



# IMPACT KCK ASSESSMENT 2018-2019

Continuing to Serve Homeless Students and Families

May 2020

**Anne R. Williamson, PhD**

Victor and Caroline Schutte/Missouri Professor of Urban Affairs  
Director, L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs | Henry W. Bloch School of Management  
University of Missouri – Kansas City | 5110 Cherry Street, Kansas City, MO 64110  
(816) 235-5177



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 3**
- INTRODUCTION ..... 4**
- MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT AND STUDENT HOMELESSNESS..... 4**
  - Homeless Student Definition ..... 4
  - School District Responsibilities ..... 5
- IMPACT KCK OVERVIEW ..... 6**
  - Brief History ..... 7
  - Collective Impact..... 8
  - 4 Pillars of Success ..... 9
  - Logic Model..... 10
  - Emerging Insights ..... 10
- IMPACT KCK OPERATIONS..... 11**
  - School District ..... 11
    - Continuation Activities* ..... 11
    - Trauma-Sensitive and Resilient Schools*..... 11
    - Social Worker in Every School Building*..... 12
  - Backbone Organization ..... 12
    - KCLE*..... 12
    - Staffing*..... 12
    - Housing*..... 12
    - Fund Raising*..... 12
  - Partner Organizations ..... 13
  - New Programming in 2018-2019..... 13
    - Trauma-Informed Services*..... 13
    - Homeless Prevention*..... 13
    - Foster Care Outreach* ..... 13
- IMPACT KCK RESULTS..... 14**
  - Impact KCK Indicators*..... 14
  - Foster Care Prevention and Family Reunification* ..... 14
  - Youth Services* ..... 14

<b>2018-2019 ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Effectiveness and Continued Innovation .....	15
Program Sustainability.....	16
Replication as Evidence of Success .....	16
<b>LOOKING AHEAD .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: IMPACT KCK PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: IMPACT KCK LOGIC MODEL.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: ARIZONA SELF-SUFFICIENCY MATRIX DOMAINS AS ADAPTED FOR IMPACT KCK .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	
Table 1: Primary Funders 2018-2019 .....	13
Table 2: Impact KCK Results by School Year.....	14
Table 3: Impact KCK Foster Diversion and Family Reunification .....	14
Table 4: Impact KCK Youth Services 2018-2019 .....	14

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2018-2019 school year marked the fourth year in Impact KCK's history. During those four years, the program matured and received substantial recognition for its effectiveness in addressing the needs of homeless public school students and their families. This Assessment provides an analysis of Impact KCK in 2018-2019.



Impact KCK is based on the effective application of the Collective Impact Model for Community Change and several important social service innovations. Further, program success and innovation is supported by developmental evaluation, which provides for real-time, continuous analysis of program achievements, challenges, and emerging issues.

Avenue of Life, a faith-based nonprofit with a location in central Kansas City, Kansas, serves as the backbone organization for

Impact KCK. As backbone, Avenue of Life provides significant services to homeless students and families in the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools, including providing intensive case management and housing solutions. It also coordinates the efforts of more than 40 partner organizations committed to addressing the needs of homeless students and families.

Impact KCK continued to facilitate family transformation in the 2018-2019 school year. Results include the following:

- Families Reached: 241
- Families Housed: 69
- Families Employed: 64

Impact KCK Navigators began to report reductions in foster care placement and increases in family reunification in the 2017-2018 school year. These results were made possible by addressing the conditions of poverty that would normally result in children becoming part of the foster care system or remaining in it. Foster care diversion and family reunification became an intentional part of Impact KCK programming in 2018-2019. Twenty-two (22) families with a total of 53 children avoided foster care placement or were reunified during the school year.

Impact KCK also continued to innovate and serve through the introduction of a Youth Services Coordinator. An employee of Avenue of Life, the Youth Services Coordinator's office is based at Wyandotte High School. This makes it possible for the Coordinator to help to identify unaccompanied homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness, as well as to most effectively serve them. A total of 51 students were served in 2018-2019; 40 were actively case managed.<sup>1</sup> Of the 40 students benefitting from active case management,

---

<sup>1</sup> Eleven (11) students transferred out of the school district and/or moved.

17 were seniors. Sixteen (16) of these seniors graduated in May 2019, while one (1) graduated in December 2019.

Impact KCK's results could not be produced without the financial support of individuals, foundations, and other organizations. Hundreds of donors made it possible to operate Avenue of Life as the backbone organization with nearly \$1.2 million in funding for 2018-2019. This funding made it possible to continue to employ Impact KCK Navigators and offer incubator space in the Avenue of Life Equipping Center for the use of partner organizations and to host Impact Wednesdays so that families benefit from a single-point-of-service. The incubator space is also used to provide essential life skills classes to Impact KCK families. Donors' funds were also used to provide direct financial assistance to Impact KCK families.

Impact KCK has not only demonstrated its continued effectiveness, it has also demonstrated its sustainability. The program has continued to achieve significant results in the service of homeless students and families despite a number of changes that took place in community leadership and in staffing from 2017 through 2019.

