



Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity

June 30, 2025



Michael Kehoe

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Governor of Missouri



Welcome

Keynote Speaker

Award Presentations

Closing Remarks



GOVERNOR'S AWARD QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

The Governor's Award for Quality and Productivity (GAQP) is a team award that recognizes service excellence, efficiency/process improvement, and innovation in Missouri State Government. All winning projects must satisfy established requirements of effectiveness, responsiveness, and efficiency, achieving a quality that positions the project as a model of excellence in state government on a national level.

GAQP History

The GAQP was originally established in 1988. At that time, nominations for a completed project could be submitted and were then reviewed by a selection committee based on a set of criteria. Award winners were identified, and sometimes, multiple winners were recognized in one criteria area. Over the years, improvements have continued and in 2001, the use of specific award categories was introduced.

In 2010, the Pinnacle Award was implemented. This award is only recommended by the selection committee if, in their opinion, the nomination encompasses multiple award categories in a manner that exemplifies the spirit of the Governor's Award or exceeds all other nominations.

Today, the GAQP recognizes winning teams in three categories: Customer Service, Efficiency/Process Improvement, and Innovation. These winning teams serve as a model of efficiency, quality, and effectiveness for other Missouri State Government teams to follow.

Regional Older Youth Advancement of Life Skills (ROYALS)

Department of Social Services

Pam Alston, Brianna Boles, Rene' Brinkman, Sheldondra Brown, Robert Clements, Robinn Daves-Huey, Jennifer Jackson, Janet James, Veronica Kirk, Haley Long, Shasta Miller, Jaquelyn Probst, Nicole Robinson, Tracy Taylor

The Regional Older Youth Advancement of Life Skills (ROYALS) Unit, launched in April 2020 within Missouri's Children's Division, is reshaping outcomes for older youth transitioning from foster care. Rooted in the principle "Nothing about me, without me," ROYALS empowers youth to lead their own transition planning, beginning intensive, individualized preparation one year before they turn 21. Plans focus on employment, education, housing, and financial stability while allowing youth to learn through supported decision making.

The model delivers exceptional results. As of March 2025, ROYALS youth outperform statewide averages across key indicators:

- Employment: 67% vs. 20%
- Financial literacy: 86% bank account vs. 16%
- Mobility: 91% driver's license or permit vs. 27%
- Vital documents:
 - 98% Birth Certificate vs. 37%
 - 94% SS Card vs. 32%
- Support system: 88% Permanency Pact Agreement vs. 49%

These outcomes translate into real success—youth starting businesses, purchasing homes, saving thousands, and even returning to serve within the Children's Division. ROYALS also leads the Missouri Youth Leadership Academy, graduating more than 40 youth since 2023 in advocacy and community leadership.

ROYALS currently serves only 132 of Missouri's 2,616 older foster youth. Expanding the program is a cost-effective investment that reduces long-term system involvement, breaks cycles of poverty and incarceration, and strengthens Missouri's future workforce.

As one youth told Congress in 2025: "They listen to older youth, walk beside them, and give us the chance to take charge of our independence — with a guiding hand, not a controlling grip.
When you invest in us, we rise."

Nominated Teams

Crossroads Correctional Center Hiring Team

Department of Corrections

Dawson Aaron, Camden Atkinson, Novalea Baker, Tommy Cain,
Lacey Clark, Raechel Kelly, Isiah Loucious, Sarah Lynch,
Michaela Meek, Richard Melton, Brian Montgomery, Jonathon Myers,
Elonda Sharp, Shona Simpson

Missouri Blue Scholarship

Department of Public Safety

Jennifer Jones, Thomas Kuntze, Jeremy Spratt

Successful Text Message Received!

Department of Social Services and Office of Administration

Kyle Heidlage, Justin Logan, Uriah Puhse, Jill Viehman, Ashley Wilson

MoDOT Telematics

Department of Transportation

Amy Bailey, Terry Blankenship, Tim Bundgard, Ronald Calvin, Paul
Denkler, Michael Frazier, Randall Ipock, Andrew James, Sarah Marino,
Sheldon Redel, Trisha Sen, Cheryl Sprogoe, Derek Vanloo

Safety Assessment for Every Roadway (SAFER)

Department of Transportation

Taylor Brune, Kataryna Garlock, Ezekiel Hall, Katy Harlan,
Frank Miller, Jonathan Nelson, John Schaefer Jr. Joshua Scott,
Raymond Shank, Eric Turner, Eddie Watkins Jr.

The The Safety Assessment for Every Roadway (SAFER) team transformed how MoDOT integrates safety into every transportation project. In response to rising roadway fatalities, staff turnover, and a strained safety culture, the team created a streamlined, statewide system that prompts safety focused decision-making at the earliest stages of project development.

