

Final Housing Subcommittee Report and Next Steps



DATE: April 6, 2023
TO: Board of County Commissioners
Penny Postoak Ferguson, County Manager
FROM: BOCC Housing Subcommittee (Commissioners Allenbrand, Fast and Hanzlick)
SUBJECT: Final Subcommittee Report and Next Steps

BACKGROUND:

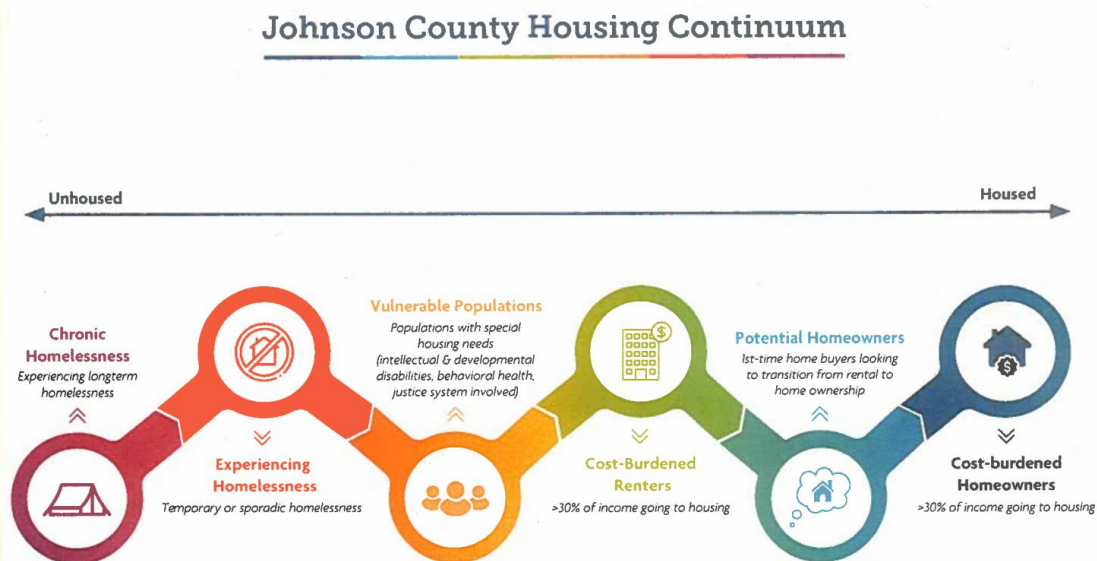
The BOCC Housing Subcommittee has worked with community stakeholders and county staff since April 2021 to identify areas where county government has opportunities and potential resources to help address the housing needs identified in the *2021 Johnson County Housing Study*, including homelessness.

As a result of these deliberations, the Subcommittee identified and developed the following information:

- 1) Six-point continuum of housing needs in Johnson County (Figure 1);
- 2) Opportunities for new or expanded county involvement in three priority areas—addressing homelessness, preserving existing housing, and developing attainable housing and homeownership opportunities (Figure 2);
- 3) Compilation of available housing resources (Figure 3).

The Subcommittee recognized the need to create space for ongoing staff-level work on housing issues, outside special projects, and discrete research. As such, the Subcommittee successfully advocated for the BOCC’s creation of a Johnson County Housing Coordinator, a new, full-time position with direction to coordinate the work of County departments, community agencies, and other stakeholders, and to pursue housing strategies across the continuum.

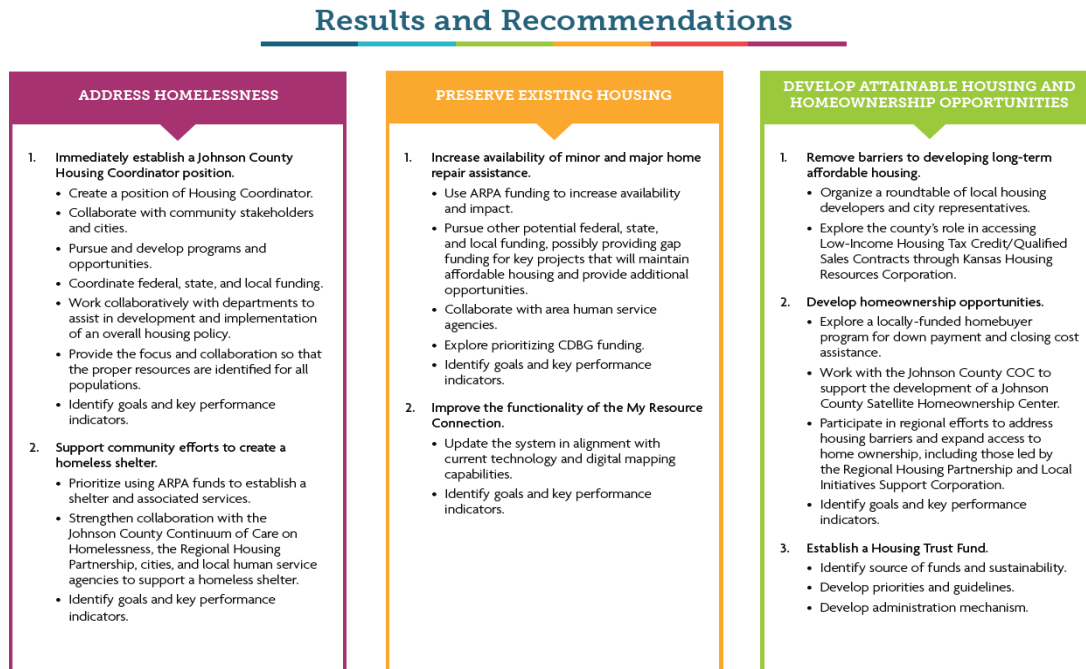
FIGURE 1:



OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS:

Today, nearly two years later, the Subcommittee is glad to report that we have fulfilled our purpose. The framework we developed will serve as the baseline for the Johnson County's strategic housing priorities and opportunities into the future. We look forward to county staff building on this framework by identifying and creating specific opportunities, in partnership with state, municipal, and other community stakeholders. Under the direction of the County Manager and facilitated by the Housing Coordinator, we look forward to quarterly information updates and action recommendations coming before the Board of County Commissioners.

FIGURE 2:



COUNTY ACTION ON IDENTIFIED HOUSING PRIORITIES TO DATE:

I. Address Homelessness

- June 2022-The BOCC designated \$6 million in ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for “unhoused solutions.”
- October 2022-The BOCC approved a \$60,000 contract for Project Dignity to conduct a community planning process and produce recommendations for a property plan and service provision for a year-round, low-barrier, non-congregant shelter in Johnson County. The report and recommendations are expected in early June 2023.
- October 2022 – The BOCC approved \$500,000 for cold weather hotel vouchers and case management; \$225,000 for Project 10/20 cold weather shelter infrastructure improvements to meet Lenexa code; \$250,000 for Homeless Management Information Software; and \$800,000 for the Food Insecurity Program (40 pantries x \$20,000).
- December 2022-The Johnson County Housing Authority, in partnership with the Continuum of Care on Homelessness, received Board approval on the HOME-ARP substantial amendment. The amendment

process required a needs assessment and community listening sessions, and ultimately identified a non-congregant shelter as the singular priority for the \$3.9 million allocation. Johnson County's was the first HUD-approved ARP plan to address homelessness in the metro area.

II. Preserve Existing Housing

- February 2021 – The BOCC authorized the use of over \$18.6 million in county Coronavirus Relief Funding (CRF) for rent and utility assistance for Johnson County residents, administered through the Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance (KERA) program at the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC).
- June 2022 – The BOCC designated over \$3.9 million in ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for “energy efficiency/septic program” for qualifying home weatherization and maintenance.
- Increased cooperation between the Johnson County Housing Authority and the Olathe Housing Authority, with the goal of providing seamless service to landlords and residents.

III. Develop Attainable Housing and Homeownership Opportunities

- May 2022-The BOCC approved an allocation of \$1 million in County Resource Funds to assist with the underwriting for the Hedge Lane Apartments in Shawnee, Kansas. The project brings more attainable housing units to Johnson County. The development group building the units committed to accepting Housing Choice Vouchers for the duration of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) period (minimum of 15 years).
- November 2022-The BOCC allocated \$1 million of HOME Investment Partnership Funds to the Prairiebrooke Townhomes. The LIHTC project helps develop a 76-unit multi-family project in Gardner, Kansas.
- Exploring county support for infrastructure development to ensure that Habitat for Humanity's Olathe Pathway project, which will finance and build 22 new homes for income-qualified buyers in Johnson County, moves forward.
- Ongoing exploration of the viability of Community Land Trusts and Housing Trust Funds to secure long-term public investment in attainable housing in Johnson County.

OTHER ACTION:

- December 2022 - Commissioner Hanzlick (serving as Kansas Co-Chair) and Commissioner Fast joined MARC's new Regional Housing Partnership Strategy Committee.
- County staff continue to be involved in MARC's CORE4 conversations about regional unhoused solutions.
- January 2023-Megan Foreman started her work as Johnson County's Housing Coordinator, ensuring staff have a continual focus on housing issues moving forward.
- At its 2023 Board retreat, the BOCC identified Housing as one of its Strategic Priorities, ensuring a continued focus on the issues within the housing continuum at the policymaking level.

FIGURE 3:

Current Resources

