

2025 Fundraising Landscape


The state of nonprofits is currently marked by a dynamic shift, with growing confidence in their ability to drive change and an increasing reliance on emerging tools like social media and artificial intelligence (AI) for fundraising efforts. Nonprofits have long played a critical role in addressing social, environmental, and economic challenges, and they are now experiencing a resurgence of support, aided by these technological advancements.

Over the past decade, nonprofits have shown resilience in the face of economic challenges, a global pandemic, and social upheavals. This resilience, coupled with a greater emphasis on transparency, impact measurement, and collaboration, has led to increased trust from donors, volunteers, and the public. People are more inclined to support nonprofits because they have witnessed the positive, tangible results these organizations can achieve.

A pivotal factor contributing to this growth is the rise of social media as a powerful fundraising tool. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and newer entrants like TikTok offer nonprofits an unparalleled opportunity to connect with a broader audience. Social media enables organizations to share their mission, engage with supporters, and create compelling narratives that resonate with potential donors. Through targeted campaigns and storytelling, nonprofits can inspire action and mobilize funds quickly and efficiently.

In addition to social media, AI is poised to revolutionize nonprofit fundraising efforts. AI can help organizations analyze vast amounts of data to identify patterns and predict donor behavior. This can improve targeting, enhance personalization, and increase engagement with donors. AI's ability to automate and streamline tasks allows nonprofits to focus more on building relationships with supporters rather than spending time on administrative work.

However, even with the advent of social media and AI, informed fundraising remains crucial. Successful nonprofit fundraising goes beyond simply asking for donations; it involves cultivating genuine relationships with supporters. Donors want to know how their contributions will make a difference, and providing a clear, transparent narrative is key to motivating them. It is not enough to rely solely on technology; nonprofits must also craft a compelling story that resonates with people's values and emotions. When donors feel a personal connection to a cause and understand the impact their gift will have, they are more likely to give and continue supporting the organization over time. AI and social media offer valuable insights that, when used correctly, can transform fundraising into a more targeted, strategic, and personalized activity.



Peter W. Kinsella, Jr.
Executive Director



Newsletter Highlights

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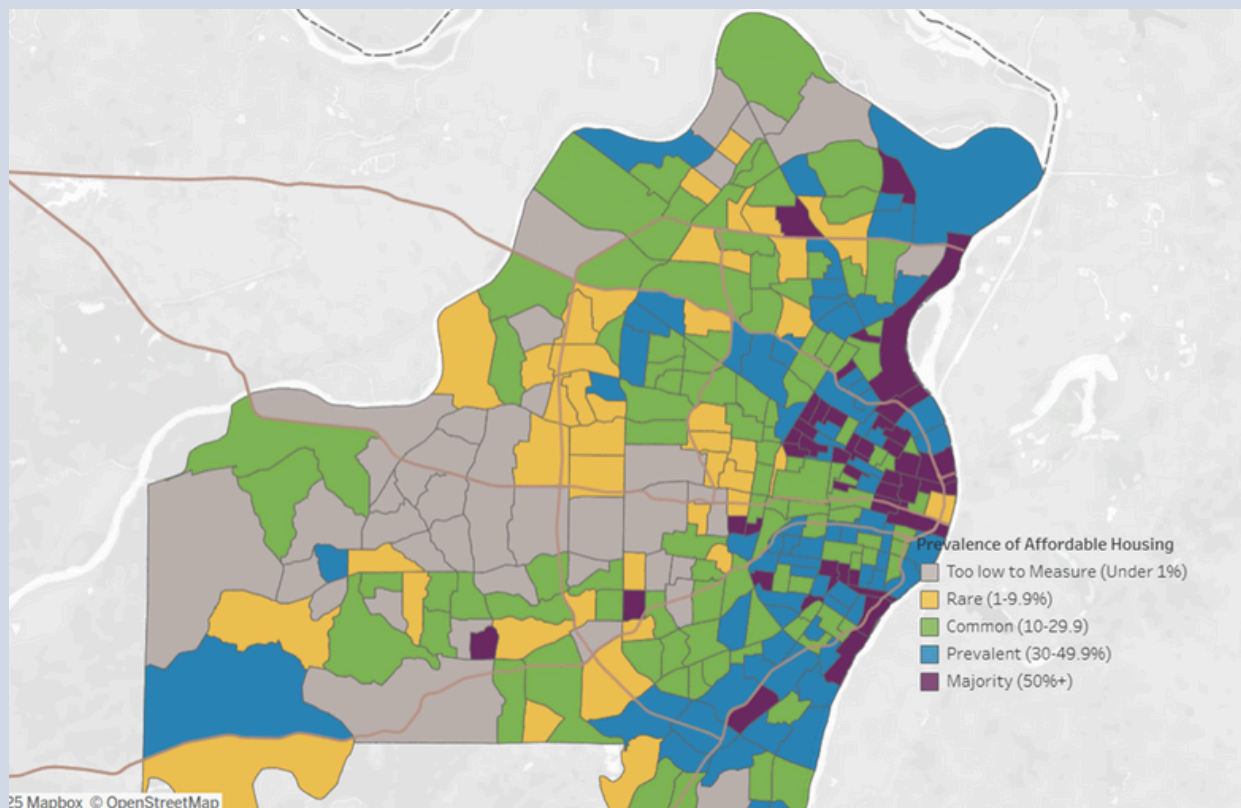
THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