This Assessment is being published while the world is still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Avenue of Life and Impact KCK continue to serve families, children, and youth at this critical time with services such as curbside diaper pick up, food delivery, and access to social services. It is clear that the pandemic will continue to create new challenges for some time to come, and the number of children, youth, and families in need will grow. It is also clear that Avenue of Life and Impact KCK partner organizations are committed to continued service and innovation in these uncertain times.

## INTRODUCTION

Impact KCK is a community program designed to reduce homelessness among students in the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS). This requires a two-generation approach involving parents or guardians, as well as children, in an intensive set of customized wrap-around services delivered by effectively coordinated partner organizations.

The purpose of *Impact KCK Assessment 2018-2019* is to provide an analysis of Impact KCK operations and results for the 2018-2019 school year. This Assessment provides information critical to continued innovation and success; it also provides information important to funders, community leaders, and the general public. Finally, it provides information for those wishing to replicate Impact KCK in their own communities.

## MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT AND STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

### HOMELESS STUDENT DEFINITION

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless students in kindergarten through grade 12 as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1))” and who meet the following guidelines:

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate

- accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings [within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)];
  - (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purpose of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii) (Public Law No. 107-110).<sup>2</sup>

The McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness expands on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness by including children and youth who are sharing housing with others (“doubled up” or “couch surfing”). Thus, the McKinney-Vento definition includes students who are experiencing housing instability, as well as those who are literally without shelter.

---

<sup>2</sup> McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act, Section 725, as reauthorized under Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act (H.R. 1), 2001.



## SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

The McKinney-Vento Act requires every school district and local educational agency (LEA) in the United States to appoint a local homeless liaison. The liaison must identify homeless children and youth and ensure that those students are both enrolled in school and have the same opportunities to succeed as their non-homeless peers.<sup>34</sup>

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) describes the liaison’s responsibilities as ensuring that:

- Homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible. . .and referrals to health care, dental, mental health, and appropriate services;
- The parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are

---

<sup>3</sup> Williamson, Anne and Damon Guinn. *Serving Homeless Students in the Kansas City Region: Barriers and Best Practices*. L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs, Henry W. Bloch School of Management, University of Missouri-Kansas City. November 2017.

<sup>4</sup> National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE). *Local Homeless Liaisons for School Districts: Making the Right Selection and Supporting their Effectiveness*. Best Practices in Homeless Education Brief Series. February 2015.

provided meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;

- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where they receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated according to the McKinney-Vento Act; and
- The parents and guardians of homeless children and youth, and all unaccompanied homeless youth, are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, liaisons must:

- Obtain immunization and medical records on behalf of students;
- Work with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement; and
- Collaborate and coordinate with the State Homeless Coordinator and with community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth.<sup>6</sup>

Much of a homeless liaison's time is spent identifying homeless children and youth. They also spend time connecting homeless students and their families with services and coordinating transportation services.<sup>7</sup>

Student homelessness is a complex social

problem with multiple causes. Further, student homelessness is a growing public policy issue throughout the United States. Homelessness among public students in kindergarten through grade 12 more than doubled from 2007 to 2013, reaching a total of more than 1.5 million in the 2017-2018 school year.<sup>8</sup>

Kansas City Kansas Public Schools are located in Wyandotte County, the poorest of Kansas's 105 counties. The district serves a diverse student body, and many students' families experience poverty or near-poverty. This makes the willingness of community organizations and individuals to come together to address homelessness and other challenges associated with poverty particularly important.

## IMPACT KCK OVERVIEW

Impact KCK has received national recognition for effectiveness in producing substantial reductions in student and family homelessness. It has been featured in a PBS *Frontline* segment and in publications of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.<sup>9</sup> At the regional level, Avenue of Life, Impact KCK's backbone organization, has been recognized with a Thrive award from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) of Greater Kansas City and a community service award from the L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs in the Henry W. Bloch School of Management at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

---

5 National Center for Homeless Education, *ibid.*

6 National Center for Homeless Education, *ibid.*

7 U.S. Department of Education: Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. *Results in Brief: State and District Implementation of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.* February 2015.

---

8 National Center for Homeless Education, *Federal Data Summary School Years 2015-2016 through 2017-2018: Education for Homeless Children and Youth.* University of North Carolina Greensboro. January 2020.

9 The program has been referred to collectively as Impact KCK since May 2018. Recognition prior to May 2018 uses terms for Impact KCK's components, Impact Wednesdays and 1400 Diplomas.



## BRIEF HISTORY

The seeds of Impact KCK were planted in 2014, when more than 80 community organizations in Kansas City/Wyandotte County came together to work with renowned community organizer and civil rights leader Robert L. Woodson, Founder and President of the Woodson Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) sponsored Mr. Woodson's work in Kansas City/Wyandotte and made his services available to other Kansas communities.

Mr. Woodson encouraged the group to find two issues on which they would focus. The group chose child poverty and high school graduation rates, two measures where Wyandotte County ranked very low compared with other counties in the state. At the same time, KCKPS began to reach out to community organizations to help them address the critical issue of student homelessness.

