HOUSING POWERS KANSAS

2026 Regional Roundtables Report

Kansans finding common ground to shape the future of housing



United Community Services of Johnson County

kansas housing advocacy network

NOVEMBER 2026



Acknowledgements

This report is the result of the commitment and collaboration of partners across the state. Thank you to the neighbors, landlords, renters, local governments, realtors, developers, elected officials, nonprofits, service providers, and KHAN partners who came together to share concerns about the Kansas rental housing market and collaborated to build shared solutions.

Thank you to KHAN core partners: United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS), Habitat for Humanity of Greater Kansas City, and Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition (KSHC). Special thanks to our partners who helped host regional roundtables and ensure that we had the right people at our shared tables to address housing challenges: United Way of Kaw Valley, City of Topeka, KHRC 2026 Housing Conference, Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, KSHC, United Way of the Plains, and the Kansas Health Foundation.

Thank you, too, to participants who agreed to serve as notetakers at each of the roundtables. Our deepest gratitude to trained facilitators, many of whom traveled across the state to multiple roundtables in less than a month: Katie Killen, Megan Foreman, Anna Van Brunt, Rachel Russell, Molly Mendenhall, Candace Ladd, Casey Johnson, and Valorie Carson.

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Executive Summary

The Housing Powers Kansas Roundtables took place from August to September 2026 in Topeka in Shawnee County, Overland Park in Johnson County, Garden City in Finney County, and Wichita in Sedgwick County. Recognizing that discussions about housing are often dominated by a single viewpoint, these roundtables invited Kansans to approach housing from a different perspective: working from common ground to build collaborative solutions that work for all Kansans. Using research and building on the findings of the 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey, KHAN facilitated conversations with landlords, renters, developers, realtors, service and housing providers, nonprofits, local governments, and elected officials directed at a specific challenge: how do we want to shape the future of housing in Kansas?

Roundtable discussions affirmed and expanded upon the findings of the 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey. Successful local and corporate landlords and stable renters power our communities. Kansans are experiencing changes in the rental housing market, and landlords and renters share many of the same concerns. Kansas needs more housing. Landlords and renters want to see improvements across the rental process. They want to reduce costs by improving the "match" between renters and landlords, avoiding unnecessary turnover, and protecting existing housing. Participants considered the legal framework of other states and collaborated on common sense policies, programs, and efforts that would work to achieve these goals in Kansas.

Two related themes emerged: to ensure a level playing field in the rental housing market, business practices of responsible, local landlords should set Kansas standards and responsible landlords should be distinguished from out-of-reach and unresponsive landlords. This energy was best captured in the idea that "Good landlords make good renters make good landlords" – a positive cycle of landlord and renter actions built on a clear legal framework and supported by training and communication.

While participants discussed many proposals that should be subject to further consideration, there was strong agreement on three key proposals:

- A "Truth-in-Renting" disclosure requirement that will make transparency the standard in the rental market, as in "Truth in Lending" for mortgages. Issued prior to accepting an application fee, this upfront disclosure will identify the full cost of renting and fees, screening criteria, and methods of payment. It ensures the rental market operates efficiently, reducing costs for renters and landlords and allowing renters to readily compare housing options. Transparency is consistent with responsible, local landlord business practices.
- A "Room to Recover" provision that responds to the benefits and challenges of property technology – online advertisement, payment, and communication systems – in the rental market. To prevent avoidable turnover due to challenges with automated property technology systems, leases should include one fee-free (or fee-included) way to pay rent, clear, human contact information, a short grace period for late payments, and a percentage cap on late fees. This provision is consistent with the business practices of most local landlords.

- A Voluntary Landlord and Renter Certification envisioned as an online, statewide education and training program serving landlords and renters. The certification will ensure that participants are aware of their responsibilities and rights, how to care for a home, how to report unsafe conditions or undertake repairs, best practices for communication, and available services and supports. It will allow both landlords and renters to stand out in the rental housing market, supporting more efficient matching into housing, stability, and improved communication.

Roundtable participants agreed on many other approaches to shape the future of housing in Kansas that require additional fleshing out, such as: verifying and distinguishing between responsible, local landlords and out-of-reach, unresponsive landlords; providing for enhanced enforcement measures to intervene earlier to preserve healthy rental housing and avoid condemnations; utilizing verified portable tenant screening reports and providing for the return of unused application fees; creating local landlord repair programs; expanding counseling and eviction mediation programs; and building partnerships with financial institutions.

This report touches on regional themes and areas where continued research and discussion are needed to reach agreement. Regional themes range from the scarcity of housing and needs of a culturally diverse population in Finney County to the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms to preserve healthy housing in Sedgwick and Shawnee counties to the pursuit of consistency across localities in Johnson County. Areas for continued research and discussion include issues such as pets in rental housing, the role of property management companies, and building additional housing.

At these roundtables Kansans identified specific, actionable policies and programs that should shape our future in housing and pointed to additional areas for continued discussion. Most importantly, these roundtables demonstrate that Kansans across the state have shared housing values and are ready to work together on substantive solutions.

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*Appendices available in online version only.

Introduction and Background

Who is the Kansas Housing Advocacy Network (KHAN)?

The Kansas Housing Advocacy Network (KHAN) is a coalition of statewide partners convened by United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS), Habitat for Humanity of Greater Kansas City, and the Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition (KSHC). UCS provides data analysis and leads collaborative planning and mobilizing to move health and human issues forward; Habitat for Humanity builds homes and community; KSHC coordinates with communities to provide advocacy, education, and collaboration to end homelessness. These partners and KHAN use data, research, and analysis to support local governments and regions in pursuing solutions to increase housing supply, increase housing stability, and end homelessness.

The Challenge: How do we shape the future of housing in Kansas?

Every Kansan is invested in housing. Kansas' housing and homelessness are the subject of significant public concern at the local, regional, and statewide level. Kansas is not alone; housing presents a challenge across the United States. Kansas' housing challenges are multi-faceted, including factors such as limited and aging supply, increased costs, lagging production and lack of skilled workers, shift to corporate ownership, the introduction and use of rental property technology, and deferred maintenance.

As regions work to respond to local conditions the challenges of the housing market are compounded by the failure of Kansas law to keep up; the Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act has not undergone substantive changes since its introduction in 1975. Changes in the law have been limited not due to lack of interest but to lack of agreement. Housing discussions at the local and state level reflect strong and competing views. Landlords and renters, neighbors and developers, renters and homeowners are painted as opponents. Local and state governments are caught in the middle. Previous discussion culminated in dozens of housing bills introduced in the 2026 Kansas legislative session. The question being asked is: how do we shape the future of housing in Kansas?

This question led to the Housing Powers Kansas Roundtable series. Using analysis of the 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey and research into other states' approaches to rental housing, the Housing Powers Kansas Roundtables invited Kansans to approach our housing future from a different perspective: starting with common ground in housing to build collaborative solutions that address our common concerns and provide a framework for the housing future that meets the needs of all Kansans.

Underlying factors in Kansas' housing market

Housing supply in Kansas has not kept up with demand since before the 2008[1] recession and home prices in Kansas have increased 55% since 2019. As home values increase, so too do property taxes for all Kansans, whether paying through an increase in rent or as a homeowner. As of 2025, 32% of Kansans rent their homes, and virtually all Kansans have been or will be renters at some point in their housing journeys. The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies' 2026

State of the Nation's Housing Report found that without significant intervention, housing affordability will continue to worsen, and more Americans will spend more of their lives in rental housing.[2] The 2026 Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing report identified a shortage of 7.2 million affordable and available rental homes for extremely low-income renters.[3]

Increasing Kansas' housing supply is a challenge; costs to build have increased and Kansas has a lack of large national developers. Zoning utilized in most cities prioritizes single family homes and presents significant barriers to building other types of housing like prohibiting duplexes or garage apartments, large lot sizes, and square foot and parking minimums. Demand for housing types is changing. To address costs and Kansas' aging population, Kansans need access to smaller homes, garden court homes, townhomes, and granny flats. Meanwhile, Kansas' housing stock is aging. The 2021 Kansas Statewide Housing Needs Assessment found that much of Kansas' housing dates to before 1960. While older housing tends to be more affordable for upfront purchase than new housing, most of Kansas' housing requires significant investment in ongoing and deferred maintenance to remain habitable. Kansas lacks a ready and skilled workforce to address specialized home repairs and new home construction.[4]

Common Barriers in Kansas' Rental Housing Market



ZONING LIMITATIONS

Prioritizes single family homes and restricts housing types like duplexes, townhomes, and garden court homes.



RISING CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Higer costs and limited large developers.



CHANGING DEMAND

Need for smaller homes, townhomes, granny flats, and aging-friendly options.



