

2024

LINC Caring Communities Impact Report



LINC
Stronger Families Together

Dear Kansas City Community,

LINC stands with you, bringing a model of community-driven service that has been building stronger families together for more than 30 years.

We know the unique strengths of our Caring Communities. Our vision binds that collective power to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, reach their highest potential and contribute to the public good.

In 2024, we moved into new offices, centralizing and blending the leadership teams of our many programs and initiatives to fully provide a one-stop service to meet whatever needs a family presents. We bring to bear the expertise of our many programs, including our early childhood services, our youth transitions team that helps children aging out of the state foster system prepare for independent living, and LINC's Missouri Work Assistance program that helps parents on state welfare get education and career training to achieve self-sufficiency.

These and other services support the work of our 55 Caring Communities sites anchored in public schools, the Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center and the Palestine Senior Citizens Activity Center. All our team leaders in the field are a trusted resource for the families and neighborhoods they serve. That's because people know that LINC is a place where barriers are removed, struggles are overcome and ideas are heard and turned into action.

As a member of the Family and Community Trust, we embrace FACT's mission to build public and private partnerships with the community. We pride ourselves on being able to work quickly, responsively and creatively—for example, setting up a vaccination clinic in partnership with Governor Mike Parson and the Missouri National Guard, or training LINC staff and providing technology in a community center to help thousands of households access more than \$3 million in emergency rental and utility assistance. We continue to help families get access to legal assistance with evictions and other housing crises. We coordinate food distribution from Missouri farmers across an 11-county area for the Local Food Purchase Assistance program. Because of our programs and initiatives, our neighborhoods, communities, cities, counties and our state thrive.

We strive simply to find a way to help one family in that one moment of need, doing whatever it takes.

We expect the future will present our families and neighborhoods with new challenges, and LINC will be there, every one of us working together, for the care and prosperity of all.

Sincerely,



Janet Miles-Bartee
President and CEO, LINC



EMANUEL CLEAVER, II

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

HOUSING AND INSURANCE SUBCOMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER

CAPITAL MARKETS SUBCOMMITTEE



FIFTH DISTRICT, MISSOURI

COMMISSION ON SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
(HELSINKI COMMISSION)

[HTTPS://CLEAVER.HOUSE.GOV](https://cleaver.house.gov)

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

December 30, 2024

Greetings,

As you celebrate another year of achievements for the Local Investment Commission (LINC), I am inspired by its impact on our community. It is my pleasure to contribute to this annual report, which highlights not just what you have accomplished but also the incredible difference LINC makes in the lives of children and families every single day.

LINC shines brightly in the Kansas City region, courageously tackling the complex needs of families and children facing adversity. LINC's commitment to local initiatives and powerful partnerships creates boundless opportunities for our youth to soar. With educational programs, health services, and comprehensive family support initiatives, LINC equips families with the tools to overcome challenges and envision extraordinary futures.

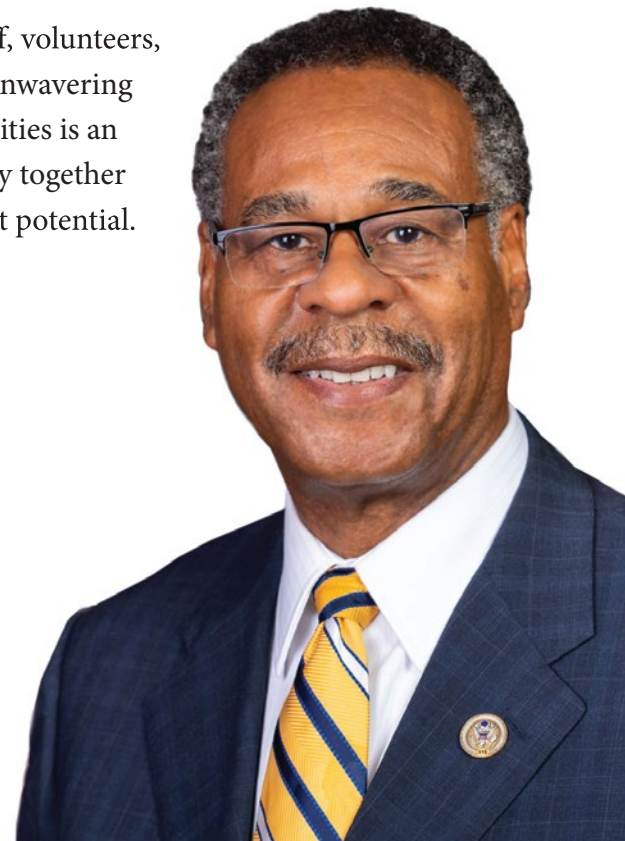
As your Member of Congress, I am committed to championing initiatives that prioritize the wellbeing of our children and families. LINC embodies this spirit through impactful programs and igniting a collective spirit of service within the Kansas City region. Together, we can ensure that every child has access to the opportunities they deserve and the support to realize their dreams.