In 2015, the community organizations that came together based on their work with Mr. Woodson determined they would work together using the Collective Impact Model for Community Change and elected Avenue of Life, a faith-based nonprofit in central KCK, as backbone organization. They adopted the name KCLE, based on the DCF program that made Mr. Woodson's work with KCK/Wyandotte possible.<sup>10</sup>

KCKPS and Mayor Mark Holland held a Call to Action in early 2015 asking for community assistance in addressing student homelessness. The school district's efforts were initially known as 1400 Diplomas, referring to the estimated number of students, as well as younger children who would one day be KCKPS students, who were homeless at the close of the 2014-

2015 school year. Avenue of Life's Executive Director, Desiree Monize, and Board of Directors Chair, Pastor Matt Adams of Westside Family Church, attended the Call to Action.

Following the Call to Action, KCLE member organizations determined they would focus on addressing the needs of KCKPS's homeless students and families. KCLE determined it would launch its community program, Impact Wednesdays, in August 2015.<sup>11</sup>

Impact KCK was introduced as the program's new name in May 2018 at a Community Symposium hosted by the L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs, University of Missouri-Kansas City. The symposium was based on sharing Impact KCK's initial Assessment, conducted by the Cookingham Institute. Avenue of Life, former Unified Government Mayor Mark Holland, and KCKPS Superintendent Dr. Cynthia Lane were honored with Community Service awards at this event.

For more background on Impact KCK, readers are encouraged to download a free copy of *Impact KCK Assessment: Reducing Student Homelessness through Collective Impact* available on the Avenue of Life website. That report covers the first three years of Impact KCK operations and results.

---

<sup>10</sup> KCLE stands for Kansas Community Leadership Enterprise.

---

<sup>11</sup> Impact Wednesdays refers to the day of the week that single-point of service activities were (and are) conducted at Avenue of Life, the backbone organization.

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Impact KCK is based on the Collective Impact Model for Community Change, as well as innovations in social service practice. The Collective Impact Model for Community Change (sometimes known as the Collective Impact Model for Social Change) was introduced in 2011 by foundation consultants John Kania and Mark Kramer.<sup>12</sup> The purpose of the Collective Impact Model is to harness the assets of a community in a strategic and disciplined way to address complex social problems.

Kania and Kramer provided the following Five Conditions of Collective Impact Success:

1. Shared agenda
2. Shared measurement systems
3. Mutually reinforcing activities
4. Continuous communication
5. Backbone organization

The findings reported in the initial *Impact KCK Assessment* published in October 2018 show that Impact KCK's success has been facilitated by the skillful application of the Collective Impact Model consistent with the Conditions for Success. Other key factors in Impact KCK's effective performance are presented on the following page as the 4 Pillars of Success.

