

# LINC Commission Meeting

July 19, 2021



The beloved JBZ's Rockin' B & Mercantile along Highway 24 west of Buckner shut down during the pandemic just as the Fort Osage School District was looking for real-world learning opportunities for its students. The owners sold the property to the district, and now the converted farmland and pond will be the site of a student-run coffee shop and community event space beginning this fall. Students will be involved in business plans, marketing, culinary arts, event planning, community engagement, phone apps, construction, HVAC and more. "The possibilities are endless," says Supt. Jason Snodgrass.



# 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, July 19, 2021 | 4 – 5:30 pm**  
**Online Meeting**

---

## **Agenda**

---

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
  - a. June 2021 minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendent Reports**
- IV. LINC Finance Committee**
  - a. 2021-22 Budget (motion)**
- V. LINC Workforce Development**
  - a. Full Employment Council**
  - b. LINCWorks**
- VI. Caring Communities**
  - a. Utility Assistance**
  - b. COVID-19 Update**
- VII. Other**
- VIII. Adjournment**



## THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – JUNE 21, 2021

The Local Investment Commission met via Zoom. Cochair **Ken Powell** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bob Bartman  
Bert Berkley  
Sharon Cheers  
Jack Craft  
Aaron Deacon  
David Disney  
Mark Flaherty

Rob Givens  
Anita Gorman  
Tom Lewin  
Marge Randle  
David Ross  
Marj Williams

Co-chair **Ken Powell** welcomed everyone and thanked **Jack Craft** and **David Ross** for leading the meetings for the past months. Powell and **David Disney** will alternate leading the meetings.

*A motion to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2021, LINC Commission meeting was approved unanimously.*

### Superintendents Reports

- **Michael Weishaar**, Assistant Superintendent (Center School District), reported summer school is now in session. The district is planning to have in-person classes in the fall. The new Indian Creek Elementary School will open in August; students were given a tour of the new building (a video was shown).
- **Carl Skinner**, Assistant Superintendent (Hickman Mills School District), reported bond-financed construction projects, including expanded entryways, are ongoing this summer. The district will be raising pay for paraprofessionals. Over 1,000 students are enrolled in in-person summer school, which runs through July 2 and will be followed by a four-week virtual program. A virtual option will be available for students in the fall. The district was named a distinguished district by Project Lead the Way.
- **Dan Clemens**, Superintendent (North Kansas City School District), reported the summer school program will end on Friday. The district ended its mask mandate two weeks ago. A preliminary budget is ready to go before the school board. \$155 million in construction projects is under way. Less than 2% of students are planning to take the virtual option in the fall.
- **Kevin Foster**, Executive Director (Genesis School), reported the school is holding a summer program in partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs, with about 50% of Genesis students attending, in addition to students from other charter schools. Preparation for fall includes designing support for 7th and 8th grade students including integrating technology, student choice, and engaging families. On Aug. 7 Genesis will hold Project Shine park and school cleanup. School reopens on Aug. 23.
- **Vivian Roper**, Superintendent (Lee A. Tolbert Academy), reported one-third of Tolbert students are enrolled in summer school, which ends on July 16. Middle-school students participated in the Most Entrepreneurial City in America competition. A muralist is working on a mural depicting the Ivanhoe neighborhood and the school. Tolbert will offer a virtual program option in the fall. The next five-year strategic plan is being developed. Roper will retire at the end of June; she introduced **Dr. Donnie Mitchell**, who will be the new superintendent.

Deputy Director **Brent Schondelmeyer** reported the Education Policy Fellowship Program is ending the 2021 program year. Fellows recently gave their topic presentations; Joe Robertson's write-up is in the meeting booklet. EPFP is now building the cohort for the 2021-2022 program year.

President **Gayle A. Hobbs** reported on LINC's efforts to create a safe environment for workers and the families it serves during the pandemic. These efforts included retaining part-time staff through the end of the 2020 school year, partnering to operate a vaccination clinic at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center, and providing opportunities for staff and families to get vaccinated. LINC is looking at ways to create a "safe to serve" workforce and hopes to have all staff vaccinated by mid-August, and is developing a phased plan to return to offices.

Human Resources Director **Trent DeVreugd** reported that LINC cares for 7,000 children a year, along with their parents and other family members, and the best way to keep them safe us for staff to get vaccinated. Discussion followed.

Executive Vice President **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported on the luncheon LINC held last week at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center to celebrate the Missouri National Guard and other partners in the vaccination clinic. Though the partnership, LINC has helped to deliver over 21,000 vaccinations, as well as 519,000 pounds of food, and \$239,000 of utility assistance. Discussion followed.

Miles-Bartee reported that summer school has started in all of LINC's partner districts and LINC is providing Before & After Summer School programs in the Center, Grandview, Hickman Mills, Kansas City, and North Kansas City districts as well as Tolbert Academy. Caring Communities Supervisor **Sean Akridge** reported LINC's program partners including Kansas City Young Audiences, Urban Tech, and Mad Science have been able to return to buildings to provide in-person programming.

Miles-Bartee asked to keep the family of **Terrell Bell** in our thoughts. The 15-year-old, a former LINC student, was shot and killed on June 8.

The meeting was adjourned.



# 'Find your community'; In critical year ahead, schools want you back, welcomed and safe

July 14, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

So much didn't go as planned in Kansas City and America's scrambled school year.

Everyone uncomfortable. So many families feeling lost. The tethers dependent on uneven technology too often broken.

It's OK. *Just come back.*

Area schools and their earnest staffs are preparing welcoming campaigns for August's new school year. It doesn't matter how well — or not — you and your child managed the hard time. A common message is brewing. Children, however much they struggled with online learning, will be advanced with their peers into the next grade. Everyone will recover together.



*Come back as you are.*

The impact of Covid-19 fell with different weight across school systems and neighborhoods in the Kansas City area. The economic hardship and the number of coronavirus cases and deaths struck deeper in low-income areas and communities of color.

Public school districts and public charter schools in the higher-threatened areas spent more of the past school year in virtual classes. LINC, its partner districts and the community [reached out to help children and families](#) caught up in the pandemic's far-reaching pain.

But the road was hard, and no one should have to feel alone in re-engaging the 2021-2022 school year.

"Find your community," said Kristin Droege, executive director of [Turn the Page KC](#).

The non-profit agency that promotes early reading skill is working with other concerned programs like the national non-profit [Attendance Works](#), helping schools rally with communities to regain learning's lost ground.

Schools have a lot of work to do, clarifying learning options, assuring health and safety and providing a warm welcome, Attendance Works advises. But the need for personal connections with families couldn't be stronger for what looms as a critical school year across the nation.

"We're going to have a ton of kids who have not been in the routine of ... in-person schooling," Hedy Chang, executive director of Attendance Works, [told the Hechinger Report](#). "Teachers are really going to have to support this learning."

Nationwide, students of color suffered a "strikingly negative impact" according to a federal civil rights report commissioned by President Joe Biden in a [story by Pro Publica](#). "Those who went into the pandemic with the fewest opportunities are at risk of leaving with even less."

In the Hechinger Report, [Racial Justice NOW!](#) co-founder Zakiya Sankara-Jabar predicted "a sharp decline" in enrollment when schools fully reopen, as frustration and lack of communication have plagued many school systems.



“I’m fearing that since the pandemic has happened,” she said, “those lines of communication that barely existed before don’t exist at all now.”

Local school districts are charting their paths forward, working on plans to speed the academic recovery of students who will return with a wider disparity in skills. Financial boosts from the \$13.2 billion [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#) will help schools accelerate learning.

Children in the [Kansas City Public Schools](#) will be welcomed and promoted, said Assistant Superintendent of School Leadership Lloyd Jackson. Curriculum is being updated. Schools will provide additional interventions and supports. The district will be holding a week-long enrollment fair July 26-31 to engage families and reach out to those who are anxious about returning.

This has to be a community-wide effort, joining districts, public charter schools, civic organizations and education supporters, said Kevin Foster, executive director of [Genesis School](#) in Kansas City.

“We need to send a strong message,” he said, with everyone “in one voice.”

The campaigns are gearing up. Critical recovery and re-engagement plans are building.

Just come back.



# Fort Osage schools to turn closed highway road stop into mecca of real-world learning

July 14, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



The beloved Highway 24 road stop, JBZ's Rockin' B & Mercantile, was still freshly realizing its potential when the pandemic shut its doors a year ago.

So much was happening here. A popular coffee shop. A babbling waterfall built into a former farm pond. A developing event space and store front. Shaded walks through five acres of gentle hills.

Suddenly it was on the market.

