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## **Upward Momentum Announces 2026 Bridging Divides Funding Recipients**

*\$1 Million investment will support five Missouri organizations advancing economic mobility through community-led solutions*

**(ST. LOUIS, MO, June 30, 2026)** - Upward Momentum is pleased to announce the 2026 recipients of funding through its Bridging Divides initiative, awarding a total of \$1 million to five Missouri organizations working to expand economic mobility and create pathways to opportunity for individuals, families, and communities across the state.

The selected organizations represent a range of strategies aligned with Upward Momentum’s vision of creating pathways to opportunity for Missouri families and communities:

- **Mission: St. Louis (St. Louis, Missouri)**
- **Pettis County Community Partnership (Sedalia, Missouri)**
- **South Side Farms (Cape Girardeau, Missouri)**
- **Empower Missouri (Statewide)**
- **New Growth (El Dorado Springs, MO)**

Over the coming year, each recipient will receive a \$200,000 grant and participate in a learning cohort designed to foster collaboration, share learning, and explore how successful approaches can be adapted across Missouri communities. Through this combination of funding and shared learning, Bridging Divides seeks to strengthen economic mobility efforts while building connections between rural and urban communities facing many of the same challenges.

“One of the things we’ve learned through Bridging Divides is that communities across Missouri already have the ideas, leadership, and commitment needed to address the challenges they face,” said Ryan Rippel, Managing Director of Upward Momentum. “The organizations selected this year have demonstrated meaningful impact in their communities and a commitment to approaches that can be adapted, shared, and scaled to benefit Missourians across the state. We are excited to support both their work and the learning that will emerge from this cohort.”

### **About Upward Momentum**

Upward Momentum is a Missouri-based philanthropic initiative launched to address the root causes of generational poverty and expand economic mobility. Backed by foundational investments totaling \$30 million from the Clever Little Girl Foundation, the James S. McDonnell Foundation, and Missouri Foundation for Health, the initiative works to create lasting change through three strategic pillars: Caring for Families, Navigating Work, and Strengthening Communities. By investing in



community-led solutions, fostering collaboration, and supporting shared learning across rural and urban communities, Upward Momentum seeks to create the conditions that help individuals, families, and communities thrive.

Build Missouri Health served as intermediary for the initiative, managing the application and review process and helping ensure a transparent, equitable, and community-centered approach to funding decisions.

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