

BOCC 2023 – 2024 Priorities

January 2024 Report

The Johnson County Board of County Commissioners establishes its strategic priorities for periods of two years. The board adopted its priorities for 2023-24 on April 20, 2023. The following is a report out of our progress for January to December 2023.



Improving housing options



Healthy and safe community



Focus on infrastructure



Investment in our staff



Improving housing options

Impact statement

Safe, stable, and attainable housing is a foundational element in an individual's life and the overall health of a community. Current activities include planning for those experiencing homelessness, vulnerable populations, and justice involved residents and supporting attainable housing projects across the continuum.

Progress towards priorities and outcomes: January to December 2023

Chronic homelessness (experiencing long-term homelessness) and experiencing homelessness (temporary or sporadic homelessness)

- **NEW:** Homeless Services Center
 - On Dec 14, 2023, the Board agreed to enter a purchase agreement with the owner of two properties at 9461 and 9471 Lenexa Drive. The Board approved \$6.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) for the project, including \$6 million for the purchase and \$500,000 to conduct due diligence activities.
 - The competitive RFP process to identify an owner/operator is being managed by United Community Services of Johnson County. The RFP ([available here](#)) was released December 22, 2023, and an award is expected to be made by the beginning of April 2024.
- Building/purchase funding allocated for non-congregate shelter
 - \$3.9 million new HUD-HOME funds
 - \$6 million State Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
- Funded a community-wide report on homelessness prepared by the Dignity Project

Vulnerable populations (Special housing needs)

- **UPDATE:** The BOCC extended the Eviction Mediation Pilot Program through December 2024 by approving an additional \$146,000 on November 9 bringing the total to \$158,000.
 - The pilot showed that 82% of the mediated cases avoided an eviction judgment because the tenant successfully met the terms of the mediation agreement as negotiated.

- A collaborative workgroup including Court Services, data analysts from the Department of Health and Environment, staff from Housing Services, Human Services and United Community Services continue meet regularly throughout the pilot to ensure data collection goes smoothly and resources are directed to residents in need.
- The goal of the expanded pilot is to avoid eviction judgments.

Cost-Burdened Renters (>30% of income going to housing)

- **NEW:** HOME Investment Partnerships Program
 - Provided financial support (\$1m) for a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit project in Gardner called Prairiebrooke.
 - **76 units total, occupancy began December 1, 2023**
 - New process for affordable housing developers to apply for HOME funds to support affordable housing projects in 2024
- **NEW:** Provided financial support (\$1m loan of Countywide Support Funds) for a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit project in Shawnee called Hedge Lane.
 - **144 units total, occupancy began November 1, 2023**
- **UPDATE:** Housing Choice Vouchers – Johnson County Housing Authority
 - September 1, 2023 – HUD awarded **19 additional HCVs** to the Housing Authority. This is the first increase since 2010. This brings the total HCVs for Johnson County to 1,466.
 - Increased in market rents for landlords approved by HUD November 2023 through all of 2024. Provides greater options for potential tenants and assists with landlord recruitment.
 - Notified by HUD that in 2025, the Johnson County Housing Authority will be required to adopt Small Area Fair Market Rent (SAFMR). This is payment standards for housing subsidies by zip code and will allow more low-income families to afford to live in higher cost of living areas in the county.
 - Landlord Incentive Pilot Program was authorized by the BOCC.
 - \$200,000 of SLFRF was allocated in June 2023.
 - Sign On Bonuses for landlords.
 - Funds exhausted in November 2023
 - **Over 80 low-income families housed**
 - **23 new landlords recruited**
 - Damages Reimbursement Claim Fund - \$50,000 of Countywide Support Funds
 - Currently no claims have been submitted.
- **NEW:** Housing Coordinator researching Housing Trust Fund policy/program options.
 - In June 2023, the Board directed staff to research the feasibility of creating a housing trust fund in Johnson County.
 - Research was completed and a report was presented to the BOCC on October 26, 2023. Consensus was to prepare a proposal for consideration.

