



# BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

## St. Louis, Missouri



### About the St. Louis Housing Authority

For more than 80 years, the St. Louis Housing Authority (SLHA) has helped St. Louisans access affordable housing and social services. With a dedicated team of 71 employees, SLHA provides housing assistance to individuals and families through two housing programs funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development: Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8. SLHA offers a variety of public housing options to low-income individuals, families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. Our city-wide portfolio includes 38 family developments, five mixed-population developments, and four senior developments of varying sizes and types. The Housing Choice/Section 8 Program provides program participants with rental assistance towards housing in the private rental market across the metropolitan area. Through these initiatives, SLHA serves over 24,000 people.

#### OUR VISION

The St. Louis Housing Authority commits to provide diverse housing opportunities and to enhance the quality of life of the families we serve.

#### OUR MISSION

Innovative housing and community development solutions that meet the challenges of our changing world.

SLHA is more than a housing provider: we recognize residents need meaningful access to supportive services and trauma-informed programming to thrive. SLHA administers an array of resident-centered programs designed to promote the economic, mental, and social well-being of children, families, individuals with disabilities, and seniors.



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### What is Building Community Resilience?

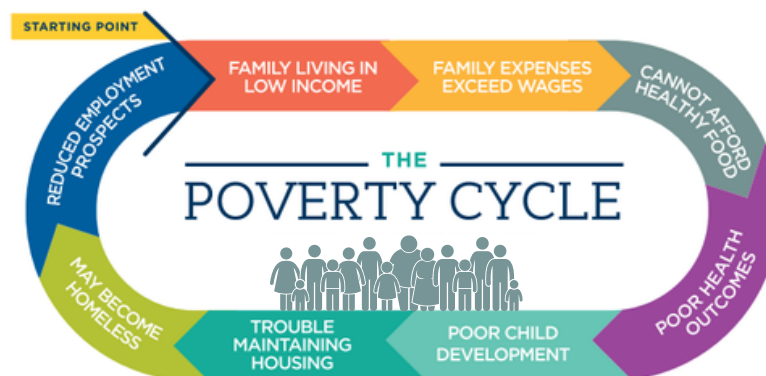
Building Community Resilience (BCR) is a national network and learning collaborative that seeks to improve the health and life outcomes of children, families, and communities. Teams in six regions across the country are using the BCR process and tools to help their communities not only 'bounce back' in the face of adversity, but bounce forward. Since 2017, BCR teams have helped build and strengthen the buffers that can prevent negative outcomes associated with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), particularly in the context of adverse community environments (ACEs)—the Pair of ACEs.

Using the BCR process and tools, teams work to align large systems with one another—such as health care, city government, and education—and also with community-based partners, including parenting support services and grassroots health advocacy. Teams also develop strategies – from implementing trauma-informed practices to data sharing and advocating for policy change – that bolster strengths, fill gaps, and ultimately build child, family, and community resilience. Teams identify community strengths and gaps, work in partnership with community not on community, develop a shared understanding of adversities and goals, and identify concrete policy asks to pursue. The teams use CCR's free and publicly available tools and resources—including the [Pair of ACEs and Resilience Trees](#), [Communications & Coalition-Building Guide](#), and [Fostering Equity Guide](#)—to implement their work.

BCR is led by the Center for Community Resilience (CCR) at the George Washington University's Milken Institute School of Public Health. CCR provides technical assistance, including strategic planning, facilitation of cross-sector information sharing, support for data and measurement, development of policy strategies, convening, and communications support.

## The Community Context

Vibrant and thriving communities give their members the power and resources to actualize their vision for health and well-being. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many Missourians. A lack of quality and affordable housing for lower-income residents affects people of all races and ethnicities across our region. The St. Louis Housing Authority (SLHA) serves a region with an exorbitant affordable housing need. Less than 27% of households earning less than 30% AMI have access to federally protected affordable housing. Of the few fortunate to access one of SLHA's income-based housing programs, residents often experience profound financial hardships. The average SLHA household earns less than \$14,897 annually, at or far below 100% of the federal poverty limit. At this poverty level, residents lack sufficient resources to meet their basic human needs. Lack of access to even one basic need can result in vast physical and mental health disparities and a lifelong cycle of compounding disadvantage and instability for many households.



Adapted from the [City of Red Deer](#)

## Our Approach to Building Community Resilience

SLHA's approach to building community resilience starts with centering the voice of impacted communities – SLHA residents, program participants, and neighboring community members – through Tenant Advisory Boards (TABs) and Program Coordinating Committees (PCC). Program participants and community stakeholders actively direct all aspects of SLHA's overall mission and operation. Centering community voice allows us to foster transformation rooted in community intention and empowers marginalized populations to become change agents. SLHA works closely with TABs and PCCs to craft resident-centered programs that promote the social well-being and economic mobility of children, families, individuals with disabilities, and seniors. Improving access to critical social service supports through a centrally coordinated, place-based service delivery system is essential to mitigating adverse childhood experiences and community environments and creating a healthier, better-supported community. SLHA's future goals include:

- Increased trauma-informed, place-based early childhood education and youth enrichment programming;
- Expanded comprehensive, outcome-focused social programs to combat community apathy and social isolation; and
- Creation of place-based health and wellness programs that promotes individual and collective healing.

## Our Partners

As a member of the national BCR collaborative, the St. Louis Housing Authority is working to build community resilience alongside partners including Missouri Institute of Mental Health, Affinia Healthcare, MCCB Transitions, Inc., and other regional stakeholders. This pioneering work requires exploration, experimentation, and frequent course changes. The Center for Community Resilience (CCR) provides resources and a framework to support information sharing, data collection, outcome measurement, and solution identification. The St. Louis Housing Authority has tapped into CCR's expertise to begin to build relationships with federal and state policymakers, including providing specific education on certain legislative and administrative actions.

## CONTACT

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