



Executive Director's Staff Report
January 15, 2026
(November 21, 2025 – January 15, 2026)

BOARD / STAFF

- **Julia López Named Associate Director of the Center for Human Rights, Gender and Migration (CHRGM) at Washington University** – Congratulations to Secretary/Treasurer Julia López who has accepted the role as CHRGM Associate Director. Julia guided the Center's operations while CHRGM Director Prof. Kim Thuy Seelinger was on leave and she is also leading the expanded Asylum Support Initiative. Professor López possess rich backgrounds in epidemiology, clinical social work, and immigrants' rights making her ideal for her new role.
- **Educational Attainment** – Congratulations to MHB Project Assistant, Cameron Saari who obtained his Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting in December 2025.
- **Nominating Committee** –The committee met virtually at 5:30 PM on December 1, 2025 to interview Dr. Evanna Burkett for potential board service. The committee will recommend her nomination at the January 15, 2025 Board meeting.
- **Executive Committee** – The committee did not meet in December as there was no December 2025 Board of Trustees' meeting scheduled. The committee did, however, meet on January 13, 2026 at 2:00 PM to review and discuss the January 15, 2026 Board Tentative Agenda and to receive an update on the cybersecurity insurance and breach response plan.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS / ALLOCATIONS
(CCSF, CMHF, Funding Partnerships & Initiatives)

- **FY27 – 29 Joint CMHF—CCSF Application Cycle** – The Letter of Interest and Technical Assistance phases of the application cycle began November 1, 2025 and concluded December 19, 2025. MHB received 172 Letters of Interest. New projects were required to meet with MHB staff to discuss their project idea. MHB staff used the technical assistance session to review MHB's funding priorities and to ensure that applicants met funding eligibility requirements. After completion of the Letter of Interest and Technical Assistance phase, 52 projects were determined to be ineligible for funding. Therefore, 120 projects were invited to submit an application due January 30, 2026.
- **MHB Response to SNAP Benefits Disruption** – MHB contributed \$10,000 from the Emerging Needs Funds (\$5,000 from CCSF) and (\$5,000 from CMHF) to the Regional Response Teams (RRT) Rapid Response Community Fund at St. Louis Community Foundation. The Rapid Response Community Fund provides immediate support to small,

community-based organizations responding to food access disruptions caused by the 2025 federal shutdown and delayed SNAP benefits.

- **FY26 St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) Out of School Time Partnership** – During its May 2025 meeting, Trustees approved a community investment budget of \$200,000 from the Community Children’s Service Fund to support out of school time programs at Pierre Laclede K-8 school and Yeatman Middle School. The purpose of the partnership is to increase access to programs that support mental health and well-being and that align with SLPS’s strategic values. School building and district leadership worked with MHB staff to select seven programs. Each school conducted a rally to kick-off the afterschool programs with service delivery to begin on January 7 and continue through the end of the school year.
- **Behavioral Health Care Team** - MHB contracted with Community Development Solutions, LLC at \$39,000 from the Emerging Needs Funds (CMHF) to develop a local behavioral health care team. The project is focused on establishing a coordinated, ready-to-activate behavioral health response for local disasters in the City of St. Louis.
- **Reviewing with Intention: Building Inclusive & Accountable Practices in the Grant Review Process** – Melanie Robinson-Powell, CEO of Revision Connections Group will conduct two in-person 90-minute training sessions in January 2026; one for MHB staff and one for Subject Matter Experts serving as Community Reviewers and Trustees. Trustees will receive an Outlook Calendar invite to attend the Subject Matter Expert training on January 24, 2026, from 10:00 – 11:30 AM, if you are available. Please be on the lookout for the invitation to decline or accept. The objectives of the training are:
 1. Increase awareness of how bias and positionality influence perceptions of proposals.
 2. Equip reviewers, trustees and staff with tools to identify and interrupt bias during the review process.
 3. Support inclusive and impact-centered reviewing practices that help reviewers evaluate proposals on their alignment with community needs and impact, rather than being influenced by non-program-related factors (e.g., language style, professional polish, organizational reputation).
 4. Build community trust in the grantmaking process through transparency, consistency, and accountability.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS / STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- **St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission** – Caitlyn Duncan joined VPC as the new Part-Time Youth Program Coordinator. She has already begun the process of strengthening the process for recruiting and training youth who serve as community reviewers for VPC youth events.
- **System of Care St. Louis Region** – The annual financial progress and program performance reports were submitted for the System of Care’s second full year of federal funding which ended September 29, 2025.

