ST. LOUIS COUNTY
CHILDREN'S SERVICE FUND
Investing in kids. Creating brighter futures.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY CHILDREN'S SERVICE FUND
YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

# NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: 2027-2028 YOUTH-LED FUNDING



Released: September 2026

Application Deadline: Friday, October 23, 4 p.m. CDT

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# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund's Youth-Led Funding Opportunity. In this document you will find information about the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund, its Youth Advisory Council, and important details – including eligibility criteria and key dates and deadlines – for the Youth-Led Funding Opportunity.

## ABOUT THE ST. LOUIS COUNTY CHILDREN'S SERVICE FUND (CSF)

Using a voter-approved quarter-cent sales tax, we fund local nonprofits and governmental entities that provide mental and behavioral health services, including prevention activities, to kids and their families in St. Louis County. Our goal is to help kids reach their potential and create brighter futures.

We distribute around $52 million annually, supporting the efforts of more than 100 organizations. Our work is guided by a board of county citizens. Visit https://stlcsf.org to learn more.

## ABOUT THE CSF YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The CSF Youth Advisory Council is a youth-led grantmaking council made up of St. Louis County students aged 14-19 years old. The purpose of the Council is to provide a pathway for youth — those supported by CSF funding — to inform and guide CSF's work in meaningful ways, including how funding is distributed and what behavioral health supports youth need. Through a two-year commitment, council members learn about the grantmaking process, making funding recommendations to CSF's staff and Board of Directors, and build leadership skills by engaging in decision-making activities. The Youth Advisory Council is designed and facilitated in partnership with the Community Health Commission of Missouri.

# ABOUT YOUTH-LED FUNDING

CSF's inaugural Youth Advisory Council (YAC) designed this funding opportunity based on identified needs and priorities among St. Louis County youth. YAC members will review proposals and make funding recommendations to the CSF Board of Directors for final approval. Identified values of this group are diversity, equity, community, integrity, and future generations.

## AVAILABLE FUNDING

The CSF Board of Directors has approved a pool of up to $150,000 for this funding opportunity. YAC members may recommend up to 10 awards. Organizations may apply for a maximum of $25,000.

The funding period for these awards will be one year, beginning March 1, 2027. Organizations awarded funding will not be required to conduct funded activities throughout the entire contract period. Applicants must indicate the proposed timeline of activities in their application.

The application opens Monday, September 14, 2026, and must be submitted via SurveyMonkey by 4 p.m. CDT on Friday, October 23, 2026. Late submissions will not be considered.

## FUNDING PRIORITIES

YAC members have identified the following priority area for this funding opportunity: Programs that support youth mental health by offering art/recreation/enrichment opportunities for youth in St. Louis County ages 5-18.

YAC members are seeking to fund programs that:

- Expose youth to new experiences, including noncompetitive sports activities
- Are easily accessible for underserved communities
- Help youth build skills that will be useful in their future
- Provide education to increase awareness of mental health

Applicants must meet at least two of the four criteria listed above to be eligible for funding (meeting more of the criteria is preferred). In addition to the minimum criteria above, additional preference is given to programs led by youth.

Programs must be free to youth who are participating.

## ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

To qualify for funding, an organization must at minimum:

- Be a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the state of Missouri or government entity OR have a fiscal sponsor that meets that criteria
- Be in good standing with the state of Missouri
- Participate in the federal E-Verify program (employment eligibility program)

Organizations currently funded by CSF are eligible to apply but may not apply for funding for programs and/or services that CSF is already funding. Organizations previously funded by CSF are also eligible to apply.

Schools and school districts (public, private, or charter) are not eligible to apply for this funding opportunity.

### CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Organizations awarded funding by CSF must abide by all funding policies, as indicated in the contract. These requirements include, but are not limited to:

- File all applicable federal and state returns (990, 990-T, MO-1120).
- Conduct background checks using the Family Care Safety Registry before hiring staff, contractors, and volunteers. Conduct checks annually for all staff, contractors, and volunteers.
- Maintain specific, minimum insurance coverages as outlined in the contract and required by Missouri law.
- Abide by CSF's Residency & Eligibility policy.
- Submit regular project impact and financial reports to CSF on schedule determined by CSF.
- Maintain a Gold Seal of Transparency on Candid. (See more on Candid requirement below.)

