The Community Health Commission of Missouri and Deaconess Foundation Launch Grant Applications for Organizations Serving Seniors in Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois

The Fund's community advisory board is now accepting funding proposals for organizations that provide transportation, safety, and health navigation support for seniors in the region

ST. LOUIS (Sept. 27, 2024) – The [Community Health Commission of Missouri](#) (CHCM), in partnership with [Deaconess Foundation](#), will award $350,000 to support services for seniors in the region through their Seniors Community Revitalization & Development Fund (Seniors Community Fund). The Seniors Community Fund aims to improve the public health system infrastructure to better serve residents 55 years of age and older and promote transparency and accountability. The Fund's community-led Senior Advisory Board, comprised of residents aged 55 and older, is now accepting funding proposals for up to $30,000 from organizations/projects/initiatives addressing three priority areas: transportation, safety, and health navigation support for seniors in the Greater St. Louis region and nearby counties in Illinois.

"We all deserve to live in safe, accessible neighborhoods and receive the support we need to successfully navigate crucial health and social services," said Riisa Rawlins, CEO of CHCM. "As we work towards achieving zero health disparities, we are proud to partner with Deaconess Foundation and the Senior Advisory Board to help close the gaps that particularly impact seniors in Black and Brown communities."

The Senior Advisory Board is comprised of seniors, leaders of organizations serving seniors and families, and community leaders in St. Louis City and County, St. Charles, Jefferson, and Franklin Counties in Missouri and Madison, St. Clair, and Monroe Counties in Illinois, who share decision-making power in order to advocate for and invest in the needed services.

"Too often the voices and perspectives of seniors are underrepresented. That's why the Seniors Community Fund puts the decision to allocate funds in the hands of seniors," said Velva Hollimon, Director of Innovation at CHCM. "This collaboration empowers seniors to ensure that their concerns, hopes, and aspirations for the future are reflected in the work happening in their community."

Last year, the Senior Advisory Board awarded grants to 14 organizations focused on the Fund's priority areas including Disability Resource Association, Inc. (Transportation), Rx Outreach Senior Health and Wellness (Health Navigation Support), Missouri EnergyCare Inc. (Safety). See a full list of the 2023 grant recipients [here](#).

Through an extensive community feedback process, including in-person focus groups, listening sessions, and surveys, seniors shared ideas that have shaped the Fund's three priority areas. While some respondents involved in the process felt their health and social needs were met within their communities, others expressed that local public transportation systems could be improved, and their neighborhoods could be made safer with additional lighting, cameras, and police presence. Some

seniors also expressed that they'd like assistance with understanding often complex legal programs and health and social services.

"With the Seniors Community Fund, we have created a space that centers and enlivens our most experienced and often sidelined community members," said Rev. Bethany Johnson-Javois, President and CEO of Deaconess Foundation. "By facilitating an inclusive and accessible community for seniors in an intergenerational way, we are paving the way towards achieving liberation for all that expands across seven generations."

The application period for the Fund is now open and will close on October 11, 2024, at 11:59 pm. Organizations/projects/initiatives that serve senior men are strongly encouraged to apply.

Questions regarding the Seniors Community Revitalization and Development Fund can be emailed to Velva Hollimon, Community Health Commission of Missouri Director of Innovation at vhollimon@chcmissouri.org.

Questions regarding application technical assistance can be emailed to GrantHelp@deaconess.org .

Learn more and apply for the Fund here.

About The Community Health Commission of Missouri

On March 16, 2023 the St. Louis Regional Health Commission (RHC) and Alive and Well Communities (AWC) announced an affiliation to advance health equity across the State of Missouri and beyond. On July 17, 2024, the merged entity of the RHC and AWC was renamed to the Community Health Commission of Missouri (CHCM). CHCM is a Missouri-based organization dedicated to eliminating health disparities by promoting equity-centered, trauma-informed practice. Our mission is to ensure that all community members have access to affordable, available, accommodating and acceptable healthcare and resources, particularly those historically marginalized or underserved.

About Deaconess Foundation
Deaconess Foundation envisions a community that values the health and well-being of all and gives priority attention to the most invisibilized. Deaconess seeks to create conditions where liberation is the lived reality within seven generations. A ministry of the United Church of Christ, Deaconess has invested more than $100 million to improve the health of the St. Louis community since 1998. Our grants and cultivated relationships support the accelerated change in conditions through policy, advocacy, and/or organizing efforts building and wielding power to transform systems to respond to the will of the people.

The Foundation's advocacy and grantmaking footprint includes St. Louis City, St. Louis, Jefferson, St. Charles and Franklin Counties in Missouri and Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Illinois. For more information, visit deaconess.org. Follow the Foundation on Twitter and Instagram @deaconessfound and on Facebook at facebook.com/deaconessfoundation.