LINC Commission Meeting

January 22, 2018

Tara Raghuveer researches evictions in the Kansas City area. Her research includes field work, analyzing data from the Kansas City housing courts, and interviewing landlords and tenants.

LINC[SM]

Local Investment Commission

@kclinc /kclinc kclinc.org

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, Jan. 22, 2018 | 4 – 6 pm
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

I. **Welcome and Announcements**

II. **Approvals**
   a. Approval November minutes (motion)

III. **Superintendent Reports**

IV. **LINC in Photos 2017**

V. **LINC Commission**
   a. New LINC Commission appointment

VI. **Evictions and Student Mobility**
   a. Tara Raghuveer presentation
   b. Kansas City Public School results

VII. **LINC Homeless Student Data Project**
   a. Community Need
   b. LINC project proposal

VIII. **Reports**
   a. Kansas City Public School murals
   b. Black History project

IX. **Other**

X. **Adjournment**

THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – NOV. 20, 2017

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo. Co-chair **Jack Craft** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bert Berkley
Sharon Cheers
Tom Davis
Aaron Deacon
Steve Dunn
Mark Flaherty
Herb Freeman
SuEllen Fried
Rob Givens
Rosemary Lowe
Mary Kay McPhee
Ken Powell

Minutes of the July 17, 2017, and September 18, 2017, LINC Commission meetings were approved.

Rob Givens of the LINC Finance and Audit Committee introduced a presentation of the LINC financial audit by BKD. Rachel Dwiggins reported BKD gave a clean opinion on LINC's financial statement and had no findings on the compliance portion. April Arnold reported BKD found the assessment of LINC's IRS Form 990 to be satisfactory.

LINC Deputy Director-Operations **Robin Gierer** introduced three new LINC staff: **Barney Barry**, Chief Financial Officer; **Trent DeVreugd**, Human Resources Director; and **Terri Kerbe**, Controller.

Superintendent Reports

- **Kelly Wachel**, Public Relations Director (Center School District), reported on an increase in the district's Annual Performance Report (APR), attributable in part to high graduation and 180-day post-graduation follow-up rates. The district is working to increase ACT scores and the number of students in AP and dual-credit classes, and is designing a process for a career pathway program for high schoolers.
- **Steve Morgan,** Asst. Superintendent (Fort Osage School District), reported the district saw a slight increase in is APR thanks to the graduation and attendance rates as well as college/career readiness. The district is working on its Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. The district held a ceremonial groundbreaking for its new early childhood center; next week it will hold a groundbreaking for the new district activity field.
- **Juan Cordova**, Asst. Superintendent (Grandview School District), reported LINC will expand its presence in the district in January when it begins offering programming in Grandview Middle School. The district achieved 100% status in the Project Lead the Way STEM program. The district saw growth in its APR thanks in part to growth in Social Studies. The district Lego team placed first in the area tournament. Staff saved the life of a student was having a medical emergency.
- **Yolanda Cargile**, Superintendent (Hickman Mills School District), reported the district saw a 2.5% decline in its APR, although it earned full points in its 4-year graduation rate and increased in points for college/career readiness. The district is focusing on improving student attendance and achievement and will hold a 100% attendance day on Jan. 31.
- **Christy Harrison**, Director of Extended Learning Opportunities (Kansas City Public Schools), reported the district achieved an APR of 89.5% and saw its graduation rate rise to 71.8%, increasing the number of graduates by 10%. The district is challenged by a student mobility rate of 40%.

- **Jerry Kitzi**, Director of Early Learning (Kansas City Public Schools), will be retiring in December. He acknowledged LINC's staff and leadership for its support of early learning efforts in Kansas City.
- **Dan Clemens**, Superintendent (North Kansas City School District), reported the Staley Falcons will play for the state football championship on Saturday. District staff are undergoing training in equity and restorative justice, issues which are pertinent to student performance and discipline in the racially diverse district. The district and J.E. Dunn Construction are discussing the creation of a construction trades academy.

LINC President **Gayle A. Hobbs** reported that school and LINC staff at Truman Elementary School (Hickman Mills School District) saved the life of a student whose pacemaker failed. LINC site staff are trained in first aid and CPR. The incident received news coverage; video clips were shown. Hobbs introduced LINC site coordinator **Wesley Cunningham**, who with two Truman school staff were given an award for their efforts by the American Heart Association.

Jack Craft reported that new Missouri Department of Social Services director **Steve Corsi** and DSS Division Director **Jennifer Tidball** recently visited with LINC leaders and staff to learn about LINC's efforts to help children, families and neighborhoods.

A video highlighting various LINC initiatives was shown. **Oscar Tshibanda** reported that during their visit Corsi and Tidball discussed the department's four priorities: transforming Medicaid, improving child welfare, addressing the opioid epidemic, and promoting self-sufficiency. LINC Deputy Director-Community Engagement **Brent Schondelmeyer** presented a series of infographics on LINC initiatives that were shared with Corsi.

Caring Communities administrators **Janet Miles-Bartee** and **Sean Akridge** reported on the recent nationwide Lights On Afterschool event highlighting afterschool programs. A video highlighting Lights On Afterschool events at LINC sites was shown.

Craft introduced LINC founder **Bert Berkley** for a presentation on the anniversary of LINC, which was started 25 years ago and has continued to be successful based on the principles articulated at its founding. **Herb Freeman** thanked Hobbs for her leadership and for bringing on skilled staff. **SuEllen Fried** thanked Berkley. Cake was served.

The meeting was adjourned.

David L. Disney

Senior Vice President

Service 33 Years with JE Dunn

EDUCATION

BS-Construction Science, Kansas State University, 1980

CREATIVITY

Co-Inventor SITE1001, US Patent No. 9,064,219

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Public Affairs and Community Development Officer for JE Dunn

David joined JE Dunn in 1980 as a Project Engineer and became full-time Project Manager in 1986 and became a Senior Project Manager in 1987. David began building the Educational Practice leading the Program Management Team (PMT) to implement the Court Ordered Desegregation Capital Improvements for the Kansas City Missouri School District. He was promoted to Vice President in 1981 and a Senior Vice President in 1999, and in 2011 he became the Public Affairs and Community Development Officer for JE Dunn.

David joined the leaders of the Construction Operations, Human Resources, and Marketing to ensure that diversity outcomes are achieved and that they support the business objectives. David continues to work with all employees to stress the importance of community involvement and to be active in our communities. He continues strategic relationships from his years of service in the community. He is active in civic, educational, and charitable organizations. He is a speaker for various professional, community, and engineering groups and is known as guest lecturer on recreational mathematics to schools in the Kansas City area and challenging youth to explore problem solving.

CURRENT AND PAST BUSINESS AND CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

- Construction Management Association of America, Past National Vice President
- Construction Management Association of America, Past President, K.C. Chapter
- Heart of America Council, Boy Scouts of America, Past Board Member
- Boy Scouts of America, National Advisory Board Member
- 2010 National Jamboree, Vice Chairman Administration, FT. AP Hill
- 2013 National Jamboree, Vice Chairman Administration, Summit Bechtel Reserve
- Kansas State University, Past Construction Science Advisory Council Member
- Metropolitan Community Colleges Foundation, Past Board Member
- Metropolitan Community Colleges, Past President of the Board (16 years of service)
- Missouri Colleges Fund, Past President of the Board, current Board Member
- Academy for the Integrated Arts, Charter School, current Board Member
- Midtown/Plaza Area Plan Implementation Committee Member
- KC Rising Human Capital Strategies, Building Trades – Talent To Industry Exchange Chair
- Kansas City Chamber, K-12 Superintendents Forum Member
- Kansas City Construction Career Academy Founding Academic Committee Chair
- Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, Past ENSEMBLE Co-Chair, Current Member
- Urban Neighborhood Initiative (UNI), Past Finance Chair and Founding Board Member
- Urban League of Greater Kansas City, Past Board Member
- Penn Valley Park Conservancy, Past President of the Board, current Board Member
- Junior Achievement, Past Kansas City Board Member
- The Children's Museum of Kansas City, Past President of the Board
- Thank You Walt Disney, Inc., Past President of the Board
- The Learning Exchange, Past Board Member
- Experiencia, Past Board Member

Tara Raghuveer

Tara Raghuveer is an organizer and researcher whose work has focused on housing, immigration, and voting rights. A Kansas City native, Tara has studied eviction in the five-county metro area for five years. She is currently the Housing Campaign Lead at People's Action, a national network of grassroots organizations committed to economic and racial justice.

