



For Immediate Release

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Kansas City Regional Housing Alliance (KCRHA) Provides Resources and is Working with Tenants and Housing Providers During COVID-19 Pandemic

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - April 24, 2020 - Stabilizing the local rental housing industry and keeping families in their homes is a goal of the KC Regional Housing Alliance (KCRHA), which is comprised of property managers, landlords, investors and Realtors representing thousands of rental units in the metropolitan Kansas City area.

The housing provider community understands the importance of shelter to the health and safety of their tenants, especially during this time of uncertainty in our nation. **You can't "stay at home" without a home in which to stay, and we're proud our industry provides homes for nearly half of the residents throughout KC.** We understand and support the eviction and mortgage moratoriums that have been enacted to protect our most vulnerable citizens who may be facing an unexpected financial strain because of the crisis. Many housing providers have taken proactive steps to waive late fees, freeze rents and not evict families who have lost income because of the tragic situation impacting our entire country.

Housing providers are working directly with their tenants to devise a fair plan moving forward. "We know that a good tenant will likely continue to be a good tenant once this emergency is over, and it is in both parties' best interests to work together to our mutual benefit. We do not need public policy to do what is naturally occurring in our market and governed by contracts," according to Stacey Johnson-Cosby, President of the KCRHA. "At any given time throughout the year, we have tenants who face crisis and emergencies and we work with them one on one. **We are naturally motivated to work together since we need each other to exist.**"

The KCRHA encourages tenants who are unable to pay their full rent and property owners struggling with mortgage payments to immediately contact their housing provider or lender to work out a written plan. **A forbearance, moratorium, or suspension order does not erase the legal obligations of a mortgage, lease, or utility bill,** and may cause additional legal and financial hardships if ignored. Any potential rent strikes will lead to a mass non-payment of rent and utilities, and will be devastating to the affordable housing market, housing providers and

tenants alike. Tenants may have their credit damaged making it more challenging to secure housing in the future. Many housing providers have also lost jobs and income, straining their ability to pay property taxes, utilities and necessary ongoing maintenance of rental properties.

Johnson-Cosby believes, "At the end of this, we do not need to be left with vacant homes that have been foreclosed and families displaced. Where will these families go? Who, if anyone, will purchase and maintain those distressed properties? We need to be forward thinking and responsible during this crisis and present resources to keep people stabilized in their current homes."

KCRHA is gathering a comprehensive list of financial resources & job openings that can help tenants and housing providers manage their costs during this time, including making sure everyone is aware of the federal government stimulus checks of \$1,200 for adults and \$500 per child for those who qualify.

KCRHA is also encouraging those who have lost jobs or income, including those who are self-employed or independent contractors, part of the gig economy: drivers, handymen, freelancers, etc. **to file for expanded unemployment insurance benefits** through the CARES Act, which can potentially add another \$600 per week to the payment, resulting in potential payments of approximately \$1,000 per week. There are also many new job openings as a result of the crisis. KCRHA is actively gathering those details and will share them soon. KCRHA believes that because of the many financial, food, health and other resources provided by our governmental entities, non-profits and the charitable efforts of many private citizens in the community, that we will all be able to weather this storm with good communication and cooperation by working together.

Financial Resources for Tenants and Property Owners:

Kansas Unemployment Insurance information & application: **GetKansasBenefits.gov**

Missouri Unemployment Insurance information & application: **Labor.MO.gov**

Federal Government Stimulus – Economic Impact Payment (\$1,200, \$500): **IRS.gov**

United Way of Greater KC – 211: Referral source for many agencies for most emergency situations, covering resources from food, health care & mental health referrals, rent and utility assistance, senior information, student information, etc. **UnitedWayGKC .org, 816-472-4289.**

Utility Information – For payment plan arrangements:

Electricity - Evergy – **Evergy.com** 816-471-5275

Water (KS) – WaterOne – **Waterone.org**

Water (KCMO) KC Water – **KCWater.us** 816-513-0123

Gas – Spire - **SpireEnergy.com** 816-756-5252

BPU – **BPU.com** (KCKS) 913-573-9000

Food Resources:

Feeding Missouri - FeedingMissouri.org, 573-355-7758

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