



# CORTEX

## IMPACT REPORT

2025



LEARN | BUILD | WORK | GATHER



# IN THE DISTRICT

**406**  
COMPANIES

**345,200**  
VISITORS

**5,400**  
EMPLOYEES

**\$163.8M**  
TAX REVENUES  
FROM CORTEX  
(2014-2025)

**\$1.33B**  
INVESTED  
IN CORTEX

## TOP 5 SECTORS

- Life Science Research
- Life Science Therapeutics
- Technology & IT
- Business and Professional Services
- Community Development

# LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR AND PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Cortex Community,

Cortex remains at the forefront of St. Louis innovation by recommitting to an inclusive, dynamic environment where talent, technology, and transformative ideas converge to address some of the world's most pressing challenges. In many ways, 2025 built upon the strong momentum of recent years, marked by continued growth, deepening impact, and steady progress toward key milestones.

In 2025, Cortex was again named a finalist for a Best Places to Work award, recognizing our team's continued commitment to an inclusive, collaborative, and purpose-driven workplace.

### Expanding Our Physical Infrastructure

A defining achievement in 2025 was retaining C2N Diagnostics, a homegrown, cutting-edge life sciences company advancing highly effective Alzheimer's diagnostics and treatments, and supporting its continued growth in St. Louis. C2N will anchor Catalyst, the historic Goodwill Building, propelling a 160,000-square-foot redevelopment by BOBB, LLC, an affiliate of Washington University in St. Louis.

Beyond labs and offices, we know that District housing is essential to a truly thriving innovation district. In 2025, we made meaningful progress on two mixed-use residential developments, including advancing plans for Cortex's first new residential project. We anticipate groundbreaking in 2026, with new apartment homes available to tenants by the end of 2027.

Our physical footprint continued to grow, with expanded activation reaching Laclede Avenue with Carriage Works' historic renovation, major milestones like Varro Life Sciences' grand opening, and continued development of the Neuroscience Research Building and BJC Infusion Pharmacy.

### Driving Business Growth, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development

Real estate matters only when it is well used. In 2025, Cortex welcomed 64 new businesses to the District. At the same time, existing operations such as life science companies Omnirose, Pairidex, PanomeBio, SweetSpot, and Varro Life Sciences each expanded their teams and their presence in the District.

It was also a standout year for Cortex's entrepreneur training program Square One, which, in addition to serving more than 1,000 entrepreneurs in 2025, earned significant recognition and secured two competitive grants that will further expand its impact.

### Building Community and a Sense of Place

Equally important, 2025 was a year of connection. More people engaged with one another and with the District than ever before, building community through more than 200 events and activations. From signature gatherings such as We Are Cortex, Frizzmas, and Kaleidoscope, to weekly coffee meetups, food trucks, bands, artists, BioSTL's monthly Innovators Hour, lunch and learns, and informal moments of connection, Cortex continued to grow as a place where people want to be, collaborate, and grow.

From talent development to placemaking, from infrastructure to entrepreneurship, 2025 was a year of meaningful progress. As we look ahead, we remain resolute in our commitment to driving innovation, economic growth, and opportunity, and to building a brighter, more inclusive future for all of St. Louis together.



**JUNE  
McALLISTER  
FOWLER**

CORTEX BOARD CHAIR



**SAM  
FIORELLO**

CORTEX PRESIDENT  
& CEO

Cortex creates space for innovators from a diversity of backgrounds to transform ideas into solutions. Weaving together people, places, and organizations, Cortex accelerates inclusive economic growth in the St. Louis region.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE:



### OPERATE A WELCOMING INNOVATION DISTRICT

**BUILD** lab, mixed-use, and office space in collaboration with developers.

**ACTIVATE** the District through in-house efforts and strategic partnerships.



### FILL DISTRICT BUILDINGS

Facilitate the growth and success of **HOMEOWN COMPANIES**.

**RECRUIT** new businesses to the region by engaging partners and building owners.



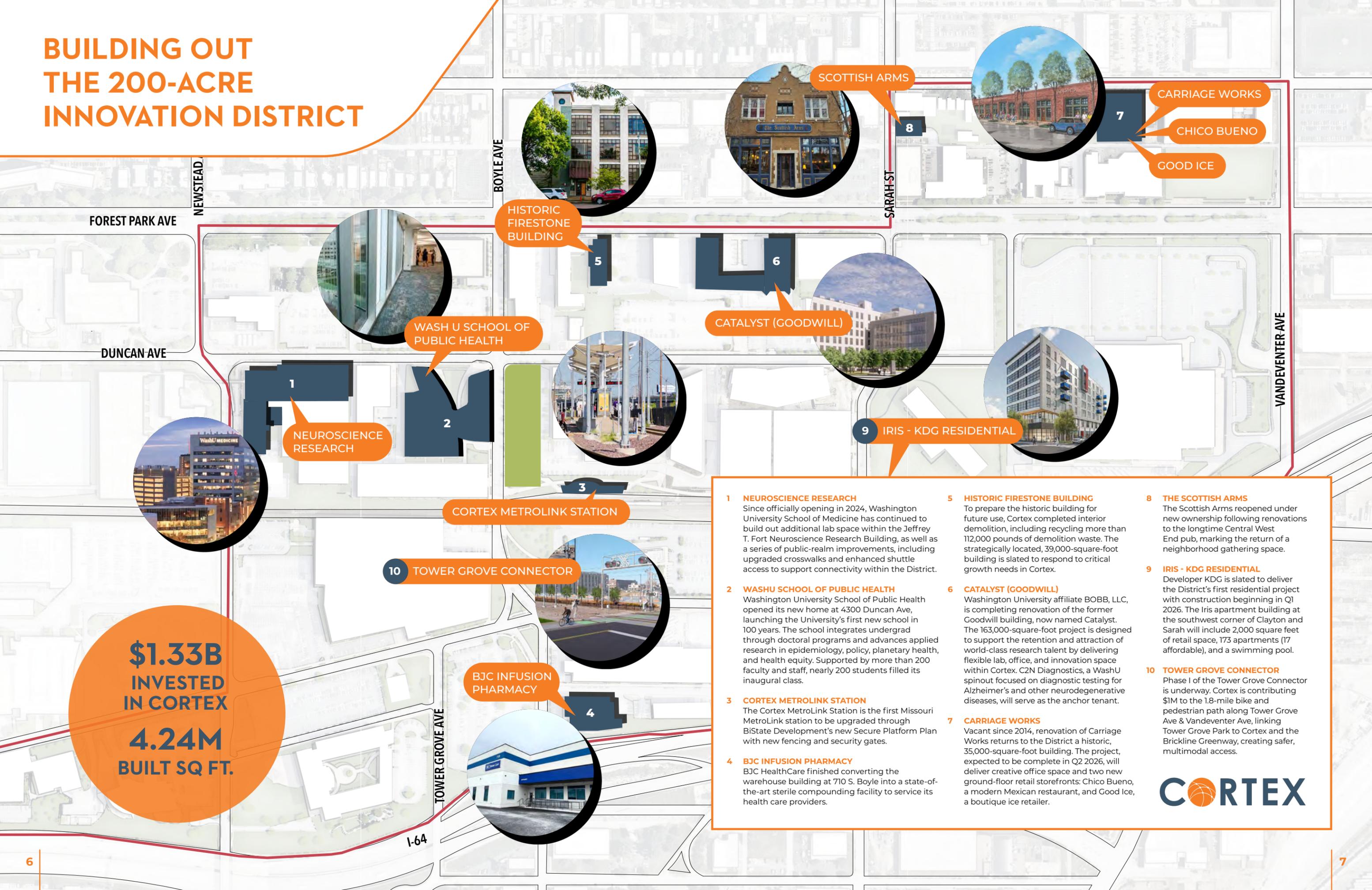
### TRAIN ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS

Equip a diverse pool of **ENTREPRENEURIAL TALENT** with the skills to start and scale new enterprises through targeted training programs.

Long-term, our success will mean that:

1. Greater than 90% of commercial space in Cortex is occupied, driving even greater District-generated tax revenues that benefit the region;
2. Cortex has increased both the number of employers recruited and retained, including the number of employers they bring to the region;
3. A diversity of St. Louisans experience an increase in household income and wealth, leading to a reduction in the regional income gap; and,
4. Discoveries will lead to new products and services, and in some cases, life-saving treatments.

