



Impact Avenues Three-Year Report:  
2019-2020 through 2021-2022

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August 2022



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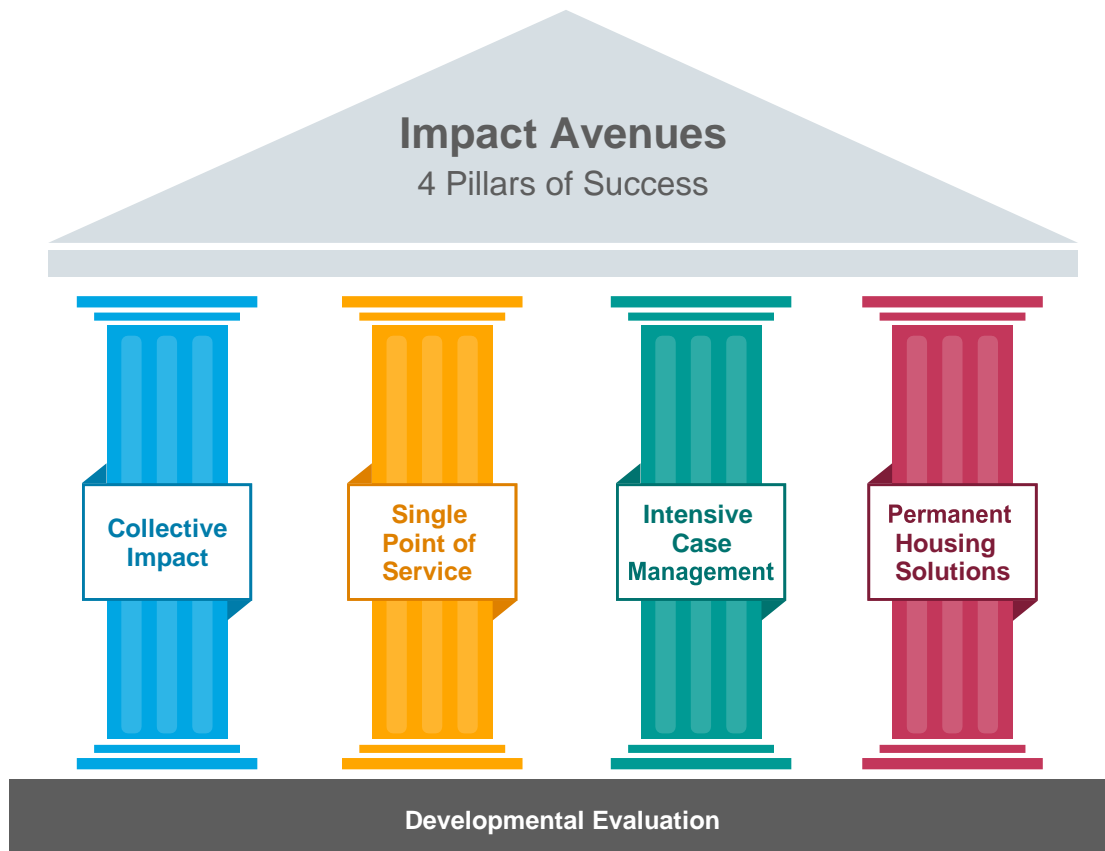
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## Introduction

Impact Avenues was launched in October 2019 as a community program to address student homelessness in Topeka and Shawnee County, Kansas. Based on the nationally recognized Impact KCK program in Wyandotte County, Kansas, Impact Avenues serves all school districts in Shawnee County.

### 4 Pillars of Success

Impact Avenues is based on 4 Pillars of Success. Each pillar is necessary for program success. The pillars are supported by the foundation provided by developmental evaluation practices.



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The descriptions of each pillar and the foundation provide an overview of how Impact Avenues produces results. These descriptions begin on the following page.

## Pillar 1: Collective Impact Model for Community Change

The skillful application of the Collective Impact Model for Community Change is one of Impact Avenues' 4 Pillars of Success. The Collective Impact Model for Community Change (sometimes known as the Collective Impact Model for Social Change) was introduced in 2011 by philanthropic foundation consultants John Kania and Mark Kramer.<sup>1</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 consistent and effective application of the Collective Impact Model has been a key factor in Impact Avenues' success. Further, the Collective Impact Model facilitates effective collaboration and client service found in the other Pillars of Success.

