Starling™

Stronger Together







Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2026

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Stronger Together.

Support is not a one-way street.

With the right opportunities and services, people with IDD thrive. And when one person gets to live into their fullest self, it benefits everyone around them and creates community.

None of us does this alone.

Together we are coworkers, neighbors, sports fans, church members, backyard gardeners, food bank volunteers, karaoke specialists, party planners, dog walkers, home cooks, even TikTok dancers! (All real examples from Starling members, by the way)

The same is true for us as providers. When one Starling member delivers excellent care in one corner of the state, it strengthens the entire system.

When we collaborate, we improve.

When we advocate as one – professionals, self-advocates, families and guardians – we cannot be ignored.



Starling Leadership

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CEO



Austin Hayden
Strategic Communications & Advocacy Director



Andrea Schonhardt
Member Services Director



Lesley Bickel
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Northwest Missouri Living Center

a letter from the CEO



Erika Rademan
CEO
Starling
erika@starlingmissouri.org

Dear Starling members,

In January 2026, when our system faced proposed budget cuts that would have gutted services for thousands of Missourians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, what did we do?

We fought back. Not through one heroic act, but by thousands of individual actions. Providers, families, self-advocates, and other supporters from across our great state showed up together, testifying, writing to legislators, and sharing stories that only we could tell.

That is what **"Stronger Together"** means to us.

We saw that same sense of community on display at the second-annual Starling Conference in Branson, Missouri. Over 400 participants joined in to learn and connect alongside more than 40 sponsors and exhibitors! Numbers like that tell you something about where we are headed as an association. We are growing, investing in each other, and creating a leadership pipeline so that we can continue to strengthen services for Missourians with IDD.

We have a lot to celebrate, but our work is not over. As state budget pressure builds, holding the line again will take all of us, together, refusing to let people with disabilities fall through the cracks.

In the pages that follow, you will read about some of our accomplishments over the past 12 months. This is just a fraction of what we are doing as an provider network of 120+ organizations and growing!

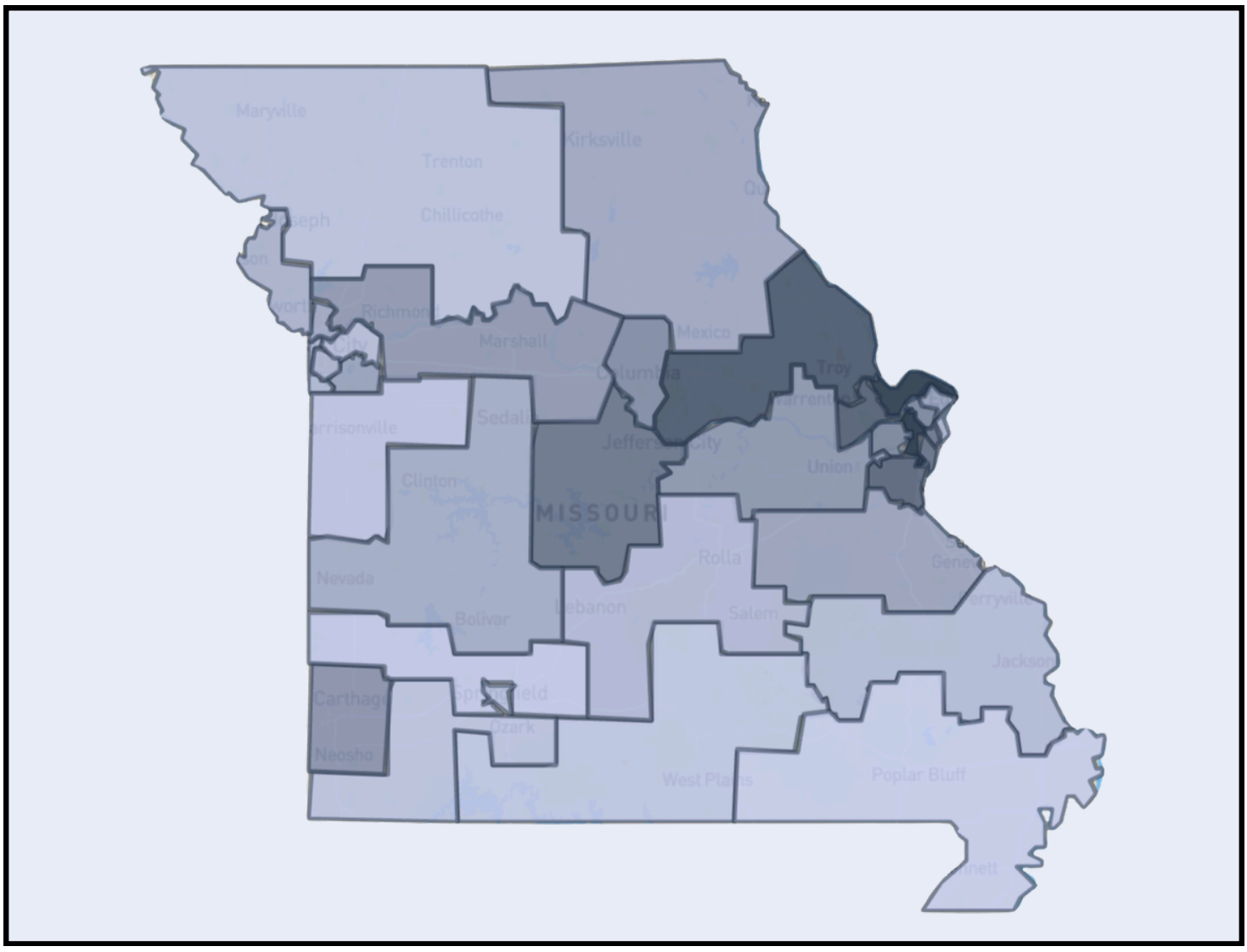
As we work across differences to accomplish our shared mission of ***helping people with disabilities flourish***, please remember, we're stronger together!