# BUILDING OUT THE 200-ACRE INNOVATION DISTRICT



**\$1.33B**  
INVESTED  
IN CORTEX  
**4.24M**  
BUILT SQ FT.

**1 NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH**

**2 WASH U SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**3 CORTEX METROLINK STATION**

**10 TOWER GROVE CONNECTOR**

**4 BJC INFUSION PHARMACY**

**5 HISTORIC FIRESTONE BUILDING**

**6 CATALYST (GOODWILL)**

**9 IRIS - KDG RESIDENTIAL**

**8 THE SCOTTISH ARMS**

**CARRIAGE WORKS**

**CHICO BUENO**

**GOOD ICE**

- 1 NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH**  
Since officially opening in 2024, Washington University School of Medicine has continued to build out additional lab space within the Jeffrey T. Fort Neuroscience Research Building, as well as a series of public-realm improvements, including upgraded crosswalks and enhanced shuttle access to support connectivity within the District.
- 2 WASHU SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Washington University School of Public Health opened its new home at 4300 Duncan Ave, launching the University's first new school in 100 years. The school integrates undergrad through doctoral programs and advances applied research in epidemiology, policy, planetary health, and health equity. Supported by more than 200 faculty and staff, nearly 200 students filled its inaugural class.
- 3 CORTEX METROLINK STATION**  
The Cortex MetroLink Station is the first Missouri MetroLink station to be upgraded through BiState Development's new Secure Platform Plan with new fencing and security gates.
- 4 BJC INFUSION PHARMACY**  
BJC HealthCare finished converting the warehouse building at 710 S. Boyle into a state-of-the-art sterile compounding facility to service its health care providers.
- 5 HISTORIC FIRESTONE BUILDING**  
To prepare the historic building for future use, Cortex completed interior demolition, including recycling more than 112,000 pounds of demolition waste. The strategically located, 39,000-square-foot building is slated to respond to critical growth needs in Cortex.
- 6 CATALYST (GOODWILL)**  
Washington University affiliate BOBB, LLC, is completing renovation of the former Goodwill building, now named Catalyst. The 163,000-square-foot project is designed to support the retention and attraction of world-class research talent by delivering flexible lab, office, and innovation space within Cortex. C2N Diagnostics, a WashU spinout focused on diagnostic testing for Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases, will serve as the anchor tenant.
- 7 CARRIAGE WORKS**  
Vacant since 2014, renovation of Carriage Works returns to the District a historic, 35,000-square-foot building. The project, expected to be complete in Q2 2026, will deliver creative office space and two new ground-floor retail storefronts: Chico Bueno, a modern Mexican restaurant, and Good Ice, a boutique ice retailer.
- 8 THE SCOTTISH ARMS**  
The Scottish Arms reopened under new ownership following renovations to the longtime Central West End pub, marking the return of a neighborhood gathering space.
- 9 IRIS - KDG RESIDENTIAL**  
Developer KDG is slated to deliver the District's first residential project with construction beginning in Q1 2026. The Iris apartment building at the southwest corner of Clayton and Sarah will include 2,000 square feet of retail space, 173 apartments (17 affordable), and a swimming pool.
- 10 TOWER GROVE CONNECTOR**  
Phase I of the Tower Grove Connector is underway. Cortex is contributing \$1M to the 1.8-mile bike and pedestrian path along Tower Grove Ave & Vandeventer Ave, linking Tower Grove Park to Cortex and the Brickline Greenway, creating safer, multimodal access.



# CORTEX'S TAX BENEFIT TO THE REGION: \$163.8M (SINCE TIF ACTIVATION)\*

Cortex allocated a new \$4M TIF allotment for C2N Diagnostics, which will produce an additional \$10.6M in tax revenue.

This investment, approved by the City of St. Louis, allows the biotech company pioneering blood-based diagnostics for Alzheimer's to remain and grow in St. Louis, establishing 172 high-paying jobs and anchoring Catalyst, a 162,000-square-foot redevelopment of the historic Goodwill building. This project transforms a formerly non-taxable property into a long-term revenue generator. The TIF activation strengthens St. Louis' innovation economy, expands the tax base, and positions the region at the forefront of medical advancement.

Taxing Jurisdiction	2014-2025 Total Tax Revenues*	2014-2025 Tax Revenues Without Construction (est.)*	2014-2025 Net New Tax Revenues*
State of Missouri	\$ 77,450,000	\$ 26,400,000	\$ 51,050,000
St. Louis City	\$ 47,500,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 37,500,000
St. Louis Public Schools	\$ 26,700,000	\$ 9,600,000	\$ 17,100,000
St. Louis Community College	\$ 900,000	\$ 350,000	\$ 550,000
St. Louis Zoo/Museum District	\$ 1,045,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 545,000
St. Louis Public Library	\$ 1,650,000	\$ 835,000	\$ 815,000
Sheltered Workshop	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 247,500	\$ 752,500
Community Mental Health	\$ 335,800	\$ 158,000	\$ 177,800
Community Children's Service Fund	\$ 707,000	\$ 307,000	\$ 400,000
Senior Services	\$ 156,000	\$ 24,500	\$ 131,500
Metro Parks	\$ 1,650,000	\$ -	\$ 1,650,000
MetroLink	\$ 4,280,000	\$ -	\$ 4,280,000
Metropolitan Sewer District	\$ 441,500	\$ 200,000	\$ 241,500
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 163,815,300</b>	<b>\$ 48,622,000</b>	<b>\$ 116,863,300</b>

\*Rounded estimates based on collections of economic activity and real property taxes  
\*Cortex TIF activated in 2014



CORTEX'S TIF  
HAS PRODUCED  
**\$163.8M**  
IN TAX REVENUES  
(2014-2025)

## ESSENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

With approval by the City of St. Louis, Cortex retained and extended its Blight Designation, a critical legal framework that enables the District to complete its long-term redevelopment mission. Under Missouri's Chapter 353 statute, which names Cortex the Master Developer of its 200 acres, renewing the designation preserves access to essential development tools that help attract private and philanthropic investment, advance infrastructure and workforce projects, and reduce reliance on general City resources.



Future Development Sites in Cortex

# WE ARE CORTEX

Innovating for St. Louis and Beyond

We Are Cortex celebrates the individuals who power our vibrant District. From entrepreneurs to engineers, from scientists to artists — it's the people of Cortex who create, innovate, and inspire.

This storytelling campaign highlights the humans behind our District's incredible progress. Together, they embody the spirit of an unstoppable innovation ecosystem that is transforming St. Louis and beyond. Together, We Are Cortex.



**PABLO SABRON**  
Impossible Sensing



“You have this cross-pollination of ideas. There's a real benefit to being in this powerhouse of brain power and diversity.”

**NICHOLE MERCIER**  
WashU Office of Technology Management



“By seeing our startups stay here in Cortex, it builds pride for us. We know that we are contributing to a robust ecosystem for St. Louis, for WashU, and for our researchers.”

**ANDREW GLANTZ**  
GiftAMeal



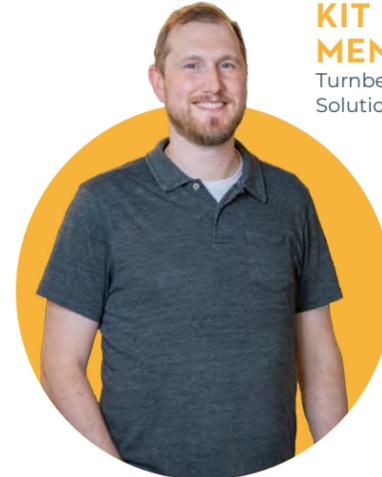
**CATHY ESPINOZA**  
Gates Ag One



**GEORGE CRANE**  
Swipesum



**KIT MENKE**  
Turnberry Solutions



**LU ALLERUZZO**  
Immunophotonics



**LAKECIA VEAL**  
Filament



**ISMAEL WAYNE**  
Puddin Puddin



**KEVIN MCBEARTY**  
Varro Life Sciences



**JIMMY PHAM**  
Wugen



**THERESA NOTESTINE**  
WashU Medicine Physical Therapy



**TASHARA EARL**  
Shades of Color



**NICOLE DOTSON**  
Alcami





# SQUARE ONE

Cortex's Square One Programs foster innovation in concept- and early-stage entrepreneurs. Embracing a person-centered and holistic approach, the program equips participants with essential tools, resources, and mentorship to bring their visionary ideas to life in Information Technology, Manufacturing/Consumer Products, Food Industries, and Service Businesses. In addition to the hallmark offerings of Cortex SQ1 Ignite + Bootcamp, we scaled entrepreneur support in 2025 and earned grants to fuel more opportunities for 2026 and beyond.



