



Human Service Fund: A Collaborative City/County Partnership
2021 Year-End Report

Since 1990, United Community Services of Johnson County, Inc. (UCS) has worked in partnership with cities* and Johnson County Government to support programs that improve the quality of life through human service strategies. For 2021, fourteen nonprofit organizations were awarded \$372,276.

This report provides an overview of programs supported by the Human Service Fund (HSF) during 2021 – the second year of a global coronavirus pandemic and a challenging year for all Johnson County residents. Grantees continued to be nimble in adapting services to meet the needs of clients and worked through ever-evolving strategies for operations and outreach to support clients in accessing safety net services as well as support opportunities made available through American Rescue Plan Act funds. Like many industries, HSF grantees providing regular case management and services, such as healthcare, experienced turnover of critical staff. Despite these challenges, HSF grantees provided over 158,000 units of service to more than 44,000^ Johnson County residents. These “units of service” included a full spectrum of programmatic interventions designed to offer support and build self-sufficiency and well-being: medical and dental appointments, nights of safe housing, counseling programs, emergency rental and utility assistance, food pantries, hours of case management, employment training and counseling, and more.

Human Service Fund Priorities:

Programs funded by the HSF must deliver measurable outcomes which benefit Johnson County residents and, in the long-term, benefit local governments by avoiding, deferring, or preventing costs that otherwise might be incurred by local government.

Programs funded by the HSF must fit the definition of “Safety Net or Work Supports.” Priority is given to programs that:

- address emergency aid and shelter, child/adult abuse, child welfare, health, work support services such as childcare and early childhood development, and job training.
- serve individuals and/or families with income below or near the federal poverty level.
- demonstrate innovation and/or collaboration in program delivery.
- are consistent with an evidence-based program, best practices or promising practices, or replicate a successful model.

The UCS board of directors, funded programs and program participants thank the Board of County Commissioners, and Mayors and Council Members who make these funds available. For additional information, contact Julie Brewer, Executive Director, 913.438.4764 (julieb@ucsjoco.org).

2021 Funding	
Johnson County Government	\$141,775
14 Cities	\$253,401
Interest	\$3,100
Total Dollars	\$398,276
UCS Administration	-\$26,000
Grant Awards	\$372,276

**Participating jurisdictions include Johnson County, De Soto, Edgerton, Gardner, Leawood, Lenexa, Merriam, Mission, Olathe, Overland Park, Prairie Village, Roeland Park, Shawnee, Spring Hill, and Westwood.*

^Grantees were not able to capture unduplicated client counts for some services, such as services provided through some online platforms; as a result, service numbers are an underestimate for 2021.

2021 Human Service Fund Year-End Report

CASA of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties

332 Johnson County children served through 15,478 hours of support and advocacy

\$48,000 Grant

CASA's (Court-Appointed Special Advocate) Child Advocacy Program is a court-ordered program that serves children involved in cases where conflicting case information has been presented to the judge, there is extreme neglect or abuse, or there are concerns about implementation of services. A trained CASA volunteer advocate focuses on the child's needs. The volunteer gathers information from significant adults in the child's life, and with a CASA supervisor, submits a report to the judge who is then able to make a more informed decision regarding the child's future. In 2021, CASA volunteers continued to serve clients through both in-person and virtual meetings. The court system utilized some virtual hearings as well as in-person trials, but took longer to process cases than in prior years. As a result, CASA advocates served existing clients longer and were able to take on fewer new referrals. Despite these challenges, the Child Advocacy Program served 414 children within and outside of Johnson County with over 19,300 hours of advocacy.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: The presence of a stable adult is a key factor in building resilience from a history of trauma. 99% of children served by CASA had a stable adult presence in their CASA volunteer during their court involvement. With limitations on in-person visits and court appearances, CASA volunteers maintained strong contact with their children through outdoor visits as well as virtual meetings. While assigned to a CASA advocate, 99% of the children served did not have an additional affirmed or substantiated report of abuse to Kansas Department for Children and Families. Of the CASA-served youth eligible for graduation or working towards obtaining a GED, 85% were successful (graduated or awarded a GED). This percentage for academic milestones far exceeds the state average for children in foster care.

Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas

16,754 Johnson County residents served through 44,446 service encounters

\$70,000 Grant

Through two centers in Johnson County, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas provides an emergency assistance and supportive housing program for families living at or below 150% of federal poverty guidelines. Emergency assistance protects and promotes the well-being of families and children by meeting basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing, as well as financial assistance with prescription medication, utility payments, and transportation. The case management delivery model emphasizes modes of self-sustainment, including asset development/financial literacy, education on life skills and connection to other resources. In 2021, Catholic Charities saw a shift in service need, with food assistance down as clients reported being able to access food assistance through multiple providers due to American Rescue Plan Act funds, but an increase in clients seeking rental or utility assistance and engaging in the Family Financial Transformations program.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: Visits to Catholic Charities for food assistance totaled 16,414. Direct financial assistance enabled 953 individuals to maintain safe housing for at least 30 days. 912 individuals benefited from utility service assistance which enabled them to sustain utility services for 30 days. 88% of households receiving direct financial assistance completed a financial assessment with their case manager. 79% of individuals who received financial assistance also completed at least

one component of financial literacy education (Money Smart, Your Money-Your Goals), and received one-on-one budget coaching. Over two-thirds of clients engaging in the Family Financial Transformations program report lasting improvement in both financial stability and emotional outlook.

El Centro, Inc.

Unduplicated number of Johnson County residents served: 2,689 through 3,508 service encounters

> 70,000 individuals engaged through 146 social media videos

\$22,800 Grant

El Centro's Johnson County Family Services Program provides a set of safety-net services to low-income, under-insured and uninsured Johnson County residents. Services include, but are not limited to, emergency assistance, assistance filing taxes, financial literacy classes and individual counseling regarding money management, and access to healthcare (health navigation and promotion). Assistance filing taxes is delivered through El Centro's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site, located in Overland Park. The other services are provided in El Centro's office located in Olathe. In 2021, El Centro responded to the pandemic by leveraging its relationship with the community to support applications for Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance as well as COVID testing and vaccination. El Centro also continued to expand its use of social media to connect with clients. While VITA services were down in 2021, due to COVID safety protocols, El Centro served more clients than anticipated through its other programs, exceeding its original projection of serving 2,500 clients in 2021.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: Clients' immediate basic needs were met: 108 households received utility assistance and 103 households received rent assistance. 211 individuals completed the financial empowerment class. 45 people were assisted with the process that enabled them to receive an Individual Tax Identification Number and thus file income taxes; 727 people were assisted in filing their taxes. 441 individuals were assisted with applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and received benefits; 240 enrolled in KanCare with assistance. 1,035 individuals were referred to a community healthcare resource and of those, 100% had at least one successful outcome. 132 individuals completed a class about eating healthy on a budget. El Centro also implemented social media educational videos on topics like healthy eating, budgeting, voting, and COVID-19 with total views exceeding 70,000.

FosterAdopt Connect

Johnson County residents served: 50 through 41 hours of Family Advocacy

\$5,000 Grant

FosterAdopt Connect's Family Advocacy Program's peer-to-peer support connects foster and adoptive families with trained advocates (experienced foster parents) who help families navigate and resolve issues related to interaction with the child welfare system. Examples of challenges include problems accessing school-based services and mental health services, and delays in reimbursement. The program forms the foundation of the agency which offers multiple programs/services in the Kansas City area. Founded in 1998, the agency operates five resource centers.

2021 Outcomes: During 2021, FosterAdopt Connect served 264 unduplicated children and adults, 50 of whom were Johnson County residents. As a response to COVID-19 restrictions, FosterAdopt expanded use of virtual contact, which allowed it to work more effectively with underserved rural clients and to provide services to more clients overall than in 2021. 96% of families being supported through direct advocacy

developed and maintained an action plan within 30 days of initial contact, 89% of families had indirect advocacy needs resolved within 3 business days, and 20% of families received advocacy and/or community support to preserve placements, which promotes stability in the lives of foster children.

Growing Futures Early Education Center

Johnson County residents served: 66 through 4,651 hours of subsidized wrap around care for 29 children, as well as virtual learning and family support through home visits