Potential Homeowners (1st time home buyers; transition from rental to home ownership)

- Thirty families enrolled in Family Self Sufficiency program for Housing Choice Voucher and Emergency Housing Voucher participants. Goal to add five additional families.
- Housing Counseling partnership with CHES, Inc. established August 2023 – provides HUD Certified Housing Counseling. Goal is to refer 15-20 families for counseling and 3-5 homes purchased by the end of 2024.

NEW: Cost-burdened homeowners (>30% of income going to housing)

- HOME Investment Partnerships Program
 - Provided financial support (\$1m) for an affordable home ownership project through Habitat for Humanity of Kansas City in Olathe.
 - **14 single family homes** will be built and sold to income eligible homeowners in 2024.
 - HOME Rehabilitation and Minor Home Rehabilitation
 - Income eligible homeowners can apply for assistance with maintaining their homes:
 - **12 Homeowners served through HOME Rehab in 2023**
 - **29 Homeowners served through Minor Home in 2023**
 - Marketing piece on Minor Home in *Best Times Magazine* September / October 2023 issue.
 - Contractor recruitment and outreach at the Contractor Licensing Fall Conference.
 - Innovation Team project completed to improve efficiency in program delivery and recruit contractors completed December 2023.

Additional information, updates or next steps:

Chronic homelessness (experiencing long-term homelessness) and experiencing homelessness (temporary or sporadic homelessness)

- Homeless Services Center
 - Finalize discussions with the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services that will support the community's effort to comprehensively address homeless services.
 - Continued vetting of the properties and RFP process is underway.

Vulnerable populations (Special housing needs)

- **NEW:** SLFRF proposal for additional support for Eviction Mediation and Landlord Incentive Pilot Programs to be considered by the BOCC on January 18, 2024.
- **NEW:** Johnson County Housing Authority is exploring new housing voucher opportunities.
 - Foster Youth Initiative vouchers for youth aging out of foster care

- HUD-VASH vouchers for homeless veterans
- Mainstream vouchers for people ages 18-61 who are disabled
- Local property tax relief program for seniors and disabled veterans will be [taking applications](#) in January 2024.
- Four new Friends of JCDS houses are in various stages of development and will provide housing to 14 individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability, served by JCDS.

Cost-burdened homeowners (>30% of income going to housing)

- **NEW:** HUD-HOME Rehab and Minor Home Repair
 - Researching the development of a public/private partnership that streamlines/directs referrals to range of programs, co-locates services/funding, helps braid funding sources to make more repairs to a single home.
 - Establishing marketing efforts for Minor Home Repair with Aging and Human Services and DTI-AIMS staff.
- **NEW:** Housing Services researching Weatherization Program for low-income homeowners



Healthy and safe community

Impact statement

As we continue to make health and safety a priority, we will do so through the lens of sustainability and diversity, equity and inclusion to promote a healthier environment and create a sense of belonging/connection throughout Johnson County. This will be accomplished by considering sustainability and inclusiveness when making funding and policy recommendations/decisions.

Progress toward priorities and outcomes January to December 2023

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Employees, Programs, Structures

- Review of county policies, procedures and practices to align with DEIB objectives.
- Language accessibility outcome-based project on schedule.
- Staff training and initiatives.
 - Continuously improve employee survey results
 - Core VIBE Team training and education directly reaching 25% of staff annually.
 - Expanding opportunities for staff to engage in DEI initiatives through Core VIBE workshops and department/agency/offices DEI teams (D/A/O VIBE Teams)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Advisory Coalition

- Recommendations for training, policies and practices in programs, activities, functions – existing and proposed.
- Promote civility and enhance communication and understanding through community outreach, assessment of current DEI initiatives and community partners.

Sustainability: Employees, Programs, Structures

- Review of county policies, procedures and practices to align with sustainability objectives to:
 - Reduce energy consumption and solid waste
 - Increase recycling and local sourcing
 - Improve water management
 - Promote efficient transportation
- A 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emission compared to 2013 was reported in the April 2023 greenhouse gas inventory.