Thank you,

Erika Rademan

We Fought for Funding

When we faced proposed cuts to DD services for Missourians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Starling mobilized **providers, families, and self-advocates** to flood the Capitol with visits, calls, letters, e-mails, data, testimony, and real-life stories. The result: the proposed FY27 cut to DD Services **funding was restored**, and the VR grant was fully funded.



Advocacy contacts to Missouri legislators by Senate district, Spring 2026. Darker districts reflect more member contacts.

10,000
Advocacy Messages sent this year

1,100
People utilized the Starling Advocacy Toolkit

UMKC Institute for Human Development

Starling™

Economic Impact:

Home and Community-Based Services for Missourians with IDD

Most people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) live in the community, with over 15,000 requiring some level of paid services through Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waivers to maintain their independence.

Support for Individuals Means Stronger Communities

Keeps families together in the community



Day services, supported employment programs, and in-home servces allow families to *stay in the workforce*



Cost Savings

Fostering independence ***reduces service needs***

Investing in community supports ***saves Missouri money***

Community supports **cost the state 2-3 x less** than institutional settings

Economic Growth

An **investment of ~$1.6B** state dollars in DD Waiver services (FY22-24):



Contributed almost **$6 billion** to MO's economy

and supported **33,000+ jobs** annually





Every **$1.00** toward DD Programs generates **$3.81** in local economic activity

Because Medicaid reimbursement rates have not historically kept pace with the cost for providers to deliver services, low wages for DSPs caused recruitment & retention challenges.

This leads to growing waitlists for services, with Missourians often residing in more coslty and restrictive settings like hospitals or intermediate care facilities (ICFs)...

Unnecessarily costing the state up to **3 times more.**

Source: UMKC

We Showed Up for One Another



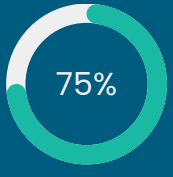






Our association is only as strong as our people, and this year, Starling members showed up! **Five membership meetings** averaged **170 attendees**. The 2025 Starling Conference, **Building a Leadership Community**, drew more than **400 participants** and **40 sponsors and exhibitors**.

Behind the scenes, our **thirteen committees** meet regularly to discuss issues, brainstorm solutions, and advance best-practices for this industry.



Starling's 125+ community providers represent more than 75% of Missouri's Developmental Disabilities services.

Starling™
Conference 2025

Building a Leadership Community

Legacy Award Winners



Sarah Mudd
President/CEO

Center for
Developmentally Disabled

CDD
Nurture. Enrich. Thrive.