Meanwhile, just down the road at the Fort Osage School District's campus, program planners were brainstorming opportunities for real-world learning for east Jackson County students.

Could this be what they were looking for?

The owner-operator of the Rockin' B, Sheri Bedsworth, was an alum and long-time supporter of the district and just might be happy to make a deal. And there, in their February meeting, the district team's imaginations began to run wild.

Fort Osage's entrepreneurial studies instructor Whitney Scott, career and technology center manager Susie Suits and communications director Stephanie Smith began rolling out ideas, said Superintendent Jason Snodgrass, who was there with them, also thinking widely.

Students could develop the business plans, create marketing campaigns and commercial designs and staff and manage the operation. Culinary arts students could provide food items. Computer science students could develop phone apps



for customers. Construction trades and HVAC students could help build out the site.

“As you can see the possibilities are endless . . .,” Snodgrass said.

It can be community space, too. FFA students could build a garden. The district could manage community events. Elementary school classrooms can plan field trips here. Pumpkin carving. Face-painting. The district’s bands and choirs could plan events and perform.

“It’s much more than a coffee shop,” Snodgrass said.

The Bedsworths were eager to deal with the district, just as the team had hoped. In June, the school board approved the purchase. The property, which had been appraised at \$700,000, was purchased for \$475,000, the district announced.

The community cheered the district’s plan to repurpose the Rockin’ B. The June 9 announcement of the sale and the district’s plans on [its Facebook page](#) has generated more than 1,400 “likes” and been shared more than 500 times — the biggest response ever to a district post, said Director of Public Relations Stephanie Smith.

“The community is thrilled” that the coffee shop is coming back, said Connie Parker, LINC’s site coordinator for the Caring Communities program in Buckner. “Just thrilled to have a nice place to go.”

The district will have administrators overseeing the project, including a professional food manager, but this will be a student-run enterprise, Snodgrass said. The E-Studies program will bring together Fort Osage students as well as Blue Springs, Grain Valley and Oak Grove districts’ students. They will experience the successes and the failures — and learn.

Fort Osage Career Center senior Alex Israelite, 17, expects his tour in the district’s Entrepreneurial Studies — E-Studies — program will provide his crowning high school experience.

The timing is exciting, he said, being able to be part of the start-up team.

“I’m a hands-on learner,” he said, “so this teaches me so much more than sitting in a classroom. This is the best experience I could get in high school.”

He was visiting the site on a hot July afternoon when the Rockin’ B’s doors were closed, the storefronts and parking lot empty, as dragonflies flitted among the tall grasses at the edge of the waterfall pond.

But peering in the windows, he could see the dining tables, chairs and kitchen appliances all still in place — ready and waiting for the fall.

“It’s a dream come true,” he said. “It’s a real-world example, being able to serve other people, learning the basic skills of being in a business and the management side of things. It’s something that will help me the rest of my life — whatever I do.”



*Fort Osage Superintendent Jason Snodgrass and senior Alex Israelite talk outside the Rockin’ B & Mercantile coffee shop on Highway 24.*



## As Congress Negotiates Recovery Package, National Panel of Infrastructure Experts Sends Priorities to the Hill

If Congress Cuts Training Investments from Proposed Plan, Local Workers Won't Have  
Access to Infrastructure Jobs

KANSAS CITY, MO – National Skills Coalition (NSC) and Business Leaders United for Workforce Partnerships (BLU) released a [six-point policy proposal](#) from its Infrastructure Recovery Panel to inform President Biden and Congress's economic recovery negotiations. At the top of the list: ensure the President's proposed investments in skills training and worker supports are included in Congress's final infrastructure plan.

Clyde McQueen, CEO and President of the Full Employment Council, served on the 21-member group of experts -- including business leaders, labor leaders, community college leaders, training providers, and others – called for a set of targeted investments and policies that are essential to any job creation efforts and the President's goal of an equitable, sustainable recovery.

"This pandemic has shown us that to support the workforce we must take a multi-pronged approach in recognizing the needs of the community," said McQueen. "Women, young people, persons of color and other underserved populations, all have been negatively impacted to a degree we've not seen before in decades, and any approach to right-side our economy cannot hope to succeed without actively engaging the people affected alongside the physical infrastructure being built.

"The need to invest in our nation's crumbling infrastructure goes back decades. But infrastructure is built by the people, for the people who reside in their local communities." said McQueen. "We must invest in training and supports along with bricks and mortar to ensure that local workers can access new infrastructure jobs in their communities. Without these investments, our economic recovery will be anything but equitable."

Panelists have been meeting with federal officials over the last month in advance of publicly releasing their recommendations. In addition to calling for the \$100 billion investment in skills training in the President's American Jobs Plan, the panel outlined six critical pillars for successful job creation and an inclusive recovery which can be viewed [here](#).

1. **Include local resident training and employment in plans for federal infrastructure projects** by investing in skills training and worker supports like childcare and transportation, incentivizing local investments in training residents for infrastructure jobs, making investments in training provider capacity which is essential to local hire efforts, and measuring equitable employment outcomes by race, ethnicity, and gender.
2. **Invest in local industry partnerships to develop targeted, local workforce solutions** that meet the needs of workers and local employers.
3. **Invest in equitable infrastructure career pathways** by authorizing new Infrastructure Professional Opportunity Grants (IPOG), incentivizing employer investments in training at risk workers, funding integrated education and training to build foundational skills, and supporting equity and inclusion within labor and businesses through industry partnerships.
4. **Expand short-term training and flexible apprenticeship** by expanding Pell grants to cover high-quality, short-term training and expanding apprenticeship and work-based learning.
5. **Help infrastructure workers and employers adopt and adapt to new technologies** by making investments to help states pursue digital inclusion and skill building, investing in new Digital Literacy Upskilling Grants, and creating a new Infrastructure Extension Partnership program to help local companies adopt new technologies.
6. **Support sustainable community outcomes beyond bricks, mortar, and jobs** by adding metrics -- like usability and accessibility of infrastructure projects, growth in community wealth building, boosting local supply chains, expanding



entrepreneurship, and improving community health outcomes -- to more traditional measurements of success like roads repaired, schools built, growth in clean energy use, and the number of community members who obtain career path employment.

NSC and BLU convened four recovery panels for the following industries: [Healthcare](#), [Manufacturing](#), [Infrastructure](#), and [Retail/Hospitality](#). The other three panels will release their recommendations in the coming weeks.



# PEOPLE-CENTERED INFRASTRUCTURE





Infrastructure should be people-centered; built for the people, by the people.

**T**he pandemic has impacted every industry differently and each industry's trajectory out of this recession will look different. The experience of certain workers and local firms within each industry will differ as well. National Skills Coalition (NSC) and Business Leaders United (BLU) convened an Infrastructure Industry Recovery Panel of leading experts working in local communities. We wanted to learn what an effective, equitable, people-centered infrastructure plan should include. Panelists represent business, labor, education and training organizations, and others working in construction, utilities, transportation, and clean energy fields.

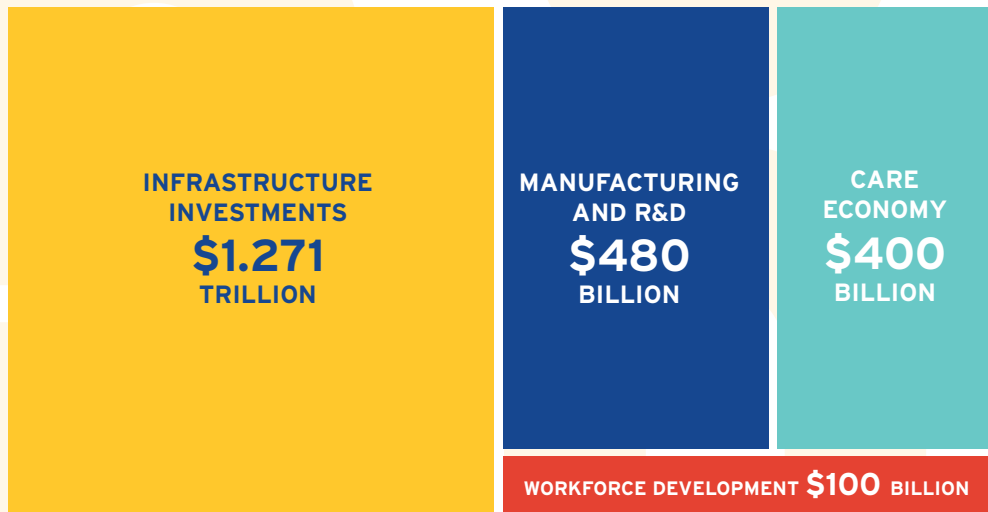
The need to invest in our nation's crumbling infrastructure goes back decades. But today, with more than 10 million people unemployed, there is unprecedented momentum to act. Women, immigrants, and people of color are disproportionately represented in these numbers as are young adults! President Joe Biden and Congress are counting on infrastructure investments to spur job creation and economic recovery.