- **Sustainability: Advisory Coalition**
- Encourage environmental stewardship across the Johnson County community by:
 - Raising awareness
 - Participating in regional planning with collaborative partnerships
- Advise the county in establishing sustainability goals and priorities.
- Advise and assist with practical methods to:
 - Reach sustainability goals
 - Identify and pursue funding opportunities

Additional information, updates and next steps:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Employees, Programs, Structures

- **NEW:** ICMA published an article featuring JoCo’s VIBE program. Quote from the article stated, “From the top down, the Voices of Inclusion, Belonging and Equity (VIBE) efforts in Johnson County Kansas, are a shining example of a serious commitment to their people.”
- **UPDATE:** Internal review of the BOCC agenda process and documentation has been conducted. County Manager staff are reviewing and considering recommendations for implementation.
- **NEW:** The Core VIBE Team has developed a strategic plan and prioritized language accessibility, initiating in 2023.

Examples:

- FAC provided translation services in Spanish and Amharic (Ethiopia) for employee benefit open enrollment.
- FAC now produces a Spanish version of the internal monthly newsletter.
- HRD provided Spanish and Amharic translation for New Hire Orientation.
- HRD provided American Sign Language Translation for LEAP.
- In addition to the core VIBE Team, an additional 40 VIBE volunteers are supporting web content, recruiting and learning programs.
 - **UPDATE:** 34 VIBE workshops for employees held in 2023.
 - Total attendees approximately 575 employees.
 - Held numerous sessions across the county on 25 different learning and development topics including a Learning Lab on navigating grief in the workplace.
 - Published 28 VIBE articles in 2023.
- Departments/Offices/Agencies are following up with action plans from the DEIB employee survey.
 - **UPDATE:** Department of Health and Environment’s Strategic Planning and Health Equity Council is developing a DHE DEIB glossary to assure all DHE staff have a shared definition for terms used at DHE and to meet their Public Health Accreditation Board accreditation criteria.
- **NEW:** Increased focus on building diverse talent pipelines.
 - Mental Health is automatically posting jobs on HireForDiversity.com to reach a more diverse population.
- **UPDATE:** Nine DOA VIBE Teams have been established with their specific organizations.

- Examples of significant milestones and accomplishments from both the VIBE Team and the DOA's include:
 - REDLINED exhibit received two national awards
 - Website recognized for ease of access for those with disabilities
 - JCPRD opened another "Park for All"
 - 2nd annual Juneteenth observance drew an estimated 400-500 people with engagement by 40 staff representing 13 departments and planned by a committee of 10 county staff.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Advisory Coalition

- On June 29, the BOCC established the Coalition.
- Appointments to the 15-member Coalition were made in September.
- **UPDATE:** Coalition held first meeting on December 5, 2023. Members were sworn in, shared introductions and received legal and board training. In February the Coalition will consider adoption of bylaws and identify strategic priorities.

Sustainability: Employees, Programs, Structures

- Provide educational materials, how-to suggestions, and updates on both the employee intranet and external web site.
- Accomplishments and activities include:
 - LEED Gold Certification for Johnson County
 - Received Top 30 in Local Government Green Power Partner Ranking (#12 on list)
 - GHG update reflected a **reduction** in emissions, establishing a more precise GHG baseline.
 - Regional recognitions in numerous programs including:
 - Stormwater management based upon watershed boundaries
 - Wastewater design and operations of Tomahawk plant
 - Park and Recreation District invasive species management
 - **NEW:** Results of the [Urban Heat Island Mapping Campaign](#) were released on November 29, 2023. A web map has been created allowing the public to submit potential locations to measure heat.
 - **NEW:** Received notification of being awarded a grant through the Carbon Reduction Program to expand the reach of 17 additional EV charging stations to public locations throughout Johnson County. Purchased 7 EVs in 2023.
 - **NEW:** Facilities department is in the process of updating its Guide to Sustainability to incorporate sustainability in new and renovated facilities.

Sustainability: Advisory Coalition

- On June 29, the BOCC established the Coalition.
- Appointments to the 15-member Coalition were made in September.
- **UPDATE:** Coalition held first meeting on December 5, 2023. Members were sworn in, shared introductions and received legal and board training. Meetings will be scheduled for 2024.



Focus on infrastructure

Impact statement

Identify needs and seek partnerships to deliver initiatives for the rapid development of the northwest portion of Johnson County while creating an Area Development Plan that will include not only traditional land use, but also transportation, transit, and broadband infrastructure.