## IGNITE

### FROM IDEAS TO ACTION

SQ1 Ignite opens the door to St. Louis' entrepreneurial ecosystem. It helps founders rapidly validate their business concepts, identify their target customers, and build foundational skills.



## BOOTCAMP

### 100+ HOURS OF ESSENTIAL HANDS-ON BUSINESS TRAINING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

SQ1 Bootcamp provides participants with business fundamentals, core workforce skills, and sector-specific support and technical guidance tailored to each entrepreneur's industry. It becomes the community that propels their businesses forward with hand-held connections to the innovation ecosystem and customers.



## YEAR-ROUND TRAININGS

### COLLABORATING WITH PARTNERS TO SHARE EXPERTISE

Regular extra training programs provide skills for new business founders around financial literacy, legal readiness, customer discovery, brand development, vendor preparation, cultural connections, and weekly pitch practice.

# BY THE NUMBERS

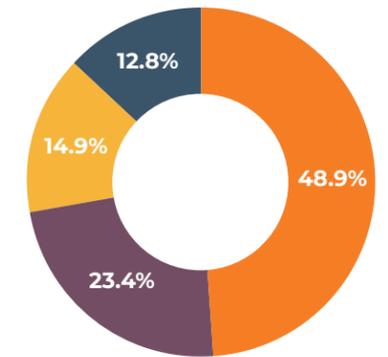
## SQ1 IGNITE



GRADUATED  
**47**  
IGNITE  
PARTICIPANTS



SECTOR  
BREAKDOWNS:  
Service: 48.9%  
IT: 23.4%  
Food: 14.9%  
Manufacturing: 12.8%



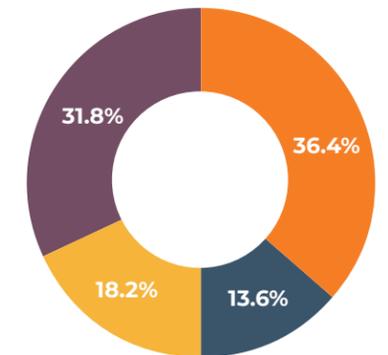
## SQ1 BOOTCAMP



GRADUATED  
**22**  
BOOTCAMP  
PARTICIPANTS



SECTOR  
BREAKDOWNS:  
Service: 36.4%  
IT: 13.6%  
Food: 18.2%  
Manufacturing: 31.8%



## YEAR-ROUND TRAININGS

**1,000+**  
ENTREPRENEURS  
SERVED

**47**  
TRAININGS

### PARTNERS

Balsa Foundation, BioSTL, CIC, Frizzy by Nature, The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Latinx Arts Network, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, Riff Business, St. Louis Community Credit Union, St. Louis Mosaic Project, Small Business Empowerment Center, TechArtista Foundation, WEPOWER, and dozens of festival and market partners.

# SQ1 SUCCESS STORIES

SQ1 enrichment remains a consistent, trusted gathering place and a hub for learning, connection, and inclusive economic growth.



"This progress would not have been possible without the WashU and St. Louis innovation ecosystem — particularly clinical collaborators, research infrastructure, and early mentors, who helped translate an idea born from personal loss into an FDA-ready platform."

**ALYSSA HUFFMAN**

## ALLUMIN8

The St. Louis-based startup Allumin8 has managed to achieve something no other medical device company ever has: clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for a type of spinal screw that's produced through additive manufacturing. Allumin8 CEO Alyssa Huffman is a graduate of SQ1 programming VentureReady MO.



"I like talking to the other entrepreneurs. We can talk about our experiences, reach a hand and help the ones that are up and coming. We provide St. Louis with this ecosystem of bad-ass entrepreneurs. Surviving is not enough anymore. Thriving is the goal."

**ADJO HONSOU**

## FUFU N' SAUCE

SQ1 Bootcamp graduate and We Are Cortex Ambassador Adjo Honsou opened a brick and mortar of her wildly popular food truck, Fufu n' Sauce. The restaurant was named one of 2026's Best New Restaurants by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.



"Going through Cortex's Square One Bootcamp really pushed me to deal with the reality of owning a business. I have to have very clear goals. And if I can use my business outcomes to impact a life every single day, that's what I want to do."

**FRANKLIN TAYLOR**

## BLOCK CLUB

SQ1 Bootcamp 2024 graduate Block Club received in 2025 the STLOnward Arch Grant, supported by NISA Charitable Fund. A customer-engagement platform, Block Club aims to help independent restaurants, retailers, and service businesses increase sales and repeat customers through outreach programs. The company is led by its co-founders, CEO Franklin Taylor and CTO Jason Ti.



"The Square One program helped me grow a strong network in St. Louis, meaningful introductions and referrals, and encouragement while also pushing me to think about who we were and who we wanted to become in the early days of Reimagine Resources. It was a safe place to test ideas, gain visibility through community recognition, and build credibility by having our work elevated on their platform. That combination of support and exposure played an important role in shaping the foundation of our company."

**JULIANA SCHEIDHAUER**

## REIMAGINE RESOURCES

Reimagine Resources is a values driven, full service fitness facility resources company that supports commercial fitness spaces across the United States. We work with commercial clients such as equipment and product manufacturers and brands, infrastructure developers, national gym franchises, corporations, schools, and more to provide solutions for their fitness facilities from concept through the life cycle of the facility. Our focus is on reliability, risk management, and long-term performance, ensuring that fitness spaces are not only built well, but supported well over time.



"Square One Bootcamp was exactly the resource I needed to turn an idea into reality. The program helped me organize my thinking, build new skills, and gain momentum through a structured, hands-on approach. The accountability — combined with coaching from a dedicated mentor and local business experts across multiple disciplines — was invaluable. By the end of the program, I had the confidence and tools to hit the ground running and successfully launch a new business."

**BONNIE MANN**

## STLCOFFEEFEST

Square One alumna Bonnie Mann launched STL Coffee Fest, St. Louis' first coffee-themed festival, in February 2025, at Cortex's neighbor City Foundry STL. The all-day celebration connected the sold-out crowd with St. Louis' top specialty roasters. Attendees explored curated exhibitions and sampled some of the area's best coffee and tea. Given the success of the inaugural event, STL Coffee Fest is back in 2026 and expanded to a two-day event.



# A SNAPSHOT OF SQ1 IMPACT

To better understand our impact, we reached out to each Bootcamp graduate from 2020-2024 to ask them about the state of their business and their current financial stability. We are happy to report **81% of respondents** still operate their business, with all but one operating in the St. Louis region. Those companies bring in a range of annual revenue, **up to \$500K per year**, and they have **created a total of 50 jobs**. **64% of respondents stated that they have improved their financial health** by using skills learned in SQ1 Bootcamp. Of those who are in the workforce, **80% reported that the skills they learned from Square One helped them get a better quality job** than they had during the program.



## BANK OF AMERICA GRANT

Cortex was selected as one of 2025's recipients of Bank of America's prestigious Neighborhood Builders award, which grants \$200,000 in funding, along with leadership training, to nonprofit organizations that shape our city's future. Funding will support Cortex's Square One program.

## PORT AUTHORITY GRANT

The St. Louis County Port Authority fund awarded Cortex an initial \$100,000 grant to fuel business expansion and entrepreneurship, with a focus on underserved communities. Cortex will partner with St. Louis Mosaic Project and International Institute on this work.



## MISSOURI TECH FIRST INITIATIVE

In 2023, Cortex and 12 partners established the Missouri Tech First initiative to create clear training and career pathways for tech jobs. By 2025, at the end of the funding, more than 800 individuals graduated from credentialed training programs, and nearly 350 received new tech jobs. Those graduates came from 86 zip codes across Missouri and Illinois, with half of the graduates being women and 60 percent people of color.

# IN THE DISTRICT

We're celebrating innovative companies big and small that make up our Cortex Innovation District. Here is a snapshot of successes in 2025.



## MICROSOFT

AI took center stage at Microsoft, shaping both strategic priorities and the customer experiences delivered. At the St. Louis Innovation Hub, Microsoft significantly expanded and refined their demo environments to showcase how AI can transform operations across a wide range of industries, from manufacturing and health care to financial services and retail. The Hub welcomed 112 customer organizations and facilitated 208 engagements, bringing in more than 1,900 participants, who collaborated with the Microsoft team to explore and develop AI-driven solutions tailored to their business needs. These sessions not only highlighted the power of Microsoft's technology but also deepened partnerships and sparked meaningful innovation across the region.

