Housing & Community Development

KANSAS CITY MISSOURI

KANSAS CITY MISSOURI

Housing & Community Development

Kansas City HOUSING GATEWAY PROGRAM

February 3, 2026

Prepared by

Kevin Barth, Chief Executive Officer, Commerce Bank

Mary Owens, Deputy Director, Housing & Community Development Department

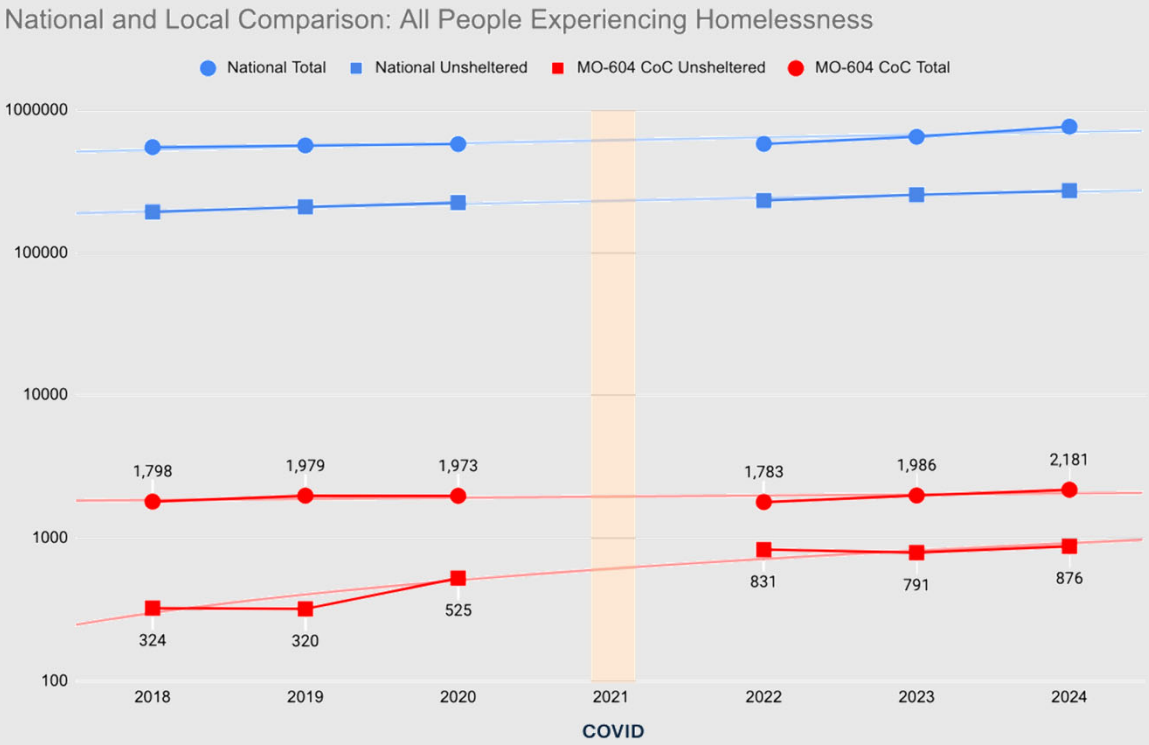
Josh Henges, Chief Impact Officer, Office of Unhoused Solutions

Ordinance 260140: Establishing the Kansas City Housing Gateway Program to End Unsheltered Homelessness

1. Establishes the KC Housing Gateway Program;
2. Reduces previously appropriated funds in the General Fund by $1,000,000.00 and reappropriates those funds to the KC Housing Gateway Program;
3. Directs the City Manager to establish a public/private advisory board to oversee funds; and
4. Directs the City Manager to conduct a comprehensive review of KC's homeless response systems and make recommendations to Council within six months.

Homelessness in Kansas City

- 2,181 people experience homelessness in Kansas City (2024 HUD AHAR)
- 95.7% of chronically homeless are unhoused—the highest rate in the nation
- Unsheltered homelessness has increased 170% in Kansas City since 2018



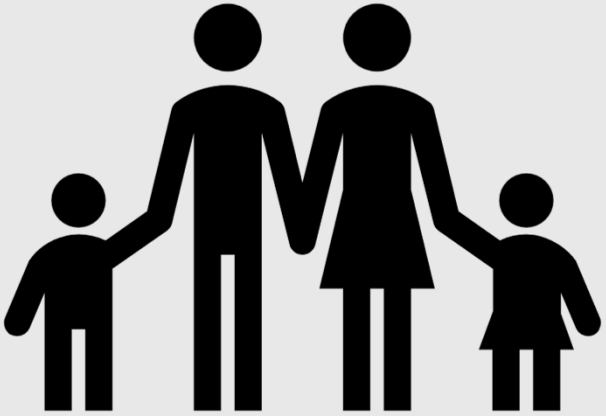
Who is Homeless in Kansas City?