Prior to joining People's Action, Tara was the Deputy Director of the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), a coalition of the nation's 37 largest immigrant rights organizations. During her time there, Tara developed a policy platform on immigration that was adopted by three 2016 Presidential candidates. She oversaw a campaign that won waivers for 3.7 million people in poverty to become American citizens for free or reduced cost. With a broad coalition, she developed the Community Navigator curriculum which has trained over 9,700 immigrant leaders and has been adopted by cities including New York and Chicago. Tara also managed NPNA's communications, internships, and the National Immigrant Integration Conference. With NPNA's executive director, Tara grew NPNA's budget 250 percent in three years.

Tara has been featured in outlets such as the New York Times, The New Yorker, Washington Post, NPR, The Guardian, and Slate. She has also written for TIME and VICE, and her research on eviction and poverty in Kansas City is cited in the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Evicted.* Tara graduated from Harvard College, where she served as student body president. She is an Australian-born Indian-American immigrant who came to the US with her family in 1995 and grew up (mostly) in Kansas City

Kansas City Star Editorial – Nov. 26, 2017

What Mayor Sly James could do during his last 19 months in office

With the successful push to build a new single-terminal airport now behind Mayor Sly James, how should he spend his final 19 months in office?

Two words, really: East Side.

So many Kansas Citians who live east of Troost have long felt that City Hall was mostly interested in helping those who need it least.

City officials contest that, of course, and point to the map on their website that shows some $2.5 billion in investment there in the last five years. Voters only recently approved a one-eighth-cent sales tax for the Prospect Corridor.

Sign up today for a free 30 day free trial of unlimited digital access.

There's no disputing, though, that a lot more needs to be done.

The priorities James already has in mind for his last year and a half in office are all worthy of serious attention: replacing the aging Buck O'Neil Bridge, working with the Kansas City No Violence Alliance's governing board to make neighborhoods safer, improving school readiness and — this one alone could be the work of a lifetime — encouraging a meaningful conversation on race.

But as a useful frame for the way to spend the mayor's considerable remaining political capital, one of those who would like to succeed James, Councilman Scott Taylor, is onto something with his "Revive the East Side" initiative of tax abatements and investments.

Taylor wants the city to put $10 million more into a home repair program that helps residents remain in their homes, and make it easier for small developers to get regulatory approvals.

Sure, Taylor is kicking off his own 2019 campaign with this proposal, and he made that especially clear when he not-so-tacitly accused some of his expected rivals of inaction on the East Side: "We have 12 council members ... many that have served six years and newer members that have had over two years now and have had plenty of opportunity to introduce a comprehensive East Side package. But I have not seen it and believe our clock is ticking as a city."

But so what?

The whole purpose of politics is supposed to be mobilizing for the common good, and the still-lagging East Side needs all of the love it can get.

One of the many issues that requires attention there, and ASAP, is housing insecurity among its many renters.

Recently, Harvard-trained housing researcher and Kansas City native Tara Raghuveer, whose work was cited in Matthew Desmond's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City," shared her study of evictions in Kansas City during the last 17 years with city officials.

The problem, of course, is in no way unique to our town. On the contrary, Raghuveer pointed out that a person making minimum wage and working full-time can't afford a two-bedroom apartment in a single county in the United States. But in Kansas City, the problem of the some 45 families who lose their homes every business day is concentrated on the city's East Side.

A researcher who was helping her map data, but didn't know Kansas City, took one look at the visual representation of where evictions happen here and asked, "What the heck is that line running through the middle of your city?" "The bright line, of course," Raghuveer told officials at City Hall, "is Troost, the historic racial dividing line in this city."

Eviction goes hand-in-hand with so many other problems — job loss, deteriorating health, educational gaps and more — that we hope James and whoever follows him will give serious thought to some of Raghuveer's policy prescriptions, especially rent control, landlord regulation and more access to counsel.

We don't doubt the sincerity of James' protestations that he has always cared about and has already done a lot for the East Side, where he himself grew up. But the still dramatic gap between the two halves argues that he spend much of his last lap as mayor in the neighborhoods where he started.

MISSOURI #36*

In **Missouri**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **$815**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **$2,716** monthly or **$32,588** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

$15.67
PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING WAGE

FACTS ABOUT **MISSOURI:**

STATE FACTS	
Minimum Wage	$7.70
Average Renter Wage	$13.65
2-Bedroom Housing Wage	$15.67
Number of Renter Households	774,668
Percent Renters	33%

MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS	HOUSING WAGE
Kansas City HMFA	$18.19
St. Louis HMFA	$17.23
Pulaski County	$16.06
Columbia MSA	$14.85
Stone County	$14.65

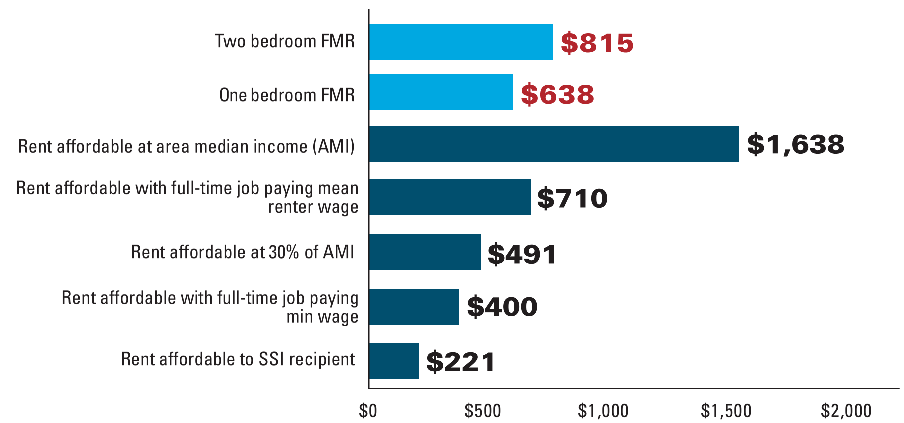
* Ranked from Highest to Lowest 2-Bedroom Housing Wage

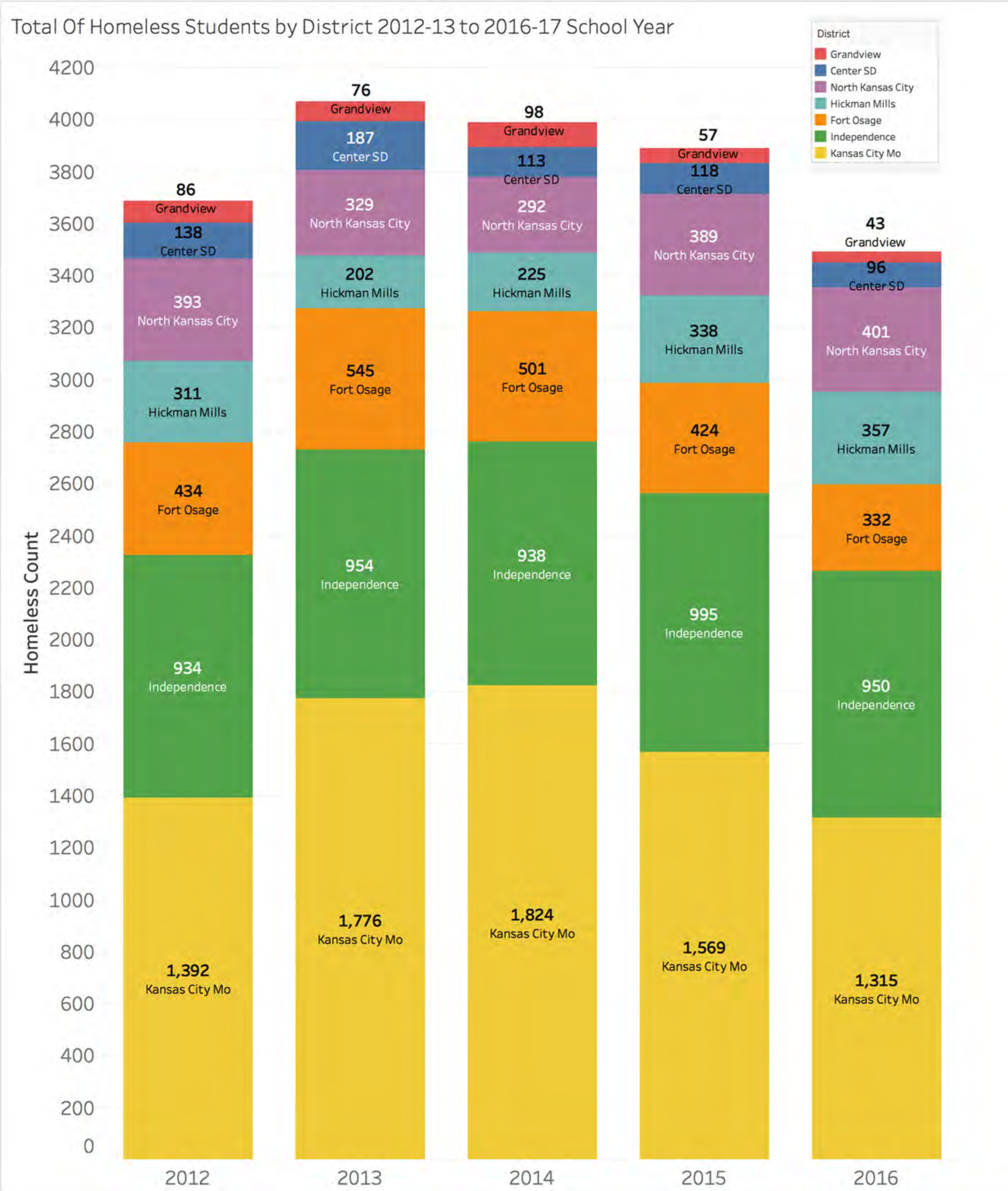
81
Work Hours Per Week At **Minimum Wage** To Afford a **2-Bedroom Rental Home** (at FMR)

