

LINC Commission Meeting

October 17, 2022

LIGHTSON AFTERSCHOOL



For Lights On Afterschool 2022, LINC Caring Communities sites are planning celebrations including fall festivals, science presentations, talent shows, games, music, food and more. These photos from 2021 give a taste of the fun.

Find an event near you:
kclinc.org/lightson



LINCSM

Local Investment Commission

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Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

Our Shared Vision

A caring community that builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, attain their highest potential, and contribute to the public good.

Our Mission

To provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

Our Guiding Principles

1. **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Provide ready access to a full array of effective services.
2. **PREVENTION:** Emphasize “front-end” services that enhance development and prevent problems, rather than “back-end” crisis intervention.
3. **OUTCOMES:** Measure system performance by improved outcomes for children and families, not simply by the number and kind of services delivered.
4. **INTENSITY:** Offering services to the needed degree and in the appropriate time.
5. **PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT:** Use the needs, concerns, and opinions of individuals who use the service delivery system to drive improvements in the operation of the system.
6. **NEIGHBORHOODS:** Decentralize services to the places where people live, wherever appropriate, and utilize services to strengthen neighborhood capacity.
7. **FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS:** Create a delivery system, including programs and reimbursement mechanisms, that are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to respond to the full spectrum of child, family and individual needs.
8. **COLLABORATION:** Connect public, private and community resources to create an integrated service delivery system.
9. **STRONG FAMILIES:** Work to strengthen families, especially the capacity of parents to support and nurture the development of their children.
10. **RESPECT AND DIGNITY:** Treat families, and the staff who work with them, in a respectful and dignified manner.
11. **INTERDEPENDENCE/MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Balance the need for individuals to be accountable and responsible with the obligation of community to enhance the welfare of all citizens.
12. **CULTURAL COMPETENCY:** Demonstrate the belief that diversity in the historical, cultural, religious and spiritual values of different groups is a source of great strength.
13. **CREATIVITY:** Encourage and allow participants and staff to think and act innovatively, to take risks, and to learn from their experiences and mistakes.
14. **COMPASSION:** Display an unconditional regard and a caring, non-judgmental attitude toward, participants that recognizes their strengths and empowers them to meet their own needs.
15. **HONESTY:** Encourage and allow honesty among all people in the system.



Monday, Oct. 17, 2022 | 4 – 5:30 pm
Kauffman Foundation

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
 - a. September 2022 minutes (motion)**
- III. Mo. Department of Elementary & Secondary Education**
- IV. Welfare to Work**
- V. Caring Communities**
 - a. Operations, licensing, staffing**
 - b. Lights On Afterschool**
- VI. LINC Retirement Committee**
 - a. Plan Review (Two West)**
 - b. Open Committee Seat**
- VII. Other**
- VIII. Adjournment**



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – SEPT. 19, 2022

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo.. Cochair **David Disney** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bob Bartman
Bert Berkley
Aaron Deacon
SuEllen Fried
Anita Gorman

Tom Lewin
Ken Powell
Marge Randle
David Ross

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2022, LINC Commission meeting was approved unanimously.

Superintendents Reports

Karen Hile, Executive Director of Human Resources (Fort Osage School District) reported that the district is increasing in enrollment again after recent decreases during Covid. Fort Osage is emphasizing conscious discipline as part of its work in social emotional learning. She also reported good progress on the district's building projects, including renovations at Blue Hills Elementary, a new central office and a new basketball court. She thanked LINC for its support for the district's recruiting campaign.

Prissy LeMay, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction (Grandview School District) reported that the district is off to a great start this school year. The district has rebranded and all schools from the high school through elementaries are now the Bulldogs. The new look was celebrated with t-shirts and school events. The district broke ground this month for construction of a new gym at Martin City.

Yaw Obeng, Superintendent (Hickman Mills School District) reported on the successful election in August of the district's bid for a levy increase and no-tax \$20 million bond issue. The passage will enable the district to pay competitive teacher salaries, while the bond issue will support projects including renovating Burke Academy to create a Sixth Grade Center. The district is also improving arts and performance facilities and other specialty programs and improving building safety.

Christy Harrison, Director of Extended Learning (Kansas City Public Schools), reported that the district is focused on five areas: literacy, math, cultural responsiveness, social and emotional wellness, and parent engagement. As part of the focus on literacy and math the district is providing professional development opportunities for teachers in the form of endorsements in those areas.

Kevin Foster, Executive Director (Genesis School), reported that the school is fully enrolled and is increasing capacity after reducing it during Covid. Genesis is bringing parents and partners back into the school building for family engagement and enrichment events including: Together Tuesdays, a partnership with Literacy KC and Coco's Kids; Let's Read volunteer one-on-one reading; Operation Smile dental care; and Project Sankofa.

