



**Executive Director’s Staff Report
February 20, 2025
(January 17, 2025 – February 20, 2025)**

BOARD / STAFF

- **Executive Committee** – The committee held its regular virtual monthly meeting on February 11, 2025, at 2:00 PM to review the February 20, 2025, Board meeting agenda, the Family Court’s request to purchase psychological evaluations from SLU’s Psychological Services Clinic, and to receive updates on important staff activities since the January 16, 2025, Board meeting.
- **Annual Board Retreat** – The retreat was held in the Summit Conference Room on January 25, 2025, from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Discussion topics included strategic planning, early childhood RFP process, out-of-school time strategy, funder DEI update, and an overview of the upcoming Trustee grant review processes.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS / ALLOCATIONS

(CCSF, CMHF, Funding Partnerships & Initiatives)

- **Monitoring impacts of Executive Orders and other federal changes** – Staff are closely monitoring the impact of a federal funding freeze for MHB’s SAMHSA System of Care grant in addition to the impact for funded partners. Additionally, staff are also closely monitoring the impact of the White House’s Executive Orders for MHB and funded partners.
- **FY26 – 28 Early Childhood Application Process** – The MHB Grant Portal opened February 3 to accept Early Childhood applications for the FY26 – 28 funding cycle which are due February 27. The table below details current early childhood funding applications:

Early Childhood Funding Opportunities for FY 2026 - 2028			
Request for Proposal	Social Emotional Development for Children	Professional Development for Childcare Providers Partnership	Mental Health Education for Parents/Caregivers Partnership
Average Funding Award \$	Average funding award in the most recently completed cycle was \$190K per year	N/A	N/A
Anticipated Number of Grants to be Awarded	8 - 10	1	1
Number of Applications that can be Submitted	One (1) per applicant organization	One (1) per applicant organization	One (1) per applicant organization
Submission Deadline	11:59 PM, February 27, 2025	11:59 PM, March 13, 2025	11:59 PM, March 13, 2025
Who can apply?	501(c)3 nonprofit organizations, organizations with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor, or a unit of government	Lead applicant must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization or nonprofit fiscal sponsor that will partner with at least 3 other organizations to provide professional development support to childcare	Lead applicant must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, nonprofit fiscal sponsor, or unit of local government with relevant experience coordinating a partnership and

		providers	ability to manage and distribute funding to childcare providers
Who will review the applications?	Joint Review Committees (Trustees and Community Reviewers)	Program Committee	Program Committee

- **Annual Site Visits** – Staff are conducting annual site visits with funded partners February 7 – March 3.
- **Systems Change Planning Grant Application Process** – The deadline for draft Systems Change Planning Grant applications for staff review was February 7. Although a total of 14 Letters of Interest (LOIs) were received, it is anticipated that up to 5 planning grants may be submitted February 27. Staff will provide proposal summaries in the March Board packet for Trustee review. Proposals will be discussed at the March 20 Board Meeting and the Board will determine which applicants they wish to invite to deliver presentations in April.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS / STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- **System of Care St. Louis** – The System of Care St. Louis leadership team met with their Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant Officer for their regularly scheduled bi-monthly meeting. During the meeting, the St. Louis team asked if they should make changes to their existing project based on the Executive Orders issued by the White House in January. The SAMHSA Grant Officer advised the team that unless they receive written instructions from SAMHSA, they should not make project changes.

ADMINISTRATION

- **Accounting Update** – Work continues on the FY24 audit.
- **Senior Fund Accounting and Controller Services Transition Update** – The transition of the Senior Fund’s accounting and controller services did not proceed as anticipated, and they have re-opened the RFP process to select another firm. This means that for the time being, Susan Kabat is still serving as their Controller and assisting with accounting. Katie Ratkowski on the Senior Fund staff handles their bookkeeping duties.
- **Foundant Training** – Director of Administration Sue Culli-Wilson and Program Assistant Cameron Saari participated in a locally-sponsored training on January 23, 2025, to learn more about MHB’s new grant management system.

OTHER

- **Behavioral Health Management Conference** – Clinical Partnerships Director Dave Haasis attend the World Conference Forum’s Behavioral Health Management Conference January 16 – 17, 2025, in Las Vega, NV. The conference focused on how to be best equipped for the rapidly evolving landscape of behavioral health. The information given included:
 - Trending topics in Addiction Treatment
 - Emerging Data on Psychedelics for the Treatment of Mental Health and Substance Misuse
 - Health Plan Partnerships with Community Based Organizations to Support Whole Person Care for Immigrants and Refugees

- Strategies for Integrating Behavioral Health with Primary Care to Enhance Patient Care
 - Value Based Care
 - Developing an Effective and Comprehensive Substance Use Management System Across the Health System
 - Population Health Management: Addressing Behavioral Health and SDOH
 - Affordable Housing and Behavioral Health Service Delivery; How to Work with Housing Organizations to Create Stronger Supports for Your Most Vulnerable Clients
- **Real School** – Cassandra and Deputy Director Serena Muhammad met with representatives of Preferred Family Healthcare (PFH) and the St. Louis County Children’s Service Fund January 22, 2025, to learn more about PFH’s recovery-focused alternative high school in St. Charles County. Aspire Advocates for Behavioral Health, a parent-led organization, is currently exploring opening an alternative high school that offers recovery support in St. Louis County that could potentially also serve city residents. The high school would need to be sponsored by a county school district in order to receive state funding for operations.
 - **St. Louis Early Childhood Regional Implementation Plan Development Process** – Cassandra, Serena, and Early Childhood Program Director Denise Carter are participating monthly in the development of a regional early childhood implementation plan. The implementation planning group includes over 35 cross-sector participants. The process, paid for by a grant from the James S. McDonnell Foundation, is supporting this effort led by Watershed Advisors (national early childhood consultants) and P5Financial Strategies. The outcome of the process will be to create an implementation plan for St. Louis City and County by June 2025. This plan operationalizes strategies identified in WE POWER’s Early Childhood [Playbook](#).
 - **St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Advisory Board** – Cassandra participated as a member of the advisory board in a January 29, 2025, meeting to learn about preliminary findings for an early childhood cost model to accurately depict the actual cost to deliver high quality early childhood services to every child in St. Louis City and St. Louis County aged 5 and under. An implementation planning update was provided by Watershed Advisors, as well as additional need data collected and updated by IFF.
 - **Executive Order on DEI: What Nonprofits and Philanthropies Need to Know** – Cassandra attended a national webinar January 31, 2025, sponsored by the National Council of Nonprofits and Independent Sector to discuss implications for nonprofits and philanthropy related to the new administration’s DEI Executive Order.
 - **Missouri Senate Testimony** – Executive Director Cassandra Kaufman testified on February 11, 2025, at the Senate’s Progress and Development Committee Hearing on the Early Childhood Sales Tax Credit.
 - **Children’s Community Service Fund Executive Directors’ Meeting** – Cassandra attend the bi-monthly meeting of the Community Children’s Services Fund Executive Directors virtually February 14, 2025.