

DEACONESS FOUNDATION
ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Appendix

2022



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Project Background

Project Vision

In 2022, Deaconess Foundation pursued a strategy refinement process to ensure the Foundation's public policy priorities remain inclusive and reflect the wisdom and vision of the communities it serves in Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois. To achieve this goal, Deaconess engaged Gladiator & Commonality as a project team to implement a community- and participant-centered, equity-driven process. Deaconess and the project team collectively aligned around the belief that shifting power to the community in meaningful and intentional ways is the only path towards reaching a more equitable future. The findings and recommendations arising from this process are intended to inform Deaconess 150-year, seven-generation vision for impact and specifically guide Deaconess advocacy, policy development, organizing, and investment efforts for the future.

In tandem with the overarching project objective of refining Deaconess's public policy priorities, and in alignment with Deaconess 100-year plus vision, we also leveraged community engagement activities to pressure test and evaluate Deaconess's organizational values, as well as gauge community perceptions of Deaconess as an organization. Via this aspect of inquiry, we sought to reimagine the possibilities for Deaconess's core beliefs, and specifically identify the organizational values needed to launch, support, and achieve transformational, generational change.

This appendix serves to detail the context, purpose, process, and findings which substantiate the project recommendations outlined in the report.

Project Context and Purpose

The timing of this important, contemplative process was pressing; the years since 2014 – when Deaconess last established public policy priorities – have held much social, economic, and political

tumult for Eastern Missouri, Southern Illinois, and the greater nation as a whole. This tumult – including, but not limited to, persistent, systemic racial injustice, assaults on U.S. democratic systems, judicial and legislative attacks on human rights, and the COVID-19 pandemic – has had serious detrimental implications for the health and well-being of all communities. Thus, there is an urgent need for Deaconess to focus its investments toward the imperative challenges of the day.

Furthermore, Deaconess underwent a leadership change in 2021 which welcomed current President & CEO, Reverend Bethany Johnson-Javois, MSW. Reverend Johnson-Javois’ vision for Deaconess as a healer; institutional anchor advocate; investor; broker/translator/facilitator; connector/convener; and learner rooted in action¹ to pursue transformational, 150-year, seven-generation change demands that Deaconess consistently self-reflect and listen to community to adjust its priorities to meet the needs that arise.²



Deaconess Public Policy Priorities Established in 2014

Deaconess’ public policy priorities established in 2014 served as a launching pad for this effort. Since 2014, these priorities have guided and informed Deaconess’ investment in and advocacy for a range of community-led and/or informed initiatives seeking to, as explained in Deaconess’s Just For Kids Theory of Change, “strengthen the region’s capability to achieve positive outcomes for children and youth”:³

- **Health Care** - All children of the St. Louis region should have universal access to comprehensive mental, physical and dental care, supported by a trauma informed care approach, a network of school- based health centers and the benefits of Medicaid expansion.
- **Economic Mobility** - Families in the St. Louis region should be able to achieve economic stability within one generation in an environment marked by fair chance employment practices, family- supporting wages and asset-building supports.

¹ Adapted by Bethany Johnson-Javois from the Grantmakers for Effective Organizations Supporting Movements Framework. Original Framework is available online: <https://www.geofunders.org/resources/how-can-grantmakers-support-movements-667>

² Johnson-Javois, Bethany. *Deaconess CEO Report*. February 2022.

³ Deaconess. Just For Kids Theory of Change. Available Online: <https://deaconess.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/DF-TheoryofChange.pdf>

- **Justice and Equity** - All children of the St. Louis region should receive just treatment under the law, with specific emphasis on contact with the state’s systems for juvenile justice and foster and adoptive care.
- **Early Childhood Education** - All children of the St. Louis region should enjoy full access to quality early childhood care and education from birth to Pre-Kindergarten.

An illustrative, non-exhaustive list of community-driven and/or informed policy successes that align with Deaconess’ current priorities is shared in the chart below. The details outlined are both retrospective and forward-looking, and include:

- The **success** , with a link to more information
- Deaconess’ **2014 policy priority** (or priorities) most closely associated with the example success
- Deaconess’ **Liberation Framework Posture** (as described in the report’s recommendations) associated with that success
- Deaconess’ **Liberation Framework Social Change Ecosystem Role** (as also described in the report’s recommendations) associated with that success

Community-Driven or Informed Policy Success	Related 2014 Policy Priority	Liberation Framework Posture	Liberation Framework Social Change Ecosystem Role
Organizing to Increase 2020 Census Participation	All Priorities	Incremental Innovation	Weaver
Deaconesses Network of Children’s Defense Fund Freedom Schools	Early Childhood Education; Justice and Equity; Economic Mobility	Incremental Innovation	Guide
Clean Missouri Amendment Passage	Justice and Equity	Incremental Innovation	Weaver
Close the Workhouse Campaign	Justice and Equity; Economic Mobility	Reform-Oriented Innovation	Healer
COVID-19 Equitable Relief and Recovery Fund	Health Care; Economic Mobility	Incremental Innovation	Frontline Responder
Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being	All Priorities	Incremental Innovation	Weaver
Ferguson Commission	Justice and Equity	Reform-Oriented Innovation	Guide
Just for Kids Anchor Institutions Program	All Priorities	Incremental Innovation	Builder

Medicaid Expansion	Health Care	Incremental Innovation	Weaver
2020 Medical Debt Abolishment Collaboration	Health Care; Economic Mobility	Incremental Innovation	Frontline Responder
North Central Plan	All Priorities	Incremental Innovation	Weaver
Multi-Initiative Peer Funder Collaboration (e.g., Feed the Babies Project)	All Priorities	Incremental Innovation	Storyteller
Proposition B, "Raise Up Missouri", Passage	Economic Mobility	Incremental Innovation	Weaver
Reverend Buck Jones Memorial Grant for Tenant Organizing	Economic Mobility	Incremental Innovation	Healer
St. Louis Regional Racial Healing + Justice Fund	All Priorities	Reform-Oriented Innovation	Guide

Engagement Process Overview

Engagement Approach

To achieve Deaconess' project goals, we employed a three-pronged engagement strategy centered on three guiding questions:

Strategy

- **Regional Community Engagement:** Gather community input via events, interviews, surveys, and focus groups.
- **Deaconess Interested and Impacted Parties Engagement:** Learn from Deaconess's Leadership, board members, and close partners via interviews and workshop-style exercises.
- **National Partner Engagement, Research and Analysis:** Glean insight from national and peer organizations via interviews, surveys, and research.

