



ENDING HOMELESSNESS: POLICY SOLUTIONS



WHO WE ARE

The Kansas Housing Advocacy Network (KHAN) is a statewide coalition of Continuums of Care on Homelessness, nonprofits, faith-based groups, and local governments – providing data, education, and evidence-based policy recommendations to increase housing security and end homelessness.

THE PROBLEM

Kansas faces a housing shortage, with ~100,000 homes needed to support lower-income Kansans. This shortage is compounded by economic growth, making it harder for seniors to downsize, young adults to move out, and families on fixed incomes to find affordable homes. Rising housing costs and inflation mean more Kansans are falling behind and becoming homeless. Without stable housing, Kansans risk losing more than just a place to call home – they lose a foundation for health, education, work, and community.

THE SOLUTION

Sustainable economic growth in Kansas requires attainable housing – jobs and homes go hand-in-hand. When Kansans have housing that fits their needs and budget, employers can attract and retain talent – ensuring Kansas thrives.

It will take a **three-part approach** for Kansas to sustain economic growth, increase housing security, and end homelessness:

- 1 Build affordable housing where Kansans need it by incentivizing development and retention efforts
- 2 Act upstream to keep cost-burdened Kansans housed
- 3 Invest in wraparound services and housing supports to stabilize Kansans experiencing homelessness (*detailed recommendations on back*)

STEPS TO END HOMELESSNESS IN KANSAS

1 Provide State Matching Funding for Programs Ending Homelessness

Kansas has 5 Continuums of Care (CoCs) that coordinate the work of agencies across the state to effectively end homelessness using federal funding. State matching funds, about \$3M, will allow nonprofits to fully access and leverage federal dollars to expand needed programs and track results through the national Built for Zero initiative. This ensures smart spending and good decision-making based on data.



MESI is the only emergency shelter in Manhattan and we always stretch to meet the needs of neighbors experiencing homelessness. Our community is very supportive. But, need has grown and we cannot raise enough to access the federal funds to provide critical services. A state funded match would be tripled by federal dollars - a wise investment.

2 Support Community and Housing Stability through Eviction Mediation, Eviction Sealing and Expungement

Housing instability costs property owners, tenants, employers and the community. In Kansas, eviction filings are permanent even when they are old, dismissed, or satisfied. Property owners and management companies routinely decline to accept tenants with an eviction filing. Eviction mediation helps property owners and tenants reach the best solution. Eviction sealing and expungement keeps tenant records up to date for housing applications.

As a homeless service provider in Western Kansas, it is a challenge to find housing for a tenant who has a past eviction filing. Landlords and management companies use electronic applications and there's no one to talk to. So even if an eviction is dismissed or paid off, the automatic response is to refuse the rental application.



3 Make Targeted Investments in Successful Housing + Services Programs to Ensure Rural Access and Reduce Waitlists

Kansas has a number of effective programs that combine services with housing supports like: Supportive Housing Funds, Projects for Assistance in Transition of Homelessness (PATH), Options Housing, SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR), and IDD waivers. Each needs additional targeted investment. Rural Kansans, who don't have access to CMHCs, need other providers to be permitted to access reimbursement for delivering these programs.



As a teenager, Roger had a job but was homeless because he couldn't afford housing. At a shelter, a case manager helped Roger find a home. With a safe place to live, Roger participated in vocational and life skills training and built up his income. More street outreach and housing case managers are needed to help Kansans like Roger get on their feet faster.