal-aligned initiatives to federal, state, and private funding in order to grow and accelerate community impact



ALIGNMENT + COLLABORATION

Activate St. Louis' corporate, government, and social sector leaders to collaboratively address inequity in the Promise Zone as the region's strategic economic development priority



OUTCOMES

Reduction in Racial Disparities

Reduction in Violent Crime

Increased College and Career-Readiness

Increased Access to Quality, Accredited Schools

Reduction in Vacancy

Decrease in Rent Burdened Population

Increase in Life Expectancy

Reduction in Underemployment and Unemployment

RACIAL EQUITY

PRINCIPLES + VALUES

Guided by Residents.

We believe in increasing and amplifying the voices of North St. Louis City and County residents at civic decision-making tables in order to create equitable change in our neighborhoods and region. We must be community-centered as we advance our goals.

Driven by Equity.

We know that inequities exist across the region and are experienced by Promise Zone residents every day. We take the intentional approach of applying a Racial Equity Lens to all our work to address root causes and decrease disparities while creating a stronger, more prosperous region for everyone.

Committed to Collaboration.

We believe that prioritizing collaborative action and reducing duplication helps multiply the potential impact of our efforts. We align the Promise Zone's many business, neighborhood, and social assets around common tables to achieve a greater change together than would be possible in silos.

Focused on Systems.

We know the disinvestment experienced by Promise Zone residents is no one person's fault and was not built overnight. We take a systems approach that connects, invests in, and scales effective initiatives for neighborhood and regional impact.

2023 Racial Equity Summit

Representatives from diverse departments and projects at the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership attended the 2023 St. Louis Racial Equity Summit. Their collective insights highlighted the societal impact of inequalities, urging both systemic critique and individual empowerment toward transformative action. Key workshop discussions emphasized an ecosystem approach to anti-racist workplaces, advocating for individual reflection and institutional reform.

The summit and the representative's insights also stressed the importance of promoting community involvement and education to empower residents to help shape a more equitable future for St. Louis and the surrounding community.



St. Louis Anchor Action Network

The St. Louis Anchor Action Network (Network) is working to advance racial equity, remove barriers to economic opportunity and create a more inclusive regional community.

The Network is a coalition of large companies and organizations in the St. Louis region, who are working to leverage economic and organizational resources to collectively advance equitable hiring, purchasing and community investment. They are initially focused on 22 zip codes in St. Louis City and County that have faced systemic racial and spatial inequalities.



St. Louis Anchor Action Network Director Stefani Weeden-Smith speaks at an executive learning event for local leaders in June at Sumner High School. (Photo by August Jennewein)

Real Estate Diversity Initiative

Wrapping up its fifth year, the Real Estate Diversity Initiative (REDI) program provides instruction and project-based real estate development training to people of color and women in the region. Hosted by the Urban Land Institute St. Louis district council, 115 students have participated in this lecture- and project-based program. REDI is designed to advance the real estate knowledge and careers of participants over 15 sessions. Participants learn about the various aspects of development - from site planning to design and construction to finance - and then apply what they learn each week to a case study site in St. Louis. Participants learn from the developer of the case study site and from volunteer faculty, comprised of experienced practicing real estate professionals who serve as instructors, mentors, and facilitators sharing market-based knowledge and wisdom from years of experience. The program concludes with REDI teams presenting their proposals to a panel of real estate professionals who engage the participants and provide constructive feedback.

Photos courtesy of Urban Land Institute



Neighborhood Leadership Fellows

Neighborhood Leadership Fellows (NLF) is an advanced leadership training program of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, University of Missouri Extension and St. Louis Promise Zone-St. Louis Economic Development Partnership.

The mission of NLF is to increase and amplify the voices of North St. Louis City and County residents at the civic decision-making tables to produce more equitable regional policies for neighborhoods. The primary geographic focus area is neighborhoods within the St. Louis Promise Zone due to the well-documented need for more targeted investment. The Fellows seek to increase and amplify the voices of Promise Zone residents on committees, boards, commissions and in elected office to advocate for more equitable policies. The program lasts for nine-months and addresses systemic change for underrepresented neighborhoods in the region. This year 26 Fellows from the Promise Zone graduated in September 2022 in the 5th cohort of Neighborhood Leadership Fellows.

The NLF continues to develop community leaders and advocates for equity in the Promise Zone. Fellows submitted personal leadership plans, attended various training sessions, and are provided opportunities for networking and individual mentorship.