Guiding Questions

- How can Deaconess Foundation **improve the lives and futures for young people, families, and communities?**
- How can Deaconess **organize people and resources to sustain change?**

- What **organizational values are needed to** launch, support, and **achieve transformational, generational change?**

Regional Community Engagement Strategy

The goals of the *Regional Community Engagement* strategy were to: 1) listen to, learn from, and understand the desired improvements of community residents and organizational leaders; 2) ensure community voice guides and leads the work; 3) ensure community is at the center of all decisions; 4) support community ownership of policy change.

Phase One: Community Event Attendance

In this phase, we gathered feedback from individuals at public-facing events hosted in a range of communities across Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois. At these events, we leveraged interactive posters featuring categories listed in the City of St. Louis' *Equity Indicators*⁴ report, which was prepared in response to the Ferguson Commission's call to action for a racial equity benchmarking process. Event attendees were invited to write their zip code on a post it note, and then place their post-it on the poster within the Equity Indicators category that best reflected an area of their life in which they wanted to see change. As the project evolved, we also asked participants to provide written feedback as to "why" a given area was selected, the impact any recommended improvement would have on their lives, and the organizational values needed by Deaconess to achieve transformative, generational change.

Phase Two: Interviews, Focus Groups, and Surveys

To gain additional insight into Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois communities, we hosted a series of one-on-one conversations with regional nonprofit, advocacy, and governmental leaders to learn what they were observing in the field specific to community needs. The leaders interviewed included both those funded by Deaconess, as well as those with no relationship to Deaconess whatsoever. Youth, community and funded-partner focus groups were also held; these focus groups provided additional context on community needs, how various audiences perceive Deaconess's role in addressing the identified needs, and the values needed by Deaconess to achieve such goals. Lastly, surveys requesting feedback on community needs were issued where possible to individuals reached via Deaconess's networks.

⁴ City of St. Louis. *Equity Indicators: Toward a St. Louis Region that works for us all, Baseline Report, 2018*. Available Online: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/mayor/initiatives/resilience/equity/index.cfm>

Deaconess Interested and Impacted Parties Engagement Strategy

The *Deaconess Interested and Impacted Parties Engagement* process allowed us to: 1) better understand Deaconess's potential from the perspective of those closest to the organization; 2) determine lessons learned from Deaconess's existing priority portfolio that might have implications for this project's recommendations; and, 3) glean additional feedback on potential organizational values to guide Deaconess's work in the future.

Phase One: Interview Process

In this phase, we connected with members from each of Deaconess's two boards (the [Deaconess Foundation Board of Trustees](#) and the [Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being Board of Directors](#)), as well as its internal [Leadership Team](#) regarding the opportunities that might be possible through the strategy refinement process. The individuals engaged were invited to take part in a 20-minute semi-structured interview; the questions asked examined both insights on past work, as well as opportunities for the future. As part of this process, care was taken to discuss the potential organizational values Deaconess might need to achieve its transformational, generational goals.

Phase Two: Workshop Engagement

Attendees at the [Deaconess Foundation Annual Joint Public Board Meeting](#), held on November 15, 2022 at the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being, were engaged in a workshop style series of exercises designed to explore preliminary project findings as well as consider potential organizational values for the future. To ensure ample opportunity for engagement, we led participants through exercises in both virtual and in-person settings, and leveraged online collaboration tools to ensure all participants could communicate and collaborate in real-time.

National Partner Engagement, Research, and Analysis Strategy

The *National Partner Engagement, Research, and Analysis* process aimed to: 1) explore policy trends and themes; 2) connect insights to community findings to inform recommendations, and; 3) discover relevant case studies to provide context to findings and recommendations. Rather than leveraging a national lens to shape and refine community findings, this process instead leveraged a community lens when reviewing broader, national trends and themes, and explored policy progress farther afield through the frame of what might align with community voiced needs in Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois.

Phase One: Thought Leader Engagement Process

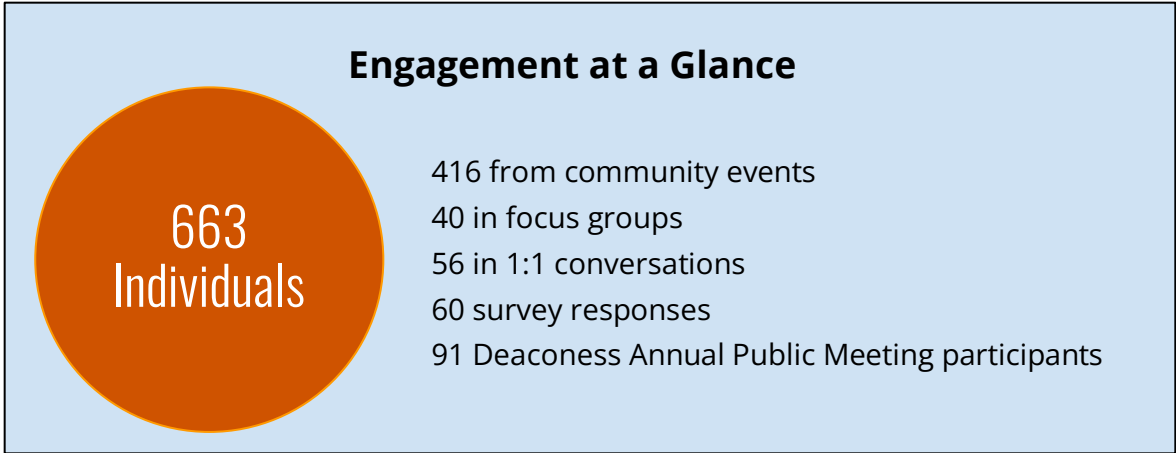
In this phase, we leveraged a series of interviews and surveys to take a national pulse on policy trends and themes that impact communities nationwide. An emphasis was placed on speaking with a variety of organizations from across the country: both those with existing connections to Deaconess, as well as those not yet considered Deaconess partners. Additionally, while care was taken to engage organizations with expertise in each of the four existing Deaconess policy priority areas, the surveyed population was not limited to those with expertise in those four topics. The interview questions remained broad to refrain from inadvertently swaying findings. This initial phase was carried out concurrently with the community outreach process to provide exploratory insights, as well as reveal potential case studies to contextualize community findings.