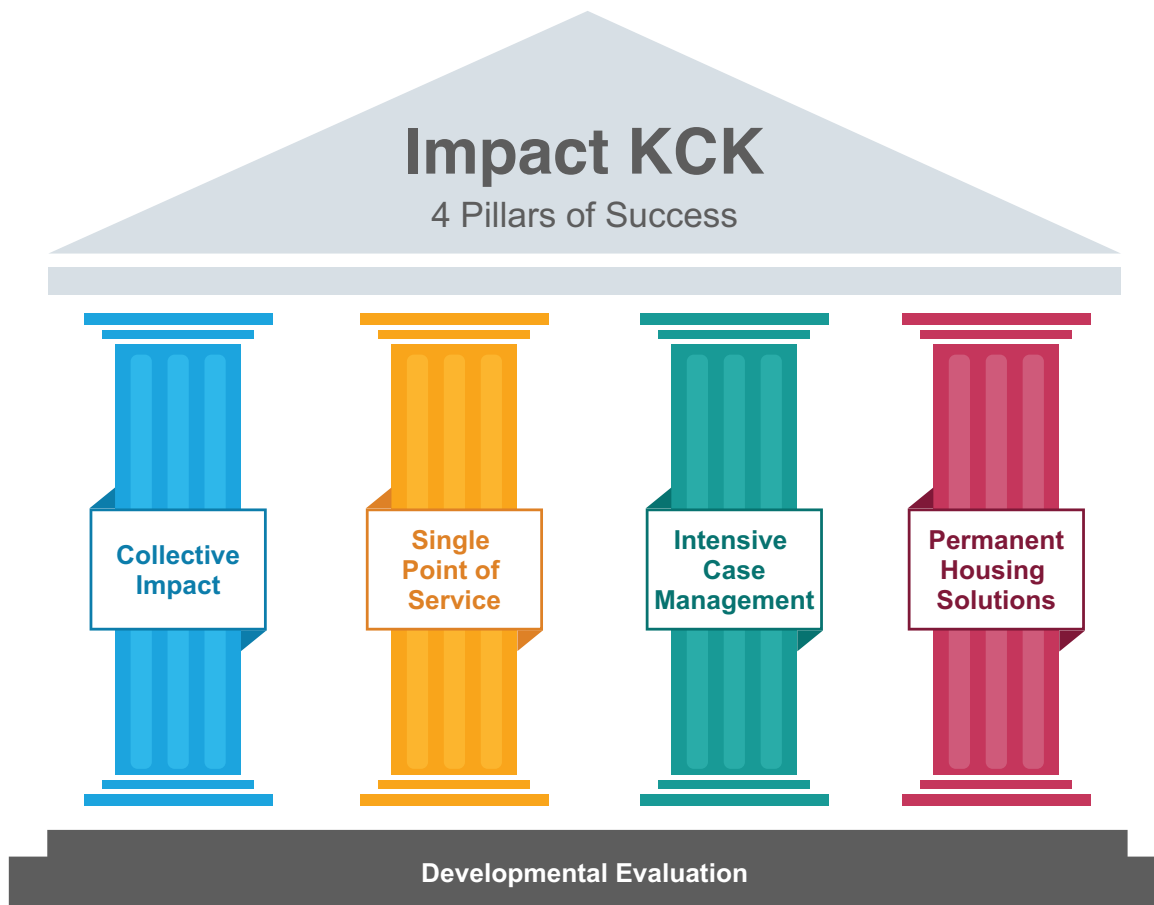


---

<sup>12</sup> Kania, John and Mark Kramer. "Collective Impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 9, no. 1 (2011): 36-41.

## 4 PILLARS OF SUCCESS

Impact KCK's effectiveness is based on 4 Pillars of Success. In addition, the 4 Pillars of Success are supported by a strong foundation provided by developmental evaluation.



Anne R. Williamson © 2019

As illustrated, Impact KCK's effectiveness requires not only the skilled application of the Collective Impact Model, but also social service innovations, including a single point of service, intensive case management practices, and connection with a permanent housing solution. Take away any one of these pillars, and the extraordinary results produced by Impact KCK would not be possible.

It is also important to note that the 4 Pillars of Success are supported by developmental evaluation.<sup>13</sup> Developmental evaluation facilitates innovation and program success through a working relationship between an evaluator and program decision makers.<sup>14</sup> In other words, instead of waiting for a prescribed period of time to produce an evaluation, an evaluator or evaluation team works closely with program decision makers on a regular basis in providing

<sup>13</sup> Design-based implementation research is a similar concept most often found in the education literature.

<sup>14</sup> Patton, Michael Quinn. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2011.

real-time data analysis and other feedback essential to designing innovations, addressing challenges, and identifying emerging issues. Without the real-time ability to reflect on program accomplishments, challenges, and emerging issues, a community program intended to address one or more complex social issues will not reach or maintain the same level of effectiveness it would with the support of this foundation.

## LOGIC MODEL

Impact KCK is based on the explicit recognition that student homelessness is a complex social problem requiring a community-based solution. The Impact KCK Logic Model was designed with this as its starting point; the program was then structured around a series of effective practices that result in housing stability and family self-sufficiency. This section provides a brief overview of the Logic Model.

Student homelessness typically has multiple causes. Thus, effective intervention requires an accurate assessment of each family's situation and application of an array of services and resources tailored to their needs.

Impact KCK families are assigned a specialized case manager, known as an Impact KCK Navigator (Navigator), who begins by assessing each family's unique circumstances through an adaptation of the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix. The Navigator coordinates the family's participation in Impact Wednesdays, the single-point-of-service system that allows the family to access multiple service providers on a single day at the same location. Further, the Navigator arranges for families to take classes on family budgeting, employment, housing, and healthcare. The Navigator facilitates each family's success by serving as a coach/mentor and working with the family to attain a permanent housing solution. Thus, families work with

one Navigator in a single location rather than attempting to access services from multiple organizations in multiple locations where they are required to retell their story every time they seek assistance from partner organizations.

Each Navigator works closely with partner organizations to coordinate family success in attaining a permanent housing solution. Case management is most intensive in the first months of Impact KCK participation, but follow-up continues for an entire year. Further, Impact KCK families are eligible to return to Impact KCK through the high school graduation of their youngest child.

This eligibility is a powerful tool for maintaining housing stability. For instance, if a parent or guardian loses a job, assistance with obtaining a new job is available in a timely fashion, and the loss of housing stability can be avoided. Another example of assistance that might be necessary after a family graduates from Impact KCK is an unexpectedly high utility bill or car repair. Helping the family overcome such hurdles while maintaining their housing stability prevents trauma for both children and parents or guardians, thereby supporting each child's educational success. Further, it is far less expensive to help a family overcome a temporary crisis and maintain housing stability than it would be to wait until the family re-enters homelessness.

The full Impact KCK Logic Model appears in Appendix 2.

## EMERGING INSIGHTS

As programs mature, new insights into policies, practices, and results emerge. The 2018-2019 school year was Impact KCK's fourth year of operations. Many challenges had been met by the fourth year, and this provided an opportunity for reflection, analysis, and innovation.