In addition to customer-focused work, Microsoft prioritized community involvement, hosting over 30 school and community events to inspire interest in STEM and expose students and local organizations to the possibilities of AI. These efforts helped strengthen commitment to workforce development and broadened access to technology education within the St. Louis community.



## SHRINERS

U.S. News & World Report released its 2025-2026 ranking of the Best Children's Hospitals, placing Shriners Children's St. Louis — along with Washington University and St. Louis Children's Hospital — at No. 21 on the prestigious list in the category of pediatric orthopedics. Two Shriners' doctors also joined an exclusive list of orthopedic surgeons trained to use a novel new ApiFix Technology for treating scoliosis. The "internal brace" technology is less invasive than traditional spinal fusion surgery and can get patients back to school in as little as a week.



## PANOME BIO

The now 20-person team offering expert metabolomics and lipidomics data, saw revenue increase in its core business serving the biopharma industry, won a \$2 million SBIR-NCI grant, and secured participation in the NCI's Childhood Cancer Data Initiative. The team achieved CLIA certification, reinforcing their laboratory excellence for biopharma developers. Panome Bio also launched numerous new service lines including TissueBridge, a first-of-its-kind service for FFPE tissue analysis, unlocking vast biobanked datasets to metabolite profiling.



## IKEA

Celebrating 10 years of serving the St. Louis community, IKEA St. Louis focused efforts on being good neighbors and supporting local organizations like Healing Action Network, 100 Black Men of Metropolitan St. Louis, and Gene Slay's Girls & Boys Club of St. Louis. These partnerships included donating furniture and providing interior design services to refresh community centers. Team members also assisted various organizations with tornado relief efforts. The iconic IKEA FRAKTA tote played an important role, serving as care package bags and helping residents transport items from their homes.



## GATES AG ONE

Gates Ag One continued to build momentum from its home in Cortex, advancing global agricultural science through collaboration and co-location. The organization launched new branding, reflecting a renewed focus on unity, access, and impact. It also expanded its research portfolio with new partnerships advancing science across maize, cassava, cowpea, rice, sorghum, and soybean. Gates Ag One has established itself in Cortex as a hub for international scientific collaboration with a commitment to delivering equitable, science-driven solutions for smallholder farmers.



## WASHU SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Washington University in St. Louis opened its School of Public Health in Cortex in 2025. Among the new School's major milestones: It recruited 130 faculty, built a world-class team of scholars and educators, launched six Innovation Research Networks to drive interdisciplinary collaboration and advance toward full CEPH accreditation (expected April 2026), introduced the new undergraduate Public Health & Society major, and hosted high-level convenings that elevated its national profile.



## WUGEN

Wugen, a clinical-stage biotechnology company, initiated a pivotal trial with its allogenic CAR-T cell therapy, applied for and received FDA Breakthrough Therapy Designation for WU-007, and raised \$115M to advance life-altering cancer therapies for patients who need it.



## CIVIC INSIGHT

2025 marked a major inflection point for CCRI as the organization launched Civic Insight, a new brand that reflects its growing ambition and impact. The team tackled some of the region's most complex analytic challenges, leading federal funding and economic development research that helped partners assess vulnerability, strengthen proposals, and direct resources where they matter most. Civic Insight significantly advanced its use of national credit bureau data, enabling deeper, program- and neighborhood-level insight into financial health, credit access, and economic mobility. As a key data partner in a large, multi-sector regional collaboration, Civic Insight helped shape shared indicators and data infrastructure to support coordinated action. To meet rising demand, the team grew from 6 to 9 staff, expanding expertise in analytics, geospatial analysis, and data storytelling.



## FABUTECH

FabUTech develops stability and manufacturing technologies that expand access to nuclear cancer diagnostics and radiopharmaceutical therapies. Their lead product, DuraRad™, extends drug shelf life by neutralizing radiolytic peroxide inside pharmaceutical vials, enabling wider distribution with less waste. Their second platform, FabULink™, provides clean, site-specific antibody and fragment conjugation to support scalable production of next-generation radiopharmaceuticals.



## PRESAGE

Presage has made significant strides in both talent and innovation, hiring for its St. Louis laboratory team, machine-learning research scientists, and an MLOps engineer to strengthen data and modeling operations. Presage also successfully completed its clinical trial in partnership with Baylor College of Medicine, demonstrating accurate pulse rate and breathing rate measurement using only mobile phone cameras. This milestone represents a major step forward in validating the company's easy-to-use technology to make vital sign monitoring accessible to everyone. Presage also launched two consumer-facing products on the Apple iOS App Store: Lung Fu, a guided breathing game, and Sixth Sense, a vital monitoring app—marking an important expansion of Presage's technology into real-world user experiences.



## FILAMENT

Filament provides free, community-focused programming for St. Louis professionals, serving over 800 individuals in 2025. Key offerings include New Skills for Work workshops, Wavelength leadership community for women, PlayDays for hands-on learning, and Thinksgiving, an annual pro-bono event connecting nonprofits with local businesses. In 2025, Thinksgiving involved 35 nonprofits and 500 participants addressing regional challenges.



## FREEDOM COMMUNITY CENTER

In response to the May 16th tornado, FCC lead a full mobile response that provided over 1,500 people with hot meals, supplies, and healing resources. Through restorative justice practices that focused on healing over incarceration, FCC this year saved 230 years of incarceration, totaling more than \$3.8 million in taxpayer savings.



## FORMULA LAW

Formula Law began transforming from a traditional estate planning and probate practice into an AI-native firm, building a custom-internal platform. By partnering with a dedicated software engineer, Formula Law is automating foundational workflows and creating tools that leverage deep estate planning and probate expertise for architecting a scalable, intelligent infrastructure that enhances client service and positions the firm at the forefront of legal practice innovation.



## UN & UP

The medical technology development corporation is dedicated to creating disruptive technology using medical magnetics. UN & UP has spun out two companies for commercialization: TheraLode, which has developed a breakthrough magnetic nanoparticle thrombolytic drug delivery platform; and Thrombot, which makes a disruptive small-diameter catheter for removing large and medium vessel occlusions in ischemic stroke, enabled and actuated by a compact external magnet system.



## AON

In 2025, AON participated in events such as the St. Louis Scores Cup to support youth literacy and the National African American Insurance Association STL TopGolf Scholarship Fundraiser, and team members were involved with multiple local nonprofits focused on health, education, and economic opportunity. Internally, AON strengthened its leadership team with the appointment of Brandon Leetch as Missouri Market Leader, and expanded companywide capabilities by hiring more than 15 new colleagues.



## CANOPY

The St. Louis homegrown research tools company Canopy Biosciences is nearing completion of its formal merger into Bruker Spatial Biology, a division of nationally traded Bruker Corporation. The company provides industry-leading spatial molecular biology solutions consisting of instruments, assays, software, and services to empower life sciences researchers around the world.



## C2N

C2N Diagnostics submitted to the FDA its blood test that helps health care professionals diagnose Alzheimer's disease. Other achievements included a research agreement with the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, the nationwide availability of the Precivity™ blood tests (as well as the expansion to seven new countries) research validating the tests' reliability, and lowering the intended use age for the PrecivityAD2™ test to 50. The homegrown St. Louis biotech company also secured a major investment from Samsung and is building out its state-of-the-art labs at the new Catalyst building in Cortex.



## GIFTAMEAL

GiftAMeal surpassed 2.75 million meals donated to families in need across 1,000+ partner restaurants. Each time a guest takes a photo at a participating restaurant on the free app, a meal is provided through a local food bank.



## BIOSTL

In 2025, BioSTL strengthened St. Louis' bio economy by accelerating startups, expanding our region's global connectedness, and building workforce pathways. BioSTL convened 39 companies from 10 countries at its Global Health Innovation Summit and launched a St. Louis-India agtech partnership, generating coverage in 19 publications across 10 languages. Locally, founders, investors, and partners connected through Innovators Hour and Startup Connect. More than 1,700 students and job seekers engaged in events, with 64 completing the MO-BEST biotech pre-apprenticeship. BioSTL is also launching two venture studios, advancing a greenhouse initiative, and stewarding a new regional bio economy strategy.



