

Unlocking Home for Kansans

Kansas Housing Resources Corporation

Communications: Integrated Campaign

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Unlocking Home for Kansans: Connecting our Message to our Mission

Sometimes a journey starts at home. When the Housing Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce was spun off in 2003 to create Kansas Housing Resources Corporation, an independent public corporation, our committed staff of finance professionals, compliance experts, and community solutions providers got to work doing what we do best: Administering complex housing and community programs with professionalism and efficiency. The KHRC team worked quietly and tirelessly, largely behind the scenes, ensuring our portfolio of properties and programs operated in compliance with federal regulations, that our development partners received crucial incentives to stimulate investment in affordable housing, and that our community partners received the guidance and support to serve their clients and manage their internal operations.

Beyond providing program administration, establishing ourselves as a self-supporting corporation was our initial and primary focus. Functioning as an independent quasi-state agency allowed KHRC the flexibility to respond to emergencies at a moment's notice and to adapt to shifting priorities as necessary. Our streamlined financial operations allowed us to manage resources with discretion and care, creating opportunities to re-invest funds in communities across the state. Our administrative structure allowed us the opportunity to collaborate with a range of state and regional housing stakeholders, community groups, service providers, and local leaders, building a robust network of partners to help steer our efforts and guide our work.

Yet when the state's housing team was summoned to testify at legislative hearings, we found ourselves introducing ourselves to our elected leaders year after year. With potential partners and community members the most common question we encountered was a simple one: who were we, exactly, and what did we do? We were efficient administrators of programs, careful and responsible stewards of public resources, and swift responders to changing needs, but our behind-the-scenes approach meant that our public image and name recognition was lacking. While our cautious outlook and low profile had served us well as we established ourselves as an independent, financially secure corporation, it left us ill-equipped to tackle broader challenges or position ourselves as the state's go-to housing resource.

The time had come; our journey had started by getting our own house in order. With 15 years of successful program administration and corporate self-sufficiency established, we were ready to embark on the next chapter—to advocate for expanded housing opportunities across the state, to reach new audiences with our training and education opportunities, and to form new partnerships and embark on new collaborations as we explored innovative approaches to address our state’s dire housing needs. We got the opportunity when Ryan Vincent, KHRC’s longtime Deputy Director and General Counsel, was appointed KHRC’s new Executive Director. With the support of a new leader behind us, we embarked on a plan to refresh our image and launch a new chapter.

What began as an effort to relaunch our aging website and develop a few new program brochures grew to an all-encompassing, soul-searching effort to better define who we are, what we do, and why our work is important. A key part of that process involved identifying the Core Values that we strive to uphold each day:

- **Thorough:** We are focused on a long-term solution over a quick fix.
- **Transparent:** Our work is behind the scenes, but open to all.
- **Nimble:** Needs and goals change. So do we.
- **Collaborative:** The challenges we face are too big to face alone.
- **Compassionate:** The dignity and worth of those we serve influence every decision.

These values were the guiding principles used in crafting our team’s mission: *We help Kansans access the safe, affordable housing they need and the dignity they deserve.*

Ultimately, our work resulted in an entirely new brand and public image, from our website to our letterhead, our annual report to our business cards. While the look and spirit of our brand is important, we’re most excited about the new doors this effort has already opened for us. Our rebranding campaign has enabled us to better tell our story, to ensure that our Core Values are embodied in each of our business decisions, and to engage with new partners and stakeholders as we unlock home for Kansans.

In less than a year since we unveiled the new Kansas Housing, we’re already seeing results:

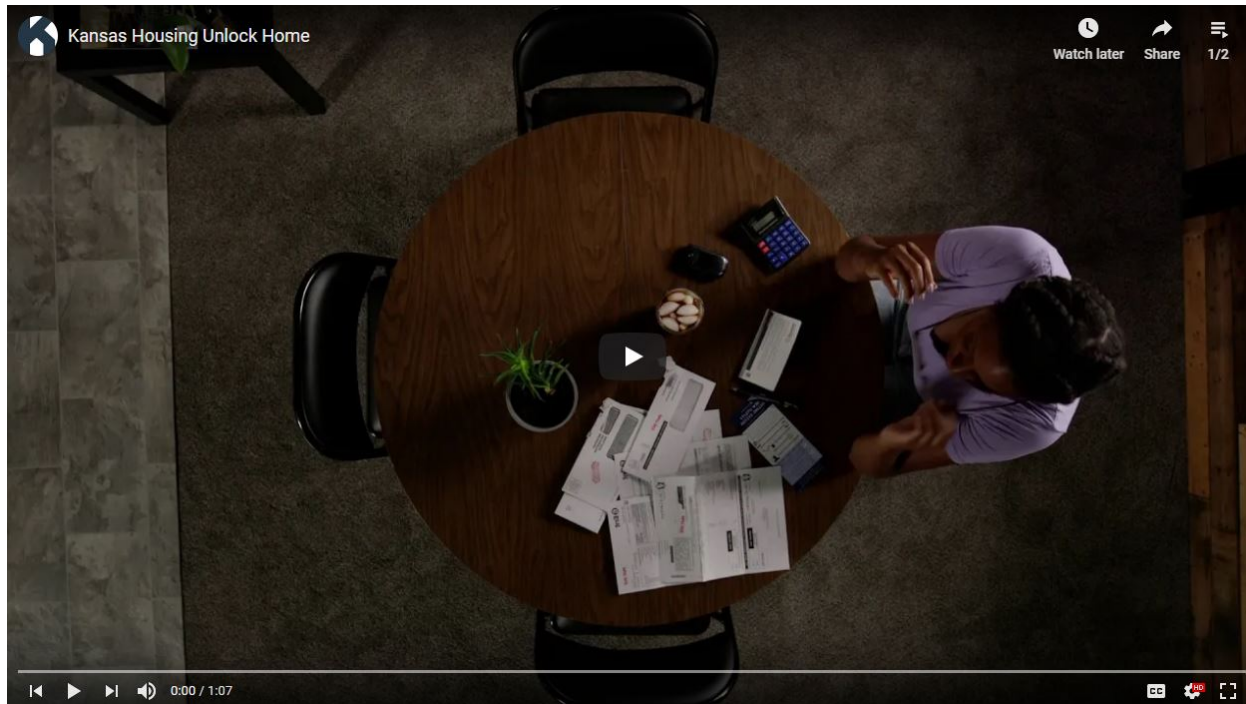
- In the interest of *transparency*, we developed a [Code of Ethics](#) to guide our work, established a confidential process for stakeholders and community members to report potential wrongdoing, and appointed an Ethics Officer to handle concerns.

