

Six nonprofit organizations received a grant from the Rabbi Robert P. Jacobs Jewish Fund for Human Needs (JFHN), totaling \$23,000.

JFHN works to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah (the obligation to do righteous acts) by awarding small grants to social service agencies not affiliated with the Jewish community that help those in need throughout the St. Louis region. This project is shared between the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) and the St. Louis Rabbinical and Cantorial Association (SLRCA). The JFHN is funded in part through a generous grant from the Lubin-Green Foundation and through the support of individual donors.

Rabbi Janine Schloss, President of the St. Louis Rabbinical and Cantorial Association said, “JFHN’s work had unfortunately been paused during the COVID years, so it was especially meaningful to get back to doing what Rabbi Jacobs (z”l) founded JFHN to do: give tzedakah and help people in need.”

Joel Iskiwitch, Chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council and a longtime volunteer with the fund added, “We have expanded the range of organizations that we consider and are now supporting organizations that provide direct services and/or advocacy. This allows us to assist nonprofits whose work is in line with, for example, the JCRC’s areas of priority, which include: racial equity, educational equity, criminal justice reform and environmental justice, access to healthcare, housing, food or employment, protection of voting rights/democracy; and organizations that fight discrimination against those considered “ger” or other.”

This round of grant recipients includes:

- [Empower Missouri](#) – works to secure basic human needs and equal justice for everyone in the State of Missouri. The JFHN’s grant was specifically awarded to support Empower Missouri’s clean slate expungement criminal justice reform initiative.
- [Immigrant Home English Learning Program](#) – empowers immigrant families by providing English language education and other tools to navigate their new community.
- [Lifewise STL](#) – supports the needs of Latinx and Somali immigrants. The JFHN’s grant was specifically awarded to support Lifewise STL’s Emotional and Physical Wellness Department.
- [Metro Trans Umbrella Group](#) – coordinates services among the St. Louis transgender community and provides direct support to individuals who identify as transgender.
- [A Red Circle](#) – addresses health and equity issues in North St. Louis County through a variety of programs including employment and access to healthy foods.
- [River City Journalism Fund](#) – promotes local news in the St. Louis region and strives for better representation of historically marginalized communities.

Upon receiving notification that they were awarded the grant, Richard Weiss, Chair of the River City Journalism Fund, had this to say: “We were honored that JFHN recognized our work to advance the cause of social justice at such a critical time for our region. In recent months, we have been able to broaden and deepen our work on behalf of marginalized communities. This grant will allow us to tell stories that will make a difference in the lives of our fellow citizens. We look forward to future collaborations with JFHN, JCRC, and the SLRCA.”

Similarly, Erica Williams, Executive Director at A Red Circle, shared her gratitude with this note: “A Red Circle is extremely grateful for the support that this grant will provide. We offer assistance to the community with healthy food that we grow, educational support in the classroom and legislature, and opportunities to enjoy the arts. Being recognized for our work by the JFHN, JCRC, and SLRCA and receiving the grant will provide financial support to our mission and the ability for our message to be shared to a broader audience.”

The JFHN Advisory Committee is comprised of representatives appointed by the JCRC and the STLRCA. Sue Picus chairs the committee and members include Carla Feuer, Wendy Flusser, Rabbi Dr. Andrea Goldstein, Joel Iskiwitch, Anna Poger, Rabbi Janine Schloss, Rabbi Arthur Stern, Tom Schweizer and Dan Vianello. The committee receives staff support from Maharat Rori Picker Neiss and Cheryl Adelstein, both employees of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

Donations to the Jewish Fund for Human Needs can be mailed to the Jewish Community Relations Council, 12 Millstone Campus Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146; or made online at <https://jcrctl.org/donate/>.