### TIMELINE

- **Funding opportunity opens:** Monday, September 14, 2026
- **Final questions due from applicants (see Q&A process below):** Friday, October 2, 2026, at 4 p.m. CDT
- **Answers posted to CSF website:** by Friday, October 9, 2026, at 4 p.m. CDT
- **Applications due:** by 4 p.m. CDT on Friday, October 23, 2026. Late submissions will not be considered.
- **Awards announced:** by February 1, 2027

## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

To apply for this funding opportunity, qualifying organizations must complete all required fields of the "2027-2028 Youth-Led Funding" application form via SurveyMonkey.

The application will open on September 14, 2026. Proposals must be received no later than 4 p.m. CDT on Friday, October 23, 2026.

CSF must comply with Missouri Sunshine Law; therefore, all responses and other documentation submitted to CSF may be subject to disclosure pursuant to Missouri law and/or CSF policy.

### NAVIGATING SURVEYMONKEY

Applications must be completed and submitted in SurveyMonkey. A Word document is available for application drafting prior to entering information in SurveyMonkey.

**SurveyMonkey will not save progress in its system for you to come back and continue working.** The application must be completed and submitted in one sitting.

Applications must be received by 4 p.m. CDT on Friday, October 23, 2026. Once the application has been submitted, it cannot be edited. Upon successful submission, a confirmation screen will appear with a message thanking you for your proposal.

In order to navigate any potential technical difficulties, it is recommended that applicants submit their applications with ample time available to navigate challenges. Late submissions will not be considered.

## CANDID REQUIREMENT

Applicants with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status are required to obtain a current (2026) Gold Seal of Transparency on Candid. Applicants must complete this requirement prior to applying and will acknowledge in the application that they have completed this requirement.

Government entities, applicants part of a large hospital or healthcare system, and applicants housed within a university system or higher education institution may be unable to claim a profile and complete requirements in Candid. In this case, the Candid requirement will be waived, but these entities may be asked to submit additional information or documentation following proposal submission.

Additional information about the Candid requirement and how to complete the Gold Seal can be found in this Guide to Candid provided by CSF. For assistance claiming and updating your organization's Candid profile, contact Support@candid.org. Please note, Candid Customer Support Team is not available 24/7, and generally responds within 24-72 hours; please plan accordingly.

## APPLICATION CONTENT

The application is split into four sections: Organization Information, Program Information, Document Uploads, and Authorized Signers and Application Certification. For the full list of application questions, please review the Word document version of the application, included on CSF's website. Specific instructions for completing certain questions within the application can be found below.

### Section 1: Organization Information

This section of the application provides an overview of information about the applying organization. This includes items like EIN, fiscal sponsor or fiscal agent information (if applicable), type of organization, and verification of Gold Seal of Transparency in Candid.

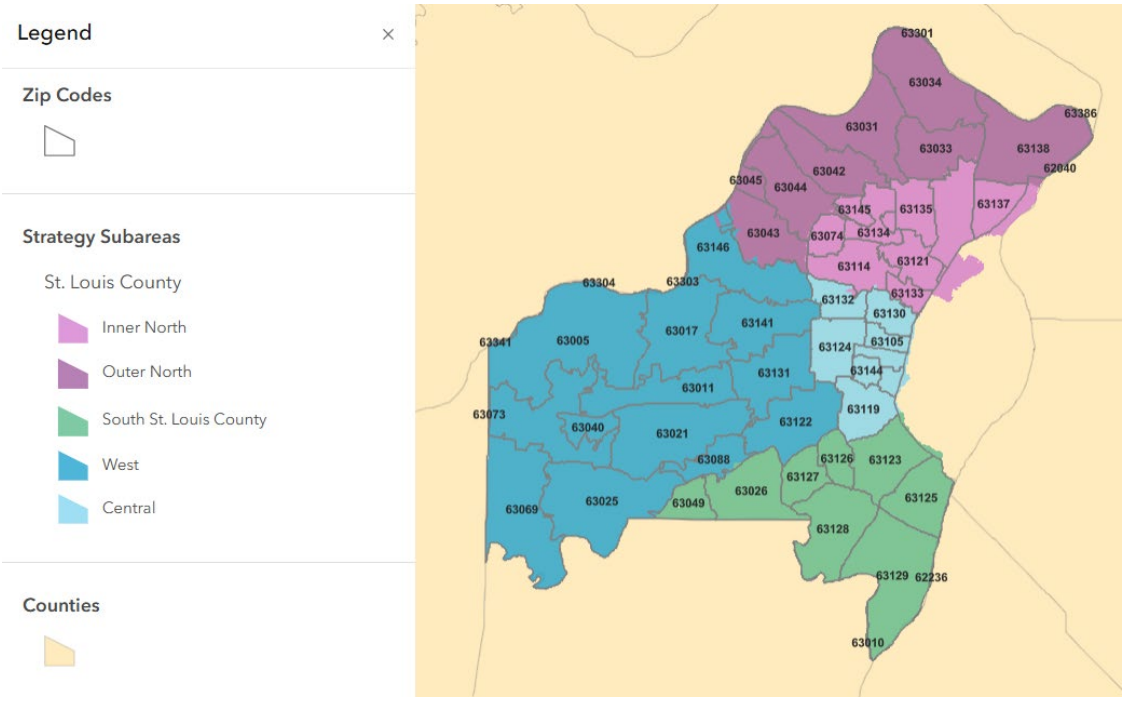
Organizations are also asked to list Executive Director or CEO, and have the option to list one additional contact as well. These two contacts will be used for communicating about this funding opportunity.

