

A graduation scene is shown in the background. A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black graduation cap and gown, walks up a set of stone steps. Other graduates in caps and gowns are visible in the background, some walking up the stairs and others standing. The lighting is warm, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The overall atmosphere is one of achievement and hope.

SUPPORTING RECOVERY THROUGH EDUCATION

Kansas City Region

OUR MISSION

The Next Step exists for one clear purpose:

To provide tuition assistance to individuals recovering from **substance use disorder**.

These individuals must be active in a 12-step recovery program and demonstrate a financial need while pursuing an academic or vocational education.

OUR VISION

A future where people in recovery achieve economic stability, purpose, and long-term success through education.



ABOUT US

- The Next Step was founded in 2005 as a grassroots organization in St. Louis, with expansion to Kansas City in 2024.
- We are a small, mission-focused organization designed to ensure every dollar raised has a meaningful, measurable impact.
- We are unique: no other organization in the country provides our service.
- We hold a 4-star, 100% rating from Charity Navigator and Platinum Transparency status with Candid, reflecting strong financial health and responsible stewardship.



THE PROBLEM

Addiction Creates Barriers to Education

For individuals in recovery to achieve economic stability, purpose, and long-term success, they often need education. They lack access to education due to:

- Financial hardship
- Limited family support
- Past disruptions to education during active addiction
- Lack of access to federal funding

Without education or job training, the risk of economic instability and subsequent relapse increases.