In closing, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the dedicated staff, volunteers, and community partners who tirelessly advance LINC's mission. Your unwavering commitment showcases our shared belief that investing in our communities is an investment in our collective future. Let us continue this essential journey together strengthening our bonds and empowering families to fulfill their highest potential.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Emanuel Cleaver, II".

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress





February 7, 2025



Dear Kansas City,

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I am able to contribute to the Annual Report on behalf of the Local Investment Commission (LINC). This year has been one of incredible growth, collaboration, and progress for our community, and it is only through the dedication and hard work of so many of you that we are able to reflect on the successes we've achieved together.

LINC's mission is to enhance the quality of life for all Kansas Citians by investing in community-driven projects, focusing on initiatives that promote sustainable growth while empowering individuals, families, and neighborhoods. In 2024, these investments made several material differences in the lives of our residents, enhancing the quality of local education and creating economic opportunity, while promoting safety and inclusivity in our neighborhoods.

This year's report highlights the impactful partnerships we have continued to cultivate with local organizations, businesses, and residents. Together, we have made significant strides in areas such as workforce development, affordable housing, and youth engagement in our community. These partnerships have helped LINC strengthen its continued support in our underserved communities, ensuring that everyone has access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

Our commitment to fostering equitable development remains central to our work. We are proud of the changes we have made, but acknowledge that our work is not finished. In 2025, we will continue to seek innovative solutions, collaborating in all corners of our City to build a brighter, more prosperous future for all.

As always, I extend my deepest gratitude to our members of LINC, our City Council, our dedicated staff, and every resident who contributes their time, ideas, and effort to this mission. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected Kansas City.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Quinton D. Lucas

Dear Reader,

For over 30 years, LINC has improved the lives of children and families while creating savings for the state of Missouri. As this Impact Report shows, LINC's approach continued to be successful in 2024.

Many Kansas City community organizations offer solutions to the problems associated with poverty—lack of affordable child care and transportation, housing instability, low academic achievement, and so on. What makes LINC different?

Answer: the vision of its founder. LINC was born in 1992 as the brainchild of businessman Bert Berkley, with the help of other business and civic leaders in Kansas City such as SuEllen Fried, and with the blessing of Governor John Ashcroft's administration. Behind the creation of LINC lay a radical idea: empower local citizens to have a say in how state services are implemented in their community.

The passing of Bert and SuEllen in 2024 leaves a large hole in our community. But the LINC Commission remains dedicated to keeping their vision alive, and to ensuring Missouri dollars are spent prudently and solutions for our community's challenges are designed with the benefit of local wisdom.

Another difference: Through the Family and Community Trust (FACT), LINC has direct access to the top leadership of nine Missouri state agencies concerned with the welfare of our community. LINC serves as FACT's Community Partnership for the Kansas City region, joining 19 other Missouri partnerships to engage with agency directors and private leaders to develop innovative solutions for improving the lives of children and families. Moreover, two LINC Commissioners, Kiki Curls of the Heavy Constructors Association and Shawn Foster of Preuss Foster Law, serve on the FACT board, ensuring a strong voice for the Kansas City community.

Bert always credited SuEllen for "opening the door" to his vision for LINC. That vision has guided LINC's work through eight gubernatorial administrations and our community's ever-changing political, economic, and social landscape. On behalf of the citizen leaders of the LINC Commission, we honor our late founders by carrying their vision forward into 2025 and beyond.

Warmest regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DAVID L. DISNEY".

David L. Disney | LINC Co-Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Powell".