64
Work Hours Per Week At **Minimum Wage** To Afford a **1-Bedroom Rental Home** (at FMR)

2
Number of Full-Time Jobs At **Minimum Wage** To Afford a **2-Bedroom Rental Home** (at FMR)

1.6
Number of Full-Time Jobs At **Minimum Wage** To Afford a **1-Bedroom Rental Home** (at FMR)




Total Of Homeless Students by District 2012-13 to 2016-17 School Year
District
Grandview
Center SD
North Kansas City
Hickman Mills
Fort Osage
Independence
Kansas City Mo
Homeless Count
4200
4000
3800
3600
3400
3200
3000
2800
2600
2400
2200
2000
1800
1600
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
86 Grandview
138 Center SD
393 North Kansas City
311 Hickman Mills
434 Fort Osage
934 Independence
1,392 Kansas City Mo
76 Grandview
187 Center SD
329 North Kansas City
202 Hickman Mills
545 Fort Osage
954 Independence
1,776 Kansas City Mo
98 Grandview
113 Center SD
292 North Kansas City
225 Hickman Mills
501 Fort Osage
938 Independence
1,824 Kansas City Mo
57 Grandview
118 Center SD
389 North Kansas City
338 Hickman Mills
424 Fort Osage
995 Independence
1,569 Kansas City Mo
43 Grandview
96 Center SD
401 North Kansas City
357 Hickman Mills
332 Fort Osage
950 Independence
1,315 Kansas City Mo

SERVING HOMELESS STUDENTS IN THE KANSAS CITY REGION: BARRIERS AND BEST PRACTICES

L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs Special Report Series

November 2017

UMKC Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs
Henry W. Bloch School of Management
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY

Anne R. Williamson, PhD
Damon Guinn, EMPA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) reports that **1,304,446** students in pre-K through grade 12 were identified as homeless by the U.S. Department of Education during the 2015-2016 school year (2017). Of these students, **998,700 were "doubled up,"** or living with another family; **187,840 were in shelters, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care; 84,789 were living in hotels or motels;** the remaining **43,047 were classified as unsheltered, living in cars, parks, campgrounds, temporary trailers, abandoned buildings, etc.** (NCHE 2017).

Regardless of their circumstances, these children and youth meet the McKinney-Vento definition of lacking "a fixed, regular, and adequate residence" [42 U.S.C. 11434a(A)] and, as a result, face numerous risks to their physical and behavioral health, their education, and their future success in life.

Consider the impact homelessness has on education alone. Research has found that students experiencing homelessness for any length of time are "more likely to be held back … have poor attendance or be chronically absent … to fail classes, to have more disciplinary issues, and to drop out of school before getting their high school diploma…." Further, these outcomes become worse the longer a student remains homeless (Ingram et al. 2016, 10).

However, homeless students do have legal rights and protections. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act and related legislation require that homeless students have equal access and opportunities in the same schools and programs as their housed peers. The Act further assigns states and local education agencies the authority to hire liaisons to protect and support these students.

> In the Kansas City region,* McKinney-Vento liaisons served 7,624 homeless students in kindergarten through grade 12 in the 2015-2016 school year. Homeless students represented 2.4 percent of the total K-12 student population.

These liaisons are tasked with myriad responsibilities, and as frontline professionals, they are uniquely attuned to challenges and opportunities associated with programs and services for students and families experiencing homelessness.

* For this report, the area is defined by nine counties served by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) with a total of 55 school districts. These counties include Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, Platte, Ray, and Wyandotte.

To identify specific barriers and needs liaisons face in addressing student homelessness and best practices for addressing students' needs, the L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs in the Henry W. Bloch School Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City conducted focus groups with local liaisons in the Kansas City region. The liaisons who participated serve 64 percent of the total homeless student population in the area.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

Five primary barriers impede progress in serving homeless students:

1. Lack of resources (money, staffing, time) to help students obtain essential wraparound services
2. Limited engagement, coordination, and support from community partners and service providers
3. Insufficient stock of decent, affordable housing and appropriate shelter space
4. Inadequate and complex transportation arrangements
5. Lack of knowledge among school staff and community members about policies and procedures related to student homelessness.

Students experiencing homelessness have difficulty keeping health care appointments, and they face particular challenges accessing mental health services if their needs are not acute. Dental services, by contrast, are readily available and fairly convenient.

To better serve homeless students, liaisons indicated that they need help from social workers and "navigators" who can help students and families obtain the benefits and services they need to improve their circumstances. Liaisons also expressed their desire for strategic help with fundraising, more shelter space and coordinated entry for students, and a "top-down culture of understanding" about homelessness and poverty.

Three best practices which liaisons believe are most effective at reducing student homelessness:

1. Drop-in centers and "one-stop shops" providing access to an array of services
2. Collaborative networks with shared data
3. Host homes.

Many of the liaisons' views are supported by empirical research analyzed for this report. Additionally, best practices recommended by local liaisons are supplemented with additional information on evidence-based Housing First and supportive housing models recommended by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

Our hope is that this report will inspire community stakeholders to engage in collaborative efforts to improve prevention and intervention strategies for homeless students in the Kansas City region and beyond. The observations and experiences of local McKinney-Vento liaisons can inform the larger community about how to best serve one of its most vulnerable populations and, in the process, give every student the chance to live a safer, more successful life.

Purpose of This Report

The L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs in the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City prepared this report to achieve two key objectives: (1) determine the barriers and needs that McKinney-Vento liaisons in the greater Kansas City region encounter as they carry out services in support of homeless students in public schools; and (2) identify and recommend policies and practices that aid McKinney-Vento liaisons in student homelessness intervention. We also hope this report will increase awareness about student homelessness and enhance strategic efforts that are already underway to end child and youth homelessness.

Nationwide, more than 1.3 million students from pre-K through grade 12 were identified as homeless during the 2015-2016 school year, according to U.S. Department of Education data compiled by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE 2017). That figure is more than double the total reported for 2006-2007 (Ingram et al. 2016, 10). However, these numbers do not include students who never admit to being homeless for fear of embarrassment, stigmatization, harassment, or entry into the foster care system. For instance, according to a 2016 report, *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools*, **67 percent of formerly homeless youth who were surveyed indicated that they are not comfortable talking about their situation with anyone at their school** (20).

While it is difficult to know exactly how many students are homeless, the reasons why they experience homelessness are well documented. Factors include a lack of affordable housing; financial strain; physical and sexual abuse; substance abuse by a parent or guardian; neglect and conflict within the home; and rejection by family and ejection from the household, particularly as a result of a youth's sexual or gender orientation and/or pregnancy (11). A 2010 report by First Focus and the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) noted that school districts began reporting significant increases in the number of homeless students after the United States entered an economic downturn in late 2007 (1). The two groups surveyed 2,200 school districts in 47 states and 45 state coordinators with the U.S. Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) program to pinpoint the reasons for the sharp rise in homelessness. Sixty-two percent of respondents cited the economic downturn (and associated job loss, high cost of living, etc.) as the primary reason for increases, while greater school and community awareness ranked second at 40 percent, with the foreclosure crisis (including rental foreclosures) following closely at 38 percent (2).

