



ST. JOSEPH RECEIVES MISSOURI BLUE SHIELD DESIGNATION

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
PAUL LUSTER, CHIEF OF POLICE
816.271.4701 or pluster@stjosephmo.gov**

**(March 4, 2026)
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

St. Joseph's dedication to strengthening public safety and supporting law enforcement has earned the City the Missouri Blue Shield designation for 2026 from the Missouri Department of Public Safety.

This honor recognizes Missouri communities that demonstrate their commitment to enhancing public safety, investing in and supporting law enforcement and building partnerships between law enforcement and our community. The Missouri Blue Shield Program was created by Governor Mike Kehoe in January 2025.

"This designation is a reflection of the dedication and professionalism of the men and women of the St. Joseph Police Department, as well as the strong support we receive from city leadership and community partners," St. Joseph Police Chief Paul Luster said.

Communities qualify for the Missouri Blue Shield designation by showing a strong dedication to reducing crime, making meaningful investments in public safety and building solid collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders. Each community's participation is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the program's goals.

"We are incredibly proud that St. Joseph is receiving the Missouri Blue Shield," Mayor John Josendale said. "This recognition reflects our strong commitment to public safety and our steadfast support for the men and women of the St. Joseph Police Department. We will continue investing in the partnerships, training and resources needed to keep our community safe."

Governor Kehoe emphasized the impact of the program across the state.

“The Blue Shield program has shown what’s possible when communities commit to prioritizing law enforcement and public safety,” Governor Kehoe said. “After awarding \$50,000 grants to more than 200 communities last year, we’re continuing that work by welcoming new communities and renewing Blue Shield designations for counties, towns and cities that remain committed to the program.”

Communities that receive the Missouri Blue Shield designation are eligible for grant funding for law enforcement training and equipment as part of Governor Kehoe’s Recommended Budget for the State Fiscal Year 2027, provided the General Assembly approves the funding. The governor’s FY 2027 budget appropriated \$10 million to the program for equipment and training grants. Participating communities are also featured on the governor’s social media pages and the Department of Public Safety website to highlight their commitment to safer communities.

Mark James, director of the Missouri Department of Public Safety, also highlighted the importance of collaboration in strengthening public safety efforts.

“Strengthening public safety and committing to joint law enforcement community – citizen safety efforts is what the Blue Shield Program is all about and the Department of Public Safety is honored to work with communities like St. Joseph that have answered the Blue Shield challenge,” James said. “Last year, the essential equipment provided by Blue Shield grants included 388 mobile data terminals, 351 body cameras, 151 license plate readers, 102 ballistic vests, 91 interoperable radios and 56 vehicles. We look forward to getting additional important equipment and training to our partners in local law enforcement.”

St. Joseph’s continued recognition through the Blue Shield designation underscores the City’s commitment to strengthening public safety, supporting its law enforcement professionals, and fostering meaningful partnerships throughout the community.