AGING HOUSING STOCK

Much of Kansas' housing dates to before 1960 and needs significant maintenance

Kansas is also experiencing a shift in rental housing ownership with the influx of private equity and corporate owners following the 2008 recession when the federal government encouraged corporations to stabilize the housing market by facilitating large scale purchases of single-family homes for the first time.[5] Corporate owners are often located out of state, removed from local housing conditions. Competition with large investors for single-family homes has made it harder for Kansans to purchase and the growth in large investors has given those investors more control over local rent prices.[6,7]

The shift to corporate ownership corresponds with the rapid expansion of rental property technology. Property technology includes tenant screening, advertising platforms, rent-setting software, online payment systems, security deposit alternatives, and other technology products. Across the United States, state Attorneys General and the Department of Justice, Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, and Federal Trade Commission have sought to put guardrails on emerging property technology, filing lawsuits to address rent-setting software, flawed tenant screening, and hidden, mandatory fees.[8]

What are the impacts of this shift in rental housing ownership in Kansas? Reports by MARC and LISC focusing on the Kansas-city region rental market found that corporate owners seek to maximize profit differently than local landlords who have long-term investment in the region. Specific corporate strategies include concentrating areas of ownership, leveraging and flipping properties, encouraging turnover to increase rent prices, and deferring maintenance.[9,10] The LISC report found that corporate owners filed for eviction at about four times the rate of local landlords and incurred code violations tied to deferred maintenance at about one and half times the rate of local landlords.[11]

News reports across the state reflect the failure of some landlords to maintain rental properties in habitable condition. A few notable examples include large apartment complexes like Aspen Place in Gardner,[12] Timber Lee in Topeka,[13] and Emery Gardens in Wichita.[14] The stories follow similar lines: the city provides years of notices of code violations, but property owners fail to adequately comply. In each of these cases, the city was forced to condemn housing as uninhabitable.

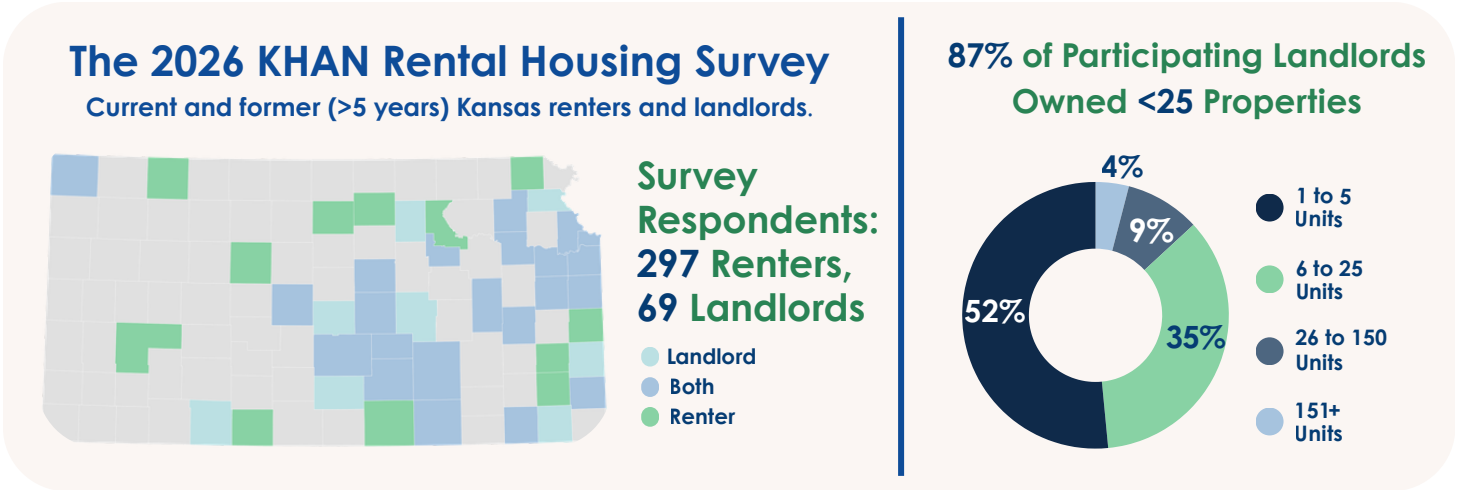
The cost of condemnation is significant, and it falls on renters, local governments, and local taxpayers. In these cases, for their own safety, renters were required to vacate their homes with their belongings, sometimes with as little as three days' notice, and without financial recourse from the property owner who had violated the lease. Local government, nonprofits, and the faith community provided support to these households, but unable to find new housing in the tight rental market some families became homeless. After condemnation of rental housing, local communities are faced with loss of valuable residential housing, a tighter housing market, and blighted buildings.

Housing conversations have been elevated at every level of government, often dominating entire city council or county commission meetings with dozens or hundreds of residents appearing to provide public comment. The Kansas legislature held a Joint Special Committee on Homelessness in 2024 and a Joint Special Committee on Available and Affordable Housing in 2025. In 2026, the legislature entertained dozens of bills addressing housing supply, housing stability, and ending homelessness.

The time is ripe to utilize the experience and expertise of Kansans to inform a thoughtful response to our shared question: How do we shape the future of housing in Kansas?

The 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey

The 2026 KHAN Rental Survey was launched in April of 2026 to help shift the focus of housing discussions from a single perspective to common ground and concerns of renters and landlords. With a clear understanding of common concerns, KHAN could undertake research and facilitate roundtable discussions to build collaborative solutions. The survey provides a snapshot of the landlord and renter experience, with an emphasis on the experience and business practices of local landlords. The survey had 366 respondents, 81% renters and 19% landlords, representing forty-three Kansas counties. Almost 90% of responding landlords are considered local landlords, owning twenty-five properties or fewer. The full survey and survey analysis are available at ucsjoco.org.



Key Findings

The 2026 KHAN Rental Housing survey demonstrates that landlords and renters share many of the same concerns and identified frustration with the same aspects of the rental housing market: matching renters and landlords, improving housing stability and reducing turnover, and protecting existing housing.

The top housing concern of landlords and renters is mirrored: 89% of landlords cite "finding qualified renters" and 91% of renters cite "affordability and availability" as their top concern. Through survey responses, landlords and renters identified barriers to accessing housing and getting to full occupancy including the application process, income requirements, security deposit, screening criteria, and application fees.

The second biggest concerns of landlords and renters are also related: landlords are concerned about turnover in their businesses and renters are concerned about habitability in their homes. Common reasons for turnover include habitability and property maintenance concerns, additional monthly fees, and challenges using property technology systems like unattended online payment portals and property management software. While property technology has increased administrative efficiency, a glitch in the payment portal or incorrect charge can result in denial of payment, overdrafts, compounding late fees, and the commencement of eviction – generating the very turnover landlords want to avoid.

Respondents provided context about their habitability and property maintenance concerns: 63% of landlords and 82% of renters indicated that poorly maintained properties are an issue in their region. 59% of renters indicate that habitability is their second biggest housing concern and 45% of renters cited habitability as a key reason that they move, creating turnover for landlords.

Respondents agree that cost is a barrier to repair and property maintenance. In open-ended comments, landlords expressed that renters wait to report the need for repairs, resulting in higher costs and loss of profit. Meanwhile, 46% of renters report that they fear retaliation through increased rent costs or eviction if they do request a repair. 38% of renters indicated that they did request repairs and there was no response. The survey identified a significant gap in how clear landlords perceive their policies and procedures to be as compared to how well renters understand them. Landlords and renters agree that communication is challenging, citing lack of contact information and unresponsiveness.

Common Ground for Roundtable Discussions

The survey found that landlords and renters are looking for improvements across the rental housing process: improving "the match" or application process, reducing turnover, and protecting existing housing. These survey responses point to collaborative solutions. When we recognize that an empty housing unit is the most expensive unit for a landlord, how can we more efficiently and effectively make the "match" between landlords and renters? Making that "match" more efficient saves time and money for both renters and landlords and increases housing stability.

The survey also highlights ways to reduce avoidable turnover. Providing clear explanation of all monthly costs and payment methods prior to lease signing ensures renters know what they are expected to pay and how to make that payment. Property technology is an important component of the rental market; what common sense measures will allow landlords to utilize efficient systems without inadvertently creating unnecessary turnover and costs for themselves and displacement, disruption, and costs for renters?

Common Concerns Between Landlords and Renters

Shared Concern	Landlords Say	Renters Say
Matching Renters and Landlords	**89%** identified finding qualified renters as a concern.	**91%** identified finding affordable, available housing as a concern.
Housing Stability/ Reducing Turnover	**50%** identified fees and turnover as a concern.	**90%** identified fees and rent increases as a concern.
Property Maintenance/Protecting our Housing	**63%** said poorly maintained properties are an issue in their region.	**83%** said poorly maintained properties are an issue in their region.

