



*it starts with us*

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



**United Community Services of Johnson County**

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# Message to the Community

## *It starts with us.*

This simple idea permeated all of UCS' work in 2022, helping us to remember that the choices we make today shape the future of our Johnson County community.

In 2022, UCS focused on actions that can make a big difference. Our programs and initiatives created space for people to better understand how they can play an active role in our community's future — from neighbors working together to advocate for better housing options, to jurisdictions creating plans for racial equity systems change. Our annual Human Service Summit focused on creating resilient communities and challenged participants to develop actions they can take to be a good neighbor, while our *One Small Step* initiative paired strangers with different political views for a conversation to demonstrate that civil dialogue is not only possible — it is necessary.

UCS continues to illuminate the need for a robust health and human services safety net to support people in need in our community. In 2022, UCS supported the efforts of Johnson County Government to conduct a needs assessment and gap analysis that identified meeting shelter and housing needs of residents experiencing homelessness as a top priority for the county.

UCS continued to monitor data trends that indicate disparities in health and well-being by race and other factors, helping us understand what steps we should take to advance equity and ensure a healthy, ready, and able workforce. The organization worked with community partners to launch a *Family First* series highlighting how women's health is integral to healthy families and an available workforce.

To achieve a resilient and sustainable community, each of us must take responsibility in fostering connection, understanding, and collaboration between people from different backgrounds and experiences. By doing this, we can build a brighter tomorrow for everyone.



Becca Yocham  
UCS Board President

Julie Brewer  
Executive Director

UCS' annual **Human Service Awards** recognize the profound impact we have in improving the human condition when we make the effort to *care, to help, and to connect* with those around us. Awards were presented at the **2022 Annual Meeting**.

The 2022 **Citizen of the Year Award** recipient was Maria Isabel Gutierrez-Flores, or as she is lovingly known to many: "Miss Isabel." This award recognizes an individual who has provided lasting contributions that enhance the well-being of Johnson County residents. Miss Isabel has the unique ability to recognize a need, but she doesn't stop there. The next question she asks is, "How can I help?" Much of her work has been focused on improving access to resources for our Spanish-speaking population, especially in areas that serve our families and children. Over the years, she has identified many gaps in the resources, training, and support for families who speak Spanish. Because of her work, Johnson County has had Spanish-speaking, accessible options for everything including CPR training, fire department courses, instruction on safe sleep for babies, parenting classes through Parents as Teachers, and more. The award was presented by UCS Board Member Vanessa Vaughn-West.



The 2022 **Distinguished Public Service Award** recognized Judge Thomas Foster. This award recognizes outstanding public service by a government official who has advanced human services to improve quality of life for Johnson County citizens. Judge Foster retired in 2020 after 21 years of service. During his time with the 10th Judicial District, he served as chief judge from 2009-2013. His body of work includes efforts to improve child support guidelines and juvenile facilities, including serving on the Kansas Juvenile Justice Review Committee. Judge Foster's focus on family issues included serving as chairman of the Kansas Child Support Guidelines Committee the last 11 years prior to his retirement and helping to start the Johnson County Family Court docket in 2006. The award was presented by UCS Board Member Dave White.

The 2022 **Excellence in Community Service Award** celebrated the collaborative partnership of the Olathe Leadership Lowrider Bike Club, Olathe Public Schools, and the Olathe Police Department. The Olathe Leadership Lowrider Bike Club not only offers high schoolers a chance to customize a flashy, envy-inducing bike, but also an opportunity to develop relationships with mentors and connect to the significant history of lowrider culture. The club has yielded a 100% graduation rate among participants, and the program is now being duplicated in Albuquerque and even Española, New Mexico which is the "unofficial lowrider capitol of the world." Locally, a new chapter has launched in Kansas City, Kansas. The award was presented by UCS Board Member Dr. Mickey McCloud.