Infrastructure should be people-centered; built for the people, by the people. Infrastructure policy must be people-centered as well. People-centered means investing in training and supports for workers displaced from hard hit industries. It means ensuring workers can train to repair roads and bridges, build schools, expand broadband, shore up our power grid and safe drinking water, restore our ports and airports, and expand public and energy efficient transportation.

On March 31, President Biden put forward the American Jobs Plan, which proposed billions of dollars in infrastructure investments and an explicit focus on racial equity. The President included a proposed \$100 billion investment in workforce development.

Economists Mark Zandi and Bernard Yaros of Moody's predict that the American Jobs Plan could recoup jobs lost during the recession and add an additional 13.5 million jobs by 2024.<sup>2</sup> They predict that most of the jobs created will require skills training, but not a college education. For this reason, they argue, "the funds in the [American Jobs Plan] for training will be important."<sup>3</sup>

### THE AMERICAN JOBS PLAN



1 According to the Century Foundation, by one month into the pandemic, one in four people between the ages of 20 and 24 were unemployed. See <https://tcf.org/content/report/the-covid-19-recession-is-hitting-young-workers-especially-young-workers-of-color-the-hardest/>

2 Mark Zandi and Bernard Yaros, "The Macroeconomic Consequences of the American Jobs Plan," Moody's Analytics, April 2021.

3 Catherine Clifford, "'Green' jobs in Biden's infrastructure bill: What they could pay and how to be eligible," CNBC Make It, April 12, 2021.



**NSC and BLU interviewed individual panelists and convened the full Infrastructure Industry Recovery Panel for group discussions. Themes emerged about the pandemic's impact on the industry, as well as essential components of a people-centered, equitable infrastructure plan.**

Prior to the pandemic, construction faced challenges hiring workers with the necessary training. A tight labor market, limited access to training, and racial and gender discrimination contributed to these challenges. Transportation sectors faced labor constraints in repair and maintenance, while major urban systems faced aging rail and bus stock. Like transportation, utilities faced the challenges of an aging, retiring workforce. An emerging alternative energy sector was still relatively small but growing. Across all sectors, digital skill demands grew as technological investments changed almost all occupations. These demands accelerated with lockdowns.

Industry leaders are excited by President Biden's proposed and much needed investments in infrastructure. They are concerned about adequate investments in skills training and support services. They recognize training will be necessary for millions of unemployed workers' transition into infrastructure jobs, particularly women, immigrants, and people of color, as well as young adults. These groups, hardest hit by the recession, are traditionally underrepresented in infrastructure fields. Industry leaders hope investments in training will also include incumbent workers. They see opportunities for women and people of color, who are concentrated in entry level utilities and transportation roles, to upskill into higher level positions.

Industry leaders are excited by President Biden's proposed and much needed investments in infrastructure. They are concerned about adequate investments in skills training and support services.



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



### INCLUDE LOCAL RESIDENT TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT IN PLANS FOR FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Industry leaders are clear about three essential components of an infrastructure plan. First, a final infrastructure package must include resources to train local workers for the jobs it creates. Second, federal dollars should come with incentives for local plans that focus on training local workers for infrastructure contracts. Third, if federal administering agencies operate in silos, those silos will reproduce at the local level, hurting workers and businesses.

#### Recommendations:

- ▶ **Invest in people through the American Jobs Plan and American Family Plan.** Ensure the \$100 billion for workforce training in President Biden's American Jobs Plan (AJP) stays in the final infrastructure package. The President's American Families Plan (AFP) – a companion to AJP – includes expanded childcare and other essential work/training supports. Congress should make these investments. Additional essential investments outside of AJP and AFP are outlined throughout this brief.
- ▶ **Incentivize local investment in people.** Local officials developing plans and bidders' guidelines should incentivize the training of local workers in how they award contracts. Congress can encourage this in a final infrastructure plan. The U.S. Employment Plan – developed by Jobs to Move America and approved by the Department of Transportation – is a possible model for Congress. The plan encourages bidders to include workforce training and employment in the manufacture of trains and buses for federal projects.
- ▶ **Capacity investments are essential to local hire.** Sustainable, long-term investment is essential to local hire goals and building long-term talent pipelines. Community colleges and community training organizations do not have investment capital to rapidly scale up training equipment, space, or capacity in response to new infrastructure investments. The infrastructure plan must provide resources directly to training providers or require local contractors to make this investment.
- ▶ **Support local alignment through federal alignment.** Congress should not fund transportation and energy agencies to develop their own training programs. Instead, they should invest in their capacity to partner with labor, education, and human service agencies. These supply side agencies have expertise in delivering training and wrap-around supports and aligning funding. In addition, The White House should create a new Interagency Sub Taskforce on Skills for an Inclusive Economic Recovery to align federal skills investments. The Sub taskforce should include heads of key federal agencies. This includes the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services as well as demand-side agencies engaged in job creation efforts like the Departments of Transportation, Energy, and Commerce.
- ▶ **Measure equitable outcomes.** Federal infrastructure investments should require reporting on hires, wages and industry-connected advancement of all workers employed on federally funded projects. Reporting should include race, gender, and whether those hired previously worked in that industry. These outcomes should be measured over time. There must also be investment in capacity to collect and report this data. Without this capacity, organizations that are highly successful in working with the community will be excluded.



## INVEST IN LOCAL CAPACITY TO DEVELOP LOCAL WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Industry leaders need flexibility to craft local solutions and target resources based on the needs of local workers and employers. This requires sustained support for local industry partnerships. Previous federal discretionary programs like the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants, the POWER Initiative, or TIGER grants have built local capacity to support these partnerships. However, their vulnerability from one administration to the next has disrupted sustainable local workforce development ecosystems. Unpredictable funding has also limited their ability to respond to industry changes. In addition, these federal grant programs often failed to require the full set of local partners necessary to respond to both industry demand and worker need.

### Recommendation:

- ▶ **Require and invest in multi-stakeholder industry partnerships at the local level.** As part of any infrastructure plan, include funding for expanded, sustainable industry partnerships to support regional, industry specific training and hiring strategies. Industry partnerships are a proven multi-stakeholder approach. They help workers enter and advance along career pathways in key local or regional industries. They help local companies within an industry support an inclusive, talent ecosystem. Industry partnerships also address specific challenges identified by industry stakeholders. Examples include marketing infrastructure careers to young people, updating training curricula, and aligning essential support services.

## INVEST IN EQUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE CAREER PATHWAYS

Achieving an equitable economic recovery and meeting industry demand for skilled workers requires a broad, inclusive hiring pipeline. Whether in the form of mandates or incentives, hiring targets can ensure jobs go to people in the community, particularly if they include explicit race and gender equity goals. But the impact of hiring targets is limited if they only lead to a short-term, entry level job. These immediate jobs should connect to additional training and equitable, longer-term pathways in the industry.

### Recommendations:

- ▶ **Authorize Infrastructure Professional Opportunity Grants (IPOG).** Building equitable career pathways requires targeting resources for training and supportive services to historically underrepresented groups in the industry. Congress can leverage and replicate the success of the Healthcare Professionals Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program for the infrastructure industry. HPOG has trained thousands of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and low-income

individuals for healthcare occupations that pay well. Congress should authorize a new Infrastructure Professional Opportunity Grant program.

- ▶ **Pass the bipartisan SKILL UP Act.** Building equitable infrastructure career pathways requires employer investment in upskilling entry level workers. Congress should empower businesses to invest in skills training opportunities for workers who need it the most. The SKILL UP Act expands the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. It provides an increased credit for businesses that invest in work-based learning opportunities. SKILL UP supports hiring and upskilling workers who have historically been excluded from long-term, infrastructure careers.
- ▶ **Fund integrated education and training to build foundational skills.** Many individuals seeking to enter infrastructure careers will need support to build basic academic skills. These include English language, math, and digital literacy skills. Under an integrated education and training model (IET), participants receive simultaneous instruction in basic skills as well as training for a specific occupation or industry. Congress should provide dedicated funding to support state or local implementation of IET through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Higher Education Act.
- ▶ **Support equity and inclusion for labor and business.** Racial and gender bias within unions and businesses has excluded women and people of color from infrastructure jobs. Building equitable infrastructure career pathways requires dismantling bias. Federal infrastructure investments should target support to sector partnerships to help employers, unions, and training providers adopt and measure equitable, inclusive practices.