As we consider how to protect our housing, respondents pointed clearly to opportunities to improve training and communication for both landlords and renters, including expansion of eviction mediation following passage of the new eviction mediation and expungement law in 2026. Education, training, and communication ensure both landlords and renters understand their responsibilities and rights as well as of how to care for properties, when to report the need for repairs, and the role of the local governing body to ensure health and safety habitability requirements are met.

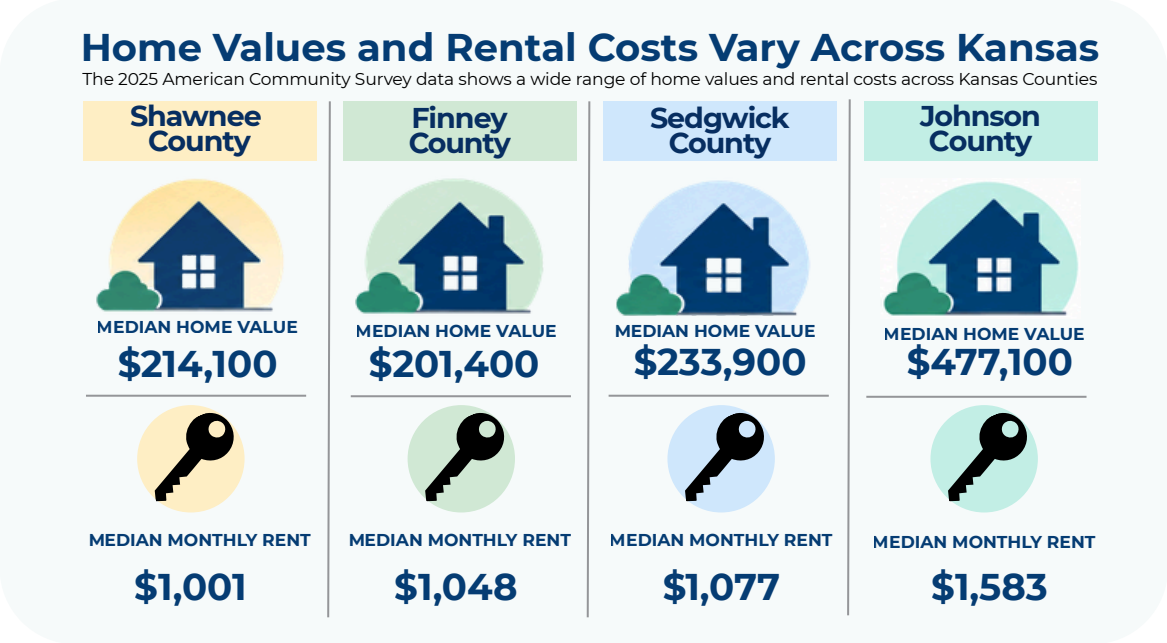
Housing Powers Kansas Roundtables

Purpose and Design

Using KHAN's research and analysis of the 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey results outlined above, KHAN and its partners designed the Housing Powers Kansas Roundtables. The Roundtables invite Kansans to approach our housing future from a different perspective: identifying common ground of all Kansans in housing to build shared, collaborative solutions that address our common concerns and provide a framework for the housing future that meets the needs of every Kansan.

KHAN collaborated with partners to host four roundtables: Topeka in Shawnee County, Wichita in Sedgwick County, Garden City in Finney County, and Overland Park in Johnson County. These locations represent a broad perspective of the rental housing market geographically and include rural, suburban, and combined urban/suburban environments. Together, these counties total nearly half the population of the state, from 37,500 residents in Finney County to 637,000 residents in Johnson County. These counties have experienced different levels of housing growth and lags in production and have different housing costs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2025 American Community Survey, housing costs vary considerably across the four roundtable regions. Median home values range from $201,400 in Finney County[15] to $477,100 in Johnson County, while median monthly rents range from $1,001 in Shawnee County to $1,583 in Johnson County. Sedgwick County's median home value is $233,900, with a median rent of $1,077; Finney County's median rent is $1,048; and Shawnee County's median home value is $214,100.

Partners for the Housing Powers Kansas Regional Roundtables included local service providers, local governments, nonprofit funders, and the Kansas Housing Resource Corporation's 2026 Housing Conference. Partner agencies helped identify regional leaders to join roundtable discussions. Facilitators were identified and trained in advance to ensure consistency. Roundtables took place over one month from August 11th through September 9, 2026. Additional information about roundtable design and implementation, including presentation and handouts, is available in the online addition of this report at ucsjoco.org.



Overarching Roundtable Themes

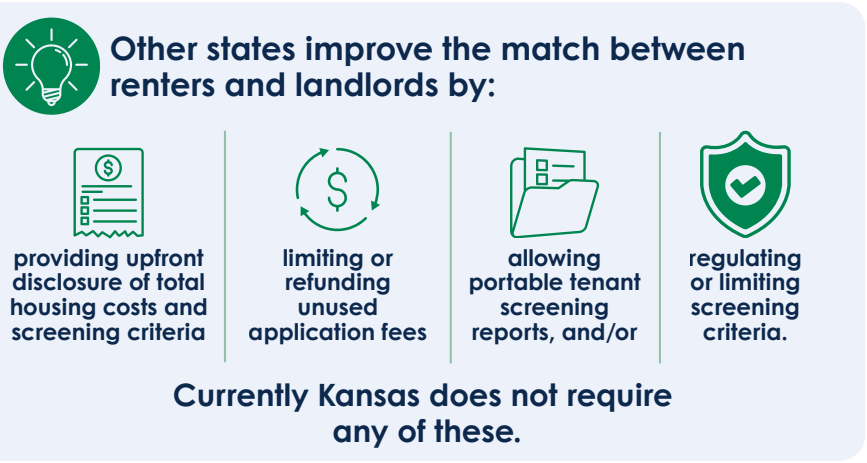
Roundtable engagement was robust. Though the regions have significant differences, all four communities identified shared themes. Participants prioritized making the rental housing market more transparent, predictable, and workable for the full community. Participants:

- recognized that stable rental housing is critical for community success and depends on clarity, communication, and shared accountability;
- identified specific strategies to improve the rental housing market from the initial "match" into housing through stable tenancy and rental home repairs such as a "Truth-in-Renting" disclosure and a fee-free (or fee-included) way to pay rent; and
- agreed that additional education, training, and communication are needed to improve the landlord, renter, local government, and community experience with rental housing.

Improving the Initial "Match"

Participants considered strategies used by other states to improve the initial match between landlords and renters, including providing upfront disclosure of total housing costs and screening criteria, limiting or refunding unused application fees, allowing portable tenant screening reports, and regulating or limiting screening criteria. Participants were most strongly supportive of providing upfront disclosure through a mandated "Truth-in-Renting" disclosure provided before a landlord accepts an application fee or payment from a potential applicant.

Participants also discussed addressing barriers to the initial match, including application fees, duplicative screening costs, and denials at length. A careful balance was identified with applicants needing to understand the criteria and full costs of rental housing and landlords needing to be able to evaluate risk.

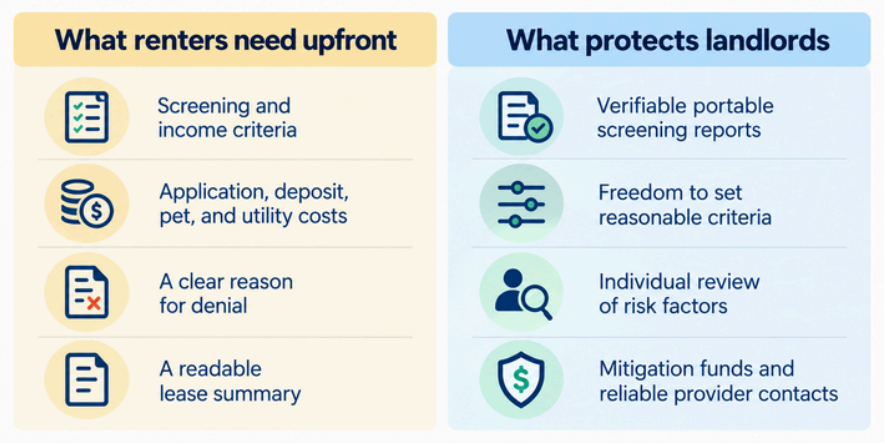


They agreed that application fees should cover only the cost of evaluating tenants and should not be a revenue source. There was general agreement that application fees should be returned when an application is not reviewed or a unit is not available. Participants also agreed that portable tenant screening reports or a clearinghouse for tenant screening reports would reduce repeated application costs. While landlords may prefer not to disclose why an application is denied, applicants need to understand why they do not qualify.

