LINC Commission Meeting

June 25, 2018

Students from the LINC Mighty Wild Eagles Drill Team from the Hickman Mills School District perform at the grand opening of the new Sun Fresh Market at Linwood Blvd. and Prospect Ave. in Kansas City, Missouri. The store is a major investment in the Prospect Avenue revitalization effort.

LINC
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, June 25, 2018 | 4 – 6 pm
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

I. Welcome and Announcements

II. Approvals
   a. Approval May minutes (motion)

III. Superintendent Reports

IV. Workforce and Work Requirements
   a. Clyde McQueen – Full Employment Council
   b. LINCWorks report

V. Educational Policy Fellowship Program
   a. Year end summary
   b. One Policy Brief – Student Mobility

VI. LINC Data Initiatives
   a. Expansion of Homeless Data System
   b. Data Sharing Agreements

VII. Other
   a. KCPT Town Hall on Housing
   b. SEBT update
   c. No July meeting

VIII. Adjournment

THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – MAY 21, 2018

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

Sharon Cheers	Rob Givens
Tom Davis	Anita Gorman
Aaron Deacon	Tom Lewin
David Disney	Rosemary Lowe
Mark Flaherty	Ken Powell
Herb Freeman	Bailus Tate

Minutes of the April 16, 2018, LINC Commission meeting were approved.

Superintendent Reports

- **Sharon Nibbelink**, Superintendent (Center School District), reported the district community has come together in support of the two students who were injured in a shooting which occurred after graduation. Center High School was recognized as a Top 40 High School in the state of Missouri.
- **Steve Morgan,** Asst. Superintendent (Fort Osage School District), reported this year's graduates were awarded more than $3 million in college scholarships. Student debaters will participate in the Lincoln-Douglas National Speech and Debate Tournament this summer. About 2,500 students (50%) will attend summer school this year. Work on the district athletics center is under way, and construction of the early childhood center is due to be completed this fall.
- **Dan Clemens**, Superintendent (North Kansas City School District), reported every graduate this year has plans for further schooling, training, or military service. All four high schools have received national distinction. North Kansas City is the third most diverse district in Missouri.
- **Michael Reynolds**, Chief Research and Accountability Officer (Kansas City Public Schools), reported 47 students graduated this year with both a diploma and an associate's degree. The district's new Middle College program in partnership with MCC and FEC is helping dropouts earn a high school diploma equivalent. KCPS will hold informational meetings about the upcoming restructuring of the board sub-districts.
- **Gayden Carruth**, Executive Director (Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City) reported on the conclusion of the Missouri legislative session. There are already 10 applicants for around 20 slots in the 2018-19 class of the Education Policy Fellowship Program. **Bob Bartman**, Coordinator (Education Policy Fellowship Program), reported EPFP this month hosted a panel discussion on trauma.

Brent Schondelmeyer, Deputy Director-Community Relations, introduced a presentation on the LINC Chess program. A Fox 4 news segment on the chess program was shown. LINC Site Coordinator **Ken Lingelbach** reported the chess program is offered at 42 sites, with more than 850 students participating. This summer LINC will offer Chess University to help adults learn to teach chess, as well as Chess Camp for students.

Schondelmeyer introduced a discussion of issues related to student mobility and evictions. **Rick Chambers**, Center Education Foundation Executive Director, reported the Center School District, Marlborough Community Coalition, and LINC are partnering to present a workshop, "Know Your Legal Rights As a Renter," on May 24, which will include one-on-one conversations with volunteer attorneys.

Mike Reynolds reported KCPS has established a data interface so that the district will be notified when the family of a student is the subject of an eviction proceeding in court.

Schondelmeyer introduced a discussion of the Community Schools National Forum held recently in Baltimore. A video of the forum was shown. Caring Communities Supervisor **Jeff Hill** and Site Coordinator **Danielle Smalls** reported on their experience of the conference. Discussion followed.

Caring Communities Administrator **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported on LINC's summer programs, which include Before & After Summer School and All-Day Summer Camp programs.

Schondelmeyer reported LINC will again support the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children initiative in the Kansas City, Center, and Hickman Mills school districts. Each eligible child in families selected for the program will receive an additional $90 in food benefits on their SNAP card this summer.

Mike English reported Turn the Page KC will hold the Summer Reading Festival at the Sprint Center on June 20. Kansas City will host the National Summer Learning Conference, Nov. 11-14.

Rob Givens reported on the Finance Committee's work to develop selection criteria, interview 401(k) providers, and make a recommendation.

A motion to adopt the recommendation of the Finance Committee to engage Two West as LINC's 401(k) advisor was approved unanimously.

Schondelmeyer introduced **Rudy Summerville**, one of LINC's first Caring Communities Site Coordinators, who recently retired from the Independence School District. A video of Summerville's retirement message was shown. Summerville thanked LINC and the Commission.

Bailus Tate reported on a recent legislative visit to Trailwoods Elementary School at which students led legislators and other guests on a tour of the LINC Before and After School program. A video of the visit was shown.

The meeting was adjourned.

Do You Receive Food Stamp Benefits?

Get job training and other support through SkillUP for FREE!

What is SkillUP?

SkillUP is a job training program for Food Stamp recipients to gain skills, training or work experience. SkillUP is free through Missouri's Job Centers and can help prepare you for a job that can raise your income.

Who can get help from SkillUP?

You can choose to take part in SkillUP if you are receiving Food Stamp benefits. Read the blue box on the right to see if you are an **ABAWD** or a **Volunteer**.

To take part in SkillUP, visit a Missouri Job Center near you, or call 1-888-728-JOBS (1-888-728-5627).

How can SkillUP help?

- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- Basic literacy
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- High school or college
- Help paying for work transportation expenses
- Job search
- Job seeking
- On-the-job training
- A skill or trade

Definitions

Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents

- 18-49 years old
- No children under age 18 in the Food Stamp household
- Not disabled
- Not pregnant
- Not a full-time student
- Not caring for an ill or incapacitated household member
- Not receiving unemployment (in any state)
- Not attending a drug or alcohol treatment program

To receive more than 3 months of benefits from Jan 2016 to Dec 2018, ABAWDs must:

- Take part in work and/or training for 80 hours per month through SkillUP, or by getting documentation to the FSD, **OR**
- Provide verification of work or training for 80 hours within the past 30 days to receive benefits again, **OR**
- Inform the Family Support Division (FSD) if they are no longer an ABAWD or meet an exemption.

Volunteers

Not an ABAWD, but are choosing to participate in SkillUP.

ABAWDs can give the Family Support Division (FSD) documentation showing they have met the requirements, such as:

- **Documents from employer, such as pay stubs or an employer statement:**
  Your income before taxes and other deductions are taken out, how often you're paid, and the hours you worked.

- **Documents from self-employment income:**
  Documentation which shows your work hours, pay and expenses, or a prior year tax return if this shows the current rate of pay.

- **Training or School Schedule**
  Work or training you do through SkillUP gets reported to the FSD and may count toward your work requirement.

Have any questions or want to learn more?

Call the FSD at

1-855-FSD-INFO

(1-855-373-4636)

or visit an FSD Office near you.

Find office hours and locations at

dss.mo.gov/dss_map/

jobs.mo.gov

Missouri Department of Social Services

FAMILY SUPPORT DIVISION

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the **USDA Program Discrimination Complaint FormPDF Document**, (AD-3027) found online at: **http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html**, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Email: **program.intake@usda.gov**

Relay Missouri: 711
Do you need help with a language other than English?
Call 1-855-373-4636 and tell the representative the language you need.
The Family Support Division is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Overview

University of Missouri Extension's (MU) Human Environmental Sciences Extension program administered the MU SkillUP program for FY2017. MU collaborated with the Family Support Division (FSD), Division of Workforce Development (DWD) and the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA) as well as other partner agencies.

SkillUP partners provided participants with career assessment; job search assistance; financial, job readiness and life skills classes; vocational and technical training; work and transportation-related support services; and case management/coaching services. The partners served both the volunteer and ABAWD SNAP populations.

Training Sector

Industry	Participants
Health Care	117
CDL/Trucking/Heavy Machinery	30
Warehouse Logistics	17
HVAC & Skilled Trades	5
Computer Science	2
Other	7

Supportive Services Data

Assistance provided	Participants
Work-Related Expenses (WRE)	98
Transportation-Related Expenses (TRE)	26

Participants by County

County	Total	Not Eligible	Did Not Enroll	Total Enrolled	Entered Training	Graduated	Continuing In Training	Did Not Graduate
Barton	1	1						
Boone	22	2	8	12	8	6	2	
Buchanan	5		2	3	2		1	1
Cass	2	1		1				
Chariton	1		1					
Christian	3		1	2				
Cole	1			1				
Cooper	2		1	1	1	1		
Dade	1				1	1		
Dallas	1			1	1	1		
Douglas	1			1	1	1		
Dunklin	1		1					
Franklin	2	1		1	1	1		
Greene	58	8	27	23	13	11	2	
Grundy	1		1					
Hickory	1			1				
Howard	2	1	1					
Jackson	222	20	95	107	43	24	18	1
Jasper	8		3	5	2	2		
Jefferson	3	1	2					
Laclede	2		1	1	1	1		
Lawrence	4		1	3	1		1	
Linn	2		2					
Livingston	3	1	1	1	1	1		
Macon	1		1					
McDonald	1		1					
Moniteau	1	1						
Morgan	2		1	1				
New Madrid	2			2				
Ozark	1		1					
Pemiscot	2	1	1					
Pettis	2	1	1					
Platte	1			1				
Randolph	4		1	3	3	2	1	
Saline	3	1	1	1				
St. Charles	7		7		1	1		
St. François	1			1	1		1	
St. Louis	51	3	28	20	15	8	7	
St. Louis City	267	23	123	121	81	60	19	2
Stone	2		1	1				
Sullivan	1			1	1		1	
Taney	4	1	1	2				
Texas	2	1	1					
Vernon	7	1	2	4				
Webster	2		2					
Unknown	94	20	65	9				
Totals	**807**	**89**	**386**	**331**	**178**	**121**	**53**	**4**

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI Extension

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University of Missouri

SkillUP

Annual Report 2017

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI Extension

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SkillUP

Impact

M.T.: When M.T., an ex-offender, had difficulties communicating with his employers and co-workers, the SkillUP specialist was able to coach him on his workplace communication skills.