School districts in the Kansas City region have reported an increase in the homeless student population consistent with this national trend. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Kansas Department of Education, **7,624 out of 314,597 public school students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 were classified as homeless in the nine-county Kansas City region during the 2015-2016 school year. The count represents 55 public school districts in Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, Platte, Ray, and Wyandotte Counties.** A majority (65 percent) of these school districts reported having homeless students during the 2015-2016 school year.

This report provides an overview of McKinney-Vento responsibilities and requirements, presents the views of local McKinney-Vento liaisons who serve the majority of the Kansas City region's homeless students, and examines current research on student homelessness to help schools,

nonprofits, public agencies, and other stakeholders pursue more effective, efficient, and equitable strategies for addressing student homelessness.

How This Report Is Organized

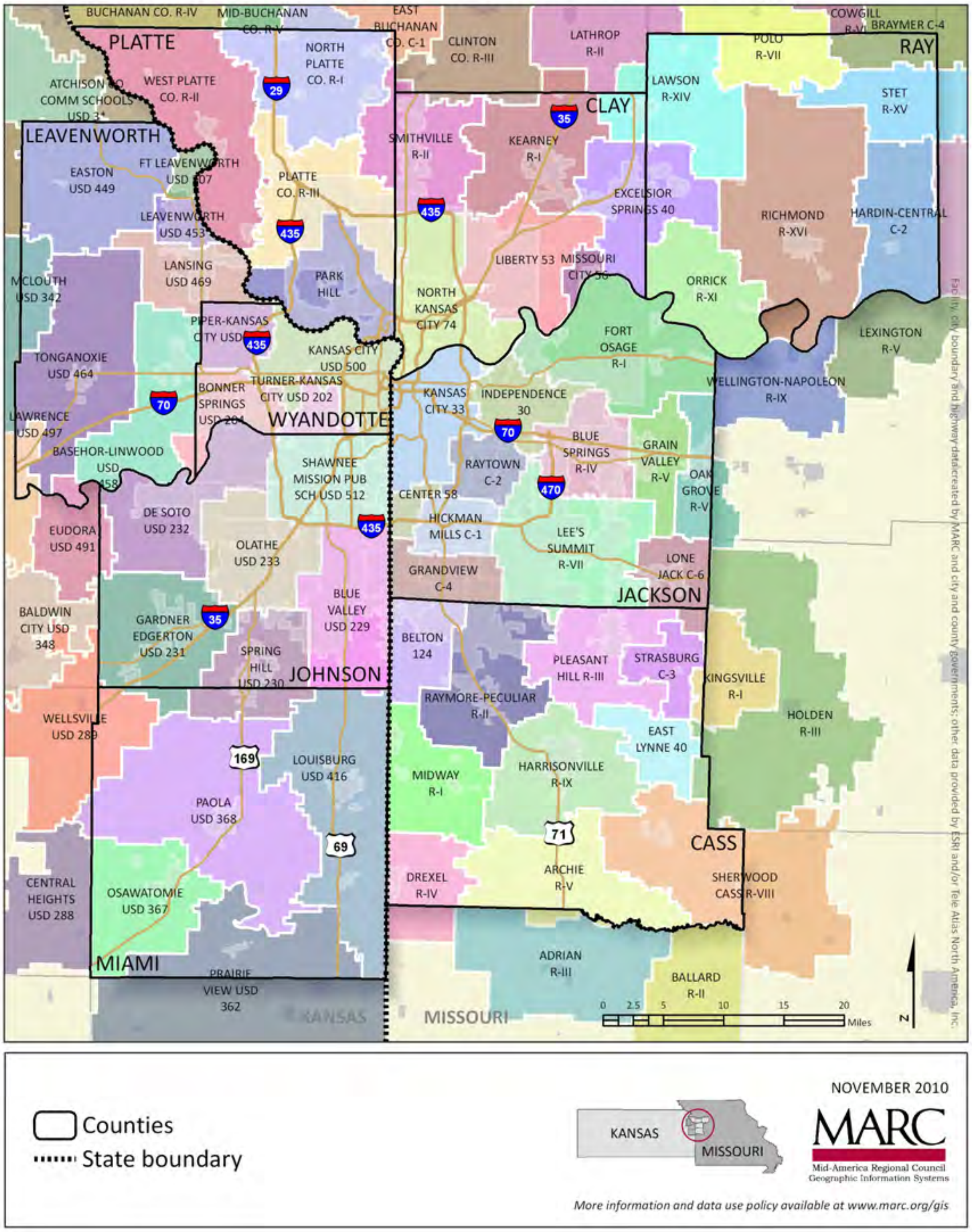
This report is organized into four sections. Section I opens with an overview of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, with an emphasis on the Act's definition of homeless children and youth as distinguished from the definition used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It also describes the role and responsibilities of McKinney-Vento liaisons. In Section II, we provide a literature review covering challenges and opportunities that McKinney-Vento liaisons encounter based on national scholastic and governmental research and survey data from nationwide McKinney-Vento liaisons. Section III provides the results of our focus groups with local McKinney-Vento liaisons. Findings are organized by interview questions.

We conclude the report in Section IV by summarizing the policies and practices recommended by local McKinney-Vento liaisons. Two appendices follow: Appendix A provides a list of the school districts included in our study area with data on each district's number of homeless students and total student population. Appendix B presents brief author biographies.

How We Prepared This Report

In preparing this report, the L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs (Cookingham) analyzed public school district data on homeless students in 55 school districts in nine counties within the Kansas City region. Data were collected from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Kansas Department of Education. The counties included in our analysis are Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami, Platte, Ray, and Wyandotte. Although there are 14 counties total in the federally defined Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area, our count focuses on the nine counties comprising the metropolitan area served by the Mid-America Regional Council's (MARC's) Regional Planning Boundaries map as the most frequently used definition of the Kansas City region.

School Districts in Greater Kansas City



This map is reprinted with the permission of the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC).

Qualitative data were collected during two separate focus group sessions with ten local McKinney-Vento liaisons and one school guidance counselor from ten metropolitan public school districts in the bi-state Kansas City area. Liaisons from 37 Missouri and Kansas school districts were invited to participate (22 from Missouri and 15 from Kansas). Of those, **eight liaisons from Missouri (along with one school counselor) and two liaisons from Kansas took part.** Six liaisons attended a two-hour morning focus group session, while the remaining four liaisons and the school counselor took part in a two-hour afternoon session.

These ten liaisons represent five of the nine counties in the Kansas City metropolitan area and served a total of 4,880 homeless students in their combined school districts during the 2015-2016 school year, or 64 percent of the total homeless student population. (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Kansas Department of Education 2016).

Given the large population served by the liaisons in urban, suburban, and rural school districts, the statements and opinions expressed in focus group sessions reflect experiences across the region. A notable exception may be Johnson County, which was represented by only one public school district during the focus groups. Johnson County encompasses a total of five school districts, but includes a relatively small portion of the overall homeless student population in the Kansas City region. (Appendix A provides a count of homeless students and total student population by school district.)

The focus groups were led by Dr. Anne Williamson, Victor and Caroline Schutte/Missouri Professor of Urban Affairs and Director of the Cookingham Institute at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Damon Guinn, the Cookingham Institute's Assistant Director, assisted with focus group facilitation.

Focus group sessions captured perspectives and issues facing those who serve homeless students. A portion of each session centered around serving homeless youth. Rising numbers of unaccompanied—and often, minor—homeless youth across the nation present special challenges for design and implementation of effective interventions, often arising from legal barriers to providing assistance to unaccompanied students who are under 18.

Both two-hour sessions were recorded by audio after obtaining written consent from the participants. The audio recordings were then transcribed, reviewed, and outlined by the researchers. Findings were categorized by interview topic, with prominent themes ranked into primary and secondary subcategories under each topic based on the degree of discussion and feedback spent on each theme during the focus groups.

The focus groups covered four key questions:

1. What are the barriers to ending student homelessness in our region?
2. What health issues do you see among the students you serve?
3. What do you need to serve your students?
4. What are some best practices you have seen for addressing student homelessness in our region and beyond?