## EXPAND SHORT-TERM TRAINING AND FLEXIBLE APPRENTICESHIP

Infrastructure investments will create demand for rapid, short-term training and upskilling. The industry needs policymakers to dramatically expand access to high-quality, short-term training in traditional training settings and at community colleges. This short-term training can lead to an immediate job or support a promotion. It can also help a person quickly develop baseline skills to enter longer-term apprenticeship.

Industry leaders also want to see apprenticeship expanded with a renewed focus on high-quality programs. This includes reinforcing the importance of Registered Apprenticeship and other work-based learning strategies, while reducing the administrative burdens of apprenticeship. Industry leaders also stress the importance of child-care, transportation, and other supports to apprenticeship expansion.



## Recommendations:

- ▶ **Pass the bipartisan JOBS Act to expand access to high-quality, short-term training.** Congress should expand federal financial aid to high-quality, short-term training programs that help workers rapidly reskill or upskill. The JOBS Act would expand access to Pell grants to ensure more workers can access short-term programs. The JOBS Act includes strong quality assurance provisions. For example, training must be aligned with state or local employer requirements; an accrediting agency must evaluate programs for quality and student outcomes; and a program must satisfy any applicable prerequisites for professional licensure or certification. In addition, the JOBS Act excludes proprietary institutions.
- ▶ **Expand apprenticeship and work-based learning through the bipartisan BUILDS Act.** Congress should pass the BUILDS Act. The BUILDS Act supports employers, education and training providers, labor unions, and workforce boards working together to train workers. The bill funds pre-employment training, transportation, career counseling and other supports that help people succeed in apprenticeship and work-based learning programs.

## HELP INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS ADOPT AND ADAPT TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The pandemic accelerated the need for new workplace technologies and the demand for digital skills. Industry leaders need support to help new and incumbent workers build foundational digital skills. Workers need access to foundational digital skills that serve as a baseline for adapting to ongoing technological change. They also need access to training that develops higher-level industry- and job-specific digital skills. Data confirm industry leaders' perspectives: 22 percent of currently employed U.S. workers in infrastructure related fields have no digital skills. An additional 28 percent have very limited skills.<sup>4</sup>

Employers also need support adopting new technologies. But there is currently little investment in supporting the infrastructure industry, particularly small and mid-sized employers, in adopting new technologies and adapting to technological change. The manufacturing industry has the Commerce Department's Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEPs) to facilitate the adoption of new technologies and innovations. A similar, federally funded network of state-based partnerships could support small and mid-sized companies in the infrastructure industry that need reasonably priced assistance.

## Recommendations:

- ▶ **Pass the bipartisan Digital Equity Act and Invest in new Digital Literacy Upskilling Grants.** Through the bipartisan Digital Equity Act, Congress should make a dedicated investment to help states pursue digital inclusion and skill building through \$1 billion in new funding. This should include formula funding for all states to support capacity-building and digital equity planning, and a competitive grant program to invest in best practices and spur innovation among states. Congress should also make a federal commitment to occupational digital literacy through a new national grant program. These new Digital Literacy Upskilling Grants would expand access to high quality digital skills instruction that meets industry and worker needs.
- ▶ **Develop a measurable national standard for industry-specific digital upskilling efforts.** Congress should define and embed occupational digital literacy in workforce and education policies like Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and II. This should be backed by funding to support quality digital skills training through existing policies as well as the new Digital Literacy Upskilling Grants.
- ▶ **Create an Infrastructure Extension Partnership program to help local companies adopt new technologies.** Congress should authorize the Department of Commerce to develop new cross-agency collaboration with the Departments of Labor, Education, Transportation, Energy and Environmental Protection Agency and fund a new network of 21st Century Extension Partnerships (based on MEPs but expanded into other industries).

## SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY OUTCOMES BEYOND BRICKS, MORTAR, AND JOBS

It bears repeating: Infrastructure should be by the people, for the people. The success of a massive federal infrastructure investment should be measured by the roads that get repaired, the schools that get built, the growth in clean energy use. Success should be measured by the number of community members who obtain career path employment. But success should be measured by so much more, including a range of sustainable community outcomes. These include useability and accessibility of infrastructure projects, growth in community wealth building, boosts to local supply chains, expansion of entrepreneurship, and improved community health outcomes. Members of the Infrastructure Industry Recover Panel are experts on how Congress can support achievement of these essential community benefit outcomes.

<sup>4</sup> National Skills Coalition, Construction and transportation workers need investment in their digital skills. December 2020. Available at <https://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Digital-Skills-Const-and-trans-final.pdf>

# BUILDING THE KC REGION'S WORKFORCE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH CLYDE MCQUEEN

It was November 1985 when Clyde McQueen first came to Kansas City to interview for the head job at the KC Full Employment Council. He had all the necessary credentials - years of working in workforce development at the Texas Economic Development Commission, the Texas Industrial Commission, State Department of Commerce, and then Director of the Texas Workforce Development Agency.

What he didn't have was a winter coat, and Kansas City in November was entirely different weather-wise from his home in Texas. "I about froze to death," McQueen says. "I still came because it was really something different." He's been head of the FEC ever since.

"My charge was to create a system to try to help our region," McQueen says. Prior to his arrival in Kansas City, the Full Employment Council was a KC Chamber program which had grown through the consolidation of a number of smaller organizations focused on workforce development.

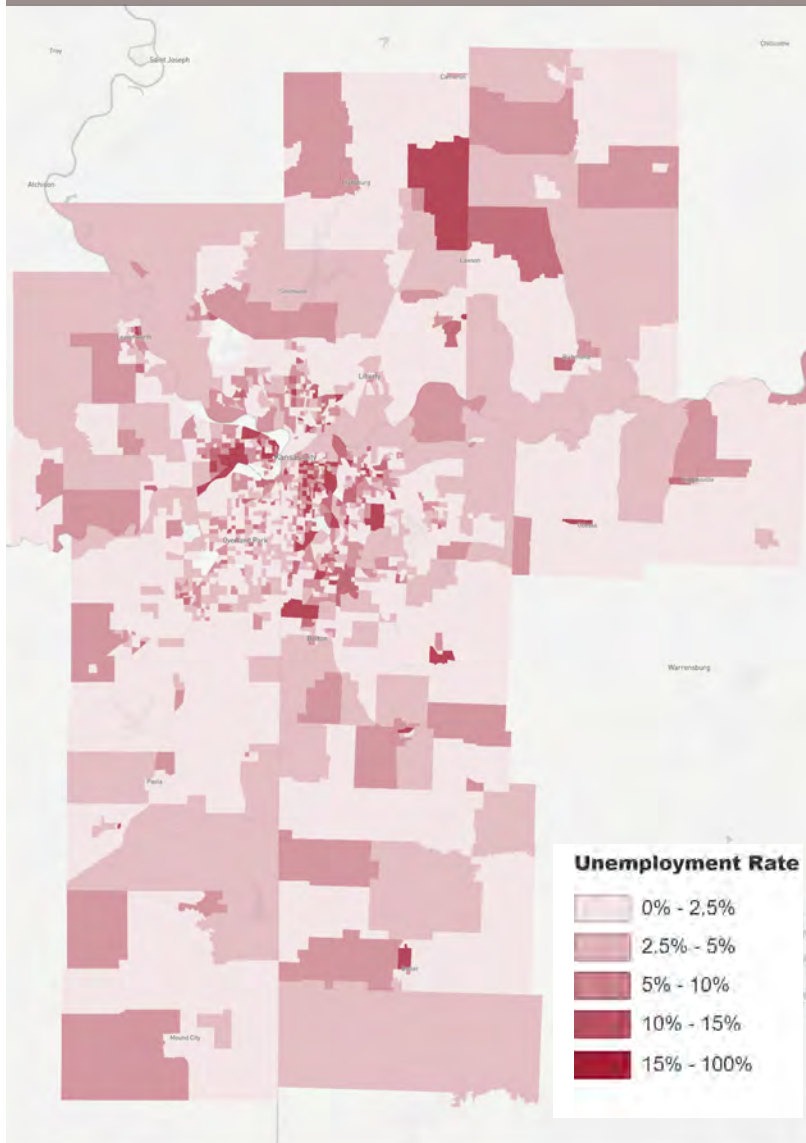
It was new terrain for him, he says. "I was used to working with government and politicians, but not with the corporate community. Kansas City was a tough town if you didn't know anybody," he adds, and credits Don Maxwell, the largest Black developer in Kansas City, Chiefs General Manager Jack Steadman, and John Walker, then Senior Vice President of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of

Kansas City, now founder and President of Perfect Output, now the largest Black-owned business in Kansas City, and others who helped him to engage with the region's business owners.

