



Strengthening & Equipping Neighborhoods Together

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455 SE Golf Park Blvd., Topeka, KS 66605

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**Johnathan Sublet**

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**02.13.2025**

Kansas Senate Tax Committee  
300 SW 10th Ave  
Topeka, KS 66612

**Dear Members of the Senate Tax Committee,**

I am writing to formally request your support in granting SENT Inc. a sales tax exemption. As a nonprofit organization committed to the holistic transformation of under-resourced communities in Shawnee County, we are working to expand our impact and increase the efficiency of our financial resources. A sales tax exemption would allow us to reinvest nearly 10% more of our funds directly into community programs, significantly amplifying our ability to serve Kansans in need.

In 2024 alone, SENT gave away 63,435 meals and \$149,961.03 worth of food through its Southside Filling Station food pantry, providing crucial nutritional support to families across multiple legislative districts. Additionally, SENT's work in housing, mental health, substance-use disorder treatment, medical services, case management, and workforce development has transformed lives and strengthened entire neighborhoods.

I have enclosed a formal testimony detailing SENT's impact, the significance of our programs, and the rationale for this exemption. We would be honored to present this testimony before the committee and welcome any opportunity for discussion. Please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange a meeting or to discuss any further details.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Johnathan Sublet**

Executive Director, SENT Inc.



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**Testimony Before the Kansas Senate Tax Committee**  
**Presented by: Johnathan Sublet, Executive Director, SENT Inc.**  
**Subject: Request for Sales Tax Exemption for SENT Inc.**

**Members of the Senate Tax Committee,**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of a sales tax exemption for SENT Inc. As the Executive Director of SENT Inc., I have witnessed firsthand the impact of our work in Topeka's most under-resourced communities, particularly in the Hi-Crest neighborhood. Our organization is built on the belief that every individual deserves access to safe housing, mental health services, economic stability, and a thriving community. A sales tax exemption would allow us to reinvest crucial resources into the programs that are transforming lives.

**SENT's Proven Impact**

- **Fighting Food Insecurity:** In 2024, SENT distributed 63,435 meals and \$149,961.03 worth of food through the Southside Filling Station, ensuring that families had access to nutritious food.
- **Housing and Economic Development:** SENT has completed over 30 housing projects, built Topeka's first Net Zero home, and is breaking ground on Fremont Hill, a 29-acre development that includes affordable housing, workforce housing, and community-focused commercial space.
- **Mental and Behavioral Health Services:** SENT has provided over 800 mental health sessions in 2024 alone, serving clients from 19 Kansas towns, including those traveling over 80 miles for services. Additionally, through the Southside Wellness Clinic, SENT offers medical treatments and substance-use disorder treatment services, ensuring that residents have access to essential healthcare and addiction recovery support.
- **Workforce Development:** Through partnerships with local schools, SENT has expanded workforce training, case management, and wraparound support, helping families gain economic independence. SENT also operates a senior citizen workforce training program, providing older adults with opportunities for employment and community engagement without affecting their benefits.

**Why a Sales Tax Exemption is Needed**

Kansas law already provides sales tax exemptions for various charitable organizations under K.S.A. 79-3606. We are requesting an exemption that aligns with these existing statutes, covering essential purchases for:

- **General Charitable Operations:** Supplies, technology, and materials that directly support SENT's administrative and programmatic functions.
- **Affordable Housing Development:** Construction materials and labor for projects like New Heights Workforce Development Subdivision and Johnson-Betts Meadows, an LMI multi-family apartment complex.
- **Health and Mental Health Services:** Therapy materials, medical equipment, and training for mental health and substance-use treatment programs.



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- **Education and Prevention Programs:** School-based counseling, trauma-informed therapy groups, and addiction prevention programs in local schools.
  - **Workforce Training:** Equipment and materials needed for SENT's job readiness and workforce development initiatives.