## CAPYBIO

CapyBio marked a strategic shift from academic validation to product and service development, positioning the biotech platform to launch its first product in Q3 2026 and pursue a priced financing round. CapyBio validated its core technologies—CellOracle and CapyBara—through peer-reviewed academic work, including publication in Cell Stem Cell. CapyBio advanced early commercial traction with industry partners and strengthened its leadership, spoke at the AIDDD Summit Innovation Incubator, and joined the NVIDIA Inception Program. Company CSO Guillermo Rivera also began a new role as a Venture Fellow at BioGenerator and as a 2026 Pipeline Fellow.



## BIOGENERATOR VENTURES

BioGenerator surpassed \$50 million in total investments, supporting 80 active portfolio companies, 20 exits, thousands of jobs, and nearly \$3 billion in follow-on capital raised largely from outside the region. In 2026, BioGenerator will launch two nonprofit venture capital studios to scale local startup investment. The move will leverage private-sector partners, expand seed and follow-on funding, and build on BioGenerator's track record backing high-growth St. Louis health tech companies.



## UNLOCKED LABS

Unlocked Labs made a national impact while not forgetting their own backyard of St. Louis. Just minutes from Cortex, in 2025, Unlocked Labs opened a computer lab for women at the St. Louis City Jail, expanding access to education and workforce training resources. Nationally, their work helped shape Maine's remote work policy, now enabling 40+ incarcerated people to earn wages, pay taxes, and support families. Unlocked Labs team members also became trusted advisors to state Department of Corrections leaders in Maine and New Hampshire and installed the first-ever resident internet network in an Alaska prison, along with upgrades to labs in correctional facilities in New York State—proving St. Louis-born innovation can drive systems change nationwide.



### ALCAMI

Alcami is a US-based contract development and manufacturing organization head-quartered in North Carolina, with Lab operations in Cortex, bringing over 45 years of experience advancing pharmaceuticals and biologics from development to delivery. Alcami provides fully integrated lab services, drug product manufacturing, cGMP pharma storage, and support services. Alcami's private equity ownership includes GHO Capital, The Vistria Group, and Ampersand Capital Partners.



### JUSTUSED



### JUSTUSED TECH

JustUsed Tech collected and diverted more than 45,000 e-waste devices from landfills, and donated 30 laptops to Saint Louis University students. The nonprofit also launched a new initiative called the JustUsed Tech Green Bin Challenge, a permanent collection point at partner organizations, like Cortex, to keep electronics out of our landfills.



### COMPOSITION MEDIA

In 2025, Composition Media advanced its mission as an AI Native Content Studio through strategic partnerships and workforce development. The studio signed its first brand licensing client, Lingokids — the world's top children's educational app — and added new clients including Paramount, Universal Music Group, and American Greetings. Through American Greetings, the team created stop-motion animation content featuring Rudolph, Frosty, and other beloved holiday characters.

Composition Media also partnered with Savvy Coders to launch and graduate the first cohort of the nation's first accredited AI Animation Production course, pioneering workforce training in AI-driven creative production.



### PER SCHOLAS

Per Scholas deepened its impact across the region by training, certifying, and placing 100+ learners into thriving tech careers in IT Support and Cybersecurity, helping individuals and families achieve economic mobility. Its team strengthened employer and pipeline partnerships. It launched five new initiatives, including an Advisory Board, Pizza Fridays, Careers & Coffee, Weekly Study Halls, and a sold-out speaker series featuring Graybar, Enterprise Mobility, TEKsystems, Nestlé IT Digital Americas, and World Wide Technology.



### COFACTOR GENOMICS

In 2025, Cofactor Genomics strengthened the clinical and commercial foundation of its OncoPrism platform to expand access to precision cancer immunotherapy diagnostics. The appointment of CEO Chris Parker accelerated commercialization and broadened reach across U.S. cancer care networks. OncoPrism expanded into multiple solid tumor types, and publication of the 1,400+ patient PREDAPT NSCLC study validated OncoPrism-NSCLC as a predictive RNA-based biomarker for immunotherapy benefit in lung cancer, the leading cause of cancer mortality worldwide. The year closed with strategic investments from Labcorp and Ascension Ventures to support national and global adoption.



### WEPOWER

WePower accelerated its mission to close the racial wealth gap by investing directly in the dreams and dignity of St. Louisans. The non-profit's All Industry Business Accelerator catalyzed 26 diverse businesses, providing more than \$100,000 in direct funding, personalized coaching, and business development education. To lower financial barriers, its partnership with Kiva unlocked an additional \$88,000 in 0% interest loans for local small businesses. WePower is also driving systemic change through The New STL Economy Playbook released last year to build collective wealth. Founder and CEO Charli Cooksey was named Social Entrepreneur of the Year by UMSL.



### Office of Technology Management



### OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT - WASHU

The Office of Technology Management (OTM) assists WashU researchers in the transfer of technology from the lab to the global marketplace. OTM accomplishes this by empowering and engaging researchers to move more inventions from ideation to real-world application, demonstrating the impact of WashU research.

In FY 25, OTM reported 268 invention disclosures, 68 U.S. issued patents, over \$17M in licensing revenue, and six new WashU IP based startups; all launched with investor funding or were revenue-generating. And, in partnership with BioGenerator, OTM graduated its first cohort of the Venture Fellows program, an experiential learning curriculum in venture capital investment and company creation.



### BOEING

Reinforcing its engagement with the St. Louis region and its Cortex office, Boeing contributed to charitable organizations in the wake of the May 16 tornado that devastated swaths of the metropolitan area and beyond. Through the Boeing Charitable Trust, the company contributed \$100,000 to the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis and \$100,000 to The Salvation Army to support recovery efforts.



### IMMUNOPHOTONICS

Immunophotonics has successfully completed treatment of the final patients in both the SAKK 66/17 and INJECTABL-1 Phase 1b/2a clinical trials, a major achievement that moves the company closer to transforming cancer care with its drug candidate IP-001 through Interventional Immuno-Oncology®. The company is now turning its focus to launching INJECTABL-3, a pivotal Phase 2/3 trial evaluating IP-001's ability to convert tumor ablation into systemic immunotherapy in colorectal cancer patients with liver metastases, which will take place across the United States and various European countries. With strong momentum and global collaboration, the commencement of INJECTABL-3 is poised to mark another significant milestone along the way to commercialization for Immunophotonics.



### CIC

CIC welcomed 74 new companies to the St. Louis campus in 2025, further growing the innovation community in Cortex. They also welcomed several new CIC team members and partnered with new lab sponsors PHCbi, Promega, and Agilent to further expand their suite of lab amenities.



REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS

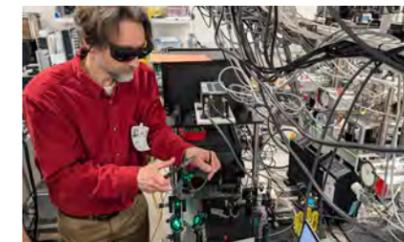


### REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION

Celebrating its 40th anniversary, RAC is the largest public funder of the arts in St. Louis, awarding \$3.7M in 2025 to 174 organizations producing arts-focused programming. Since its inception in 1985, RAC has distributed more than 7,500 grants, investing ~\$120M in St. Louis City and County artists and arts & culture organizations.



IMPOSSIBLE



### IMPOSSIBLE SENSING

2025 tested the space sector. A major restructuring at NASA, combined with federal budget pressure, slowed programs across the industry. Impossible Sensing kept building. During the year, the company delivered flight hardware to three NASA centers in support of future missions and secured a contract to test life-support systems for next-generation space habitats in microgravity. In parallel, Impossible Sensing's terrestrial business accelerated. The team piloted precision fertilization technology in real-world conditions, and launched two new ventures focused on critical mineral exploration and ocean monitoring. In a constrained year, Impossible Sensing executed and diversified.



### AVOL

Setting up shop in Cortex, Avol Aerospace has rapidly emerged as a promising force in medical logistics, using autonomous electric drones to move lifesaving supplies faster and more reliably than traditional methods. Combining deep expertise in bioengineering, robotics, and aerodynamics, Avol's blended-wing aircraft delivers medical products such as organs, blood, and tissue samples up to 11 times faster than existing options, helping reduce delays caused by traffic, cargo schedules, and geographic barriers. Avol raised \$3.8 million, built a fleet of more than 30 aircraft, secured approval to fly in eight states, and is conducting daily deliveries with pilot health care partners across the Midwest and East Coast.