During the 2018-2019 school year, it became clear that a number of factors influence school district McKinney-Vento figures. These factors are often beyond the control of either the school district or Impact KCK backbone and partner organizations. These factors include:

- Some students who are **stably housed** must be designated as McKinney-Vento in order to receive educational services. For example, a child living with a grandparent who requires no social services or other assistance must be McKinney-Vento in order to enroll in public school if the grandparent is not the child's legal guardian.
- Homeless families from **other school districts within the region** may transition to KCKPS because they have heard that full wraparound services and a permanent housing solution are available to families referred to Impact KCK.
- **Natural disasters** in other states often bring new McKinney-Vento students and families to KCKPS and Impact KCK.
- **A lack of affordable housing and high utility bills** often lead to homelessness.
- **Local wage levels** may make it difficult for families to afford housing meeting basic quality standards.
- The McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to count each student designated as homeless during the school year, even if the episode was only for as little as one day. The same rule applies for counting a homeless student who may have been in the school district for a very brief period.

These insights are important for evaluating Impact KCK now and in the future. Because much that influences the number of public school students identified as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act is beyond the control of either the school district or Impact KCK, the program's achievements must be analyzed based on its performance with regard to the families who are referred and agree to participate.

## IMPACT KCK OPERATIONS

Impact KCK is designed to engage the community in serving students and families experiencing homelessness, thereby allowing the school district to focus on the critical activity of educating students. Thus, once the school district refers a family to Impact KCK, providing a customized set of wraparound services and resources is coordinated by Avenue of Life, the backbone organization.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT

KCKPS continued to work closely with Impact KCK in 2018-2019. The district's McKinney-Vento Liaison continued to make referrals of families with students identified as homeless. Further, KCKPS began referring families for homeless prevention services in the 2018-2019 school year.

**Continuation Activities.** KCKPS's McKinney-Vento Liaison and Impact KCK Navigators remained in close contact about referrals and the progress of students and families served throughout the school year. Further, the school district's Director of Student Services, whose responsibilities include supervision of the McKinney-Vento Liaison function, regularly attended KCLE meetings and met individually with Avenue of Life's Executive Director. This continuous communication is one of the Collective Impact Five Conditions for Success and has been essential in producing Impact KCK's results.

**Trauma-Sensitive and Resilient Schools.** In addition to continuing its collaboration with Impact KCK, KCKPS began work to become a Trauma-Sensitive and Resilient School District in 2018-2019. The district's goals for this program are to (1) increase and strengthen programs that will provide tools to develop trauma-sensitive and

resilient schools; and (2) strengthen positive community partnerships to provide KCKPS families with the resources they need. Becoming a Trauma-Sensitive and Resilient School District increased KCKPS's ability to identify and address student trauma, including the trauma associated with poverty and homelessness.

#### ***Social Worker in Every School Building.***

KCKPS successfully sought grant funding that resulted in placing a social worker in every school building beginning with the 2018-2019 school year. This is a major achievement that facilitates student success by providing increased capacity for identifying and counseling students facing challenges, including homelessness.

### **BACKBONE ORGANIZATION**

Avenue of Life continued to serve as the Impact KCK backbone organization in the 2018-2019 school year. As noted in Kania and Kramer's Five Conditions for Collective Impact Success,<sup>15</sup> coordination by a backbone organization is essential for communities addressing complex social problems.

***KCLE.*** Avenue of Life continued to host monthly KCLE meetings in the 2018-2019 school year. These monthly meetings allow the backbone and partner organizations to share information about achievements, challenges, and emerging issues. This is part of the continuous communication necessary for collective impact success, and it is also an important part of how Impact KCK is able to be not only effective, but also continue to innovate.

***Staffing.*** The backbone organization experienced some staff turnover in early 2019. Staff turnover is a normal part of maturing programs, particularly in organizations providing social services.

Avenue of Life's Operations Director assumed responsibility for the day-to-day supervision of Impact KCK Navigators late in the 2018-2019 school year and coordinated the hire and onboarding of four new Navigators. This increased the backbone's capacity to serve students and families referred to Impact KCK by KCKPS.

Avenue of Life added a Youth Services Coordinator in 2018-2019. This staff member works with unaccompanied homeless youth and youth who are at risk of homelessness. The Coordinator is based at Wyandotte High School to maximize contact with KCKPS high school students in need. Her office includes an emergency area with clothes, personal hygiene products, and other items youth may need.

***Housing.*** The backbone organization makes it possible for Impact KCK families to attain permanent housing by providing the security deposit and first month's rent. Most Impact KCK families do not receive any federal, state, or local government assistance or subsidy for housing.

***Fund Raising.*** Avenue of Life continued to engage in significant fund raising activities as the Impact KCK backbone in 2018-2019, raising nearly \$1.2 million to support the program. This figure includes salaries for Impact KCK Navigators and direct services to families. It excludes salaries for the Executive Director, Operations Director, and Business Development Director.

About \$300,000 of the funds raised for Impact KCK are used to support the incubator space within Avenue of Life's Equipping Center. The incubator space houses partner organizations and includes classrooms for Impact KCK classes. It also includes space for barber services provided to Impact KCK families.

Hundreds of donors participate in funding Impact KCK and the backbone organization.