Jennifer Collier, Interim Superintendent (Kansas City Public Schools), thanked the Commission for welcoming her today. She reported more details of the district's efforts to build strong literacy skills in students to prepare them for success. The district is conducting a reading campaign to build a culture of reading throughout the community and hopes to involve the LINC Caring Communities initiative in it. The district is also focused on culturally responsive teaching, which leverages a student's cultural identity to help them connect what they know to what they are learning and thereby achieve academic success. The community is invited to join a study of the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain* by Zaretta Hammond; the first community meeting on the book will be Sept. 29.

Donnie Mitchell, Superintendent (Lee A. Tolbert Academy), reported that the school is having challenges finding certified teachers and has been filling the gaps with provisional substitute teachers. The LINC afterschool program is off to a good start.

Caring Communities Update

Disney reported that LINC joined its school partners in welcoming students and their families back to school on Aug. 22. A video highlighting the return to school was shown.

Executive Vice President **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported LINC Before & After School program enrollment has increased significantly this year. LINC has struggled to find sufficient part-time program staff and has not been able to place every child in the program. LINC has been building relationships with state licensing staff, many of whom are new since Covid began, and working to resolve issues around program space, immunization records, and training. This year LINC has 21 sites with 21st Century Community Learning Center funding, which requires greater collaboration with principals and teachers. LINC is grateful that its partners, including Kansas City Young Audiences, Kansas City Community Gardens, Boy Scouts, and Urban Tech – are able to return to the school buildings.

LINC HR Director Trent **DeVreugd** reported LINC has added 120 part-time staff since July and is now up to 332 active staff. LINC has been innovative in recruiting staff through neighborhood canvassing in addition to hiring online. The labor shortage has made finding staff difficult; in addition, candidates for program positions have additional hoops to jump through including background check and TB test.

Miles-Bartee reported the ERAP utility assistance program has been extended through Oct. 31. LINC staff have continued to process applications for assistance for many families that have gone long periods without water, gas or electricity. LINC has connected families to more than \$2.5 million in assistance.

Caring Communities Site Coordinator **Danisha Clarkson** reported that providing utility assistance to families is important for children, even though they might not know that their families need the help.

Caring Communities Program Specialist **Carl Wade** reported on LINC's partnership with Harvesters to provide food for families. A Harvester's video featuring LINC staff working at the monthly food distribution at Center High School was shown.

Caring Communities Program Associate **Drake Bushnell** reported that LINC serves families during weekly food distributions at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center, where families have received more than 3 million pounds of food.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Update

LINC Finance Director **Jeff Hill** reported that LINC staff have met with the Commissioner of Education to discuss Out of School Time funding. LINC is now working on its contract with DESE and has hired accounting staff to support that work. Controller Terri Kerbe has been working with Forvis on the LINC financial audit.

Other Reports

Ken Powell reported that he, **Janet Miles-Bartee**, and **Brent Schondelmeyer** traveled to Buffalo, NY, to accept an award from the American Association for State and Local History on behalf of LINC, Kansas City Public Library, and Black Archives of Mid America, for the Kansas City Black History book that the partners produced last year.

The meeting was adjourned.

'Historic' decline in child poverty ties to LINC's Caring Communities legacy with FEC

Oct. 4, 2022

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



It's been a quarter century since President Bill Clinton and his embattled campaign to reform welfare brought the nation's eyes on Kansas City, LINC and the Full Employment Council.

The President had signed a bi-partisan bill in 1996 that would make many people's welfare eligibility contingent on work — an action many feared would bring devastating effects, especially on children in chronically poor households.