Ken Powell | LINC Co-Chair

Learn About LINC

Our Vision

A caring community that builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, attain their highest potential, and contribute to the public good.

Our Mission

To provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

Core Results

LINC's work is organized around achieving results in these nine core areas:

- Adults working
- Children and youth succeeding in school
- Healthy children and families
- Young children ready to enter school
- Children safe in their families and families safe in their communities
- Youth prepared for productive adulthood
- Elders and people with disabilities valued and living as they choose
- Well-informed citizens making decisions about their communities
- Strong, thriving neighborhoods

Guiding Principles

- Comprehensiveness
- Prevention
- Outcomes
- Intensity
- Participant Involvement
- Neighborhoods
- Flexibility and Responsiveness
- Collaboration
- Strong Families
- Respect and Dignity
- Interdependence/Mutual Responsibility
- Cultural Competency
- Creativity
- Compassion
- Honesty

Community Partnership

The Family and Community Trust (FACT) is a non-profit corporation with members drawn from the top leadership in state government and the private sector. It governs the work of the twenty community partnerships across the state. LINC is a proud member of FACT, helping them develop innovative solutions for improving the lives of Missouri's children and families.

How It Works

Caring Communities

Using the Caring Communities model, **LINC works with families to tackle the complexity of the social safety net.** Caring Communities sites are placed at local anchor institutions like schools and community centers, so people can access services right where they live. Site Coordinators are trained to ask questions to get to the heart of an issue a family or person might face, and they are trusted by community members in the neighborhood. Site Coordinators organize families and other neighborhood stakeholders to form site councils to identify challenges and opportunities and make decisions to strengthen the community.

LINC is:

Place-Based

Caring Communities sites are strategically located in **55 schools, community centers, and neighborhood access points** across the Kansas City metro area.

Responsive

LINC engages community members through **neighborhood-based site councils.** These councils, composed of diverse stakeholders, amplify community voices to inform LINC's work and ensure local needs are addressed.

Efficient

By **collaborating** with six school districts and **partnering** with dozens of nonprofits and businesses, LINC streamlines services to avoid duplication and maximize impact.

Scalable

The Caring Communities model is adaptable, enabling LINC to **serve a wide range of community members**, including foster youth, parents receiving temporary assistance, elder citizens, school-aged children and their families, rural Missouri farmers, and daycare providers.

A Connecting Point

The model serves as a **bridge between the community and the state**, facilitating the flow of information to align funding with local needs more effectively.

A Distribution Network

LINC leverages its network to reach almost anyone in need. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, LINC **mobilized over 26,000 Kansas City residents to be vaccinated.** Additionally, by working with **115 Missouri farmers, LINC provided fresh food to over 100 distribution points across an 11-county area.**

2024 Highlights

Athletics

LINC believes all youth and families should be able to experience the benefits and opportunities of sports. More than 1,600 children participated in LINC's free, expanded athletics program, and hundreds joined in healthy activities for families, including the spring social mindful movement event that gathered more than 200 children and adults on the football field at Central High School in LINC's mission to support healthy lifestyles.

"Once you understand to focus and understand who you are, there is nothing you can't accomplish."

— John Thomas, Boxing Coach

Caring Communities Day

LINC added to its annual celebration of Caring Communities Day with a new Fall Festival in the Southland, as more than 2,000 residents at both events felt the love and joy of a community that shared food, dancing, games, prizes, music, educational resources, health screenings and employment opportunities.

"This is what we need more of in Kansas City—everybody coming together."

—Stacey Graves, Kansas City Police Chief

Serving Senior Citizens

LINC expanded its services for seniors, taking on the management of the Palestine Senior Citizens Activity Center as a new Caring Communities site with new programming, nutritional services, exercise classes, health screening, and tripling its enrollment from 90 to 282 members to support and encourage a vibrant senior community.

"This is going to be a model for so many others to follow."

—Rev. James Watkins,
Pastor, Palestine Missionary Baptist Church

Local Farm Food Distribution

LINC recruited local farms and producers to build a food distribution network that reached more than 100 community sites across an 11-county area in Missouri, connecting local farms to communities of need. LINC's network, as part of the federal Local Food Purchase Assistance initiative, has distributed over \$1 million in food to more than 100,000 people.

