



2019 Annual Report

We Are All Connected



United Community Services of Johnson County

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Message to the Community

If there's one thing that 2019 taught us, it's that we are all connected, and we are better together. UCS staff, board and community partners demonstrated a desire to work together for a stronger, more vibrant, and more inclusive Johnson County community.

The mission of United Community Services of Johnson County is to provide data analysis, lead collaborative planning and mobilize resources to enhance the availability and delivery of health and human services. UCS promotes a vision and a belief that our efforts - research, education, advocacy, resource allocation and most importantly thoughtful planning and collaboration - can impact and improve the well-being of our community's most vital resource: its people.

In 2019, UCS focused on the need for attainable housing options for all Johnson County residents. At the annual Human Service Summit, elected officials and community members from across sectors including business, public safety, education, health and human services, government, faith community, and funders gathered to learn about the impact that rising housing costs has had on residents across all ages and stages of life.

An ongoing partnership with the Johnson County Government and its Department of Health and Environment highlighted that, in addition to attainable housing, residents need social support networks - friends, family, neighbors, and other groups - to help them feel connected and supported. These and other factors create health and well-being, and it's up to all of us to build systems and policies that help everyone thrive and reach their fullest potential.

UCS is honored to lead work that strengthens relationships, improves programs and services, and shines a light on emerging issues in the Johnson County region and beyond. Thank you for supporting our efforts.



Kate Allen
UCS Board President



Julie Brewer
Executive Director



2019
we are all connected

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The core work of UCS is illuminating needs and solutions through **Education & Advocacy**, fostering a framework for collaboration through **Mobilizing & Planning**, and prioritizing community investments through **Targeted Resource Allocation**.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY



An audience of 225 elected officials and community members from multiple sectors gathered at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center for the annual **Human Service Summit** in June. The theme was "Health Starts at Home" and centered on Census data which shows that 1 in 4 households in Johnson County is burdened by the cost of housing (cost-burdened is defined as housing costs that exceed 30% of a household's income). An inspiring keynote presentation by Dr. Tiffany Manuel, President and CEO of TheCaseMade, was followed by a data presentation featuring newly released community health needs assessment data from the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment. The conversation focused on the impact of rising housing costs on residents across all ages and stages of life. The event showcased the work of a storytelling campaign to lift up community voices around housing issues.



The **Kansas Public Policy Forum** in November included the release of UCS' Public Policy Platform which detailed local, state and federal positions on issues ranging from housing to Medicaid expansion. The forum featured a conversation with Secretary Laura Howard of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services (KDADS) and a panel of experienced legislators sharing a look ahead to the 2020 session.

Attendees at the **UCS Annual Meeting** in December heard a [keynote presentation](#) from Reverend Adam Hamilton of The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection about the importance of human connection to prevent social isolation, which negatively impact health outcomes.

According to the County's community health needs assessment, Johnson County lags behind the state and the country when measuring social connectedness even though it ranks first in the state for health outcomes.

The event featured the presentation of the annual **Human Service Awards**. Awards were presented in recognition of Citizen of the Year, Distinguished Public Service, and Excellence in Community Service, as well as the Karen Wulfkuhle Bridge Spanner Award.

2019 Human Service Awards

UCS' Annual Human Service Awards recognize the profound and positive impact that individuals and organizations can make on our community when intentionally caring, helping, and connecting with those around them.



Citizen of the Year award - Mary Birch
[Video](#)

Mary Birch, Government Relations Coordinator, Lathrop Gage, LLP., was recognized as **Citizen of the Year** for her 35-year history of building community, advancing education, and developing leadership in Johnson County. "I credit my family for who I am. My proudest accomplishment relates to the young people I employed and developed at the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, who are still involved with the organization," said Mary. "I always had a little bit of community builder in me."

The **Distinguished Public Service** award was presented to Melissa Rooker, Executive Director, The Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. What began as volunteer work through her own children's school PTA evolved into larger advocacy efforts and parent engagement. In 2012, she was elected to the first of three terms in the Kansas House of Representatives. "Now I am working with the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, and we are helping to develop a statewide strategic plan for early childhood as a system, as well as fund programs to create healthy development, strong families, and early learning opportunities," said Melissa. "We can all give back and strengthen our community."



Distinguished Public Service award - Melissa Rooker
[Video](#)



Excellence in Community Service award -
partners in the #ZeroReasonsWhy campaign
[Video](#)

UCS recognized the Teen Council and Student Ambassadors, Johnson County Mental Health Center, six partnering school districts in Johnson County, and community organizations involved in the #ZeroReasonsWhy community mobilization and story campaign with the **Excellence in Community Service** award. "It is really amazing to see how the community is banding together to disrupt the rise in teenage suicide, and it is so important for all of us to work together to make progress toward our goal of ensuring that no teen takes their life due to suicide," said Pooja Jain, #ZeroReasonsWhy Teen Council member and senior at Blue Valley West High School.