Phase Two: Research and Analysis

In order to more richly understand community findings within the broader landscape of national policy themes, a research phase was conducted. The research stage resulted in the discovery of more specific case studies to provide context to community findings, as well as support the synthesis of recommendations.

Engagement Reach: Summary at a Glance

The project team engaged 663 individuals across all three project strategies:



Engagement Interview Guide

Interview Questions for Board

- In your perspective, what are the existing barriers to implementing policy change?
- Of the current Deaconess priorities (Health Care, Economic Mobility, Justice & Equity, Early Childhood Education), where has the most progress been made in your opinion? Where has the least progress been made? Question: In your opinion, what policy areas are ripe for change? What policy changes in the next decade have the greatest potential to positively impact the next generation?
- What issues are important as you've heard or learned from community members and the communities you are a part of?
- In your opinion, what is Deaconess uniquely poised to do that Deaconess is not currently doing?
- From your vantage point, where does the will of the Spirit and the will of the people meet?
- What are the greatest areas in need of reckoning given the pervasive health and racial inequities we are experiencing? Where should we be truth telling the most to facilitate reckoning in order to accelerate healing?
- How can Deaconess raise the voices of community members to advance healing and drive outcomes?
- If Deaconess is the type of organization that is responsive to community, what type of guiding values would they need?

Interview Questions for National Partners + Peer Organizations

- Tell us about your work, and if/how you collaborate with Deaconess.
- What are your policy/funding priorities at the community level? Has the pandemic shifted any of those priorities?
- How do you ensure your priorities align with the needs of the communities you serve?
- What emerging policy trends are you seeing? How are these trends going to affect your policy priorities?
- Tell me about your philanthropic giving philosophy and how/if it has evolved.
- What is unique about the Deaconess Foundation? What is Deaconess uniquely situated to do?

Interview Questions for Funded Partners

- What do you think makes Deaconess unique?
- What are they uniquely situated to do?
- If Deaconess did what community directed, what values would be needed?
- What has been most helpful from the support you received from Deaconess?
- One thing we've learned through conversations is that needs are interconnected; meaning that improvements are needed in all areas, not "just" housing or "just" education.
 - With that understanding, how does your organization determine where to invest capacity and determine where you will focus?
 - What is your organization focusing on and why?
 - Where do you see the greatest need for those you serve?
 - Why?
- What is one thing that can be done to change the conditions for the community you serve?
- What will increase the chances of those stated improvements becoming a reality?
 - What is/can be Deaconess's role in this?
- Who else should we talk to?

Focus Group Questions for Deaconess Funded Partners

- From your perspective, what makes Deaconess unique?
- What is Deaconess uniquely situated to do?
- Organizational values are the principals and beliefs that provide cohesive vision, define who we are as organizations, and guide our work internally and externally. In order for Deaconess to shift power and show up for community, what values should be centered in their work?
- What are the "wins" that you've observed that were able to occur because of Deaconess's assistance?
- One thing we've learned through conversations is that needs are interconnected; meaning that improvements are needed in all areas, not "just" housing or "just" education.
 - With that understanding, how does your organization determine where to invest capacity and determine where you will focus?
 - What is your organization focusing on and why?
 - Where do you see the greatest need for those you serve?
 - Why?
- What is one thing that can be done to change the conditions for the community you serve?
- What will increase the chances of those stated improvements becoming a reality?
 - What is/can be Deaconess's role in this?

Focus Group Questions for General Community

- What are your initial thoughts to the presented findings?
 - Does anything surprise you?
 - What didn't surprise you?
 - What things have you observed but didn't see listed within the findings?
- Of the presented and discussed areas of need (housing, finances, employment, health, judicial system, and education), how would you recommend prioritizing needs?
- Of the presented and discussed areas of need, are there any that can be deprioritized?
- If you were in the room with Deaconess, what would you want them to know?

Focus Group Questions for Youth Councils/Groups

- What are the needs you see within your communities?
- What areas do you see significant support?
- What prevents things from changing for the better in your community?
- If you were in the room with Deaconess, what would you want them to know?
- What other youth groups should we talk to?

Findings

Voices from the Community

Our community engagement efforts elicited powerful responses from the neighbors, activists, leaders, and organizers we spoke with, resulting in the following interconnected themes:

- Economic insecurity made worse by health concerns and the pandemic
- Access to housing impacting a child's education, mental health and lifelong economic opportunities
- Climate change impacting food access
- Natural disasters create housing insecurity and economic distress

Below are the responses from our community - in their own words - that we captured during our outreach at community events, via interviews with partners and peer leaders, and from focus groups.

Note: several quotes in the following sections were shared during our workshop at the Deaconess Foundation Annual Joint Public Board Meeting on November 15th, 2022. As part of the workshop, the 91 participants (across in person and virtual settings) were asked to place a “dot sticker” (in person) or “drop a pin” (virtually) next to the quotes that resonated most, based upon their lived experience. In the sections below, these shared quotes are followed by a parenthetical noting the number of votes (e.g., dot stickers or pin drops) received on that quote during the exercise.