"They've figured out how to get the food to the counties and areas where there's need."

—Bob Proffer, CEO, Proffer Produce



Anti-violence and Anti-bullying

With Kansas City strained by violence, LINC worked with Ossco Bolton and The New P.O.S.S.E. to train LINC staff in recognizing trauma in families, and created an anti-bullying curriculum based on the work of the late SuEllen Fried to foster a community of peace, inspired by Fried's belief in the Power of Kindness.

"Empathy is the capacity every human being has to put themselves in somebody else's skin and imagine what they are going through."

—SuEllen Fried

Community Program Expansion

LINC opened additional offices for its Youth Transitions team and its Missouri Work Assistance team throughout the region, bringing LINC's case managers and range of services closer to more of the families and individuals we serve.

"I finally felt some security. I could find a career path."

—Samantha Wrozier,
Missouri Work Assistance program participant

Widening Community Partnerships

Recognizing that we are stronger together, LINC increased the reach and power of community services through expanded partnerships, including collaborating with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City, the Kansas City Zoo and Aquarium, the Urban Summit and more.

"We're going to get to work, folks."

—Gwen Grant,
President and CEO, the Urban League of Greater Kansas City

Holiday Generosity

LINC's many services to families during the holiday season included gathering 40 children with their parents so the children could join in a shopping trip with Kansas City-area police officers at a local Target store. Additionally, LINC worked with the U.S. Marine Corps to help the Toys for Tots program distribute more than 52,000 toys to families throughout the Kansas City area.

"It makes me feel like if I have a need, it will always be met."

—DeKeisha Lora, Parent





Kansas City Black History Project

LINC's annual, award-winning collaboration with the Kansas City Public Library and the Black Archives of Mid-America produced a stirring collection of stories of great men and women with roots in Kansas City, portrayed in booklets and posters, that were shared in schools, churches, community halls and homes.

"The purpose of this project is to tell the truth about history and about the building of Black Kansas City."

—Dr. Carmaletta Williams,
Executive Director, Black Archives of Mid-America



Youth Overnighter

LINC gathered boys from across its network of Caring Communities sites to join an overnight sports lock-in at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center in June. The night included basketball drills at the Hy-Vee Arena and soccer at a sports clinic in Kansas City, Kan. The event combined the fun of Kansas City sports venues with important messages from mentor speakers on unity, character, anti-violence and hard work.

"This really keeps the kids safe and keeps them in a good positive environment."

—Shamika Sanchez, Parent



Family Night at Starlight

LINC Caring Communities teamed up with Starlight Theatre and Community Builders of Kansas City to provide more than 1,000 children and adults an opportunity to gather in the iconic arts venue for musical performances and a free showing of the Disney/Pixar film "Coco."

"Free events like this reflect our vision to be the home for accessible live arts experiences for all generations."

—Lindsey Rood-Clifford
President and CEO, Starlight Theatre



Focus on Literacy

LINC's Caring Communities focused on building literacy in 2024. LINC's program at Holliday Montessori School was one of many LINC programs joining the "Read for 15" daily reading exercise with the 15 and the Mahomies Foundation. LINC students kept reading logs with their caregivers. LINC created unique curriculum and events, including visits from local authors like Nikiyah Crosdale and Kristen Heath.

"We are always appreciative of our partnership with LINC, not just for before- and after-care, but all the ways that LINC supports our families."

Dr. Jennifer Collier, Superintendent, Kansas City Public Schools

LINC Chess

LINC has long taught chess in its classrooms as a great way to help children think as problem-solvers and learn good sportsmanship. In 2024, LINC again gave players across the area the opportunity to celebrate the game together as more than 100 children and teens competed in each of three LINC Chess tournaments. Dozens more children and adults improved their game at LINC's summer chess camp and Chess University.

"It doesn't matter what language you speak or your skill level. Anybody can play chess. It's just a great community and a great game to learn."

—Kristin Davis, Chess Instructor

Expert Trainers

LINC's certified trainers helped many providers build capacity to better serve families and communities across Missouri and nationwide. LINC President and CEO Janet Miles-Bartee and Director of Training Carl Wade presented "The True Power of Afterschool" at the National Afterschool Alliance Conference in Dallas. State conference presentations included anti-bullying curriculum, Youth Work Methods and behavioral management.