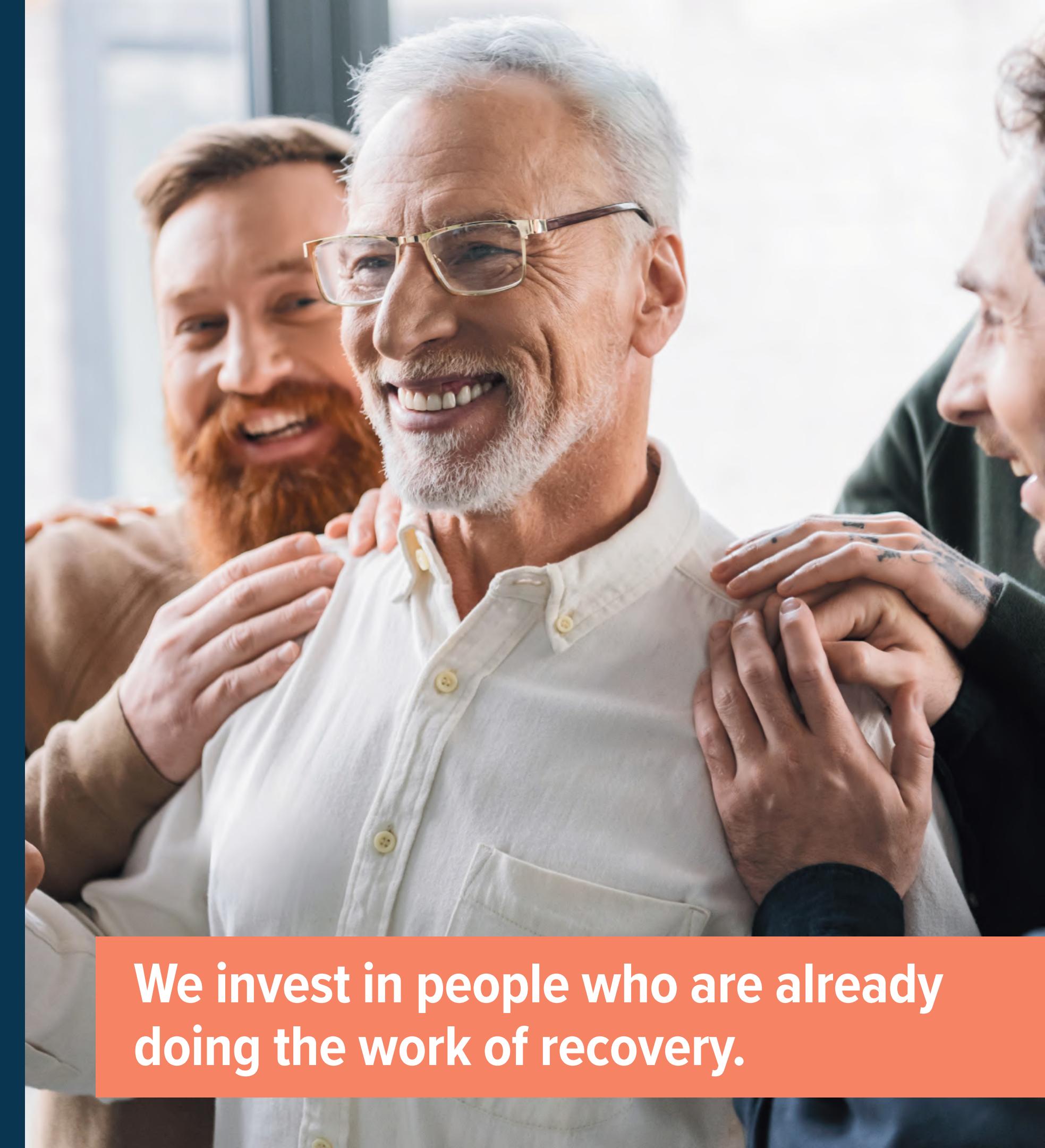


OUR SOLUTION

Removing Financial Barriers to Education

The Next Step does this by providing:

- Needs-based scholarships for tuition and books. All qualified applicants are funded.
- Support for Associate's, Bachelor's, and advanced degrees, and vocational, technical, and certification programs.
- A structured application and review process focused on accountability and readiness.
- Annual reapplication to support continued progress toward completion



We invest in people who are already doing the work of recovery.

WHO WE SERVE

Our students are diverse:

- Represent all genders across a wide age range
- From varied racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Often, first-generation college students
- Frequently, single parents or primary caregivers
- Face significant financial barriers

What they share:

- Sustained sobriety in a 12-step, abstinence-based recovery program
- Strong commitment to education
- Dedication to service work and volunteerism
- Motivation to increase earning potential
- Desire for long-term stability and independence



OUR PROCESS

Our students are carefully selected through a **rigorous application** process:

- A detailed online application
- Verification of eligibility requirements
- A sponsor recommendation letter
- Personal interviews by board members

Funding integrity: All scholarships are paid directly to educational institutions

Accountability: students must meet defined academic and service requirements, including submission of schedules, invoices, and semester grades. They must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA and volunteer for the organization.



TO QUALIFY

Applications are accepted annually between **December 1 - April 1**. To qualify for an interview, applicants must meet these criteria:

- Be active in a 12-step recovery program from substance use disorder (AA, NA, HA, CA, MA)
- Have one year of continuous sobriety time by the April 1 application deadline
- Demonstrate financial need and responsibility
- Employed at least part-time or receiving disability benefits
- Be enrolled in or planning to enroll in an educational or vocational program
- Live in the St. Louis or Kansas City metropolitan region



LEARN MORE

OUR IMPACT

Since 2005, The Next Step has awarded **1,116 scholarships** and more than **\$2.9 million** in tuition assistance to individuals in recovery pursuing education.

In our first two years in Kansas City, we have established a strong foundation for local impact.



Kansas City benefits from a proven model with strong local investment and accountability.



\$3,309
ANNUAL AVERAGE
SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

***The maximum annual scholarship award is \$5,000.**

OUR OUTCOMES

Success for our students is measured through academic progress, completion, and stability, including:

- Continued academic enrollment and excellence
- Completion of degrees, certificates, or vocational programs
- Upward mobility in employment and economic stability
- Continued sobriety supported by education and structured accountability

Student testimonials and reporting consistently reflect these outcomes.



STUDENT SUCCESS



BEVIN W.

Current Recipient
Associate's Degree in Nursing

As a single mother of three, every day is a balancing act of parenting, working, and striving to create a better life for my family. Since entering recovery in 2020, I've been determined to build a brighter future, and pursuing a nursing degree has always been my dream. Becoming a scholarship recipient changed everything — it gave me hope and a path forward. Without The Next Step's financial assistance, I would not be in school today.



JEFF N.

Alumni
Bachelor's Degree in Business

Early in my recovery journey, The Next Step gave me a scholarship. It felt like they believed in me before I believed in myself, as I wasn't sure I could graduate from college. I realized that with the financial help, it would be possible, and I could set my life up so I would never have to go back to the horrors of addiction. Getting my Bachelor's degree was extremely beneficial and rewarding. Today, I am an Outreach Coordinator at a substance use disorder treatment center. I am financially stable, a proud father, and remain active in recovery. This was all made possible by The Next Step's support.