For example: “Quote” (12 votes)

Conversations with your Community Residents (Events & Focus Groups)

Regarding Education:

- “Representation in classrooms and schools (teachers and authors)” (16 votes)
- “Equal funding would uplift inner-city schools” (13 votes)
- “Free school lunch for all kids regardless of financial status” (12 votes)
- “More Black educators will help create a more welcoming environment” (12 votes)
- “Improvements in education could ensure my child can read on grade level” (11 votes)
- “I would have a college degree if it was free/affordable” (10 votes)
- “More opportunities for young Blacks”
- “Education that prepares students to solve the issues of their community”
- “Education helps with the value in the overall growth of the community; financial literacy and economic education”
- “Education; technology fields and STEM; make an agenda that can help promote to kids in the area”
- “Extra program work for kids or social clubs for kids”
- “Better options for single mothers”
- “Loan forgiveness options for underprivileged communities; not just public service loan program”
- “More affordable college courses available could lead to better jobs and more money in the community”
- “Education on imperative life skills; budgeting repairs; mental health; car maintenance”
- “If my school had better teachers it would mean a lot because the students would get the help they need”
- “Creative alternatives that will lower costs in underrepresented districts”
- “Accountability for SLPS elected board for effective neighborhood schools”
- “Create space for mental health”
- “Digital Equity”
- “Children have materials and tools to be successful in school”
- “Equity funding for inner-city schools”

- "Tech schools for the youth or jobs they don't know exist (construction)"
- "Focusing on bigger institutional knock down of systems that reinforce white supremacy and capitalism; as opposed to placing onus on individuals"
- "Guaranteed early childhood for all 3+ year olds like in NYC"
- "Students don't have textbooks and are unable to complete assignments because they can't afford the books"
- "Funding to help supply laptops to college students"
- "Access to mental health. It's been something I've been looking for for a very long time. I'm undocumented and low income"

Regarding Finances and Employment:

- "Higher pay for level entry jobs and teachers" (24 votes)
- "Better jobs, better wages; training" (20 votes)
- "Consistent hours; higher wages; work with purpose and enjoyment and passion" (14 votes)
- "Financial Education" (14 votes)
- "Jobs that give a living wage that aren't 20 minutes away" (8 votes)
- "Finances will help pull more people out of poverty" (8 votes)
- "More employment opportunities in different job/career fairs to inform people" (6 votes)
- "Finances would help me to be able to invest in the areas needed to succeed" (3 votes)
- "Opportunities to create/build ownership and generational wealth"
- "More entry level jobs with better pay"
- "More opportunities for Black males"
- "More understanding when calling off"
- "Less licensing requirements which create barriers to employment"
- "Educate the community about living wage careers"
- "Providing free education on financial literacy at young ages to help build strong foundations for when they become adults (ROTH, IRA, etc.)"
- "More banking and lending options in under resourced areas"
- "If it were easier to get a loan I could afford to open a small business"
- "Creating generational wealth and allow me to contribute to my community"
- "East St. Louis, home of the Black high school; money should be spent on its children"
- "Kids' saving accounts"
- "Lack of financial literacy and resources for HS kids to learn more about loans, taxes, mortgages, etc - things they need to know before going to post-secondary"
- "I remember going to a choir competition at Eureka High School. I noticed the High School there looks so much better than the schools in St Louis. But these schools shouldn't be looking so different. Tax dollars should be better allocated "
- "Resources for post-secondary knowledge and education. Not all schools have counselors to provide high school students with resources to get guidance for post-secondary goals. Help young people gain support to figure out what they want to do after high school"
- "Local small banks in Page/Dale would allow people in the area to have better lending power"

Regarding Housing:

- "More affordable homes" (19 votes)
- "Teaching about housing in school is important; most young adults don't know about bills; should be taught in schools" (17 votes)
- "Provide homeowners with funds or grants; low interest loans fix home repair" (15 votes)
- "Easy access to housing- furnished; change generational issues with housing insecurity" (12 votes)
- "Fair housing opportunities" (11 votes)
- "No more homeless people"
- "More homeowners"
- "More funding for affordable housing and rent assistance; reopen Section 8 apps"
- "We could make homes cheaper and more accessible to people with normal jobs"
- "Tenant education/rights"
- "Develop strategies/workshop to realistically promote home ownership"
- "Improvement of housing quality will ensure that I have stable electricity and reliable; and clean water"
- "I am a single older woman who wants to downsize her big old home and age in place. St. Louis has nothing to meet my needs to purchase and I may have to move from the city I love"
- "We lack sufficient affordable (quality & safe) housing in our community. Neighbors are struggling to afford--and often maintain--their homes and apartments and are often feeling forced to move out of a neighborhood they have lived in for years (often decades)"

Regarding Local and State Judicial System:

- "Alternative responses to harm and violence; invest more in the community by funding programs that focus on healing restoration and reconciliation" (24 votes)
- Stop targeting Black people in lower income areas " (20 votes)
- "More community engagement around elections to inform the votes" (19 votes)
- "Decrease the number of African American males in the penal system which will increase their presences in the communities, homes with their families" (14 votes)
- "Better quality of funding for prisons to improve prisons"
- "Corrective action for offenders held on marijuana charges"
- "Having people that will be true to the system"
- "Fair sentencing"
- "Some Black police treat us worse than white police"
- "No more slave wages in prison"
- "Stop the one way to prison wave"
- "Elect more African Americans from urban areas at all levels"
- "Voting empowerment to youth to create informed voters"

Regarding Heath:

- "More access to mental health services" (24 votes)
- "Free healthcare" (20 votes)
- "More grocery and health food stores would boost the community" (16 votes)
- "Provide opportunity and access for all" (12 votes)
- "Environmental Justice and how it impacts health" (8 votes)
- "We need more Black physicians! Recruitment must begin in primary grades so students are on a trajectory where they can get into medical school"
- "Focus on reducing infant mortality and healthy births"