Unseen Homeless

Who is Homeless in Kansas City?

Chronically Homeless

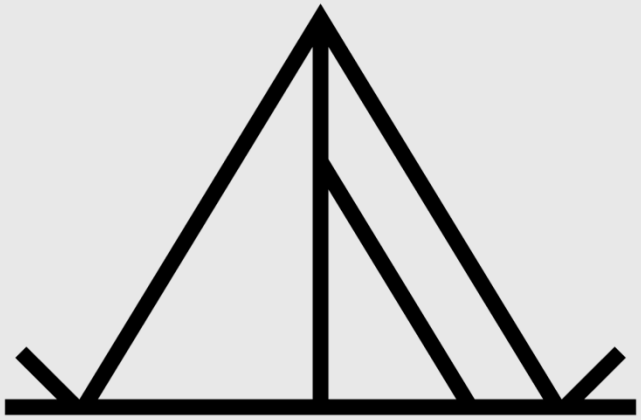
What Causes Homelessness?



How People Become Homeless

Money

Relationships



Why People Remain Homeless

Severe Persistent Mental Illness
Substance Use Disorder

Factors Contributing to Unsheltered Homelessness in Kansas City

- Kansas City faces a gap of 64,000 affordable housing units.
- Rents grew 7% year-over-year in 2024, one of the fastest rent growth rates in the U.S.
- HAKC has 27,523 applicants on the Housing Choice Voucher waitlist with 2-3 year wait times.
- A majority of CoC funds are in legacy “Shelter Plus Care” programs that do not require supportive services. These programs suffer from extremely low housing retention rates estimated at 30% and have high rates of return to homelessness.
- Voucher holders cannot locate landlords willing to accept vouchers.

Unhoused Workshop Findings

National Homeless Experts Jim Mathy and Mandy Chapman-Semple facilitated a series of meetings with service providers, outreach teams, police, nonprofit partners, city staff, and other stakeholders to diagnose barriers within the current system and identify opportunities for improved coordination.

1. Funding is not aligned around outcomes;
2. Kansas City lacks affordable housing options (e.g. low barrier shelter and transitional housing);
3. The Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) is not capturing critical data and is obsolete;
4. Kansas City's Coordinated Entry System is inaccessible to individuals that are homeless for less than 12 months; and
5. Kansas City's homeless response system is inefficiently distributing our existing federal housing resources.

Expert Recommendations for Addressing Unsheltered Homelessness

Category	Recommendations
Overall goal	Transform KC's fragmented system into a unified, accountable, data driven homeless response system with guaranteed reductions in unsheltered homelessness.
Approach	Convene public and private partners to pool resources and co-invest in strategic priorities. End street homelessness by rapidly resolving homelessness, clearing encampments and maintaining closures, and expanding low-barrier shelter capacity.
Addressing Newly Homeless (0-12 months)	Early touch interventions for 400 people in year 1; shift culture from waiting to rapid resolution.
Addressing Chronic Homelessness (1+ years)	House 200 people in year 1 using municipal housing vouchers that provide housing with wrap around services; years 2-3 scale regionwide.
Landlord Engagement	Activate existing affordable housing units by conducting landlord engagement and providing landlord incentives and a landlord mitigation fund.
Funding Needed	$10M in Year 1 using a mix of private/public dollars for shelter expansion, interventions and management, and encampment closure and maintenance.
Governance	Establish a formal governance and accountability structure comprised of leaders from business community, city staff, city council members, and philanthropy to own the strategy and hold the system accountable. Establish a third-party administrator to function as a depository, program administrator, and data system.

Ordinance 260140

KC Housing Gateway Program: Reappropriates $1M from the general fund to establish a new flexible fund to provide rapid assistance to individuals and households experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Comprehensive System Reforms: Directs the City to conduct a comprehensive review of Kansas City's homeless response system and make recommendations to City Council within 6 months.

Kansas City Housing Gateway Program

Core Components	Project Milestones
• Flexible fund for municipal vouchers, deposits, utility payments, transportation supports, etc. • Landlord engagement and incentives • Wrap around services and supports • Regional data system	• Establish governance through a public/private partnership • Secure funding from public and private funding sources • Procure consultant with expertise launching public/private homeless initiatives • Partner with a third-party administrator • Design and launch the KC Housing Gateway Program • Build a coordinated housing pipeline with landlords and shelter providers • Pilot an encampment closure and closure maintenance downtown • Integrate wrap around services and supports • Develop a regional data system
Core Leadership Team	**Funding Sources ($10M needed in Year 1)**
• Business leaders • City staff • City Council • KCPD • Landlords • Shelter providers • Healthcare providers • CoC & HAKC	• City • County • State • Federal (CoC, ESG, HAKC) • Business • Philanthropy

Questions?

Housing & Community Development

THANK YOU