## Pillar 2: Single Point of Service

A single point of service is the second Pillar of Success. Once a family has been referred to Impact Avenues, the Senior Program Administrator or Impact Navigator makes contact and gathers intake information. The Administrator or Navigator then sets up the family with a targeted set of partner organizations and services at the next Impact Thursday. Impact Thursday is the single point of service for Impact Avenues families.

Instead of sending families to multiple locations to get the assistance they need, Impact Avenues' single point of service makes it possible to meet needs on a single day in a single location. Families who are stressed due to housing instability and other emergency needs are unlikely to access all services necessary if they must travel to multiple locations. By using a single point of service, Impact Avenues greatly enhances the likelihood that all necessary services and resources will be accessed.

## Pillar 3: Intensive Case Management

Intensive case management is another hallmark of the Impact Avenues program. Without it, the program's effectiveness would be substantially reduced. The Senior Program Administrator and Impact Navigator provide intensive case management services, and each family develops a close working relationship with the individual

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

providing case management services. This builds trust between the program and those served, another essential ingredient in ending homelessness.

Intensive case management means that the Administrator or Navigator walks side-by-side with each family throughout their journey to housing stability. The Administrator or Navigator identifies family needs at the outset of this journey. The Administrator or Navigator then matches each family with partner organizations providing services they need and for which they are eligible. This means that **each family will experience a “Yes” with every partner organization** with which they meet on Impact Thursdays and beyond. This is far different than the traditional case management model, where families are referred to organizations that **may** have services or resources for which they qualify. Thus, families avoid experiencing stress and disappointment by referrals to organizations where they may be ineligible or where organizations do not have sufficient resources to serve them.

The Administrator’s and Navigator’s roles also enhance program effectiveness by ensuring that partner organizations only receive referrals from eligible families for whom the organization has sufficient resources available. This means that partner organizations can better focus their activities and avoid administrative bottlenecks.

#### Pillar 4: Permanent Housing Solutions

Impact Avenues includes a permanent housing solution as the fourth Pillar of Success. The *Impact KCK Assessment*<sup>2</sup> showed the importance of including assistance in reaching a permanent housing solution when addressing student and family homelessness. Programs without a permanent housing solution may address some emergency needs, but they will not lead to the housing stability needed by students and their families.

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<sup>2</sup> Williamson, Anne R. *Impact KCK Assessment: Reducing Student Homelessness through Collective Impact*. L.P. Cookingham Institute of Urban Affairs, Henry W. Bloch School of Management, University of Missouri-Kansas City. October 2018. Available for download at: <https://www.avenueoflife.org/impact-kck.html>.

## Foundation for Success: Developmental Evaluation

The 4 Pillars of Success are supported by an important foundation: developmental evaluation.<sup>3</sup> Developmental evaluation facilitates innovation and program success through a working relationship between an evaluator and program decision makers.<sup>4</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 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.

## School Districts

A critical outcome of the Impact Avenues program is that school districts are able to focus on the job of educating students. This is made possible because the school districts served by Impact Avenues screen and refer students and families to the program for services secure in the knowledge that those they refer will get the assistance they need.

It is important for anyone seeking to understand the Impact Avenues program to know that it is the *community* providing services and resources for McKinney-Vento students and their families (as well as those at risk of homelessness). Thus, while school districts are important partners in making referrals and remaining in contact with the Impact Avenues team, **the goal of the community initiative is to relieve school district personnel from the responsibility of meeting social service and housing needs so that they can focus on the important task of educating their students.**

## Backbone and Partner Organizations

The City of Topeka serves as the backbone organization for Impact Avenues. The City is also the federally designated Continuum of Care,<sup>5</sup> which means that federal funds are seamlessly integrated into the Impact Avenues program. This leverages private philanthropic funds provided to Impact Avenues. Impact Avenues includes more than 38 partner organizations.

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<sup>3</sup> Developmental evaluation may also be referred to as design-based implementation research.

<sup>4</sup> Patton, Michael Quinn. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Federal homeless funds flow through local Continuums of Care throughout the country.