Other:

- "Free civil legal assistance would help a person living with low-income obtain or retain Medicaid or food stamps to improve their Health. It would allow for the defense of an eviction lawsuit or preserve subsidized housing to improve Housing. Free legal help on a variety of legal issues, such as consumer debtor/creditor, public benefits, family law for survivors of domestic violence, helping small business owners start or grow a business, education advocacy to help obtain special education services or stop discriminatory discipline, would all improve the chances of a family living with low income to thrive"
- "Our society faces a dramatic demographic shift to an aging population; caring for our aging friends, neighbors, and family members needs attention and focus"
- "Education re domestic violence"
- "More Black love; I would love to see families together"
- "Bring stores/shopping within walking distance"
- "Reparations"
- "The erosion of vigorous, thoughtful, open and affirming, religious communities leads to a comparable erosion of commitment among women and men committed to education for all our children, apathy toward a desire for full fair employment for all, acceptance of concentration of wealth as a norm, not an aberration, lack of moral outrage at an 18 year disparity in life expectancy between two zip codes in St. Louis, looking the other way at unacceptable housing stock and unhoused sisters and brothers, and accepting the unacceptable principle that justice is for those who can afford it."
- "Systemic issues - racism, the Black community is not included in systems (they're built against them). I need the space to say I need help, I need support, I need funding - it's hard for students to ask for support. But they don't want to ask for help, or know who to ask for help, or they might get negative feedback if they try to ask for help"
- "Productive, inclusive, budget-friendly activities for youth"
- "Addressing root causes of youth violence"
- "West Lake Landfill; cleanup and family affected"
- "Public transportation availability"

- “We need more policies across the region focusing on racial equity, justice, trauma/violence and economic development to improve life outcomes”
- “Seeing things change in North St Louis; end the Delmar Divide”
- “But it’s not that we are underprivileged - we’re under-resourced. We need more accessible, equitable resources. Not everyone needs the same thing - people need different things based upon their race, religion, gender, the list goes on - but if students know that they can rely on someone, they’re more likely to pursue a higher education”
- “It’s hard if your parents don’t know what to do to get that help”
- “Young people want to be involved - students want to be involved in the decision making processes - it involves them, and they want a seat at the table”


Conversations with your Funded Partners and Regional Peers

Specifically surrounding “what Deaconess is uniquely poised to do”:

- “Deaconess should continue to advance understanding of what racial equity actually means and the systems that are in place that need to be dismantled”
- “Amplify voices that are typically not heard”
- “Philanthropy is helping to raise awareness about reality and lived experience in marginalized communities but they aren’t necessary addressing that lived experience”
- “Try to figure out how to advance grantmaking practices that focus on racial equity and health equity”
- “Many funders (especially in St. Louis) are paternalistic and grounded in white saviorism, but Deaconess is not this way. They respect their grantees and see them as partners and co-conspirators in the work.”
- “Stop chasing symptoms of the problems and address the problem head on”
- “Democracy and agency for coalition-building: Grow the number of people a part of the organization, the union”
- “Create a youth-led grantmaking board and committee that is compensated for their time and wisdom”

Conversations with your Board

- “Childcare issues; continue to be even more active in leadership around children’s issues; more leadership in social justice, equity, diversity; nothing comes to mind that’s brand new- more of an emphasis of continuing to do the things that they are already doing”
- “A real focus on economic mobility and expanding that in a more equitable fashion: creating opportunity for a broader swath of people to earn and create a more stable life through a



salary and all that goes with it- asset building, home ownership. But you need to have decent jobs that pay a decent wage available to a broad swath of people to attain that”

- “Teachers salaries in Missouri are the lowest in the US. Children need good teachers who are paid a fair wage”
- “How do we make it easier for small developers to help improve their communities and the communities they serve? There is lots of red tape for neighborhood organizations to develop in their neighborhoods - especially zoning issues. We must allow the community to have a seat at the table for community zoning issues”
- “State legislature is in opposition with Deaconess with most things. How can we organize, fund ballot initiatives and win? Creating a 501C4 is key”
- “Deaconess, because of its faith heritage, is uniquely poised to address some issues to people who may disagree on the basis of faith - faith can be a common ground and north star - we are all God’s children and we’re all in this together. Use faith as a bridge between differing parties”
- “Organizations like Deaconess - who occupy that thinking space - should spend time figuring out how to decriminalize poverty. Even underwear is locked up at Walmart. Black hair care products are locked up at Walgreens. Poverty is at the root of incarceration, poor health”

Conversations with National Partners, Peers and Thought Leaders

- “We are concerned about the assault on democracy and the Dobbs decision”
- “Direct voter engagement - making sure communities can fully participate in elections while the ballot box is under attack”
- “Funder collaboratives are the future (Racial Healing and Justice; Missouri Democracy Fund)”
- “To support mental health, we are interested in scaling trauma informed approaches”
- “We are interested in growing our rapid response funding to support emergencies (Natural disaster, COVID, etc.)”
- “We’re focused on economic and workforce development as a way to combat poverty”
- “In DC, we are focused on identifying how to serve BIPOC communities equitably with products and services”
- Federally, we are laser focused on reproductive justice and how to affect the new Omnibus package”
- “Economic Mobility: People aren’t being paid enough to take care of the basic needs - in the housing space, there is a movement towards justice, specifically with basic guaranteed income”
- “I’m trying to build justice and equity in the foster care system -it’s a travesty that foster kids don’t have housing assisting to youth aging out at age 18”
- “Legal Aid is really important. It could make a big difference in the community”

Overarching Policy Trends

- “Mental and Behavioral Health, with an emphasis on the aftershocks of COVID-19”
- “Defending Democracy, including voter engagement and protecting the right to vote”
- “Womens Healthcare and Abortion Access, especially in conservative leaning states following the 2022 Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade”
- “Bolstering Economic Viability in Communities, via workforce development, education, economic development (including small business support), or otherwise”
- “The policy priorities are tenant organizing and housing justice organizing, which has deepened even more throughout the pandemic”
- “Worker Rights, particularly the right to unionize and ensuring a living wage”
- “The Legal System, including police reform”
- “Social Safety Net, such as the possibility of universal basic income”

Case Study Examples and Resources, by Issue

The National Partner Engagement, Research, and Analysis Strategy revealed several relevant policy progress examples related to examined issue areas. These examples are linked below. Certain examples have been described as a case study spotlight which notes the Liberation Framework Posture associated with each example.