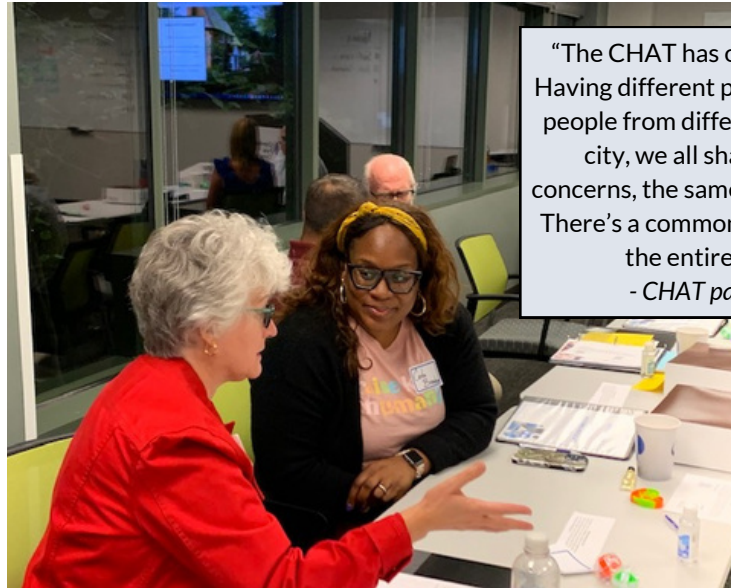


# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

## UCS launches the CHAT pilot to engage community housing advocates

UCS and the Johnson County Health Equity Network (HEN) partnered with Consensus KC to plan and implement the Community Housing Advocate Training (CHAT) pilot. UCS' prior work on the Johnson County Municipalities Community Housing Study and the Housing for All Toolkit prioritized the need to establish and support a network of community housing advocates. The CHAT pilot was designed as a possible path to establish a grassroots network of housing advocates that could identify and advocate around housing issues that were meaningful to them.

The city of Overland Park was selected as the first community for the CHAT pilot, and a group of 19 residents volunteered to participate. The participants came from each of the six council wards in Overland Park and represented a variety of lived experiences. The CHAT pilot included five two-hour training sessions that covered topics ranging from housing data and the history of housing in Johnson County, to advocacy methods and tools. Insights and lessons from the first CHAT pilot session will inform the development of the CHAT training manual, which will be adapted for use in additional communities in 2023.



"The CHAT has opened my eyes. Having different perspectives from people from different parts of the city, we all share the same concerns, the same things we value. There's a common thread through the entire group."  
- CHAT participant

## UCS convenes partners to address screen habits in youth and families

The Children's Coordinating Council partnered with the Transitional Age Youth Planning Project and the Alcohol Tax Fund to invite Tim DeWeese, Director of the Johnson County Mental Health Center and Amy Holsopple from Stand Together and Rethink Technology (START) to share tools and information with event participants to help families develop healthier relationships with technology.

START presented highlights from their Screen Sanity program which is designed so that workshop attendees can bring their learnings and the program itself back to the organizations and communities they serve. Event participants were introduced to five Screen Sanity modules. Each module was followed by guided group discussion. One participant shared that the program "not only brought forward heavy issues of concern, but made me more aware of my own habits with my phone."



# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

## Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness

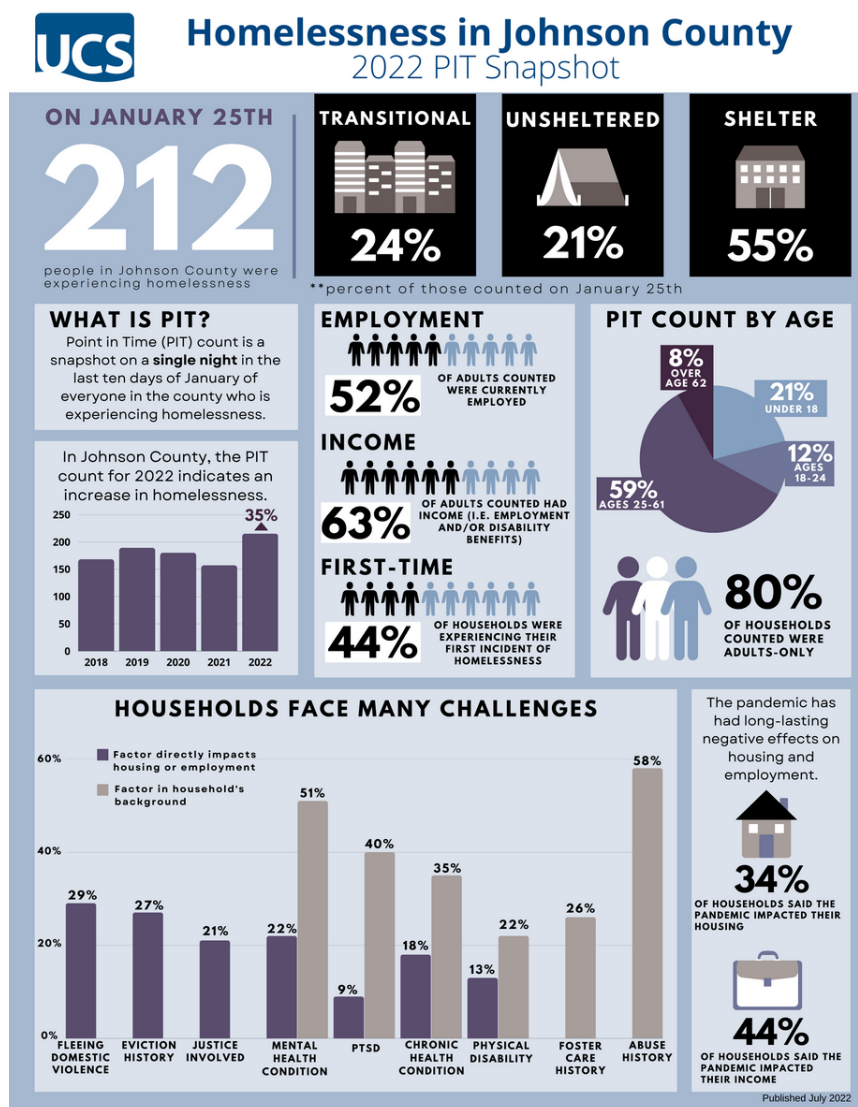
UCS is the lead agency for Johnson County's Continuum of Care on Homelessness, engaging approximately 75 organizations from the human service sector, local government, schools, and the faith community to respond to homelessness and poverty.

For the 2022 grant year, local agencies were awarded \$882,432 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to support transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing projects, as well as the Homeless Management Information System.

In addition to writing the collaborative application annually on behalf of local members, UCS is responsible for conducting regular meetings of the CoC membership and board, managing the CoC Rank and Review and the Point-In-Time count processes, and providing educational/best practices opportunities for all entities involved in serving our county's homeless population. Approximately 60 emergency shelter beds exist year-round for those experiencing homelessness in Johnson County which is home to more than 600,000 residents.

In 2022, UCS partnered with Kansas Housing Resources Corporation, Johnson County Housing Services and several human services agencies to roll out several responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Johnson County Housing Services received 62 Emergency Housing Vouchers and worked with UCS and the Coordinated Entry agencies to identify households experiencing homelessness as voucher recipients. UCS provided educational presentations to landlords in 2022 regarding the different types of rental assistance and supportive housing programs and the importance of landlords' participation in these programs.

UCS worked with Kansas Housing Resources Corporation, Johnson County Government, United Way of Greater Kansas City, and local agencies to connect Johnson County residents with Kansas Emergency Rent Assistance and Kansas Homeowners Assistance Fund. Johnson County Housing Services partnered with UCS and CoC partners to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment needed to submit the County's HOME-ARP Allocation Plan, new federal funds that will be used towards homelessness projects.



# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

## Five jurisdictions complete UCS' Racial Equity in Communities pilot

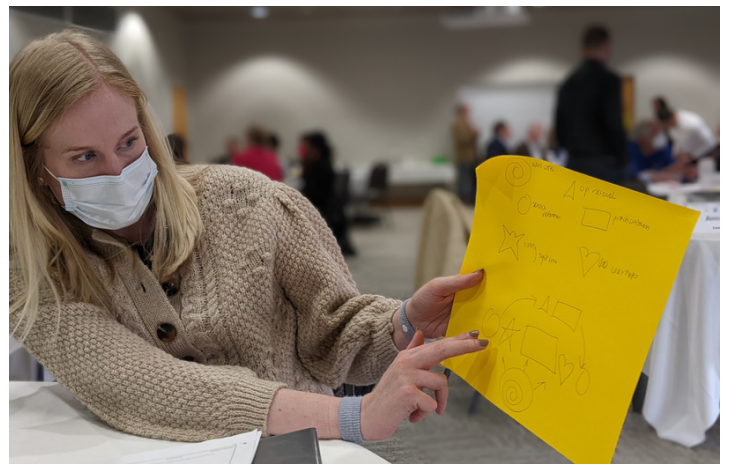


Racial Equity in Communities (REIC) is a six to eight-month program that provides a customized series of workshops to a community of practice that includes residents, staff, and elected officials from jurisdictions in Johnson County, Kansas. UCS wrapped up the Racial Equity in Communities pilot in March 2022.