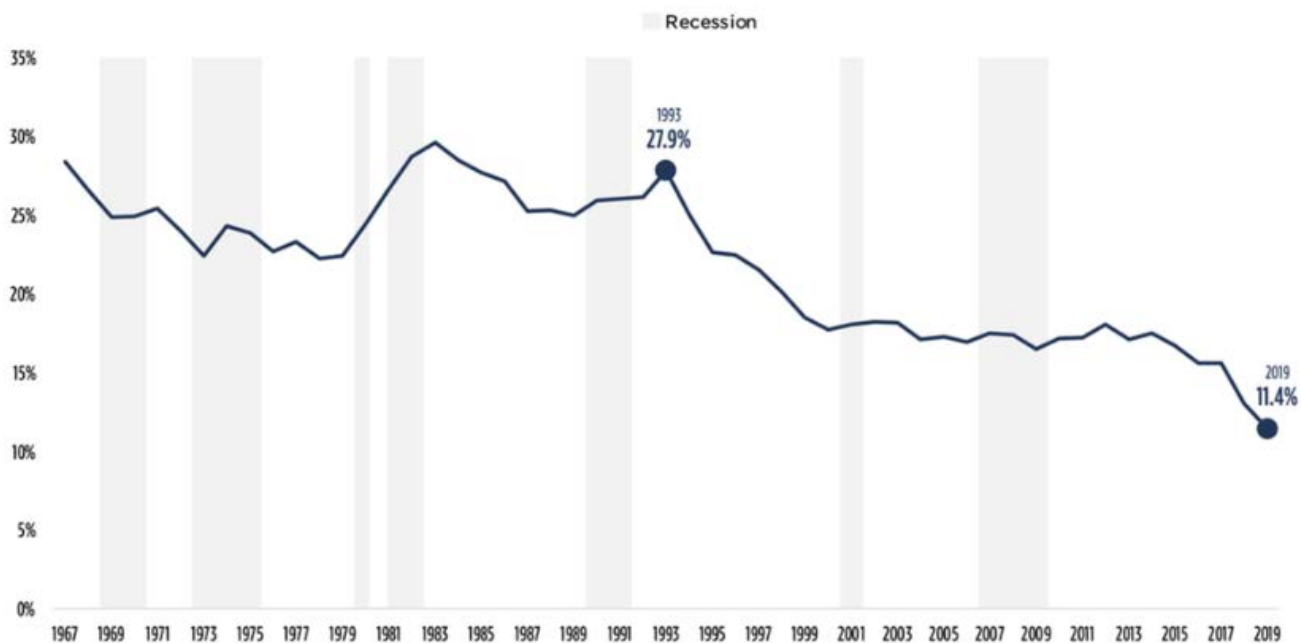
In Kansas City, the President said, a collaboration already under way between LINC and the FEC could show the nation what was possible.

"(Other) states and communities now have a responsibility to create a story like yours," he said.

It's been a hard road to today, helping poor or traumatized households enter and thrive in the workforce. And LINC didn't necessarily agree with the restrictions in the new law.

But LINC and the FEC's work with families helped lay a path for welfare reform that has played a key role in what a newly released study is calling "a fantastic success story":

Child Poverty Rates Measured Using the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), 1967-2019



Since the early 1990s, child poverty in America has fallen by more than half.

The [Child Trends study](#) identified two major factors for the historic decline. First, more parents, especially single mothers, were able to persist and thrive in the workforce than perhaps was expected.

Even more impactful, lawmakers began looking for other ways to support the working poor, expanding benefits like the earned income tax credit, food stamps and the child tax credit. These helped families balance work obligations and child care.

The percent of children in poverty, according to the study, fell from 27.9% in 1993 to 11.4% in 2019. The number of children living in poverty was 19.4 million in 1993 and 8.4 million in 2019.

“This is an astounding decline in child poverty,” Dana Thomson, a co-author of the Child Trends study, [told the New York Times](#). “Its magnitude is unequalled in the history of poverty measurement.”

Even before the Clinton administration and Congress were shaping a welfare reform bill, LINC and the Full Employment Council were already changing the local welfare landscape.

There’s a reason, when Clinton spoke in Kansas City at the FEC headquarters, Sept. 10, 1996, that FEC Director Clyde McQueen sat at the President’s right and LINC President Gayle Hobbs sat at his left.

“These people in Kansas City know what they are doing,” the President said. “It’s miraculous what they are doing.”

LINC’s Caring Communities organization was less than five years old then in its mission to improve the social services system and was building critical partnerships, including its work with the FEC, which was established in 1984.

LINC and the FEC targeted single parents and children in poverty to build a crucial comprehensive support system with early childhood care, housing, healthcare, legal aid and more. Other target populations included children in foster care and people on Medicaid.



President Bill Clinton joined with Clyde McQueen and Gayle Hobbs in a workshop on welfare reform in Kansas City, Sept. 10, 1996.

The FEC, as the administrator of the public workforce system, focused on job training and skill-building to lead workers in these populations to careers in sync with their interests and aptitudes.

The drive was not just toward employment, McQueen said, “but retention in that career.”

The LINC and FEC project in 1994 had obtained federal waivers through the state to adapt welfare regulations so that employers who hired workers on welfare would have the value of the workers’ welfare checks diverted to the business as an incentive and to subsidize higher wages.

Under the waiver, the workers hired off of welfare also would keep benefits such as Medicaid and child care support — benefits that had been lost when welfare recipients found employment.