After in-depth training and mentorship, Fellows will be prepared to lead in a variety of ways, including:

- Develop and lead training and presentations around issues and assets in North St. Louis
- Serve on a board or committee or be nominated to serve on a commission
- Run for elected office
- Implement action steps outlined in the Forward Through Ferguson report

DEFINITIONS

ADOPTED FROM FORWARD THROUGH FERGUSON

Racial Equity.

A state in which a person's life outcomes cannot be predicted by race. When our regional systems work well for all people so that disparities are closed and all residents, regardless of their race and ZIP code, have justice and the opportunity to thrive.

Systemic Racism.

Entrenched institutional policies and practices that systematically disadvantage people of color and systematically benefit white people.

Systems Change.

A theory of change that prioritizes shifting the ways that systems – networks of institutions, policies, practices, and people – have been structurally and culturally configured to differentially benefit one group over another.

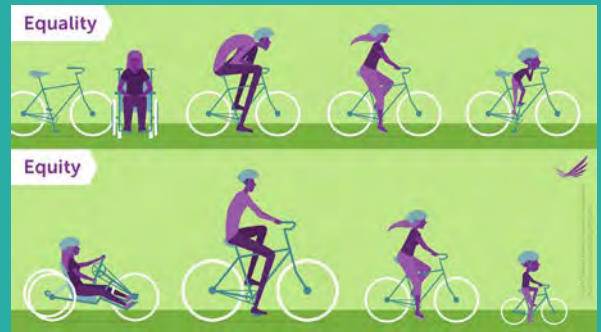


Photo Credit: Robert Woods Johnson Foundation



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Redeveloping and Cleaning up Brownfields

Located in an Environmental Justice area, the STL Partnership facilitated brownfields cleanup on two adjacent sites at 9844 and 9846 West Florissant that burned during the 2014 civil unrest in Ferguson and Dellwood. The clean up was completed in March 2023.

The site is now being developed into the Urban League Plaza, by The Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis (ULMSL). The plaza will be a new 13,500 square foot commercial center that will promote economic growth, create new jobs, and foster entrepreneurial endeavors and community wellness for the City of Dellwood and surrounding communities. This multi-use center will serve as an incubator for new businesses, a home for established and committed partners, as well as a place for community services for pregnant people, children, and parents of young children. Prospective, representative tenants include First Bank, At Home Care, Proficient Chiropractic, ULMSL, including space for the Save Our Sisters program, and a local restaurant. The goal is to create around 250 jobs. Urban League Plaza is planning a groundbreaking in late 2024.



Rendering of Urban League Plaza



Missouri 2023 Brownfield Conference

The St. Louis Promise Zone had 10 representatives including mayors, council members, and municipal staff attend the Missouri Brownfield Conference on July 9 and 10, 2023 in Osage Beach, MO. Missouri Department of Natural Resources and The Environmental Protection Agency spoke to all attendees about available Brownfield resources for redevelopment activities.



Photo courtesy of the St. Louis Promise Zone

Extending West Florissant Avenue's Equitable Redevelopment Efforts

The City of Jennings is a small municipality in North St. Louis County that borders the City of St. Louis. A railroad line was built in 1855 making Jennings a hub of industrialization in the economic boom after WWII. Population growth for Jennings peaked in 1940 at nearly 20,000 residents.

At that time, the West Florissant Business Corridor developed into a major commercial and cultural hub for the region. However, Jennings, like many inner-ring, post-WWII suburban communities, was impacted by racism and racist policies including redlining and racially restrictive covenants that encouraged white flight and devalued real estate resulting in massive disinvestment in Jennings. This now majority Black municipality has limited access to crucial resources, a crumbling infrastructure, and an overall decreased quality of life.

In March the Missouri Department of Natural Resources provided the City of Jennings an assessment identifying potential brownfield sites on Jennings Station Road and the West Florissant Corridor to target redevelopment planning. The data collected during the Brownfields Inventory will be used to assist the City of Jennings' Economic Development with strategic planning to prioritize potential brownfield sites for future environmental investigations prior to redevelopment. The study area consisted of 151 commercial and residential parcels.