"The Chamber - at that time and today - was a gathering place where I met business leaders and owners from the corporate and minority business sectors to better inform FEC efforts about the workforce strategies to service regional workforce needs," McQueen says. "It was also during that time and today that I worked with leaders like Chris Thompson, President of the West Central Missouri Community Action Agency. Two years ago, we jointly set up an office in Raymore to serve rural and suburban populations in Cass County. Thirty years ago, we worked with the Ray County Commission to set up an office in Richmond to service the rural unemployed and that office still stands."

Organized within the KC Chamber, McQueen says the FEC was more than a theoretical construct designed to facilitate workforce systems on a regional basis. "It's an on-the-ground workforce system that directly delivers services to employers and job seekers," he explains. "The FEC works under the auspices of the Kansas City & Vicinity Workforce Development Board which provides policy guidance and oversight. It's the most unique workforce system in the state of Missouri and is a

## Workforce development as ecosystem



major part why our region has the top service and performance levels among Missouri's Public Workforce Systems."

Workforce development as ecosystem (Include as graphic here screenshot from Greater KC Report showing highest

unemployment areas)

The FEC is the only Missouri agency of its kind that serves urban, suburban, as well as rural populations. Its service area includes five counties: Cass, Clay, Platte, Jackson, and Ray.

If you look at this map of the

region's unemployed, you'll notice that the two highest areas of unemployment are in the urban core and in rural Missouri. In many rural communities poverty and unemployment rates are parallel to those in urban areas, but comprise smaller numbers in population.

McQueen says the only difference between those two populations is the density of the population.

Whether it's the urban core or Ray or Cass County, McQueen says, "They have the same foundational issues: lack of access to childcare, transportation, housing affordability, and general access to debt-free skills training," he says. "We're a big region with a lot of land mass and scarce population. We don't have the ecosystem support that enables workforce participation, whether you're talking about rural, urban, or a small town population.

"As for debt-free skills training," he continues, "The increasing cost of skills training has outpaced the typical grant amounts available through Pell grants, and other training amounts available through other grant funded programs. Many of these potential students must then explore student loan programs to



supplement their grants and many families and students are reticent to get further in debt.”

Labor market participation is the challenge. “Even if they have the skills,” he says, “they can’t participate if they can’t get the childcare or the ability to get to and from work at the right time for the right shift. The majority of people do want to work. We don’t have people just sitting around. Most do want to work but it has to make sense to them - I can get my child to and from care, I can get transportation back and forth, but if that equation doesn’t work for them, they’re not going to venture out and fail.”

He says people are beginning to understand the need to create a system of support. “People are starting to get that,” he says. “We’re having a better conversation.” Transit options are being created - van pools, paratransit, and ride share.

“We also have to figure out how to create a career track for childcare workers,” he says. “the only way we can sustain the system is to create a career track for childcare workers - right now they’re not making much. We lost 40 percent of our childcare capacity during the pandemic. That’s why the President’s program to fund childcare is so important. There’s got to be an initial investment. We’re working with the childcare agencies - what’s the career path and what’s the right pay to attract people. Access to childcare increases labor market participation.”

#### Services for youth & adults

McQueen cites his family as his role models. His father and his uncles all had to quit high school and he watched as his father got his GED, two Master’s degrees, and authored two books. His uncles all became entrepreneurs, starting their own small businesses. As a teen, he worked in his aunt’s Lubbock pharmacy, where minority and low-income customers were given credit to

buy the pharmaceuticals and 45 records. That pharmacy is now a museum in Lubbock.

“When you work with young people, it’s not just about a job,” he says. “It’s important to know the value of work, but they have to learn so many other things - financial literacy, how to work as a team, the value of lifelong learning. Mentorship is important. Entrepreneurship is important. That’s what we try to give the young people we serve. We want to make sure they transition from education to training to a career.”

For adults, McQueen says, “The focus is creating a lifelong learning curriculum to be able to skill up and compete in your career. IT, for example - if you start as a Microsoft 2 and you never upgrade your certifications, you can be out of a job very quickly.

“There’s a big demand for information tech specialists who don’t have a four year degree, for people who drive locomotives or who can repair aircraft engines. They don’t have a four year degree but they have certifications. We want to create this ecosystem of training.” He says that local colleges and universities are increasingly offering non-semester based training and certifications that are industry-recognized.

McQueen obviously loves his work. “There’s nothing like seeing how you’re helping people. It’s basically how I grew up and how I was able to get where I am because of this system of support, information, and family. Living it and seeing it and experiencing it everyday is what motivates me. At this point in my life, I want to make Kansas City a place of opportunity, and that its citizens see it as a place of opportunity for everybody. And to make sure that we can provide that. I want to help people who want to help themselves and I see a lot of that. That’s what motivates and feeds me.”

## Missouri Work Assistance Employment Efforts

- LINCWorks works with referrals from the Family Support Division in the Missouri Dept. of Social Services in a five-county area: Jackson, Clay, Platte, Cass and Ray counties.
- The local economy has many jobs available as the economy restarts and businesses look to hire.
- LINCWorks provides skill training for those seeking employment or changing fields.
- MWA staff work with partner agencies to create new training opportunities for participants and identify additional community resources to assist with families' barriers and needs.
- MWA main training provider is the Full Employment Council (FEC) which provides skilled training opportunities monthly, employment opportunities, and job readiness services (i.e., resume writing, interviewing, etc.).
- Approximately 135 individuals been employed during the period October 2020 to May 2021.
- The top three industries where participants are placed are: healthcare, business management and construction/manufacturing.
- Significant employers include Amazon, Aerotek, Cenitrex, FedEx, Hallmark and Wal-mart.
- The average wage is \$13.11 per hour.
- During the pandemic, the LINCWorks monthly caseload has declined from 1,300 individuals to 870 participants – a reduction of one-third.

# 'This means everything to me'; LINC Morning Star clinic connects families to utility bill assistance

July 1, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

*The aid has mounted like a rolling wave of relief in the two months since LINC and Morning Star began collaborating with utility companies and processing applications for utility assistance under federal pandemic funds.*

*By mid-July some 250 households were reached by LINC staff, processing more than \$380,000 to pay off bills, many times ending or intercepting cutoff notices.*

*"You see me smiling," 26-year-old DezShanae Scott said after getting help filing her application at the third clinic July 7. "I was going through a lot, and they helped me."*



*With more staff trained to process accounts, LINC expects to keep helping families gain relief available to them, carrying on with urgency since the first clinic in May . . .*

That first day was only meant to open a crack in the door to the vast numbers of debt-burdened Kansas City renters they knew were crowding on the other side.

But word gets out.

Just like that, the “soft launch” of LINC’s clinic for people applying for assistance with past-due utility bills was swarmed.

Staff at the May 19 clinic, which was jointly organized by utility companies, city services and LINC at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church’s Youth and Family Life Center, scrambled to help many dozens of people who came carrying bills with past-due balances of hundreds, even thousands of dollars.

“With everything being so stressful,” said On’Rea Knox-Lewis, “having past bills, not knowing how you’re going to get to your next job, or what job you’re going to have, this gives me some type of relief.”

She was one of more than 80 Kansas Citians who came to [the clinic at 27th and Prospect](#) seeking help with a complicated online process to apply for a piece of the \$25 billion in federal funds — including \$30 million for the KC area — dedicated to help people battered by the pandemic’s economic blows.

In all, the clinic processed applications for more than \$118,000 worth of past-due utility bills — some \$1,500 per person — giving hope to people like Knox-Lewis, who said she can breathe a little and “just take a moment to get myself back together.”

In many cases, filing the applications allowed applicants to get their utilities turned back on, or staved off cut-off notices while the applications are pending.

Staff with LINC and sister organization LINCWorks have been training with the Mid-America Assistance Coalition and utilities Evergy, Spire and KC Water to help process a backlog of more than 2,000 applications for assistance in Kansas City under the [federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program \(ERAP\)](#).

“The actual application process was hard for those who didn’t have electronic resources,” said Celeste Tucker, KC Water manager of credit and collections, who helped organize the clinic. “So we wanted to do our part for the community

and be on site to assist with . . . or even complete those applications.”

LINC and the utility companies are preparing to hold more clinics at Morning Star, arranging an appointment schedule to bring more people in to make assistance applications throughout the summer.

Meanwhile, as of June 9 the Morning Star clinic has processed more than \$200,000 in past due bills, helping more than 130 households.

Paula Canty, who came to the first clinic with her 17-month-old daughter, was one of those households.