### TAYLOR GEOSPATIAL

Taylor Geospatial Institute completed its transition to independence — a milestone that affirms the maturity, ambition, and global relevance of the St. Louis geospatial ecosystem. It launched the Geospatial Innovation for Food Security Challenge to move “soil-to-satellite” innovations from proof-of-concept toward operational deployment. In partnership with Amazon Web Services, the Institute was awarded \$1M in AWS credits to develop generative AI solutions for critical geospatial challenges, such as disaster response and urban planning. The non-profit also continued support for graduate and postdoctoral researchers through its fellowship program with Planet Labs, applying high-resolution satellite imagery to address environmental and societal crises.



### VARRO LIFE SCIENCES

Varro Life Sciences hosted state and local dignitaries to officially open its headquarters in Cortex, where the company is developing its innovative diagnostic and environmental surveillance technologies that are accessible, ethical, and transformative. Varro's unique biosensor technology platform identifies viral, bacterial, and fungal pathogens in the air in real time. The company is focused on three products: a breath-based diagnostic, an air bio-detector, and microimmuno-electrodes, Varro's flagship biosensor.



### TURNBERRY LABS

In 2025, Turnberry Solutions built on its momentum by delivering strong results for clients and teams across the organization. The firm expanded its leadership in AI and advanced technologies with the introduction of cmpli.ai, an AI-powered compliance solution that streamlines regulated content review and risk detection. Turnberry earned Microsoft Azure Solutions Partner designations in Data & AI and Digital & App Innovation, recognizing its expertise in modern, cloud-based solutions. More than 10,000 hours were invested in consultant training, supporting skill growth and career development. The company received Top Workplace recognition in multiple markets and, under new CEO leadership, streamlined operations to drive improved efficiency and performance.



### OMNIOSE

OmniOSE continues to build meaningful momentum in its exclusive scientific collaboration with AstraZeneca to advance vaccines targeting bacterial pathogens, including multidrug-resistant “superbugs.” The company secured additional NIH funding for its internal programs during 2025, including a new NIH grant of up to \$3M over three years for Klebsiella vaccine development as well as \$2M in annual extension grants for our Klebsiella and Group B Streptococcus vaccine programs. To support these new programs, OmniOSE expanded its team from 19 to 22 full-time employees during 2025.



### AION BIO

AION builds closed-loop hardware to read and write bioelectric states in deep tissue using electromagnetic and acoustic fields. The company's initial target is non-invasive thymic regeneration for the ~3 million cancer patients annually who face severe immunosuppression post-chemotherapy. In 2025, AION raised \$3 million and hired 3 team members including a WashU PhD mechanobiologist and a founding engineer. The team developed their field delivery platform and is advancing toward preclinical validation.



### CYBERUP

CyberUp has grown from a regional initiative into a nationally recognized leader in cybersecurity workforce development, helping professionals gain the skills and training needed to enter and excel in the cybersecurity industry.

Over the past ten years, we've trained and upskilled more than 800 individuals for cybersecurity careers; partnered with over 125 employers nationwide to create apprenticeship opportunities that turn potential into professions; and inspired more than 4,000 students through youth programs that make cybersecurity hands-on, exciting, and accessible.



### IFF

In an effort to focus on higher-margin, specialty business, IFF agreed to sell its assets related to the lecithin, soy protein concentrate, and crush businesses to St. Louis-based Bunge. IFF will focus on its more specialized isolated soy protein business, where more promising prospects for application development and innovation are available, improving margins in the Food Ingredients business.



### SWIPESUM

In its most memorable year to date, the Swipesum Team at Cortex continued to bring transparency to payments and drive cost savings for some of the most notable companies in the world. For three years in a row, Swipesum had made the Inc. 5000 list (#2,198 in 2025) and has ranked among Entrepreneur's Top Franchise Suppliers.



### AB MAURI

AB Mauri North America is a company passionate about baking and driven to help customers achieve superior quality. Industrial and artisan bakers turn to ABMNA for iconic Fleischmann's Yeast; premium bakery ingredient solutions, exceptional process optimization; and customized baking technology, technical service and support. AB Mauri has its North America headquarters, bakery research space, fermentation lab, and AB Biotek division offices located within @4240. St. Louis-based employees are active in supporting local food-based charities including Bridge Bread, Ronald McDonald House Charities, and Operation Food Search.



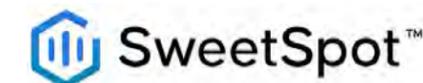
### GDIT

Harnessing idle computer capacity falls at the heart of a pilot project GDIT launched in 2025 with the St. Louis campus of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. The project stitches high-end computer workstations together during idle times, aiding the agency's dive into artificial intelligence by adding the equivalent of an extra supercomputer for less expense, power, and space. GDIT also announced it had won a \$1.5 billion IT modernization contract to strengthen operational readiness at U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM). GDIT also received multiple industry recognitions for innovation and technology.



### PAIRIDEX

Pairidex launched FusionMRD™ laboratory developed test in Fall 2025 — a personalized leukemia-monitoring assay that will enable patients and their doctors to know if their treatment is working in real-time utilizing a non-invasive blood test. With growing lab operations, the team achieved CAP/CLIA accreditation in 16 months — a fast feat. Paul Kortschak joined the team as CEO, bringing 25 years of molecular, clinical, and companion diagnostics experience.



### SWEETSPOT

Originally founded as Aegis Health with early support from BioSTL, digital health company SweetSpot reached several major milestones, including being named a Company to Watch by the American Diabetes Association, winning a Growth Grant from Arch Grants, and enrolling more than 3,000 patients on its SweetSpot platform by year's end. Designed to address a critical gap in diabetes management, SweetSpot supports scalable, reimbursable remote patient management for endocrinology practices nationwide. While growing nationally, the company remains rooted in St. Louis — continuing to hire locally, collaborate across the innovation ecosystem, and generate nearly \$1 million annually in economic impact for the region.

# DISTRICT EXPERIENCE

## EVENTS BY THE NUMBERS

**188**  
EVENTS ACROSS  
CORTEX, NORTH  
ST. LOUIS, AND  
ONLINE



**15,945**  
ATTENDEES



**8**  
IN-DISTRICT  
ACTIVATION  
PARTNERS:



BioSTL, CIC, Filament, IKEA, Lilibridge, Move by BJC, WashU Office of Technology Management, WashU School of Public Health

**118**  
EVENTS WERE  
OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC



See all upcoming  
Cortex events!



An innovation district is only as strong as the community it brings together. At Cortex, we intentionally create spaces and experiences that invite people in — whether they are entrepreneurs, researchers, neighbors, students, or first-time visitors. Through a year-round calendar of public events, programs, and gatherings, we activate our District as a place to connect, learn, and build relationships. These events foster collaboration, spark curiosity, and reinforce Cortex as a welcoming, inclusive destination where innovation is accessible to all. The following examples highlight how our events bring people together and strengthen the sense of place that defines the Cortex community.

### COFFEE & FOOD TRUCKS + ACTIVATIONS

During warmer months, Cortex provided opportunities for District members to gather over free morning coffee or a bite to eat on Food Truck Tuesdays in the Cortex Commons, coupled with a weekly dose of interactive activities and entertainment. From puppy play dates to live music, these gatherings strengthened community and encouraged connection across the District.



### WE ARE CORTEX CELEBRATION

We Are Cortex showcases some of the faces of Cortex, including entrepreneurs and scientists, food servers and coders, and a smattering of the people who make the world go 'round within our District. We celebrated the launch of the newest We Are Cortex campaign with a lunch attended by 250 Cortexians, who also enjoyed a panel about the range of world-changing innovations happening in Cortex.



#### STAY IN THE KNOW

on all the happenings at Cortex with our monthly newsletter.

### KALEIDOSCOPE

Cortex celebrated Black & queer entrepreneurs by hosting a vibrant marketplace with local vendors, music, and food.



### FIESTA

The annual FIESTA @ Cortex is more than a party — it's a powerful celebration of Latino culture, heritage, and innovation in St. Louis. We are proud to celebrate St. Louis' Hispanic Community by showcasing local Hispanic entrepreneurs, cultural societies, music, dance and food in service of creating inclusive spaces where all ages can learn, celebrate, and connect!



### BIOSTL'S INNOVATOR HOURS

BioSTL launched Innovator Hours, a monthly event for entrepreneurs, innovators, and anyone curious about St. Louis' vibrant bioscience innovation ecosystem. Each session features a conversation with a leading startup founder, hosted by Jim McCarter, Senior Managing Director of BioGenerator Ventures. Together, they explore the founder's journey from idea to groundbreaking technology — offering insights, lessons, and inspiration.