\$9,000 Grant

Most of the families served by Growing Futures have incomes at or below federal poverty guidelines. Through the Human Service Fund grant, scholarships for childcare assistance help low-income families experiencing financial hardships who are unable to pay their share of childcare fees (federal Head Start grants fund 3.5 hours of the day and parents are responsible for costs wrapped around the Head Start funded hours). Scholarships allow for continuity of early childhood care and education while parents are working or attending school. Emergency assistance is provided to families in need of short-term help, particularly with housing, and food. Household need was particularly acute in 2021 due to the pandemic and Growing Futures was able to support 66 individuals through HSF funds with scholarship assistance and family support.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: 29 children and their families received short-term help or fee subsidies which allowed parents to remain working or in school while facing financial challenges. The needs of families went beyond monetary. Growing Futures' Family Support Advocates helped families obtain childcare subsidy funding and resources. Growing Futures hosted a vaccination clinic for families in fall 2021, supplied backpacks of school supplies to each student, and provided baskets of non-perishable food and winter clothing for children before winter break. During 2021, no children left the program due to inability to pay fees. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, 83.5% of the assisted families achieved steps toward the completion of a large family goal – such as maintaining employment, learning English, purchasing a first home, or working toward a GED. 97.5% of kindergarten eligible children achieved kindergarten readiness based on the Bracken School Readiness Assessment and Classroom Observation Record.

Harvesters – The Community Food Network

Johnson County children served:* 3,030 children

35,157 Backpacks

5,893 meals

\$15,000 Grant

The Human Service Fund supports Harvesters BackSnack and Kids Café programs within Johnson County. BackSnack provides low-income children with a backpack of food to take home from school over the weekends. Harvesters purchases food for the backpacks, transports the food to community partners and links schools to community partners. School staff identify children who are in greatest need of food assistance. Kids Café is provided in after-school locations and summer sites in Johnson County. Harvesters delivers meals directly to Kids Café sites and provides meals there at no cost to children and youth. Free and reduced lunch school statistics help determine location of Kids Café sites across school districts in Johnson County.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: Harvesters provided 35,157 Backpacks to children in Johnson County as well as BackSnack meals to 3,030 children; the Harvesters' Kids Cafe program served a total of 2,863 meals to food-insecure children after school and over the summer. In 2021, school closures and remote learning made regular delivery of

food more challenging. To further support families, Harvesters supplemented BackSnack meals with in-school food pantries.

*Harvesters is not able to provide an unduplicated count of children served between Kids Café and BackSnack, or by each individual program over the calendar year or a school year. In order to determine the minimum number of unduplicated children served by both programs, the largest number of children served in each Johnson County jurisdiction during a six-month period for either program was added together for total of 3,030.

**Health Partnership
Clinic of Johnson
County**

7,450 Johnson
County residents
utilized 15,977
healthcare visits

\$49,500 Grant

The Health Partnership Clinic (HPC) provides primary and preventative medical care as well as dental and behavioral health services for low-income and uninsured patients who otherwise would not have access to care. HPC health care services include both pediatric and adult care. Specialty care is provided through a network of providers. In addition, a walk-in clinic and case management services are provided for patients who are homeless. HPC is Johnson County's largest safety-net clinic and only Federally Qualified Health Center and utilizes a medical home model which emphasizes prevention and health maintenance while providing a broad scope of services including care for patients with chronic diseases.

HPC has pivoted in response to COVID, including patient triage of those who have COVID symptoms and drive-thru testing to minimize COVID spread. Many HPC patients, in particular pediatric patients, delayed well child visits or regular visits for fear of COVID exposure. HPC also utilized telehealth technology to continue providing healthcare services that support social distancing and limit exposure of patients and healthcare providers. Like many healthcare providers, HPC experienced turnover in staff in 2021, which led to fewer client visits than projected. However, in 2021 HPC was able to reopen its dental clinic, which is providing outreach through local schools.

Outcomes achieved in 2021: HPC served 9,613 patients from within and outside of Johnson County in 2021. In 2021 there were 20,628 patient office visits and/or clinical encounters. Over 90% of patients surveyed indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with overall care they received as a patient. HPC has opened a school-based service site in Shawnee Mission West school district that will provide important access to new clients in Johnson County to HPC's services.

**Johnson County
Interfaith Hospitality
Network**

43 Johnson County
residents accessed
1,691 nights of
shelter

\$9,000 Grant

Through partnerships with 36 faith congregations, Johnson County Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) provided homeless families and single unaccompanied women with shelter, meals, and case management which included assistance with budgeting and money management, job and housing searches, transportation, and referrals to community resources. In 2021, due to the continued coronavirus pandemic, IHN provided shelter primarily through hotel rooms, whereas in prior years, IHN provided shelter primarily through partnerships with congregations. As a result of budget limitations, IHN served fewer clients than projected; however, IHN remained open, providing needed shelter and case management throughout 2021.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: IHN utilized the funding support to provide professional strengths-based case management for homeless families, and homeless single unaccompanied females. A total of 43 Johnson County residents were supported through this program in 2021. 38% of families moved to homes of their own, or transitional housing within four months of entering the network. 82% of families increased economic resources by 25% during their time in the network. IHN held three in-person volunteer trainings in 2021 with 98% of volunteers reported increased awareness of human service needs in our community after attending a volunteer training.