Launched in 2022, SAFER ensures that all project teams consider proven safety strategies, supported by analytical tools and dashboards that quantify expected lives saved. This systematic approach strengthened accountability, improved consistency, and revived safety awareness across the agency.

The impact has been significant. In just three years, the percentage of Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects including safety countermeasures increased from 25% to 72%. Safety enhancements implemented in 2024 alone are projected to save 178 lives over their service life.

By embedding safety into everyday work, the SAFER project maximizes public benefit, advances MoDOT's mission, and supports Missouri's long-term goal of zero roadway fatalities. The team's innovation and commitment have delivered measurable, statewide improvements that will protect Missourians for years to come.

Nominated Teams

DOC-DAI Facility UC Conversions

*Department of Corrections
Office of Administration - ITSD*

Rose Appleby, Kristie Bailey, Jim Brock, Angie Craig, Angie Freet,
Michael Fry, Nicole Klatt, Blake Newbold, Sean Northweather, Gwen
Payne, Alex Porter, Mandie Morriss, Tony Ulstad, Chris Wilson

MO HealthNet's Notification of Pregnancy

Department of Social Services/MO HealthNet Division

Abigail Parker, Amanda Fahrendorf, Jayna Knipp,
Lori Melvin, Lori Parrish, Julie Peanick,
Anna Walscott, Ashley Wilson

State Youth Advisory Board (SYAB)

Department of Social Services

Rene' Brinkman, Mary Chant, Laquisha Maxwell, Heidi Strickler

Vacancy Report Process Improvement

Office of Administration

Jenn Evers, Emily Ferbet, Lyndsay Ludy,
Nicosha Roadruck, Lindsey Wisewski

MoDOT Southwest District General Services Team and Crowder College Collaboration

Department of Transportation

Steve Smith, Ben Strong, Aaron Underwood, Reid Vardell,
Clarence Brewer (Crowder College)

The MoDOT Southwest District General Services Team and Crowder College created an innovative partnership that strengthens Missouri's workforce while keeping vital transportation equipment on the road.

In response to technician shortages, rising repair costs, and long vendor wait times, the team established a hands-on program allowing Crowder's diesel technology students to diagnose and repair MoDOT equipment under instructor supervision.

This collaboration has delivered impressive results. Since 2023, students have completed repairs on more than 30 units with zero rework required, saving MoDOT over \$50,000 in labor costs and reducing turnaround time from weeks to just days.

The program also provides MoDOT with a strong pipeline of skilled candidates - resulting in multiple internships and full-time hires from the Crowder program.

The partnership's success has inspired expansion to additional colleges and programs across Missouri and has gained statewide and national recognition for its creative approach to workforce development and operational efficiency.

Through this forward-thinking collaboration, MoDOT and Crowder College have built a sustainable model that benefits students, strengthens agency operations, and enhances service to Missouri's citizens.

Nominated Teams

Feed My Starving Children (FMSC)

Department of Corrections

Sarah Gibson, Steven Johnson, Chris Savini, Vern Styer, Vivian Thomas,
Mitchell Treadwell, John Wade

Jefferson City Correctional Center's Global Leadership Academy

Department of Corrections

Dylan Atkisson, Robert Bamburg, Bo Cornelius, Justin Davison, Tyler Durre, Lori Dreyer, Jeffrey Gabelman, Norman Graham, Brett Graziano, Jason Hess, Andrea Ike, Kyle Kempker, Brandon Layton, Brandon Lenny, Mark Leonard, Raina Martin, Kelly Morriss, Albin Narvaez, Percy Thompson, Ryan Williams

MOMENTS

Mentoring Program Algorithm, Application & Website

Office of Administration

Beckie Brietzke, Nigelle Cochran, Kaitlyn Cook, Tonna Cornett, MaryBeth Deeken, Ryan Hawkins, Kyle Heidlage, John Houston, Lori Libbert, Melissa McCubbin, Utah Puhse, Stacy Strobe, Crystal Wilson

Statewide Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping

Department of Mental Health

(with Office of State Courts and Missouri Behavioral Health Council)

Mora Bock, Patricia Joyce, Kathy Lloyd, Gary Lynch, Brent McGinty, Angie Plunkett, Roger Prokes, KC Rafferty, Jeanette Simmons, Christine Smith

Thank You to the GAQP Selection Committee

Bill Foster

Department of Revenue

Shartina Campbell

Department of Social Services

Rick Kuttenkuler

Department of Corrections

Karen Miller

Department of Transportation

Mike O'Connell

Department of Public Safety

Adam Perkins

Department of Health &
Senior Services

Tyler Trusk

Department of
Economic Development

Debra Walker

Department of Mental Health

Colette Weckenborg

Department of
Natural Resources



The Governor's Award for Quality and
Productivity is coordinated by the Office of
Administration Division of Personnel