ADMINISTRATION

- **Cybersecurity Insurance & Breach Response Plan** – Following legal review, management bound and locked in cybersecurity insurance and a rate for an 18-month term, securing the full cyber policy effective 01/01/26 through 06/30/27 to ensure rate stability and avoid anticipated increases.
- **FY24 & FY25 Audits** – CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) is nearing completion of the FY24 audited financial statements with the Single Audit remaining. The audited financials will be presented to the board for approval at an upcoming board meeting. Following completion of the FY24 audit, the FY25 audit will begin immediately with completion anticipated in Spring 2026.
- **1099s** – are in process and will be submitted to MHB’s auditor CLA next week. This year 1099s will be emailed as well as sent via US postal service.

OTHER

- MHB staff held their **holiday luncheon** at the Foundry Food Court December 17.
- **Executive Director Cassandra Kaufman and Deputy Director Serena Muhammad hosted an introductory meeting for Missouri State Legislators at the MHB office on January 9, at 11:00 AM.** Rep. Nick Kimble (D) District 82 and Jessica Petrie from Winton Policy Group were in attendance.
- MHB, in partnership with the St. Louis Office for Developmental Disability Resources and the St. Louis City Senior Fund, **co-hosted a webinar on January 15** at 11:00 AM entitled, **“Missouri’s 2026 Budget: Proposed Changes and Local Impacts”** featuring Amy Blouin from the Missouri Budget Project.
- **Executive Director Cassandra Kaufman** – attended:
 - Health Funder’s Luncheon December 2
 - Lutheran Foundation Ripple Effects Mapping Session Dec. 11 (Part of their strategic planning process)
 - City Tax Levy Funder’s monthly meetings Dec. 11 & Jan. 8
 - Virtual Governor’s State of the State Address January 13
- **Controller Susan Kabat** – attended the following virtual webinars and trainings:
 - American Institute of Certified Public Accountants Town Hall Series Dec. 9.
 - SIKICH, a nationally-ranked Certified Public Accounting Firm –Yellowbook Session 11: Year-End Recap and What to Expect for 2026 Dec. 10.
 - RubinBrown, a nationally-ranked Certified Public Accounting Firm –Tax Planning and Policy Outlook Dec. 11.
 - Missouri Society of Certified Public Accountants – quarterly economic update to stay informed on national and regional economic trends impacting public finance Jan. 9.
 - Susan met with City tax levy funders and City of St. Louis Assessor Shawn Ordway on December 9 for an overview of priorities of the Missouri House Special Committee on Property Tax Reform and other state-level property tax legislation filed.

- **Director of Clinical Partnerships Poli Rijos** –
 - Completed the Adult Mental Health First Aid Training. Once Poli provides a training in English, she will be certified in Spanish. There are only a handful of Spanish instructors in the state of Missouri.
 - Secured an AED Machine for our office courtesy of BJC HealthCare, in partnership with the St. Louis Blues and The Foundation for Barnes-Jewish Hospital.
 - Assisted the Department of Mental Health with translation of 988 materials.
 - Alongside Serena Muhammad, Prevention Partnerships Director Lisa Potts, and Early Childhood Program Director Denise Carter, participated in tabletop exercises that brought together community-based organizations, emergency management agencies, and regional partners to practice coordination and communication protocols between Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs) and St. Louis Area Regional Coalition of COADs (SLARCC).

- **Accountant Deanna Shea** – is currently completing a Non-Profit Accounting certification course

- **Accountant Anjanette Washington** attended the webinar “The Future of Reconciliation – Presented by US Bank”.