The need for affordable housing is a growing concern worldwide, driven by the increasing gap between income levels and housing costs. As urbanization accelerates and populations grow, many low- and middle-income families find themselves priced out of the housing market. This disparity leads to housing insecurity, with families often forced into overcrowded conditions or homelessness. The lack of affordable options can also contribute to social inequality, as those unable to afford housing in desirable areas are pushed into neighborhoods with fewer opportunities and resources.

Affordable housing is not just a basic necessity, but a foundation for stability. Access to secure, well-located housing enables families to maintain employment, pursue education, and improve their quality of life. Additionally, affordable housing helps to stimulate local economies, as it allows for a diverse workforce to thrive in urban areas.

Anecdotally, the St. Louis region is in need of up to 120,000 affordable housing units. Governments, businesses, and community organizations need to collaborate to address this issue through policies that increase the supply of affordable units, provide subsidies, and incentivize the development of mixed-income housing. Without action, the gap between housing supply and demand will continue to widen, worsening social and economic divides, and leaving many families vulnerable. Affordable housing is essential for a thriving, equitable society.

Affordable housing has become a common theme involving many existing and prospective clients. Whether with the International Institute looking to house immigrants and refugees, or clients which provide housing for the disabled or the disadvantaged, MRA is prepared to offer its expertise and support in the form of site selection and due diligence, as well as renovation, rehab or new construction. Transformation begins with stability and housing is the first critical step.



RECENT CLIENT UPDATES

On November 22nd, the **Hawthorn Leadership School Foundation** closed on the sale of its building at 1901 – 1929 N. Kingshighway to Friends of Friendly Foundation, a Missouri nonprofit, interested in opening a charter school at the site. This was the culmination of work that began in October of 2023, after the school had formally ceased operations as a result of decreased enrollment, which began with the onset of the pandemic. MRA identified candidate brokerage firms, issued an RFQ, interviewed several brokers and ultimately helped negotiate a listing agreement with Balke-Brown Transwestern. Working closely with Mike Hurley, who has since moved to the Cozad Group, and Pam Hinds, now with Hiland Commercial, MRA was instrumental in bringing about the successful sale of the property to a nonprofit meeting the criteria set forth in the Hawthorn Leadership School Foundation’s governing documents.

On December 3rd, the **International Institute** closed on the takeover of 22 apartment units in Soulard that were gifted by BSB Development Co. The units, valued at \$2.4M, were first offered to the Institute in early 2024, with a transfer contemplated by the end of the summer. MRA was engaged to help coordinate the assimilation of the units, to prepare operating proformas, to communicate with counsel for both the Institute, the donor and the title company, and to make arrangements for the conduct of due diligence and the engagement of a suitable property management firm. Despite several delays, the transfer was ultimately completed and units are now available for use by the Institute to house immigrants or refugees, or as a source of operating revenue to fund other programming.

Charter school **St. Louis Voices Academy of Media Arts (“Voices”)** has engaged MRA to find a new location for its school, as it has outgrown its current location at 1220 Olive downtown. With a lease that expires at the end of June, 2026, Voices is looking to expand from its current K-2 classes to accommodate grades K-5. While it is expanding its footprint at its current location, the goal is to own its facility, to incorporate both indoor and outdoor space (which it lacks), and that it be positioned near resources such as public transportation, community centers and local libraries. MRA will collaborate with brokerage firm SmartEquity in the search, and is prepared to act as developer to renovate the new location to meet the Voices’ specific needs.

MRA has also begun work with the **Miriam School and Learning Center** which has two campuses, one in Webster and one in Olivette. The engagement is to coordinate (1) a safety and security audit; (2) a property condition assessment; (3) master planning of both campuses; and (4) to develop cost estimates to inform and guide a fundraising campaign strategy. With the initial help of BSI Constructors, MRA assembled a proposal for each of the above scopes, including the safety and security expertise of the Jewish Federation (which is providing its services at no charge), and has engaged AEI Consultants to provide the property assessment reports. Once completed, Miriam will have the information required to pursue its fundraising needs.

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- Nonprofits benefit the public, rather than the financial interests of individuals or groups.
- Nonprofits are businesses that have paid staff, in addition to volunteers.
- If the nonprofit sector were a country, it would be the 16th largest in the world, as measured by gross domestic product.
- Nonprofit organizations play a vital role in strengthening communities and generating revenue for the industries they serve.

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Peter Kinsella
Executive Director
Mission Realty Advisors
314-285-7012
pkinsella@missionrealtyadvisors.org