2025 ANNUAL REPORT

transforming neighborhoods together

St. Louis Magazine; Photography by Eric Schmid

Rise partners with communities to build stronger, more equitable St. Louis area neighborhoods.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year reflects both the complexity of our work and the importance of staying committed to it. Across the St. Louis region, communities continue to face a shortage of quality, affordable housing, even as they hold strong assets, history, and opportunity.

In 2025, Rise advanced projects that reflect a long-term, partnership-driven approach. From the groundbreaking of Marquette Homes in South St. Louis to the full lease-up of Winstanley Park in East St. Louis, to supporting the completion of the St. Louis County Comprehensive Plan, our work demonstrates both persistence and results.

The year also brought the devastation of a natural disaster, which called into sharp focus the crucial need for a fully functional community development ecosystem – not just for immediate recovery but for ongoing and sustained community resiliency.

Delivering these results, and scaling them, requires coordination across many partners. We bring together public, private, and philanthropic resources to move projects forward, while also supporting planning efforts, preserving historic buildings, and lending funds for redevelopment work at all scales.

We are grateful to the partners, funders, and community members who share our vision of a more equitable St. Louis area and help make this work possible. As we implement our new strategic plan in the years ahead, we remain focused on turning that shared vision into lasting community impact.

COLLEEN K. HAFNER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our Overarching Impact

To date, Rise, together with our partners, has supported affordable housing, community investment, and family stability across the communities we serve.

$318+ Million
Community Investment Under Development

843
Total Homes Under Development

2025 Overview

24
Communities Served

620
Families Supported

231
Homes Under Construction

$75+ Million
Housing Development Closed & Under Construction

$703,000+
CDFI Loans Provided for Minority Contractors & Small Developers

St. Louis Public Radio; Photography by Brian Munoz

OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY IMPACT

Building community requires more than a single solution. Rise works across the full lifecycle of community and affordable housing development, aligning on-the-ground priorities, capital, and expertise to deliver lasting impact.

Plan

We partner with communities and local organizations to develop strategies grounded in resident priorities and long-term neighborhood growth. Our process ensures this work is intentional, disciplined, and regionally aligned.

Finance

We structure complex capital stacks—bringing together public, private, and philanthropic resources to move projects from concept to reality. Through our CDFI lending, we deploy capital strategically and consistently.

Develop

We advance affordable housing and community developments from planning through completion, coordinating partners, sites, and execution to strengthen neighborhoods and support residents.

Preserve

We protect existing housing and historic assets, ensuring communities retain affordability, stability, and identity.

Support

We respond to emerging community needs, from capacity building to disaster recovery, advocacy, and coalition building; we coordinate partners, resources, and expertise to strengthen neighborhoods.

YEARS IN THE MAKING: HOUSING EXPANDS IN SOUTH CITY

After years of planning and coordination, the Marquette Homes development is moving forward, bringing 52 new affordable housing units to Dutchtown and Gravois Park.

This $26.3 million development reflects the persistence required to deliver housing at scale. The project combines new construction with the rehabilitation of historic buildings, including the long-vacant Melba Theatre and the prominent structure at 3305 Meramec.

The Melba Theatre, a landmark at a key South City intersection, will be transformed into a mixed-use hub with affordable housing, nonprofit office space, and community-serving organizations. Once completed, it is expected to serve as an anchor for further investment and activity along South Grand.

Developments like Marquette Homes require layered financing, including low-income housing tax credits, historic tax credits, and multiple public and private funding sources. Securing these resources is highly competitive and often requires multiple application cycles and years of coordination.

Despite these challenges, the need remains clear. With a shortage of more than 30,000 affordable units in St. Louis, developments like Marquette Homes play a critical role in expanding access to quality housing while strengthening neighborhood corridors.

MEETING DEMAND & BUILDING MOMENTUM IN EAST ST. LOUIS

Winstanley Park demonstrates what happens when quality affordable housing reaches the market.

The 38-unit development in downtown East St. Louis leased quickly after opening, with all units filled within months and a waiting list exceeding 100 households. The strong response underscores the significant demand for safe, affordable housing in the region.

Developed as part of a long-term neighborhood strategy, Winstanley Park builds on more than 17 years of investment in the area.

The development transforms a formerly vacant site into a mix of apartments and townhomes designed for working families.

Beyond housing, the development contributes to a broader vision for neighborhood revitalization—one that includes future housing, community facilities, and economic development. Plans for a new community center will expand access to services and support for local families.

