



Opportunity Starts Here Fundraising Guide

April 2026

Organization Summary

Opportunity House envisions a community where all young people have the stability and support they need to thrive in a place they call home. Guided by this vision, the mission of the organization is to provide young people in the St. Louis region with access to safe and stable housing and the support needed to thrive. Opportunity House delivers culturally responsive, social justice-oriented housing and support services that foster a compassionate and inclusive environment. By honoring the identities and inherent dignity of every individual served, the organization creates the sense of safety and belonging essential for healing, growth, and lifelong stability and success.

Opportunity House is guided by the following principles:

Community Collaboration is Essential

Ending homelessness requires collective action. Lasting solutions can only be developed, implemented, and sustained through strong, ongoing partnerships with the broader community.

Housing is a Basic Human Right

Everyone deserves safe and stable housing. Opportunity House follows a low-barrier, Housing First model—prioritizing immediate access to housing with minimal preconditions or restrictions.

Healing Requires Safety

Traumatic experiences such as homelessness deeply affect a person's ability to achieve and maintain stability. Recovery begins with a foundation of safety, security, and access to compassionate, supportive care.

In pursuit of its mission, Opportunity House provides the following services:

Housing. Opportunity House provides low-barrier housing designed around housing first, harm reduction, and trauma informed principles. Residents are between the ages of 17 and 24 and live in double occupancy apartments. There are no restrictions on length of stay. This allows Residents to transition from the program when they are prepared to maintain long-term housing stability.

Mental health services. Mental health screenings, mental health assessments, ongoing crisis intervention, and therapeutic services are provided to increase the ability of program participants to manage symptoms and develop the skills necessary to successfully maintain long-term independence. These services are provided by community partners, contracted therapists, and organization staff.

Education. Connections to education programs – high school, HiSET, community college, trade school and four-year universities – are provided to ensure that program participants develop the skills necessary to achieve education goals. Opportunity House has established a partnership with St. Louis Community College to link Residents to

certificate programs in the areas of manufacturing, health, and technology. Through a partnership with Thomas Dunn Learning Center, Opportunity House Residents receive free HiSET programming.

Employment. Through the cultivation of partnerships with employers, program participants are provided direct links to career opportunities with livable wage jobs.

Community building. Opportunity House recognizes that a supportive community is a necessary tool for overcoming adversity. For many reasons, young people experiencing homelessness lack connections to supportive and caring peers and adults. Through regular community events for Residents, largely supported by each site's Advisory Board, Opportunity House helps Residents cultivate meaningful and lasting supportive relationships.

Aftercare and direct cash assistance. The move from supported housing to independent living can be daunting. To ease this transition, Opportunity House provides a \$1,000 transition stipend in the month a resident exits the program, followed by \$500 in direct monthly cash assistance for the five months thereafter. This support helps Residents maintain housing stability and build a foundation for long-term success.

Uniqueness of Services

There are several key differences between the services offered by Opportunity House and those offered by similar organizations in the St. Louis region. These differences include:

Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Young People

Research from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago reveals that 2SLGBTQIA+ young people are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than their non-2SLGBTQIA+ peers. Further, the National Coalition for the Homeless reports that nearly 60% of unhoused 2SLGBTQIA+ young people are victims of human trafficking, compared to 33.4% of their heterosexual counterparts.

In response to these disproportionate risks and unmet needs, Opportunity House offers a dedicated housing program that affirms and supports 2SLGBTQIA+ young people experiencing homelessness.

Long-term Housing with Minimal Barrier

Young people aged 17 to 24 are eligible to enroll in the program and can continue receiving support until they are prepared to transition to independence. Unlike many programs that impose strict age cutoffs or time limits, this program does not require Residents to leave upon turning a certain age or after a set period of time. Instead, support is based on individual readiness, ensuring each young person receives the time and resources necessary to achieve lasting independence.

Access to Gender-Affirming Care

Opportunity House recognizes that gender-affirming care is essential to the health, safety, and dignity of transgender and gender-diverse young people. To support Residents fully, Opportunity House covers the costs associated with accessing hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and related care—removing a major barrier to life-saving medical treatment.

Event Details

From April 5–18, Opportunity House is mobilizing our community to raise \$10,000 to support individuals working toward stability, independence, and a brighter future.

We are launching a peer-to-peer fundraising challenge, where 20 amazing team leaders—and their friends, families, and communities—will each raise \$500 to support the life-changing programs at Opportunity House.

Registering with Givebutter

Creating a Team

1. Visit <https://givebutter.com/OpportunityStartsHere2026>
2. Click the button titled *Fundraise*
3. Provide registration details (a photo is not required but highly encouraged)
4. Select *Create A Team* and provide necessary details (a team logo is not required but highly encouraged)

* Once you create a team, you will automatically be enrolled as a member of the team.

Joining a Team

1. Visit <https://givebutter.com/OpportunityStartsHere2026>
2. Click the button titled *Fundraise*
3. Provide registration details (a photo is not required but highly encouraged)
4. Click the button titled *Join a Team*
5. Select the appropriate team
6. Provide registration details (a photo is not required but highly encouraged)
7. Click *Join this Fundraiser*

Sample Team Member Recruitment Email

I'm excited to share that I'm serving as a team lead for Opportunity House (www.opportunityhousestl.org) during their upcoming virtual fundraiser, *Opportunity Starts Here*, taking place April 5–April 18. I've committed to helping raise \$500—and I can't do it without your support.

Opportunity House envisions a community where all young people have the stability and support they need to thrive in a place they can call home. Their mission is to provide young people in the St. Louis region with access to safe, stable housing and the resources needed for long-term success. Through culturally responsive, social justice–oriented housing and support services, Opportunity House fosters a compassionate, inclusive environment that honors the dignity and identities of every individual they serve—creating the safety and belonging essential for healing and growth.

I'm reaching out to invite you to join my fundraising team. As a team member, I'll provide all the tools, guidance, and support needed to make participation simple and manageable. All I ask is your commitment to helping our team reach our \$500 goal—it really is that easy!

Let me know when you have time to connect, and I'd be happy to share more details about joining the team.

Sample Team Member Recruitment Text

I'm putting together a fundraising team for Opportunity House (www.opportunityhousestl.org) and their virtual event, *Opportunity Starts Here*. We're aiming to raise \$500 from April 5–18, and I'd love for you to be part of it! I'll provide all the details and support—just let me know if you're interested.

Timeline: Team Lead

Date	Activity	Completed
Feb/March	Register team with Givebutter	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Make list of 10 people to join your team	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Contact potential team members to have them join team - Send them the Fundraising Guide	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Follow up with those you recruited to your team to confirm their interest and provide them with the Fundraising Guide	<input type="checkbox"/>
3/30/2026	Confirm all team members have registered	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/1/2026	Confirm team members have made a list of 20 potential donors	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/8/2026	Confirm team members have texted or called their potential donors	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/15/2026	Confirm team members have made reminder phone calls/emails/texts	<input type="checkbox"/>

Timeline: Team Member

Date	Activity	Completed
Feb/March	Register with Givebutter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feb/March	Make list of 20 potential donors	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/5-4/18/26	Contact potential donors (ongoing)	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/5/2026	First post to social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/8/2026	Second post to social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/11/2026	Third post to social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/15/2026	Fourth post to social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/17/2026	Fifth post to social media	<input type="checkbox"/>
4/18/2026	Thank You post to social media	<input type="checkbox"/>