"SkillUP … Thank you so much … I have never been able to save $2,000 in my bank account, and now I have. I have even been able to give extra money to my son's mom to help raise him …"

D.J.: During coaching with a SkillUP Specialist, D.J. attended a Financial Education class taught by an MU Extension Family Financial Education Specialist. Here are two quotes D.J. shared:

"Hi {FFE}!! I just had to reach out to you, because I had to let you know that meeting you last week was an absolute impact on me. Personally, financially, and spiritually! I did enjoy meeting you and definitely will be in contact in the near future. You are an amazing individual. I thank you! D.J."

"Hello {SkillUP Specialist}, I am grateful for your program and your assistance with getting my supplies needed to complete the Medical Assistant program successfully. I have picked up everything and it just moved me to have programs out there like yours to assist individuals to be more successful…. Although this program is getting my toes wet to be sure this is the direction God has for me. But I had to take a moment to let you know I appreciate you and your hard work. Thank you from the bottom of my heart! My daughter also will be thankful one day when she is able to realize the walk her mother has had to take for her! D.J."

Success

"Hello, my name is Z.B. … I want to talk about why it's a good idea to keep the funding in place for programs such as this. If it weren't for this grant, I wouldn't have been able to pay for the class to become a CDL licensed driver. I've not always made the best of choices, but I found myself a door and a couple of people that believed this was possible and said I could … With the opportunities I've been presented, I will now be able to provide for my family."

"To get what you've never had, you've got to go where you've never been."

"The funding will help families like mine; therefore it should remain in place. Not everyone that comes for help may actually need this, but those that do need and want this … it's something that changes their life. This is why I believe the funding should remain in place."

M.H.: has a family of five. He has held many jobs, from over-the-road trucker to a school custodian. Being very family centered, he took positions that allowed him to spend time with his children while they were young. Now that his children are older, he desired to train for a career as an over-the-road driver. M.H. completed his CDL training. He was hired the week following graduation as a team driver. This allowed him more time at home, and he is on schedule to earn $72,000 this year. He was able to eliminate his food assistance. M.H. said,

"SkillUP opened the door for me."

S.R.: Started with SkillUP in February 2017. She is a single mother of two children with special needs and has a mother with health issues. S.R. is an excellent example of someone whose hard work and dedication enabled her to achieve her goals. While attending classes, she worked a full-time job and served as the primary caretaker for her family members.

S.R. is pursuing a career in the allied health care industry. S.R. was valedictorian of the Patient Care Technician Program at Bell-Brown Medical Institute with a GPA of 4.2. She has gone on to pursue a second certificate as a certified clinical medical assistant and is on track to graduate in December.

Educational Policy Fellowship Program (2017-18)

The culmination of the Educational Policy Fellowship Program is the selection of a policy topic and a group presentation. These are the topics selected and with the formal presentations made earlier this month.

Universal Early Childhood

- Kyle Matchell
- Clay Fulghum
- Leigh Ann Neal
- Alicia Wilson
- Mike English

Impact of Student and Family Mobility

- Dewayne Bright
- Renee Asher
- Linda Davidson
- Natalie Allen
- Robert Goltra

Recruiting and Retaining for Equity

- Lisa Janeway
- Mark Schmidt
- Mark Maus
- Jeremy Tucker
- Shaunda Fowler

Requirements for Safety and Security for Schools and Community

- Gerald Sewell
- Jason Woolf
- Fred Bouchard
- Kelly Wachel
- John Kitchens

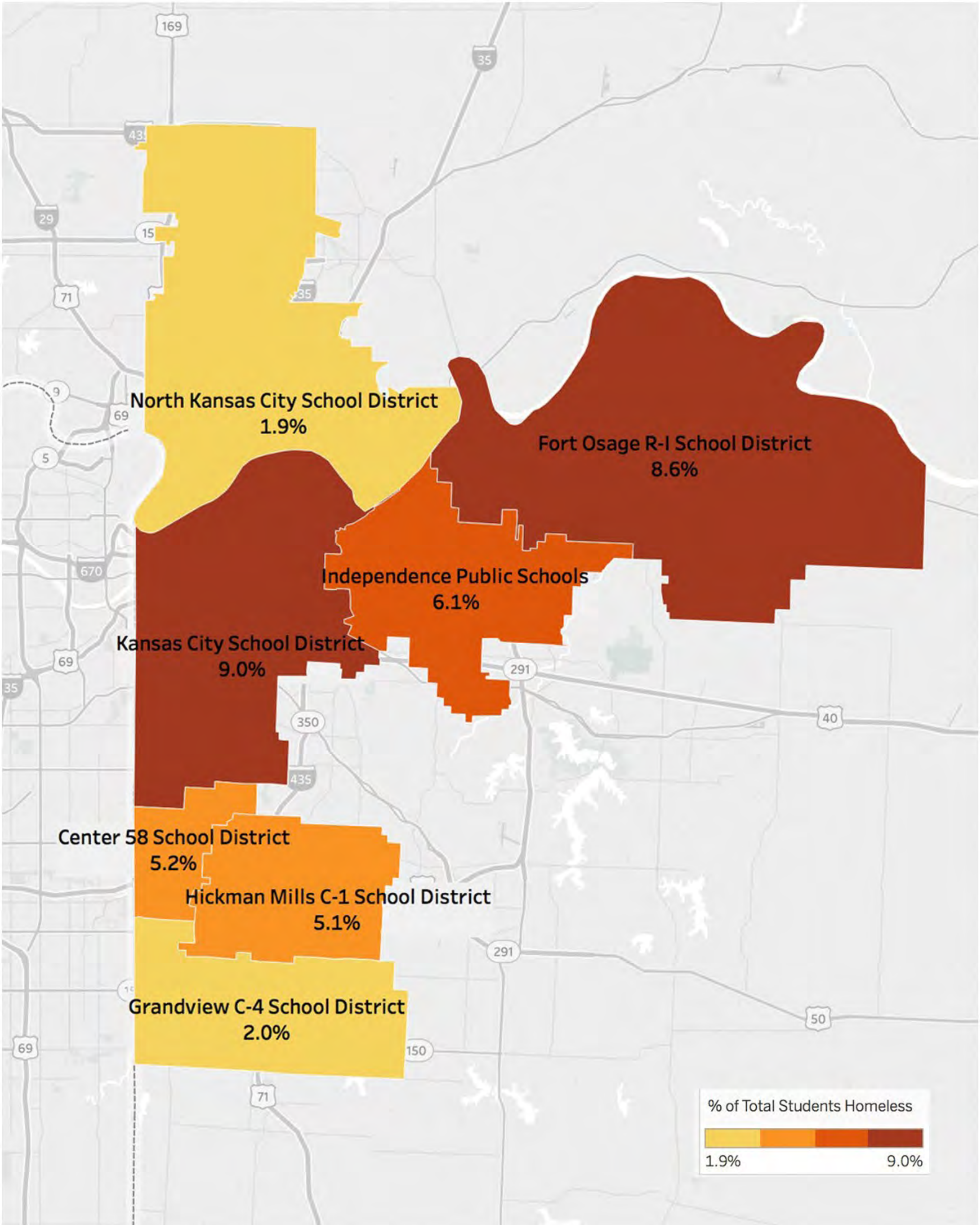
LINC Commission Data Motion

Approved Feb. 26, 2018

The LINC Commission supports and endorses the following efforts to address the issues of student mobility and evictions and their impact on school attendance, academic achievement, homelessness, housing, child welfare, and family stability:

1. **Support** the ongoing efforts of the KC Eviction project to analyze evictions, student mobility and academic attainment through data-sharing agreements and cooperation with area school districts;
2. **Support** LINC seeking funding to further develop and expand the homeless student data system developed for the Independence School District in the LINC-managed Apricot data system to include the Kansas City Public Schools (Phase I);
3. **Support** LINC seeking additional funding to expand the scope of the homeless data system project to include other interested area school districts while determining if there are ways to reduce days out of school due to students changing schools within a district or between districts (Phase II).

Map - % of Homeless Students in District



High-Level Students In Transition System Framework

Pre-Requisites

- Data Sharing Agreement
- Key Stakeholders
- District Leadership

Schedule

Phase 1 : ISD (Complete)
Phase 2 : KCPS (In Progress)
Phase 3 : Spring 2019 (2-3 TBD)
Phase 4 : Fall 2019 (Remaining Districts)
Phase 5 : Full Deployment (TBD)

2018

OUT of REACH

THE HIGH COST OF HOUSING

NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION

MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROSITY OF:
JPMorgan Chase & Co.

MISSOURI

STATE RANKING #41*

In **Missouri**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **$804**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **$2,679** monthly or **$32,148** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

$15.46
PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING WAGE

FACTS ABOUT MISSOURI:

STATE FACTS	
Minimum Wage	$7.85
Average Renter Wage	$14.14
2-Bedroom Housing Wage	$15.46
Number of Renter Households	787,627
Percent Renters	33%

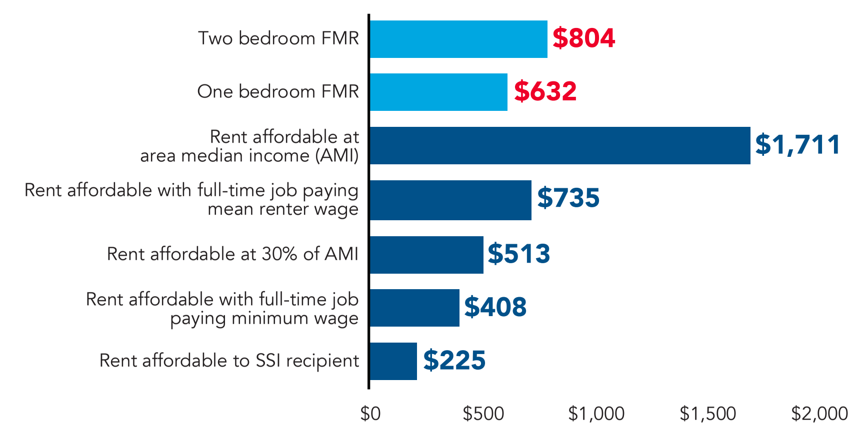
79
Work Hours Per Week At **Minimum Wage** To Afford a **2-Bedroom Rental Home** (at FMR)

62
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)