"Presenters were amazing and I can't wait to take this information back to my program!"

—From conference audience published feedback

Peace Building

In a year in Kansas City that saw 147 homicides and another 571 people shot and survive, LINC teamed with youth anti-violence expert Ossco Bolton and The New P.O.S.S.E. to help LINC staff and the community they serve better understand the roots of violence, the damage of trauma and the paths toward peace. LINC held workshops with its frontline Caring Communities team and worked proactively with youths to give them skills and confidence to stand for peace.

"Young people have to feel like they are part of something bigger."

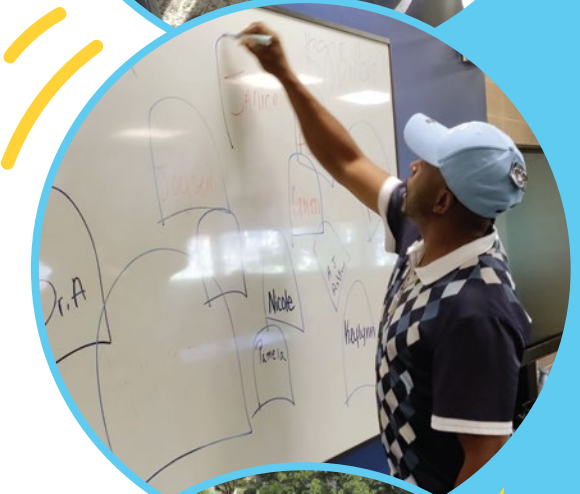
—Ossco Bolton

Faxon Accessibility Sensory Wall

LINC robotics students at Faxon Elementary in Kansas City, in an after-school partnership with the Front Porch Alliance, recognized that the school's playground did not accommodate many students with disabilities. The students designed inclusive renovations, including an accessibility sensory wall, which they built with help from community volunteers.

"Everybody gets to have fun with the sensory wall and everybody can be happy."

—Jenny, age 10, Faxon Elementary Student





Our Initiatives

Before and After School

LINC enrolled more than **5,800 children in its free before and after school programming** for families in the Kansas City, Hickman Mills, Grandview, Center and North Kansas City school districts, as well as Lee A. Tolbert charter school. **Families saved thousands of dollars**, and employers gained from parents being able to work. Children grew academically and socially in LINC's program that has **proven to increase student attendance and reading achievement**. Each site provided STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programming at least twice weekly, guided by LINC's in-house STEM trainers and with partners including Kansas City Young Audiences and Kansas City Community Gardens.

Workforce Development

LINC's case managers in the Missouri Work Assistance program helped **771 people** in the state welfare system **overcome barriers** in their lives to **get into school or job training**, by providing financial support and skills in managing life stress, parenting, and searching for work so they can **become self-sufficient**. LINC distributed **\$153,853** in incentives and direct support to help with work- and travel-related expenses.

Justice in the Schools

The LINC-funded Justice in the Schools program provided legal assistance from an attorney from Legal Aid of Western Missouri to **110 families** in 2024, impacting **197 children**. Since the program began in 2020, LINC has connected **632 families** representing **921 children** to free legal aid. More than **two-thirds** of the cases involved housing crises, saving families from evictions and providing critical aid to help **keep families stabilized and children in school**.

Athletics

LINC expanded its athletics programming in 2024, installing an athletic director to lead programming that gave more than **1,600 children** the opportunity to join team and individual sports with professional coaching and new equipment so they can **gain skills and confidence** from sports experiences **that otherwise would not be available to many of them**. LINC obtained **\$68,506 in grants** to support coaching and equipment for boxing, golf, pickleball, flag football, basketball, soccer and mindful movement.

Emergency Assistance

LINC drew on the expertise of its staff and partners in all its initiatives to **act quickly with emergency aid** when families in LINC's community were in crisis. LINC **helped hundreds of families** keep their lights on, get critical car repairs, stave off eviction, replace necessary home appliances, get into shelter, receive hot meals, clothing, coats and more.