“For a lot of people who’ve been affected especially by Covid,” she said, “and having to take a reduction in hours, especially with child care being so expensive, this really, really helps.”

“I’m so appreciative of it,” she said.

At the clinic, several workers with laptop computers helped input customer information. The Kansas City Department of Housing and Community Development was on hand to help with applications for rental assistance.

The process is difficult. Applicants must gather several documents including identification, proof of income, lease agreements and utility bills and be able to upload them. The application is a dozen screen pages long with over 35 questions. The relief funds apply only to past-due bills accrued during the pandemic, or since April 2020.

LINC and LINCWorks’ processors assist many customers in completing the application, and then the staff work with utility companies and their databases to verify accounts, debts and eligibility.

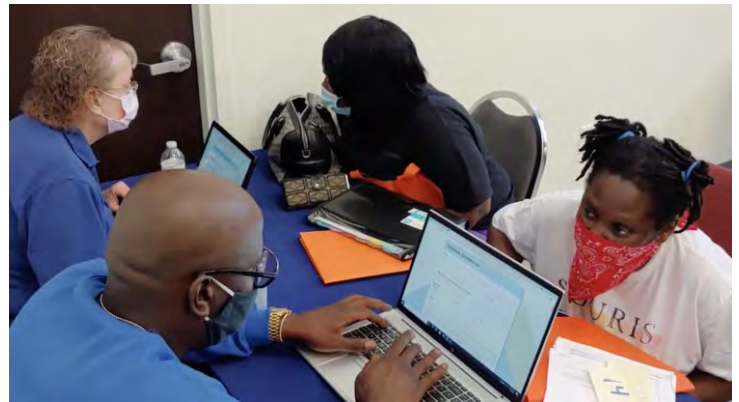
One of the customers from the May 19 clinic, while waiting for the process to be completed, had his electricity cut off several days later. But LINC staff were able to expedite the application, and his power was restored within an hour.

Moratoriums against utility shutoffs during the pandemic were mostly lifted in May. Eviction moratoriums are also lifting, and Kansas City’s social services providers are anticipating another wave of distressed calls for help.

The Morning Star clinic is powering up to speed many Kansas Citians toward relief.

“This means everything to me,” said clinic customer Louis Eason. “I’m getting big help. They are patient with us, and I feel good about the outcome.

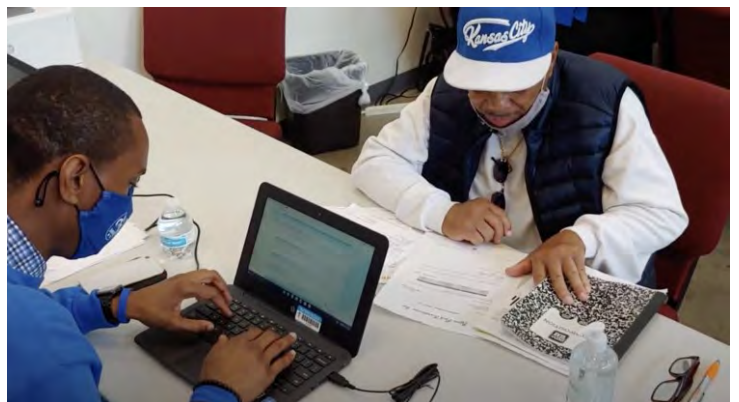
“I’m getting my bills paid.”



*On’Rea Knox-Lewis, in the red bandana, gets help from LINC staff in making her ERAP application. “I can take just a moment to get myself back together,” she said.*



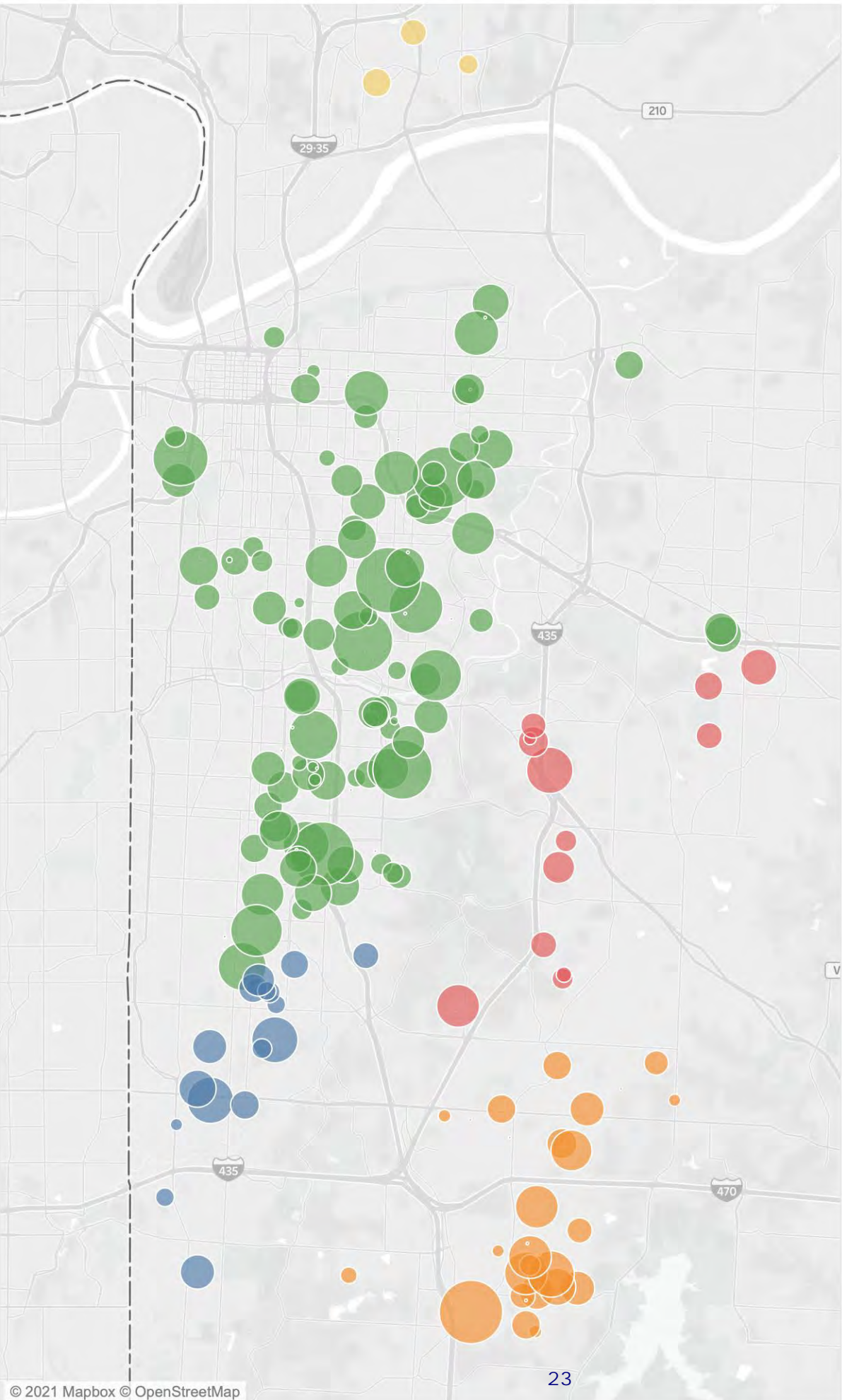
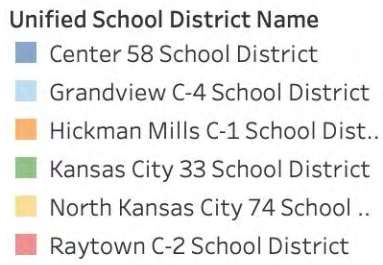
*An overflow crowd came for help making ERAP applications at the soft launch of the Morning Star utility assistance clinic with LINC and Kansas City utility companies May 19.*



*Louis Eason, right, gets help from LINC processing his ERAP application. “This means everything to me,” he said.*