## Section 2: Program Information

This section is the longest part of the application. Applicants will need to provide information regarding the program they are proposing, who it will serve, and its proposed impact.

Questions 19-21 ask about a target population for the proposed program (age, gender identity, and race/ethnicity). It is possible to check more than one box in these questions. Organizations are not required to have a target population. There is an option on each question to indicate no target population.

Question 22 asks about target geographic area served by the proposed program within St. Louis County. Again, no target geography is required, and it is also possible to check more than one box in this question. For further information about how CSF defines the five subregions in St. Louis County, see below.




## Section 3: Document Uploads

There are three document uploads that are required in this application:

1. Budget Request

2. E-Verify MOU (see sample)
3. Work Authorization Affidavit: The affidavit must be notarized, signed, and dated after September 10, 2026.

Documents are uploaded with the "Choose File" button on SurveyMonkey when reaching this section. A window will appear to drag and drop the file to be uploaded or click "Upload file" to search for a file. When uploaded successfully, the button text will change to "Replace File," and the name of the file that has been uploaded will be listed next to the button. Only PDFs are accepted as attachments.

### Section 4: Authorized Signers and Application Certification

Organizations must list one or two individuals who are authorized to sign documents on behalf of their organization.

Applicants are also asked to confirm the application certification. The individual listed in question 33 should be one of the authorized signers and the person who is confirming they have completed the application certification.

## COMPLETING THE BUDGET REQUEST

To request funding from CSF, organizations will need to complete a separate budget spreadsheet and upload it in SurveyMonkey (see Section 3: Document Uploads).

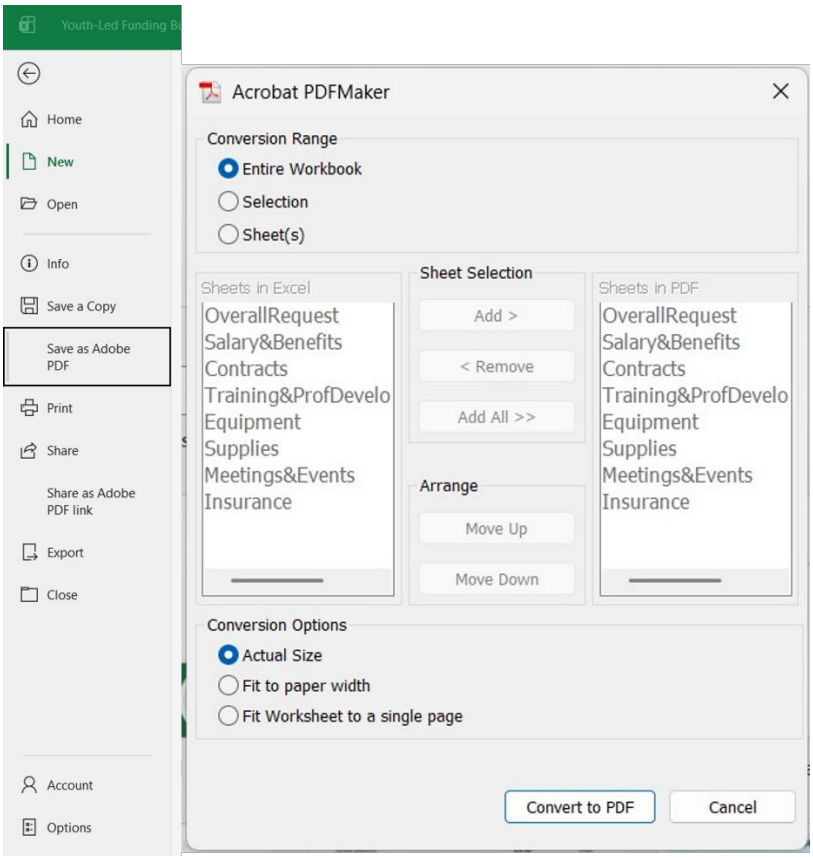
The Budget Request should reflect all items an organization is requesting to use CSF funding for during the contract period (March 1, 2027 through February 29, 2028). Information about these items will be put into separate worksheet tabs on the budget: Salary & Benefits, Contracts, Training & Professional Development, Equipment, Supplies, Meetings & Events, and Insurance. Applicants are not required to include line items on all tabs. The total amount from each of these tabs will be added automatically to the budget summary on the first sheet. All program expenses do not need to be listed in the budget; only items where CSF funding is requested need to be listed. Each line item description should clearly explain what the expense is and how it supports the program as described in your application.