This report provides a detailed account of the liaisons' responses to these questions and compares local liaisons' responses with national responses captured in the *Hidden in Plain Sight* report by Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates (Ingram et al. 2016). An examination of the concerns of local liaisons in relationship to those of national evidence gives us a basis for identifying the most suitable interventions and policies, and the extent to which those interventions and policies should be developed at the local, state, regional, and/or national levels.

SECTION I

An Overview of McKinney-Vento Legislation: Background, Definitions, and the Role of Liaisons

Signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1987, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was designed to provide communities with essential funding and technical assistance to shelter the homeless (National Coalition for the Homeless [NCH] 2006). The Act stated that "the Nation faces an immediate and unprecedented crisis due to the lack of shelter for a growing number of individuals and families…," adding that the problem "is expected to become dramatically worse" with "no single, simple solution to the problem of homelessness because of the different subpopulations of the homeless, the different causes of and reasons of homelessness, and the different needs of homeless individuals" [42 U.S.C. § 11301.102(a)(1),(2), and (4)]. The Act outlined three types of federal action to address the problem: (1) the establishment of an Interagency Council on the Homeless (now known as the Interagency Council on Homelessness); (2) the use of public resources and programs "in a more coordinated manner to meet the critically urgent needs of the homeless of the Nation;" and (3) the provision of funds "for programs to assist the homeless, with special emphasis on elderly persons, handicapped persons, families with children, Native Americans, and veterans" [42 U.S.C. § 11301.102(b)(1) - (3)].

Congress expanded McKinney provisions in 1990, 1992, and 1994 to include specific education protections for homeless students. Amendments to 1994 legislation gave homeless children the right to a free public preschool education and gave parents of homeless children and youth a say in their children's school placement (NCH 2006). Additionally, Congress gave local educational authorities (LEAs) greater leeway in their use of McKinney sub-grant funds for programs and services to homeless students and required educational authorities to coordinate efforts with public housing authorities (NCH 2006). States were also required to provide the Coordinator of the Education of Homeless Children and Youth with estimates of the number of homeless children and youth in the state and the number served under grants and contracts, as well as information on the nature of the problem, noting that every state shall:

> gather, to the extent possible, reliable, valid, and comprehensive information on the nature and extent of the problems homeless children and youth have in gaining access to public preschool programs and to public elementary and secondary schools, the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children and youth, any progress made by the State educational agency and local educational agencies in the State in addressing problems and difficulties, and the success of the program under this subtitle in allowing homeless children and youth to enroll in, attend, and succeed in, school… [42 U.S.C. 11432.722(f)(2)].

This placed a greater priority on accounting for the number of homeless children and youth for the purposes of identifying the needs of communities and providing appropriate services. McKinney legislation underwent another round of changes in 2000, when the name was changed to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act by President Bill Clinton as a tribute to the late Congressman Bruce Vento, a leading supporter of the law (NCH 2006). The Act was then reauthorized in 2001 as part of the No Child Left Behind Act signed into law by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002, which was itself a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) originally passed in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty (Klein 2015). **The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) pointed out in their 2013 Homeless Liaison Toolkit that "national statistics at the time showed that over one million children and youth were likely to experience homelessness in a given year and that extreme poverty, coupled with high mobility and loss of housing, placed these children at great risk for educational challenges"** (NCHE 2013, 1-A-3,4). In addition to expanding the definition of homelessness among children and youth, NCHE further noted that the updated Act prohibited school districts from segregating homeless students from their housed peers and required state coordinators to help integrate homeless students previously separated into schools and programs strictly for homeless students. State coordinators and school liaisons were also given greater discretion in how they utilized increased McKinney-Vento funds, with the understanding that coordinators and liaisons would work together to ensure accountability (1-A-4).

Since 2001, other federal laws, amendments, and reauthorizations have strengthened the rights and protections of homeless children and youth. The most recent reauthorization of McKinney-Vento, the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), clarifies rules and regulations on elements of the legislation that have caused disputes between LEAs, states, and child welfare agencies. Most notably, **ESSA increased funding for the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program from $70 million in 2016 to $85 million in 2017** (NAEHCY 2015). ESSA stipulates expanded and more flexible use of funds, increased support for pre-K students, new rules pertaining to foster care, and new rules for reporting disaggregated graduation rates for homeless students, while also stressing that SEAs and LEAs designate State Coordinators and local liaisons who have the time and ability to carry out their duties and requires that liaisons and any other school personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development to better identify and serve homeless youth (NAEHCY 2016, 1-6; Ingram et al. 2016, 50).

Additionally, ESSA requires liaisons to "publicly disseminate the rights of homeless students" and states that "liaisons are required to refer homeless families or unaccompanied students to housing services" (Ingram, 50). ESSA also addresses conflicts over the "school of best interest" and "school of origin," giving unaccompanied youth or parents greater say as to which is most suitable, and ensures that procedures are in place for a homeless student to enroll in a new school immediately if changing schools is in the best interest of the student, while ensuring that the student is able to transfer all class credits (50).

The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homelessness for Children and Youth

There has been much debate over who qualifies as homeless and why. This report uses the federal definition of homeless students in kindergarten through grade 12 as defined by Section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act, reauthorized under Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act (H.R. 1) in 2001. Homeless children and youth are defined as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1))" and who meet the following guidelines:

> (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement ["or are awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition by the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2016, except in Arkansas, Delaware, and Nevada. The change of definition is scheduled to occur in those states on December 10, 2017 (NAEHCY 2016, 6)];
>
> (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings [within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)];
>
> (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
>
> (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii) (Pub. L. No. 107-110).

This definition expanded the scope of who qualifies as homeless beyond that of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition in Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I of the U.S. Code by further covering children and youth who are forced to share housing with others (Miller 2011, 309). The inclusion of children and youth who are "doubled up" increased the number of students protected by the Act, "perhaps as much as fivefold," according to research conducted by Cunningham and Henry (2007) and cited by Miller, thereby complicating efforts to collect an accurate count of student homelessness (310). **Cunningham and Henry estimated that there could be between 2.4 million and ten million people "doubled up" across the nation each night** (310).

Role and Responsibilities of McKinney-Vento Liaisons

The McKinney-Vento Act requires every school district and local educational agency (LEA) in the United States to appoint a local homeless liaison to identify homeless children and youth at their respective schools and ensure that those students are both enrolled in school and have the same opportunities to succeed in school as their non-homeless peers (NCHE 2015, 1). To qualify for the position, NCHE stated in their "Best Practices in Homeless Education Brief Series" that each liaison "must be an employee of the school district" and that the position "is frequently assigned to an existing staff person or administrator" (4). NCHE added that the person under consideration should have "sufficient time, experience, and authority to carry out all local liaison responsibilities and will not have any conflicts of interest in identifying and serving homeless students" (4). Liaisons are responsible for ensuring that:

- Homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible … and referrals to health care, dental, mental health, and appropriate services;
- The parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;

- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where they receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated according to the McKinney-Vento Act; and
- The parents and guardians of homeless children and youth, and all unaccompanied homeless youth, are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(6)(A)] (2).

Additionally, liaisons are tasked with obtaining immunization and medical records on behalf of students, as well as:

- Informing parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth;
- Working with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement; and
- Collaborating and coordinating with the State Coordinator and with community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(6)(A)] (2).

These responsibilities are compounded by the complexities of understanding and applying local, state, and federal policies and providing guidance and technical assistance to administrators, staff, students, families, and service providers. The myriad demands require that liaisons possess "a high level of commitment, energy, intelligence, and experience working with at-risk students" (NCHE 2015, 2). Regardless of these competencies, liaisons have indicated that they are often overextended due to their numerous, complex obligations. A 2012 survey commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development found that among 390 liaisons, 66 percent reported that they spent most of their time identifying eligible homeless children and youth. Ensuring that students and their families received services ranked second, while coordinating transportation services ranked third (2015).

A separate survey of 504 liaisons conducted by Hart Research Associates found that 90 percent "work in another official capacity other than as a homeless liaison within their school district," while 89 percent "spend half their time or less on their responsibilities as homeless liaisons" (Ingram et al. 2016, 7). Liaisons surveyed also told the researchers that resources to address the problem have not kept up with the growing problem (7).

> Although 82 percent of liaisons indicated that their school districts are doing a "good or fair job of addressing youth homelessness," 33 percent stated that their school districts do not "place a high priority on the problem" and 89 percent see "room for improvement" (Ingram et al. 2016, 7).