Transparency in costs and screening criteria

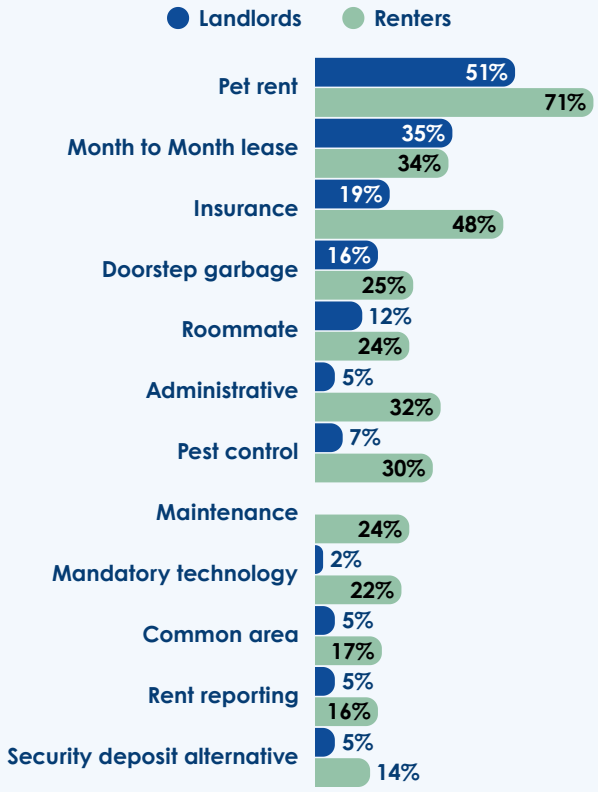
Participants recognized that successful landlords – local and corporate – are necessary in the rental housing market in Kansas and that landlords are experiencing increasing costs in insurance, taxes, and property maintenance. Landlords expressed frustration that many costs, especially insurance and property maintenance were out of their control. Participants agreed that landlords need freedom to set their own screening criteria and prices.

At the same time, they expressed significant concern that renters may not know screening criteria or the full cost of housing and monthly fees prior to entering a lease and may be surprised by new or increased monthly fees.



Examples of unexpected costs and fees charged after a lease was signed included "security fees", variable monthly charges, pet rent, in addition to pet deposit, undisclosed third-party fees, and fees to pay rent. Participants acknowledged that landlords needed to be able to cover costs to remain viable businesses and agreed that those costs needed to be bundled or "baked" into the total monthly cost. The overarching comment was "fees and costs need to be predictable."

Local landlords report charging few added monthly fees, while renters report paying a wide range of fees



Many landlords indicated that it is their business practice to identify all costs upfront, but that other landlords do not follow that practice. One landlord stated he was "100% in full favor of full transparency of fees" after seeing the rental charges one of his employees experienced; he noted that the scope of the fees was "breathtaking" and made it clear that legislation was needed to ensure that there is transparency in the actual cost of rental housing.

Participants noted that screening and eligibility criteria are often unavailable before paying an application fee and applicants often do not receive a reason for denial. Renters and providers described tenant screening and denials as a "black box." Landlords acknowledged this practice and noted that transparency in screening criteria would improve the "match" into housing but expressed concern that they might have liability if they provided a reason for denial. Participants agreed that additional education and training on the Fair Housing Act would protect both renters and landlords.

Across all four roundtables, participants strongly supported mandated transparency in rental costs. They compared renting to obtaining a mortgage and proposed a one-page summary, like the Truth In Lending Act mortgage disclosure, be provided to applicants prior to submitting an application fee. Participants spent time envisioning this one-pager and detailing the specifics that should be included: total monthly costs, including rent, all fees and estimated utilities, screening and eligibility criteria, unit availability, owner and local human contact information, and payment methods and charges.

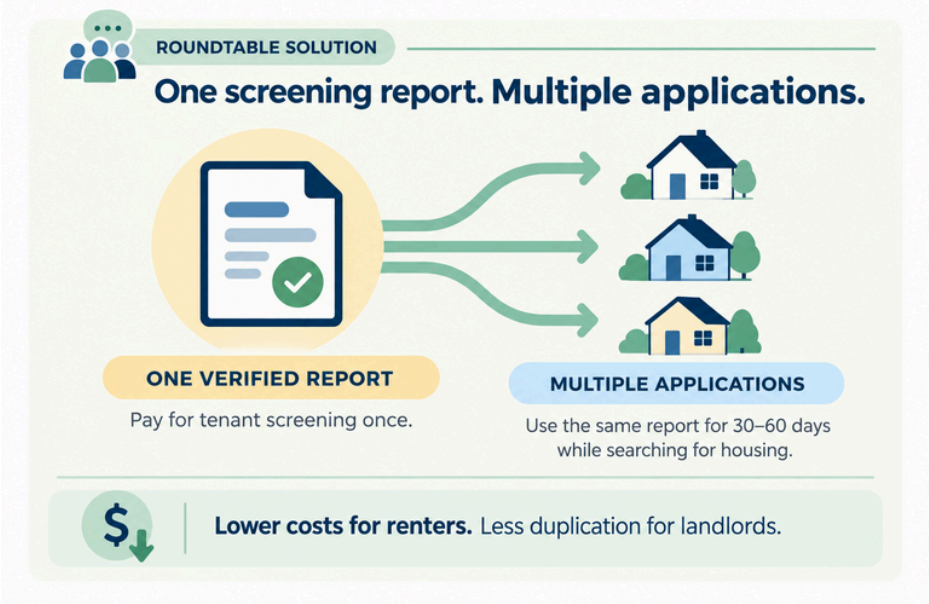
Providing an upfront disclosure prior to accepting an application fee ensures transparency in the rental housing market, improving the "match" and reducing costs. Making transparency the standard ensures that the rental housing market can operate efficiently and reflects the business practices currently utilized by the local landlords participating in 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey and these roundtables.

Reducing costs of the application process, fraud

Participants were concerned that renters typically pay multiple nonrefundable application fees, including for repeated tenant screening reports, in the search for housing. Applicants rarely receive a copy of their tenant screening report and are unable to verify its contents or appeal for corrections. Experiences shared included applicants paying more in application fees than their regular monthly rent and highly variable application fees with some companies requiring $25 to cover tenant screening and others requiring $50 per person plus a flat administrative fee, totaling hundreds of dollars per application. Participants were interested in portable tenant screening reports, in which renters pay for the initial tenant screening and can provide a copy of it for the ensuing thirty to sixty days. They discussed whether a report could be verified or hosted in a clearinghouse accessible to landlords.

Participants discussed potential caps on fees and concerns about fraud or the perception of fraud in application fees. Examples included renters who had paid multiple application fees, deposits, and first month's rent for fraudulent rental listings. A service provider indicated that some rental companies accept application fees even when there are no units available and no anticipated availability. A landlord stated that it is possible to leave one unit open and earn more in security deposits than if the unit was occupied. Across roundtables, landlords reiterated that application fees should not be a "secondary income stream."

While participants did not agree on an application fee cap, they did identify a possible balanced approach: providing a refund of the application fee if the application is not screened or there is no unit available. Participants supported the use of verified and current portable tenant screening reports. Allowing renters to reuse verified tenant screening reports while actively looking for housing reduces costs for landlords and renters.



Requiring landlords to return unused application fees ensures transparency in the application process and prevents the use of application fees as a secondary revenue stream that undercuts responsible landlords and harms renters.

Education

A final cross-cutting theme in improving the match between renters and landlords was the need for clearer communication and education. One participant noted that the standard leases run dozens of pages and are extremely hard to interpret. Multiple participants remarked that some renters are unprepared for the obligation of a lease. One local landlord reported routinely spending forty-five minutes reviewing the lease with new renters to ensure renters understood what they are signing. Participants agreed a one-page lease summary, like a mortgage disclosure, would dramatically improve understanding of key lease terms.

Participants reached strong agreement on effective ways to reduce costs in the application process, improving the "match." A persistent theme was that responsible, local landlords were strongly supportive of these business practices and wanted to ensure that all landlords were held to their standard.

Avoiding Unnecessary Turnover

Landlords affirmed the finding of the 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey that one of their biggest costs and barriers to sustainability is turnover. Providers and renters shared that an unexpected move is often prohibitively expensive for renters and disruptive for work, education, and access to healthcare. Participants agreed, "Evictions are costly for everyone." Collaborative solutions for Kansas include supporting communication, expanding mediation pursuant to current law, and adopting reasonable payment practices, including at least one fee-free way to pay rent. Most participants agreed on a short grace period and a percentage late fee limit. Many landlords indicated this reflects their business practice but not necessarily the industry norm.