---

<sup>15</sup> Kania and Kramer, *ibid.*

It would not be possible to address student and family homelessness without the support of these donors. Primary funders for the 2018-2019 school year include:

Table 1: Primary Funders 2018-2019

Bangs Family
Colonial Presbyterian Church
Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)
Frank & Margaret G. McGee Fund
Greater Kansas City Community Foundation
Hall Family Foundation
Hodgdon Family Charitable Fund
Kansas City Young Matrons
L.G. Barcus and Sons, Inc.
National Christian Foundation
Oppenstein Brothers Foundation
Sherman Family Foundation
Stich Family
United Methodist Church of the Resurrection
United Way of Wyandotte County
Unified Government of Kansas City, Kansas /Wyandotte County (Emergency Solutions Grant)
Unified Government of Kansas City, Kansas/Wyandotte County (Hollywood Casino Grant Fund)
Westlund Family
Westside Family Church
Withers Family

## PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

More than 40 partner organizations continued to be a part of KCLE and worked with the backbone to produce another year of transformation for students and families experiencing homelessness. A list of Impact KCK partner organizations is provided in Appendix 1.

The commitment and adaptability of Impact KCK partner organizations continued to make it possible to provide seamless operations for the families served. The multi-sector coalition of Impact KCK partners

continued to work very closely with the backbone organization to provide an array of wraparound services tailored to each family's specific needs.

## NEW PROGRAMMING IN 2018-2019

**Trauma-Informed Services.** Impact KCK has always been based on an understanding that homelessness is a traumatic experience for children, youth, and parents/guardians as demonstrated by the program's use of ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) testing to determine the extent of trauma experienced by students and families served.<sup>16</sup>

Wyandotte Health Foundation provided funding for training in trauma-informed services offered by Matt Brandmeyer, LMSW, MLAC, of Structured Solutions LLC in 2018-2019. Impact KCK Navigators and other backbone staff members received this important training.

**Homeless Prevention.** Impact KCK began implementing a homeless prevention program for KCKPS students and families in the 2018-2019 school year. Families at risk of homelessness were identified by the KCKPS McKinney-Vento Liaison and referred to Avenue of Life for services.

**Foster Care Outreach.** Poverty, housing instability, and homelessness can lead to children entering foster care, because parents or guardians are unable to adequately provide for their children. Impact KCK helped 39 families with 100 children avoid foster placement in the 2017-2018 school year. This led to the development of specific Impact KCK foster outreach services for the 2018-2019 school year.

<sup>16</sup> For more information on ACE testing and the impact of trauma on health and opportunities, see the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html>.

# IMPACT KCK RESULTS

**Impact KCK Indicators.** While the number of families reached, housed, and served are important indicators, **the most important indicator of Impact KCK's success is that 95% of families receiving a permanent housing solution remain housed.** This figure includes all families permanently housed from the outset of program implementation in August 2015 through the close of the 2018-2019 school year. Impact KCK results are presented by school year in Table 2.

Table 2: Impact KCK Results by School Year<sup>17</sup>

	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	TOTAL
Families Reached	241	419	394	207	1,261
Families Housed	69	129	116	58	372
Families Employed	64	110	87	46	307
<b>Permanent Housing Maintenance Rate: 95%</b>					



<sup>17</sup> Results for the 2018-2019 school year are reported through March 31, 2019 except for the permanent housing maintenance rate, which is calculated through the end of the 2018-2019 school year.

**Foster Care Prevention and Family Reunification.** Impact KCK also prevented children entering foster care due to conditions associated with poverty. In addition, children who previously entered foster care as a result of poverty conditions were reunified with their families. Table 3 provides information on Impact KCK and foster care.

Table 3: Impact KCK Foster Diversion and Family Reunification

	2018-2019	2017-2018
Families	22	39
Children	53	100

**Youth Services.** Table 4 presents information about Impact KCK's youth services in 2018-2019, the first year in which these services were offered.

Table 4: Impact KCK Youth Services 2018-2019

Activity	Number of Students
Case-managed students (total) <sup>18</sup>	51
Actively case-managed students	40
Unaccompanied homeless youth	18
Youth experiencing homelessness with a parent or guardian	11
Homeless prevention youth	11
Homeless grade 12 youth	17
Case-managed seniors graduated May 2019 <sup>19</sup>	16
<b>Graduation Rate for Case-Managed Seniors: 94%</b>	

<sup>18</sup> Total includes 11 students whose case files were archived due to transfers and/or moves.

<sup>19</sup> Only one of the case-managed seniors in the 2018-2019 school year did not graduate in May 2019. This student graduated in December 2019.



# 2018-2019 ASSESSMENT

This Assessment has been prepared based on the principles of developmental evaluation. The Cookingham Institute project team remains in continuous communication with the backbone and partner organizations, as well as the school district, to facilitate real-time analysis in support of continued program effectiveness and innovation. Thus, the evaluation team attends KCLE meetings with the backbone and partner organizations, regularly conducts site visits, and meets with Avenue of Life's leadership team at least once each month to discuss current operations, accomplishments, challenges, and emerging issues.