1.5
Number of Full-Time Jobs At **Minimum Wage** To Afford a **1-Bedroom Rental Home** (at FMR)

MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS	HOUSING WAGE
St. Louis HMFA	$17.23
Kansas City HMFA	$16.71
Pulaski County	$15.62
Joplin MSA	$14.87
Springfield HMFA	$14.62



MSA = Metropolitan Statistical Area; HMFA = HUD Metro FMR Area.
* Ranked from Highest to Lowest 2-Bedroom Housing Wage. Includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

	FY18 HOUSING WAGE	HOUSING COSTS			AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI)				RENTERS				
	Hourly wage necessary to afford 2 BR[1] FMR[2]	2 BR FMR	Annual income needed to afford 2 BR FMR	Full-time jobs at minimum wage needed to afford 2 BR FMR[3]	Annual AMI[4]	Monthly rent affordable at AMI[5]	30% of AMI	Monthly rent affordable at 30% of AMI	Renter households (2012-2016)	% of total households (2012-2016)	Estimated hourly mean renter wage (2018)	Monthly rent affordable at mean renter wage	Full-time jobs at mean renter wage needed to afford 2 BR FMR
Missouri	$15.46	$804	$32,148	2.0	$68,442	$1,711	$20,533	$513	787,627	33%	$14.14	$735	1.1
Combined Nonmetro Areas	$12.86	$669	$26,752	1.6	$51,401	$1,285	$15,420	$386	183,074	31%	$9.80	$509	1.3
Metropolitan Areas													
Bates County HMFA	$12.33	$641	$25,640	1.6	$56,500	$1,413	$16,950	$424	1,942	29%	$10.26	$533	1.2
Callaway County HMFA	$12.85	$668	$26,720	1.6	$61,500	$1,538	$18,450	$461	4,477	28%	$13.95	$725	0.9
Cape Girardeau MSA	$13.52	$703	$28,120	1.7	$64,600	$1,615	$19,380	$485	11,426	33%	$11.13	$579	1.2
Columbia MSA	$14.60	$759	$30,360	1.9	$76,400	$1,910	$22,920	$573	30,784	45%	$10.22	$531	1.4
Dallas County HMFA	$12.63	$657	$26,280	1.6	$44,500	$1,113	$13,350	$334	1,663	27%	$7.19	$374	1.8
Jefferson City HMFA	$12.38	$644	$25,760	1.6	$79,500	$1,988	$23,850	$596	10,416	30%	$11.00	$572	1.1
Joplin MSA	$14.87	$773	$30,920	1.9	$56,700	$1,418	$17,010	$425	22,719	34%	$12.87	$669	1.2
Kansas City HMFA	$16.71	$869	$34,760	2.1	$80,000	$2,000	$24,000	$600	172,860	36%	$15.77	$820	1.1
McDonald County HMFA	$12.33	$641	$25,640	1.6	$46,400	$1,160	$13,920	$348	2,325	28%	$11.29	$587	1.1
Moniteau County HMFA	$12.33	$641	$25,640	1.6	$62,600	$1,565	$18,780	$470	1,431	26%	$7.78	$405	1.6
Polk County HMFA	$12.50	$650	$26,000	1.6	$52,400	$1,310	$15,720	$393	4,007	34%	$8.54	$444	1.5
Springfield HMFA	$14.62	$760	$30,400	1.9	$60,000	$1,500	$18,000	$450	61,348	38%	$12.42	$646	1.2
St. Joseph MSA	$14.21	$739	$29,560	1.8	$64,300	$1,608	$19,290	$482	15,300	35%	$12.10	$629	1.2
St. Louis HMFA	$17.23	$896	$35,840	2.2	$76,800	$1,920	$23,040	$576	263,855	32%	$16.21	$843	1.1
Counties													
Adair County	$12.33	$641	$25,640	1.6	$61,000	$1,525	$18,300	$458	3,875	41%	$5.91	$307	2.1
Andrew County	$14.21	$739	$29,560	1.8	$64,300	$1,608	$19,290	$482	1,568	23%	$10.27	$534	1.4
Atchison County	$12.33	$641	$25,640	1.6	$60,600	$1,515	$18,180	$455	765	31%	$11.99	$624	1.0
Audrain County	$13.08	$680	$27,200	1.7	$56,500	$1,413	$16,950	$424	2,910	31%	$11.28	$586	1.2

Sullivan City (part of Crawford County) is not included due to a lack of sufficient data.

1: BR = Bedroom
2: FMR = Fiscal Year 2018 Fair Market Rent.
3: This calculation uses the higher of the state or federal minimum wage. Local minimum wages are not used. See Appendix B.
4: AMI = Fiscal Year 2018 Area Median Income
5: "Affordable" rents represent the generally accepted standard of spending not more than 30% of gross income on gross housing costs.

INTRODUCTION

NLIHC's annual report, *Out of Reach,* documents the gap between wages and the cost of rental housing across the United States. The report's Housing Wage is an estimate of the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a rental home at HUD's fair market rent (FMR) without spending more than 30% of his or her income on housing costs. FMRs provide an estimate of what a family moving today can expect to pay for a modestly priced rental home in a given area. This year's findings demonstrate how far out of reach modestly priced housing is for the growing low-wage work force, despite recent wage growth, and for other vulnerable populations across the country.

The 2018 national Housing Wage is $22.10 for a modest two-bedroom rental home and $17.90 for a modest one-bedroom rental home. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, the two-bedroom Housing Wage ranges from $13.84 in Arkansas to $36.13 in Hawaii. The five metropolitan areas with the highest two-bedroom Housing Wages are Stamford-Norwalk, CT ($38.19), Honolulu, HI ($39.06), Oakland-Fremont, CA ($44.79), San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA ($48.50), and San Francisco, CA ($60.02).

A full-time worker earning the federal minimum wage of $7.25 needs to work approximately 122 hours per week for all 52 weeks of the year, or approximately three full-time jobs, to afford a two-bedroom rental home at the national average fair market rent. The same worker needs to work 99 hours per week for all 52 weeks of the year, or approximately two and a half full-time jobs, to afford a one-bedroom home at the national average fair market rent.

In no state, metropolitan area, or county can a worker earning the federal minimum wage or prevailing state minimum wage afford a two-bedroom rental home at fair market rent by working a standard 40-hour week. In only 22 counties out of more than 3,000 counties nationwide can a full-time minimum-wage worker afford a one-bedroom rental home at fair market rent. These 22 counties are all located in states with a minimum wage higher than $7.25. Higher minimum wages are important, but they are not the silver-bullet solution for housing affordability. Thirty-eight local jurisdictions have their own minimum wages higher than the state or federal minimum-wage, but all fall short of the local one-bedroom Housing Wage (Appendix A).

DEFINITIONS

Affordability in this report is consistent with the federal standard that no more than 30% of a household's gross income should be spent on rent and utilities. Households paying over 30% of their income are considered cost burdened. Households paying over 50% of their income are considered severely cost burdened.

Area Median Income (AMI) is used to determine income eligibility for affordable housing programs. The AMI is set according to family size and varies by region.

Extremely Low Income (ELI) refers to earning less than the poverty level or 30% of AMI.

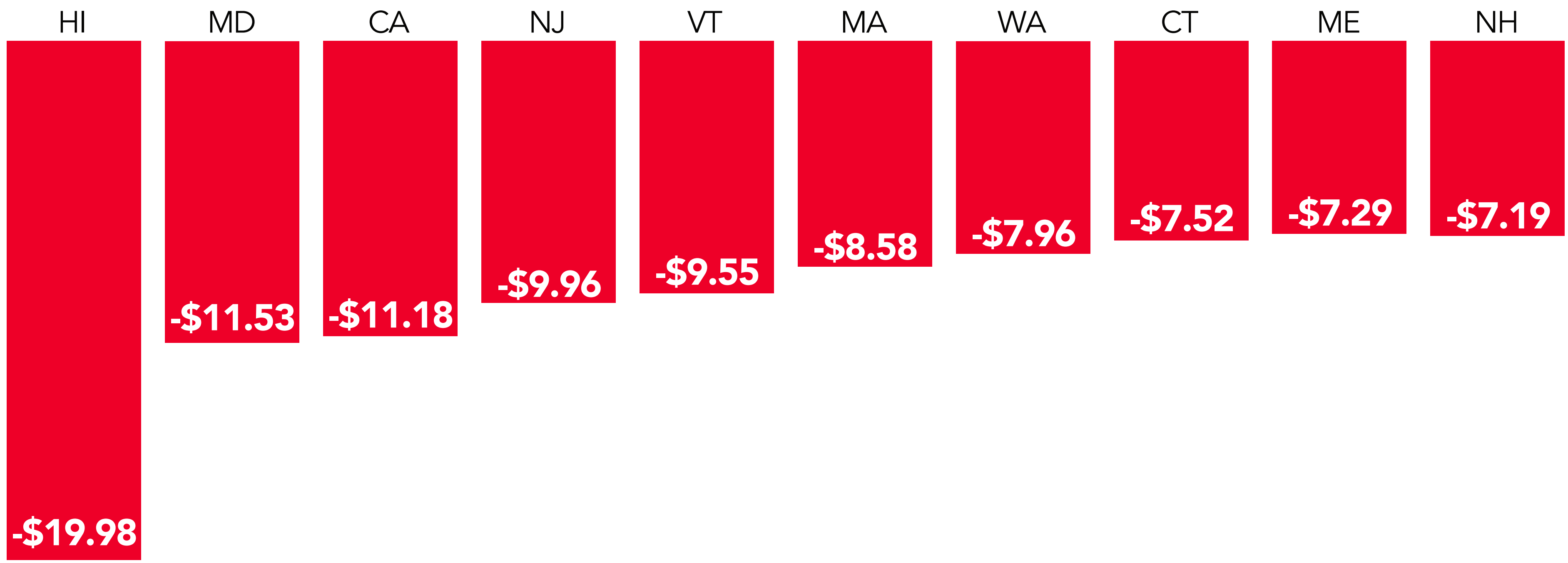
Housing Wage is the estimated full-time hourly wage a household must earn to afford a decent rental home at HUD's Fair Market Rent while spending no more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

Full-time work is defined as 2,080 hours per year (40 hours each week for 52 weeks). The average employee works roughly 34.5 hours per week, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Fair Market Rent (FMR) is typically the 40th percentile of gross rents for standard rental units. FMRs are determined by HUD on an annual basis, and reflect the cost of shelter and utilities. FMRs are used to determine payment standards for the Housing Choice Voucher program and Section 8 contracts.