UCS Board President Kate Allen presented the **Karen Wulfschuhle Bridge Spanner** award to family members of Richard A. Worrel in posthumous recognition of his lifetime of service. Rick's life was defined by his love for God, his family, and making his community a better place. He served in many prominent community roles, including Chairman of the Board of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce and its Economic Development Council and Foundation, President of ACEC Kansas, Vice President of United Community Services of Johnson County, and a member of the ForwardOP Steering Committee. Genuine, caring, and selfless, Rick was a husband and father who nurtured deep relationships with nearly everyone he encountered.



Karen Wulfschuhle Bridge Spanner - Rick Worrel and family
[Video](#)

MOBILIZING AND PLANNING



UCS moved into a new phase of the **Transitional-Age Youth Planning Project (TAY)** with ongoing funding support from the REACH Healthcare Foundation. With innovative pilots, youth engagement, and community awareness initiatives, the TAY continues to work towards the goal of ensuring every at-risk transitional-age youth in Johnson County enters adulthood successfully. Program focus areas include education and training, housing, employment, health and wellbeing, and social connection.

The Johnson County Health Equity Network (HEN), a multi-sector collaborative of community partners addressing health inequities and their root causes, entered its third year of planning and implementation with support from the Kansas Health Foundation. Through research, data analysis and focused listening sessions, the HEN identified housing as a priority health equity issue for the Johnson County community. In response, UCS launched and serves as a backbone organization for a **Housing Study**, a comprehensive housing analysis and needs assessment commissioned by Johnson County Government and the municipalities, and a **Housing Task Force** initiative. Once completed, the study will contain a 10-year forecast of housing opportunities and challenges in Johnson County. The cities participating in the county-wide housing study and Task Force include De Soto, Edgerton, Fairway, Gardner, Lake Quivira, Leawood, Lenexa, Merriam, Mission, Mission Hills, Mission Woods, Olathe, Overland Park, Prairie Village, Roeland Park, Shawnee, Spring Hill, Westwood and Westwood Hills.

UCS convened the **Children's Coordinating Council**, a network of 30 service providers, quarterly to promote stronger relationships and best practices among organizations serving at-risk children and families. The CCC explored a range of topics in 2019, including implicit bias, changes to the child welfare system, the impacts of screen time on children, and plans for counting children and youth in the 2020 Census.



MOBILIZING AND PLANNING: SUCCESS STORY



As part of the UCS-led **Transitional Age Youth Planning Project**, Johnson County Community College (JCCC) and Olathe Public Schools (OPS) completed the first stage of a pilot project designed to help students successfully bridge the gap between high school graduation and college. The Bridge to Success pilot aimed to achieve positive education and training outcomes for students with limited family supports, students who are in foster care, and students experiencing homelessness. A total of 10 graduating seniors participated in the pilot that connected the mentoring program at OPS with the Student Success program at JCCC to ensure that students successfully bridge the gap between high school graduation and college.

The two key components of the pilot were to engage the OPS mentors to continue supporting students beyond graduation through the first semester of college, and to provide both students and mentors with the information and tools needed as the students begin their college experience. Johnson County Community College designed four information sessions for the OPS students in the pilot: Life After High School; Getting to Know JCCC; Getting Started at JCCC; and a tour of JCCC including available resources and support. Due to the success of the initial pilot, OPS and JCCC plan to expand the program to high school juniors and increase the number of informational sessions.

TARGETED RESOURCE ALLOCATION

UCS facilitates the **Drug and Alcoholism Council of Johnson County** which, on behalf of the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners and nine cities, oversees the allocation of local **Alcohol Tax Funds** for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. Nearly 49,000 people benefited from programs funded in part by Alcohol Tax Funds in 2019. Jurisdictions allocated \$2,023,712 to 25 programs for direct services.

UCS continues to manage the **Human Service Fund**, an important city/County partnership that invests funding resources in nonprofit programs which provide our residents essential health and human services promoting self-sufficiency and well-being. With funding from 14 cities and Johnson County, \$339,800 was awarded to 14 nonprofit agencies. Approximately 60,000 people benefited from these programs.

UCS is the lead agency for **Johnson County's Continuum of Care on Homelessness**, engaging more than 50 organizations from the human service sector, local government, schools, and the faith community in the area's work of preventing and ending homelessness for Johnson County residents. In 2019, local agencies were awarded \$727,890 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to support rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing and homeless management information systems projects.