## EFFECTIVENESS AND CONTINUED INNOVATION

Analysis of Impact KCK's results demonstrates its continued effectiveness in addressing homelessness among KCKPS students and their families. **The most important indicator of Impact KCK's effectiveness is the Permanent Housing Maintenance Rate, which continued at 95% during the 2018-2019 school year.** This figure indicates that 95% of all Impact KCK families who attained a permanent housing solution from program launch in August 2015 through June 2019 **remained housed.**<sup>20</sup>

---

20 The Permanent Housing Maintenance Rate includes families who (1) have maintained their original home once they attained permanent housing status; and (2) have changed residences to another permanent housing unit.

It is important to understand that some families referred to Impact KCK are not in need of a new housing arrangement. Some who are referred receive assistance in maintaining their current housing unit.<sup>21</sup> Thus, while 241 families were reached during the 2018-2019 school year, a permanent housing solution was not necessary for every family.

For example, a student who is living in a stable situation with a grandparent may be classified as McKinney-Vento, because the grandparent is not the child's legal guardian. The McKinney-Vento classification is necessary for the child to be enrolled in school. Further, although this grandparent family may not be in need of a housing unit when the student is identified as homeless under McKinney-Vento, they may need assistance with a utility bill, overdue rent, a car repair, etc. at some point prior to the child's high school graduation. Thus, this family may be served by Impact KCK but will not appear in data reported for families housed. Further, a grandparent family is less likely to appear in the report of families employed, because the grandparent is more likely to be retired and receiving Social Security income.

Sixty-nine (69) families—or about 28.6% of families referred—received a permanent housing solution through Impact KCK in 2018-2019. This compares with an average of slightly less than 30% of families receiving permanent housing solutions over the program's history.

The small reduction in the proportion of families with a permanent housing solution may arise from several factors, including the

---

21 For instance, sometimes families referred to Impact KCK are in danger of eviction because they have unpaid utility bills. Thus, emergency financial assistance helps them remain in their current rental, and they are not counted as having been housed by Impact KCK. Other features of the Impact KCK program, such as assistance in advancing in employment and classes on housing, family budgeting, and other life skills significantly reduce the likelihood that the family will face the threat of eviction in the future.

nature of the situations and needs presented at Impact KCK intake. However, another factor may have been that by the 2018-2019 school year, Impact KCK's success in helping homeless families achieve permanent housing reduced the already small number of rental properties that were both available and affordable to newly referred Impact KCK families. This created challenges for Impact KCK Navigators and families as they worked together to secure an affordable rental unit meeting basic housing quality standards.

Another indicator of Impact KCK effectiveness is the result for families employed. This figure captures the number of families with a parent or guardian who became employed through Impact KCK employment assistance. Those who require assistance in obtaining employment may have various challenges in qualifying for employment, including lack of a high school diploma, lack of marketable skills, and little or no work experience. The holistic approach taken by Impact KCK helps parents and guardians overcome barriers to employment, a major factor in making housing stability possible for many homeless families.

## PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

Impact KCK has demonstrated its sustainability over time. While most social service programs rely on an individual or a single agency to lead them, the Collective Impact Model facilitates sustainability by creating and maintaining effective collaboration among many multi-sector organizations.

For instance, Impact KCK and its environment have experienced a number of changes in key positions since it was launched in August 2015, including:

- Election of Mayor David Alvey in 2017
- Change in KCKPS McKinney-Vento Liaison in Fall 2017

- Superintendent David Foust taking leadership of KCKPS in 2018
- Change in Impact KCK Director in the first half of 2019

Community leadership support for any program intended to address complex social problems is a must, and Impact KCK's success would not have been possible without the consistent support of leaders such as the Unified Government's mayors and KCKPS superintendents. The successful weathering of changes in key program positions such as the Impact KCK Director and KCKPS McKinney-Vento Liaison provides further evidence that Impact KCK is a sustainable program reliant on strong working relationships and the skillful application of the Collective Impact Model for Community Change rather than a single individual or a single organization.

## REPLICATION AS EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Another indicator of success is that interest and activity aimed at replicating Impact KCK in other communities increased during the 2018-2019 school year. For instance, the Topeka Public Schools began working toward full replication in 2018-2019 and launched their program, Impact Avenues, in August 2019. Replication training and technical assistance were sponsored by the Kansas Department for Children and Families from July 2018 through August 2019.

Further, school district representatives and other community stakeholders from multiple states participated in Impact KCK Replication Training on site at Avenue of Life from March 18-20, 2019. Avenue of Life continues to receive requests for training and assistance in Impact KCK replication from communities throughout the country.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Replication training and technical assistance are provided through Vital Impact Consulting, LLC, with the full approval of Avenue of Life's Board of Directors.

## LOOKING AHEAD

This *Assessment* has been written during the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the coronavirus. This is a time of nearly unprecedented uncertainty about the health of individuals, families, and communities the like of which has not been seen since the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. What we can be certain of, however, is that many more children and families will require assistance in the coming months in order to attain, re-attain, or maintain housing stability.

