

COMBAT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘These Dollars Save Lives’

Jackson County Prosecutor’s Office and COMBAT Announce Awarding Of ‘Life-Saving’ Mid-Year Funding For Programs Focusing On Domestic Violence & Youth Employment

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021: Prior to a news conference Wednesday announcing COMBAT was awarding nearly \$1.5 million in mid-year funding, a teacher at the DeLaSalle Education Center in Kansas City made a poignant observation: “These dollars save lives.”

DeLaSalle hosted the news conference, which was held two days after the Jackson County Legislature approved the \$1,475,870 in funding. The life-saving dollars will support programs focusing on two crucial anti-violence issues: domestic violence and youth employment.

Getting Resources Out ‘Right Now!’

Although COMBAT did provide two rounds of emergency funding last year as agencies in the community confronted the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, this marks the first time COMBAT has specifically sought applications to provide mid-year funding. Domestic violence and youth employment were two areas of need identified through consulting with COMBAT-funded agencies, law enforcement officials, community leaders and others.

“We’ve had police telling us about 50% of the calls they were getting last year were domestic violence-related,” COMBAT Director Vince Ortega said. “And youth employment—the lack of opportunities—has been an issue for years.”

Jackson County Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker stressed the youth employment funding was a “new arm” of COMBAT that she “desperately wanted to get out this summer to make sure we could push out those resources while they are really, really needed—*right now!*”

15 Programs Funded For Youth Employment

The DeLaSalle Education Center’s Block37 program provides students, all who live at or below the federal poverty level, real-world work experiences through apprenticeships and internships, while they earn an hourly wage or stipend. Block37 is one of 15 youth employment programs that will be receiving COMBAT’s mid-year funding.

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“Our students in this city are *not* vulnerable,” stated DeLaSalle’s director, Sean Stallings. “That’s a deficit mindset. The thing that they are, they’re untapped potential.”

Studies in Chicago and Boston have reflected that youth who participate in employment programs are far less likely to be involved in crimes, have improved social and emotional skills, develop crucial job skills and communications skills, and raise their academic aspirations—with the impact enduring after the youth participate in the programs.

Number Of Domestic Violence Programs Being Funded Doubled

A year ago, the Rose Brooks Center described Domestic Violence as “the pandemic on top of the epidemic.” With this round of funding, COMBAT is doubling the number of Domestic Violence programs supported through the Community Backed Anti-Crime Tax—from nine programs to 18.

“It is imperative that as a caring community, we recognize that the safety risk and the need for COMBAT-funded safety interventions for survivors and their families persists in our community,” Rose Brooks Chiefs Operating Officer Lisa Fleming said Wednesday.

Rose Brooks averaged 1,000 calls per month in 2020 from people seeking help.

A complete list of programs awarded COMBAT mid-year funding can be accessed at jacksoncountycombat.com/midyear.

THOSE SPEAKING AT THE NEWS CONFERENCE AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jackson County Prosecutor
Jean Peters Baker

COMBAT Director
Vince Ortega

DeLaSalle Education Center
Director
Sean Stallings

Metropolitan Organization To Counter Sexual Assault
Director of Advocacy
Victoria Pickering

Rose Brooks Center
Chief Operating Officer
Lisa Fleming

Hope House
Chief Operating Officer
Ilene Shehan

Jackson County Legislator
Jalen Anderson (1st District At-Large)

Jackson County Legislator
Theresa Cass Galvin (6th District)

Jackson County voters first approved the Community Backed Anti-Crime Tax in 1989 to reduce substance abuse and to “combat” drug-related crime. COMBAT’s mission was expanded two decades later to include violence prevention. COMBAT funding permits Jackson County to approach the impacts of drugs and violence on individuals and entire communities as both a legal issue and public health crisis. COMBAT supports organizations that provide a wide-range of prevention programs and treatment services, in addition to also providing funding for law enforcement agencies and the Missouri 16th Circuit Court.

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