Kansas Children’s Service League

205 Johnson County residents engaged in 610 client visits

\$20,280 Grant

Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL) Healthy Families Johnson County, a child abuse prevention program, provides intensive home-based parent education, support, and case management to first and second-time parents who have been identified as being high risk for child abuse and neglect. Participants receive routine at-home visits, case management, referrals to community resources and services, child development and parent education, and linkage to health care services. During the pandemic, families engaging with KCSL reported acute stressors and crises, making it more challenging for them to maintain regular appointments with KCSL providers. Overall, KCSL had fewer clients and fewer client visits than projected for 2021. KCSL adapted to meet client needs through creative outreach, including virtual or telephonic encounters, text messaging, and “porch” visits in outdoor settings. In addition, KCSL providers supported families by picking up and dropping off emergency assistance items. Parent engagement includes Parent Cafés, parent support groups, and a Parent Leadership Council. Parent engagement was also provided through virtual events and Facebook interactions.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: 99% of families served by the program remained free from substantiated abuse and neglect while in the program. By the end of the year, 100% of children enrolled in the program for at least six months had health insurance and 87% had a developmental screening. A total of 88% of children were up to date on immunizations. KCSL notes that during 2021 their clients identified significant increase in stressors related to the pandemic, including financial instability, food insecurity, domestic violence, and mental health issues; KCSL anticipates families will continue to need additional support, creative outreach and engagement, and more in-depth services in 2022.

KidsTLC

Johnson County residents served: 417 through 917 service encounters

KidsTLC’s Thriving Families provides support and education services, including a Family Support and Navigation Specialist who is available to help families navigate the complexities of finding mental health/health care, housing, and community resources/support. The program also provides education groups for parents or guardians of KidsTLC clients through the CARES and Que Onda Familias (Spanish speaking) education and support groups. The program is a compliment to the residential and outpatient mental health services KidsTLC provides to children. Services are targeted to the following populations: homeless/McKinney Vento families in the Olathe and Shawnee Mission school districts; Spanish speaking families in

139 individuals engaged with Que Onda Familias

\$17,500 Grant

Johnson County; parents/guardians of current KidsTLC clients; and families on long waitlists for mental health services. The goal of the program is to educate families on health issues, trauma, and raising healthy children and to provide health navigation and connection to community resources. In 2021, KidsTLC expanded its use of virtual engagement with families through the Que Onda Familias program, serving more clients than it anticipated.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: KidsTLC served a total of 661 individuals in and outside of Johnson County as well as 292 (not unduplicated) individuals through Que Onda Familias in a total of 1,716 service encounters. During the pandemic, Que Onda Familias moved to an online platform, which increased class size from 20 adults per class to up to 139. KidsTLC helped meet people’s life sustaining basic needs by referring clients to resources, as a result of referrals: 12 families were assisted with rent/deposits, 11 families were referred for general assistance, 132 families were referred for medical, dental, or mental or behavioral health services, and 35 families were directed to early childhood education resources. 77% of clients reported having a better understanding of health and mental health resources available to them after working with KidsTLC and 56% of families reported following through with referrals within one week of referral (27% did not respond to follow-up inquiries).

NCircle

83 Johnson County residents engaged in 2,223 hours of case management and training

\$19,696 Grant

NCircle, Inc. provides skills training, certification instruction, financial education, job placement, connections to community services, and job retention services for individuals in Johnson County Department of Corrections Adult Residential Center (ARC) and Therapeutic Community, as well as adults on probation upon release from the ARC. Programs include essential life skills training, digital literacy and computer skills training, and occupational training courses, such as OSHA 10, welding, and forklift training. These programs enhance the qualifications of Johnson County workforce.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: In 2021, 83 individuals engaged in the training and employment program, receiving 2,223.5 hours of instruction and case management with the support of HSF dollars. Clients in the program earned 153 certificates through the College of Trades program such as: OSHA 10, Construction Basics, Welding, Shop Blueprint, Customer Service, Skills for Professional Assistants, MS Word, MS Excel, and Forklift certificates. Upon completion of the College of Trades, 83% of clients were able to identify job stabilizing social supports and assistance; 85% of participants demonstrated increased digital literacy and computer skills, and 76% of clients graduated with the skills required for their desired job.

