St. Louis County Executive VOTER GUIDE

Sponsored by:

ACTION St. Louis

ARCH CITY DEFENDERS

In partnership with:

Paid for by Action St. Louis, fiscally sponsored by ArchCity Defenders, Kayla Reed, Executive Director 1041 N Vandeventer Ave, St. Louis, MO 63113
2020 ELECTION TIMELINE

St. Louis City Circuit Attorney Debate 7/5/2020

Watch Now!

Last Day to Register to Vote in the August 4th Election 7/8/2020

St. Louis County Executive Debate 7/12/2020

Send in Your Absentee Ballot Request Form 7/22/2020

Primary Election 8/4/2020

Last Day to Register to Vote in the November Election 10/7/2020

General Election 11/4/2020

Watch Now!

2020 COUNTY EXECUTIVE VOTER GUIDE | ACTIONSTL.ORG/ELECTION-CENTER | 1
Primary Date: August 4th
Registration Deadline: July 8th

Absentee and Mail-In Ballot Request forms: Must be RECEIVED, NOT POSTMARKED by July 22

Access the online voter registration site.
Check Your Voter Registration here.
Request an Absentee or Mail-In Ballot with this form.
Here is a Sample Ballot.

When are polls open on Election Day?
Polls open at 6:00am and close at exactly 7:00pm. If you are in line at the time polls close you must be allowed to vote

What are our options to vote this year?
Due to COVID-19, our options to vote for this year have expanded. Vote by mail is temporarily available to any Missouri voter in 2020, no excuse necessary. These ballots must be notarized and returned via mail. You can request a ballot in person or by mail. See below to request your ballot.

For individuals who are at risk for contracting or spreading COVID-19, you may vote absentee with no notarization necessary. You can request a ballot in person, via mail, fax, or email. Absentee ballots can be returned in person or by mail, by the voter or a close relative of the voter if they’re unable to. See below to request your ballot.

High Risk includes:
- 65 years or older
- In a long-term care facility
- Chronic lung disease or moderate/severe asthma
- Serious heart condition
- Immunocompromised
- Diabetes
- Liver disease
- Chronic kidney disease/dialysis
The Candidates

Mark Mantovani
Campaign Website

Sam Page
Campaign Website

Jamie Tolliver
Campaign Website

Jake Zimmerman
Campaign Website
Each candidate was sent an electronic survey. Their answers are verbatim and have not been altered or edited in any way.

1. What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of the St. Louis County Executive?

2. What systemic challenges has the pandemic highlighted and what are your short- and long-term ideas for solutions?

3. How will your administration increase access to affordable housing in St. Louis County and what would you do to reduce the number of eviction proceedings pending in the County?

4. What are your specific plans for budget allocations and policy changes to support equitably resourcing and improving the quality of early childhood education?

5. The newly released guidelines for the reopening of St. Louis County Schools during the COVID-19 pandemic provides a lot of recommendations but very few actual requirements. What are the most important steps to ensure the safety of students, staff and their families?

6. What are your priorities for public safety?

7. The St. Louis County Justice Center has seen a number of recent inmate deaths and as well as (a) COVID-19 outbreak(s). What concrete steps would you take to protect the wellbeing of inmates, many of whom are presumed innocent, and to prevent such deaths from occurring in the future?
Question 1

What do you believe to be the most important role(s) of the St. Louis County Executive?

Mark Mantovani

To serve our community by providing competent, bold leadership that brings people together to help solve our most challenging issues and move us forward. For too long we’ve experienced a lack of economic opportunities, accelerating crime rates, racial disparities, and tired political leadership - and COVID has amplified these challenges. The County Executive should be a unifier, mobilizing, inspiring and most importantly, communicating effectively with the region. I’m running to restore our region, to spark growth, create jobs, and build a safer, healthier, and more equitable county. I have the executive and management experience -- and the courage and fortitude -- to get the job done and will bring a fresh approach to county government.

Sam Page

To lead our region through a crisis the likes of which we’ve not seen in a century. That means making fast, smart decisions that will save lives. It means listening - to learn what all members of our community need and how we can best serve you. It means building a shared vision by working with a diverse coalition that believes in equity, progress, and growth. It means asking ourselves every day - did we do enough today to move the ball forward and make life better? It means being transparent about what we’ve already done and how we plan to improve.

For too long, the County Executive was a bully. In my administration, the County Executive is a partner - a partner in change, in progress, in equity. The record of the last 15 months shows the progress we’ve already made, and I hope to be able to continue it.