Kansas City, the USA Today reported in 1997, had become “one the nation’s leading welfare-to-work laboratories.”

“This is hard work,” Hobbs wrote in 1996 in the American Public Welfare Association’s Public Welfare magazine. “It is easy to underestimate the difficulty . . . and the resolve necessary to implement welfare-to-work efforts.”

Early on, too many of the workers from welfare did not last with their new employers. LINC and the FEC redoubled efforts and increased career training, adding more focus on soft skills and post-employment case

management.

“It didn’t just matter how many people you put to work but how long they stayed on the job,” McQueen said. “We broke ground on that nationally as a community, because the national debate (in welfare reform) had just looked at how many people you put to work. It didn’t look at how long did they stay. It didn’t look at how much money they were making, what type of careers did they get into and the cost of the effort.”

Kansas City and other communities making reforms, Hobbs said, “will need to focus on a participant’s employability instead of eligibility.”

LINC founder Bert Berkley knew the task was vast.

“If people are to be self-sufficient, they need jobs,” he said. “To get jobs, they need skills, transportation, along with affordable housing and affordable daycare. To hold jobs they need encouragement, self-esteem and a fair wage.”

LINC’s broadening work for children and families has carried on through Caring Communities sites now anchored at more than 50 schools in the Kansas City area, and in programs like LINCWorks that train and support parents who are receiving state aid. LINCWorks’ team of advocates help parents build career and life skills to break free from dependency.

LINC has subsidized legal aid for families, helping them get ahead of housing crises and staving off evictions. LINC has also helped hundreds of households get access to rent and utility bill assistance to help them stay in their homes and their children stay in school.

The FEC continues to provide equitable opportunities for employment, helping recruit and prepare a workforce in collaboration with business and industry in Kansas City, helping families with debt-free training, supportive services, and ongoing assistance.

The work of this systems-based partnership, most importantly, has proven to be sustainable, McQueen said.

LINC’s regional family support system, funded by the U.S. and Missouri social services departments, and the FEC’s work funded by the U.S. and Missouri offices of labor and workforce development, has lifted parents and their children into higher-paying careers, bringing them benefits crucial to early childhood health and development.

“This success has been sustained for over a quarter of a century,” McQueen said, “and continues to grow in innovation, efficiency and performance.”

But the road ahead, in Kansas City and nationwide, remains steep.

Hardship and insecurity still weigh over millions of American households, the Child Trends study warned. More than 20 million Americans are still poor today.

The American investments in families and individuals must continue, it said.

“The lessons of this decline provide powerful insights into how we can continue to reduce child poverty,” it said. “By better understanding what progress has been made—and what led to it—policymakers will be better able to sustain, and accelerate, further progress.”

Healthy families, healthy lives: Lights On Afterschool events to celebrate community strength

Oct. 11, 2022

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



Students celebrate with LINC at the Lights On Afterschool event at Faxon Elementary School in 2021.

Intuitively, fans of LINC’s Caring Communities probably have a good sense of what holistic after-school programs can do for their communities.

A [nationwide study](#) of after-school programming puts hard numbers behind the confidence of parents and the healthy development of their children.

Here are some of the findings that fuel the fire as LINC and other after-school programs throughout America prepare for the annual celebration of [Lights On Afterschool](#).

Surveys show that 85% of parents said after-school helped their children engage better with peers.

77% said their children built positive relationships with caring mentors and adults.

81% said their children built confidence.

82% said their children learned life skills and responsible decision-making.

And this confidence, says the national study by the national [“America After 3 PM”](#) report, has been growing since the annual reporting began in 2009.

“After-school programs,” declared the Afterschool Alliance’s response to the report, “promote healthy futures!”

Every October, LINC Caring Communities sites gather families after school to showcase some of the wide variety of programs and partners that educate, engage and entertain children.

It is also a chance to reinforce the community-building work that LINC and its Caring Communities coordinators and staff carry on throughout the year, helping to keep families safe, in stable housing with utilities secured and food on the table, and in touch with the needs and opportunities in their neighborhoods.

Most of the more than 50 LINC Caring Communities program sites are preparing events during the coming weeks through the end of October to celebrate Lights On Afterschool and all that these programs provide.

The national study saw the same appetite for holistic programming as 90% of the parents in surveys wanted programs to provide opportunities to build life skills, be active, partake in healthy snacks or meals, and experience the outdoors.

Satisfaction surveys showed that most programs nationwide — as at LINC — met these needs. Check out the study's interactive data dashboard [here](#).

Learn more about LINC's Lights On programming and take a look at a video and photo gallery from our 2021 celebrations at kclinc.org/lightson.