Renter wage is the estimated mean hourly wage among renters, based on 2016 Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data, adjusted by the ratio of renter household income to the overall median household income reported in the ACS and projected to 2018.

FIGURE 1: STATES WITH THE LARGEST SHORTFALL BETWEEN AVERAGE RENTER WAGE AND TWO-BEDROOM HOUSING WAGE



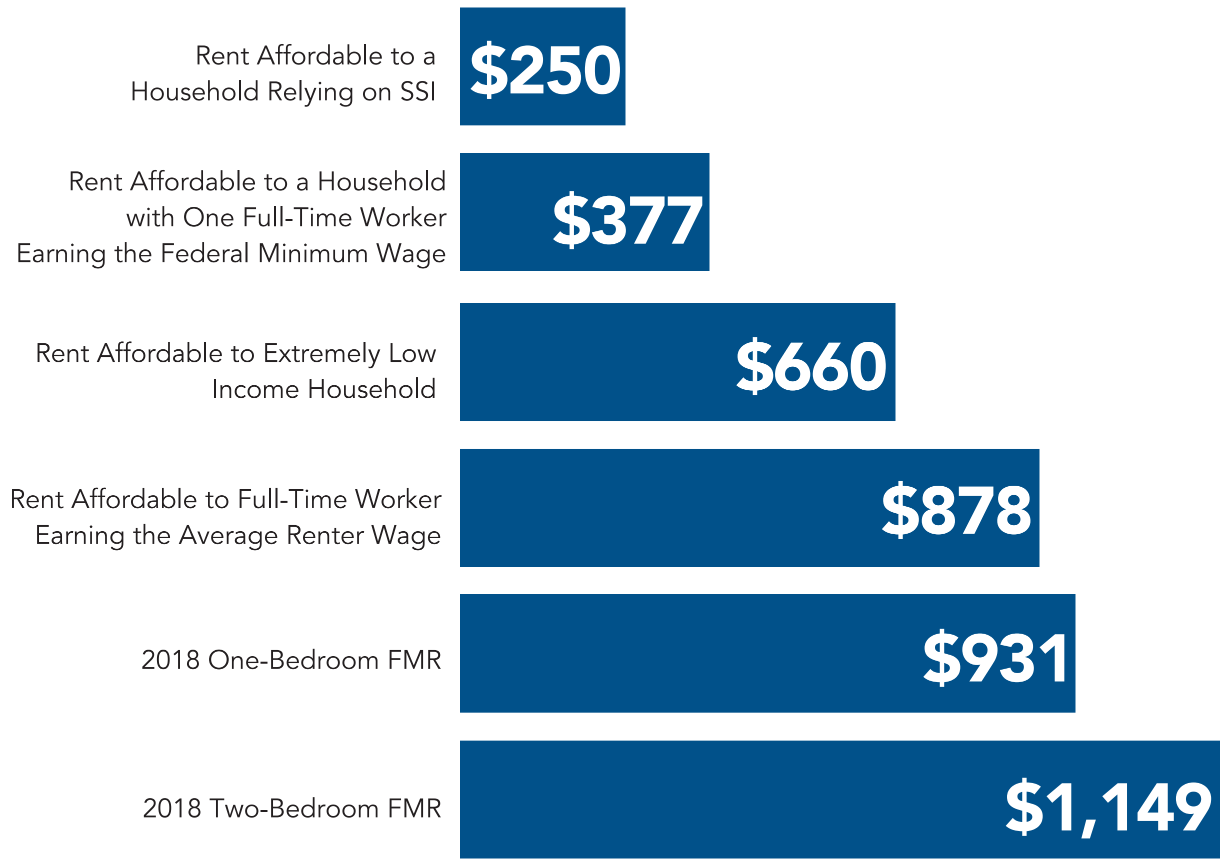
Source: Housing wages are derived from HUD fair market rents. Average renter wages are derived from BLS QCEW, 2016, adjusted to 2018 dollars.

> The struggle to afford modest rental homes is not limited to minimum-wage workers.

The struggle to afford modest rental homes is not limited to minimum-wage workers. NLIHC estimates that the average renter's hourly wage in the United States is $16.88, which is $5.22 below the two-bedroom Housing Wage and $1.02 below the one-bedroom Housing Wage. A significant gap exists between the average renter wage and the two-bedroom Housing Wage in many states (Figure 1). The 11.2 million extremely low income renters in the United States, those earning less than the greater of the poverty level or 30% of the area median income (AMI), fall particularly short of being able to afford modest rental homes. On average, extremely low income households of four people earn no more than $26,420 annually and can afford at most $660 per month for housing (Figure 2). The national average fair market rent for a one-bedroom home is $931 per month and $1,149 for a two-bedroom home, far from affordable for an extremely low income family.

Extremely low income households include people with disabilities who rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI). A person with a disability whose sole source of income is the federal SSI can

FIGURE 2: RENTS ARE OUT OF REACH FOR MANY RENTERS



Fair Market Rent = Fair Market Rent.
Source: NLIHC calculation of a weighted-average HUD fair market rent. Affordable rent for average renter wage is based on BLS QCEW, 2016, adjusted to 2018 dollars. Other rents are based on HUD Income Limits and and Social Security Adminstration, 2018.

afford a monthly rent of just $250, well below the national average fair market rent for a one-bedroom rental home. In fact, the monthly cost of a modest one-bedroom apartment is greater than an SSI recipient's *entire* income in 220 housing markets across 40 states and the District of Columbia, leaving no resources for food and other necessities (Schaak, Sloane, Arienti, & Zovistoski, 2017).

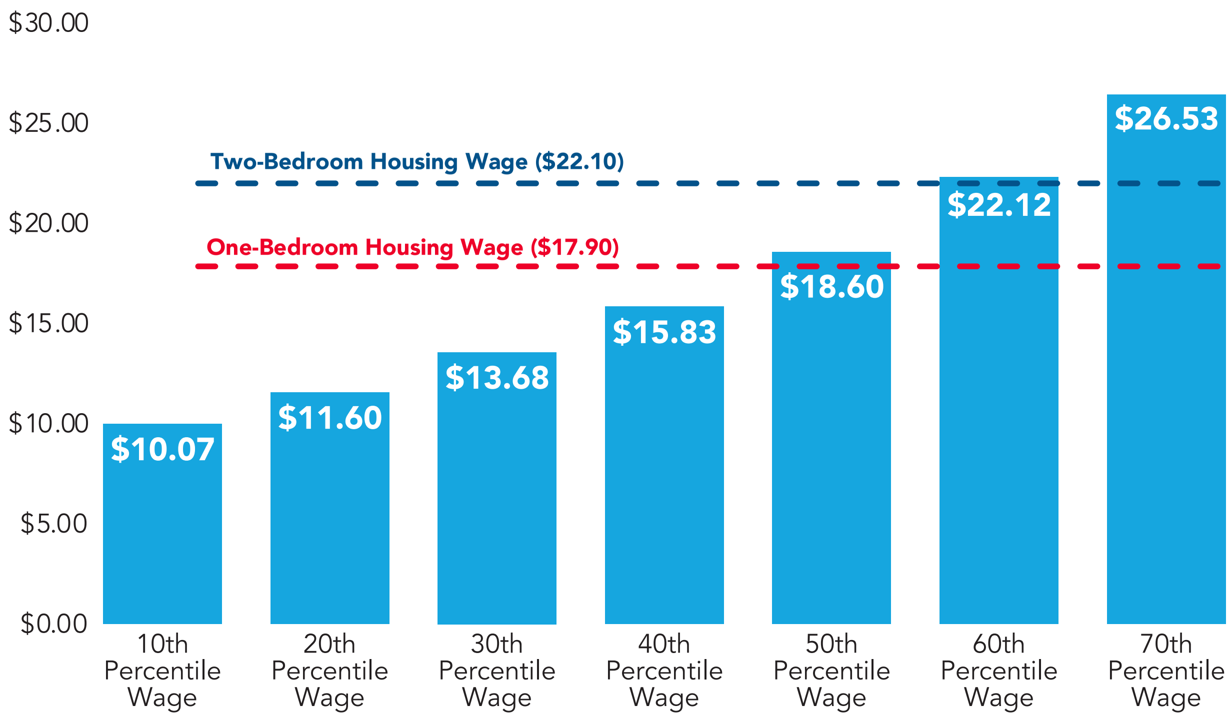
While modest rental homes are out of reach for many renters, particularly those with the lowest incomes, federal housing programs that provide much needed housing assistance to these vulnerable individuals and their families are chronically underfunded. Three out of four eligible households in need of assistance receive none (Fischer & Sard, 2017). For those lucky enough to receive assistance, recent proposals in Congress and by the Trump administration to raise their rents threaten to undermine their housing stability. The remainder of this report discusses the reasons modest rental housing is out of reach for so many renters and policy recommendations to address the problem.

LOW WAGES AND THE GROWTH OF LOW WAGE WORK

Low wages and wage inequality contribute to the gap between what people earn and the cost of their housing. Low-wage workers have recently seen modest wage growth as the economy has improved. Wages grew 3.7% from 2016 to 2017 for the lowest 10% of wage earners, due in part to improvements in the economy and state minimum wage increases (Gould, 2018). The lowest-paid workers saw greater gains in states with minimum wage increases than in states without. Wages remain too low, however, for many workers to afford modest rental homes at the fair market rents. Nationally, a full-time wage earner at the 40th percentile of the wage distribution (40% of workers earn less) cannot afford a modest one-bedroom apartment at the average fair market rent without spending more than 30% of his or her income on the rent (Figure 3).

Wage inequality between the lowest-paid and highest-paid workers remains significant. A worker at the 95th percentile of the wage distribution earns an hourly wage more than six times that of a worker at the 10th percentile (Gould, 2018). Despite a small improvement during the past year, growing wage inequality has been a long-term trend. Between 1979 and 2016, real hourly wages increased 51.7% for workers at the 95th percentile of wages and 4.4% for workers at the 10th percentile. Previous research indicates that areas with greater income inequality are less affordable for low income households, suggesting housing markets are more responsive to the demand for housing among higher income households than to the needs of low income households (Holmes & Berube, 2016; Dong, 2017).