Jamie Tolliver

Fostering cooperative relationship between the multiple county departments and the residents of the county. In doing so, promoting diversity, equity, justice, fairness in each area. The most important role of the St. Louis county Executive is that of a servant leader - one who recognizes that in order to lead, one must become a servant of the people.

Jake Zimmerman

The most important job for our next County Executive will be to restore a county government that is open, transparent and responsive to the people – no more pay for play (which is still going on), no more hiding investigative results on things like prisoner deaths at the jail, no more backroom deals. Re-imagined policing that lets all of our residents of all races feel safe and secure in their lives and homes, and proud of the police department that serves them. A county government that knows what it is doing and does it right. Steve Stenger is gone, but the mess he left behind isn’t. I will clean it up.
Question 2

What systemic challenges has the pandemic highlighted and what are your short- and long-term ideas for solutions?

Mark Mantovani
To serve our community by providing competent, bold leadership that brings people together to help solve our most challenging issues and move us forward. For too long we’ve experienced a lack of economic opportunities, accelerating crime rates, racial disparities, and tired political leadership - and COVID has amplified these challenges. The County Executive should be a unifier, mobilizing, inspiring and most importantly, communicating effectively with the region. I’m running to restore our region, to spark growth, create jobs, and build a safer, healthier, and more equitable county. I have the executive and management experience -- and the courage and fortitude -- to get the job done and will bring a fresh approach to county government.

Sam Page
Racism, income inequality, healthcare access, food and housing insecurity - the pandemic has shone a blinding light on each of these. Systemic racism is a public health crisis. We can’t make progress without addressing it in all of our institutions.

Short term: last year, I ordered anti-bias training for police, increased the minimum wage for County jobs to $15/hour, expanded paid family leave, created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department and a Diversity and Inclusion unit within the police department, and appointed more diverse voices to our boards and commissions.

Our pandemic response shows our commitment to fighting inequalities. From the CARES funding, $2 million has gone to food insecurity and over $12 million to homelessness prevention and keeping people safe in their homes. Testing sites operated by the County opened on the same day throughout the County.

Long-term: expanding Medicaid, increasing social safety nets, and ending systemic racism.

Jamie Tolliver
Healthcare disparities, systemic racism, and economical deficits and misappropriations are among the major challenges the pandemic highlighted. In the short term, a solution comes from education. Educate the county government to the needs of each community and educating the community of the necessary steps it will require to fulfill those needs. Long term, having regular progress report meetings with the various boards of leadership within each community, planning, preparing and adhering to timelines and budgets to achieve community wellness in all areas. In order to be successful however, the county first needs to rebuild trust.
What systemic challenges has the pandemic highlighted and what are your short- and long-term ideas for solutions?

Jake Zimmerman

The County government has not done well so far. Late on testing (yes, we now have lots of test sites – but it still takes ten days or more to get results). Ineffective on contact tracing. Did not foresee infection and death rates four times higher in North County than in other areas, and let the situation there get out of control. Spending the $175 million federal grant without County Council oversight, and putting ten percent of that money into "slush funds" for Council members to dole out to favored groups and businesses.

But, it is not too late to do things right. Another wave may be coming in the fall. Will we be ready? Will our first responders have the PPE they need? Will we have adequate testing ready to go (both diagnostic and antibody)? Will we be able to contact trace? The time to prepare is right now.
Question 3

How will your administration increase access to affordable housing in St. Louis County and what would you do to reduce the number of eviction proceedings pending in the County?

**Mark Mantovani**

For affordable housing: 1) Work with local banks to give priority to lending support to borrowers who don’t normally qualify under bank guidelines; secure philanthropic assistance. 2) Properly fund the Housing Trust Fund in order to provide mixed use housing in areas of opportunity; allow for home and rental property improvements and assist with utility and housing expenses. 3) Continue to expand low income tax credits. In terms of evictions: Provide better social service support, legal representation, stop illegal lockouts and secure more caseworkers.

**Sam Page**

Housing is a human right. I signed the affordable housing trust fund legislation into law, and created a new funding stream for affordable housing with the medical marijuana tax. We’ve combined our housing and homeless offices, and our housing strategic plan prioritizes increasing quality affordable and accessible housing options. This has made us more attractive to grant funders, who can give us even more resources.

I fought against the Trump administration and won, by stopping the demolition of public housing in Wellston. This kept hundreds of people in their homes and gave them options through vouchers.

Our response to COVID shows our dedication to housing and homelessness prevention. We allocated over $12 million of CARES Act funds to rental, mortgage, and utility help - and in homelessness prevention - to keep our families safely at home. Those funds include legal assistance, to help people navigate legal proceedings.