Mike Powers
President/CEO

The Arc of the Ozarks

THE Arc OF THE Ozarks

Partner Award Winner

CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES

Center for Human Services

For their innovation and commitment to inclusion:
Mobile Sensory & Accessibility Resource Center

David Kramer
Chief Executive Officer

We Made an Impact

At the Table

Starling leadership and Executive Team members regularly hold high-level meetings with the Governor's office, DMH, VR, and House & Senate Budget leaders - raising provider concerns and successes on behalf of Starling providers.

Rules and Policy

Starling reviews proposed rule changes affecting IDD providers and submits regular comments to shape policy before it's finalized – including a successful effort, backed by hundreds of member messages, urging Missouri's AG to withdraw from a lawsuit threatening community-based care, and a win on the HRST rater issue after Starling raised concerns on members' behalf.

Rate Study

Starling pushed DD and Mercer for transparency on how Day Hab rates are calculated. Since the initial draft came in too low, Starling has prepared comments urging Mercer to factor in what's actually happening on the ground, so that the final rate more accurately reflects the reality of delivering high-quality, community-based Day Services.

Sustainability

Starling has representation on DDD's sustainability workgroups. We have drafted our own cost-saving proposals, ensuring any changes to DD programs keep people with disabilities, families, and community-based providers top of mind.

We Shared the National Stage



ANCOR Policy Summit
Washington, D.C., September 2025
Starling leadership advocated directly with federal lawmakers on issues facing IDD providers.

ANCOR Connect
Boston, April 2026
Missouri sent the largest state delegation of any state at ANCOR's national conference.

Advancing Employment First with APSE
Starling staff partners with APSE (national) and Missouri APSE to advocate for competitive, integrated employment for people with IDD.

Collaborating with The Arc of the US
Starling brought in The Arc of the US Senior Director of Medicaid Policy Kim Musheno for a briefing on federal Medicaid HCBS cuts, reaching advocates statewide.

DSP Workforce Initiative with the University of Minnesota
Starling partnered with UMN's Institute for Community Integration to build resources for DSP recruitment, retention, and support.

Direct Support **Workforce Solutions**

INSTITUTE *on* COMMUNITY INTEGRATION | UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

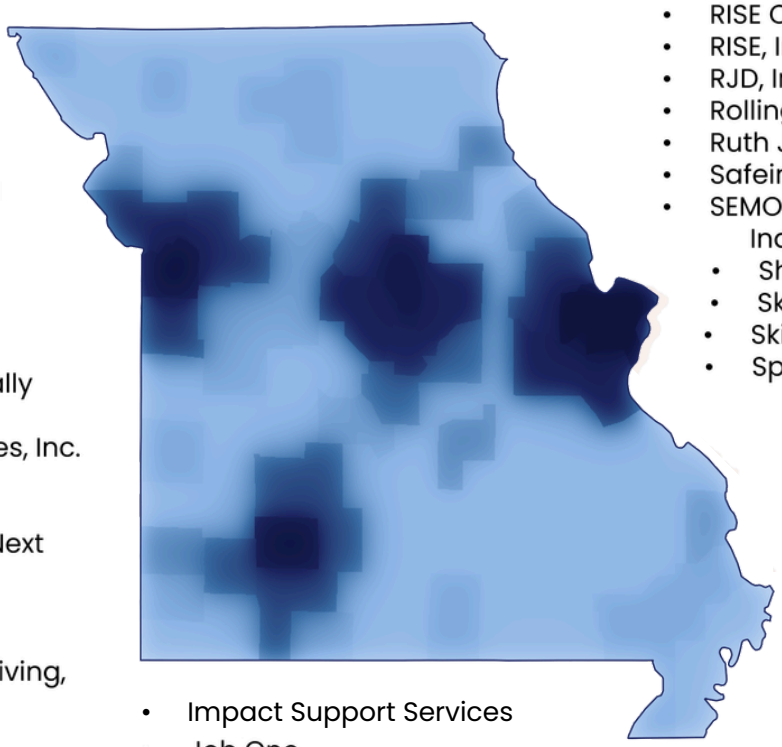
APSE Employment First
Employment for All