Foster Youth Transitions

This year LINC's youth transitions team provided critical assistance to **606** older youths who were aging out of the state's foster care system or transitioning from the juvenile justice system. LINC provided personal counseling and tangible support to help these youth **gain skills, confidence and financial support** to be able to complete education, get employment, start careers and overcome barriers such as housing and transportation **to become independent adults**. Supports included providing phones and computers for work and school, driving lessons, life skills classes, auto repairs, apartment start-up kits and distributing **\$287,000 in incentives toward school and work success**.

Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center

LINC's Caring Communities site at the Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center **in the heart of Kansas City's east side** at 27th and Prospect serves as a critical resource center for previously underserved neighborhoods. Morning Star is where **360 households were able to access \$319,417 in rent and utility assistance** in 2024. Weekly, year-round food service provided more than **45,000 meals and food boxes**. Families and individuals received more than **2,300 items of coats and clothing**. Morning Star was the community's center for events, including the Caring Communities Day public fair, youth summer food service, scouting, chess camp, adult yoga classes, a Christmas Eve meal and celebration and more.

Neighborhood Events

LINC helped its community bond and celebrate with **free neighborhood events that drew thousands** together to share in music, dancing, games, food, prizes and important household resources. **Caring Communities Day** in August distributed **2,000 meals, 500 bags of school supplies, 282 smoke detectors, 250 bicycle safety kits, 87 gun safety locks, 100 children's books** and more than **250 prizes**. Many of the same services were offered during **the new Fall Festival in south Kansas City** with more than **1,000** attendees.

Palestine Senior Citizens Activity Center

LINC took over the management of Palestine Senior Citizens Activity Center in the summer of 2024 to **revive this important service center** in east Kansas City. **Membership tripled from 90 in August to 282** by the end of the year. LINC brought in major partners including ArchWell Health, University Health and Welcome Wellness and enlivened social opportunities with games, special meals, community councils and exercise in building a vibrant senior community.