In scenes from LINC's 2021 Lights On Afterschool events, right, top to bottom, Mad Science cotton candy at Dobbs Elementary, cooking decorating at Conn-West Elementary, drive-through trunk or treating at Ervin Elementary and bowling fun at Faxon Elementary.



Food, fun, football at LINC Family Night in Hickman Mills



Were you keeping score?

Three hundred hot dogs. Six hundred balloons . . .

Those were some of the big numbers measuring the fun at [LINC's Family Night](#). After a couple years hiatus for Covid, the annual celebration returned to Ruskin High School in Hickman Mills Sept. 30.



In just 3 months, Kansas City's right-to-counsel program has helped nearly 400 tenants

KCUR | By Celisa Calacal
Oct. 3, 2022

Since opening in June, more tenants are receiving legal representation, leading to better outcomes that avoid eviction and keep tenants in their homes.

On a cool Thursday afternoon in late September, Chris Ward finds himself on the seventh floor of the Jackson County Courthouse. Sitting on a hard wooden bench outside the courtroom doors, he's feeling stressed.

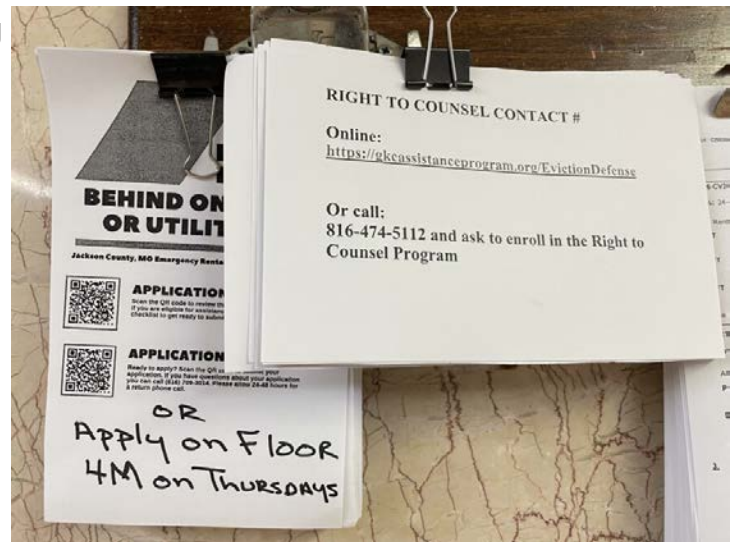
"I don't know what's going on because I'm confused," he says. "This is a complicated process."

This is Ward's first time facing eviction. But during this, his second visit to the courthouse, Ward finds he doesn't have to fight his case alone. Sitting beside him on the bench is an attorney who walks him through the case and explains his legal options. Every few minutes, the attorney walks into the courtroom to talk to the judge or the property management company on Ward's behalf.

"I'm glad he is over there," Ward says. "Cause I would be screwed. They're just getting me tangled in this."

Ward's free legal representation comes thanks to Kansas City's right-to-counsel program. Since June, tenants who live in Kansas City and face eviction in court are entitled to representation by an attorney, free of charge, regardless of their income level.

Since June, 372 cases in Jackson County Circuit Court have been referred to an attorney, according to city data. More than half are still going through the legal process. But of the cases that have been adjudicated, 75 were dismissed, resolved by agreement between the landlord and tenant, or resolved by a ruling in favor of the tenant.



Celisa Calacal / KCUR 89.3

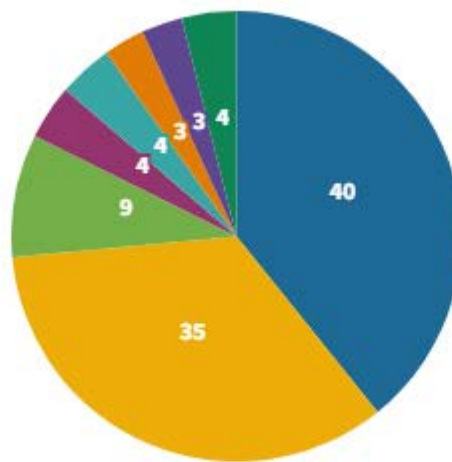
Signs about Kansas City's right-to-counsel program and rental assistance are posted outside courtroom doors during eviction proceedings in the Jackson County Courthouse.

Impact of Kansas City's Right to Counsel Program

The program provides a free attorney to any Kansas City resident who receives an eviction filing against them. The data is from June to August 2022.