The impacts of property technology and breakdowns in communication

Participants pointed to the shift to the use of property technology payment, communication, and property maintenance systems and away from in-person and on-location interactions with landlords as reducing administrative costs while presenting challenges. End-user access to online systems is not consistent. Individuals who are elderly or not technologically proficient, who use a language other than English as their primary language, or who do not have reliable internet access experience repeated barriers in utilizing property technology. Breakdowns happen in property technology systems and, without immediate intervention by a representative of the landlord, the result is escalating late fees, housing instability, and sometimes eviction. Participants repeated the idea that "communication needs to be consistent and two-way" and that "preventing a problem from escalating is generally easier and less expensive." Nevertheless, renters often lack clear contact information about who to call, what assistance is available, and who has the authority to address problems.

OTHER STATES REDUCE TURNOVER BY SUPPORTING PAYMENTS:



Provide at least one fee-free way to pay rent.

So renters can pay without extra costs.



Provide short grace periods

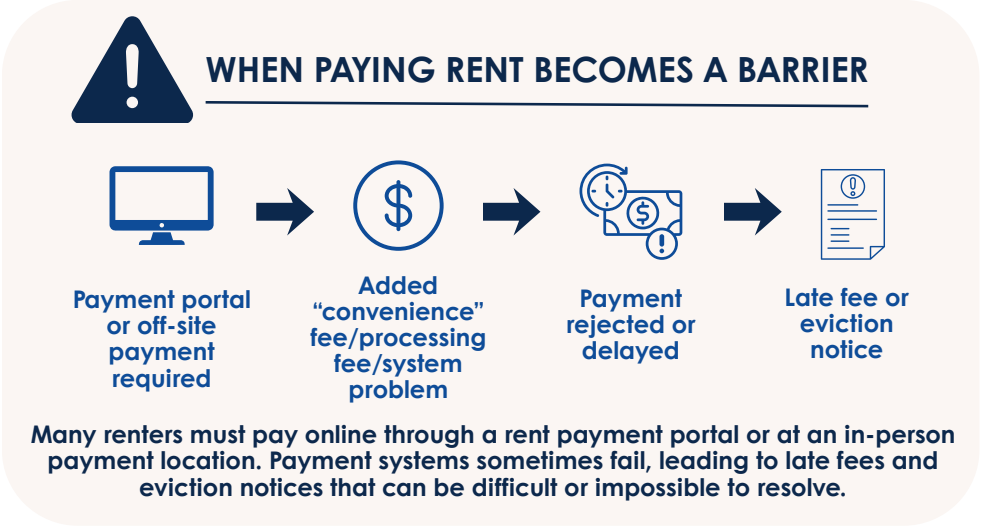
Helps prevent small delays from becoming evictions.



Set reasonable late fees and fee mark-up limits.

Keeps fees fair and predictable.

Participants discussed renters being charged mandatory fees to pay rent through required payment portals or in-person, off-site payment locations. They described the "minimum payment" requirement in which all rental costs, including any late or additional fees, are bundled into a "minimum payment" amount and any payment below that amount being rejected. One participant described going to the required in-person, off-site payment location and waiting in line to pay rent. At the front of the line, they learned that an undisclosed $45 third-party fee was considered part of their rent and included in the "minimum payment." The payment amount they brought – rent and fee amounts provided in the lease plus the payment processing fee – was rejected. There was no way to get an explanation or appeal the third-party fee without paying rent late and accruing a late fee.



Participants also described situations in which payment portals went down on rental payment dates making it impossible to pay rent. Neither the property manager nor the vendor was able to provide assistance and once the payment portal was working, automated late fees had already been assessed and payments for the rent amount without the late fee were rejected as below the "minimum payment" amount. Even when payment portals work correctly, renters cite paying additional processing fees, such as $16/month, and being unable to challenge incorrect or hidden charges without accruing late fees.

Supporting communication between renters and landlords was recognized as vital for reducing avoidable turnover but participants acknowledged that failures in communication occurred in both directions. They called for a clear listing of contact information that connected renters to human contacts rather than automated lines or message systems being prominently displayed in the lease.

Disclosure of rent payment methods and fees and a fee-free (or fee-included) way to pay rent

Across all roundtables, participants prioritized reducing barriers to paying rent and creating room to recover to avoid unnecessary turnover. Several participants expressed: "Why should I pay to pay?" Accepting payment is a necessary function of business, but some methods are more expensive for landlords and passing on that higher fee as the default is undesirable. For example, credit card payments may have 3–5% processing fees. Participants strongly agreed that there should be at least one fee-free (or fee-included) way to pay rent, such as ACH payment, cash, debit card, or a cash payment app (like Zelle) for renters with bank accounts, and a certified check or money order for renters who do not have reliable internet access or are unbanked.

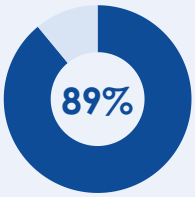
Participants emphasized that the goal is not to eliminate every fee associated with every payment method, but to ensure that renters have a reasonable way to pay their rent without incurring an additional charge.

Keeping routine payment costs predictable can help prevent small expenses from compounding financial strain, while still allowing landlords to offer additional payment options that carry processing costs. Tying back to the "Truth-in-Rent" disclosure, participants wanted to ensure that all payment methods and associated fees were identified in the one-pager. Clear information upfront allows renters to choose the payment method that works best for them and reduces the potential for unexpected costs after a lease has been signed.

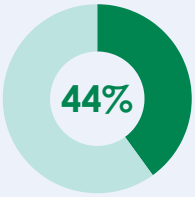
Several landlords noted that because they or their colleagues utilized property management companies or property technology systems, they were not always aware of the additional costs being passed onto their tenants or of the policies those companies used. Improving awareness was a priority.

Providing upfront disclosure of payment methods and one fee-free (or fee-included) way to pay rent is consistent with the reported business practices of local landlords. Codifying this business practice ensures that all landlords are held to the same standards that local landlords are already practicing.

DO KANSAS RENTERS HAVE FEE-FREE WAY TO PAY RENT?



of landlords say renters can pay rent without a fee



of renters report having a fee-free option to pay rent

Small fees add up.
Some companies use added monthly fees as profit drivers, adding as many as 35 fees to base rent*

*The Guardian, June 2026

Reasonable payment practices - creating room to recover

Participants also agreed that short-term or technological problems – a payment portal being down or a late paycheck – should not automatically spiral into escalating late fees and potential eviction. Discussion was driven by both cost-savings and a strong sense of fairness. Unnecessary turnover could be avoided if renters had a short grace period and a reasonable late fee cap, which most landlords acknowledged utilizing in their own business practices.

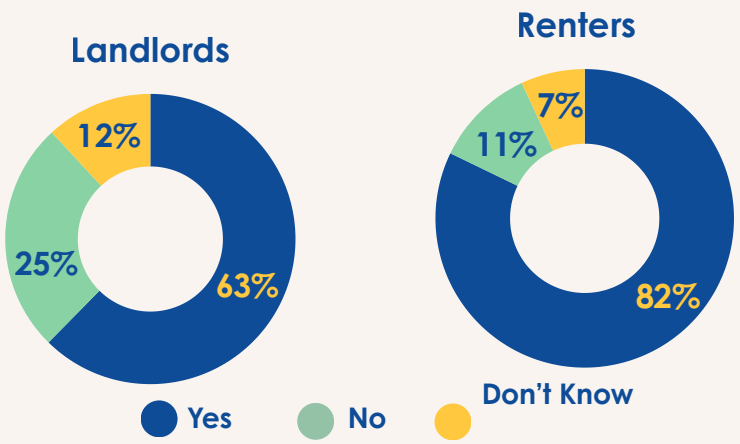
Landlords highlighted that late rent does result in added business costs and a statutory flat late fee, such as $50, may not cover those costs. Participants agreed that having a late fee "is not the issue." Rather, compounding daily and escalating fees generate unnecessary turnover and sometimes serve as a secondary income stream. Programs that provide rent assistance for highly vulnerable renters are often able to pay rent, but not fees. A lease providing a $50 initial late fee with a $10/day late fee that continues to accrue if any amount is owed amounts to approximately $350 in extra fees each month. One landlord explained, "There's no real benefit to trapping tenants in late fees. It's expensive and costs to evict tenants, and rapid in-and-out turnover is not good for business."

While there was concern that a late fee cap and grace period could become the new default, participants discussed a durable solution could be a flat percentage fee, such as 5%, and a short grace period, such as 5 days. The standard grace period for a mortgage – which the landlord may have on the rental property – is fifteen days with a standard cap on late fees of 4-5%. Most landlords acknowledged that it is their business practice to allow five days for rent to be considered late and a flat percentage fee is adequate to recoup costs. However, this was not considered the industry norm; it is an example of how local landlord business practices can set the standard for reducing turnover.