Clients graduating from the College of Trade saw an average pay per hour of \$19.32 for their first job placement after completing the program. Program graduates also had reduced recidivism: 91% of program graduates had no revocations, 96% no new charges, and no graduates had a new conviction.

Safehome

Safehome provides shelter and other assistance to those fleeing domestic violence, including assistance in addressing finances, such as direct financial assistance, financial literacy courses, assistance budgeting and improving credit, identifying barriers to

68 Johnson County residents engaged in 284 service encounters

\$21,000 Grant

employment, referrals to Workforce Partnership, and supporting employment. Through education, support, and referrals to community agencies, this program assists clients in taking control of their finances and moving towards financial independence as they work to rebuild their lives. In 2021, Safehome’s clients reported more dangerous domestic violence cases than in prior years (as reflected by more severe violence by the abuser). With its focus on housing first and rehousing for fleeing domestic violence clients, Safehome served fewer clients than anticipated in financial literacy and job-related supports: 147 clients from inside and outside of Johnson County.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: After four weeks in shelter, 92% of Safehome clients in need of employment had worked with staff to identify barriers to employment and 83% were referred to Workforce Partnership. After 8 weeks in shelter, 82.5% of clients working on financial independence had made a plan to pay of past due bills. Upon leaving Safehome, 100% of clients working on financial independence reported gaining knowledge about financial abuse during their time at Safehome.

The Salvation Army, Olathe

109 Johnson County residents received 21,010 nights of shelter, meals, and hygiene kits

\$23,000 Grant

The Salvation Army Johnson County Family Lodge assists homeless and near homeless families with shelter and food at their Olathe campus. Each family receives strengths-based case management where they develop an individualized housing and financial stabilization plan and are assisted in locating affordable housing and establishing savings. Family therapy, crisis counseling, parenting classes and financial literacy programming are also available. The Salvation Army participates in the Coordinated Entry System which began in late 2017 under the auspices of UCS-facilitated KS-505 Johnson County Continuum of Care on Homelessness. In 2021, the Family Lodge remained open and provided shelter throughout the year utilizing a staggered entry approach for new families and reserving a quarantine room to ensure the safety of clients during the pandemic. Due to these safety protocols, there were no instances of COVID in the shelter in 2021.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: 96% of families who exited the program moved into transitional or permanent housing. 100% of eligible families applied for and received mainstream services (medical assistance, childcare subsidy, WIC, work program supports, SNAP). 89% of households increased their skills or income through the program. 16 families were able to access financial assistance to pay down past eviction or utility bills, which had served as a barrier to new housing, and five children utilized financial assistance for daycare which enabled their parents to go to work.

Sunflower House

Johnson County residents served: 12,873

\$42,500 Grant

The Human Service Fund supported the Sunflower House child abuse prevention program – the Personal Safety Educational program. The program includes: 1) *Happy Bear*, an interactive play for children ages four through seven in public and private early childhood centers and elementary schools; 2) *Think First and Stay Safe* for PreK-5th grade students; 3) *E-Safety*, an internet safety program for middle school students; 4) *Keeping Kids Safe Online*, education for parents; 5) *Stewards of Children*, a child abuse prevention training for parents and caregivers; 6) *Child Protection*, an adult-

focused child sexual abuse prevention program; and, 7) *Mandated Reporter Training* which teaches attendees to recognize signs of sexual abuse, the correct procedures/laws for reporting, and how to handle a child's disclosure.

Traditionally, Sunflower House provides in-person trainings to large groups; due to the pandemic, Sunflower House now provides both virtual and in-person training options. Overall number of clients served is reduced from pre-pandemic levels due to limited large in-person trainings, but service numbers have increased from 2020. In 2021, Sunflower House added a program in Spanish for adults on how to recognize and report child abuse. In 2021, Sunflower House served 19,826 individuals from within and outside of Johnson County.

Outcomes achieved during 2021: Following training on personal safety, 97.25% of children indicated that they will report unwanted contact, including physical touches and electronic communication. 2,675 adults, including 539 within the special needs community, were trained regarding child abuse with 99% of adults indicating that they gained new information. After online safety training, 95% of youth indicated an increase in knowledge and 99% of adults indicated they will more closely monitor the electronic communications of children in their care.