Winstanley Park reflects a simple but powerful principle: stable housing is the foundation for community growth.

St. Louis Public Radio; Photography by Will Bauer

A LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY, BUILT ON EQUITY & COORDINATION

On May 16th, a devastating tornado tore through neighborhoods in St. Louis that had already endured decades of disinvestment. Homes were damaged or destroyed, blocks were destabilized, and families faced loss layered on top of long-standing inequities. The storm was sudden, but its impact was not evenly felt, and the recovery ahead will take time.

For many of these neighborhoods, the tornado did not create vulnerability so much as expose it. Aging housing stock, high vacancy, limited access to insurance and capital, and under-resourced infrastructure have shaped both the damage and the difficulty of rebuilding. In the immediate aftermath, residents and community-based organizations met urgent needs and checked on neighbors. That people-centered response mattered. It reminded us of the strength of our community and the value that trust-based initiatives bring to bear.

The ongoing recovery requires sustained investment and intentional coordination across public agencies, funders, lenders, nonprofit and for-profit developers, and community leaders. It must address storm damage and the deeper conditions that left some communities more exposed than others.

Stabilizing neighborhoods will take years of focused effort to repair homes, return vacant and damaged properties to productive use, and ensure longtime residents can remain and rebuild. Without alignment, recovery will become slow, fragmented, and inequitable.

This moment calls for a layered community development approach: planning rooted in resident priorities, targeted incentives and financing tools that close gaps, support for ongoing vacant-unit rehabilitation, flexible capital for nonprofit developers, and shared recovery frameworks that are true equity strategies—helping ensure rebuilding strengthens neighborhoods rather than fueling speculation or displacement.

Rise's role in this recovery is supportive and connective: helping align capital, policy, and practice so community development organizations and residents can lead rebuilding. We are advancing shared recovery plans and policies that prioritize affordability and long-term stability, while strengthening the systems that make equitable development possible, before the next crisis, not just after it.

The tornado was a profound disruption, but it should also be an inflection point. With intention, coordination, and respect for community leadership, recovery can repair long-standing harm and build greater resilience. Rise remains committed to the long haul, supporting the work required to rebuild structures and sustain communities.

PRESERVING HISTORY, CREATING OPPORTUNITY

The transformation of the former Tri-County YMCA into the Edison Avenue Art Lofts in Granite City, IL shows how preservation and development can work together to meet community needs.

Built in the 1920s, the 48,000-square-foot building has been reimagined as 37 affordable loft-style apartments, including units reserved for veterans, with a community arts hub featuring galleries, studios, and performance space.

Key historic features were retained while spaces like the gymnasium and dance studio were adapted into distinctive residential units—preserving the building's character while creating new opportunities for residents and artists.

In 2025, Rise was honored with a Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Preservation Award from Landmarks Illinois for excellence in adaptive reuse of this landmark redevelopment.

Edison Avenue Art Lofts illustrates how thoughtful redevelopment can strengthen community identity, support creative economies, and expand access to affordable housing. That same commitment to revitalization depends on ensuring residents have stable, affordable places to call home.

HOUSING AS THE FOUNDATION OF COMMUNITY STABILITY

Across the region, the need for affordable housing continues to outpace supply, even as many neighborhoods contend with vacancy, disinvestment, and aging building stock. Meeting this moment requires both new development and preservation of existing assets.

Rise's work is grounded in the understanding that housing is more than a standalone outcome; it is a platform for:

- Economic mobility and wealth creation
- Access to services
- Neighborhood stability
- Long-term community growth
- Regional competitiveness

From large-scale developments to targeted stabilization efforts, each project advances a broader goal: communities where residents can live, work, and thrive.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

This Work Is Made Possible Because of You

Rise is deeply grateful to our many partners, funders, residents, institutions, neighborhood groups, community organizations, and public sector collaborators who continue to work alongside us to advance equitable development and stronger neighborhoods.

Your trust, partnership, and shared commitment make this work possible as we continue *transforming neighborhoods together* across the St. Louis region.

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Accurate Disbursing
AECOM
Added Dimensions
Advantage Capital
Alliance Bank
Altman Charter
American Planning Association
Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen
Arnold Grounds Apartment Management
Boston Financial
BSI Constructors
Busey Bank
Carrollton Bank
Carr Square Tenant Corporation
Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust
CDI
City of St. Louis Affordable Housing Trust Fund
City of St. Louis Community Development Administration
City of St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency
Commerce Bank
Community Builders Network
Core 10 Architects
DeSales Community Development
Development Strategies
DOORWAYS
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