The City of Jennings is using the information gathered through this assessment to request technical assistance from the EPA via their Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities, Planning for Equitable Development Tool. The West Florissant Business Corridor in Jennings consists of 6 blocks, containing 41 storefronts and three vacant lots. The vacancy rate along this stretch of West Florissant is 27% and 28 of the stores are considered blighted Brownfields, while three, 6401, 6819, and 6900 West Florissant Avenue also have probable environmental concerns.

Guided by community input, Jennings wants to transform the West Florissant corridor into a safe, walkable, and environmentally-just business district that meets the community's needs. Jennings is committed to making this a reality with support to access adequate resources.



Business Finance

The Business Finance division of the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership plays a pivotal role in assisting businesses with diverse financing options. Notable success stories within the Promise Zone area include:

Iron Hops Brewing Company LLC

Located in Produce Row in the historic Old North St. Louis, Iron Hops Brewing Company LLC operates a cutting-edge production facility. Leveraging the support of the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership, they recently secured an SBA 504 loan amounting to \$112,000. This financial boost facilitated the creation of six job opportunities, contributing to both local employment and economic growth.

Freddie Lee's Ghetto Sauce

A dynamic addition to downtown St. Louis, Freddie Lee's Ghetto Sauce has established its manufacturing facility with the culinary prowess of husband-and-wife owners, Freddie and Deborah James. Specializing in crafting versatile all-purpose sauces suitable for marinating, dipping, and enhancing various dishes, they received financing through two loans totaling \$650,000. The collaborative efforts of the St. Louis Local Development Company, staffed by the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership, and the St. Louis Development Corporation, along with the St. Louis Community Credit Union, played a crucial role in securing this funding for Freddie Lee's Ghetto Sauce.

Goebel & Co. Furniture

Goebel Furniture, a distinguished local high-end furniture enterprise nestled in North St. Louis, has successfully expanded its horizons. This was made possible through a strategic partnership with the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership's Business Finance team, securing a substantial \$300,000 Economic Development Administration (EDA) Loan. Goebel Furniture proudly unveils its latest venture, the Kindred Heirloom Collection. The collection, thoughtfully curated and crafted, encompasses an array of chairs, tables, bed frames, and more.

Deluxe Hospitality LLC

Deluxe Hospitality LLC, part of Haven Hotel, replaced a Days Inn and Extend A Stay Suites. The experienced proprietors moved from Atlanta to Hazelwood, MO, aiming to make their mark. With a \$746,000 SBA 504 loan, they retained 11 jobs, created 7 new positions, and rebranded the establishment, ushering in a new era of hospitality excellence for the community and boosting Hazelwood's economy.

Labyrinth Smart Mobility Inc.

Labyrinth Smart Mobility Inc. revolutionizes urban mobility with low-speed electric vehicles in Downtown St. Louis. They obtained a \$120,000 loan for 4 more vehicles, secured a \$1 million contract, and plan to create 10 new jobs while expanding services in the city.



Photo courtesy of STL Partnership



Photo courtesy of Goebel & Co.

R+R Marketplace

R&R Marketplace was partially funded by STL Partnership's Heartland Regional Investment Fund.

The redevelopment will be a mixed-use facility that will foster new opportunities for jobs, childcare, healthcare services, and more. It will include the creation of 100 jobs within one year and 2,000 jobs within five years.

"The R&R Marketplace will be a great asset to the North County community", said Jeff Colona, New Markets Tax Credits Director at STL Partnership. "We are proud to be included in this partnership and are excited about the future of Dellwood and surrounding areas."



St. Louis Development Corporation's Roadmap to Economic Justice

The St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) and the City of St. Louis Mayor's Office have created a plan to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to reverse decades of economic decline in North St. Louis. The Economic Justice Action Plan lays out specific steps the city must take to seek to create long-lasting economic growth for the residents and businesses in St. Louis. The plan outlines five primary goals, along with three pillars of action.

Five primary goals:

- Strengthen neighborhoods
- Close the wealth gap
- Improve healthy & education outcomes
- Expand the tax base
- Grow the City's population



ST. LOUIS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Three pillars of action:

- Equitable inclusive development: incentive reform site assembly & development commercial corridor revitalization
- Neighborhood transformation: neighborhood capacity building vacancy & environmental justice housing accessibility
- Economic empowerment: business empowerment workforce development educational justice.

The plan also includes a survey that lists top priorities from the community, as well as an evaluation of different parts of the city on indicators of need and opportunity, such as high unemployment rate or if a neighborhood has a community development corporation.

An estimated total of \$246 million plan to be invested by December 31, 2026.

