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Women's leadership organization expands to St. Louis after 50 years in Milwaukee



Jennifer Dirks is president and CEO of Tempo.

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Story Highlights

- Tempo, a Milwaukee-based women's leadership organization, launched its first expansion chapter in St. Louis.
- The inaugural St. Louis chapter includes 40 executive women from 31 organizations across multiple industries.
- Tempo has served more than 500 executive women and nearly 300 emerging women leaders in Milwaukee.

Tempo, a Milwaukee-based organization dedicated to advancing women leaders, is expanding beyond Wisconsin for the first time with the launch of Tempo St. Louis, a new chapter designed to connect and support executive women across the region.

The move marks a significant milestone for the organization, which has spent more than 50 years building networks, leadership development programs, and mentoring opportunities for women in senior leadership roles.

"This is an important moment in TEMPO's history and a natural step in our evolution," said Jennifer Dirks, president and CEO of Tempo.

Dirks said the organization chose St. Louis after extensive research and conversations with business and community leaders. Tempo found strong similarities between Milwaukee and St. Louis, including demand for executive-level networking opportunities for women, comparable market characteristics and established relationships between business leaders in both cities.

The inaugural St. Louis chapter will include 40 executive women representing 31 organizations from industries including financial services, technology, healthcare, higher education, law, professional services and nonprofit organizations. Founding members come from companies and institutions such as Microsoft, Edward Jones, Bayer North America, World Wide Technology, Commerce Trust, Northern Trust, Washington University, Maryville University and Husch Blackwell.

“St. Louis has an incredible community of accomplished women leaders, but what we heard repeatedly was a desire for more opportunities to connect across companies and industries in an authentic and meaningful way,” Dirks said. “TEMPO already knows how to build that kind of community.”

The organization’s expansion was supported by local business leaders who saw a need for stronger cross-industry connections among women executives, Tempo said. Marianne Hayes, director of business development at BDO and a founding sponsor of the chapter, said the idea grew organically from conversations with women leaders seeking deeper professional relationships.

“TEMPO St. Louis started, quite simply, because women kept asking for it,” Hayes said. “I found myself connecting incredible leaders who were all looking for the same thing: meaningful relationships, authentic conversation and a stronger sense of community.”

Tempo St. Louis will operate as part of the larger organization while maintaining a local identity. Members will have access to leadership programming, mentoring opportunities, peer learning, networking events and connections with members in Milwaukee. The arrangement is expected to create broader opportunities for business referrals, professional development and collaboration across both cities.

Founded in Milwaukee, Tempo now serves more than 500 executive women and nearly 300 emerging women leaders. Dirks said the organization’s expansion strategy is focused on extending its mission rather than pursuing growth alone.

“Our goal is not growth for growth’s sake,” she said. “It is to thoughtfully extend what TEMPO does exceptionally well: creating meaningful relationships and opportunities that help women lead, grow and have greater impact.”

THE LIST

Here are St. Louis' 62 largest women-owned businesses

2025 Revenue

Rank	Prior Rank	Company / Prior Rank (*not ranked)
1	1	MTM Inc.
2	2	Tarlton Corp.
3	3	Federal International Inc.

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