Property Maintenance and Condition

Participants across all four roundtables expressed significant concern about property maintenance and the condition of rental properties in their region. Policy examples from other states include limiting use of security deposit damages or total security deposit amount and renter repairs and escrow processes. A cross-cutting theme was there are "bad actors that are landlords and bad actors that are tenants," but "good landlords make good renters make good landlords." To support this positive cycle in rental housing, participants proposed an online, statewide renter and landlord training or certification program that would provide education, improve communication, and help renters and landlords stand out in the market. Another cross-cutting concern was how to distinguish between responsible landlords and difficult-to-reach or repeat offenders. Additional accountability and enforcement are necessary to hold repeat offenders accountable without overburdening responsible landlords.

Are poorly maintained properties an issue in your region?



Landlords and renters agree that poorly maintained properties - or habitability - are a problem.

59% of renters identify habitabilty as a top concern and **45%** say it is the reason they move. This directly impacts local landlords bottom line.

Education: Voluntary landlord and renter certification

Participants expressed concern that both renters and landlords lack some of the basic information necessary to ensure a successful tenancy. On the renter side, it is a "steep learning curve for first-time renters." Meanwhile, landlords expressed lack of understanding of the Fair Housing Act, Kansas law regarding security deposits, and provisions related to rental repairs. Participants were unclear as to when security deposits are required to be returned and the definition of "wear and tear". Some landlords appear to have a policy to retain the security deposit without explanation, despite the law requiring return, with an itemized receipt, within 30 days.

Landlords expressed concern that renters did not know how to properly care for rental properties. Repair costs go up if issues are not reported early: a small leak becomes a substantial remodel. At the same time, renters expressed fear to report a needed repair, anticipating an increase in rent to cover the cost of repair or an eviction if they were labeled a "problem" tenant. Some renters indicated that they had made multiple complaints about the need for repairs and never received a response.

WHAT KANSAS LAW SAYS
K.S.A. 58-2550 provides:

Return of security deposit, with itemized receipt, no later than 30 days;

Security deposit may be used to cover physical damage caused by renter action or negligence;

Security deposit may not be used to cover ordinary wear and tear.

Participants agreed that an online, statewide education program for both renters and landlords would support improved education and communication in the rental housing market. Participants were undecided on who might be best to create and maintain the training, but agreed that a voluntary certification would allow both responsible landlords and responsible renters to stand out in the rental housing market. One roundtable suggested offering it in high school to help prepare first-time renters. Another pointed to voluntary certification to build confidence in first-time or second-chance renters. This certification process would ensure that renters and landlords know how to report unsafe conditions, are aware of protections and available supports, and understand the best practices for communication.

Distinguishing between responsible landlords and repeat offenders, enforcement

Landlords were adamant that renters and enforcement agencies, such as city code enforcement, needed to be able to distinguish between responsible landlords and out-of-state or hard-to-reach owners. Participants agreed that all rental housing needed to have a specific local, human contact responsible for accepting notifications, communicating with renters and local authorities, and making required repairs. Participants pointed toward a verification system or tracking registry to ensure that renters and cities can identify a responsible local contact and so that cities can track habitual code violations and LLC transfers or sales intended to evade enforcement or pass unresolved problems onto new owners.

Participants recognized that existing laws in Kansas do not adequately protect rental housing. They introduced many questions: what are reasonable repair timelines for emergent, urgent, and routine concerns? What is the right response when substandard and potentially unsafe housing is being actively rented, but there is nowhere else for residents to go? Should renters be able to escrow rent with the city or court to ensure repairs? When a large property is condemned, who should bear the cost of repairs and relocation? How can Kansas reduce fraudulent rental listings?

Participants expected local government to serve as a third party to enforce health and safety requirements. However, stronger enforcement mechanisms are needed. There were multiple examples of cities undertaking investigations, issuing repeated code violations but being unable to ensure that essential repairs were made early enough to preserve rental housing. As a result, residents were endangered and housing condemned. Examples of the toll on renters forced to live in unsafe housing included children being removed from families by DCF due to the condition of the rental housing, illnesses created or exacerbated by unsafe housing, and Kansans being forced to vacate housing – without any financial recourse from the property owner - when unsafe housing is condemned.

Participants suggested expanding the Kansas Consumer Protection Act to allow the Attorney General to take enforcement action in egregious rental housing cases or to allow private attorneys to bring enforcement cases on behalf of renters. They proposed allowing cities to make

repairs and put a lien on the property and having escalating penalties for repeat offenders. The loss of rental housing due to condemnation, as experienced in Sedgwick, Johnson, and Shawnee counties, not only displaces and disrupts renters; it tightens the housing market, passes costs of displacement to the county and its taxpayers, and results in blight and reduces property tax revenue.

Complementary approaches

Participants proposed local training programs, landlord mitigation or repair funds, rent escrow or rent repair programs, and building partnerships to better preserve rental housing.

For example, participants highlighted low-cost financing, landlord mitigation programs, and incentives as measures to support responsible landlords, particularly those providing housing that is considered affordable in the region. Those incentives could be tied to preventive inspections and earlier interventions to ensure safe housing. Responsible landlords may experience unanticipated costs in rental housing beyond their control, such as poor wiring predating purchase or storm damage. Low-cost financing and incentives for responsible landlords could help mitigate those costs. Incentives and landlord mitigation programs have served as a type of insurance in some localities, providing funding to encourage landlords to remain affordable or to cover the cost of needed repairs. Participants were explicit that these incentivizes should be reserved for responsible landlords and not "finance neglect."

Participants also noted that different regions provided local training or eviction mediation and crisis navigation programs that could be more clearly advertised to renters and landlords to support housing stability. With the introduction on July 1, 2026 of a new law requiring judges to consider mediation in eviction cases when practicable and allowing eviction expungement, expansion of existing mediation and prevention programs is a priority to ensure compliance with the law and to support housing stability. Across roundtables, participants supported developing stronger partnerships in rental housing between cities, code enforcement, housing providers, legal services, landlords, and service providers.