Avenue of Life and KCLE partner organizations continue to serve Impact KCK families in extraordinary ways, such as curbside diaper pickup, food delivery, delivery of personal hygiene items, and access to a full array of social services and financial resources. The unwavering commitment of those who make up Impact KCK will ensure that children and families in Kansas City/Wyandotte County will have the help they need to thrive.



# APPENDIX 1: IMPACT KCK PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

<b>KCLE Partner Organizations</b>	
Avenue of Life (Impact KCK Backbone Organization)	Kansas Department for Children and Families
Advance Community Health Center	KC Dream Center
Alliance Workforce	KC Care Clinic
Barefoot Mission	KVC Health Systems
Blessings Abound Thrift Store	Love Outreach Ministries
Brothers in Blue Reentry	L.P. Cookingham Institute, UMKC
Caring for Kids Kansas City	McCrummen Immigration Law Group
Colonial Presbyterian Church	NBC Community Development Corporation
Community Health Council of Wyandotte County	Rachel's Tea House
CTV Freedom Initiative	Safe Families for Children
Duchesne Clinic	Salvation Army Pathway of Hope
Economic Opportunity Foundation, Inc.	The Small Hinge
El Centro, Inc.	Structured Support LLC
Firm Foundations	Unified Government of Wyandotte County
Happy Bottoms	United Methodist Church of the Resurrection
Harvesters	United Way – Wyandotte County
Heartland 180	Vibrant Health Wyandotte
Junior League of Kansas City, Missouri	Village Initiative
Kansas City Kansas Community College	Westside Family Church
Kansas City Kansas Housing Authority	Wyandotte County Sheriff's Department
Kansas City Kansas Police Department	Wyandot, Inc.
Kansas City Kansas Public Schools	Zoe's House Adoption Agency
Kansas City Young Matrons	

# APPENDIX 2: IMPACT KCK LOGIC MODEL

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Initial Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McKinney-Vento Referrals from School District</li> <li>Impact KCK Backbone Organization Staff</li> <li>Impact KCK Navigator Client Assessment</li> <li>Partnering Agencies Staff</li> <li>Classroom Instruction</li> <li>Impact KCK Navigation (intensive case management)</li> <li>Trauma-informed approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact Wednesday</li> <li>Connection to services and resources</li> <li>Targeted referrals for services and resources</li> <li>Work with clients referred by Impact Navigators</li> <li>Life skills classes</li> <li>Wraparound case management services</li> <li>Internship &amp; Job Training</li> <li>Housing Services</li> <li>Trauma-informed parenting classes and mental health counseling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># Households referred by the school district to Impact Wednesday</li> <li># Households participating in Impact Wednesday</li> <li># Households referred for specific services</li> <li># Children and adults signed up for health insurance coverage</li> <li># Individuals in Mental Health Counseling</li> <li># Individuals in Life-skills classes</li> <li># Households in Case Management</li> <li># People in Internship &amp; Job Training</li> <li># Households who obtain permanent housing</li> <li># Adults in trauma-informed parenting classes</li> <li># Children with parents or guardians in trauma-informed parenting classes</li> <li># Adults in mental health counseling</li> <li># Children and youth in mental health counseling</li> </ul>	<p>Education Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in KCKPS school attendance rates for Impact Wednesday participants</li> <li>Increase in high school graduation rates among KCKPS McKinney-Vento students who have participated in Impact KCK</li> </ul> <p>Health Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of children and adults enrolled in health insurance</li> <li>Increased number of children and adults with a healthcare home and dental home</li> <li>Improved attitudes and perceptions of importance of health care access</li> </ul> <p>Self-Sufficiency Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of individuals who increase their income through employment</li> <li>Increase in number of households who maintain permanent housing</li> </ul>	<p>Education Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact Wednesday participants maintain attendance rates that are normalized to the district average</li> </ul> <p>Health &amp; Self-Sufficiency Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviors increased as measured by the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix</li> </ul>	<p>Education Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in rates of families &amp; youth involved with Impact Wednesday</li> <li>Reduction of homeless children &amp; youth in KCK Public School System</li> </ul> <p>Health Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintaining access to health care and use of primary care physician and dentist</li> <li>Improved access to health care</li> <li>Improved food access</li> </ul> <p>Self-Sufficiency Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in unemployment rate in KCKS</li> <li>Improved housing security</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX 3: ARIZONA SELF-SUFFICIENCY MATRIX DOMAINS AS ADAPTED FOR IMPACT KCK

The 16 family self-sufficiency domains used in the Impact KCK program appear below. They have been adapted from the Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix.

- Housing
- Employment
- Income
- Food
- Childcare
- Children's education
- Adult education
- Healthcare coverage
- Life skills
- Family relations
- Mobility
- Community involvement and social support
- Parenting skills
- Legal
- Mental health
- Safety

Families are assessed on each domain using the following scale:

- 1 = In Crisis
- 2 = Vulnerable
- 3 = Safe
- 4 = Building Capacity
- 5 = Empowered





Henry W. Bloch School of Management  
University of Missouri - Kansas City  
5110 Cherry Street, Kansas City, MO 64110