TARGETED RESOURCE ALLOCATION: SUCCESS STORIES



KidsTLC provides evidence-based clinical supports to children and families experiencing mental and behavioral health challenges, developmental trauma and autism. The **Human Service Fund** supports Thriving Families, a KidsTLC program that educates families on health issues, trauma, and raising healthy children, and provides health navigation and connection to community resources. Matt began receiving therapeutic supports from KidsTLC in 2014 and participates in the Thriving Families program. He says the program has been helpful and encouraging, and credits KidsTLC with helping him live on his own and maintain a job for more than two years.

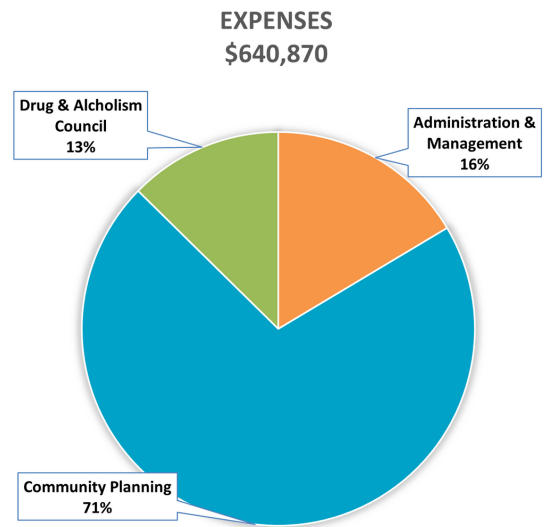
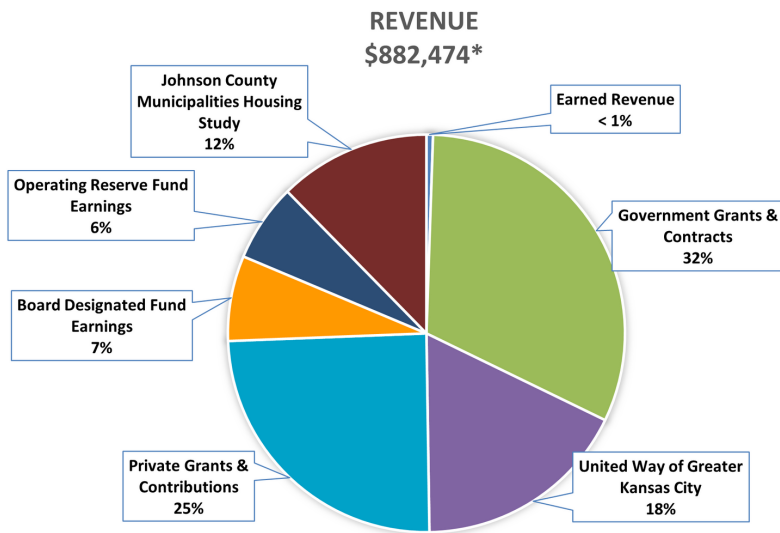


Friends of Recovery is the advocacy organization for the Oxford Houses in Kansas, which are transitional housing programs for people with addiction to drugs and alcohol. Funds received from the **Alcohol Tax Fund** have helped Friends of Recovery support Oxford Houses, and also offer workshops on empowerment, self-defense, trauma-informed care, and other topics to residents. Former Oxford House resident Kyra was able to maintain her recovery with support from Friends of Recovery and others living in the home with her. She has since moved into her own home but stays connected with other women that she knew at Oxford House.



Safehome is a nonprofit organization and domestic violence shelter for women and children in Johnson County, and receives a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development through the Johnson County **Continuum of Care on Homelessness** facilitated by UCS. For one client with a 9-year old son, Safehome provided a safe haven as they fled domestic violence. Safehome's housing program helped this family to avoid homelessness in early 2019. Today, the mother is steadily employed and stably housed, she and her son are receiving trauma therapy, and she volunteers at a local community services center to give back. They no longer have to rely on an unsafe relationship for survival.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



* Revenue includes grant income received in 2019 intended for use in 2020.

** Human Service Funds are held by UCS in a separate account and paid out to grantees twice a year once collected from contribution jurisdictions. New audit guidance indicates UCS no longer recognizes pass through grant dollars on its revenue and expense balance sheet. 2019 Grant Allocations to agencies totaled \$339,801.

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*deceased

FUNDING SUPPORT

THANK YOU TO OUR PLANNING PARTNERS



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AdventHealth	Foulston Siefkin	Johnson County Mental Health
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RESOURCE ALLOCATION PARTNERS

Alcohol Tax Fund (ATF) participating jurisdictions

Gardner, Johnson County, Leawood, Lenexa, Merriam, Mission, Olathe, Overland Park, Prairie Village, Shawnee

Human Service Fund (HSF) participating jurisdictions

De Soto, Edgerton, Gardner, Johnson County, Leawood, Lenexa, Merriam, Mission, Olathe, Overland Park, Prairie Village, Roeland Park, Shawnee, Spring Hill, Westwood

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