Progress towards priorities and outcomes: January to December 2023

Transportation/Transit and Fire Station

- Create a transportation plan update for the northwest area of the County with the Kansas Department of Transportation and local partners on
 - **Completed:** First coordinating kick off meeting in July 2023.
 - **NEW: Ongoing:** Agreements with the cities participating in the planning efforts and the development of study scope documents have begun and are near completion. Initial discussions with the selected consultant have begun.
- Investigate existing and innovative transit solutions for employers in the region with KDOT, De Soto and other transportation providers.
 - **Completed:** Identified the correct point of contacts for Panasonic.
 - **NEW: Ongoing:** Transit and CMO staff have met with multiple members of Panasonic's team, including their newly hired HR lead. Transit staff have proposed an initial transit solution in the form of a van pool service through Enterprise and the KCATA (Johnson County funds this regional van pool project through a takedown of our federal 5307 urban funding of approximately \$24k annually). Transit staff have also requested additional information from Panasonic in regard to their targeted labor sheds and recruitment centers.
- Plan, construct and own a Northwest Fire District fire station which will support development and housing in that area.
 - **Completed:** Facilities Management selected a firm to design the station.
 - **NEW:** Funding received from Panasonic.

Park and Recreation

- Update the Kill Creek Park and Sunflower Nature Park: Master Plan (including adding ~2000 acres to Kill Creek Park).
 - **NEW:** The master planning project/process kicked off in December 2023. Stantec was selected to provide professional master planning and community engagement services to JCPRD.
- Design Kill Creek Streamway Trail – North of Kill Creek Park (connecting Kill Creek Streamway to Kill Creek Park with donated Sunflower land).

Community Planning

- Comprehensive Plan update for the northwest portion of the county for land use related to housing density and area covered in the comp plan.
 - **Completed:** Approved by the Board of County Commissioners Q2 2023.
- Begin conversations between residents in unincorporated northwest Johnson County, the state and private sectors to identify solutions to increase broadband access. Meeting will gauge interest in broadband for area residents.
 - **Completed:** Outreach to a private sector provider.
 - **NEW:** Initial meeting with residents of the unincorporated area with potential providers and Kansas Broadband Office.
 - **NEW:** A broadband task force comprised of members of DTI and PLN are exploring next steps to coordinate with the Kansas Broadband Office.

Additional information, updates and next steps:

Transportation/Transit and Fire Stations

- Create a transportation plan update for the northwest area of the county with the Kansas Department of Transportation and local partners
 - **Next Step:** Finalize consensus scope of work.
 - Also finalize the funding agreement for local road improvements with KDOT and submit to the BOCC for approval.
- Investigate existing and innovative transit solutions for employers in the region with KDOT, De Soto and other transportation providers.
 - **Next Step:** Determine correct entities/individuals to develop transit options: Kansas Department of Commerce, Panasonic, KCATA, JCT, Chamber of Commerce(s) Q1 2024.
- Plan, construct and own a Northwest Fire District fire station which will support development and housing in that area.
 - **UPDATE: Next Step:** CMAR contract will be coming to BOCC this quarter.

- **UPDATE:** Waiting on the land transfer from Sunflower Redevelopment Corporation.

Park and Recreation

- Update the Kill Creek Park and Sunflower Nature Park: Master Plan (including adding ~2000 acres to Kill Creek Park).
 - **UPDATE: Next Step:** Timelines are forthcoming.
- Design Kill Creek Streamway Trail – North of Kill Creek Park (connecting Kill Creek Streamway to Kill Creek Park with donated Sunflower land).
 - **Next Step:** Accept property transfer and start design of a connecting segment of the Kill Creek Streamway trail, bringing the total contiguous length up to ~11 miles.
 - **NEW:** The Army to review metes and bounds legal descriptions for all parcels to be transferred and certain environmental elements on the parcels. This includes, but is not exclusively, JCPRD transfer property.