Applicants may request funding only for the portion of the expense that directly supports this program. When an applicant is requesting CSF funds for a portion of an expense—such as part of an employee's salary or a share of a contractual cost—indicate that percentage in the "% Allocated to CSF" column. For example, if a staff member spends 15% of their time on the program described in this application, then no more than 15% of their salary and benefits can be included in the budget request. If CSF is being asked to fund the full cost of an expense, then list 100%.

Requests within this funding opportunity may not exceed $25,000. Applicants will list total funding requested within the application, as well as on the first tab on the uploaded spreadsheet ("Total CSF Request"). These two figures must be the same.

CSF cannot fund inpatient medical, inpatient psychiatric, inpatient chemical dependency services, and transportation services. CSF will not approve cash payments or the providing of gift cards as payment for stipends, reimbursements, incentives, honoraria, or any other expenses related to CSF grant funding. CSF does not provide funding for equipment exceeding the purchase price of $2,500. Likewise, CSF does not provide funding for the purchase of land, vehicles or real estate property.

When the Budget Request spreadsheet is complete, it must be saved as a PDF to be submitted in SurveyMonkey. Go to File -> Save As Adobe PDF -> Entire Workbook -> Convert to PDF. See the screenshot below.



### TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Limited technical support is available from CSF staff. This support can be accessed by emailing CSFSupport@stlouiscountymo.gov. CSF staff reached via this email cannot provide support regarding the content of an application, only support in navigating the technical aspects of applying. Requests for support must be received (via email) by 4 p.m. on Monday, October 19, 2026, to guarantee a response. Support may potentially be provided after that date, but it will not be guaranteed. Please note that application content will not save in SurveyMonkey until submitted, it must be completed in one sitting. As such, CSF staff will not be able to restore lost application content in SurveyMonkey if it was not submitted.

For technical assistance with Candid, email Support@candid.org.

## Q&A PROCESS

To ensure a fair and transparent process, CSF requires all questions and communications about the funding opportunity be sent to CSFFunding@stlouiscountymo.gov.

Interested applicants may submit questions to the email address above by 4 p.m. CDT on Friday, October 2, 2026. All questions will be transcribed, answered, and posted by 4 p.m. CDT on Friday, October 9, 2026. The Q&A page can be accessed at https://stlcsf.org/how-we-fund/youth-led-funding/.

## REVIEW PROCESS AND AWARD NOTIFICATIONS

As this is a youth-led funding cycle, the members of the CSF Youth Advisory Council will be the primary reviewers for this funding opportunity. Proposals should be crafted with this audience in mind. Additional individuals will be involved in this process (reading proposals and/or participating in recommendation discussions) because of their role in supporting the Youth Advisory Council and CSF processes. This includes CSF staff, select staff of the Community Health Commission of Missouri, and designated Educator Champions from each of the three school districts currently participating in the Youth Advisory Council.

Youth Advisory Council members will make funding recommendations to the CSF Board of Directors. The Board will review these recommendations and make final funding decisions.

### AWARD NOTIFICATION

Applicants will be notified of award decisions by February 1, 2027.

Applicants may request a written summary of reviewer feedback following award decision.