Build Back Better Regional Challenge

A collaborative effort by Greater St. Louis Inc. and the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership (STL Partnership) and other community partners, helped bring a federal EDA Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant worth \$25 million to the region.

AMICSTL: The centerpiece of the proposal is to create the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center St. Louis (AMICSTL) as a new innovation anchor institution in North St. Louis City, which is physically adjacent to Ranken Technical College. Greater St. Louis Inc. and STL Partnership will co-lead implementation of the award providing overall guidance, governance, execution, and community engagement.

Local community leaders are developing a 20-page concept paper outlining the vision of a Manufacturing Innovation District in the historically dis-invested, marginalized neighborhoods around AMICSTL in North St. Louis City that would serve as a focal point for manufacturing innovation, talent and workforce development, and community revitalization.

AMICSTL has advanced its capital campaign for construction with significant commitments from state, local, private, and philanthropic partners and is beginning to staff up and prepare for groundbreaking and its programmatic soft-launch in early 2024.

Harris-Stowe State University (HSSU): The MECCA Accelerator has welcomed 72 participants with an expected graduation rate of 70 percent. The accelerator is designed to provide support to underrepresented students and members of the St. Louis community to help them find success in business.

Rung for Women: Recruitment for Rung for Women's first cohort in Advanced Manufacturing began in June 2023 with a targeted marketing campaign combined with a personalized outreach strategy. The latest cohort of Rung members were given the option of selecting advanced manufacturing as their training emphasis. When the cohort began, 18 women identified an interest in advanced manufacturing.



USDA to Build New Food Safety and Inspection Service Midwestern Laboratory in Normandy

The U.S. Department of Agriculture celebrated the groundbreaking of a new Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Midwestern Laboratory in Normandy, Missouri on May 24. The St. Louis lab is one of three in the country. This new lab will address present and future public health challenges through science and technology to ensure that our nation's meat, poultry and processed egg supply is safe and properly labeled.



Photo courtesy of STL Partnership

Economic Justice Accelerator

To commemorate 314 Day, the St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) announced the formation of the Economic Justice Accelerator, a fund designed to leverage public funding, private equity and philanthropic investment to sustain the Economic Justice Action Plan through and beyond 2026.

Northside Economic Empowerment Center



The City of St. Louis is putting millions of federal COVID relief dollars toward economic initiatives in north St. Louis. The work started with the opening of a new center to encourage economic development in the area.

The Northside Economic Empowerment Center is funded by \$1.5 million from the American Rescue Plan Act and is part of the St. Louis Development Corporation.

Photo courtesy of SLDC

Community Literature Drop

Photos courtesy of SLDC

The St. Louis Promise Zone partnered with the Northside Economic Empowerment Center (NEEC), a project of the St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC), and Verizon on a targeted literature drop to provide educational resources to the surrounding community.



The NEEC is a strategic, centralized center focusing on business empowerment, capacity building and workforce development for businesses and residents. The NEEC supports WBE/MBE contractors by providing access to technical assistance, capital, and back-office support services. Workforce development services and training opportunities are also available for residents.

15 volunteers helped distribute a total of 150 bags and participated in thoughtful dialogue around effective community engagement strategies, capacity building and small business support.

The St. Louis Promise Zone program partners with local leaders to give communities proven tools to rebuild and put people back to work. Our federal designation, which lasts 10 years, is a catalyst for ongoing collaboration and change that will drive regional growth and create a better, more inclusive St. Louis region.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Building Inclusive and Resilient Communities

Food insecurity has been reported by families in North St. Louis County and City, as a critical problem due the COVID-19 pandemic. To reduce food insecurity in North St. Louis City and North St. Louis County, Missouri Building Inclusive and Resilient Communities (MO BRIC) used three approaches: using a client choice model for food pantries and food banks, improving transportation barriers to food access points, and increasing spaces for residents to grow their own healthy food, including, community gardens, urban farms, mobile markets, community owned grocery stores, and farmers markets. Current MO BRIC partners are primarily located and acting in six neighborhoods: Spanish Lake, The Ville, Hyde Park, Jeff Vander Lou, Forest Park Southeast and Kingshighway East.