### **The Long-Term Impact of an Exemption**

A sales tax exemption would free up thousands of dollars annually that could be redirected toward expanding our programs and serving more families in need. For example:

- Redirecting funds from sales tax to housing would increase affordability and help more families achieve homeownership.
- Lower costs for food purchases would allow us to feed more families through the Southside Filling Station.
- Reduced costs for therapy materials would enable us to expand our mental health programs and serve additional clients.

By granting SENT Inc. this exemption, the Kansas Legislature would be supporting a proven organization with a track record of delivering tangible results for Kansas families. We urge this committee to support our request and allow SENT to reinvest more resources into the people we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions and look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Johnathan Sublet**

Executive Director, SENT Inc.

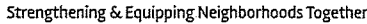
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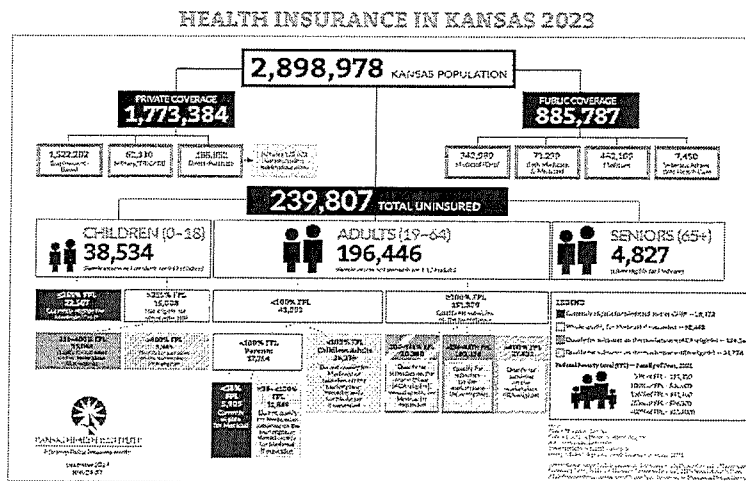
# 2024 Southside Filling Station Pantry Data Breakdown (08.01.2024-12.19.2024)

- **Families by Zip Code:**
  - # of families Served: 1671
  - Average Family Size:
    - Adults: 2
    - Children: 1.3
  - 533 families from 66605 (32%)
  - 106 families from 66609 (6%)
  - 63 families from 66611 (4%)
  - 170 families from 66607 (10%)
  - # of zip codes served: 38
- **Economic Challenges:**
  - 1101 families (66%) with a household income below \$20,000.
  - 464 families (28%) with a household income between \$20,000 and \$39,999.
  - The average estimated household income was \$1,479.36 per month.
  - 701 families (42%) qualify for free or reduced lunch.
- **Education Levels:**
  - 345 families (21%) with less than a high school diploma or GED
  - 1084 families (65%) with a high school diploma or GED
- **Program and Support Involvement:**
  - 545 families (33%) involved with DCF programs
  - 508 families (30%) receiving SNAP benefits
  - 158 families (9%) receiving WIC
  - 18 families (1%) receiving TANF
  - 353 families (21%) uninsured
  - 606 families (36%) on KanCare
  - 453 families (27%) on Medicare
- **Additional Services Provided:**
  - 100 families (6%) Involved with other SENT Services:
  - 166 families (10%) Involved with other Avondale East Care Center Services:
  - 50 families (3%) receiving case management assistance
  - 101 families (6%) receiving mental health support
  - 14 families (1%) receiving job training
  - 329 families (20%) expressed interest in healthy meal prep classes
  - 1372 families (82%) signed up for our SENT monthly newsletter to stay connected with our services



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Southeast Topeka is located in a region with the highest rates of uninsured individuals in Kansas, particularly among children. According to recent reports, this area faces significant healthcare coverage gaps, with many families unable to access or afford the care they need. Nationwide, approximately 27 million Americans are uninsured[U.S. Census 2021], and 41% of adults refrain from seeking healthcare due to cost [Commonwealth Fund 2019]. These disparities are even more pronounced in Southeast Topeka, where a large percentage of families are also struggling with high-deductible health plans[NIH 2019] or lack a primary care provider altogether [National Asso. Community Health Centers 2023]. This unmet need for healthcare access and coverage drives SENT's commitment to offering comprehensive, affordable healthcare options, ensuring that no one is left behind in our community.