McKinney-Vento school liaisons in the Kansas City region expressed similar frustrations and concerns as those surveyed nationally in 2012 and 2015. We present their responses in our focus group findings in Section III.

CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The growth in student homelessness is an unsettling trend with no simple solutions and no signs of abating given recent findings that low-income families are finding it increasingly challenging to cover the costs of core needs such as housing, food, and transportation (Pew Charitable Trusts 2016). Housing costs, in particular, are swallowing up a greater share of income for low-income families. **Pew has noted that "lower-income households' housing costs grew by more than 50 percent over the past 19 years," with lower-income renters spending close to 50 percent of their before-tax income on rent in 2014.** This trend has invariably driven demand not only for affordable housing but also for limited shelter space and transitional units, leaving many students and families homeless or at risk of homelessness.

> Despite the increase in homelessness, McKinney-Vento school liaisons in the Kansas City region have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that homeless children and youth have equal access to education and support for their basic needs.

In the process, liaisons routinely go above and beyond their assigned responsibilities to help homeless students, a practice evidenced by the feedback we received from liaisons during our focus group sessions and liaisons' survey responses and comments in the *Hidden in Plain Sight* report. We, as residents and stakeholders, must take action if we are to bring an end to student homelessness.

A key priority that aligns with feedback from local liaisons and recommendations from sources cited in this report is to increase efforts to raise widespread awareness about student homelessness and the rights of homeless students and families. Liaisons create awareness by personally informing parents and guardians, school personnel, public officials, and service providers about the rights of homeless students; by publicly displaying information about students' rights at school and places where students receive services; and by reporting data and information to their school districts and states. **Agencies, organizations, and public officials can support liaisons and expand awareness by collecting, compiling, and sharing research and data and then promoting that evidence publicly.** Sharing firsthand knowledge from liaisons, along with quantitative findings from supporting groups, can engage the broader community and validate the concerns of homeless students and families. As one liaison in our focus groups pointed out, **it is difficult to grasp the scope of the problem that students face without first understanding the basic, everyday challenges they face.** "I'm talking to this kid about going to college and getting a job and everything," the liaison shared, "and I remember him saying, 'Oh, my [goodness], you always have toilet paper in your house, don't you?! I bet you never run out of toilet paper.' And that was so eye-opening to me."

As community stakeholders intensify efforts to raise awareness about student homelessness, they should also **work together to build and strengthen collaborative networks between school districts, public agencies, nonprofit providers, and private foundations to provide timely, innovative, and effective support to homeless students and their families.** Doing so will help eliminate many of the barriers liaisons cited in the focus group sessions. Stronger collaborative networks help address the problem of insufficient resources by enabling partner organizations and agencies to share financial, structural, administrative, and technical resources, similar to continuums of care. They can reach larger audiences when fundraising to support the additional needs of liaisons and their students and even help educate the community about the rights and responsibilities of homeless students.

As collaborative networks coalesce and become more defined, they should replicate drop-in centers and one-stop-shop service models like the 1400 Diplomas Impact Wednesday program in Kansas City, Kansas, to improve engagement and coordination between school districts and community partners. That work has already begun in the Olathe and Shawnee Mission school districts in Johnson County and the Kansas City, Missouri, school district in Jackson County. These new efforts need the full support of the surrounding communities to succeed. **Drop-in centers and one-stop shops not only simplify students' and families' access to, and enrollment in, much-needed services, they help reduce transportation burdens on students, families, and liaisons by fulfilling multiple appointments within a certain timeframe at one location.** This approach can also strengthen connections and trust between students and their families and public agencies and service providers, while also improving communication and knowledge of policies among all parties, by establishing a safe, shared forum for questions and answers and equal access to services and support.

Pivotal to the success of any network, however, is the presence of champions to build momentum and engagement around the cause and help direct the goals of the network. Recall the quote from one of the liaisons about what is required to effectively implement a one-stop-shop approach. Besides a champion on the school side, which is fulfilled by the role of the school liaison, "You need the community champion that's willing to take the lead on it and build these partnerships," the liaison stressed. **The navigator role that local liaisons recommended to help homeless students and families enroll in services, schedule and attend appointments, and provide case management and various coaching activities could be the community champions who advocate for students and their families.** Community navigators are already utilized by other service networks, such as physical and mental health providers, immigrant support and advocate organizations, and groups that represent citizens with disabilities, to manage community outreach, organizing, screening, and application assistance on behalf of their clients. **Community navigators could help students and families experiencing homelessness build trust in school districts by virtue of having a more autonomous role than that of liaisons and by concentrating on outreach efforts. As a result, they could help identify students in need of services and reduce the stigma of homelessness in communities, while keeping students and their families connected to providers and services.**

At the same time the community partners increase efforts to spread awareness, strengthen collaborative networks, and help homeless students and families navigate enrollment in programs and services, **stakeholders should also attempt to develop and sustain a larger network of host homes, where hosts and beneficiaries enter a mutually approved living arrangement akin to the HOST program mentioned earlier in this report.** But host homes alone are not sufficient to reduce student homelessness since they are designed to serve unaccompanied youth and not those students who remain with family members. Homeless students within families need access to housing subsidies and low-barrier access to an array of safe and supportive transitional and permanent housing. These traditional housing services have been proven effective and remain reliable solutions. The HUD *Family Options Study* found that “long-term housing subsidies reduced the proportion of families that were homeless or doubled-up in the previous six months by 50 [percent] and reduced the proportion of families who experienced a shelter stay by 75 [percent],” while “project-based transitional housing also reduced the proportion of families who experienced a shelter stay,” according to a report by the Campaign for Housing and Development Funding (Weiss 2016, 5).

Greater awareness, stronger collaboration, improved navigation, and low-barrier, supportive housing are four key practices recommended by liaisons in the Kansas City area and backed by national research. These practices provide pillars of safety and stability for homeless students and families. By setting them in place, we will create firmer, more supportive foundations across our communities and in our region at large.

New York Times

No Longer Homeless, but Still Struggling in School

By ELIZABETH A. HARRIS - DEC. 11, 2017

For homeless children, the negative effects don't end when they move into a new home.

Formerly homeless students continue to struggle in school for years, scoring as poorly on state tests as their peers with no place to live, according to a study from the Education Trust-New York released on Monday by a coalition of groups from around the state.

This study emphasizes the challenges facing New York City, where 10 percent of public school students were homeless at some point during the last school year, but also makes clear that this is not just a city problem. Across the state, more than 148,000 children were homeless during the last school year, and that number is widely considered to be too low.

The analysis looked at the 2015-16 results for the annual reading and math tests given to third through eighth graders. It identified more than 90,000 students who took the test — 10 percent of the total test takers in the state — as children who were either currently homeless or had been homeless at some point since starting school in New York. Homeless students could have lived in temporary housing, such as shelters or hotels, or doubled up with family friends.

While statewide, 40 percent of students who had never been homeless scored as proficient on the reading test that year, only 20 percent of homeless students passed. The percentage was the same for formerly homeless students. Many children cycle from being homeless, to having a home, and then right back again.

The numbers in math were similar: 42 percent of students who had never experienced homelessness scored as proficient, while 19 percent of homeless and formerly homeless students did so.

"This should be an area of urgency," said Ian Rosenblum, the executive director of the Education Trust-New York.

Another significant finding in the study was how big an impact a school district, or a school can have. Students who were homeless in New York City did better over all on both the reading and math tests than students who had never been homeless in Syracuse, Buffalo and Rochester.

In New York City, 19 percent of homeless students passed the math test as did 20 percent of formerly homeless children. Students who had never been homeless passed at a rate of 40 percent. But in Rochester, just 9 percent of students who had never been homeless passed the math test. Formerly homeless and homeless students passed at a rate of just 4 percent. In reading, the numbers were similar.

"Our outcomes are nowhere near where we want them to be as far as on-time graduation and achieving competencies," said William G. Clark, president of the Urban League of Rochester, which is part of the coalition that released the report. "And our homeless and formerly homeless students are only at half of that."

The Education Trust found that there are schools where homeless students did better than statewide averages — there were 169 schools where this was the case in math and 164 in reading. A vast majority of those schools were in New York City, and about a third of them were charter schools.

"When we see these very successful schools that have reached homeless students, it really is a bright spot," said Anna Shaw-Amoah, principal policy analyst at the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness. "It's a point we need to be making, that these low proficiency scores we're seeing over all really can rise up. It doesn't need to be that way."

