

March 18, 2024

Senator Rick Billinger
Chairman, Senate Ways and Means
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street, Room 545-S
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Proponent Testimony to the House Welfare Reform Committee in re: Senate Bill 542

Chair Billinger and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for Senate Bill 542. Johnson County Government is supportive of state/local partnerships to address community needs for emergency shelter; however, we respectfully request the grant process to secure these funds be open and competitive, and that the process ensures local flexibility to implement community-based solutions.

Creation of a non-congregate shelter is underway in Johnson County. The Board of County Commissioners voted in December to dedicate \$6.5 million in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds toward the purchase of a hotel and vacant restaurant to provide shelter and intensive wrap around services to the County's unsheltered residents. An RFP process to identify an agency to provide 24/7 client services operations is underway now. Additionally, the county set aside its one-time \$3.9 million HUD HOME-ARP allocation for the development of a non-congregant shelter. These funds will be used to support the operating agency and fund facility renovations.

Most recently, the Board of County Commissioners voted in February to accept a grant from KDADS to fund six new positions at the Johnson County Mental Health Center to expand their homeless services team. These positions will provide critical wrap around support to unsheltered residents, from prevention and street outreach, therapy and medication assistance at the homeless services center, and case management as they transition into stable housing. The grant is one-time start-up funding. The ongoing support from KDADS's Certified Community Based Health Clinic (CCBHC) program is appreciated and demonstrates how local jurisdictions are layering KDADS programs for maximum impact.

We highlight Johnson County's budding non-congregate shelter for two reasons:

- It highlights the over \$10 million dollar commitment the county has already made to addressing unsheltered homelessness and meeting local match obligations.
- The CCBHC partnership to provide wrap around mental health services shows the excellence in service delivery that is possible when state and local governments collaborate.

Johnson County's non-congregate shelter project is ripe for state support through the proposed KDADS grants. We encourage the committee to pass SB 542 with assurances that: a) localities maintain the right to enforce their own ordinances, as determined by their residents via their elected district attorneys, sheriffs, and appointed police departments, and b) local flexibility to determine spending priorities around infrastructure and wraparound service needs is maintained. For example, our community is considering how to achieve objectives such as capitalizing a facility maintenance fund, infrastructure investments to support a variety of on-site wrap around services, and investments in long-term supports such as transitional units and permanent supportive housing.

Johnson County Government

111 S Cherry Street Suite 3300
Olathe, Kansas 66061



Grant funding from SB 542 will build on Johnson County's commitment to addressing homelessness; combining state and local investments will increase the overall return on investment of all public funds. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay C. Leipzig", is written over the typed name.

Jay C. Leipzig, Director
Planning, Housing, and Community Development Department
Johnson County, Kansas