



Testimony for HB 2007: Missouri Housing Trust Fund

Committee: House Budget Committee

Hearing Date: Week of February 9, 2026

Witness: Riisa Rawlins, CEO, Community Health Commission of Missouri

Dear Chair Deaton and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Riisa Rawlins, and I serve as Chief Executive Officer of the Community Health Commission of Missouri. Our organization evaluates legislation through a pragmatic lens: how policy decisions affect the health, workforce stability, and long-term economic resilience of Missouri's communities—across geography and party lines.

It is well established that clinical care accounts for only about 20 percent of health outcomes. The remaining drivers are rooted in the conditions in which Missourians live, work, and age. Among these, stable housing is foundational. When families have safe and secure homes, they are better able to maintain employment, manage chronic conditions, and ensure children are ready to learn. When housing is unstable, stress increases, health deteriorates, and families are pushed into higher-cost emergency systems.

For these reasons, we urge your support for the \$6.5 million allocation to the Missouri Housing Trust Fund.

Stable housing is essential to a stable workforce. Without reliable housing, it is nearly impossible for individuals to maintain steady employment or for employers to retain workers. Investments through the Housing Trust Fund support workforce housing that enables businesses to grow, expand, and remain competitive—particularly in communities already experiencing labor shortages.

From a fiscal standpoint, housing stability is a cost-effective investment. Preventing housing instability reduces downstream expenditures in emergency healthcare, behavioral health crises, and the justice system. Simply put, it is more prudent to invest upfront in housing than to absorb significantly higher public costs later.

Finally, ensuring fair access to housing opportunity strengthens Missouri's economic resilience by supporting communities where need is greatest—urban, suburban, and rural alike. A stable housing infrastructure supports individual self-reliance, family stability, and long-term economic participation across the state.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to policies that support Missouri's workforce, families, and economic future.

Respectfully,

Riisa Rawlins, CEO Community Health Commission of Missouri