



# WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS IN KANSAS?



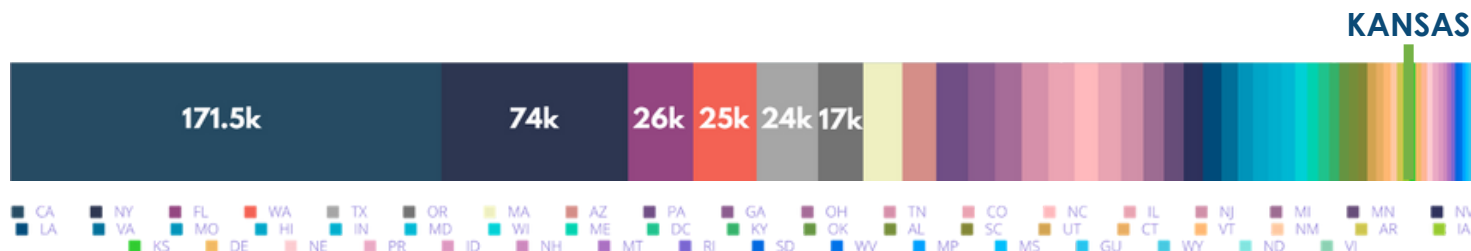
Like many places across the United States, **Kansas is facing a housing crisis.** Last year, homelessness in Kansas rose by about 12%. To address this growing issue before it continues to rise, we first need to understand the scope of the problem and what is causing it.

Kansans are homeless due to a statewide housing shortage. Imagine housing as a game of musical chairs with 10 people needing affordable housing—seniors, families, adults with disabilities, single parents with minor children—but only 4 chairs. When the music stops, 6 are left without affordable housing. They have to spend so much of their income on rent that they don't have enough money each month for necessities like food, utilities, transportation and medical care. Without adequate savings and support systems, these vulnerable households risk falling behind in rent and losing their housing when unexpected expenses arise.



## Homelessness in Kansas is solvable.

With ~2,600 people experiencing homelessness, Kansas represents only 0.41% of the total U.S. homeless population, based on annual Point in Time Count data.



# CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS IN KANSAS



**Shortage of housing:** The 2021 Kansas Statewide Housing Needs Assessment found that Kansas needs more housing, especially housing that fits the needs of retirees and young professionals, like starter homes, duplexes and triplexes.

*Lack of quality, affordable housing is an undeniable barrier to economic growth & development in any community, particularly in rural communities.*

*KHRC Needs Assessment*

**Lack of affordable housing:** The National Low Income Housing Coalition has estimated that Kansas needs over 50,000 additional housing options for Kansans with very low income.

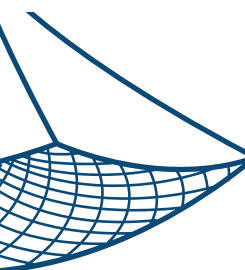
*Nearly 50% of Kansas renters spend 30% or more of their income on housing, making it challenging or impossible to cover other necessities like food, medical care, transportation and childcare.*



**Slow wage growth and inflation:** Since 2019 inflation is up ~25% and wages have not kept up. Low- and fixed-income households are being priced out of their homes, leading them to move in with family or friends, live in their car or outside.

**Lack of healthcare access:** Kansans without access to quality healthcare put off preventive care and critical medical services. This can cause more costly medical issues and disabilities long-term. Disability and medical debt can lead to homelessness, even for prosperous, insured Kansans.

*Nearly 250,000 Kansans are uninsured. Medicaid expansion would enable access to preventive care and treatment to improve health and reduce the risk of disability, medical debt and lost housing. Medicaid also helps cover housing costs for some patients.*



**Inadequate safety net supports:** Safety net supports are intended to stabilize families who need help, but Kansas' assistance programs provide very limited support, are difficult to qualify for and have lifetime limits as short as 24 months.

*Preventing homelessness leads to better outcomes and is less expensive for taxpayers.*

*Santa Clara "Project:Home"*



**By investing in affordable housing, support services and tackling the root causes, we can prevent housing insecurity from growing further in Kansas. Together, we can work to ensure everyone has a place to call home.**