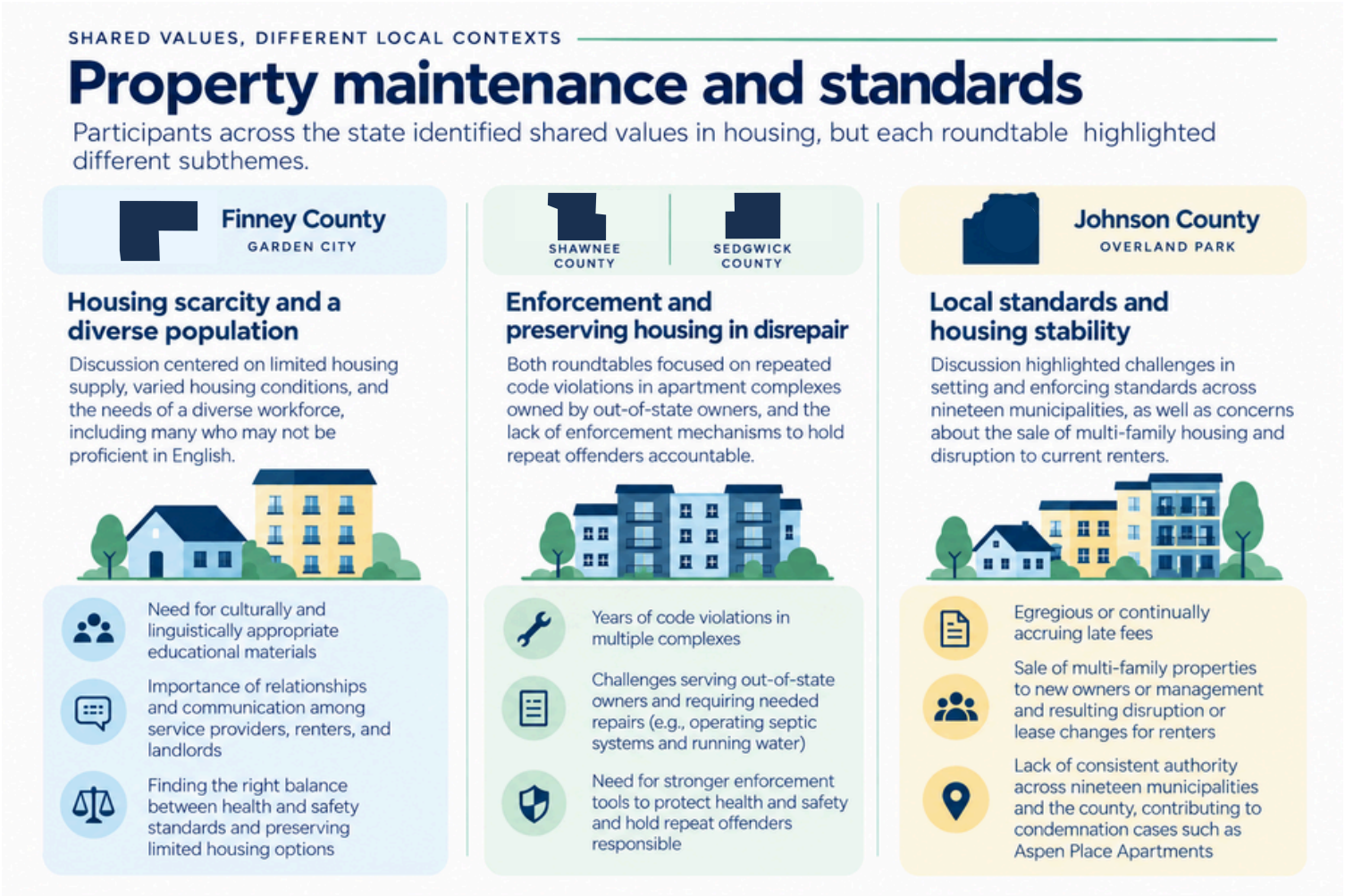
Regional Themes

Participants across the state identified shared values in housing, but discussion in each of the roundtables carried different subthemes. Finney County's discussion centered on housing scarcity and the needs of its diverse population. Shawnee and Sedgwick counties focused on similar concerns: how to strengthen enforcement of basic habitability requirements and preserve housing in need of repair. Johnson County discussion highlighted challenges in setting standards across nineteen municipalities and how to address sales of multi-family housing and disruption to current renters.

Discussion in Finney County was dominated by concern about housing scarcity and quality. The workforce in Garden City is diverse, and a significant subset may not be proficient in English. Given the limited supply of housing and with a limited ability to negotiate, renters were willing to accept any rental housing, no matter the living conditions. Participants emphasized the importance of relationships and communication between service providers, renters, and landlords with a marked need for culturally and linguistically appropriate educational materials. The rural nature of much of Finney County and varied housing conditions sparked concern: what is the right balance between ensuring health and safety of housing and preserving housing options? What level of government should address these standards?

Wichita and Topeka identified similar concerns regarding property maintenance and repeat offenders. Both roundtables focused on yearslong and repeated code violations in apartment complexes owned by out-of-state owners. Despite the repeated code violations, the cities struggled to serve the owners with code violations and the owners failed to make repairs required to ensure the properties were not in violation of basic health and safety standards, such as having operating septic systems and running water. Clearest examples include Timber Lee and Emery Gardens apartments, but participants cited several other housing complexes with similar problems. Participants clearly indicated that the city lacked enforcement mechanisms necessary to protect health and safety and hold repeat offenders responsible.

Discussion in Overland Park highlighted particular concern about egregious or continually accruing late fees. Participants also discussed the sale of multi-housing units to new owners and new property management companies, which often resulted in disruption or lease changes for renters. What is the best policy for providing notice and supporting housing stability in that situation? Local control versus basic standards was also a dominant theme. Johnson County is home to nineteen localities in addition to unincorporated areas, making it a challenge to set and enforce standards related to property maintenance and health and safety. Participants attributed lack of consistent authority across cities and with the county as a contributing factor to the condemnation of Aspen Place Apartments.



Areas for continued research and discussion

Roundtable discussion broadly covered the application process, housing stability, and property maintenance. Areas of additional interest that should be subject to further research and discussion emerged, including pets in rental housing, meaningful screening criteria, the role of property management companies, minimum standards for rental housing habitability, and balancing the preservation of existing housing and building more affordable housing.

Participants agreed that pets and emotional assistance animals should be revisited. Renters noted how common and important it is to own a pet or assistance animal and expressed frustration about exclusion from housing options. Landlords responded with concern about the costs of rehabilitation due to pets and the risk of allergens. Participants discussed the legitimacy of monthly pet "rent" in addition to a pet security deposit: "we don't charge for toddler rent; so are pets any different?" and "why would a tenant even have to pay pet rent when the tenant is responsible for the destruction anyway?"

There was uniform uncertainty about what screening criteria are most meaningful and concern that current screening reports and property management screening are not always reliable. Is three times rent in monthly income the right screening criteria for very low, subsidized rent or very expensive monthly rent? Why do tenant screening reports rely heavily on credit scores when renters are not seeking credit? Participants reported inaccurate information in reports and barriers to getting corrections from tenant screening companies. This prompted a larger question: "What about people that don't qualify for any places and can't meet the requirements. Where do they go?"

Property management companies should also be examined. One landlord explained that "these companies are almost predatory." Though the use of property managers is standard across the state, common complaints include poor communication, increased costs, failure to maintain units, and increased turnover. Local landlords using property managers may not be aware of their policies, procedures, and added fees or the potential for increased turnover or reduced property quality. Potential solutions included workforce development, oversight or certification, and development of nonprofit property management companies.

Statewide minimum requirements for rental property habitability and standards for enforcement were discussed across the roundtables, but a clear standard was not identified. Participants indicated that at least some local control is necessary to respond to local conditions using local expertise and priorities. However, there was persistent concern that some renters have the right to safer housing than others.

Across roundtables, participants also highlighted Kansas' housing shortage. Ideas to address the housing shortage included working directly with financial institutions, keeping a registry of vacant or blighted properties, more effective use of the Kansas abandoned housing act to rehabilitate abandoned homes, and intervention in tax sales. Localities and the state will have to balance supporting and incentivizing the building of new housing with preserving existing housing.

Next Steps

Participants identified local efforts and programs that would support a robust rental housing market as well as statewide policy changes that would provide a necessary framework to support sustainable local landlords, renters, and communities.

Programs

Voluntary certification
Landlord and renter education

Develop a voluntary certification program that includes education and resources for both landlords and renters.

Eviction mediation and prevention

Expand access to eviction mediation and prevention efforts to keep people housed and reduce unnecessary turnover.

Policy

Kansas Truth in Renting Disclosure

Require a clear, standardized one-page disclosure of key lease terms, fees, and policies before a renter applies or signs a lease.

Portable Tenant Screening Reports and Unused Application Fee Return

Allow tenants to use one screening report for multiple applications and require the return of unused application fees.

Fee-Free Way to Pay

Ensure at least one fee-free (or fee-included) way to pay rent, such as ACH, debit card, cash, or money order, with clear disclosure of all payment methods and any associated fees.

Room to Recover

Cap late fees at 5% and provide a 5-day grace period to give renters room to recover and avoid unnecessary turnover.

The Regional Roundtables

Four community conversations across Kansas brought together renters, landlords, service providers, local leaders, and policy experts to identify shared concerns and collaborative solutions to shape the future of housing in Kansas.



Roundtable Design and Implementation

Partnerships

Included local service providers, local governments, nonprofit funders, and the Kansas Housing Resource Corporation's 2026 Housing Conference. Partners helped identify regional leaders and participants.

Consistent and Inclusive Design

Facilitators were identified and trained in advance to ensure consistency. Each roundtable included three to seven tables of up to eight participants, with diverse perspectives represented at each table (landlords, renters or tenant groups, housing providers or developers, service or legal providers, local government staff, elected officials, and state legislators). Participants were assigned to tables in advance, and each table had a designated notetaker who used a standardized notetaking template.

Format and Focus

Events lasted about three hours and included lunch (Overland Park was condensed to fit the conference schtedule). The roundtables began with a presentation on housing in Kansas and outcomes from the Rental Housing Survey. Discussions focused on three themes:

- **Improving the Match between Landlords and Renters**
- **Improving Housing Stability and Reducing Turnover**
- **Protecting our Housing: Property Maintenance and Moving.**

Analysis

Following the events, facilitators reviewed table notes and debriefed with UCS staff. Notes were compiled and analyzed by UCS staff and compared to an A.I.-generated analysis to verify themes or trends were not overlooked. Unless otherwise attributed, quotes in this report are from table notes.

Key Elements at a Glance

- **4 roundtables** across the state
- **3-7 tables per event** up to 8 participants per table
- **3-hour events** (including lunch)
- **Presentation and issue-specific handouts** (with space for participant notes)
- **Multi-step analysis** of roundtable notes and themes

Explore Roundtable Materials Online
The roundtable presentation and handouts are available in the appendices to the online edition of this report at ucsjoco.org.





United Community Services of Johnson County

kansas housing advocacy network



Scan the QR code for more information

Housing Powers Kansas: Lessons from Local Landlords and Renters

Every Kansan is part of the same housing market, and stable, attainable housing is the foundation of strong communities and a growing economy.