- In the spirit of *collaboration*, we engaged with new partners and stakeholders, from industry and government associations to community groups, to host informational meetings, share presentations, and produce housing content for new audiences.
- Our focus on *compassion* challenged us to tell the stories behind our statistics, sharing examples and successes from local families whose lives were improved through access to our programs and services. In lieu of stock photography, we commissioned professional photographs of local client families to share in our marketing and communication materials. We provided professional development opportunities including site visits, client testimonials, and diversity and inclusion programming to allow our team to learn more about the people behind the files that cross our desks each day.
- Like so many organizations, current public health considerations have challenged us to be more *nimble* than ever—we are currently in the midst of planning our first digital housing conference, we've adopted a remote work policy to ensure that our programs and services continue without interruption while protecting our team's health and safety, and we're working with state and federal partners to direct new resources and funding toward life-changing housing services and support for those most deeply affected by the pandemic.
- We were tapped to lead the Lieutenant Governor's newly formed Office of Rural Prosperity Housing Work Group, guiding a *thorough* approach that includes representation from each of the state's major agencies and departments as we develop a results-driven, step-by-step approach to analyze the research, summarize the resources, and deliver recommendations to expand housing opportunities across the state.
- Applications for our Moderate Income Housing program doubled in just one funding cycle.
- We've embarked on an ambitious, collaborative process to update and streamline our Housing Development program and draft a new Qualified Application Plan while receiving praise from key, long-term stakeholders.
- We've worked to make public hearings more accessible to community members and to compile comprehensive resources for those in need of housing and community services.

Sometimes a journey starts at home. Kansas Housing's next chapter is just beginning, Unlocking Home for those we serve.

Visual Aids:

[Kansas Housing website](#)



Anthem Video (Click [link in image](#) above to play online)

[ID Suite](#)

Marketing Collateral:

- [2019 Annual Report](#)
- [Kansas Housing Fact Sheet](#)
- [First Time Homebuyer Program Fact Sheet](#)
- [Weatherization Program Fact Sheet](#)

KHRC Stories:

- Client success story: [In search of a fresh start, and dignity](#)
- News release: [Kansas Housing awards \\$7.6 million to support statewide housing development efforts](#)
- Client success story: [A forever home in Paola](#)
- Director's message: [Putting our core values into action](#)
- Leadership update: [Alan Deines appointed to state finance, housing boards](#)

Email blasts:

- [Compliance Update newsletter](#)
- [Housing Development Stakeholder Summit Invitation](#)
- [Notice of Public Hearing: Weatherization Assistance Program](#)

Selected Stakeholder Feedback:

- *"I just wanted to drop you both a compliment regarding your delivery of the information. I appreciated the personal email from [the Housing Development Director] congratulating me and notifying me first of the award. I thought the email that followed shortly after to housing partners was also perfectly delivered with important information regarding the rounds outcome and provided complete transparency. I also liked the well timed below email releasing the information to the public. I know this was a big conversation you all had internally, trying to keep the personalized and relationship driven feel while being fully transparent and controlling the spread of information to applicants, housing partners and the public. It's certainly been an area that was very hit and miss in the past so I thought how you did it today was all perfect. To me it's continuing proof just how committed you are to furthering KHRC's mission and the way that is done. I know I'm a broken record on this...but I really am very excited about where you all are taking KHRC and the benefits that will have on our states housing." – Housing Development stakeholder and President of Kansas Housing Association*
- *"I want to compliment you on your comments and release. Good information and communication. All of us appreciate working with you and your staff. All the best." – Housing Development stakeholder*
- *"I appreciate the open communication and transparency that I've been witnessing lately, and I was happy to hear on last week's call that there will be continued focus on these efforts going forward." - Housing Development Stakeholder*