The goal of REIC is to support implementation of culturally-responsive systems change in Johnson County jurisdictions that want to move beyond a symbolic awareness of racial equity towards substantive analysis, action, and accountability. REIC supports jurisdictions' capacity to (a) learn—define key REI terms and concepts, (b) respond—address residents' needs/call for action related to REI, and (c) govern—shape and adopt a policymaking framework that centers racial equity.

UCS engaged 45 residents, staff, and elected officials from five jurisdictions in the inaugural REIC community of practice. Those jurisdictions included Johnson County Government and the cities of Lenexa, Mission, Prairie Village and Roeland Park.

UCS convened a roundtable of Thought Partners including the University of Kansas' Public Management Center, Kansas Leadership Center, and Critical Social Change Project to assess the readiness of participating jurisdictions, design learning objectives and program activities, facilitate the workshops, and provide technical assistance to the jurisdictions.



“

We were well-prepared by REIC to address issues and to move forward with some confidence because we have a nice coalition that we built among those of us who participated. Having the resource of UCS and the consultants who helped with this work and the curriculum that they developed reinforced our confidence.

*-REIC pilot participant*

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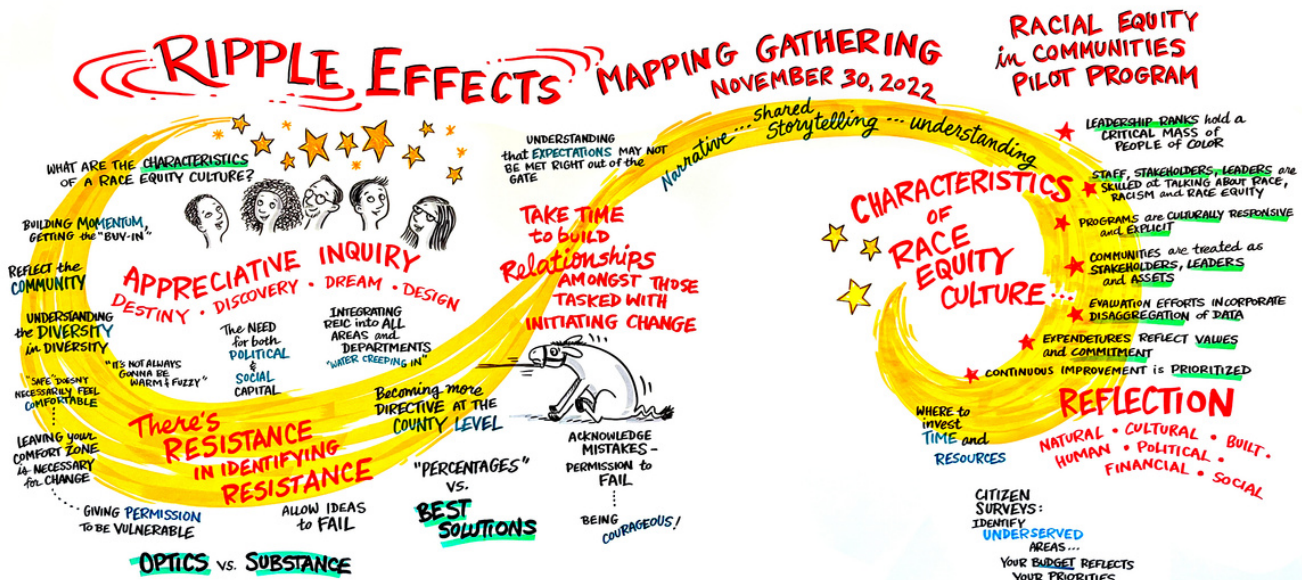
The program was implemented over the course of six sessions facilitated by the Thought Partners roundtable. Facilitated sessions lasted for 4-5 hours and took place between September 2021 and March 2022. Each session built upon the prior session, and participants received intersession homework to support applied knowledge and sustainability of the learning that was happening in the workshops.