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the COVID-19 pandemic, these gaps in coverage will continue to affect Kansas residents until effective solutions are put in place.

But, our community has needs now so SENT is taking the following approach.

**1. Medicaid Access and Support** For community members who qualify for Medicaid, SENT's Neighbor Advocate team is here to guide them through the process of determining eligibility and completing enrollment. Our team is committed to removing barriers and ensuring that individuals access the healthcare benefits they deserve.

**2. Affordable Care Act and Tax Credits** For those who do not qualify for Medicaid but fall within 100%-400% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, SENT assists with navigating the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Our Neighbor Advocate team helps individuals access tax credits, making healthcare coverage more affordable by reducing premium costs. This ensures that families in our community can secure the coverage they need without financial strain.

**3. Aimee Health: A Low-Cost Healthcare Option** SENT has partnered with the Stand Together Foundation to offer Aimee Health([seeaimee.com](http://seeaimee.com)), an innovative telehealth service. Through Aimee Health, individuals can access virtual urgent care(\$9.99/visit) and primary care(\$29.99/visit) services at affordable rates. Community members can also access low-cost prescriptions, lab tests, and even medical weight loss services(\$299/month), including coaching and medication. Aimee Health provides some of the most affordable healthcare options available, with a membership fee of just \$5 per month, making it an invaluable resource for those with limited access to traditional healthcare services.

**4. The Southside Wellness Clinic** To address the unique healthcare challenges faced by our community, SENT is launching the Southside Wellness Clinic. This new facility will provide comprehensive express care services, including walk-in services for routine lab tests, flu vaccines, STD and TB testing, and nebulizer treatments. The clinic will also offer scheduled appointments for physicals, well-woman exams, birth control prescriptions, and telemedicine consultations. Additionally, the clinic will provide Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) as part of its substance use disorder treatment services.

**5. Expanding Access to Care** In response to the healthcare provider shortages in Southeast Topeka, designated as a Healthcare Professional Shortage Area and Medically Underserved Area, SENT is committed to hiring a Community Health Advocate to assist individuals in navigating their healthcare options and accessing the resources available to them. Through this comprehensive approach, SENT ensures that no one is left behind, regardless of their financial situation.

By leveraging Medicaid, the ACA, Aimee Health, and the Southside Wellness Clinic, SENT is creating a holistic healthcare ecosystem that meets the diverse needs of the community. Together, we are building a healthier, more resilient Southeast Topeka.



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At **SENT Topeka**, we are committed to providing comprehensive, wrap-around support for families through various programs and services designed to meet the diverse needs of caregivers and their children. Our offerings are structured to provide continuous support throughout the year, ensuring that parents can access **multiple layers of assistance** as their families grow and evolve.

## Year-Round Group Support

Parents have the opportunity to engage in group sessions for **three-quarters of the year**, participating in programs tailored to different stages of their children's development:

- **Prenatal Support** – Expectant parents can begin their journey with specialized **prenatal groups**, laying a strong foundation for parenthood.
- **Early Childhood (Ages 0-5)** – Following childbirth, caregivers can join the Kansas Children's Service League's (KCSL) programs, such as the **24/7 Dad®** and **Positive Parenting Program® (Triple P)**, which focus on fostering **positive parenting skills** during the critical early years.
- **Adolescence (Teens)** – As children grow, parents can participate in the **Parenting for Positive Self-Worth** program, led by **Greg Lombard Rea**, designed to help caregivers build strong, connected relationships with their children. Greg's specialty is working with parents of **teenage children**.
- **Self-Worth & Healing for Parents** – Many caregivers carry **unresolved childhood wounds** that impact their parenting. The **Making Sense of Your Worth for Parents** program allows caregivers to **explore their self-worth, heal from past trauma, and parent from a place of emotional security**. This helps break generational cycles and **promotes a healthier home environment** for children.