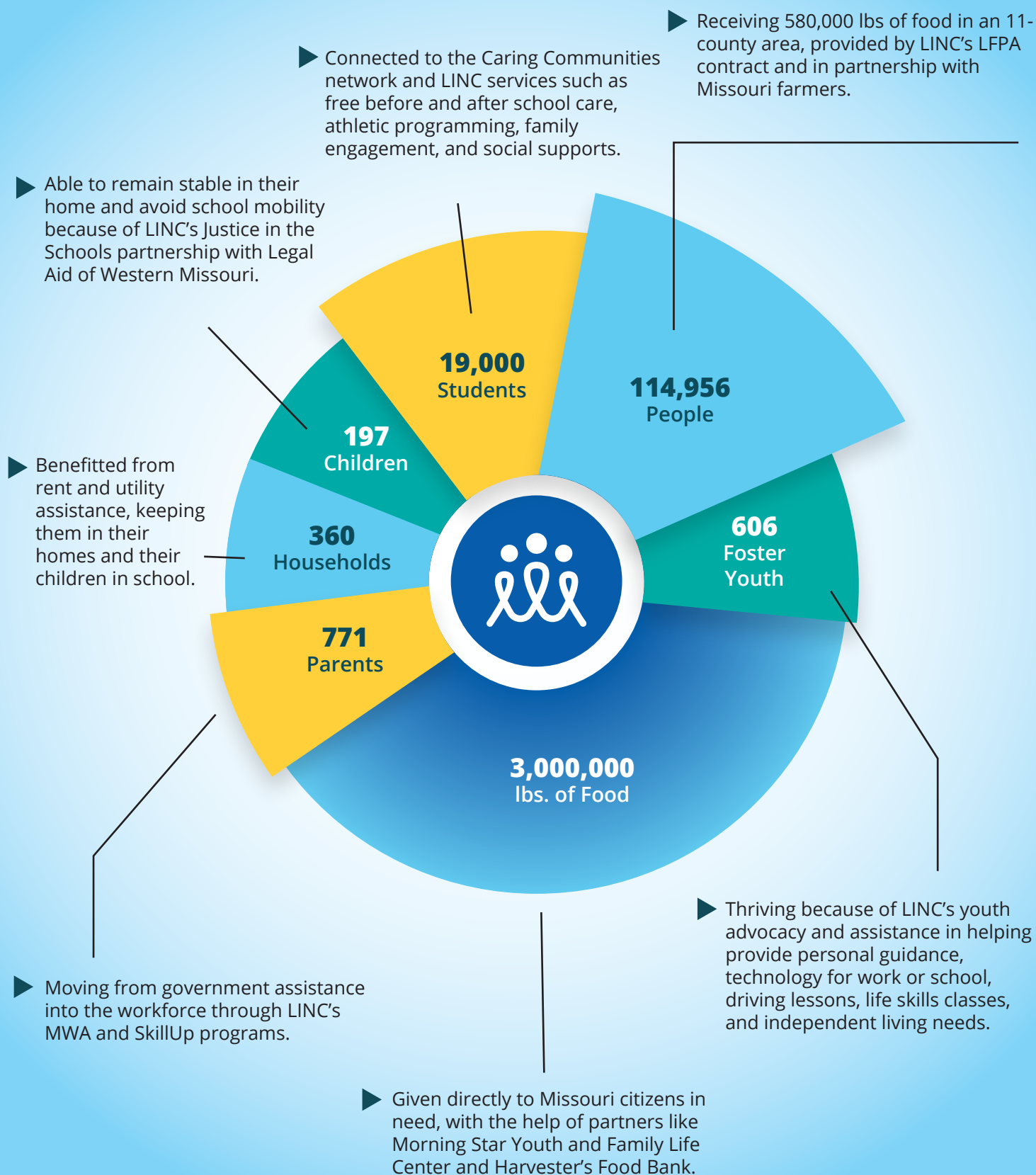
Early Childhood Support

LINC's team of early childhood trainers in 2024 worked with seven early childhood centers that cared for a total of **416** children. Through more than **500** total visits, LINC's team helped the **117** teachers in those centers **build stronger skills** for interacting with children and families, **create better learning environments and improve program safety**. With LINC's support, The Kids in Christ Academy in Kansas City gained NAEYC accreditation and won a grant to move into a new building.

Star School

LINC's online Star School program enabled **225 youths from across Missouri to continue high school education** despite disruptions in their lives that impeded traditional schooling. LINC's team of **19** certified teachers helped youth in many challenging situations, including being in the state's juvenile justice system or under supervision of the state Department of Youth Services. Many successes were achieved as **145 youths earned high school credits, 45** passed one or more of the subtests for the HiSET graduation equivalency diploma and **18** were able to return to their home high school.

2024 Impact Summary



Financials

LINC is a trusted partner of public funding.

LINC is the trusted avenue through which state agencies work in collaboration with the community to efficiently and effectively direct public and private funds. LINC is a proven steward of these resources, deploying an annual budget of **\$42 million to catalyze an additional \$35 million in community investment and in-kind support each year.**

The LINC Caring Communities model creates a distribution system that incorporates dozens of local partners and a dedicated programming team to **deliver the highest quality services to Kansas Citizens and Missouri citizens.**

The Caring Communities model also supports the fiscal and programming structures of other nonprofits, bolstering the service delivery system by **connecting services between the state and local community.** At the request of the state and individual nonprofits, LINC ensures entities can meet complex reporting and financial standards, as well as improve programming and administrative systems.

Let's run the numbers.

FY2024 Budget

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

State and Federal Funding

Community Services	\$10,303,939
21st Century Learning	\$1,844,709
Infant & Toddler Specialist Network	\$591,532
Missouri Work Assistance	\$2,841,346
Foster Youth Initiatives	\$1,117,748
Local Food Purchase Agreement	\$1,139,467
Behavioral Intervention	\$855,000
Adoption Resource Centers	\$16,817,099
Youth Development	\$1,995,000
Food & Basic Needs	\$500,000
Fatherhood Program	\$255,000
Parental Engagement Program	\$145,500
Payroll Support	\$364,320

Local Funding

Before and After School	\$3,047,969
Direct Assistance	\$250,000

Private Funding

Private Grants and Contributions	\$120,000
----------------------------------	-----------

Total Financial Capacity **\$42,188,629**

Development Efforts

Looking forward in 2025!

Imagine a Kansas City where every family, every child, and every person has access to the resources they need to thrive—not tomorrow, not next year, but today. At LINC, we've been making that vision a reality for over 30 years with a proven, community-driven model.