FIGURE 3: HOURLY WAGES BY PERCENTILE VS. ONE AND TWO-BEDROOM HOUSING WAGES



Source: Housing wages are derived from HUD fair market rents. The hourly wages by percentile are from the Economic Policy Institute's State of Working America Data Library. Adjusted to 2018 dollars.

Low-wage work is expected to grow. Seven of the ten occupations projected to enjoy the greatest growth during the next decade, provide a median wage that is lower than the two-bedroom or one-bedroom Housing Wage (Figure 4). Many of these jobs are in the service sector. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) projects an increase of more than 770,000 personal care aides between 2016 and 2026, representing the greatest growth of any occupation. Their median hourly wage is $11.32. The number of food preparation workers, who earn a median hourly wage of $9.89, is expected to grow by nearly 580,000. The three occupations with the greatest projected growth that pay a median wage higher than the Housing Wage are general operations managers, software developers, and registered nurses: each require advanced degrees or significant experience. In tight high-cost housing markets, even these occupations may not provide wages sufficient to afford decent rental housing.

A SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOMES

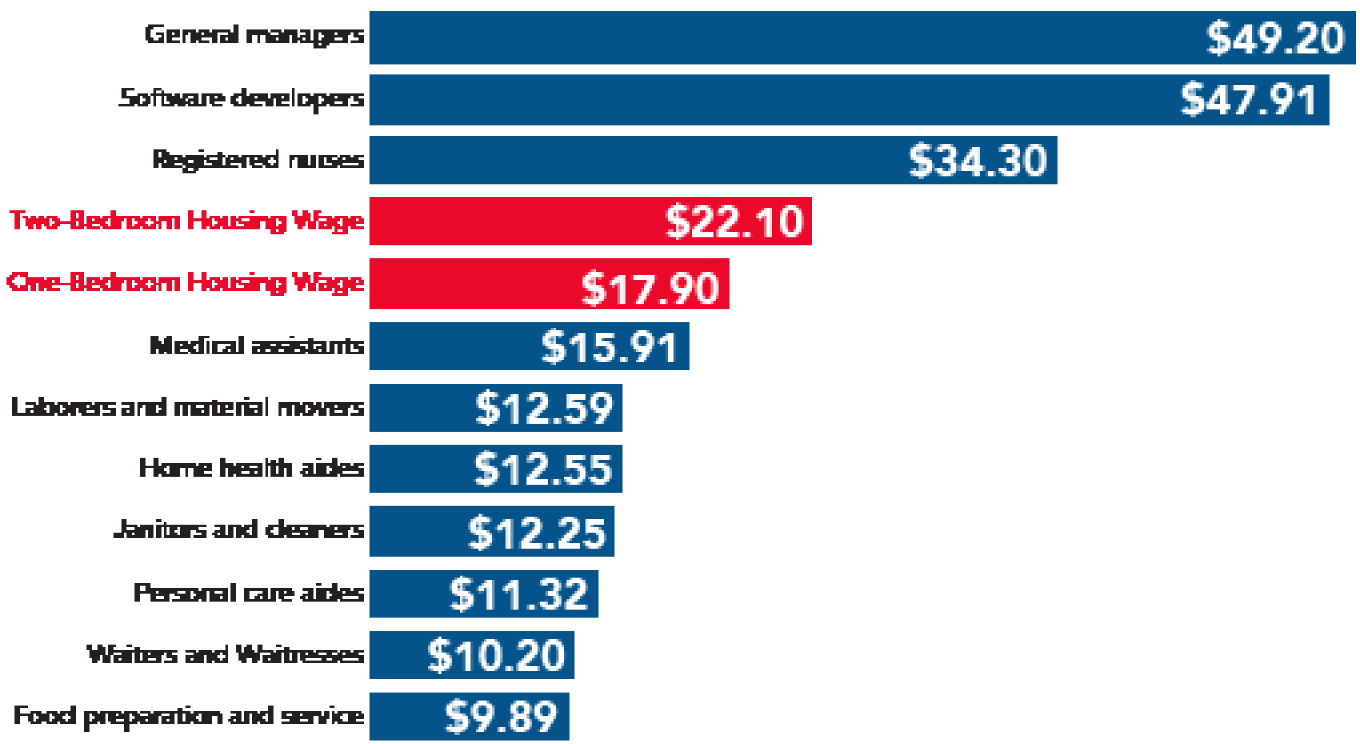
The demand for rental housing grew significantly during the past decade as a result of demographic shifts and the effects of the Great Recession. Between 2005 and 2016, the number of

> The demand for rental housing grew significantly during the past decade as a result of demographic shifts and the effects of the Great Recession.

renters increased by nearly 10 million households to a record 43.3 million, pushing up rental prices (Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2017). A small dip to 43.1 million renter households and a slight increase in the rental vacancy rate from 6.9% to 7.2% in 2017 indicates the rental market is beginning to cool (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018), but a significant affordability challenge remains for low-wage workers and other vulnerable households.

New rental construction over the past decade has been largely geared toward the high end of the rental market, due to increasingly high development costs. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies (2017), the number of homes renting for $2,000 or more per month increased by 97% between 2005 and 2015 with the new development of high-end apartments and rising rents of existing apartments. During the same time, the number of homes renting for

FIGURE 4: HOUSING WAGE AND MEDIAN WAGES FOR OCCUPATIONS WITH HIGHEST PROJECTED GROWTH



Source: Housing wages are derived from HUD fair market rents. Employment projections from BLS Employment Projections Program. Occupational wages from May 2017 National Occupation Employment and Wage Estimates, Occupational Employment Statistics, BLS. Adjusted to 2018 dollars.

less than $800 declined by 2%. While the rental market added more than 6.7 million housing units during this period, the number of units renting for less than $800 declined by more than 260,000.

Most low income renters rely on older units that become affordable over time as newer units are developed. But this process, known as filtering, does not produce enough affordable rental homes to serve extremely low income renters. When rents reach a level that the majority of extremely low income renters could afford, landlords in strong housing markets have an economic incentive to redevelop their units for higher rents. Landlords in weak housing markets often find the cost of upkeep is higher than the rent they are able to collect, and they therefore decide to abandon maintenance on the housing or repurpose the property.

Absent public subsidy, the private market fails to provide sufficient housing affordable to the lowest income households. At the same time, three out of four low income households in need of housing assistance are denied federal help due to chronic underfunding (Fischer & Sard, 2017). The net result is a national shortage of 7.2 million rental homes affordable and available to the lowest income renters (NLIHC, 2018b). No state or major metropolitan area has an adequate supply.

FEDERAL POLICY SOLUTIONS

The findings of *Out of Reach 2018* highlight the significant shortfall between the incomes of low-wage workers and other vulnerable populations and the cost of modest rental homes. Seventy-one percent of extremely low income renters spend more than half of their incomes on housing, leaving them few resources for other necessities and putting them at risk of losing their homes given the difficulty of sustaining their rent payments (NLIHC, 2018b). The lack of stable housing can result in the loss of employment (Desmond & Gershenson, 2016) and in poor health (Sandel et al., 2018), and can interrupt student learning and lower academic achievement (Brennan, Reed, & Sturtevant, 2014). Nonetheless, the Trump Administration proposes reducing federal housing assistance for the lowest income households through budget cuts, increased rents, and arbitrary and administratively burdensome work requirements.

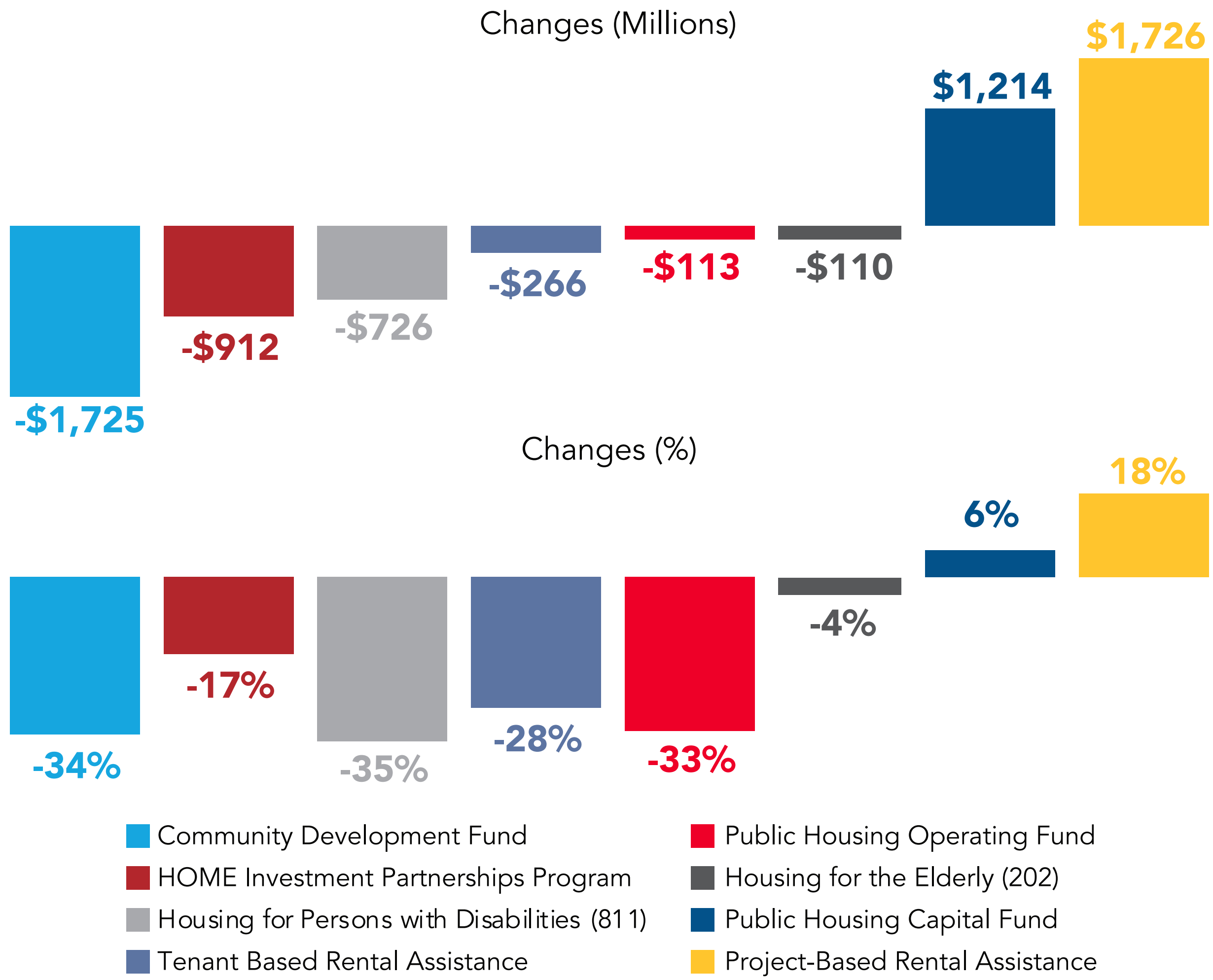
Congress provided a 10% increase to HUD's budget for fiscal year 2018 (FY18), an important step forward. However, funding for many of these programs remains well below FY10 levels and insufficient to fully meet the nation's needs (Figure 5). Adequate funding for these programs is necessary to solving the affordable rental housing crisis in America.