MO BRIC created a collective on equitable nutrition security, food sovereignty and food justice, that includes representation from food banks, food pantries, farmers markets, community gardens, senior centers, urban farms, mobile markets, and community-owned grocery stores. Local partners and implementers of MO BRIC include: Trailnet, St. Louis Area Agency on Aging, Operation Food Search, St. Louis Food Area Bank, BJC Community Health Improvement, Missouri Coalition for the Environment (MCE), Fit and Food Connection, A Red Circle, Emerson YMCA, Spanish Lake Community Development Committee, Great Rivers Greenway, Urban Harvest, Metro Market, City Greens, Da Hood Connect, Transform 314, Phi Global Farm, Robert Fulton INC, North Side Youth and Senior Center, Wesley House, City Greens, Integrated Health Network and Be Well Cafe.

A primary focus of the MO BRIC efforts has concentrated on the need to build resilience within the emergency system as it relates to getting those in need of healthy foods and getting them there safely. Trailnet has been a key partner in helping community gardens, farmers markets and senior centers make the streets adjacent to their locations safe places for people to engage in active transportation through the implementation of calm streets pilot and demonstration projects. A close collaboration with the Metro Market, which functions as a farmer's market on wheels, selling groceries and other grocery items at a reduced cost in neighborhoods with limited food access, is helping MO BRIC rethink the way we are talking about food banking and other ways in which they can meet people where they are.

A Red Circle

In 2018, when a Shop 'n Save outlet closed in her North County neighborhood, Erica Williams, founder and executive director of A Red Circle, set out to find partners to build a grocery store for an area that is defined as a food desert.



A Red Circle, a non-profit organization, received nearly \$1.5 million in federal funding through the Economic Development Initiative/Community Project Funding program of the U.S. Congress to build The North County Community Nexus. The Nexus is a grocery store that will feature local urban farmers' produce, a bistro serving grab-and-go-meals made with farm fresh produce, and a shared culinary kitchen and small-scale production space for chefs.

The building will also house the Learning and Opportunity Center for community service programming, education about nutrition and healthy foods, and a space for small businesses. The Nexus and Learning and Opportunity Center are slated to open in spring of 2025 and will employ around 20 people.

Show Me Healthy Homes

A collaboration led by the St. Louis County Department of Public Health (DPH) was awarded a \$1.8 million federal grant in 2022 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes to implement the Show-Me Missouri Healthy Homes Program in St. Louis County and Kansas City.

The program's primary goal is to improve the health and safety of families through home assessments and remediation in targeted communities in both regions. DPH and its partners focus on HUD's eight Healthy Home Principles: keeping homes clean, dry, pest-free, contaminant-free, safe, ventilated, comfortable, and maintained. Radon testing is also offered for each home enrolled in the program.

DPH is the lead agency administering the HUD Healthy Homes Production grant. In the St. Louis region local partners include the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County and the Missouri Botanical Garden's EarthWays Center.

St Louis Promise Zone remains the highest priority area in St. Louis County. In 2023 the DPH held three municipal presentations about the grant in Ferguson, Northwoods, and Pine Lawn. These cities are helping to promote the program by delivering flyers to residents.

HUD has approved the Tier 1 Environmental Reviews for 60 homes in the St. Louis Promise Zone. Initial healthy home assessments have been completed for over 20 homes and 24 radon tests have been completed in St. Louis County to date.

The program is also working to increase the number of professionals in St. Louis County with knowledge of healthy home issues through healthy homes training courses intended for audiences including contractors, health educators, and housing and environmental professionals. For National Healthy Homes month in June, DPH offered two courses in collaboration with the Missouri Botanical Gardens/Earthways Center: Building Science Principles and Healthy Homes Principles. These courses were targeted to the trades industry and community organizations that provide healthy home services.

Addressing Vacancy in St. Louis County

The recent local government initiative in St. Louis County, MO, stands as a beacon of transformative change as the Department of Revenue rethinks how we do business. The County Recorder of Deed and the County Collector of Revenue work in collaboration towards the St. Louis County goal to eliminate vacant properties, especially in low to moderate-income neighborhoods.

The Collector of Revenue is enhancing the Delinquent Property program by implementing equitable and efficient processes, including payment plans and connecting taxpayers with legal services. Additional staff has been hired to improve revenue compliance on delinquent accounts and prevent actions that could jeopardize homeownership. By identifying 61% of vacant properties with significant tax payment delinquency, the initiative aims to streamline the search process for potential buyers, as well as improve the return of properties to the tax roll.