Outcome of case:

- Dismissed or decided in favor of tenant
- Agreement providing opportunity to vacate a judgment for possession at a later date
- Judgment for possession in favor of the property owner
- Vacated residence prior to end of lease
- Orders for possession filed in county court and detainer proceedings
- Writs of restitution issued in county court in forcible entry
- Residential evictions by county sherriff
- Required to vacate but given additional time



Source: Kansas City, Missouri • Celisa Calacal/KCUR 89.3

 A Flourish chart

“Just as we expected, attorneys make the difference between tenants being housed or being on the streets,” says Gina Chiala, lead attorney at the Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom, a nonprofit participating in the program.

Tenant union KC Tenants championed the right-to-counsel program last year, along with the Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom, Stand Up KC and Missouri Workers Center. The Kansas City Council approved the program with overwhelming support last December.

Tenants in Kansas City facing eviction can call the city’s hotline at (816) 474-5112 or fill out an [online form](#) at its eviction defense website.

Attorneys like John Michael Pipes and Chiala of the Heartland Center are seeing how the program has changed the dynamics of eviction court. Previous data had shown that tenants were more likely to lose their cases, end up with evictions on their records and lose their homes when they didn’t have legal representation.

Since the program launched in June, Pipes has been assigned to 48 cases. He says none have ended with an eviction judgment.

“Having an advocate who knows the dynamics of court, knows the rules and also is able to navigate a negotiation of a settlement or a dismissal really changes the way that these outcomes take place

and these cases go," he says.

Jane Pansing Brown, director of Kansas City's Housing Department, agrees.

"For someone who's being evicted, in most cases it's their first time having this happen," she says. "So it's not only unfamiliar, but it's very scary. When you have someone there representing you who understands the system, it takes away a lot of the fear and also can provide a better result."

To run the program, the city contracted with three organizations: Legal Aid of Western Missouri, the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law and Heartland Center.

Chiala says there are 13 attorneys in the program, two shy of the 15 attorneys the city budgeted for. That has been adequate so far, she says, but she notes eviction filings have climbed in recent weeks.

"We're starting to see some strain in our caseloads," she says. "At first we were able to keep up with 13, but we're going to need that full 15."

Program advocates say there's still room to strengthen it.

Sabrina Davis, a leader of KC Tenants, says the city needs to make more residents aware of the program and their right to legal counsel. Currently, the court sends Kansas City officials a list of people who have received eviction filings, which enables the city to send them a letter notifying them of their right to a free attorney.

But that agreement doesn't exist for Kansas City residents who end up in court in Platte or Clay counties.

"There's still a lot of people, Jackson County, Platte County, Clay County that have no idea that there is such a thing as right to counsel," Davis says.

And there are still tenants who fall through the cracks and don't get representation. If a tenant calls asking for representation and their trial date is due to take place within three days or less, attorneys have the discretion to turn down their case.

"We want the attorneys to have that independence to say, 'Hey, I can't competently represent this person because I only have three days to prepare for trial, and I have 10 other cases that day,'" Chiala says.

Chiala thinks more proactive outreach from the city to residents about their right to an attorney would help.

With the program's enactment, Kansas City became the 13th city nationwide to guarantee legal representation to tenants in eviction court.

The results in other cities have been encouraging. In San Francisco, which passed its right-to-counsel law in 2018, recent data show that 59% of tenants represented by counsel stayed housed. In New York City, eviction filings have decreased by 30% since the program was established in 2017, and 84% of tenants stayed in their homes.

Chiala is hopeful Kansas City will see similar results.

"Right to counsel is a deterrent because landlords know now that it's not going to be a short, quick and easy process to evict the tenant," Chiala says. "They're going to be more willing to work with that tenant before they run to the courtroom door."

Missouri voting guide: What to know about the 2022 election

KCUR | By Roxie Hammill
Sept. 19, 2022

KCUR assembled a guide to help you navigate Missouri's 2022 election, including information on how to vote and what to expect on your ballot.

Missouri's Nov. 8 general election is fast approaching. Time to get things lined up so you know if you can vote, where you can vote, and what you'll be voting on when Election Day rolls around.

Missourians have some high-profile races coming up, and with the balance of the U.S. Senate and House in question, every vote will be important.

There are also several constitutional ballot questions to be decided, most notably one legalizing recreational marijuana and another calling for a new constitutional convention.

KCUR has compiled a list of candidates, rules and deadlines for voting and information on each amendment.

Key dates:

- Absentee voting period begins: **Sept. 27, 2022**
- Voter registration deadline for general election: **Oct. 12, 2022**
- First day of no-excuse absentee voting: **Oct. 25, 2022**
- Last day to vote absentee: **Nov. 7, 2022**
- General election: **Nov. 8, 2022**

Voter information

How do I register to vote in Missouri?