The Arc
For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

ANCOR

Starling Provider Network

- 2Gether Tech
- 731 Investments, LLC
- Marion County Services, Inc dba Abilities
- Abilities First
- Ability
- AbleLight
- Aspiring Solutions, LLC
- Avant Supported Living
- Bayada Home Health
- Beacon Specialized Living
- Behavior Intervention Services
- Behavioral Health Allies - Community Support Partners
- Benchmark Human Services
- Boone Center Inc. (BCI)
- Boone County Family Resources
- Boone Supported Living
- Brain Injury Association of Missouri
- Callaway County Special Services
- Services by Design dba Caring Solutions
- Casco, Inc.
- CC Links
- Center for Developmentally Disabled (CDD)
- Center for Human Services, Inc.
- Choices for People
- Choices of St. Joseph
- CMSE Giving Gardens & Next Step Day Program
- Cole County Residential Services, Inc.
- Common Good Natural Living, LLC
- Community Living, Inc.
- Community Opportunities
- Community Support Services of Missouri
- Compass Health Network
- Complete Health Care Solutions Inc
- Creative Concepts for Living
- Creative Pathways Residential Supports
- Day Solutions
- DDRB of Jasper County
- Developing Potential, Inc.
- Developmental Center of the Ozarks
- Developmental Disability Advocates
- Difference Makers ABA
- Dunklin Day Activity Center
- Easterseals Midwest
- Easy Living, Inc.
- Emmaus Homes
- Empac Employment Resources
- Endless Options, Inc.
- F.A.C.T.
- Firefly Supported Living and Employment Services
- Friends Are Family
- Gateway Down Syndrome Association
- Gingerbread House, Inc.
- Grace Reliant Health Services
- Green Hills Superior Care, Inc.
- Hands, Inc
- Help at Home
- Hearo Technologies, LLC
- Heartland Supported Living, Inc.
- High Hope Employment Services, Inc.
- ICAN Missouri Foundation



- Impact Support Services
- Job One
- Job Point
- Judevine Center for Autism
- Lafayette County Bridging Support Services
- L'Arche St. Louis
- Learning Opportunities Quality Works, Inc.
- Life Unlimited
- Living with Purpose of Missouri
- Marion County Services for the Developmentally Disabled
- MCCDDC
- McClay Adult Day Care
- MERS Goodwill
- Miller County Board for Services for the Developmentally Disabled
- Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (MODDC)
- Moniteau County SB40 Board
- New Visions Group Homes Inc.
- Night Owl Support Systems, LLC
- Nodaway County Services
- Northwest Missouri Living Center
- Nova Center of the Ozarks
- Phelps County SB-40 Board
- Pike County Agency for Developmental Disabilities
- Platte County Board of Services
- Pony Bird
- Promise Community Homes
- Rainbow Abilities Center
- Ray County Board of Services / Community Living Options
- REM Missouri DBA Missouri Mentor
- Resources for Human Development
- Restoring Hope
- RISE Community Service
- RISE, Inc.
- RJD, Inc.
- Rolling Hills Creative Living
- Ruth Jensen
- SafeinHome
- SEMO Alliance for Disability Independence (SADI)
- Sherwood Autism Center
- Skills Unlimited, Inc.
- Skillset
- Specialized Support Services, Inc.
- Specialty Products & Services, Inc.
- Stepping Stones
- St. Louis Arc
- St. Louis Office for DD Resources
- Steadfast Support Services LLC
- Stone County Developmental Disability Board
- Sunnyhill, Inc.
- Taney County Board for the Developmentally Disabled / Developmental Connections
- The Arc of the Ozarks
- The Center for Autism Education
- The Community Supports Network, Inc.
- The Farmer's House
- TNC Community
- UCP Heartland
- University of Missouri Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Unlimited Opportunities
- Warren County Pathfinders
- Willows Way
- Woodhaven



Starling™

Helping People with Disabilities Flourish

Like everyone, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have goals, hopes, and ideas. Passions and preferences. Decisions to make.

When people with disabilities have the freedom to dream and make choices, and the supports and opportunities needed to thrive and succeed - they, their families, and communities all thrive.





Starling is the Missouri nonprofit trade association of more than 120 community providers supporting over 40,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at home, at work, and in all aspects of life in the community.

COLLABORATION.
EDUCATION.
ADVOCACY.

Starling™

Helping People with Disabilities Flourish

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