Tenant-based rental assistance like Housing Choice Vouchers is proven to reduce homelessness and housing instability (Gubits et al., 2016). Voucher recipients find housing in the private market and contribute 30% of their incomes toward housing costs. The voucher pays the remaining costs up to the local housing agency's payment standard. Only one of four households in need of rental assistance receives any due to chronic underfunding. To meet the need, Congress should significantly increase funding for new vouchers.

> "This year's HTF allocation of $266 million will be put to good use building and repairing homes affordable to the lowest income people, but its current funding level is inadequate to meet the need."

An increase in capital investments in homes affordable for the lowest income renters is also needed. The national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) provides block grants to states for the creation or rehabilitation of homes for extremely low income and very low income households earning up to 50% of their area median income. Funded by a modest contribution from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, at least 90% of HTF dollars must be used for rental housing and at least 75% of rental housing must benefit renters with extremely low incomes. This year's HTF allocation of $266 million will be put to good use building and repairing homes affordable to the lowest income people, but its current funding level is inadequate to meet the need. Congress should expand funding to the HTF through comprehensive GSE reform, or other avenues, to no less than $3.5 billion.

FIGURE 5: CHANGES IN FUNDING LEVELS FOR KEY HUD PROGRAMS (FY10 ENACTED TO FY18 ENACTED)



Note: Adjusted for inflation.

Rather than address the affordable housing crisis, the administration's proposed spending cuts for FY19 would, if enacted, lead to the largest reduction in affordable housing and community development investments in decades. The proposed budget could lead to more than 200,000 families losing vital federal rental assistance and to the elimination of programs that support state and local efforts to address their housing needs (NLIHC, 2018a).

For the limited number of families that receive federal housing assistance, recent proposals by the administration threaten to undermine their housing stability. The administration seeks to cut housing benefits by imposing rent increases and arbitrary work requirements. The administration proposes increasing tenants' contributions toward rent from 30% of adjusted household income to 35% of gross household income, eliminating deductions for medical and childcare expenses, and tripling minimum rents on non-disabled households from $50 per month to $150. These reforms would result in an average rent increase of 44% on households with housing assistance (Fischer, 2018).

The vast majority of individuals and families in need of housing assistance are seniors, people with disabilities, caretakers for people with disabilities or very young children, or are in the labor force (NLIHC, 2018b). No evidence indicates that work requirements would eliminate their need for housing assistance (Levy, Edmonds, & Simington, 2018). The low-wage employment typically available to low income households often fails to sufficiently cover the costs of housing and other basic needs.

Rather than undermine the housing stability needed by families for economic growth and academic achievement, Congress should invest in key housing programs that serve as a safety net and provide stable housing for the lowest income households. These programs include Housing Choice Vouchers, the national HTF, public housing, project-based rental assistance, and other federal rental housing programs serving the lowest income households.

THE NUMBERS IN THIS REPORT

Out of Reach data are available for every state, metropolitan area, and county at www.nlihc.org/oor. We encourage you to visit the site, click on your state, and select "more info" to see an interactive page on which you can choose specific metropolitan areas or counties in your state. The final pages of this report describe where the numbers come from and how to use them, identify the most expensive jurisdictions, and provide state data and rankings.

The Housing Wage varies considerably across the country. The Housing Wage for a modest two-bedroom rental home in the San Francisco metropolitan area, for example, is $60.02, far higher than the national Housing Wage. On the other end of the price spectrum, the two-bedroom Housing Wage is $11.65 in some of Alabama's counties. Jurisdictions with lower-than-average Housing Wages, however, are not immune to a shortage of affordable rental homes. Jurisdictions with a low Housing Wage tend to have less vibrant economies and lower-than-average household incomes, meaning a low Housing Wage is still out of reach for too many households.

The Housing Wage is based on HUD fair market rents (FMRs), which are the Department's best estimate of what a family moving today can expect to pay for a modest rental home, not what all current renters are paying on average. The FMR is typically the 40th percentile of rents that a family can be expected to pay. The FMR is the basis for the rent payment standard for Housing Choice Vouchers and other HUD programs. They are typically applied uniformly within each FMR area, which is either a metropolitan area or nonmetropolitan county. Therefore, the Housing Wage does not reflect rent variations within a metropolitan area or nonmetropolitan county.

HUD has published Small Area FMRs based on U.S. Postal Service ZIP codes to better reflect small-scale market conditions within metropolitan areas. NLIHC calculated the Housing Wage for each zip code to illustrate the variation in the Housing Wage within metropolitan areas. These wages can be found on-line at www.nlihc.org/oor.

Readers are cautioned against comparing statistics in one edition of *Out of Reach* with those in another. Over time, HUD has changed its methodology for calculating FMRs and incomes. Since 2012, HUD has developed FMR estimates using American Community Survey (ACS) data to determine base rents. This methodology can introduce more year-to-year variability. From time to time, an area's FMRs are based on local rent surveys rather than the ACS. For these reasons, readers should not compare this year's report to previous editions of *Out of Reach* and assume that all differences reflect actual market dynamics. Please consult the appendices and NLIHC research staff for assistance with interpreting changes in the data.

Cities Are Starting To Address The Eviction Crisis That's Devastated Poor Tenants

Evictions can plunge an already struggling tenant even deeper into poverty.

Eleanor Goldberg

PHILADELPHIA — The rodent infestation had grown so severe in the home Yazmin Vazquez shared with her nephew that when she left a plate of roast beef on the stove to cool, rats pounced and devoured the entire dish.

The home didn't have heat and sewage leaked into the basement. By March 2016, the city Department of Licenses and Inspections deemed the property unfit for human habitation. But when Vazquez tried to get her landlord to make repairs, he tried to evict her. Such cases are common in Philadelphia, a city with a high rate of poverty and deteriorating housing. It's part of the reason why Dan Urevick-Ackelsberg, a lawyer at nonprofit the Public Interest Law Center, took on Vazquez's case.

"You have a power imbalance between landlords and tenants," Urevick-Ackelsberg told HuffPost. "It prevents tenants from being able to use laws that are designed to protect them."

He wanted to "try to flip that imbalance on its head," Urevick-Ackelsberg said, by representing low-income clients, like Vazquez, who are often intimidated by their landlords.

Vazquez sued her landlord and property manager, and ultimately settled. As part of the agreement, the landlord and property manager agreed to abide by preconditions that allow for collecting rent.

A sheriff's deputy looks over a family's belongings piled in the front yard of an apartment after they were removed by an eviction team on April 6, 2010, in Aurora, Colorado. The tenants had failed to pay rent for almost three months and were evicted with a court order.

Vazquez is one of many Americans who have been caught up in the eviction crisis — the magnitude of which has only recently come to light thanks to Eviction Lab, a data initiative led by Matthew Desmond, Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard sociologist. Desmond is the author of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, which took an intimate look into how families in Milwaukee fared after getting kicked out of their homes.

In 2016, 2.3 million evictions were filed in the U.S. These cases disproportionately affect low-income women, particularly women of color, victims of domestic violence and families with children, according to the lab. These numbers likely don't even tell the entire story though, since so many struggling residents live in unregulated housing, where there may just be a verbal lease agreement and tenants can be kicked out without much notice.

Desmond's findings underscore the need for more affordable and habitable housing. They also highlight the need for legal reforms that would give underserved renters a shot at remaining in their residences, or at least at negotiating agreements that work for them.

Armed with a better understanding of the sheer scale of the eviction crisis, a handful of cities are now working to better protect low-income tenants. In Philadelphia, where one in 14 renters faces an eviction filing, that means finding more affordable housing options, educating tenants about their rights and offering more legal representation for low-income renters.

“We know, by and large, tenants who are represented have better outcomes,” said Rasheedah Phillips, managing attorney in the housing unit of Philadelphia’s Community Legal Services.

Mia Finn, 51, shows the eviction notice she received from the landlord. She is a flight attendant from San Juan Capistrano who is undergoing weekly chemotherapy treatment for stage 3 breast cancer and is being evicted from her apartment where she has lived for six years. (Photo by Irfan Khan/Los Angeles Times via Getty Images)

In addition to demonstrating the scope of the issue, Desmond’s book also showed that eviction isn’t just a byproduct of poverty, but is actually fueling the cycle. That’s of particular concern in Philadelphia, which remains the poorest major city in the U.S. More than a quarter of residents live below the poverty line.

In the worst cases, tenants end up homeless. That is traumatizing for the resident and taxing for the city, as one shelter bed in Philadelphia costs about $15,000 a year, according to Liz Hersh, director of the Office of Homeless Services in Philadelphia.

Even if a tenant doesn’t end up on the streets, there are still other devastating consequences. Eviction judgments can come with hefty fines, which can increase a person’s already existing debt load, and future landlords are less likely to rent to someone who’s experienced eviction.

For children, eviction is particularly punishing, since it could mean abruptly switching schools or being taken away from their families, said Philadelphia City Councilwoman Helen Gym.

“Where you are evicted, usually it’s a spiraling downward,” Gym said. “There are very serious consequences.”

The major contributing factor to evictions is a lack of affordable housing. A 2016 report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition found that there are no states in which a worker earning minimum wage can afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. That same year, 25 percent of renters spent more than half their income on housing costs, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Compounding the issue is the fact that many low-income tenants aren’t aware of their rights, can’t access legal counsel or end up in court just for demanding that their landlords make basic improvements to their homes.