By the end of the pilot, each jurisdiction made a preliminary plan for next steps for racial equity systems change/improvement, including details of key participants, infrastructure, and activities. Equipped with the leadership competencies and content knowledge gained in the workshops, jurisdictions began to implement their plans in 2022 with ongoing technical assistance from UCS and its partners.



## 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

UCS hosted two Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) gatherings in November 2022, eight months after the REIC pilot workshops concluded. REM is a participatory evaluation process that engages program participants and other community stakeholders to reflect upon and visually map intended and unintended changes. We chose this approach of evaluation so that REIC participants and their stakeholders could make sense of the impacts they see "rippling" through their systems. REM participants observed the impacts of REIC within their jurisdictions, and identified "community capitals" that need to be further developed to achieve racial equity systems change.



## UCS and partners encourage the community to take "One Small Step"

UCS partnered with Resurrection, A United Methodist Church, and Overflow Companies to produce a pilot podcast series called *JoCo's One Small Step*. Inspired by the One Small Step podcast framework from NPR's StoryCorps, UCS saw an opportunity to remind us of the humanity in everyone, even those with whom we disagree. Each episode brings together two Johnson County strangers with different political views to have a conversation.

When participants applied to be part of the One Small Step pilot, they filled out an online questionnaire about who they are, what they believe, and what their political values are. Those questionnaires are used by NPR's StoryCorps to "match" participants with someone who identifies more with the other side of the political spectrum. This makes for pairs who don't agree on everything — except that they're both willing to come have a conversation with someone who believes differently.

The project produced a [conversation](#) between two women who sit on opposite sides of the aisle, yet find common ground and mutual understanding; a [dialogue](#) between a man and a woman who are registered to two different political parties and expected to come into the conversation ready to disagree; and a [discussion](#) between a self-proclaimed "Eisenhower Republican" and a man who has recently been re-evaluating his political beliefs after a major life event and isn't sure he fits into one political party.



# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

## ATF and HSF grant programs secure resources to address community needs

UCS prioritizes community investments through Targeted Resource Allocation. UCS supports the Drug and Alcoholism Council of Johnson County (DAC) which, on behalf of the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners and ten cities, oversees the allocation of local Alcohol Tax Funds (ATF) for substance abuse prevention and treatment programs. More than 42,000 Johnson County residents benefited from programs funded in part by the Alcohol Tax Fund in 2022, with jurisdictions allocating just under \$2 million to 23 programs for direct services. In 2022, UCS also provided education to jurisdictions and potential recipients regarding the Opioid Settlement Funds (OSF) and Kansas Fights Addiction Act; as a result, in 2023, the DAC will launch the Substance Use Continuum of Care Fund (SUF), which will allow them to coordinate funding recommendations for expenditures of both OSF and ATF, further strengthening the substance use continuum of care.

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 that promote self-sufficiency and build well-being. In 2022, the Human Service Fund launched a small grants program, with grants of less than \$5,000 made available for new, growing, and grassroots organizations to inclusively support smaller nonprofits working to build their footprint and grant capacity. With a more than 10% total increase from 14 cities and Johnson County, the Human Service Fund saw a 50% increase in total applications and awarded \$410,830 to 19 programs, including 5 new programs. HSF grantees provided more than 221,000 units of service to more than 61,000 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.

## Success Story



Karli, an Olathe teenager, was attending a Halloween party when she was asked if she wanted to drink alcohol. She was able to remove herself from that situation. She has been a member of the Olathe Unit of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City for four years. She participates in her favorite program “SMART Girls” that provides health, fitness, prevention/education, and self-esteem enhancement. Karli talks about how Smart Girls, which receives support from the **Alcohol Tax Fund**, has helped her become a leader and not fall to peer pressure. Karli is a strong leader and a determined young lady who not only consistently attends school at Olathe North as a freshman, but also has a job after school. She is a positive role model for her siblings and others at the Club.