Abja Midha, the deputy director of the Education Trust-New York, visited a few of the schools where homeless students performed well. She said that while each approach was tailored to that school's particular community, they all used targeted academic help and intensive engagement with the families, and tried to address the social and emotional needs of their homeless students.

The study was written with an eye toward a federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, which was signed by President Obama in 2015. Under that law, states are required to report on the academic outcomes, like state test scores and high school graduation rates, for students in temporary housing. The coalition that released the study, which advocates on how best to implement the new education law in New York, includes civil rights, education and business organizations from around the state.

"Our coalition believes that the reason E.S.S.A. is so important is that it provides an opportunity to shine a light on how well schools are doing for every group of students," said Mr. Rosenblum of the Education Trust. "As we think about what groups of students are particularly vulnerable, it's clear that the education system needs to do a better job of serving students in temporary housing and formerly homeless students."

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

ANALYSIS

How the Federal Government Helps Families Meet Child Care Needs

Tax credits and social programs that support access and affordability

December 06, 2017 Financial Security and Mobility

By Erin Currier and Sowmya Kypa

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This analysis was updated on Jan. 2, 2018, to more accurately reflect how much the government spends to support child care and to clarify how the child tax credit can be used.

Child care is essential for many American families, but most parents say they have difficulty finding affordable, high-quality care in their community, with the sentiment cutting across race, income, and educational background. The federal government helps families afford child care through a combination of tax credits and spending programs.

Despite these supports, however, child care for many families makes up the largest household expense, exceeding even housing, transportation, and college tuition, and affecting family income and expenditures. Lack of access to affordable care can drive parents, particularly mothers, to drop out of the labor force in a way that hinders long-term earning potential, take on unsustainable debt, make other budgeting decisions that leave them worse off, or compromise on the quality of care their children receive.

This analysis examines seven fiscal mechanisms—two tax provisions and five spending programs—through which the federal government supported family access to child care in fiscal year 2016. (See Figure 1.) As the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate prepare to reconcile differences between their tax bills, both of which propose changes to the tax provisions discussed here, the time is ripe for important conversations about how the federal government funds child care for some families and whether that support is sufficient.

Figure 1

7 Fiscal Mechanisms Helped Families Access Child Care in FY 2016

Major tax provisions and spending programs by dollar cost

Note: The figures for tax provisions reflect forgone federal income tax revenue, but for the purposes of this analysis, the refundable portion of the child tax credit is considered an outlay rather than as forgone revenue. While the child tax credit is not explicitly intended for child care, it could be used to subsidize parents' out-of-pocket child care costs. Likewise, only a portion of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the social services block grant is directed toward child care. Federal grants to states are not the same as total program costs because state governments also fund these programs.

Sources: Department of the Treasury, "Tax Expenditures FY2016," accessed Oct. 6, 2017, https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/tax-policy/Pages/Tax-Expenditures.aspx; Federal Funds Information for States, "FFIS Grants Database," accessed Oct. 5, 2017, http://www.ffis.org/database

Tax provisions for families with children

This analysis focuses on tax credits, which reduce a filer's tax liability and therefore also decrease the income tax revenue the federal government collects. The federal government also supports families through other tax provisions such as deductions, exclusions, and exemptions, which reduce a filer's taxable income rather than taxes due. One common example is employer-provided flexible spending accounts, such as the child care tax exclusion and the dependent care assistance program.

The way tax credits are structured meaningfully affects who benefits from them and how. For the credits discussed here, eligibility and the amount that can be claimed are based on taxable income. The amount that may be claimed increases with income up to the maximum credit. Above a certain income threshold, however, the available amount starts decreasing until it phases out for higher earners. A credit's reach can be expanded or restricted by changing the income thresholds for eligibility or the maximum credit amount.

In addition, tax credits can be refundable or nonrefundable. Refundable credits reduce the amount of taxes owed, even to below zero, in which case the negative liability is refunded to the filer. Nonrefundable credits, on the other hand, are subtracted from the filer's taxes due up to the total amount owed but not below zero. Nonrefundable credits typically do not benefit low-income families, because those households often don't earn enough to owe income taxes.

Tax credits also come with trade-offs. For example, because they are provided in a lump sum after households file their taxes, families do not realize the benefit until long after they make child care decisions and incur expenses. This can strain households that need consistent support and may not have the capacity to wait for help. Tax credits also have relatively high rates of improper payment, partly because the Internal Revenue Service lacks the resources to ensure that filers are thoroughly screened for eligibility.

The two tax credits discussed below—the child tax credit and the child and dependent care tax credit—totaled nearly $29 billion in fiscal 2016, or about 2 percent of all forgone revenue (approximately $1.5 trillion). (The refunded portion of the child tax credit is considered an outlay in this analysis, and the nonrefunded portion a tax provision.)

Child tax credit

Although not explicitly focused on child care, the child tax credit (CTC) provides families up to $1,000 per child per year to offset the costs of raising children. The Tax Policy Center estimates that almost 70 percent of all families with children will benefit from the credit in 2017. The credit enjoys broad bipartisan support because of its extensive financial impact on working families. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, this credit "lifted approximately 2.8 million people out of poverty, including about 1.6 million children, and lessened poverty for another 13.3 million people, including 6.6 million children," in 2015.

Although the credit itself is nonrefundable, it has a refundable component in the form of the additional child tax credit (ACTC). Families that do not owe enough taxes to receive the full amount of the CTC may claim the ACTC, which refunds 15 percent of earnings above $3,000 to the maximum credit amount. However, the $3,000 earnings threshold makes this credit less accessible to extremely low-income families. The federal government incurred $24 billion in tax expenditures for the CTC in fiscal 2016 plus another $30 billion for the ACTC, or 0.78 percent of total federal outlays that year.

Child and dependent care tax credit

The child and dependent care tax credit (CDCTC) is a nonrefundable credit for working or student adults with children up to age 13 or other dependents, such as elderly family members. It covers 20 to 35 percent of child care costs, depending on family income, to a maximum of $1,050 per child or $2,100 per family. The federal government incurred $4.6 billion in forgone revenue for this credit in fiscal 2016. Because it is nonrefundable, the child and dependent credit does not benefit families that do not owe income tax. A 2013 analysis by the Urban Institute found that families with children in the bottom fifth of the income distribution did not realize any benefit from the credit.

Grants to states and local governments

The federal government makes grants to states and local governments to cover part of the costs of administering social programs that help families access child care. Federal fiscal 2016 spending for the programs described below, in addition to outlays for the ACTC described in the previous section, was slightly more than $60 billion, or almost 2 percent of total federal outlays ($3.9

trillion).

Spending programs categorized as block grants—in which the federal government provides funding to states, which then operate the programs according to federal guidelines—give states considerable control over how they spend the funds. In general, the state programs provide more frequent payments to participating families than tax credits do and so align better with families' regular spending. However, they also incur much higher administrative costs because they take up time and resources evaluating participants' eligibility. Further, large portions of block grant funding sometimes do not reach their intended beneficiaries, and some programs, particularly Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the child care and development block grant (CCDBG), described below, have suffered from declining participation among eligible populations.

Child care development fund

The child care development fund helps parents work by providing child care access and supports the social-emotional development of disadvantaged children by investing in child care quality. The fund has two components:

- Child care entitlement to states, which is not subject to the annual appropriations process.
- Child care and development block grant (CCDBG), which must be reauthorized by Congress every year.

The entitlement to states has two funding elements: mandatory funds, which states receive without an obligation to contribute additional resources; and matching funds, which states must supplement with their own monies. In fiscal 2016, the federal government granted $2.8 billion under the program, or 0.07 percent of total federal outlays.

The Center for Law and Social Policy characterizes the CCDBG as "the largest source of federal funding to states to provide child care assistance for low-income families and improve the quality of child care." Because the program is a block grant, states have substantial discretion in setting its rules. They usually make funds available to families in the form of vouchers that generally do not cover the full cost of care. Several states have long waiting lists for this assistance with fewer than 1 in 6 eligible children receiving support from the block grant. An estimated 1.4 million children participated in the program in 2015, the lowest in 17 years. In fiscal 2016, the federal government granted $2.7 billion through the program, or about 0.07 percent of total federal outlays.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The primary goal of TANF is to provide financially vulnerable families with needed cash assistance, child care subsidies, and work support. However, some states have redirected the money to fill gaps in their budgets or to substitute for state funding of other social programs such as state earned income tax credits, prekindergarten, or child welfare. In fiscal 2016, the federal government granted $16 billion through TANF, or 0.42 percent of total federal outlays.