### FOR THE WOMEN (CIC)

The third annual For the Women event was hosted by CIC, Cortex, and Filament. The afternoon recognizing Women's History Month included a dynamic session by Filament on building personal brands, followed by a lively community social. From meaningful connections to discovering local, women-owned businesses, the energy in the room was truly inspiring.



### FRIZZMAS

Frizzy by Nature, Cortex, and Lilibridge welcomed more than 1,500 community members for this year's Frizzmas Holiday Extravaganza at Cortex. Attendees shopped local Black-owned businesses, took complimentary pictures with Santa & Mrs. Claus, and enjoyed warm drinks and sweet treats to celebrate the season.



### THANKSGIVING (FILAMENT)

THANKSGIVING is Filament's award-winning initiative that partners St. Louis nonprofits with teams from innovative businesses for a day of creative problem-solving focused on the future. This year's Thanksgiving brought together more than 300 St. Louisans.



# LIVING OUR VALUES

The Cortex team is driven by our values:  
Community-Centered | Accountability | Inclusivity |  
Imagination | Sustainability



## EF3 TORNADO STRIKES ST. LOUIS

When a devastating tornado struck north St. Louis, Cortex and its District members quickly transformed a planned Cortex Clean Up Day into a sustained, months-long volunteer effort to support affected neighbors. In partnership with the North Newstead Association and the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, District employees stepped in to remove debris, assist families in relocating to safe housing, and distribute donated goods collected by Cortex members — putting our community-centered values into action when it mattered most.



## DONATION DRIVE

The Cortex community collected more than 1,600 items to support our neighbors in North St. Louis City devastated by the May 16 tornado. We collected supplies for daily hygiene care, cleaning and repairs, as well as baby and pet food.



## NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**4**  
CLEANUPS 

**175+**  
VOLUNTEERS 

In partnership with the North Newstead Neighborhood Association

**5**  
UNIQUE DONATION DRIVES 

## SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS + BY THE NUMBERS



**9 BUILDINGS**  
LEED CERTIFIED

**1.45 MILLION SQ FT**  
OF BUILDING SPACE LEED CERTIFIED

**Tech Recycle Drive:** In partnership with District member JustUsed Tech, 4,000 lbs of tech was diverted from the landfill

**Cortex clothing swap:** Diverted 400+ lbs of clothing from the landfill to Cortex members, donating all remaining clothes to Independence Center

**New Earth Farms Community Compost:** Diverted 2,470 lbs of food waste from the landfill

**Ripple Glass Community Glass Recycling:** Established new partnership with IKEA to provide dropoff location

**Stormwater Runoff BMP Impact:** Prevented more than 1 million gallons of rainwater runoff overflow with bioretention basins from their initial installation dates starting in 2015

**Cortex added 1,408 native plants** to street basins to mitigate storm water runoff and enhance the health of our ecosystem



## FIRESTONE SUSTAINABILITY

**Firestone Building Interior Demo:**

**112,800+ LBS**  
OF MATERIAL DIVERTED FROM LANDFILLS including 34,000 pounds of donated furniture and 1,500+ recycled fluorescent lights



## INDEPENDENCE CENTER

Cortex again partnered with Independence Center to provide supported employment to individuals with chronic mental illness. The Cortex Grounds Program offers them a welcoming environment where they can get back on their feet and get back to work.



Gabe, with Cortex President & CEO Sam Fiorello

## COAT DRIVE

Cortex and CIC together collected more than 150 new and gently used coats from our community to donate to partner organizations working directly with our neighbors in greatest need.



**CORTEX WAS A FINALIST** for St. Louis Business Journal's Best Places to Work

ST. LOUIS BUSINESS JOURNAL



BEST PLACES TO WORK

# IN THE NEWS



## **Promising Clinical Trials in Alzheimer's Prevention**

National news show CBS Sunday Morning featured groundbreaking Alzheimer's prevention trials at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. These studies focus on individuals with a high genetic predisposition, using antibody drugs to target amyloid plaques before symptoms appear, offering hope for long-term dementia-free life.



## **Put Down Roots**

Featuring Michael and Tara Gallina's Take Root Hospitality with three lauded spots in St. Louis, including Vicia in Cortex. "We try to be innovative, just like the community that we're in," Michael Gallina said. "One of the things that drew us to Cortex was the innovation and creativity that's here."



## **Cortex SQ1 Bootcamp Powers Two Dozen More Entrepreneurial Journeys**

"A new crop of 23 local entrepreneurs is set up for continued growth after graduating from Cortex's annual SQ1 Bootcamp," wrote reporter Eric Schmid. "The 10-week intensive program shepherds businesses through fundamentals such as marketing, accounting, and building a business plan and a solid pitch, with guidance and presentations from established local experts."

## **St. Louis Startup's Novel Spine Screw Gets FDA Clearance for Patient Use**

The St. Louis startup and Cortex District member Allumin8 has managed to achieve something no other medical device company ever has: clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for a type of spinal screw that's produced through additive manufacturing.



## **Wugen woos VCs, landing \$115M to bring fratricide-resistant CAR-T cell therapy to market**

Wugen has raised \$115 million, tapping a Fidelity-led syndicate to fund its pursuit of FDA approval for the first off-the-shelf CAR-T for T-cell malignancies. A pivotal trial is underway, putting the company on track to seek approval in 2027. WU-CART-007 is designed to overcome the barriers to the treatment of T-cell cancers.



## **Firm plans HQ move to Cortex**

Office furniture company Corporate Interiors, Inc., or CI Select, plans to relocate its headquarters from Maryland Heights to Cortex where it would anchor an ongoing redevelopment there called Carriage Works. CI Select is the St. Louis region's largest office furniture dealer, with \$45 million in 2024 revenue and 50 employees.

## **Biotech Firm C2N Diagnostics to Anchor WashU's \$100M Cortex Project at Goodwill Site**

"This news is a testament to the enthusiastic backing we've received in St. Louis, the extremely talented team members we employ, and the health care professionals who've embraced our technology and premium quality testing services," C2N Diagnostics CEO Joel Braunstein said. "We're especially excited to be growing in the Cortex Innovation District, where we started and where we feel we exemplify its passion for providing the resources needed to shape the future."

## **Varro Developing Test for Airborne Diseases, Brings \$42.5M Investment in HQ Move to St. Louis' Cortex Innovation District**

A company that promises to revolutionize airborne disease testing was welcomed by a host of stakeholders in the local innovation scene, praising the firm for choosing the Cortex Innovation District to house its headquarters and workforce. Varro Life Sciences says it will bring \$42.5 million in investment to St. Louis, along with creating 33 jobs, in its move from New York to St. Louis.

## **At Cortex, We're Committed to Inclusive Growth**

In an opinion editorial published in the St. Louis Business Journal, Cortex President & CEO Sam Fiorello restated the non-profit's ongoing commitment to accelerating inclusive economic growth in the St. Louis region: "It means we actively cultivate an environment where all innovators, entrepreneurs, and business leaders – regardless of background – can access opportunities."

## **Cortex District Member Cofactor Genomics Lands Investments from Labcorp, Ascension Ventures**

The St. Louis-based biotech company says new investments will allow it to accelerate expansion of its OncoPrism immunotherapy-response diagnostic technology. The commercial-stage diagnostics company located in Cortex develops tests that analyze RNA and are aimed at determining which immunotherapy treatments will work best for patients.

## **ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**

### **Company using WashU Tech to Detect Airborne Germs Moves to St. Louis' Cortex from New York**

Varro Life Sciences, a biotech company developing sensors that can detect air-borne germs that cause flu and COVID-19, is opening its headquarters and research labs in the Cortex Innovation District, with plans to hire 30 scientists and lab workers.

### **Cortex SQ1 Alum Named in Post-Dispatch's 10 Best New Restaurants of 2025**

In 2024, Cortex Square One alum Adjo Honsou won the PBS cooking-competition series "The Great American Recipe," and she has notched another victory this year with the new brick-and-mortar location of her food truck Fufu n' Sauce, garnering accolades from the region's top food critic.

### **With \$115 million in hand, Cortex-based biotech startup eyes the finish line**

Backed by more than \$300 million in recent funding, Wugen's lead therapy for deadly T-cell leukemia and lymphoma has shown striking early results (91% response rate), positioning the company for FDA approval as early as 2027 and underscoring its potential life-saving impact.



## **Grand opening for New HQ in Cortex**

Varro Life Sciences' grand opening is part of a broader, high-demand expansion within the Cortex Innovation District, which includes new lab spaces, residential units, and significant infrastructure projects, such as the \$100 million redevelopment of the Goodwill Building, called Catalyst.

