



Reducing Poverty and Creating Opportunity

A Call to Action to the Health and Human Service Sector

WORK

ACTION: Make every health and human service sector job a “good job”

The health and human service sector in Johnson County is a major employer, and as such should strive to pay a living wage and help employees successfully balance work and family life. If every health or human service related job was a “good job,” thousands in our community would be better off than they are now.

What makes a “good job”?

- ◆ Good starting wages and an opportunity for wage growth
- ◆ Gender equity in pay
- ◆ Opportunity for advancement or job growth
- ◆ Predictable hours of work - advance notification of schedules, guaranteed minimum hours
- ◆ Flexible scheduling to provide better work-life balance for employee
- ◆ Positive work environment
- ◆ Earned sick days to provide paid leave for employee/family medical needs, health insurance
- ◆ Retirement savings plan

What can your organization do?

- Review and adjust salary ranges.
- Examine work schedules.
- Assess policies and practices.
- Assess work environment.

EDUCATION

ACTION: Promote “Talk, Read, Play” with employees, clients, and stakeholders

Intentionally talking, reading and playing with children daily improves brain development, self-esteem and vocabulary — key predictors of success in school. “Talk, Read, Play” is an education campaign that translates neuroscience studies about brain development in young children to a simple message every parent and caregiver can use to help support a child’s early development and later success. This is especially relevant among children born into low-income families who on average hear roughly 30-million fewer words by the age of three and thus have more limited vocabularies than their more affluent peers. The Family Conservancy leads this campaign in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

What can your organization do?

- Make a commitment to support the “Talk, Read, Play” education campaign.
- Distribute fliers to your clients.
- Publish an article in your organization’s newsletter.
- Invite The Family Conservancy to make a presentation to your board and/or other community partners.

SAFETY NET

ACTION: Increase access to safety net supports for adults without children and transitional age youth

The public and private safety net offers a range of services and supports for families with children. While these supports are typically not sufficient to meet all needs, they do help many families in crisis. However, fewer safety net supports are available for individuals without children, particular youth transitioning to adulthood and working-age adults. Individuals who do not live with family members account for more than two of five Johnson County residents with income below the federal poverty level. Assuring assistance to the underserved populations would improve their long-term stability and reduce more costly interventions in the future.

What can your organization do?

- Examine your eligibility guidelines to determine how you might expand services to single young adults and working age adults, or couples without children.
- Participate in future UCS-led discussion about adult-only households.
- Connect to efforts supporting youth aging out of the foster care system.