More cities are developing programs and passing legislation to help improve outcomes for renters. New York City, which has the most evictions of any major U.S. city, passed a law last year that guarantees legal representation to any low-income resident facing eviction. In more than 90 percent of eviction cases in New York City, landlords had access to legal representation, and 90 percent of tenants didn’t. It was the first law of its kind in the U.S.

Vicente Oliveros holds up his eviction notice in Los Angeles, June 11, 2009. Oliveros was paying his $773 monthly rent and has lived in the apartment for 10 years, but had his trash services cut off and is now being evicted after the apartment building owner failed to pay the mortgage.

Just this week, San Francisco voted in favor of a measure that would provide a lawyer to any tenant facing eviction.

Philadelphia hasn't followed that route, but advocates have implemented new policies to help support the needs of low-income renters.

In January, the city launched the Philadelphia Eviction Prevention Project, which offers a helpline for tenants in need, connections to legal services and information for at-risk tenants. In its first three months, the program provided 220 tenants with advice, referrals or full legal representation, according to Phillips.

It's a big step considering that tenants are typically poorly represented. In Philadelphia, 85 percent of landlords have lawyers in eviction cases, whereas about 5 to 8 percent of tenants do, Phillips said.

Landlords now also have to prove that they have a license to rent and that their buildings are up to code in order to move forward with an eviction.

Last year, the city secured $500,000 to support anti-eviction measures. It pales in comparison to the amount of funding New York City secured, but Councilwoman Gym said it's a start and she hopes to expand those efforts. That funding allowed three agencies that represent low-income tenants to hire five full-time lawyers, and one part-time lawyer.

In April, Philadelphia's eviction task force released an extensive report, outlining recommendations to help prevent evictions. Those recommendations included launching a public education campaign on the topic and giving low-interest loans to landlords who own just a few properties, in order for them to be able to improve aging units.

While the task force suggested increasing the number of lawyers available for low-income tenants, it didn't recommend passing a right to counsel law. Many housing advocates say funding first needs to be put toward making more affordable housing units available in a city where there's only one unit available for every 17 extremely low-income renters.

"You have to start with the premise that having safe home with a roof over your head is a basic human right," Urevick-Ackelsberg said. "When you're comfortable with people living in horrific conditions, spending 70 percent of income on their home, you're always going to have this problem."

June 12, 2018

Sly James, Chamber want sales tax hike to expand pre-K in KCMO, but questions remain

BY STEVE VOCKRODT, MARA ROSE WILLIAMS AND KATY BERGEN

Kansas City Mayor Sly James and top officials with the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, along with others, are pursuing a plan to increase sales taxes in order to fund the expansion of early childhood education, or "Pre-K," in Kansas City.

Plans are in the early stages, but broad outlines of the idea would have Kansas City voters in November deciding whether to increase sales taxes by ⅜-ths of a cent, enough to generate $30 million a year. A portion of that $30 million would expand the availability of early childhood education in public schools, charter schools, private schools and private child care providers that meet education and curriculum standards.

The idea is meant to make affordable early childhood education more accessible for eligible 4-year-olds in Kansas City, where demand far outpaces the supply. It's also a continuation of James' pursuit of improving educational opportunities in Kansas City, which his predecessors left largely up to school districts.

"It's no secret he's been working on education issues in the city for the seven years he's been in office," said James spokeswoman Laura Swinford. "One of those initiatives is how to close that access gap to give more kids access to pre-K. Not enough kids in Kansas City have access to that education. It's important to close that gap."

Details and key questions of the sales tax plan — how the money is distributed, who oversees and manages the program, how outcomes are measured — remain a work in progress.

Kansas City Council members reached by The Star, including those allied with James, have not been briefed on the plan and knew few details about it. The sales tax question might sidestep the council, which usually votes to put citywide tax measures on the ballot. Supporters of the sales tax plan say that a petition initiative is being considered as a way to place the question before voters in November.

School districts have expressed reservations, citing outstanding questions about how the tax would be implemented.

"We are eager to expand preschool seats," said Natalie Allen, spokeswoman for Kansas City Public Schools. "But we can't say one way or the other that we support something that is not fully planned out. But we have supported pre-K for years."

August is the deadline for placing measures on the November ballot, offering a short time line for proponents of the tax to make their case.

The idea has some precedent in Kansas City: Kansas City Public Schools in 2015 contemplated a tax levy increase to fund universal pre-kindergarten, but turnover in administration and the school board put that proposal on hold.

Now a citywide effort is in the works.

Jovannah Rohs, director of the Mid-America Regional Council's early learning and Missouri Head Start program, said initially about half of the sales tax proceeds would go to offset tuition costs for pre-K providers.

Kansas City Mayor Sly James (above) and the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce are proposing putting a sales tax increase to expand early childhood education on the November ballot.

For Kansas City families, the program would work like this: Families would enroll their 4-year-old child in an approved pre-K program, and that provider would receive money from the tax increase to offset all or a portion of the cost for the child to attend. The family doesn't get the money directly, but families in effect end up paying less for child care than without the tax.

How much less depends on a funding scale that offers more tuition assistance to both lower income residents and those who put their kids in higher-quality child care providers. The lower a household's income, the higher the tuition credit; the higher quality the provider, the higher the tuition credit.

Families would be given the choice of where to send their children and eligible providers would receive payment for the tuition credit. Or, in the case of a public school provider offering "free" preschool, the payment would cover a portion of the costs of offering early childhood education.

After half the sales tax proceeds go to tuition assistance, about 20 percent would go to capital improvements — bricks and mortar — for child care providers. Another 20 percent would go to "quality improvement supports" — training, coaching and curriculum for child care providers. The remaining 10 percent would fund administration of the tax, evaluation and marketing.

A statutory agency would oversee the spending of the pre-K sales tax proceeds, with the Kansas City Council having a final say in the program's direction. An additional nonprofit may manage the day-to-day operations of the tax.

Rohs said a sunset for the tax, possible 10 years, would be part of the proposal.

Rohs said other cities with similar programs end up serving up to 65 percent of eligible preschoolers.

"With the exception of Denver," Rohs said. "I think they've gotten a little bit higher."

Kansas City's early childhood proposal is modeled after the Denver Preschool Program, the product of a sales tax increase that first passed in 2006 and was re-authorized by Denver voters in 2014.

Ellen Braun, deputy director of the Denver Preschool Program, said her organization has been in contact with Kansas City officials.

"We have been working with Kansas City and supporting them and giving them lessons learned," Braun said.

Like the Kansas City proposal, Denver Preschool Program allows families to pick their child care providers, and tuition credits are based on income and quality of the provider.

"We are not mandating curriculum, we are not mandating which school, we are not mandating location, we are wanting families to choose...the school that best fits their family needs," Braun said.

Since the Denver Preschool Program started, it has served about 50,000 children and provided $106 million in tuition support.

Evaluations of the Denver Preschool Program indicate that participants showed improvements in vocabulary, literacy and social development during the year in which they attended the program.

"We feel proud of what we've been able to do and the improvements we've made with the funds that we have," Braun said. "As always, we feel there's growth that could be made if we had more funds."

A group of 18 Kansas City leaders got a firsthand look at the Denver Preschool Program in 2015. At the time, Kansas City was exploring the idea of funding an expansion to early childhood education through the Early Learning Commission.

Denver in 2000 and 2001 tried to pass a tax for early childhood learning, among other programs, but was twice shot down by voters who thought the initial plans lacked focus. The idea was revived during then-Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper's administration and passed in 2006.

The Denver Preschool Program receives about $20 million a year from sales taxes in Denver.

That's $10 million less than the Kansas City sales tax is expected to fetch in a city that has 14 school districts within its boundaries.

KCPS already has early childhood education classrooms in 14 of its elementary schools serving 1,200 3- and 4-year-old students. Among the schools are the Holliday Montessori, Border Star Elementary and two comprehensive early learning centers at Richardson and Woodland elementary schools.

Students are enrolled in the free, all-day programs on a first-come, first-served basis. KCPS pre-K is funded through Head Start, a federal income-based grant program; the Missouri Preschool Project, and the district.

Rohs said tuition credits from the Kansas City sales tax program could be used in conjunction with funding from Head Start and the Missouri Preschool Project.

KCPS officials are concerned this year that the district will have to cut deeper into its budget to fund preschool next year, considering the current state budget proposes cutting $5.6 million statewide from the preschool project. That would cost KCPS five pre-K classrooms, affecting about 100 children.

Every year the district has a long waiting list of students whose parents want to enroll them in public preschool.

The district has been working to expand its preschool for years in an effort to eliminate preschool deserts throughout the city.

KCPS Superintendent Mark Bedell made preschool expansion a priority when he arrived in the district two years ago. A large population of the students entering kindergarten in the Kansas City school district come academically behind. Creating more preschool seats in the schools is an effort to get more students kindergarten ready when they start school, district officials said.

June 12, 2018

Sly James' plan to raise sales taxes for pre-K expansion still needs work

BY THE KANSAS CITY STAR EDITORIAL BOARD

Kansas City Mayor Sly James and other local officials are quietly discussing a major tax increase proposal for the November ballot.

They want to raise the city's sales tax by three-eighths of a cent. They would use the money — some $30 million annually — to offer subsidies for early childhood education in the city.

The plan sounds intriguing, but it's far too soon to judge its merits. Improving Kansas Citians' access to quality education for their children before kindergarten is a worthwhile goal that's worth pursuing, but details are important.

Who will oversee distribution of the proceeds? Would participating schools need to qualify for the funds? Would the city guarantee the safety and quality of schools that are part of the program?

What role would school districts play? Why can't the state of Missouri fund early childhood education?

Those questions, and others, will be answered in the weeks ahead if the proposal moves forward. Other, more fundamental questions may be tougher to address.

Kansas City's never-ending thirst for sales tax revenue is troubling. It must be repeated, early and often: Sales taxes hurt the poor and working class. If an early childhood education tax passes, the sales tax will approach 10 cents on the dollar in many places, an extraordinary burden for many who can't afford it.

Supporters argue that the tax will provide funds to help poor families find quality pre-K programs. But what about families without children? The elderly? They'll be asked to shoulder part of the ever-escalating sales tax burden in the city.

Expensive water and sewer rate increases are a concern as well. Coupled with last year's voter-approved property tax increase, Kansas Citians are likely to ask if there's any limit to spending at City Hall.

