

# Mayor Tishaura O. Jones Signs Bill to Establish Missouri's First Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot, Expand Health Care Access

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ST. LOUIS - Mayor Tishaura O. Jones announced today the signing of the Working Families Bill ([BB116](#)) to support St. Louisans, recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Using \$52 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, this legislation establishes Missouri's first guaranteed basic income program to support public school children and their families, expands health care access for residents, and invests in public safety by creating new opportunities for youth.



“St. Louis is back on the map, joining more than 20 cities across the country in piloting an innovative, forward-thinking guaranteed basic income program for city

schoolchildren and their families,” said Mayor Tishaura O. Jones. “From creating better opportunities for our youth to expanding access to healthcare, this bill is an investment directly in our communities still struggling to get back on their feet. Lifting families out of poverty makes our city stronger and safer, and I am grateful to sponsor Ald. Shameem Clark-Hubbard, Board President Megan Green, and Ald. Annie Rice for getting this bill to my desk.”

The guaranteed basic income pilot will require participating families to meet at least three qualifications: Residents must be a parent or legal guardian of a parent of a child enrolled in a public school in the City of St. Louis; they must have suffered a negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and be at or below 170% of federal poverty level based on family size/household income.

“This bill is an example of what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of when he emphasized the beloved community. This bill is what it looks like to care for your neighbor as you care for yourself,” said bill sponsor Ald. Shameem Clark-Hubbard (26, new 10). “I want to thank Mayor Jones and her team for their leadership and vision and my colleagues at the Board of Alderman for their steadfast care and love for the people of our city. As we head into 2023, I’m overjoyed by the commitment of my fellow elected leaders to the people, the families, the mothers and children of our city; we are working together to make the best life possible for St. Louisans.”

The bill also addresses disparities in health care that have widened since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing \$13 million to four St. Louis federally qualified health centers (FQHC) for expansion across North and South St. Louis.

“The Working Families bill gives struggling families an added lift so they can pursue higher paying jobs, cover childcare expenses, and pay down debt — giving them a real chance to break the cycle of poverty,” said Board of Aldermen President Megan Green. “If we’re serious about eliminating poverty in St. Louis, we have to stop using moral hazard as a roadblock. People experiencing poverty lack resources, not character. This bill is a step toward a universal program that would help all St. Louisans achieve a dignified, prosperous life.”

The Working Families bill makes critical investments to address root causes of crime to improve public safety. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health conditions and substance use disorders have increased globally by 13% in the last decade. The bill directs \$2 million to the City of St. Louis Department of Health’s newly created Bureau of Behavioral Health to combat substance misuse and abuse. \$10 million will also be allocated to enhance youth diversion, programming, and jobs through the Office of Violence Prevention and St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment.

“Connecting our youth to the right resources and opportunities has been proven to deter them from a life of crime and violence,” said Office of Violence Prevention Director Wilford Pinkney. “We are using these funds to take a holistic approach to address crime in our communities and make our neighborhoods safer.”

The bill was passed almost unanimously.