Community Planning

- **NEW:** Comprehensive Plan update for the northwest portion of the county for land use related to housing density and area covered in the comp plan.
 - **Next Steps:** Planning staff will begin work with a consultant for the update to the Johnson County Subdivision Regulations. This will be a multi-year effort that will kick off in 2024.
- Begin conversations between residents in unincorporated northwest Johnson County, the state, and private sectors to identify solutions to increase broadband access. Meeting will gauge interest in broadband for area residents.
 - **UPDATE: Next Steps:** Begin work on a Broadband Plan to obtain funding from the State of Kansas Broadband Office and establish key goals, objectives and performance benchmarks.



Invest and support a forward-thinking, diverse and high-performing workforce

Impact statement

A resilient workforce that maximizes the county’s ability to deliver exceptional services, contributing to a high quality of life for Johnson County residents.

Progress towards priorities and outcomes: January to December 2023

Recruitment and Retention

- **Annual turnover goal: 10% - 14%**
 - For the period 1/1/23 thru 7/31/23 we are at 6.85% turnover, which annualized would result in 11.7% turnover for 2023 should the trend continue. At this same time last year, we were at 8.04%.
 - **NEW:** Turnover continued to trend lower for the period 8/1/23 thru 12/31/23. Lower than normal turnover in the last two months of 2023 resulted in a final turnover of 11.6% which is just below the forecasted rate from the previous report. By comparison, turnover in 2022 was 16.01%, which is a significant improvement in year-over-year performance.

- **Number of applications per open position goal: 20**

	Jan 1 to July 31, 2023	Aug 1 to Nov. 23, 2023	Nov. 6 – Dec. 31, 2023	Jan 1 to July 31, 2024	Aug 1 to Dec. 31, 2024
Average applications per open position	16	32.5 (Post salary market adjustments)	40.4 (Post implementation of easier-to-use iCIMS applicant system)		

- For the period 1/1/23 thru 7/31/23 we are averaging 16 applications per open position.
- **NEW:** For the period 8/1/23 thru 11/5/23 we averaged 32.5 applications per open position. This is an increase over the previous period that began to increase after the implementation of the salary market adjustments.
- **NEW:** For the period 11/6/23 thru 12/31/23 we averaged 40.4 applications per open position. This increase is largely due to the implementation of iCIMS, our applicant tracking system, which provides a much faster and simpler process for candidates.

- **NEW:** Vacancy rate goal: 5%

	Beginning of 2023	End of 2023
Vacancy rate by open position	452	264
Vacancy rate by percentage	11.3%	6.5%

- The county’s overall vacancy rate went from 11.3% or 452 open positions at the beginning of 2023 to 6.5% or 264 open positions at the end of December 2023. This impressive improvement over the course of the last year is the result of the Human Resource Department’s enhanced proactive recruitment strategies that focused on how to recruit differently for hard-to-fill positions as well as working with regional partners related to job fairs and educational institutions. Additionally, the implementation of a new pay structure positioned the County to be more competitive in the local market.

Workplace culture

- **Goal for employee response to the survey question: “More often than not, I am very satisfied to work here”:** 80% positive or higher
 - In 2020, the positive response to this question was 82.3%, it was not surveyed in 2021, and was 76% in 2022.
 - **NEW:** The 2024 survey is scheduled to launch in late January, and updated results will be reflected on the next report.

Additional information, updates or next steps:

Recruitment and Retention

- **UPDATE:** A new JoCo pay table implemented July 9, 2023, allowed us to align our pay structure more closely with the market. Additionally, a 2% range movement adjustment was implemented for the Emergency Services pay table with the intent to bridge the gap for the anticipated step pay plan that becomes effective January 7, 2024. Today, the county has almost all Departments, Agencies, and Offices achieving 90% or more of their positions filled. Today, no division or work group within a DAO is under 80% vacancy and only four DAOs are under the 90% threshold, and they all still have 85% or more of their positions filled.
- **UPDATE:** Staff attended 17 job fairs, sponsored 23 jobs with Indeed, and provided sourcing on 30 jobs through LinkedIn and Fetcher job boards by reaching out to 1,312 passive candidates which resulted in 3 hires. In addition, staff managed connections with specialty recruitment boards resulting in 2,039 jobs being sent to hard-to-reach populations like veterans and other diverse candidates.
- **UPDATE:** Many HR and organizational staff worked on the implementation of the iCIMS Applicant Tracking System. This new system has already contributed to improvements such as increasing the applications per requisition, drastically reducing time to apply to a three-minute average, and increased communications. As of 12/31/23, nearly seven hundred candidate contacts have been made through text messaging alone.