Voters approved a sales tax increase a little more than a year ago for projects on the East Side. Many will undoubtedly be leery of another tax hike, three times as large, before projects funded by the Central City Economic Development Sales Tax even get off the ground.

The fact that this proposal has been drafted behind the scenes without open community discussion is also worrisome. James and others might have learned from last year's airport debate that secrecy is counterproductive, both for voters and stakeholders.

There are indications supporters will try to put the measure on the ballot through a petition rather than a City Council vote. That would contradict the mayor's complaints about the petition process and would push council members aside. That would be a mistake.

In 2013, community leaders asked voters to approve a nebulous sales tax increase in Jackson County for "translational" medical research. Voters crushed it at the polls.

If this new plan is to avoid a similar fate, supporters will need to change their approach. They'll have to explain why Kansas Citians should endorse yet another tax that's collected every time they buy something at the store.

The School Year Starts On A Hot June Day For Some North Kansas City Students

By SOPHIA TULP • JUN 12, 2018

Classrooms at North Kansas City's Winnwood Elementary followed normal back-to-school procedures on June 11, with their first day falling over the summer under a year-round school system.

SOPHIA TULP / KCUR 89.3

Students at Winnwood Elementary started a new school year with 97 degree heat and indoor recess — just one small adjustment schools make when the school year starts in June.

Monday marked the beginning of the 2018-19 school year for Winnwood and Crestview Elementary, two North Kansas City schools that recently made the switch to a year-round schedule. By adding over a month to their academic calendars, educators were trying combat a phenomenon known as “summer slide” — the tendency to forget the material learned during the school year over the break.

Heading into the fourth year of the program, Winnwood Principal Leah Copeland said the results are visible.

“Our data was showing a huge regression in between May and August with our students,” Copeland said. “We were noticing that they would sometime regress a half of a school year, sometimes even a full school year just in those three months. We have seen just amazing results from the additional time with our students.”

Low academic performance and high poverty levels were two of the reasons the district chose Winnwood and Crestview to pilot the year-round program. At both of the schools, more than 80 percent of students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.

Winnwood used to be one of the lowest performing schools in the district as measured by Missouri State Assessments, especially in reading and math. Now, they sit in the top third of the highest performing schools. At the state level, Missouri assigns Annual Performance Report (APR) scores to each school based on test results, student growth, attendance and graduation rates. At Winnwood, this APR score increased 30 points from before the year-round schedule was implemented in 2014 compared to 2015 after its first year in place.

The year-round schedule packs in 30 more days of curriculum in June and July, in addition to the traditional school year that runs August through May. Students begin their new grade levels in June, and by the time they leave Winnwood after sixth grade, they graduate with the equivalent of an extra year of school.

“We have quite a bit of transiency amongst our population, students turning over both within our district and outside of our district, and so that additional 30 days really allows us to help catch kids up and get them where we need them quicker,” Copeland said.

Sophia Tulp is a KCUR news intern. Follow her on Twitter @sophia_tulp.

JUNE 12, 2018

Trouble paying medical bills? Large survey shows it’s common in Kansas and Missouri

BY ANDY MARSO

While traveling through Kansas talking about health care, David Jordan has heard story after story about people drowning in a sea of medical bills they can't pay.

So Jordan, the president of the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, said he wasn't surprised when one of the largest surveys of Missouri and Kansas health care consumers ever conducted showed that medical debt was one of their top concerns.

"One story comes to mind," Jordan said. "In Pratt, Kansas, the owner of a property rental business, in the context of Medicaid, highlighted that oftentimes her tenants are choosing between paying their rent and paying their medical bills. They struggle with this decision and one month they might pay their medical bills and other months they might choose to pay their rent. As a result, oftentimes she has a third to half of her accounts defaulting."

The survey of 4,274 people was commissioned by five nonprofit health foundations and conducted in 2017 by the Research Triangle Institute.

It found that 33 percent of Kansas kids and 28 percent of Kansas adults lived in a household that struggled to pay medical bills the year before. In Missouri, it was even more common, with 38 percent of kids and 34 percent of adults in households that struggled with bills.

Almost 20 percent of respondents in both states said they had faced financial consequences from medical debt, either asking family and friends for help, seeking personal loans or getting hounded by debt collectors.

The survey results come on the heels of an Urban Institute study released in December that showed that in some areas of Kansas City, about 30 percent of households have medical debt in collections.

Jordan said that can have a ripple effect on local economies by harming credit ratings while also making people less likely to seek medical care.

"Medical debt and lack of insurance is financially crippling families in Kansas and Missouri," Jordan said.

The survey showed that about 20 percent of adults ages 19 to 64 in both states are uninsured, and about 60 percent of them are working. The uninsured rate in children, who are often eligible for Medicaid, was much lower.

Uninsured rates were slightly higher for black Kansans and Missourians than whites, but markedly higher — about 50 percent — among Hispanics.

"The stark rate of Hispanics who are uninsured has to be called out," said Bridget McCandless, the president and CEO of the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City.

Jordan and the leaders of the various health foundations have advocated for the legislatures of both states to expand Medicaid to low-income adults under the Affordable Care Act. A majority of states have expanded and Jordan said they have higher insured rates and lower rates of medical debt.

Medicaid eligibility in Kansas and Missouri is currently restricted mainly to children, the elderly, people with disabilities and pregnant women.

Legislators who oppose expansion under the ACA, commonly called Obamacare, have said Medicaid should remain a program for those populations. They also balked at the expense of funding expansion, which requires states to shoulder up to 10 percent of the costs.

Being uninsured is not the only factor in medical debt, though. The survey's authors said some respondents who reported being insured also reported struggling to pay medical bills, though they had not broken out what percentage yet.

Sheldon Weisgrau, the director of a grant-funded program to get Kansans signed up for health insurance, said higher deductibles and co-pays mean even people covered under private insurance plans often find themselves with bills they can't easily pay.

"Under-insurance is a huge problem," Weisgrau said.

McCandless said nonprofit hospitals can help ease the problem in the Kansas City area.

As part of the "community benefit" they must show to keep their tax-exempt status, nonprofits are supposed to write off or write down some bills for low-income residents.

McCandless said she thought hospitals have improved their record of doing that, but "still have room to go."

"As hospitals are making more financial decisions around their bottom lines, it is critical that we as taxpayers continue to make sure that that community benefit returns to the community," McCandless said.

In addition to medical debt, Kansans and Missourians reported problems accessing some types of medical services.

Lack of dental insurance was a problem in both states, and so was access to mental health care.

People who couldn't get mental health care said they either could not afford it, could not find a provider who takes their insurance, could not find a provider who had an opening or didn't know where to find care.

Brenda Sharpe, the president and CEO of the REACH Healthcare Foundation, said she hoped those responses will push lawmakers to expand access to mental health.

"This is a hot topic in both states," Sharpe said. "But we've seen very little action."

▲ HIDE CAPTION

The Woodland Early Childhood Center will house about 200 students. It will include a library, therapy rooms, conference rooms and multipurpose rooms. The $6 million project is part of an $11.37 million bond issue that Fort Osage School District voters approved last year. [Photo courtesy of the Fort Osage School District]

New early-learning center for Fort Osage schools is coming along

By Michael Smith
michael.smith@examiner.net

The Fort Osage school district is starting to see some of the benefits of the $11.37 million that voters approved in April 2017.

The renovations of the high school football stadium are nearly complete, and the new early childhood center should be ready to open in January 2019. Other renovations are a new breezeway enclosure for the high school, resurfaced walking trails and work on school playgrounds.

The Woodland Early Childhood Center will replace the Fort Osage Early Childhood Center, which had become crowded. The Fort Osage Childhood Center is a 5,700 square foot facility that serves 150 students.

The new childhood center got its name from a one-room schoolhouse that used to be where the Gragg Administration Center currently is.

“It was named after the nearby woods that was near the facility,” Fort Osage superintendent Jason Snodgrass said.

The 20,000 square-foot Woodland facility will be on the backside of Elm Grove Elementary, off Whitney Road.

“We had a need in regard to space,” Snodgrass said. “We needed therapy rooms and conference rooms. This new childhood center was a need that our community committee that selected as a priority. The new childhood center should accommodate 40 more students.”

The old childhood center will be used for other needs, once the students move to the new one, Snodgrass said.

“We’re still making decisions on how that will be utilized,” he said.

Stadium renovations

The additions to the Fort Osage High School stadium are nearly complete as the new concrete sidewalks, a three-window ticket both and a new five-room press box have already been in place.

The cost of the stadium renovations totals a little more than $3 million, and substantial completion of the project should be complete June 29, according to Snodgrass. A ribbon cutting is set for Aug. 17, Meet The Indians Night.

“The press box will be able to accommodate coaches from both teams, the student broadcast team, the scoreboard folks and the media,” Snodgrass said.

A new fence surrounds the track and football field, which originally was grass was replaced with synthetic turf. The new asphalt base has been placed on what will be a new eight-lane track and will receive a new surface his week.

“This will give us an opportunity to host more (track and field) meets,” Snodgrass said. “We have already scheduled some for the coming school year. We are pretty excited about that.”

Five hundred bleachers have been placed on the home side of the field and new concession stand and restrooms have been completed on the visitors side. The concession stand on the home side has been remodeled with a new roof. The new scoreboard can transition between football and soccer statistics and track times.

“We really wanted to leave no stone unturned with this project,” Snodgrass said. “We have added some additional concrete to clean it up. We want this to be a facility that our community can be proud of.”

EVICTION
IN KANSAS CITY
Leveling The Foundation

Wednesday, June 27

Reception: 6:00 pm
Program: 6:30 pm

RSVP at KCLibrary.org

Plaza Branch
Kansas City Public Library
4801 Main Street
Kansas City, MO 64112

Numbers underscore the troubling prevalence of eviction in the Kansas City area. Nearly three of every 100 renters in Jackson County—a rate almost 20 percent higher than the national average—lost their homes in 2016.

The issue revolves, however, around the people whose lives are uprooted, single moms and schoolchildren and others threatened with homelessness. The Library and KCPT-Kansas City PBS look at their stories and begin a search for solutions in the second installment of a series examining eviction in the city.

The event begins with a screening of Evicted, a documentary examining the issue and how it's tackled elsewhere. A panel including Councilman Quinton Lucas then discusses how it can be addressed in KC. Co-presented by the Black Community Fund and KCPT-Kansas City PBS.

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