# LINC Utility Assistance Provided by Location and Benefit Amount



# LINC Utility Assistance Pledges by Week

Date  
2021

April

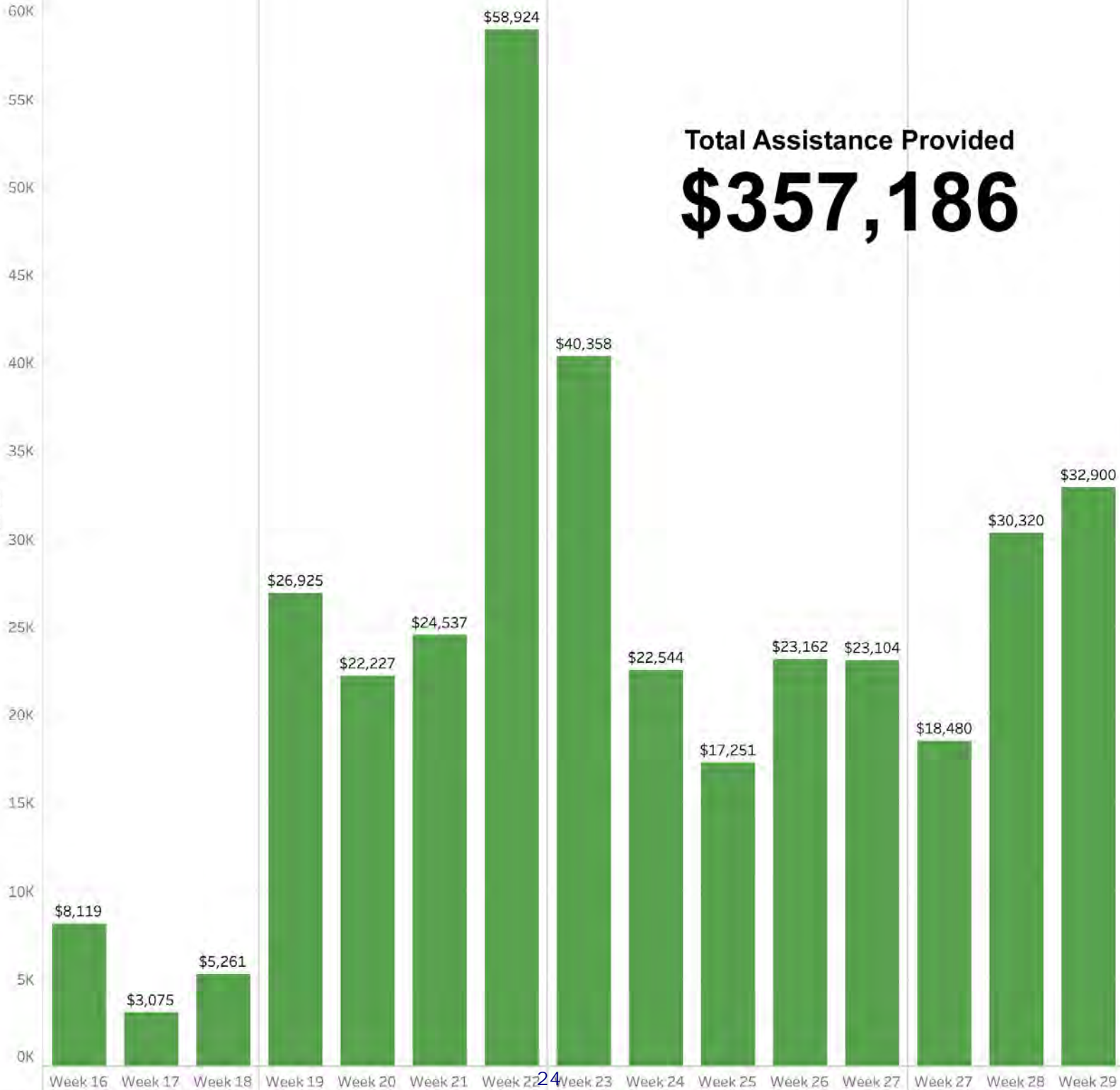
May

June

July

**Total Assistance Provided**  
**\$357,186**

Amount



Sum of Amount for each Date Week broken down by Date Year and Date Month. The marks are labeled by sum of Amount

# Financial Support for Missouri Renters Impacted by COVID-19.



**Struggling to pay rent or utilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic? Missouri State Assistance For Housing Relief (SAFHR) may be able to help – learn more and find out how to apply!**

SAFHR for Renters is an assistance program administered by the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC), funded by the federal government COVID stimulus package.

## What help does SAFHR for Renters provide?

- Provides rent and utility assistance for eligible Missouri residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Covers up to a total of 12 months of rent and utility bills, back to April 2020 and for up to 3 months in the future.
- Utilities include gas, electric, water, sewage/waste water, fuel (propane, wood, etc.) and trash.
- Money is paid directly to landlord or utility company.

## Am I eligible for SAFHR for Renters?

- You must be a resident of the state of Missouri, and a renter at your current or previous address.
- At least one member of your household **must be financially impacted** – directly or indirectly – as a result of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. This could mean someone in your household has lost a job, had reduced pay, or incurred significant COVID-related expenses. You must be at risk of losing your housing or having your utilities shut off due to this financial hardship.
- Your **income must not exceed 80% of your Area Median Income (AMI)**. This is determined by your county and your household size. You can determine if you meet the income requirements by viewing the SAFHR income ranges worksheet at [mohousingresources.com/safhr](https://mohousingresources.com/safhr)



**Financial assistance  
is here. Apply now!**

Apply online at  
[mohousingresources.com/safhr](https://mohousingresources.com/safhr)

Applications are open now!\*

If you can not apply online or need help with your application, please call **833-541-1599** or email: [mo.safhr@mhdc.com](mailto:mo.safhr@mhdc.com)

\* Application period expected to be open until Sept 2022.

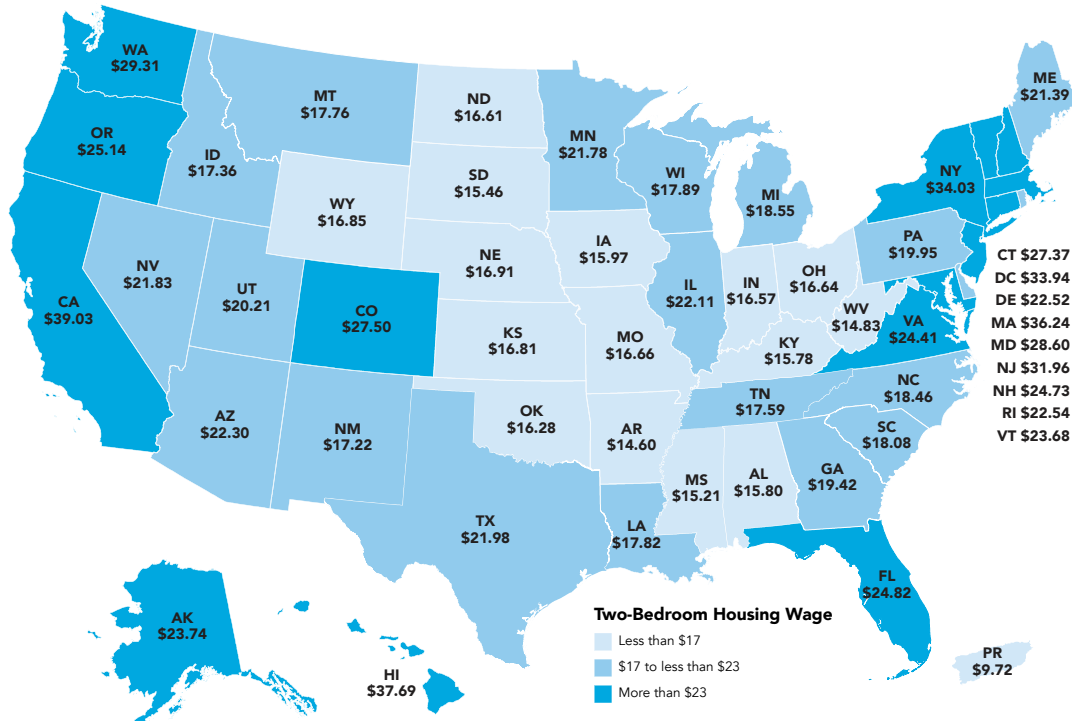
The SAFHR Program is funded through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260 (Dec. 27, 2020) (the "Act") and provided to the State of Missouri from the U.S. Department of the Treasury for emergency rental assistance. This project is being supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number ERA-2101112507 awarded to Missouri Department of Economic Development by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The Missouri Housing Development Commission is administering this project on behalf of the Missouri Department of Economic Development. <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/emergency-rental-assistance-program>



# OUT of REACH

## FACTS OVERVIEW

### WAGES NEEDED TO AFFORD RENT ACROSS THE U.S.



IN 2021, THE 2-BEDROOM NATIONAL HOUSING WAGE IS

**\$24.90**

A full-time worker must earn at least **\$24.90 an hour** to afford a modest, two-bedroom apartment without spending **more than 30% of income on rent**. This wage varies from state to state.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT

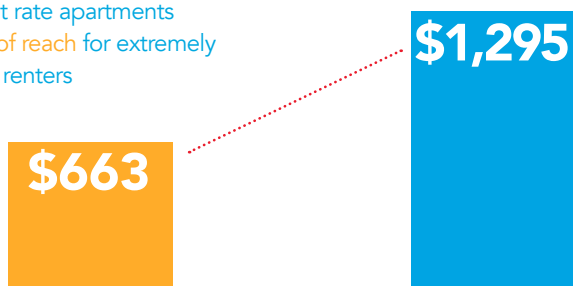
**1 in 4**  
RENTER HOUSEHOLDS

OR

**10.8 million**  
HOUSEHOLDS

### HAVE EXTREMELY LOW INCOMES AND CANNOT AFFORD THE RENT?

Most market rate apartments remain **out of reach** for extremely low income renters



### MINIMUM-WAGE WORK DOESN'T PAY THE RENT IN MOST AREAS:

2021 one-bedroom Housing Wage: **\$20.40**

2021 two-bedroom Housing Wage: **\$24.90**

Average Number of Hours at Minimum Wage Needed to Afford One-Bedroom: **79**

Average Number of Hours at Minimum Wage Needed to Afford Two-Bedroom: **97**



# MISSOURI

# #40\*

In **Missouri**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **\$867**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **\$2,888** monthly or **\$34,662** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

**\$16.66**  
PER HOUR  
STATE HOUSING  
WAGE

## FACTS ABOUT MISSOURI:

STATE FACTS	
Minimum Wage	<b>\$10.30</b>
Average Renter Wage	<b>\$15.62</b>
2-Bedroom Housing Wage	<b>\$16.66</b>
Number of Renter Households	<b>802,535</b>
Percent Renters	<b>33%</b>

**65**

Work Hours Per Week 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  
2-Bedroom Rental Home** (at FMR)

**52**

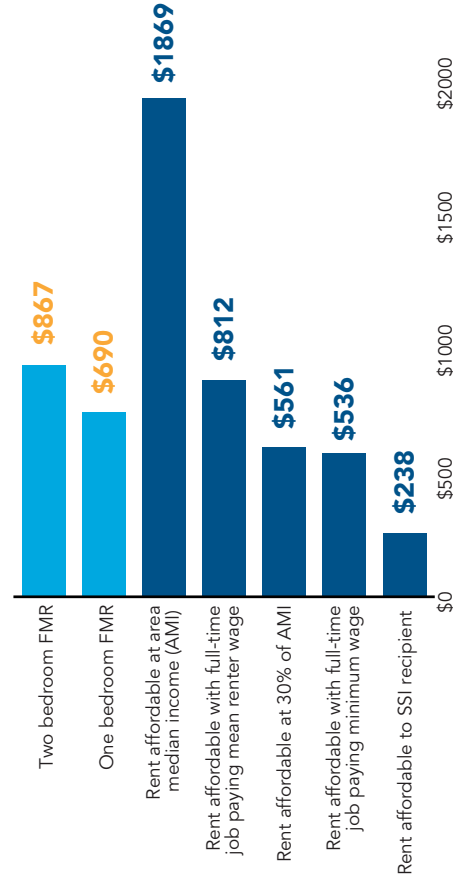
Work Hours Per Week At  
**Minimum Wage To Afford a 1-Bedroom  
Rental Home** (at FMR)

**1.3**

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

MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS		HOUSING WAGE
Kansas City HMFA		<b>\$19.63</b>
St. Louis HMFA		<b>\$18.04</b>
Columbia MSA		<b>\$16.81</b>
St. Joseph MSA		<b>\$15.71</b>
Cape Girardeau MSA		<b>\$15.52</b>

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.



# Covid-19's Delta variant stalks communities; spurs renewed call for vaccinations

July 8, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



*Paul Washington of Grandview receives a Covid-19 vaccination at the LINC Morning Star vaccination clinic in Kansas City in April 2021.*

For the fully vaccinated, the summer has opened wide to nearly all the activities we enjoyed before Covid-19.

But for the many people in our Kansas City communities who remain unvaccinated, the Covid's Delta variant brings an intensified threat that is putting Missouri at the top of the list for the rate of Covid deaths and hospitalizations.

Missouri and Arkansas now have the highest rates of new cases, [according to the New York Times](#). A surge of cases in downstate Missouri saw 17 Covid deaths reported in Springfield — with none of the victims being fully vaccinated, [the Kansas City Star reported](#).

Vaccines are readily available in the Kansas City area, for either walk-up visits or appointments. LINC keeps track of opportunities [on our coronavirus information page](#).

LINC's dedication to helping its community get protected led to the establishment of a clinic in partnership with Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, Missouri National Guard and Kansas City Fire Department. The partners delivered 24,773 vaccinations targeting under-served neighborhoods in East Kansas City before the clinic ended June 30.

Now, as demand has waned, the mission urged by the CDC, the Kansas City and Jackson County health departments and community leaders like retired public health administrator Jim Nunnelly is to encourage people who have been reluctant so far to get vaccinated.

Nunnelly has been [sharing coronavirus information](#), about testing and then vaccinations, and is supporting efforts like

[the campaign by 15-year-old Skyelar Anderson](#) with [Arts Tech](#) of Kansas City to rally other young people to get their friends, family members and neighbors vaccinated.

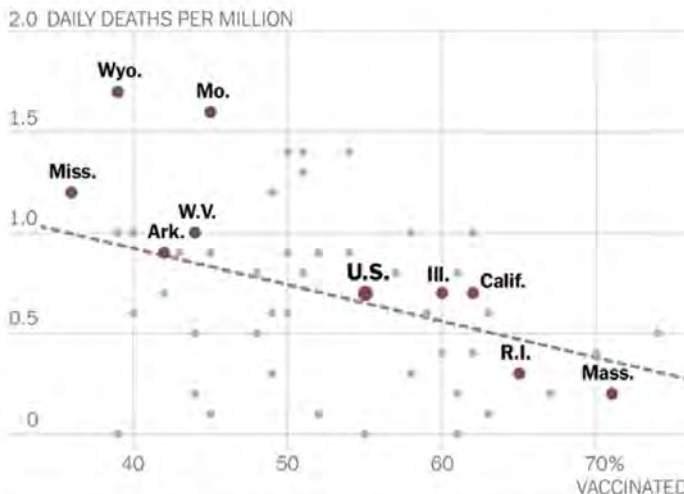
“THESE YOUNG FOLKS ARE DETERMINED to act!!!” Nunnelly posted.

The CDC is reporting that the Covid-19 vaccines in the U.S. are proving to be strong defenses against the coronavirus and the Delta variant. The recent rise in hospitalizations and deaths has been driven by the variant that in almost all cases is striking people who are not vaccinated — including a 45-year-old woman in Grain Valley, Mo.

Tricia Jones died June 9 at Research Medical Center in Kansas City. Her mother, Deborah Carmichael, lamented that her daughter had been uncertain about the vaccines and had decided to wait.

“Please take this seriously,” Carmichael said [on WDAF-TV FOX4](#). “You don’t want to see a family member you love go through this. You have a way better chance of coming out OK than if you don’t.”

States With Lower Vaccination Rates Have More Covid Deaths  
Average daily deaths per million residents, compared with state vaccination rate



Vaccination rate is the share of all residents with at least one shot, as of July 6. Daily death averages are from Friday, July 2.

Graphic by [the New York Times](#). Sources: State and local health agencies, the CDC and the U.S. Census

### The Morning Star-LINC vaccination clinic’s 5-month campaign:

**Total  
Vaccinations  
24,773**

#### February 2021

3000 vaccinations. With the Missouri National Guard and Truman Medical Centers.

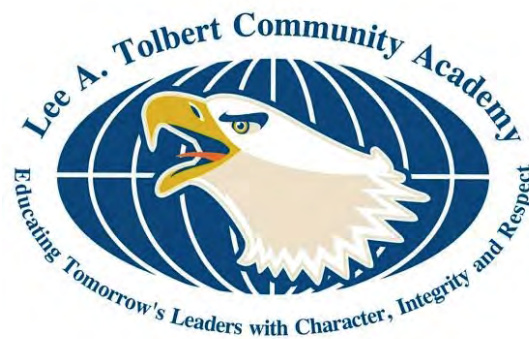
#### March-June 2021

More than 21,700 vaccinations with the Missouri National Guard and the Kansas City Fire Dept.

Vaccination info: [kclinc.org/coronavirus](http://kclinc.org/coronavirus)



# Knowledge is Power



Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy offered a one-day challenge for middle school students to explore how they might use art to display leadership and entrepreneurship at the school campus. The mural concept above was chosen to communicate how far the African American community has come, from writing on the sand as slaves to becoming college graduates.