In Missouri, you must be 17-and-a-half years old to register and 18 years old by Election Day to vote. You must also be a Missouri resident and a United States citizen.

The deadline to register to vote before Missouri's general election is **Oct. 12, 2022**.

Not sure whether you're already registered? [This page](#) at the Secretary of State website can help you find out.

Otherwise you can register the following ways:

[Online here](#)

Print and mail an application. [Forms here](#)

In person at the county clerk's office ([find where that is here](#))

Request an [application be mailed to you](#). Must be postmarked by the registration deadline. If you ask for a mail application, expect the blank form to arrive in three to five business days.

Can I vote absentee if I'm not able to on Election Day?

The law on absentee voting in Missouri has changed since the primary. Missouri now offers both excuse and no-excuse options.

In-person absentee voting at your local election office starts on **Sept. 27** for residents who meet certain eligibility requirements.

You can vote absentee if you have a physical disability, cite religious beliefs, are an election worker away from your own polling place, if you are incarcerated, or if you are a certified participant in an address confidentiality program. The request must be made at your local election office.

If you vote absentee with an excuse, you must [request your ballot](#) by **Oct. 26**. You can return the ballot by mail or fax, but it must be received by the local election office no later than 5 p.m. the second Wednesday before the election, or **Oct. 26**.

There are no drop boxes in Missouri for ballots, other than the U.S. Postal Service.

For Missourians who don't fall in one of those categories, there is now an option for you! Any Missouri voter can vote absentee without giving an excuse during the last two weeks before the election – in this case, starting **Oct. 25, 2022**.

Absentee voting is available in-person until 5 p.m. the day before the election (**Nov. 7**). If you use the no-excuse option, you cannot mail in your absentee ballot.

If you vote absentee in person, you will still be asked to provide voter ID. In-person absentee voters will not be provided with a provisional ballot.

You can also ask for an absentee ballot by mail, fax, email or in person from the local election office. (Don't ask through the Secretary of State's office.)

Second-degree relatives can request ballots on behalf of their spouses, parents or children by filling out a form in person at the election office.

How do I vote in-person?

In person polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 8. If you are in line at the closing time, you still have a right to cast a ballot – stay in line!

Your polling place is determined by where you live, but may have changed since the last time you voted. [Locate your polling location here.](#)

Need more accessible voting? Arrangements, including audio ballots and enlarged text, are available for those with mobility issues and disabilities.. There's also an option to request a different polling place if yours is not accessible, or to sign up for permanent absentee voting.

According to the Missouri Secretary of State's [website](#), polling places will also offer curbside voting: "Voters with limited mobility can vote 'curbside' or outside the polling place. Just go to your polling place and ask someone to go in and ask poll workers to bring a ballot out to you. They should bring you a ballot within a reasonable period of time."

Do I need voter ID?

Yes. Voter ID rules in Missouri have changed since the August primary because of a [recently-signed law](#). The new law requires photo identification to cast a ballot.

Some examples of a valid ID are:

- Non-expired Missouri driver's license
- State-issued ID
- Non-expired U.S. passport
- Military photo ID

Read [this guide for information on how to get a valid voter ID in Missouri.](#)

You can get a photo ID for free at the [Missouri Department of Revenue](#) or by calling 573-526-VOTE (8683).

If you show up to your polling place but don't have the required ID, you can still fill out a provisional ballot. However, you'll need to take action to make sure your vote is counted – your provisional ballot will include a stub telling you how to verify your identification.

You can do so by returning to your polling place on Election Day with an accepted photo ID. Your vote may also be counted if local election officials determine that your signature matches the one on your voter registration record.

What am I voting on?

In the November general election, Missouri voters will decide who they're sending the U.S. Senate and U.S. House, as well as elect officials on the local level. But there are also a handful of statewide ballot issues that are worth paying attention to.

[Find your full sample ballot here.](#)

Constitutional ballot questions

Missouri has five ballot questions this election. The proposed amendments offer a wide array of changes to the state constitution, including on how tax money is invested and whether to call a new constitutional convention.

But the marquee amendment asks whether to legalize the recreational use of marijuana by adults over 21.

Amendment 1: State investment

Amendment 1 would allow the state General Assembly to override existing constitutional restrictions on how the state treasurer invests taxpayer money. This would allow legislators to expand options for investment and allow the treasurer to invest in municipal securities.

Currently there is no statutory authority granted to lawmakers on investment.

Amendment 3: Recreational marijuana

Missourians approved marijuana for medical use in 2018. Amendment 3, which was put on the ballot by citizen petition, would remove prohibitions against possession, sale, manufacturing and using it for personal use.

