

Josh Henges

2023 Winner

Josh Henges has devoted his life's work to ending homelessness—and the stigma surrounding it—in Kansas City. From the time he was a child, he has been obsessed with helping those without a home. As he entered his professional life, he committed his career to addressing the root causes of chronic homelessness: severe and persistent mental illness and substance use disorders.

Henges serves as Kansas City, Missouri's first-ever "czar" responsible for preventing homelessness. In this role, he creates and implements innovative community-wide strategies to assist the houseless and those at-risk of becoming houseless and creates strategies to reduce homelessness and generational poverty. He collaborates with public and private organizations along with various committees and taskforces on strategic long- and short-term goals, including large system and infrastructure projects, and policies that aim to ensure services to the houseless and housing insecure.

He started by working with homeless youth at KidsTLC, then went to Artists Helping the Homeless and served briefly at Reconciliation Services before starting with Veterans Community Project (VCP). While at VCP he helped manage a village of 49 tiny homes and helped secure permanent housing for more than 100 veterans.

Josh has shown a commitment to this work and will continue working toward the goal of reaching a functional end of homelessness in Kansas City.