## Additional Support Services

Beyond group sessions, **Greg Lombard Rea** offers **personalized support** to meet the unique needs of each family:

- **Individual Caregiver Coaching** – One-on-one sessions tailored to address specific parenting challenges and goals.
- **Group Caregiver Coaching** – Collaborative group settings where caregivers can learn from each other's experiences under professional guidance.
- **In-Home Nurture Groups** – Sessions conducted within the home environment to strengthen family bonds and implement nurturing practices in daily routines.



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## The Impact on Underserved, Under-Resourced Communities

The **long-term impact of wrap-around support** like this is **profound**—especially for families in underserved, under-resourced communities. Studies show that **holistic, multi-layered family support** programs can lead to **measurable improvements** in family stability, child development, and overall well-being:

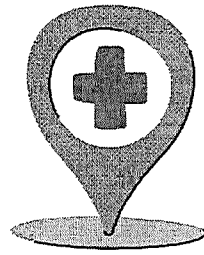
- **Parental Resilience & Stability:** Research indicates that **70% of parents in underserved communities experience chronic stress**, which affects their ability to parent effectively. **Support programs like these have been shown to reduce parental stress by up to 40%**, leading to **more positive family interactions**.
- **Child Development & Academic Success:** Children with engaged parents are **42% more likely to graduate high school** and are less likely to experience behavioral issues. Programs like **Triple P and Parenting for Positive Self-Worth** help parents **build emotional security in their children**, setting them up for long-term success.
- **Breaking Cycles of Trauma & Poverty:** **Generational trauma and poverty are closely linked**—but studies show that **consistent parenting support reduces the likelihood of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) by 50%**, decreasing future risk of mental health struggles, substance abuse, and poverty.
- **Father Involvement & Family Strength:** Programs like **24/7 Dad®** have been shown to **increase father engagement in children's lives by 60%**, leading to better emotional and academic outcomes.
- **Economic Impact:** Every **\$1 invested in early parenting education programs** has been estimated to save communities **\$7 in future** education, criminal justice, and healthcare costs.

## A Community-Wide Impact

By engaging in these **layered support services**, families receive **continuous, tailored guidance** that adapts to their **evolving needs**. This **comprehensive approach** ensures that caregivers are equipped with the **tools, knowledge, and confidence** to foster **healthy, nurturing environments** for their children at **every stage of development**. When families are supported, **communities thrive**—leading to **stronger neighborhoods, lower crime rates, and a brighter future for all**.

Please visit [www.senttopeka.com](http://www.senttopeka.com) for more information about these programs and services.





**SOUTHSIDE  
WELLNESS  
CLINIC**

# ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE FOR SOUTHEAST TOPEKA

## APPOINTMENTS

MON - THURS | 9am-4pm

FRI | 10am-2pm

*Select Thursday Evenings  
and Saturdays*

## WALK-INS

TUES | 12pm-3:30pm

THURS | 2pm-6:30pm

FRI | 10am-1:30pm

### WALK-IN SERVICES

- ▶ Routine laboratory collection and testing
- ▶ Rapid strep tests
- ▶ Urinalysis and urine cultures
- ▶ Flu vaccines
- ▶ STD and TB testing
- ▶ Nebulizer treatments

### SCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

- ▶ Work, sports, and DOT physicals
- ▶ Well-woman exams
- ▶ Birth control prescriptions
- ▶ Telemedicine consultations
- ▶ Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)
- ▶ Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)

### EXPRESS CARE

- ▶ Upper and lower respiratory infections
- ▶ Ear infections
- ▶ Urinary tract infections
- ▶ Common cold, flu, and allergy symptoms



**SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TODAY OR  
WALK IN TO SEE US!**

[www.senntopeka.com](http://www.senntopeka.com)

Call: 785-228-2346 | Fax: 785-228-2337

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Strengthening & Sustaining Neighborhood Resilience