OUR NEED

We need partners who believe in focus, accountability, and impact to help us achieve our goals:

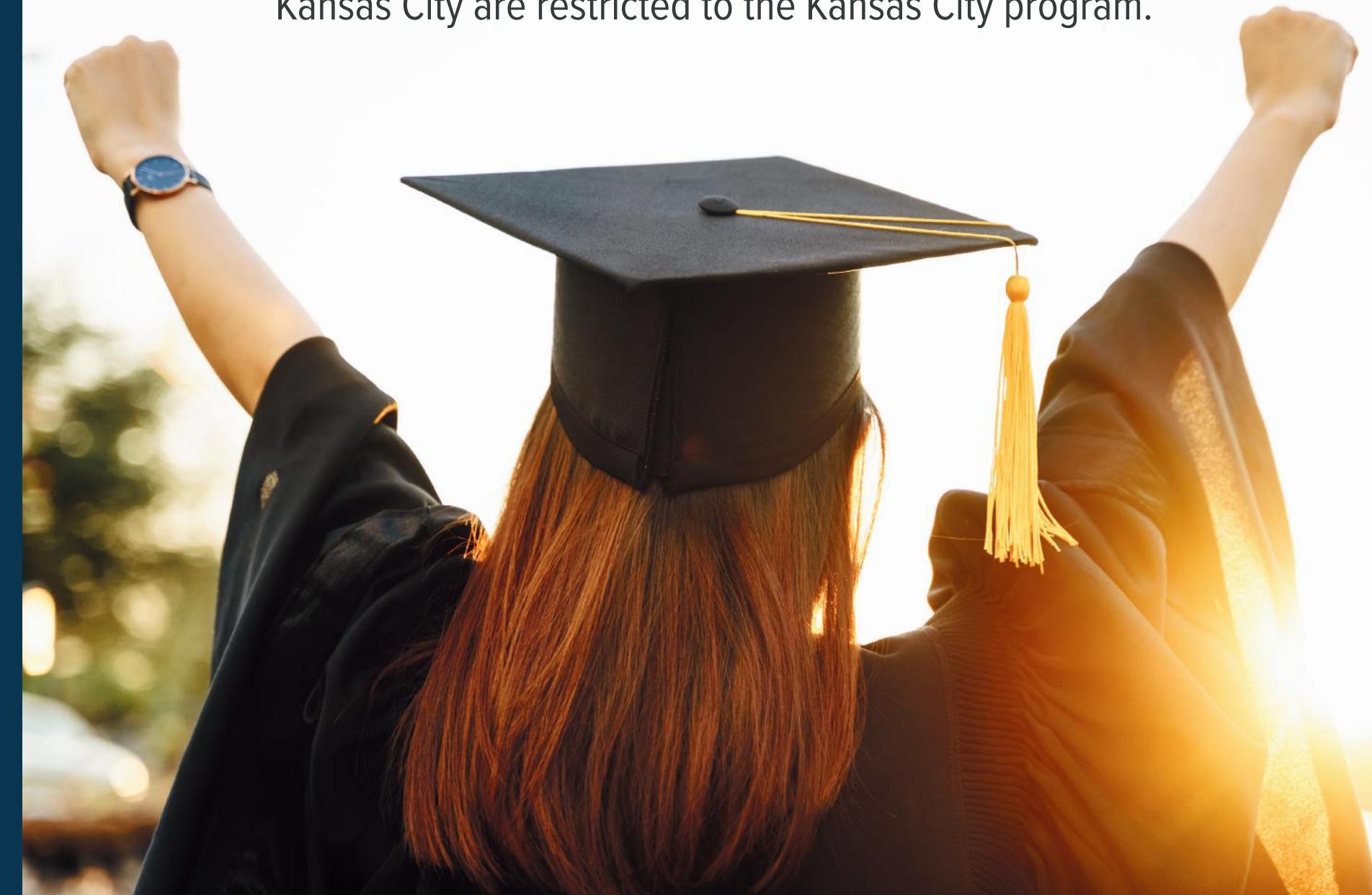
- Serve more individuals in recovery each year through **additional scholarships**.
We are projecting a 40% increase this year.
- **Fully fund education** whenever possible, removing financial barriers that threaten completion.

Growth, for us, is about deepening impact where it matters most.

2026 PROJECTED BUDGET

Kansas City	\$115,000.00
Saint Louis	\$1,035,000.00
Total Budget	\$1,150,000.00

The Next Step receives no state or federal funding and is supported entirely by individual donors and family foundations. Funds raised in Kansas City are restricted to the Kansas City program.





thenextstepkc.org

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Saint Louis, MO 63122

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