Federal Government Priorities

- [Partnering with Federal Agencies to Advance Racial Equity](#)
- [Blueprint for the Next Generation of Place-Based Policy](#)

Housing

- [Addressing America's Housing Crisis](#)
- [Housing Justice on the Ballot](#)
- [Blueprint for the Next Generation of Place-Based Policy: Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing](#)
- [The Fresno D.R.I.V.E. Initiative: Developing the Region's Inclusive and Vibrant Economy](#)
- [Austin's \\$250 million Affordable Housing Bond Approved](#)
- [Proposition 123: Dedicate Tax Revenue to Affordable Housing](#)
- [The Generational Opportunities to Achieve Long-Term Success \(GOALS\) program](#)
- [Youth At-Risk of Homelessness: Design for an Impact Study of “Pathways to Success”](#)

- [Lessons from the Field: Using Housing Vouchers to Support Youth With Child Welfare Experience at Risk of Homelessness](#)

Legislative and Ballot Initiative Wins in Minnesota

Liberation Framework Posture: Incremental Innovation

2018: Legislative Wins

In 2018, [Homes for All](#), a coalition of over 270 organizations working to end homelessness and the affordable housing shortage in Minnesota, successfully advocated for the state legislature to approve \$77 million in bond funding for housing, and more than \$5 million in expanded support for homeless programs.⁵ The funding was allocated as:

- \$55 million in Housing Infrastructure Bonds for the construction and preservation of affordable housing
- \$10 million in General Obligation Bonds to improve the health, safety, and energy conditions in existing public housing
- \$12 million for the Catholic Charities Dorothy Day Center, which provides essential emergency services in St. Paul
- \$2 million for the Centering Learning Around Student Stability (CLASS) Act, which provides secure, stable housing for highly mobile school children and their families to promote academic success
- >\$3.5 million for Department of Human Services Programs, including budget increases of \$2.15 million for *Housing with Support for Adults with Serious Mental Illness*, \$750,000 for *Long-Term Homeless Support Services*, \$400,000 for transitional housing programs, and \$200,000 for emergency services programs

2021: Ballot Initiative Wins

In 2021, municipal voters acted to approve two ballot initiatives to advance housing justice in Minnesota⁶:

- [Home to Stay MLPS](#): in Minneapolis, MN, 54% of voters said “yes” to Question 3 (a win of the *Home to Stay Rent Stabilization coalition*) which gave the Minneapolis City Council the power to create and implement a rent stabilization ordinance.
- [Keep St. Paul Home](#): in St. Paul, MN, 53% of voters agreed to cap annual rent increases at 3% and initiate vacancy control across tenancies. This win was a result of the Keep St. Paul Home coalition and campaign.

Local + State Judicial System

- [The Midterms Trigger a Seismic Shift in Harris County's Courts](#)

⁵ Minnesota Housing Partnership. *From the Field: Minnesota Advocates Win New Housing Funding*. 2018. Online: <https://mhponline.org/from-the-field-minnesota-advocates-win-new-housing-funding/>

⁶ Hoang, Tram. *Housing Justice on the Ballot: Policy Pathways for Housing Justice*. Policy Link, October 20, 2022. Online: <https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/10-20-22%20Housing%20Justice%20on%20the%20Ballot%20Webinar.pdf>

- [Rehabilitative Justice, Bail Bond Reform Will Make Bexar County Safer, More Equitable](#)
- [Nashville Amendment 1 for police oversight board passes overwhelmingly](#)
- [Nevada Question 1, Equality of Rights Amendment \(2022\)](#)
- [Cities & Counties for Fine and Fee Justice Lessons](#)
- [New Programs for and Approaches to Justice System Challenges: Case Studies of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oregon, and Pennsylvania](#)
- [State Policing Reforms Since George Floyd's Murder](#)
- [Winnable criminal justice reforms in 2022](#)
- [A better path forward for criminal justice: A report by the Brookings-AEI Working Group on Criminal Justice Reform](#)
- [Reform Trends: Evidence-Based Practices](#)
- [Columbus City Approves "Common-Sense" Gun Legislation](#)

Columbus Gun Control Legislation

Liberation Framework Posture: Incremental Innovation

2022: Legislative Win

In December 2022, the Columbus Ohio City Council - in an effort to reduce gun violence - voted to pass gun legislation banning large-capacity magazines with 30 rounds or more, requiring gun locks, and banning new straw sales.⁷ The legislation - which encountered opposition from the Buckeye Firearms Association and others - also prohibits a person from negligently storing a firearm in locations in which a minor is able to gain access.