Child care is generally states' secondary use for TANF money after cash assistance to families. In 2015, states disbursed $2.6 billion of TANF funds for child care, as direct-to-families assistance or transfers to their child care development funds. States may redirect up to 30 percent of their TANF funds toward development fund programs.

The percentage of eligible families receiving TANF benefits has been declining. In 2012, 1.1 million adults and 3.3 million children—32 percent of eligible families—received TANF assistance, down sharply from 2000, when 52 percent of eligible families received it.

Social services block grant

The federal government designed the social services block grant to provide assistance for at-risk populations—the elderly, people with disabilities, and children and adults vulnerable to neglect or abuse—and states have substantial flexibility in how they use the funding. In fiscal 2013, 27 states and the District of Columbia used the block grants for child care, amounting to 4 percent of total program funding, or $1.6 billion, not including supplemental funding in response to Superstorm Sandy. The federal government also awarded $1.6 billion in block grants in fiscal 2016, or 0.04 percent of total federal outlays.

Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start seek to prepare young children from families with incomes at or below the federal poverty threshold for primary education and help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Participants can also access family support services related to health and parenting. In addition to children in poverty, those in foster care, who are homeless, and are from families that receive public assistance are also eligible for Head Start services, regardless of income, but estimates suggest that less than 50 percent of qualified children are enrolled in Head Start and less than 5 percent in Early Head Start. The federal Administration for Children and Families provides funds to public or private agencies that administer these programs at the local level. During the 2015-16 school year, Head Start programs served 1.1 million children and their families. In fiscal 2016, the federal government provided $7 billion for Head Start, or 0.19 percent

VIEWPOINT

Investing in Housing for Health Improves Both Mission and Margin

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Viewpoint

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During the last 20 years, low-income families have had their incomes plateau or decline as their housing costs soared. Public aid has not been expanded to meet the growing need: only 1 in 4 households that qualify for housing assistance receives it. As a result, today most renting households below the federal poverty line spend more than half of their income on housing costs, and 1 in 4 spends more than 70% of its income on rent and utility costs alone.[1] Rent-burdened families not only have less money to spend on wellness and health care but also regularly face eviction and homelessness, which further threaten their health. According to recent estimates, 2.8 million renting households are at risk of eviction and more than 500 000 people are homeless on any single night.[2]

Medical researchers and clinicians are increasingly recognizing the importance of the social determinants of health, which include stable, decent, affordable housing. Housing problems have been associated with a wide array of health complications, including lead exposure and toxic effects, asthma, and depression.[3] In the United Kingdom, a study of more than 4000 adults found that childhood housing conditions, such as poor ventilation, were associated with an increased risk of mortality.[4] In the United States, data from the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey estimated that 40% of asthma cases in children were related to the children's home environment.[5] Moreover, the lack of stable housing compromises the ability of clinicians to treat low-income patients with medical complexity, not only because eviction and residential insecurity thwart treatments and continuous care but also because families are often forced to choose between medication costs or rent.

> A stable home functions as a secure foundation on which to build holistic and cost-effective health care.

Acute residential insecurity among low-income households contributes to making the US health care system both ineffective and inefficient. The top 5% of hospital users—overwhelmingly poor and housing insecure—are estimated to consume 50% of health care costs.[6] Patients living in poverty in the United States are often the most expensive to treat, in part because of their lack of a stable home. If nothing changes, many individuals with unstable housing will continue to develop difficult-to-treat illnesses and will continue to account for substantial health care costs.

Housing Is Similar to Drug Prescription

Recognizing residential insecurity as a cause of preventable hospitalization, some hospitals and health systems have developed permanent, supportive housing models to reduce health care utilization among chronically homeless people.[7] The Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers in New Jersey and the Hennepin County Health Center in Minnesota use housing vouchers to reduce health care costs; health care organizations like UnitedHealthcare have invested health care dollars to develop new housing and reduce unnecessary health care utilization; and nonprofit health systems like Bon Secours Health System in Baltimore, Maryland, and Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, have used endowment funds to build affordable housing units and fund community improvement initiatives.

Many of these models combine affordable housing, offered through centralized units or decentralized vouchers, with integrated case management, often involving medical or behavioral on-site care. This approach has been shown to improve health outcomes while reducing both health care costs and societal costs. For example, randomized trials have found that hospital stays and emergency department visits decreased among homeless individuals after they were offered stable housing and case management.[8] Although much needs to be learned from these promising efforts, they remain uncommon approaches to improving health and are often hampered by limited funds as well as a narrow focus on highest-need, highest-cost patients.

To significantly reduce health disparities through effective housing platforms, far more resources are needed. Instead of operating independently, health and housing sectors should enter into broad partnerships. Approaches are needed that meet both *mission*- and *margin*-oriented goals, simultaneously addressing increasing housing costs, inefficient health care spending, and the social determinants of health. This requires the health sector to invest with a double bottom line in mind, expanding affordable housing options to achieve the mission of promoting community-wide health while also reducing costs incurred by ineffectively treating high-cost patients.

The Role of Hospitals and Health Systems

Housing-based approaches to health care will require a new set of partnerships, including affordable housing developers, investors, community boards, hospital leaders, and government officials. Hospitals and health systems should play a larger role in this effort, with more involvement in addressing the housing crisis and the health problems that arise from inadequate housing.

First, hospitals and health systems, both those that have at-risk insurance contracts and those that provide largely fee-for-service care, could direct a percentage of their investment portfolios toward affordable housing initiatives. The financial portfolios of hospitals should not—and need not—resemble those of the for-profit sector. Effective nonprofit and for-profit affordable housing developers have learned how to provide quality affordable housing and financially thrive, even in down markets. Additionally, risk can be dispersed and returns secured through shared-investing efforts such as the Healthy Neighborhoods Equity Fund, which brings together hospitals, banks, philanthropists, foundations, and government agencies.

The return on investment involved in expanding affordable housing cannot be fully measured by portfolio profits or even by costs saved by addressing the root causes of residentially insecure families' health needs. It is also measured by building healthier communities—with plenty of safe, decent, and affordable housing—to improve the well-being of children who, if nothing changes, may be the future's most expensive patients.

Second, hospitals could maximize the success of affordable housing programs by combining them with wraparound services that provide social services, wellness initiatives, and medical care. Alternatively, the federally financed Housing Choice Voucher Program could partner with health care systems such as academic medical centers and federally qualified health centers, with the former expanding vouchers for low-income individuals with medical complexity as the latter provides on-site services, such as home-based medical or behavioral health care.

Conclusions

A stable home functions as a secure foundation on which to build holistic and cost-effective health care. Without this foundation, medical treatments are reduced to short-term, limited fixes that must be applied and reapplied at significant cost and insignificant health gains. Hospitals and health systems can and must do better in investing in homes for health, for both patients and the broader community.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Published Online: October 31, 2017. doi:10.1001/jama.2017.15771

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Both authors have completed and submitted the ICMJE Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest. Dr Sandel reports being on the board of Enterprise Community Partners. It is an unpaid affiliation. No other disclosures were reported.

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EVICTED
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Tara Raghuveer

Social activist Tara Raghuveer presents troubling findings about the frequency of eviction in the Kansas City area – an average of 42 cases per business day from 1999 to 2016, with African-Americans disproportionately affected – and then joins a panel discussion of the issue. Nick Haines of KCPT-Kansas City PBS moderates.

From 1999 to 2016, records show, Jackson County logged nearly 174,000 evictions – an average of about 42 per business day. Alarmingly, the leading predictor was race. Analysis by activist Tara Raghuveer revealed a disproportionate impact on African-Americans.

The findings parallel those of sociologist Matthew Desmond, who embedded himself in two poor neighborhoods in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for his Pulitzer Prize-winning book Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City. Raghuveer's research, conducted under his guidance, was cited in the book.

Raghuveer, a native Kansas Citian and graduate of Harvard College, presents her findings and then joins a panel discussion of the issues surrounding eviction in the Kansas City area. KCPT-Kansas City PBS' Nick Haines moderates the town hall event, which will be recorded by KCPT for later broadcast.

Co-presented by the Black Community Fund and KCPT-Kansas City PBS. The event is the first in a series focusing on eviction and other housing issues in Kansas City.

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