Today, this model touches the lives of thousands of Kansas Citians every year by meeting people where they are. From foster youth to working parents, from elder citizens to rural farmers, LINC ensures that everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest potential.

Thanks to the generosity of local foundations, partners, and state and city agencies, we raised \$1.6 million in 2024. This funding allowed us to strengthen the overall Caring Communities system so that we could respond quickly to emergency needs, stabilize families, deepen programming, expand services, and train staff.

But we can't do it alone. LINC's success depends on our community — people like you who believe that every Kansas Citian deserves the opportunity to thrive. With your support, we can expand our reach, strengthen our programs, and meet the growing needs of our community.

Your investment in LINC isn't just a donation—it's a commitment to creating a stronger, more connected Kansas City. It's a chance for you to amplify your voice and make a difference.



Will you join in making
this vision a reality?

Make your gift today and be a part of
creating stronger families together.

👉 kclinc.org/donate

In tribute to our founder, Bert Berkley



Bert Berkley was LINC's founder and the people's champion. Berkley created LINC in 1992 with a firm belief in the right of families and neighborhood leaders to shape their own destinies from their neighborhoods, schools, and meeting halls.

To this work, Berkley gathered the original members of the LINC Commission. Those leaders and a dedicated staff advanced the vision that it is the people who know the needs and strengths of their communities who should inform the policy makers and legislators and lead the action of change.

Bert Berkley passed away in 2024 at the age of 101. He lived fully to the end. In advance of his 100th birthday, Berkley reflected on the origin of LINC and his life of service, and his belief that he was the most fortunate man who ever lived. "Looking back at the early days of LINC, I never imagined that it would grow to where it is now, serving thousands of families directly and so many more through such a wide network."

We honor Berkley's legacy by carrying on the work he started with gratitude to the families, school and community partners, civic leaders, and neighborhood champions who guide us.



Berkley with founding members meeting in the mid-1990s. (L-R) founder Bert Berkley, Herman Johnson, Rosemary Smith Lowe, Gayle Hobbs, Oscar Tshibanda, and Landon Rowland.

In memoriam, SuEllen Fried



In 2024, LINC lost founding commissioner SuEllen Fried. Her impact in the world can be measured many ways — in the volume of her wisdom, her books on beating bullying, by the lives of incarcerated men and women that were made more meaningful, and the children and adults she inspired to their better selves. But she left behind simple moments of love as well, like teaching people she met the best way to hug: stepping together, face-to-face but a little off-center to the right, she said, so that when your arms pull you close you are heart-to-heart. And then, in parting, she'd put into your hand one of her green buttons to pass on, inscribed with her lasting message: The "Power of Kindness."

Founder Bert Berkley always credited Fried with giving him the spark of the idea that, he said, "opened the doors" to what would become LINC. Her crusade against bullying is particularly important to LINC as we have created a curriculum based on her books and her organization, BullySafeUSA, and is a meaningful part of her legacy that we carry on.

Leadership Team



Janet Miles-Bartee
President & CEO



Jeff Hill
Chief Operating Officer



Trent DeVreugd
Director of Human Resources



Alex Hughes
Director of Finance



Rebekah Jones
Director of Development



Bryan Shepard
Director of Information Services
& Communications



Sean Akridge
Director of Caring Communities



Sonny Williams
Director of MWA



Michael Coram
Director of Youth Services



Carl Wade
Director of Training
and Compliance



Jason Ervin
Director of Athletics



Lauren Walls
Director of Early Childhood
& Site Supervisor

LINC Commissioners



*Front row: Tricia Scaglia, Kiki Curls, Dr. Marj Williams, Sharon Cheers, David Ross
Back row: David Disney, Matt Haase, Shawn Foster, Ken Powell*

CO-CHAIRS

David Disney
Ken Powell

EX-OFFICIO

Hon. Quinton Lucas
Hon. Frank White Jr.

COMMISSIONERS

Sharon M. Cheers
John (Jack) C. Craft
S. Kiki Curls
Aaron Deacon
Shawn G. Foster
Rob Givens
Anita Gorman

Matthew G. Haase
Tom Lewin
Mary Kay McPhee
David Rock
David Ross
Patricia Scaglia
Dr. Marjorie Williams

Our Partners