**Jamie Tolliver**

By making the application and approval process for affordable housing easier as well as, ensuring that those most in need of affordable housing are directed to the appropriate resources in common county social services offices when seeking other services. With the government moratorium ending, we can prepare for a wave of evictions that can be reduced significantly if landlords are willing to work with tenants on a case by case basis. There should be a program where tenants are able to apply for eviction deferment that allow a reasonable set amount of time for alternative resolution to be achieved.

**Jake Zimmerman**

We face an immediate crisis with the recent re-opening of the courts and the pending resumption of evictions. A portion of the County's $175 million in CARES Act funding should go to financial assistance to those threatened with loss of housing because the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has rendered them unable to keep up with their rent. Looking beyond this immediate crisis, we need to go after the scofflaw landlords who own our worst problem properties with more aggressive code inspection and enforcement. They have to learn that they will not get away with warehousing tenants in substandard, unhealthy buildings.
Question 4

What are your specific plans for budget allocations and policy changes to support equitably resourcing and improving the quality of early childhood education?

**Mark Mantovani**

There is no better return on investment than early childhood education, especially for developing a strong future workforce. I would work with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that recent federal and child care development funds and grants aimed at increasing early learning quality and availability would benefit St. Louis County families most in need of such resources. And I would support efforts to increase the state revenue stream.

**Sam Page**

As a doctor, I recognize the tie of brain development to quality early childhood education. We need to improve access to early childhood education and the quality of what is provided.

First, our state needs to fully fund education, including early childhood education. We can do this through passing common sense legislation like an online sales tax, commonly known as the Wayfair tax.

In my COVID-19 response, I designated $6.4m from CARES funding to early childhood education and care, and an additional $500k for social and emotional support for children. That is a $7m downpayment on my commitment to expanding access to early childhood education. Early childhood educators, like all educators, are underpaid and under-resourced. Leading by example, I raised the minimum wage in County jobs to $15/hour and expanded paid family leave. The rest of our state economy needs to do the same.

**Jamie Tolliver**

Communicating with board of education in the various cities and municipalities will allow the budget to no longer be blindly allocated or assume that all schools need the same thing. There is a reason that we distinguish equity from equality. Some school need more funding because they have less resources than others to begin with. Improving early childhood education begins with creating a curriculum that is more age appropriate learning and less like circumstantial childcare. Finding fun and creative ways to expose children to things they will be expected to learn as they advance academically, especially in the areas of math, science, and social studies, would make a world of difference.

**Jake Zimmerman**

Our son Gabriel recently "graduated" from pre-school, and I’ve seen firsthand the difference early childhood education can make in a child’s development. Our public schools face no more important challenge than providing top-quality and affordable (preferably no-cost) early childhood education. This is particularly true in economically disadvantaged communities, where early childhood education can provide the solid foundation the children need to keep learning through high school and beyond, and to escape the school-to-prison pipeline. As County Executive I will use the "bully pulpit" of my office to support the expansion of early childhood education not only in our county but throughout the region.
Question 5

The newly released guidelines for the reopening of St. Louis County Schools during the COVID-19 pandemic provides a lot of recommendations but very few actual requirements. What are the most important steps to ensure the safety of students, staff and their families?

**Mark Mantovani**

Proper hygiene and following science based procedures.

**Sam Page**

We are collectively responsible for the safety of our schools. By limiting the spread of the virus, we create the safest environment. That’s why we all have to socially distance, wear masks, practice good hygiene, and avoid crowds.

Beyond education, our schools provide healthy food, services and therapies, and even a necessary check in on vulnerable families. With parents shouldering work and care for school-aged kids, our families are stretched. We can’t ignore the impact that has on them and our economy. And, we can’t put our students, staff, and families at risk.

While the County Executive does not control the school districts (reopening decisions will be made district-by-district), my administration has been in daily conversations with them. Many safety precautions will be required - masks, social distancing, increased hygiene and cleaning, logging visitors for contact tracing, isolating those who become sick, and more. Full guidance here: https://tinyurl.com/yc9w5j4or

**Jamie Tolliver**

The school day needs to be planned in such way where in addition to social distancing and facial coverings, sanitation is given a lot of attention. Health "screenings" to include temperature and symptom checks should be administered daily to both staff and students. Throughout the entire reopening process constant communication, health education, and transparency are paramount in achieving success during this critical time.

**Jake Zimmerman**

The decision to re-open schools will be made by the school districts, not the County. That said, I offer the districts the same advice I will follow as County Executive. Remember that saving lives and protecting the health of your students and staff is your top priority; don't give in to political pressure to take short cuts. Let science drive your decision making and be guided by the experts (note: Dr. Fauci is an expert; President Trump is not, and neither is Governor Parson). Remember that Covid-19 hits some parts of our community a lot harder than others and make sure aid responds to need.
Question 6

What are your priorities for public safety?

