



HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Penny Postoak Ferguson, County Manager

FROM: BOCC Housing Subcommittee (Commissioners Allenbrand, Fast and Hanzlick)

DATE: April 28, 2022

RE: Housing Subcommittee Update

Background:

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

On August 20, 2021, the Subcommittee presented an initial report to the BOCC that included a Johnson County Housing Insecurity Spectrum, an inventory of current resources at each level of need, and initial results and recommendations. At that meeting, the BOCC directed staff from the Planning, Housing, and Community Development Department to explore the viability, benefits, and financial impact of the opportunities outlined in the subcommittee report.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the actions and strategies currently being pursued and recommended by the Housing Subcommittee and county staff. Since the subcommittee's last report, we have prioritized three areas of opportunity for the county to address housing needs: 1) address homelessness; 2) preserve existing housing, and 3) develop attainable housing and homeownership opportunities.

Priorities and Recommendations:

1. ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

a. Immediately establish a Johnson County Housing Coordinator position

Create a position of Housing Coordinator to oversee the implementation of the BOCC's housing strategy; collaborate with community stakeholders and cities to pursue and develop programs and opportunities; and pursue and coordinate federal, state, and local funding opportunities.

It is envisioned that this position will work collaboratively with several departments, including Mental Health, Developmental Supports, Corrections and Housing Services to assist in development and implementation of an overall housing policy. This highly visible position will provide the focus and the collaborative efforts needed to ensure that the proper resources are identified for all populations identified on the Housing Continuum.

Identify goals and key performance indicators to measure progress.

b. Support community efforts to create a homeless shelter

Prioritize using ARPA funds to support current community efforts to establish a shelter and associated services.

Strengthen collaboration with the Johnson County Continuum of Care on Homelessness (COC), the Regional Housing Partnership, cities, and local human service agencies to support a homeless shelter and pursue funding for additional supportive housing programs in Johnson County.

Identify goals and key performance indicators to measure progress.

2. PRESERVE EXISTING HOUSING

a. Increase availability of minor and major home repair assistance

Use ARPA funding to increase the availability and impact of Johnson County’s home rehabilitation programs and pursue other potential federal, state, and local funding for this purpose. This may include providing gap funding for key projects within the County that will maintain affordable housing stock and provide additional leveraging opportunities.

Collaborate with area human service agencies to increase the impact of their home repair programs, especially those helping seniors age in place.

Explore prioritizing Community Development Block Grant funding to support home repair and accessibility modifications.

Identify goals and key performance indicators to measure progress.

b. Improve the functionality of the My Resource Connection referral network through administrative and technological improvements. This system needs an update, and with current technology and digital mapping capabilities, it could provide greater benefit for housing providers and consumers.

Identify goals and key performance indicators to measure progress.

3. DEVELOP ATTAINABLE HOUSING AND HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

a. Remove barriers to developing long-term affordable housing

Organize a roundtable of local housing developers and city representatives to identify ways to remove barriers to building long-term affordable housing.

Explore the county’s role in accessing Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)/Qualified Sales Contracts (QSC) through Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) to develop attainable housing.

b. Develop homeownership opportunities

Explore a locally funded homebuyer program for down payment and closing cost assistance.

Working with the Johnson County COC, support the development of a Johnson County Satellite Homeownership Center by pursuing grant funding from Credit & Homeownership Empowerment Services, Inc. (CHES Inc).

Participate in regional efforts to address housing barriers and expand access to home ownership, including those led by the Regional Housing Partnership (RHP) and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

Identify goals and key performance indicators to measure progress.

c. Establish a Housing Trust Fund

- Identify source of funds and sustainability
- Develop priorities and guidelines
- Develop administration mechanism

Next Steps:

The Housing Subcommittee will continue to work with county staff, community stakeholders, and regional partners to pursue the goals and implement the recommendations in this report.