## Impact Avenues Results

Backbone and partner organizations together **touched the lives** of Shawnee County's students and families **3,340 times** in the 2019-2020 through 2021-2022 school years. During this period, 349 families with 827 children were served; 424 were students, while 333 were younger siblings. Full results are available in the Appendix.

A key metric for this program is the housing stability rate once families attain a permanent housing solution. **Ninety-seven percent (97%)** of families who attain a permanent housing solution through Impact Avenues **remain stably housed**. This extraordinary result is made possible by the full array of wraparound services and classes that build families' ability to be self-sufficient that are at the heart of the Impact Avenues program.

## COVID-19 Response

Impact Avenues launched only months before the COVID-19 pandemic struck the United States. It is important to highlight the fact that the community could not have responded as quickly or as effectively to the pandemic's effect on McKinney-Vento families if Impact Avenues had not been in place prior to the pandemic. The backbone and partner organizations made a number of adaptations in order to provide effective programming during the pandemic. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Impact Avenues staff made "care calls" at the beginning of the pandemic to identify and address the needs of all families served. Care calls continued throughout the pandemic.
- Impact Avenues fully mobilized for delivery of food, clothing, personal hygiene items, and other essentials at the beginning of the pandemic. This mobilization has continued throughout the pandemic. Delivery of food and other necessities is made to any family in need, e.g., not just Impact Avenues families.

## Further Analysis

In addition to the skillful use of the Collective Impact Model for Community Change and the application of social service innovations and permanent housing solutions, Impact Avenues has a number of other noteworthy features and accomplishments:

- In the 2021-2022 school year, Impact Avenues added Life Skills 101 to its series of classes that help families reach and maintain housing stability.
- Impact Avenues began taking referrals from anyone in the community in July 2020. Referrals may also be made through the Topeka Rescue Mission.

- As the area’s Continuum of Care, the City of Topeka is funding homeless prevention, including not only assistance with rent and utilities, but also with mortgage payments.
- Impact Avenues makes use of other funds—particularly public funds—before making use of Advisors Excel funds. This provides significant leverage in addressing student and family homelessness in Topeka.
- Impact Avenues and the City of Topeka received a \$10,000 U.S. Conference of Mayors’ grant. These funds are being used to eliminate fines and fees for families served.
- Impact Avenues has addressed its initial challenges with a lack of furniture and warehouse space. Impact Avenues now has warehouse space it uses for furniture and other donated items. This is a significant milestone for Impact Avenues and the families served, because this will allow families to benefit from a “turn key” experience with a fully furnished home when they reach a permanent housing solution.
- Impact Avenues takes a continuous improvement approach to its work. This facilitates the development of innovative solutions and preparation for the future.

## Success Stories

There are many success stories made possible through Impact Avenues’ first three years of operation. This section provides three stories that illustrate some of the challenges faced by McKinney-Vento families and how Impact Avenues helped them reach housing stability. Names have been changed to protect client identities.

**Jane’s Family.** Jane came to the program in October of 2021. Jane and her family were experiencing homelessness due to mental health issues and alcoholism. Prior to becoming homeless, Jane lived in an apartment with her partner and their three children. Jane faced ongoing mental health issues and abused alcohol in an attempt to cope with the issues. She attempted suicide with a gun; her partner tried to stop her. There was a scuffle, and the police were called. This led to a “disturbance of peace” violation and eviction.

The children went to stay with their grandparents while Jane went into treatment. Jane then faced criminal charges of aggravated assault, use of deadly weapon, and interference with an officer, which made it difficult to find housing. Her main goal was to prove that all of the allegations were caused by mental health issues and not due to reckless violent behavior. While going through the Impact Avenues Program, Jane was able to not only get the housing she needed, but she was able to attend programs that helped with her mental health.

Jane ran into another problem not long after being housed. One of her sons was diagnosed with cancer. This flipped her world upside down again. Fortunately, the doctors were hopeful and said that he had one of the most treatable cancers. As the months went by, Jane continued to work and continued to use the skills that she learned



from the classes at Impact Avenues. Six months later, Jane qualified for permanent housing through Cornerstone. Jane was also able to regain custody of her children, and her son is in remission. She is looking forward to moving her family into permanent housing in the next two weeks.

