

# Missouri Foundation for Health Makes \$500,000 Investment to Urban Strategies, Inc. to Support Community Revitalization in St. Louis

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Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) awarded a \$500,000 impact investment to Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI), a St. Louis-based national nonprofit with experience in the design and implementation of place-based human capital development strategies in disinvested communities. USI will use the impact investment to support its community development financial institution (CDFI) in establishing a bridge to capital and wealth creation for Black, Indigenous and Latine emerging businesses in the St. Louis area.

The impact investment by MFH will be used to support community revitalization and provide employment assistance by deploying capital and business supports to emerging businesses including affordable housing developers and entrepreneurs.

“Health and well-being are inextricably linked to the financial health of communities and families. The Foundation has long acknowledged that having access to things like good jobs, safe housing, and nourishing food are the building blocks that allow people to live their healthiest lives. Investing in local infrastructure and working with communities across Missouri to co-create solutions that generate tangible, systemic change is a commitment we share with USI,” said Mark Seebeck, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, Missouri Foundation for Health.

Minority businesses continue to encounter structural obstacles when trying to access the resources, expertise and markets needed for growth. The Small Business Credit Survey (SBCS) finds that firms owned by people of color tend to have weaker banking relationships, experience worse outcomes on credit applications and are more reliant on personal funds. USI’s CDFI seeks to address this inequity by propelling entrepreneurs to prosperity and economic participation through the creation of middle-income, wealth-generating jobs and businesses.

“As a longstanding partner in St. Louis, Urban Strategies is proud to steward this investment from Missouri Foundation for Health to expand access to capital and opportunity. By strategically deploying resources and leveraging our CDFI platform, we are working to ensure that emerging businesses have the support, financing, and networks needed to grow and create lasting wealth in their communities. This investment represents a commitment to building a stronger, more equitable regional economy,” said Donovan Duncan, Chief Operating Officer, Urban Strategies, Inc.

Through this partnership, USI and MFH seek to affect the root causes that prevent families from becoming stable and thriving. USI has nearly 50 years of experience working with clients with full humanity and a theory of change that centers on personal and neighborhood equity and justice.

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## **Missouri Foundation for Health**

Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH), an independent philanthropic foundation, was created in 2000. MFH is building a future for all through collaboration, convening, knowledge sharing, and strategic investment. MFH's mission is to eliminate underlying causes of health inequities, transform systems, and enable individuals and communities to thrive.

**For more information:** [www.mffh.org](http://www.mffh.org)

## **USI**

Founded in 1978, USI is a national nonprofit leader that works at the intersection of housing, community, and economic development. USI's mission is to promote community-based economic development by leveraging investment and providing access to services, financing, and strategies that create sustainable businesses and clear pathways for families and neighbors to build generational wealth and live stable, prosperous lives.

**For more information:** [www.usi-inc.org](http://www.usi-inc.org)

## **USI CDFI**

The USI CDFI provides equitable access to affordable financial products and services in underserved communities. Community-based CDFIs are located throughout the country and are dedicated to serving market niches that are often underserved by traditional financial institutions.

**For more information:** [www.USI-CDFI.org](http://www.USI-CDFI.org)