Finances + Employment + Education

- [Minnesota Advocates win New Housing Funding](#)
- [State Education Policy Tracking](#)
- [Advancing Workforce Equity in Metro Detroit: A Blueprint for Action](#)
- [Advancing Workforce Equity in Nashville: A Blueprint for Action](#)
- [Advancing Workforce Equity in Columbus: A Blueprint for Action](#)
- [Advancing Workforce Equity in Dallas and Collin Counties](#)
- [Illinois Amendment 1, Right to Collective Bargaining Measure \(2022\)](#)

⁷ Siefert, Kate and Jarrod Clay. Columbus City Council Approves 'common-sense' gun legislation. ABC 6 online. December 5, 2022. Available online: <https://abc6onyourside.com/news/local/columbus-city-council-approves-common-sense-gun-legislation-magazine-size-firearms-locks-shayla-favor-emmanuel-remy-and-council-president-shannon-hardin?fbclid=IwAR2VhcPwydLml19pB7Kd0UOIYTAiGkqEWy1g4Mfo69tiyqaOuxlBlZxGoj8>

- [Access to Earned Sick Leave Impacts Economic Security and Racial Equity: How Local Officials Can Improve Public Health and Economic Security](#)
- [What we know about universal basic income - Across-synthesis of review](#)
- [Case Study: Experiences battling debt drive reform of hospital financial assistance laws in Colorado](#)
- [Red for Ed: The Movement Strengthens and Continues](#)
- [Universal School Meals; Missouri Universal School Meals Act](#)
- [Tennessee Literary Success Act + Memphis-Shelby County Schools High School Literacy Curriculum](#)

Free School Meals in Colorado + Missouri Opportunity
Liberation Framework Posture: Incremental Innovation

2022: Colorado Ballot Initiative Win

With 55.2% of the vote, Coloradan voters in 2022 passed Proposition FF, which limits state income tax deductions on people who make >\$300,000 or more in order to fund the *Healthy School Meals for All Program (HSMAP)*.^{8,9} HSMAP provides free school meals for students in public schools, funds grants to help schools buy food from Colorado farmers and ranchers, and funds wage increases for school food employees.

2023: Missouri Legislative Opportunities

Building on momentum from wins like the one described in Colorado, two Missouri-elected officials have put forward legislative proposals to offer universal free school meals to all students in Missouri:¹⁰

Collective Bargaining in Illinois
Liberation Framework Posture: Reform-Oriented Innovation

2022: Illinois Ballot Initiative Win

⁸ Ballotpedia. *Colorado Proposition FF, Reduce Income Tax Deduction Amounts to Fund School Meals Program Measure*. 2022. Online: <http://bit.ly/3HO64IC>

⁹ Cook, Lanie Lee. *Free School Meals Approved by Voters*. Fox News 31, Denver Colorado. November 9, 2022. Online: <https://kdvr.com/news/politics/election/prop-ff-free-school-meals-colorado/#:~:text=Prop%20FF%20limits%20state%20income,ranchers%20to%20prepare%20nutritious%20meals.>

¹⁰ Suntrup, Jack. *A Free Lunch? Missouri Republican Wants Free Meals for Every Public School Student*. St. Louis Post Dispatch. December 7, 2022. Available Online: <http://bit.ly/3FFDzKy>

In November 2022, 59% of Illinois voters approved Illinois Constitution Amendment 1, the *Workers Rights Amendment*, to amend the state constitution to guarantee workers a broad right to collective bargaining over wages, hours and working conditions.¹¹ Its passage was supported by [Vote Yes for Workers Rights](#), a union-backed campaign.¹²

Health + Wellness

- [Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential \(LEAP\): A mul-ti-mil-lion-dol-lar ini-tia-tive to increase employ-ment and edu-ca-tion-al oppor-tu-ni-ties for young peo-ple fac-ing some of the great-est chal-lenges on the path to adult-hood](#)
- [Serving Young Parents: Selected Resources for Young Parents, Practitioners, and Policymakers](#)
- [Kansas for Constitutional Freedom: The bipartisan coalition of reproductive rights advocates that protected the constitutional rights of Kansans in the historic 2022 primary election](#)
- [Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 2, No Right to Abortion in Constitution Amendment \(2022\)](#)
- [Child Tax Credit](#)
- [County Experiences with Medicaid Expansion Implementation: Case Study Report](#)
- [Case Studies: How States Are Expanding School Health Services Using Medicaid](#)
- [A Playbook for Implementing Medicaid Expansion: Louisiana's Experience](#)

Protection for Reproductive Rights in Kansas Liberation Framework Posture: Reform-Oriented Innovation

2022: Ballot Initiative Win

¹¹ Ballotpedia. *Illinois Amendment 1, Right to Collective Bargaining* (2022). Available Online: [https://ballotpedia.org/Illinois_Amendment_1_Right_to_Collective_Bargaining_Measure_\(2022\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Illinois_Amendment_1_Right_to_Collective_Bargaining_Measure_(2022))

¹² Wiessner, Daniel. *Voters in Illinois, Tennessee Approve Dueling Measures on Union Membership*. Reuters, November 9, 2022. Online: <https://reut.rs/3VdMh8i>

In August 2022, a strong majority (59%) of Kansas voters rejected a state constitutional amendment that would have said there was no right to abortion in the state.¹³ The first state to vote on abortion rights since the US Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022, this outcome was supported by the work of [Kansans for Constitutional Freedom](#), a bipartisan coalition of reproductive rights advocates and allied organizations committed to protecting the constitutional right of Kansans to make personal healthcare decisions free from governmental interference.

Other

- [Blueprint for the Next Generation of Place-Based Policy: Transportation](#)
- [Medicaid Is a New Tool to Expand Healthy Food Access](#)
- [Blueprint for the Next Generation of Federal Place-Based Policy: Promise Neighborhoods](#)

All Values Suggested, Grouped by Value Theme

The following section lists all organizational values suggested across all engagement activities. The values have been grouped under their respective actionable value themes, as previously discussed in the main report. Repeated values were recommended by more than one individual.