- The Board of County Commissioners adopted KPERS Deferred Retirement Option Program, which allows KPF members that are eligible for full retirement to earn their salaries and retirement benefits at the same time. By incentivizing eligible staff, it allows the county to reap the benefits of experienced staff not separating from employment, so they are available to guide and mentor less experienced staff at time when recruitment is difficult.

Workplace culture

- Our next employee survey will be held in early 2024, followed by an employee benefits survey in late spring 2024.
- We believe that our strong HPO culture supports employee satisfaction. Since January 1, 542 employees have attended the LEAP (leadership empowers all people) training.
- Our wellness program was enhanced by our participation in Corporate Challenge. We had 307 Johnson County employees representing 27 departments compete in 30 events, earning us a 9th place finish in Division A.
- **UPDATE:** In addition to the estimated 60 VIBE-related programs, events, and initiatives that have taken place in 2023, HR has facilitated 35 VIBE educational workshops and presentations for approx. 575 employees of various departments this year to date.
- The Innovation Team’s new steering committee is helping to guide and prioritize the work in this area. We also have more than 100 “sparks” – employees embedded in the organization available to assist with innovation team projects.
- Employees gave back to the community through the annual Feed the Need campaign collecting 256,000 pounds of food, nearly double from the 2022 campaign. Activities as part of this year’s campaign included Canstruction, Event Day, Spring into Summer Golf Tournament, Family and Friends Night Out, and more. We also have more than 230 employees supporting United Way through payroll deduction.
- Employees enjoyed a successful Juneteenth celebration, and over 400 employees and their family members attended the County’s employee night at Theater in the Park in July.
- New policies and procedures were adopted enhancing tuition reimbursement, bringing the County into compliance with the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and other minor housekeeping revisions.
- **NEW:** An employee benefits and wellness survey is scheduled to be released in May 2024.
- **NEW:** Since January 1, 639 employees have attended LEAP (Leadership Empowers All People), 666 have attended the Supervisor Training Institute, 587 have attended New Employee Orientation, and 513 have attended a collection of other classes provided by the HR Organizational Learning and Development Team. All told, the HR OL&D team provided training to 2,405 staff during 2023. In addition, 3,421 staff have attended online courses developed by the OL&D team. This leads to a grand total of 5,286 training opportunities provided by the HR OL&D team during 2023.
- **NEW:** The 2024 Wellness campaign that began August 1, 2022, through July 31, 2023, continued to have positive participation in earning both wellness and tobacco incentives. Of eligible employees, over 69% employees earned the wellness incentive while over 91% earned the tobacco incentive. Both percentages are well above industry standards. All employees who didn’t receive an incentive will pay a higher medical contribution rate in 2024.
- **NEW:** Benefits staff completed another successful Open Enrollment campaign. With a new

Benefits Consultant, Benefits has access to a new communications vendor who developed two videos and a new plan option tool to assist employees in electing the right plans for them. This tool was much more user friendly than the Excel-based tool offered in the past. Both the videos and analytical tool was heavily used by employees.

- **NEW:** Benefits developed a pilot program with Blue KC to create an email campaign with an embedded video promoting the BlueSelect Plus network. An initial email was sent to each employee enrolled in the Preferred Care Blue network advising how many current medical providers were in the BlueSelect Plus network which would result in a financial win-win for both the employee and the county.
- **NEW:** As part of the county's Pillar of Performance, employee development continues to be encouraged and supported. For this reporting period, 73 employees received educational reimbursement assistance for both degree and non-degree seeking programs.
- **NEW:** A new departmental VIBE team has emerged in the County Manager's Office, raising the count to 9 departmental VIBE teams.
- **NEW:** Employees gave back to the community through the county's annual United Way campaign via fundraising or payroll contribution pledges that totaled over \$86,000.