Mark Mantovani
Reduce violent crime with time tested and innovative procedures associated with guns and other violent behavior.

Sam Page
My priorities are to keep people safe and treat people with dignity. We must put resources where they are needed most - education, affordable housing, food security, economic opportunity. We must update our laws and speed up our processes. We cannot police our way to safety.

The status quo hasn’t served and protected everyone, so I appointed four diverse voices to our police board. We need a thoughtfully trained police department that is accountable for its actions and interactions.

I support community policing. We have two outstanding chiefs from other communities who are reviewing our practices and procedures. Before President Obama challenged police departments to adopt his “8 Can’t Wait” policies, our force had already implemented them. Under my direction, a founder of the Black Lives Matter PAC provided anti-bias training to our police officers. I will continue to work with Moms Demand Action to advocate for gun sense.

Jamie Tolliver
Rebuilding community trust in the police and law enforcement is a top priority. The rules, regulations, policies and procedures that govern law enforcement need to be carefully scrutinized, evaluated, and adjusted where needed. Non bias parties should be a part of the policy reform process. Beyond that, public safety during COVID-19 and as it relates to the racial tensions, I truly do believe that education and transparent communication are key. You can not solve a problem you are only half aware exist.

Jake Zimmerman
Our County police chief told the County Council that racism just isn’t a problem in her department. Seriously – does anyone else believe that? And do we really need yet another “top to bottom review” to tell us what we already know? It’s time to admit that problems exist and get to work. We start with making sure every PD in the County adopts the “8 Can’t Wait” recommendations for use-of-force reform. We install a Police Board that has no patience with repeat violators of use-of-force policies. We give our cops the training they need to manage use of force effectively. We boost diversity. We establish a regional database of “problem” officers so that cops fired for cause from one area department don’t keep popping up in other departments. We strengthen civilian oversight by the Police Board and a civilian Police Review Board. And more. Read my whole plan at https://www.jakezimmerman.org/policing-accountability/
The St. Louis County Justice Center has seen a number of recent inmate deaths and as well as (a) COVID-19 outbreak(s). What concrete steps would you take to protect the wellbeing of inmates, many of whom are presumed innocent, and to prevent such deaths from occurring in the future?

**Sam Page**

All people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, including incarcerated people.

When I became County Executive, I took on reforming the Justice Center. We’ve reduced the inmate population from 967 to 875, eliminated six different types of jail fees, stopped the practice of shackling pregnant inmates, started providing quality period products, put cameras in the clinic, overhauled dozens of systems with the help of the MacArthur Justice Foundation, added more training for corrections officers and nurses, and reconvened the Justice Service Board.

Some very sick people come into the jails, whether because of mental illness, substance abuse, or lack of access to care, we work to recognize and provide what they need.

The Director of Justice Services is working with the courts to move people out of the jails as quickly as possible, and making sure that people aren’t there simply because they can’t pay their fees.

**Mark Mantovani**

We need to review the intake screening process and make improvements. One idea is to incorporate the use of telemedicine to allow physicians to assist and supervise the nurses currently conducting the assessments. There also should be more coordination with area hospitals on medical care. In addition, I would encourage more collaboration between Justice Services, the County Health Department and the board appointed to look into the deaths - and I would communicate openly with them and make sure their needs were met. Bottom line: All must work together to make sure the jail treats everyone in custody humanely.

**Jamie Tolliver**

The Justice Center should be treated in many ways the same educational institutions with staff being checked regularly upon entering and inmates checked regularly as well. Sanitation should be monitored and social distancing practiced as much as possible, with inmates exhibiting symptoms being quarantined and monitored. Testing should occur when inmates are taken into custody and “clean” and “quarantined” areas created and regulated for inmate and personnel safety.
The St. Louis County Justice Center has seen a number of recent inmate deaths and as well as (a) COVID-19 outbreak(s). What concrete steps would you take to protect the wellbeing of inmates, many of whom are presumed innocent, and to prevent such deaths from occurring in the future?

Jake Zimmerman
The County Executive appointed a citizens commission to recommend jail reforms, and then refused to share investigative results from the jail deaths with his own commission. That is scandalous. We cannot and will not tolerate a jail operation where six inmates die in a year, some under very suspicious circumstances. I will share with the public what we know about jail deaths. I will work with community representatives as well as our justice system to develop real and effective reforms. I also will work to clean up the cash bail system to ensure that no one ever has to spend months in the jail awaiting trial simply because they can’t afford bail.