# 2022 CONVENINGS

## Human Service Summit

The UCS [2022 Human Service Summit](#) in June hosted more than 150 attendees in person for the first time since 2019. Leaders from various sectors of Johnson County came together to foster ideas about creating strong and resilient communities in the face of shared challenges. The event kicked off with a UCS [presentation](#) demonstrating the importance of creating strong communities by analyzing survey data. In partnership with American Public Square, the Summit hosted a discussion of multi-sector panelists moderated by Denesha Snell, Director of Programs at American Public Square. Panelists were intentionally selected for their roles in fostering community connectedness, including:

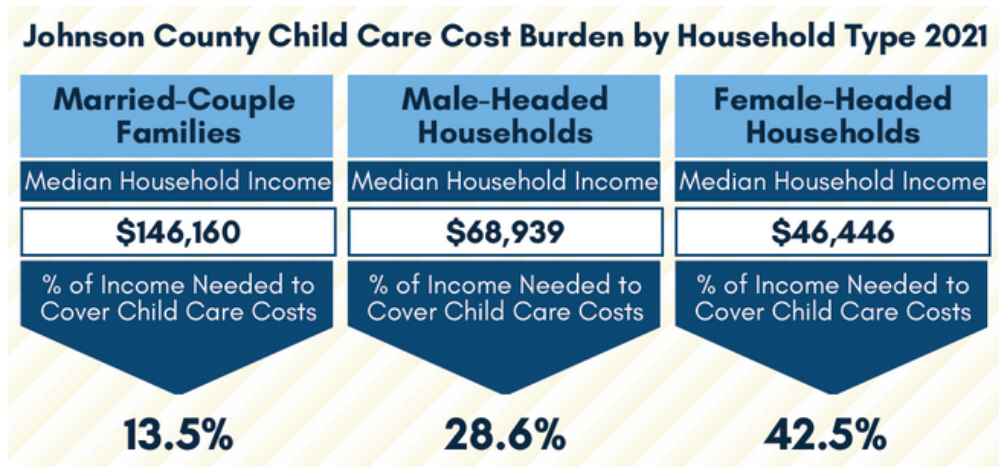
- [Erik Erazo](#), Executive Director of Diversity and Engagement, Olathe Public Schools
- [Andrea Generaux](#), Executive Director, Livable Neighborhoods Task Force, Wyandotte County
- [Colette Panchot](#), Secretary of the Board of Overland Park's Neighborhood Executive Committee, and Chair of the Beverly Estates Steering Committee
- [Tim Suttle](#), Lead Pastor of Redemption Church, and Co-Vice President of the Good Faith Network.

Following the panel, Tricia Maxfield, Civics Education Associate of American Public Square, led participants through a breakout session continuing the theme of connecting across differences. In the end, participants identified qualities of a good neighbor and qualities that contribute to a strong neighborhood.