The Recorder of Deeds, in partnership with the County Department of Human Services and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM), now ensure that eligible residents are able to receive estate planning and legal services at little to no cost fostering a greater appreciation of property ownership. This comprehensive effort reflects a commitment to a brighter future, where all St. Louis County neighborhoods thrive, residents prosper, and a revitalized sense of community prevails.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Community Building Network (CBN)

Over the past year, the Community Building Network (CBN) has played a pivotal role in enhancing the capacities and effectiveness of key member organizations operating within the Promise Zone, specifically Dream Builders 4 Equity, Old North Restoration, LinkStL, North County Inc, North Newstead Association, and Beyond Housing. CBN has focused on organizational assessments, individualized work plans, and capacity building in critical areas through a series of targeted initiatives and collaborative efforts.

Key Activities and Impact:

Organizational Assessments:

- Conducted comprehensive assessments for each member organization to identify strengths, challenges, and growth opportunities.
- Utilized data-driven insights to tailor interventions that align with the unique needs of DB4E, Old North Restoration, LinkStL, North County Inc, North Newstead Association, and Beyond Housing.

Individualized Work Plans:

- Developed customized work plans for each organization, outlining specific strategies for growth and improvement.
- Emphasized areas such as Financial Diversification, Performance Measurement and Evaluation, Economic Development, Board Effectiveness, Staff and Volunteer Management, and Collaborations and Partnership Building.

Capacity Building and Technical Support:

- Provided hands-on support to strengthen financial management practices, ensuring sustainability and resilience.
- Offered guidance on establishing robust performance measurement and evaluation frameworks for evidence-based decision-making.
- Facilitated discussions on economic development strategies tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities within the Promise Zone.

Evening Brew in the Old North Neighborhood Gathering (October):

- Hosted a community-building event bringing together stakeholders, including Mike Woods from Dream Builders 4 Equity.
- Provided a platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and fostering collaborations to drive equitable development.

What's Brewing in Affordable Housing Gathering Event at Beyond Housing (November):

- Organized a focused event highlighting the importance of affordable housing.
- Facilitated panel discussion on innovative solutions, with a spotlight on member organizations' efforts, contributing to community-driven housing solutions.

Midwest Climate Summit

Promise Zone team members, Lavoughnda White and Maude Trost recently attended the Midwest Climate Summit at Washington University.

During the conference, Lavoughnda White hosted a meeting on climate resiliency with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at Washington University.

The meeting included a brief presentation about the concept of a health-integrated climate resilience hub, with the region 9 initiative in Sacramento as an illustrative example. This meeting facilitated discussion about planning related to safety net health services and climate resilience in St. Louis. Climate Resilience Hubs are intended to increase capacity in vulnerable communities and build resilience in the face of natural and other disasters, including safety net health and human services as critical components. Climate Resilience Hubs encompass emergency preparedness services, public health, medical services, as well as state and local government services.



Wellington Family Homes

The St. Louis Economic Development Partnership joined local officials, community leaders, and partners for the Wellington Family Homes groundbreaking ceremony in Wellston, Missouri.

Wellston Community Empowerment Corporation and Housing Authority of St. Louis County partnered with Knight Development to demolish 15 units and develop 186 new housing units for the Wellington Family Homes Development Project. The development is expected to serve low-to-moderate income families and the properties will target individuals with children and formerly homeless individuals and families.



West Florissant Great Streets

The West Florissant Avenue Great Streets (WFGS) project is a collaborative effort between the St. Louis County Department of Transportation and Public Works, Ferguson and Dellwood Cities, and the East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWGCG). This initiative aims to rejuvenate West Florissant Avenue, transforming it into a vibrant hub for commerce, community engagement, and comfortable living.

The project, aligned with EWGCG's Great Streets Initiative, focuses on revamping West Florissant Avenue to boost mobility, connectivity, and local identity, while fostering economic development. Similar transformations are underway on Grand Avenue, Natural Bridge Avenue, and Page Avenue, exemplifying a broader regional commitment to revitalization.

Securing an \$18.2M grant in 2021 from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program marked a significant milestone. A year later, the project achieved another milestone with the approval of the preliminary design plan for the corridor. In July 2023, the project team hosted a successful community open house, drawing 109 attendees eager to witness the final plan presentation before right-of-way acquisition and construction commence in 2024.

