

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: High-Stakes Partnership Launches: FFSC & WashU HomeGrown StL Target Recidivism and Economic Disparity

Setting a 2-Year Goal for Black Male Home Ownership or Independent Rental Security



ST. LOUIS, MO – (December 12, 2025) – In a critical effort to enhance public safety and dramatically accelerate economic equity in St. Louis, [Fathers & Families Support Center \(FFSC\)](#) and Washington University’s nationally recognized [HomeGrown StL](#) project have formally launched the [“Be Men” life coaching intervention](#). This program is a new, personalized coaching and networking opportunity for young fathers and youth ages 14-35 who are current or past graduates of FFSC’s programs.

This intensive, evidence-informed, and community-driven program provides targeted support for **Black males**, and also leverages FFSC's long-standing expertise to immediately address personal obstacles that block employment, stability, and positive parenting.

The Ultimate Goal: Home Ownership or Independent Rental Lease

The cornerstone of the two-year post-completion plan for every "Be Men" participant is to achieve **gainful, stable housing opportunities**. This means securing either **home ownership or an independent rental lease to establish a safe and healthy foundation place to live**. This milestone is key to full family and community stabilization and sustained asset building.

“This is not just another training program; it’s a commitment to transformative change that targets the root causes of economic instability and lack of generational wealth,” said FFSC Quality Assurance Manager Oge Oge. “By combining the rigorous research of Washington University with FFSC’s deep, daily expertise, we are providing a direct, measurable pathway out of economic disparity, with the clear end-goal of putting our graduates in their own **homes or independent rentals within two years**. This is how we build sustained leadership and equity.”

Dr. Sean Joe, PhD, Benjamin E. Youngdahl Professor of Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis and director of the Race and Opportunity Lab, underscores the synergy of the partnership:

“The 'Be Men' initiative, in collaboration with Fathers & Families Support Center, represents a critical intersection of evidence-based research and deep community expertise. By pairing Washington University's rigorous, data-driven approach with FFSC's proven ability to deliver comprehensive, immediate, and holistic support, we are not just addressing symptoms of instability—we are building a powerful, customized infrastructure for stability and long-term economic mobility in St. Louis.”

The "Be Men" life coaching intervention is built upon three critical pillars: *resource navigation, social mobility skills development, and relational changes*. The program is designed to disrupt cycles of poverty and recidivism by providing actionable, individualized guidance focused on the long-term goal of **housing security and asset building**.

Immediate Impact and Foundational Steps

The partnership is already generating concrete, life-changing support through the “Be Men” framework, with services directly preparing participants for financial independence and housing stability:

- **Legal & Family Empowerment:** Direct connections to the FFSC Legal Services Director to urgently address complex issues such as child support modification, establishing paternity, and securing necessary legal documentation—essential steps for long-term financial planning. Session topics include Family Law & Childcare.
- **Financial Literacy & Asset Building:** Strategic partnerships, including with STL Community Credit Union, deliver essential financial literacy training and introduce critical wealth-building skills that are foundational to achieving the goal of **home ownership or rental security**. Participants receive focused presentations on Banking & Credit, Financial Planning, and Home Ownership.
- **Holistic Stability:** The program addresses comprehensive well-being, including Health & Wellness, Transportation, and Violence Prevention.

These foundational efforts are serving as a powerful driver for participants to develop responsible financial goals, improve communication skills, and build positive relationships, ensuring they are financially and socially prepared to secure independent housing and lead their families. The cohort is scheduled to run on Wednesdays from January 7 through February 25, 2026, culminating in a Cohort Graduation.

About Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC)

Celebrating 27 years, Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC) is a non-profit dedicated to supporting men (and women) on their journey to responsible parenthood, improving outcomes for children and strengthening families in the St. Louis bi-state region. FFSC also support at-risk youth through its 20+-week [Youth Leadership & Development Program \(YLDP\)](#).

Through its comprehensive programs and support services, FFSC has positively impacted over 53,000 children who have more responsible, involved parents today. To date, FFSC has supported nearly 22,000 men who wanted to become more responsible, involved fathers with their children. FFSC’s goal is to break the cycle of poverty, child neglect and abuse, and welfare dependence by educating and preparing fathers to become responsible parents with the financial stability to support their children materially and the parenting skills to support them emotionally and developmentally.

About HomeGrown StL (Washington University in St. Louis)

HomeGrown StL is a regional collaborative initiative housed at the Race and Opportunity Lab at Washington University’s Brown School. It is dedicated to strengthening the St. Louis region’s capacity to support Black males ages 14-35 in becoming economically mobile, thriving, contributing members of the community.

Media Contacts:

Sid Officer, Development & Communications Manager, FFSC: 314-351-2818 (text/call);
sofficer@fatherssupport.org

Neil Schoenherr, Senior News Director WashU Marketing & Communications office 314-935-5235; cell
314-2399734 nschoenherr@wustl.edu