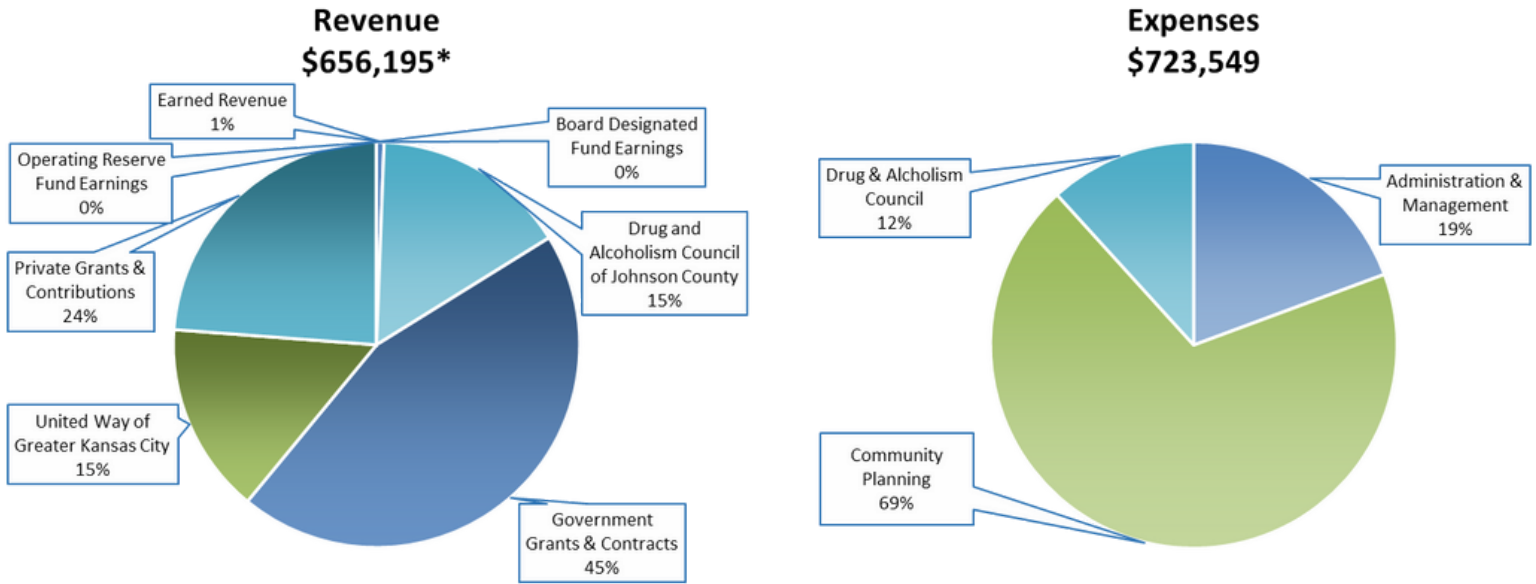
## Kansas Public Policy Forum

The [Kansas Public Policy Forum](#) in December marked the official release of priority policy issues for the 2023 legislative session. It was an opportunity to highlight the policy issues that support a healthy community and a ready workforce, with particular emphasis on issues affecting Kansas women. UCS completed a [Family First](#) research and policy series prior to the forum to raise awareness for issues that affect women in the workforce, including policies to stabilize childcare resources and support financial stability for families, including the more than 304,000 women and girls who play a vital role in our society, culture, and local economy.

Following the presentation on policy priorities, participants received a deeper dive into the challenges and opportunities facing women in Kansas from Wendy Doyle, President and CEO of United WE, and Brenda Sharpe, President and CEO of the REACH Healthcare Foundation. A legislative panel followed the presentation.



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW ♦



\* 2022 revenue figures do not include grant income received in 2021 for use in 2022.

❖ Human Service Funds are held by UCS in a separate account and paid out to grantees twice a year once collected from contributing jurisdictions. Audit guidance indicates UCS no longer recognizes pass through grant dollars on its revenue and expense balance sheet. 2022 Grant Allocations to agencies totaled \$410,830.

♦ Audited Financials for 2022 will be available July 2023.

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# FUNDING PARTNERS

## THANK YOU TO OUR PLANNING PARTNERS



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Forward OP Community Corporation	Johnson County Mental Health	REACH Healthcare Foundation
Health Forward Foundation	Kansas Gas Service	UMB Financial Corporation
Johnson County CDBG	Mid-America Regional Council	United Methodist Church of the Resurrection
Johnson County Community College Fdn.	Overland Park Rotary Club Foundation	Wealthplan Partners

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## JURISDICTION FUNDERS

**ATF participating jurisdictions:** De Soto, Gardner, Johnson County, Leawood, Lenexa, Merriam, Mission, Olathe, Overland Park, Prairie Village, and Shawnee

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

**REIC participating jurisdictions:** Johnson County, Lenexa, Mission, Prairie Village, and Roeland Park



# ABOUT UCS

Since 1967, UCS has been the catalyst and resource to ensure that the human service system meets the needs of Johnson County, Kansas residents.

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' vision is that all people have the opportunity to fulfill their potential and contribute to the health and well-being of the community.

UCS provides information, trends analysis and documentation to enhance community-wide planning and decision-making. 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**.

Based on the belief that all individuals and entities contribute to and share responsibility for the common good, the following principles guide UCS activities:

- Human services play a vital role in a healthy community, advance quality of life and contribute to economic vitality.
- All community sectors play valuable roles in advancing human service solutions.
- Human services can be strengthened through policy advocacy and resource investment.
- Collaboration fosters a comprehensive approach to multi-faceted challenges.
- Community planning can produce strategic change and improvements.