Wellston Demolition

The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA) of St. Louis County is committed to helping the City of Wellston redevelop the residential base of the community by creating clean buildable sites where uninhabitable and dangerous dilapidated houses previously stood. In 2023 four structures were demolished in the Lulu Heights neighborhood. The LCRA is working with the remaining homeowners, the City of Wellston and potential developers to redevelop the area.



Photos courtesy of STL Partnership



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Census & Data Pulling Workshop

The St. Louis Promise Zone hosted a Census Data and Pulling workshop to provide expertise on how to capture and utilize census data. We recognized that our partners needed support gathering data for their grants and other projects and sprang into action.

The workshop had support from St. Louis Economic Development Partnership's Data Analyst, Zinnia Ron-Ferguson, who facilitated and assisted our partners with their data needs.



Photos courtesy of the St. Louise Promise Zone

Grants 101 Workshop

The St. Louis Promise Zone and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs Region 7, hosted a free Grants 101 workshop for our community partners. Attendees learned about the Federal Grant Applications Process, common mistakes and important tips and how to draft a competitive grant proposal from a grant reviewer's guide perspective.



Arts & Community Literacy

Library Box Locator

The Promise Zone Library Box Project is an initiative that provides community members access to books and reading materials in an effort to increase literacy rates in the Promise Zone. The St. Louis Promise Zone team continues to partner with St. Louis County Library, local governments, and local nonprofits to provide 24/7 public access library boxes in communities across the Promise Zone. There are currently 20 library boxes within the Promise Zone and this locator helps residents find a library box near them.

[Find a library box near you.](#)



Photos courtesy of the St. Louis Promise Zone



REDUCE SERIOUS & VIOLENT CRIME

St. Louis Violence Prevention Commission

St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission works to reduce violent crime in the region by promoting and advocating for coordinated, well-resourced policies, support systems, and interventions among area governments, institutions and agencies that serve individuals and families most at risk of violent crime.



2023 Priorities:

1. PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Policy & Systems Change Committee

2023 activities include publicizing and prioritizing policy suggestions from previous public safety plans for St. Louis and working toward their implementation, as well as working with the Center for Policing Equity on their plan implementation

2. TRAUMA INFORMED CARE/ SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Youth Engagement & Safety Committee

2023 activities include launching and publicizing the VPC Youth Safe Spaces Programming grant funding in partnership with the City of St. Louis using ARPA funds and making grants for safe spaces, Recreation Center Late Night Hours and Downtown Youth Zone

3. RESPONSE TO NONFATAL SHOOTING

Service Delivery Committee

2023 activities include publicizing the Gun Violence Response Network available services and expanding mental health supports for victims and community residents that have experienced gun violence, and supporting the implementation of Handle with Care

4. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE BASED PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

For example, Cardiff Model for Violence Prevention, Youth Advocate Programs
Violent Injury Prevention Committee, Youth Engagement & Safety Committee

2023 activities include mapping of hospital and police data on violent assaults, creating neighborhood profiles, staffing Cure Violence Steering Committee, and coordinating social service partners.

5. ENGAGING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS IN VPC'S ACTION PLAN

Municipal Engagement Taskforce

2023 activities include identifying and reaching out to municipalities to coordinate violence prevention efforts with the VPC regional action plan

COALITIONS + COLLABORATIVES

COMMUNITY BUILDERS
NETWORK

DISTRICT 4 CONVENINGS

NATIONAL COALITION FOR
PROMISE ZONES

REGIONAL YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT COALITION
(RYEC)

ST. LOUIS NORTHEAST
CORRIDOR INVESTMENT
INITIATIVE

ST. LOUIS VIOLENCE
PREVENTION COMMISSION

COMMUNITIES

Ferguson
Bellerive
Bel-Ridge
Berkeley
Beverly Hills
Cool Valley
Country Club
Hills
Dellwood
Flordell Hills
Glen Echo Park
Greendale
Hazelwood
Hillsdale
Jennings
Kinloch
Moline Acres

Northwoods
Normandy
Pagedale
Pine Lawn
Riverview,
University City
Uplands Park
Velda City
Velda Village
Hills
Wellston

St. Louis City
Wards: 1-5,
18-19, 21-22,
26-27

Zip Codes: 63101, 63102,
63103, 63106, 63107, 63108,
63112, 63113, 63114, 63115,
63120, 63121, 63130, 63133,
63134, 63135, 63136, 63137,
63138, 63140, 63145, 63147,
63042, 63044

