

## MARC NEWS RELEASE

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## KC COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund supports eviction prevention efforts

Eviction prevention is one of three targeted areas of investments in the latest round of funding awarded by the Kansas City Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, which was established to address critical needs for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The \$1 million award will support a collaborative partnership to help those in danger of being evicted or losing their homes through foreclosure as a result of the coronavirus-caused recession. This round of funding also supports programs to increase COVID-19 testing and other public health efforts supporting vulnerable populations and essential workers, childcare and out-of-school time programs, and broader digital access to support remote learning, economic opportunities and telehealth.

Available support through the eviction prevention program includes:

- Legal representation focused on eviction prevention and financial assistance to prevent evictions.
- Advocacy for homeowners focused on loan modification, foreclosure prevention and assistance navigating the foreclosure process, as well as financial assistance to prevent foreclosures.
- Case management, including help finding new housing.

Renters facing eviction may receive legal assistance to halt the eviction and funds to help pay past-due rent. Homeowners facing foreclosure may receive assistance to restructure their loans. In some counties, there are also funds available to help pay utility bills.

Individuals needing assistance are asked to call 211, United Way of Greater Kansas City's help and information line, or visit the [website](#). They will be directed to the appropriate social service agency for help. In some cases, the call specialist can help with necessary forms while on the call.

During the federal eviction moratorium in effect until Dec. 31, 2020, those facing eviction also need to file a declaration to avoid being evicted for non-payment of rent but may still seek help from 211.

"Having a lawyer meant the difference between me and my kids being housed or being on the streets when our landlord sued us," said Jamie T., a client of Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom. "Me and my husband have health problems that make the coronavirus really dangerous to us. Having to go to a homeless shelter or taking our family of seven to another family's home would have been life threatening."

The goal of this effort is not only to prevent loss of housing, but to preserve tenants' and homeowners' qualifications for housing opportunities in the future. "With these funds and services in place, the region is positioned to help more people avoid homelessness — and its subsequent health consequences — during this pandemic," said Jim MacDonald, chief community impact officer at United Way of Greater Kansas City. "It's never been more important for our community to come together to help each other out."

The eviction prevention effort is coordinated by United Way of Greater Kansas City and supports an overlapping set of initiatives to provide legal and social services. Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom, Kansas Legal Services, Legal Aid of Western Missouri and the legal clinic at the UMKC School of Law will provide legal services, and more than a dozen social services agencies will provide direct service to clients in the metro area.

The Kansas City Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund award will supplement other public and private funds earmarked for regional housing stability efforts. Additional funds from Clay, Jackson, Johnson and Wyandotte counties, including CARES Act funding, total \$7.7 million (\$1 million in Clay County, 1.5 million in Jackson County, \$3.3 million in Johnson County, \$1.9 million in Wyandotte County).

The Kansas City Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund would not be possible without the generous contributions of many foundations, corporations and individuals that have invested over \$17 million in response to the urgent needs of area residents. "Many of our community's most vulnerable populations are facing severe rent burdens and are at risk of experiencing homelessness due to COVID-19," said Denise St. Omer, vice president of grantmaking and inclusion initiatives at the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation. "But we're encouraged by the generosity and collaboration from our partners who are doing everything they can to help those in need."

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The Kansas City Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund was created in March 2020 to address the needs of the Kansas City region's most vulnerable communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund is coordinated by the [Greater Kansas City Community Foundation](#), [United Way of Greater Kansas City](#), [LISC Greater Kansas City \(Local Initiatives Support Corporation\)](#), and the [Mid-America Regional Council \(MARC\)](#).

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