

TITLE X GRANTEE PROFILE: MISSOURI FAMILY HEALTH COUNCIL, INC.

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Missouri Family Health Council, Inc. (MFHC) brings family planning, reproductive health, and preventive care to Missourians through its network of 63 service sites across the state. Throughout MFHC's 40 years as Missouri's Title X grantee, the council has worked to increase access to family planning, improve infant and maternal health, reduce sexually transmitted infections, and break down barriers to care for its residents.

Like other states in the Midwest, Missouri has a mix of urban and rural communities; of its 114 counties, 100 (88 percent) are considered rural. One of the most significant challenges for Missourians seeking medical services, particularly those in rural communities, is the lack of available primary care providers and specialty providers, such as obstetricians and gynecologists. MFHC works to meet this need through its diverse service sites, which provide services in 79 percent of the state's federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas.

MFHC's provider network includes health departments, hospital-based clinics, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and stand-alone sites. MFHC's executive director shares that the variety of providers and locations served enables broad, quality care across the state.

To support its diverse provider base, MFHC offers regular training opportunities that reflect the needs of its communities and its providers. MFHC has recently provided trainings focused on equity, cultural competency, and recognition of implicit bias. "We all come with our own experiences and backgrounds," says MFHC's executive director. "No matter who you are, where you're coming from, you're always going to receive high-quality counseling, education, and family planning care [with MFHC]." Other trainings provided by MFHC to support equity in healthcare include serving LGBTQIA+ populations, serving people with disabilities, and combating human trafficking.

MFHC has also prioritized trainings related to recent STI screening and treatment guidelines. "We're really proud of our chlamydia screening," says MFHC's executive director. "We've seen screening rates increase throughout health centers and have done a lot of specific training to support the implementation of updated guidelines."

FAST FACTS

HHS Region:	7
Year of initial Title X funding:	1980
Grantee tenure:	40 years
# of subrecipients:	15
# of service sites:	63

Website: [MFHC](https://www.mfhc.org)

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

- Missouri's poverty rate (14 percent) is above the national average (12.7 percent).
- Missouri has several Health Professional Shortage Areas and medically underserved areas.
- Approximately 300,000 Missourians fall into the Medicaid coverage gap, significantly increasing the need for safety net healthcare services such as Title X.

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Other priorities for MFHC are to ensure that clinical activities promote positive relationships to increase family participation in family planning services and healthy decision making, as well as provide education and counseling that prioritize optimal health and life outcomes for every individual and couple.

Currently, more than half of all pregnancies in Missouri are described as unintended. MFHC leads *The Right Time* initiative, a collaborative of Missouri-based health centers founded on the principle that “everyone should have the opportunity to pursue the future they want, including if, when, and under what circumstances to get pregnant.”

One of the collaborative’s tactics to reduce unintended pregnancies is to lower cost barriers to contraception counseling and access. Uninsured women are more likely to go without care—particularly preventive care—because of cost. In addition to low-income populations, people of color and rural populations experience disproportionately high rates of unintended pregnancy.

MFHC partners with organizations such as the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Missouri KidsFirst, and the Teen Pregnancy & Prevention Partnership to share knowledge and build best practices around mandatory reporting and adolescent sexual health. “We aren't out here doing this alone,” says MFHC’s executive director. “We have strong partnerships. We bring in other experts. And that information sharing and training goes both ways.”

The culture of knowledge sharing at MFHC has been critical in creating a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. None of MFHC’s service sites were doing telehealth before the onset of the coronavirus, so MFHC quickly set up a series of how-to trainings so its network could continue providing care for patients around the state.

MFHC’s executive director shares, “Our network is full of very committed, passionate, and dedicated folks. They’ll always go the extra mile to implement Title X at the individual level for their patients.”

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Special thanks to Michelle Trupiano, M.S.W., MFHC executive director, for her contributions to this story.

ABOUT TITLE X

For 50 years, Title X family planning clinics have played a critical role in ensuring access to a broad range of family planning and related preventive health services for millions of low-income or uninsured individuals and others. Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services.

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