



December 7, 2021

The Honorable Quinton Lucas and Distinguished Members of the City Council
City of Kansas City, Missouri
City Hall, 414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

Dear Mayor Lucas and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of LISC Greater Kansas City, I write to express our strong support for Ordinance 211067 directing the City Manager to create a Tenant's Right to Counsel Program to increase tenant access to legal representation in eviction and other proceedings related to rental housing. As you are likely aware, as one of our nation's oldest and largest Community Development Financial Institutions, LISC Greater Kansas City partners with residents and stakeholders to forge resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity. Supporting affordable housing, economic development, and financial stability, particularly in our communities of color, is at the core of our work.

While the Council has taken some critical and impactful steps over the past few months to begin to address the need for affordable housing in our community, it is worth recalling that in Kansas City, Missouri, 46% of the City's residents are tenants. Additionally, you may recall that the Apartment Guide's April 2021 Rent Report listed Kansas City as having experienced the highest level of year-over-year rent increases for one-bedroom units of the largest 100 cities in the United States.

Most poor and working class tenants are one emergency — a flat tire or a sick kid — away from eviction. In eviction hearings, landlords are represented by lawyers over 90% of the time. Conversely, KCMO tenants are represented an average of 3% of the time. From 2006-2016, over 99.8% of Jackson County eviction hearings resulted in tenants losing their homes.

We believe a Tenant's Right to Counsel is critical in leveling the playing field and in ensuring tenants have the opportunity for stable housing. LISC is proud to join KC Tenants, Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom, and the dozens of other organizations and individuals pushing for this legislation.

The passage of Ordinance 211067 continues the momentum and commitment this Council has made to providing more stable and attainable housing options in our community. We commend you for your leadership around this important issue and look forward to working with the City to ensure all residents have an opportunity to thrive. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoff Jolley". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Geoff Jolley
Executive Director