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## **Missouri State Technical Assistance Team Awards Grants to Support Investigation and Prosecution of Child Sex Crimes**

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The Missouri Department of Social Services, State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding totaling over \$980,000 to prosecuting attorney offices and law enforcement agencies across the state. The ARPA funds were allocated by the Missouri Legislature with the Governor’s approval to create grants for county prosecutors and law enforcement agencies who experience a high percentage of child sexual abuse investigations.

“I am incredibly thankful to our legislators and to the Governor for allocating this funding to such a crucial cause,” said **Robert Knodell, Department of Social Services Director**. “It’s imperative that we work together with our community partners in our shared mission of keeping Missouri’s children safe.”

The grant application period opened via an online portal in March 2023. Applications were due by May 12, and a total of 22 agencies submitted proposals for the federal funding. STAT worked in collaboration with the Missouri Office of Prosecution Services (MOPS) to conduct comprehensive reviews of the project proposals to determine which county agencies met the required criteria. Project proposals ranged from specialized child sexual abuse training, dedicated child sexual abuse law enforcement investigators and prosecutors, specialized equipment relevant to collection of evidence in investigations, audio-visual recording equipment, and more.

“This was an excellent opportunity for STAT to provide financial assistance to those communities who are heeding the call to do more and improve their efforts to protect the children in their communities,” said **Frank Tenant, STAT Chief**. “It is vital our partners in these communities are able to vigorously investigate and prosecute those people who chose to prey on our children’s innocence.”

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The Department of Social Services, Division of Finance and Administrative Services will be assisting the awardees with the administrative requisites of the program to facilitate the awarded funds.

The grant awardees are listed below:

Prosecuting Attorney Offices	Law Enforcement Agencies
Christian County Prosecutor's Office	Lincoln County Sheriff's Office
Stoddard County Prosecutor's Office	Pike County Sheriff's Office
St. Francis County Prosecutor's Office	Dunklin County Sheriff's Office
Shelby County Prosecutor's Office	Iron County Sheriff's Office
Washington County Prosecutor's Office	St. Clair County Sheriff's Office
Jefferson County Prosecutor's Office	Christian County Sheriff's Office
Grundy County Prosecutor's Office	St. Charles County Police Department
	Marshall County Police Department

The Department of Social Services strongly encourages anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-392-3738. The Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is answered 24-hours a day, every day, all year round.

**The mission of the Department of Social Services is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives.**

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