**Sarah's Family.** Sarah had recently moved to Kansas as a single mother of four trying to flee from her ex-husband and the nightmare that they were experiencing with him. She came to Topeka with no family support, no resources and did not know where to start. Sarah was referred to Impact Avenues in July of 2021. We were able to communicate with her through her first language, Spanish. This helped her feel more comfortable opening up and expressing her needs.

We were able to connect Sarah with assistance through an array of community partner agencies through Impact Thursday, the Impact Avenues single-point-of-service day. This made it easier for Sarah to get all her needs taken care of at one single location rather than relying on the bus or seeking rides from others, all while bringing along all four children to each location. This eliminated many barriers for the family and helped them get a rapid start. Sarah and her four children now live in a permanent home. Further, Sarah is holding down stable employment and has achieved financial stability for her family.

**Daniel's Family.** Daniel is father to three young girls. He had a rough past before he came to us and spent some time in prison. When Daniel was released, he was determined to change. He found a full-time job as a traveling carpenter that he loved, and it paid well. He then got a call that his daughter was in the hospital. The girl's mother and her girlfriend had poured boiling water on his 2 year old daughter's hands, and she had cigarette burns on her body. All three girls were being abused.

Daniel dropped everything and came back to Topeka. He immediately took temporary custody of all of his daughters. However, he was now homeless and had no job. He used what he had saved to stay in a motel for a while before he was referred to Impact Avenues. Impact was able to help him find employment and housing and walk alongside him during this difficult time. The courts did not initially want to give him custody of the girls because of his past. It was a very difficult and long battle, but he fought and didn't give up. Daniel now has full custody. He is a great dad and is focused on helping the girls work through their trauma. The girls are now in a safe place and have a stable home.

## Conclusion

Impact Avenues' first three years shows that the program has been highly successful. The 97% housing stability rate for those who attain permanent housing through Impact Avenues clearly demonstrates that Impact Avenues is meeting its goals. Hundreds of children have been spared further trauma due to family circumstances, and their

parents have become steadily employed. Families are stably housing, a critical element in students' ability to reach high school graduation and beyond.

## Appendix: Impact Avenues Data as of July 31, 2022

See Next Page for Data Table

**Metrics for Impact Avenues – July 2022**

<b>Participation</b>	<b>Year 1 2019-20</b>	<b>Year 2 2020-21</b>	<b>Year 3 2021-22</b>	<b>Total Reached</b>
Total Number of households referred	103	104	142	349
Referral breakdown (unduplicated)	TPS: 88 TRM: 8 Community 7	TPS: 41 TRM: 2 Community 56	TPS: 43 TRM: 8 Community 91	TPS: 172 TRM: 18 Community 154
Number of children referred	260	265	302	827
Number of students participating in the program	168	157	169	494
Number of households participating in the program	72	75	93	240
Number of Adults (18 +) participating in the program	90	86	114	290
Number of Children (17 -) participating in the program	195	187	213	595
Number of Adults (18 +) graduating from the program	<i>Report at graduation</i>			
Number of Children (17 -) graduating from the program	<i>Report at graduation</i>			
Number of households that completed Housing 101 class	51	49	53	153
Number of households that completed Healthcare 101 class	56	48	57	161
Number of households that completed Employment 101 class	52	41	44	137
Number of households that completed Personal Finance 101 class	51	50	55	156
Number of households that completed Life Skills 101 class			26	26
Number of households that found employment through Impact Avenues			47	47
<b>Housing Status</b>				
Number of households in temporary housing	33	43	42	118
Number of Adults (18+) in temporary housing	40	53	50	143
Number of Children (17-) in temporary housing	103	109	95	307
Number of households in permanent housing	41	32	51	124
Number of Adults (18+) in permanent housing	52	38	63	153
Number of Children (17-) in permanent housing	99	87	118	304
Number of households dismissed from the program (Include reasons for dismissal)	7 – all moved out of area	8 – all moved out of area	5	20- all moved out of area
<b>Services Received</b>				
Number of households receiving utility assistance (gas, water, electric)	98	93	141	332
Number of individuals receiving mental health services	61	47	93	201
Number of households receiving public assistance (e.g., TANF, Medicaid, Childcare Vouchers, etc.)	73	74	92	239
Number of households receiving transportation assistance (e.g., bus passes)	54	8	58	120