## **Cortex Lab Space Hits 100%, New Capacity Coming**

Lab space in St. Louis' Cortex Innovation District nears 100% occupancy, driven by high demand for bioscience research, leading to the revival of several expansion projects to bring new capacity to the market.

## **Total Information AM Welcomes Neighborhood Builders**

KMOX welcomed live on air Bank of America's Marilyn Bush and this year's Neighborhood Builders winners, Cortex – with Sam Fiorello, and the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis – with Mike McMillan, whose organizations each received \$200,000 grants from Bank of America.



## **AB Mauri's Baking HUB in Cortex is Where the Science Happens for Popular Baked Goods**

"Walk in any grocery store, we're probably in 40-45% of the baked goods you eat every day, you just don't know us by name," said Rick Oleshak, AB Mauri North America. In the Cortex Innovation District, AB Mauri headquarters is manufacturing baking ingredients and technical solutions inside its state-of-the-art bakingHUB™ and pilot fermentation lab.

## **From a Small Hustle to a Growing Enterprise, Puddin Puddin has Success in St. Louis**

"I want Puddin Puddin to be a household name. I want this to be a trusted brand," said Ismael Wayne, owner of the dessert company. Wayne is part of We Are Cortex, as the Cortex Innovation District helped Wayne successfully scale his business through Cortex's Square One Program. His banana pudding and flavors of pudding cheesecakes are now sold in select stores like the Fresh Thyme Market.

## **Tremendous Support Celebrating \$42.5M Expansion of Varro Life Sciences is Sign of Growth for Cortex**

Flanked by Missouri Governor Mike Kehoe, City of St. Louis Mayor Cara Spencer, and other prominent civic leaders, Varro Life Sciences opened its new headquarters in the Cortex Innovation District.

## **Cortex's Square One Programs are Helping Entrepreneurs Launch Successful Startups in St. Louis**

Cortex's Square One is designed to help entrepreneurs find and access the resources, training and other tools they need to launch their businesses.



## **Construction Starts for Project Connecting Tower Grove Park to Cortex**

Construction started for Phase 1 of the Tower Grove Connector, which will connect Tower Grove Park, along Tower Grove Avenue, to Cortex. The 1.8-mile protected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure project will also extend the reach of the Brickline Greenway.

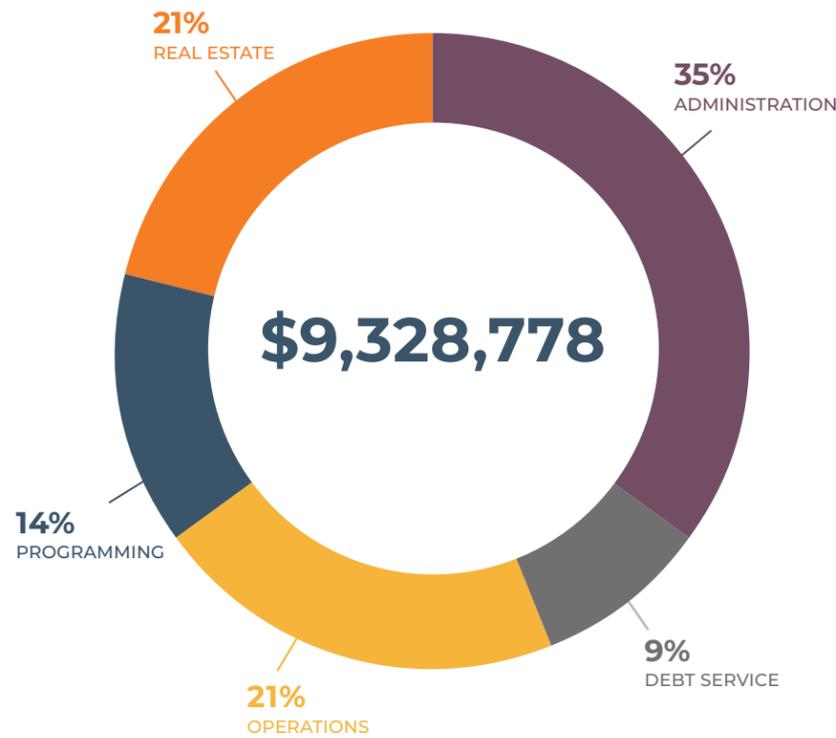


## **Construyendo un Futuro Inclusivo: Reflexiones desde UnidosUS 2025 y el Liderazgo de St. Louis**

*Building an Inclusive Future: Reflections from UnidosUS 2025 and the Leadership of St. Louis*

Written by Ben Molina, Cortex Entrepreneurship Program Manager, and Gabriela Ramirez-Arellano, Cortex VP of Entrepreneurship

# 2025 EXPENSES



## ADMINISTRATION | 35%

Management & General  
**\$3,248,162**

## DEBT SERVICE | 9%

Loan Payments Principal & Interest  
**\$869,472**

## OPERATIONS | 21%

Snow Removal, Landscaping, Security, Maintenance  
**\$1,951,111**

## PROGRAMMING | 14%

Events, Activations, Mission-Oriented Activities  
**\$1,343,851**

## REAL ESTATE | 21%

Building and Leasing Activities  
**\$1,916,183**

## TOTAL\*

**\$9,328,778**

*\*Unaudited cash-basis expenses*

## CORTEX IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT FROM OUR GENEROUS DONORS:

Bank of America  
The Bellwether Foundation  
BioSTL  
Cambridge Innovation Center  
Enterprise Mobility Foundation

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro St. Louis  
William T. Kemper Foundation  
Lewis and Leslee Levey  
James S. McDonnell Foundation

Small Business Empowerment Center  
Anne and Bud Strong  
St. Louis Community Credit Union  
St. Louis Mosaic Project



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## June McAllister Fowler | Board Chair

Retired, Senior Vice President, Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs, BJC Health System

## Robert W. Cannon | Vice-Chairman

President, East Region, BJC Health System

## Derek Rapp | Treasurer

Managing Director, RiverVest Venture Partners

## Donn Rubin | Secretary

Founding President & CEO, BioSTL

## Ellen Barnidge, Ph.D., MPH

Interim Vice President for Research, Saint Louis University

## Nick Barto (joined Q4)

President & CEO, BJC Health System

## Steven Berberich, Ph.D.

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Missouri-St. Louis

## Aaron F. Bobick, Ph.D.

Dean, James McKelvey School of Engineering, Washington University in St. Louis

## Rodney Crim, CEcD

CEO & President, STL Partnership

## Edward Feser, Ph.D. (joined Q2)

President, Saint Louis University

## Doug Frantz, Ph.D.

Vice Chancellor of Innovation and Commercialization, Washington University in St. Louis

## Jan Holloway

Retired, Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff, Monsanto Company

## Richard J. Liekweg (retired Q3)

Chief Executive Officer, BJC Health System

## Lúcia Lohmann, Ph.D.

President, Missouri Botanical Garden

## Nichol Luoma

Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Chief Administration Officer, Washington University in St. Louis

## Andrew D. Martin, Ph.D.

Chancellor, Washington University in St. Louis

## Bob Olwig

Executive Vice President of Global Partner Alliances, World Wide Technology

## Fred P. Pestello, Ph.D. (retired Q2)

President, Saint Louis University

## Nick Piazza

SVP & Chief People Officer, Emerson

## Jason Q. Purnell, Ph.D.

President, James S. McDonnell Foundation

## Kristin Sobolik, Ph.D.

Chancellor, University of Missouri-St. Louis

## Christopher D. Spilling, Ph.D., CChem, FRSC

Vice-Chancellor for Research and Economic & Community Development, University of Missouri-St. Louis

## Gregory Triplett, Ph.D.

Dean, School of Science and Engineering, Saint Louis University

## Sean J. Walsh

Managing Director and Co-Founder, Turnberry Solutions

## EX-OFFICIO DIRECTORS

### L. Jared Boyd (resigned Q2)

Chief of Staff, City of St. Louis Mayor's Office

### Michael Browning

Alderman, 9th Ward, City of St. Louis

### Kevin S. Cahill

Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, STL Partnership

### Sam Fiorello

President and CEO, Cortex Innovation District

### Neal Richardson, MBA (resigned Q2)

Executive Director, St. Louis Development Corporation

### Otis Williams (joined Q3)

Interim President & CEO, St. Louis Development Corporation



Accelerating inclusive economic  
growth in the St. Louis region



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