Theme: Dismantle	Theme: Heal	Theme: Justice	Theme: Collaborate	Theme: Love
Anti-Racist	Adaption	Accountability	Active	Authentic
Boldness	Bridge The Age Gap	Anti-Police	Agility	Being Creative
Catalyst	Building Trust	Black Led	Alignment Of Work Efforts	Biblical
Courage	Caring	Brave	Board Membership	Children

¹³ Lysen, Ziegler and Mesa. *Voters in Kansas Decide to Keep Abortion Rights Legal in the State, Rejecting an Amendment*. NPR. August 3, 2022. Available online: <https://www.npr.org/sections/2022-live-primary-election-race-results/2022/08/02/1115317596/kansas-voters-abortion-legal-reject-constitutional-amendment>

			To Include Impacted Residents	
Dismantling Prejudices	Healer	Ending Poverty	Building Bridges	Compassion
Disrupter	Healing	Equality	Co-Creat	Compassionate
Disruptor	Healing	Equity	Co-Learning	Consistency
History	Healing The Earth	Equity	Collaboration	Empathy
Innovative	Healing Trauma	Fairness	Collaboration	Faith
Intention	Holistic	Fearless	Collaboration Among Impacted Populations And Funded Partners	Faithfulness
Leader Of Foundations And Corporations	Hope	Fearless Leaders	Community	Foster Patience
Liberation	Intergenerational	Freedom	Community Driven	Genuine
Mobilizing Policy Change That Creates Opportunities For Everyone	Intergenerational Trauma Informed	Honest	Community Enrichment	Grace Filled
Radical	Knowledge Sharing	Honor	Cultivation Of Leadership	Hospitality
Radical	Preventative	Integrity	Decision Making	Human-Centered
Radical Imagination	Racial Healing	Justice	Deep Listening	Humility
Transcendent	Stewards For The Community	Justice Seeking	Democratize Power	Humility
Transformational	Support	Racial Equity	Education	Inclusion
Transformative	Sustainability	Reckoning With Racism	Elder Informed	Inclusive
Unflinching	Sustainable	Steadfast	Find Opportunities For Communities And Families To Be At Center Of Action	Inclusivity
Unflinching	Trauma Informed	Those Who Are Directly Impacted In Front	Flexibility	Joy
Vision	Wellness	Transparency	Increase Awareness	Lgbtq
	Wholeness	Truth	Listen To Young People	Listening With Love
	Wisdom	Truth Tellers	Open To Creativity	Love

		Truth Telling	Openness	Love
		Uncompromising	Participation	Queer
			Partnership	Respect
			Trust	Service
			Trustworthy	Simplicity
			Understanding	Trans
			Youth Voice	Truly Authentic
				Value Community Voices
				Values

- Constance Harper | Deaconess Foundation
- Darlene Sowell | Unleashing Potential
- Dara Eskridge | Invest STL
- David Nehrt-Flores | Deaconess Foundation
- Deleshā George | Deaconess Foundation
- Dr. Joia Crear-Perry | National Birth Equity Collaborative
- Dr. Susan Stepleton | Deaconess Board of Trustees
- Elizabeth Noonan | Deaconess Board of Trustees
- Elizabeth O'Brien + David Schroyer | The Nonprofit Centers Network
- Evan Krauss | East Side Aligned
- Faith Sandler | The Scholarship Foundation
- Gabriel Calixto | United Congregations of Metro East
- Jane Callahan | JF Robblee foundation
- Janee Johnson | Missouri Healthcare For All
- Jared Boyd | St. Louis Mayor's Office
- Justin Idleburg | Idleburg Consulting | Community Catalyst
- Karissa Anderson | Deaconess Board of Trustees
- Kathy Reeves | Enterprise Holdings
- Katie Rahn | Gateway Early Childhood Alliance
- Kayla Reed | Action St. Louis
- Kiesha Davis | Deaconess Foundation
- Lara Granich | MO WIN
- LeAnn Chilton | Barnes Jewish Hospital
- Lettie Hicks | Community Organizing and Family Issues
- Lindsay Rosenthal | Vera Center
- Mackenzie Alberti | Verizon
- Matt Oldani | Deaconess Foundation
- Melody Baker | Amplify Fund
- Neosha Franklin | St. Louis Community Foundation
- Patrick Brown | Deaconess Board of Trustees
- Patrick Sablich | Wells Fargo
- Peggy Bailey | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Phylicia Manley | JP Morgan Chase
- Raquel T. Hatter | Kresge Foundation
- Reverend Bethany Johnson-Javois, MSW | Deaconess Foundation
- Rev. Josh Privitt | Deaconess Board of Trustees
- Rev. Norma Patterson | Deaconess Board of Trustees
- Rexanah Wyse Morrissette | Children's Defense Fund
- Rudy Nickens | Deaconess Board of Trustees
- Serena Muhammed | St. Louis MHB
- Sharon Bush | Grand Victoria Foundation

- Tammy Krebel | Commerce Bank
- Tosha Phonix | Food Justice Organizer
- Vianey Beltran | Wells Fargo Advisors

Focus Groups

- Wyman Youth Council Focus Group | September 28, 2022
- Deaconess Funded Partner Focus Group | October 11, 2022
- Deaconess Funded Partner Focus Group | October 14, 2022
- Deaconess Funded Partner Focus Group | October 20, 2022
- Deaconess Funded Partner Focus Group | October 21, 2022
- The Scholarship Foundation Policy Fellows Focus Group | October 21, 2022
- Deaconess Funded Partner Focus Group | October 25, 2022
- General Community Focus Group | November 14, 2022

Attended Community Events

- Back to School Fair (Harvester Christian Church) | August 13, 2022
- Farmer's Market (Red Circle) | August 27, 2022
- #WeOutside | August 27, 2022
- 6th Annual Childhood Obesity FamFun3k Walk | September 10, 2022
- Northside Community Housing Trap Run | September 10, 2022
- United Congregations of Metro East: Deep Canvassing | September 10, 2022
- FrizzFest | September 17, 2022
- Racial Healing & Justice Fund (Deaconess Foundation) | September 24, 2022
- Blacktoberfest | October 1, 2022
- North Central Plan: People's Assembly | October 1, 2022
- Arch City Defenders: Community Appreciation Event | October 7, 2022
- Metropolitan Congregations United: Look Up Alive | October 9, 2022
- St. Louis 24th Senate District Event (Metropolitan Congregations United) | October 13, 2022
- Deaconess Foundation Annual Joint Public Board Meeting | November 15, 2022