**Metrics for Impact Avenues – July 2022**

Number of households receiving legal assistance	19	12	9	40
<b>Agency Involvement</b>				
Topeka Public School District	84	63	82	229
City of Topeka – Neighborhood Relations	88	104	142	334
Kansas Department for Children and Families	73	74	92	239
Heartland RADAC	8	3	4	15
Valeo	42	27	54	123
GraceMed	47	28	42	117
Health Access	17	11	14	42
Family Service and Guidance Center	19	20	39	78
Let’s Help	13	1	8	22
Doorstep	35	31	38	104
Housing and Credit Counseling	53	50	46	149
Cornerstone	51	49	73	173
Topeka Housing Authority	64	60	82	206
Topeka Rescue Mission	27	18	18	63
Topeka City ID	4	0	0	4
KDOR Mobile	8	0	0	8
Mirror – Work for Success	15	1	7	23
Kansas Children’s Service League	7	2	5	14
IBSA	29	24	19	72
Washburn Tech	16	6	15	37
Evergy	52	49	72	173
Kansas Gas	46	44	69	159
Adecco	40	6	5	51
Express Professional Services	48	19	41	108
Kwik Staff	19	7	6	32
Boys and Girls Club	13	5	34	52
City of Topeka – Impact Avenues	90	104	142	336
CRC	19	6	7	32
Azura	14	14	10	38
Fellowship Bible Church/Faith Based	8	0	8	16
El Centro	3	3	3	9
Orion	11	5	4	20
Kansas Family Advisory Network	6	0	9	15
Communities in Schools	1	1	0	2
Topeka Workforce Center	3	8	4	15
KVC	2	4	3	9
Furniture Mall of Kansas	27	27	20	74
Parks and Rec	76	0	71	147
<b>Household Barriers</b>				
Housing score	<i>Report at graduation</i>			
Food score	<i>Report at graduation</i>			
Employment score	<i>Report at graduation</i>			
Transportation (Yes = 1 - has vehicle or dependable form of transportation; No = 0)	Yes, has transportation = 22	Yes, has transportation	Yes, has Transportation =44	Yes, has Transportation =96

**Metrics for Impact Avenues – July 2022**

	No, does not = 50	= 30 does not = 45	Does not= 49	Does not= 144
Number of households in crisis when starting the program (include context where possible)	72	75	93	240
Number of households in crisis when ending the program (include context where possible)	<i>Report at graduation</i>			
Number of households experiencing domestic violence	17	27	20	64
<b>Demographics</b>				
Education level of Head of Household (No high school, some high school, GED or HS Diploma, some college, Associate’s Degree, Bachelor’s Degree, Graduate or Professional Degree)	No GED or HS dipl = 26 GED or HS Dipl. = 18 Some college = 23 Associates degree = 1 Bachelor’s degree = 3 Graduate degree = 0	NO GED or HS dip= 20 GED or HS dip.= 28 Some college = 24 Associates degree = 3 Bachelor’s degree = 0 Graduate degree = 0	NO GED or HS dip= 27 GED or HS dip.= 38 Some college = 23 Associates degree =5 Bachelor’s degree = 0 Graduate degree = 0	NO GED or HS dip= 73 GED or HS dip.= 84 Some college = 70 Associates degree = 9 Bachelor’s degree = 3 Graduate degree = 0
Average Household income at intake	According to HUD’s guidelines: Extremely low 30% or less = 72	According to HUD’s guidelines: Extremely low 30% or less = 73 Very Low 50% or less = 2	According to HUD’s guidelines: Extremely low 30% or less = 91 Very Low 50% or less = 2	According to HUD’s guidelines: Extremely low 30% or less = 236 Very Low 50% or less = 4
Average Household income at graduation	<i>Report at graduation</i>			
<b>Comments</b>				
<p>July Highlights: Impact Avenues has 93 participating families, representing 213 children. Of those 213 children, 169 are students and 44 are children from birth to pre-k. Fifty-two (52) households have received permanent housing, representing 118 children and 63 adults. Forty-eight (42) families are currently in temporary housing as they work on barriers to permanent housing.</p> <p>July 31 concludes the third full year of the Impact Avenues Program. Please see the attached report on the three-year impact.</p>				