The amendment would also allow people convicted of nonviolent marijuana offenses to petition for release from incarceration or parole, and have their records expunged. In addition, it requires a registration card for people who want to cultivate the plants, a lottery to award licenses and equal distribution between congressional districts for licenses.

The amendment would also impose a 6% sales tax with revenues dedicated to various programs.

Read [KCUR's full guide to the Missouri legal marijuana amendment here.](#)

Amendment 4: Kansas City Police funding

Amendment 4 uniquely affects Kansas City and its police department.

During the last legislative session, Missouri [lawmakers passed a law](#) that would require Kansas City to allocate 25% of its general revenues to the KCPD each year – an increase from the 20% already required. But the law was called into question as being an unfunded mandate, disallowed by the Hancock Amendment to the Missouri Constitution.

Amendment 4 [specifically allows](#) state laws passed before Dec. 31, 2026 to increase the minimum funding for police departments overseen by a state board of commissioners.

Kansas City's police department is the only one in Missouri under [such a governing structure](#), and therefore the only department whose funding would be affected. The state control arrangement was created in 1939 and is a vestige of the Pendergast era.

Kansas City's mayor has challenged the [recent police funding law](#) in court.

Read [KCUR's full guide to the Kansas City Police funding amendment here](#).

[Amendment 5: Missouri National Guard control](#)

The Missouri National Guard, currently under the state Department of Public Safety, would become its own state agency under Amendment 5.

The new agency would be headed by an adjutant general appointed by the governor, with advice and consent of the state Senate. According to the ballot information on the Missouri Secretary of State's office, this would not have an impact on taxes.

The amendment puts the guard more directly answerable to the governor. It was proposed in the most recent legislative session by Missouri Rep. Adam Schnelting, R-St. Peters, and placed on the ballot by the [General Assembly](#).

[Constitutional convention question](#)

Because of an automatic referendum clause in the state constitution, Missourians get to decide once every 20 years whether to call a [new constitutional convention](#), with the possibility of rewriting the state's constitution, as long as it doesn't violate the U.S. Constitution.

U.S Senate

Twenty-one Republicans and 11 Democrats filed in the primary for Missouri's U.S. Senate races after Republican Sen. Roy Blunt, who was first elected in 2010, announced he would not seek re-election.

Voters have since narrowed the choices down to one candidate per party. With the balance of the U.S. Senate at stake this year, expect this race to get a lot of attention.

Republican

[Eric Schmitt](#), Kirkwood

Democrat

[Trudy Busch Valentine](#), Clayton

Libertarian

[Jonathan Dine](#), Kansas City

Constitution Party

[Paul Venable](#), Lincoln

U.S. House of Representatives

Members of the U.S. House are re-elected every two years, so every representative in Missouri is on the ballot this year. As with the Senate, the Democratic majority is thin enough that eyes will be focused on whether it will hold through the general election.

Another thing to note: Your congressional district might be different this year than it was before. Following the 2020 census, the Missouri General Assembly [approved a redistricting plan](#) that creates new congressional maps, rearranging the boundaries of House districts.

Check the [Secretary of State's website](#) to find out which congressional district you're voting in.

First District**Republican**

[Andrew Jones](#), St. Louis

Democrat

[Cori Bush](#), Northwoods

Libertarian

[George A. Zsidisin](#), St. Louis

Second District**Republican**

[Ann Wagner](#), Ballwin

Democrat

[Trish Gunby](#), Ballwin

Libertarian

[Bill Slantz](#), St. Charles

Third District**Republican**

[Blaine Luetkemeyer](#), St. Elizabeth

Democrat

[Bethany Mann](#), Brentwood

Fourth District**Republican**

[Mark Alford](#), Raymore

Democrat

[Jack Truman](#), Lamar

Libertarian

[Randy Langkraehr](#), Warrensburg

Fifth District**Republican**

[Jacob Turk](#), Lee's Summit

Democrat

[Emanuel Cleaver II](#), Kansas City

Libertarian

[Robin Dominick](#), Kansas City

Sixth District**Republican**

[Sam Graves](#), Tarkio

Democrat

[Henry Martin](#), Kansas City

Libertarian

[Edward A. \(Andy\) Maidment](#), Kearney

Seventh District**Republican**

[Eric Burlison](#), Battlefield

Democrat

[Kristen Radaker-Sheafer](#), Joplin

Libertarian

[Kevin Craig](#), Powersite

Eighth District**Republican**

[Jason Smith](#), Cape Girardeau

Democrat

[Randi McCallian](#), Newburg

Libertarian

[Jim Higgins](#), St. Louis