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS



FEDERAL PARTNERS



PROMISE ZONE PARTNERS

100 Resilient Cities
 22nd Judicial Circuit
 A Red Circle
 A3 Design
 Affinia Healthcare
 Alive and Well STL
 Arch City Defenders
 Behavioral Health Network
 Behavioral Health Response Better
 Family Life
 Beyond Housing
 Bi-State Development Agency
 BioSTL
 Boys and Girls Club of Metropolitan
 St. Louis
 Breath Of Life Christian Fellowship
 BRIC Partners
 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and
 Firearms
 Community Development
 Administration
 Center for Community Progress
 Centers for Disease Control and
 Prevention (CDC)
 Center for Women in Transition
 Central Reform Congregation
 Character Plus
 Christian Hospital

Christian Hospital Foundation Circuit
 Attorney's Office
 City of Dellwood
 City of Ferguson
 City of Jennings
 City of Kinloch
 City of Pine Lawn
 City of St. Louis - Department of
 Human Services
 City of St. Louis - DOH, YVPP
 City of St. Louis Department of Health
 City of St. Louis, Affordable Housing
 Commission
 City of St. Louis, Homeless Services
 City of St. Louis, Housing Authority
 City of Wellston
 Claim Academy
 College Bound
 Commerce Bank
 Community Builders Network (CBN)
 Crime Victim Advocacy Center
 Deaconess Foundation
 Delmar Devine
 Department of Corrections: Board of
 Probation and Parole
 Dept. of Public Safety
 East West Gateway
 Episcopal Diocese of Missouri
 Equal Housing & Opportunity Council

Fathers' Support Center
 Family Workforce Centers of America
 Federal Bureau of Investigation Federal
 Reserve Bank
 Ferguson-Florissant School District
 Fit and Food Connection
 Focus St. Louis
 For the Sake of All (WashU)
 Forward Through Ferguson Generate
 Health STL
 Goodmap
 Grace Hill
 Great Rivers Greenway
 Habitat for Humanity St. Louis
 Hazelwood School District
 Harris Stowe State University
 IFF
 Integrated Health Network
 International Institute of St. Louis
 Invest STL
 Jennings School District
 Justine PETERSEN
 KIPP Schools
 Launch Code
 McCormack Baron
 Mercy
 MET Center and Family Workforce
 Centers of America Midwest Bank
 Centre

Mission: St Louis
Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Missouri DED
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Missouri Foundation for Health Humanities
Normandy Schools Collaborative
North County Inc.
North Newstead Association
One West Florissant
Operation Food Search
Parents As Teachers
People's Community Action Corporation
PGAV Planners
Probation and Parole
Promise Zone Residents
Project Connect
Ranken Technical College
Ready by 21 St. Louis
Regional Business Council
Regional Early Childhood Council
Regional Health Commission
Rise Community Development
Riverview Gardens School District
Saint Louis University
Saint Louis University (SLU)
Senior Transition Accommodations & Recreation LLC

SLATE
Spanish Lake Community Development Corporation
Small Business Development & Technology Centers
Starbucks - Ferguson Community Cafe
St. Louis Anchor Action Network
St. Louis Children's Hospital
St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office St. Louis Community College
St. Louis County Children's Service Fund
St. Louis County Department of Planning
St. Louis County Department of Public Health
St. Louis County Homeless Services
St. Louis County Housing Authority
St. Louis County Human Services
St. Louis County Library
St. Louis County Police
St. Louis County Police Department, Division of Criminal Investigation
St. Louis County Strategy and Innovation Office
St. Louis County Workforce Development
St. Louis County Workforce Investment Board
St. Louis Development Corporation
St. Louis Initiative to Reduce Violence
St. Louis Integrated Health Network

St. Louis Mental Health Board
St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department
St. Louis Mosaic Project
STL Partnership
St. Louis Public School Foundation
St. Louis Public Schools
St. Louis Realtors
St. Louis Regional System of Care
St. Louis Violence Prevention Commission
St. Louis Youth Jobs
The Housing Partnership
The Little Bit Foundation
Turn the Page STL
United Way of Greater St. Louis
University City School District
University of Missouri-St. Louis
University of Missouri Extension
Urban Land Institute
Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis
Urban Sprouts
Urban Strategies
US Attorney's Office
US Bank CDC
Washington University Brown School
Washington University Olin School of Business
WEPOWER
Women's Creative
World Trade Center St. Louis
YWCA Head Start



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