More than 40% of Kansans rent their homes today, and nearly every Kansan has been a renter. Rising costs and limited supply have transformed the rental market, with rents increasing an average of 35% over the past five years. As a result, Kansans are spending more time as renters.

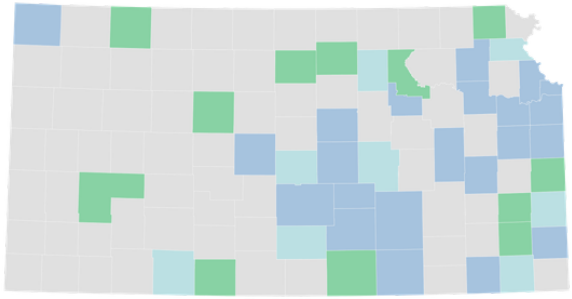
At the same time, ownership has shifted from local landlords to larger corporate owners and technology has changed nearly every aspect of renting—from advertising and applications to screening, maintenance, and rent collection.

To better understand these changes, the Kansas Housing Advocacy Network (KHAN) surveyed Kansas renters and landlords to identify shared challenges and opportunities for solutions that strengthen local landlords, improve housing stability for renters, and support thriving communities.

Our guiding question: *How do we shape the future of housing in Kansas?*

The 2026 KHAN Rental Housing Survey

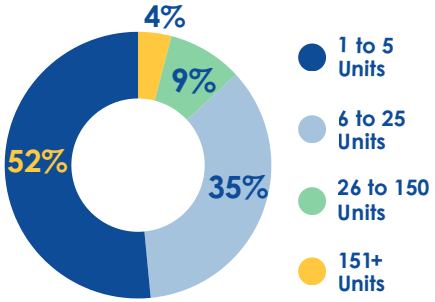
Current and former (<5 years) Kansas renters and landlords.



Survey Respondents: 297 Renters, 69 Landlords

- Landlord
- Both
- Renter

87% of Landlords Owned <25 Properties



Landlords and Renters Agree:

Survey responses indicate landlords and renters shared many of the same concerns. Understanding these concerns allows us to collaborate on meaningful solutions from policy changes to pilot programs to legislation.

- **Kansas needs more attainable housing;**
- **Landlords and renters want to:**
  - **improve matching renters with the right housing,**
  - **improve housing stability and reduce turnover,**
  - **ensure we protect the housing we have.**

Shared Concern	Renters Say	Landlords Say
Inadequate housing supply	Lack of units (50%)	Lack of units (52%)
Matching renters and landlords	Finding affordable available housing (91%), due to application costs, screening criteria	Finding qualified renters (89%), due to application costs, screening crieria
Achieving Housing Stability, Reducing Turnover	Fees, ongoing habitability (59%) and rent increases (90%)	Fees and turnover (50%)
Protecting our housing: property maintenance and exiting housing	Poorly maintained properties an issue (83%), fear of reporting repairs (46%) and unresolved repairs (38%)	Poorly maintained properties an issue (63%), cost of repairs (50%)

UCS

kansas housing advocacy network

Survey Findings: Housing Availability and Full Occupancy

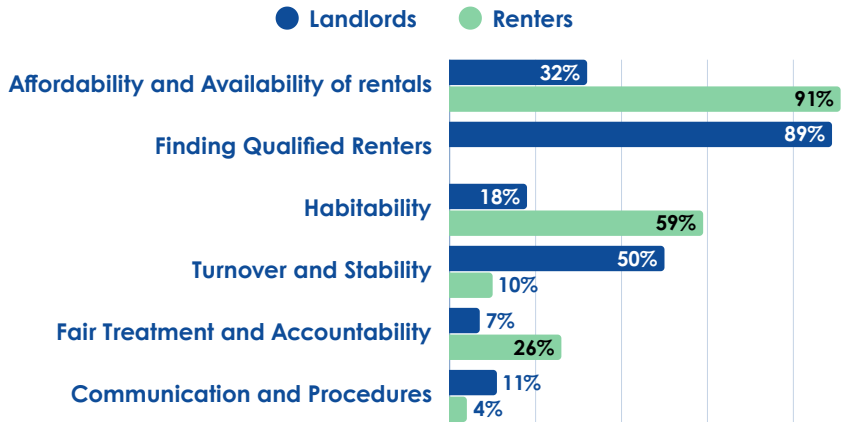
Survey responses point to collaborative solutions.
Renters and landlords agree that the application process and screening criteria, along with upfront costs are a significant barrier to housing **and/or staying housed.**

Recognizing that an empty unit is the most expensive unit, how can we support more efficient and effective matching between available rental housing and renters?

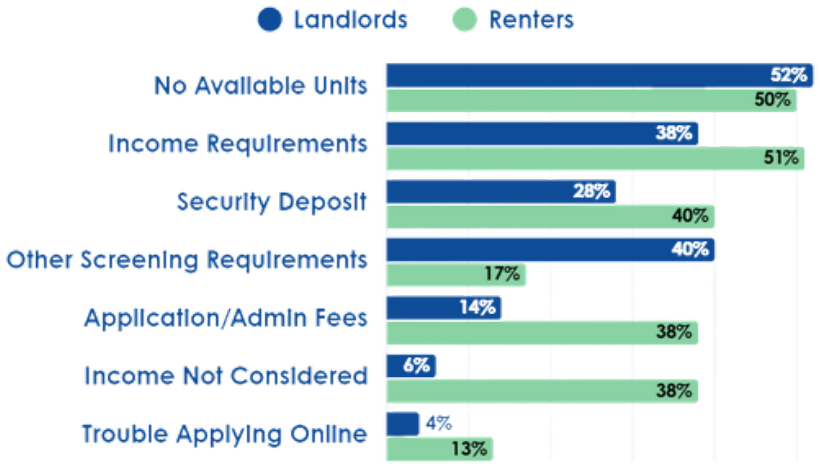
Two Biggest Housing Concerns

Landlords:
1. Finding qualified renters(89%)
2. Turnover and stability (50%)

Renters:
1. Affordability and availability (91%)
2. Habitability (59%)

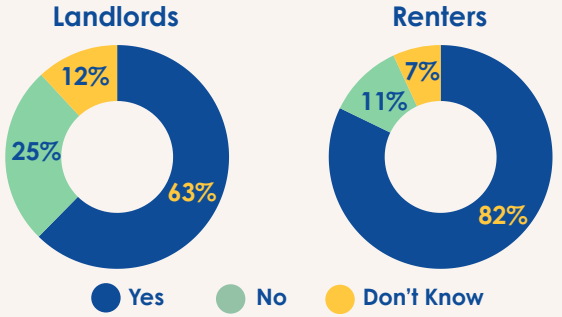


Biggest Barriers to Housing



Protecting Our Housing

Are poorly maintained properties an issue in your region?



Landlords and renters agree that poorly maintained properties - or habitability - are a problem.

59% of renters identify habitabilty as a top concern and **45%** say it is the reason they move. This directly impacts local landlords bottom line.

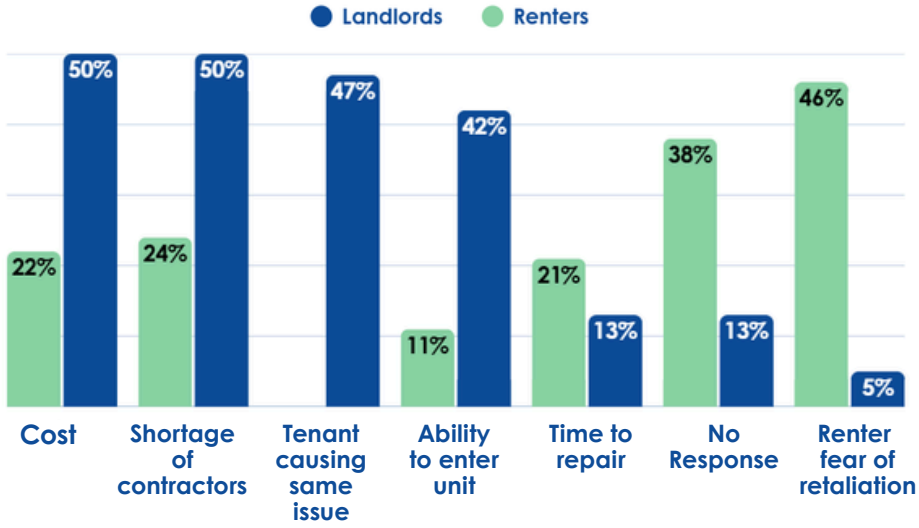
What are the barriers to repair?
Landlords and renters agree that cost is a barrier to repairs.

Landlords indicate that renters wait to report the need for repairs - resulting in higher costs and loss of profit.

46% of renters report being afraid of facing rent increases or eviction if repairs are reported. **38%** say when they request repairs there is no response.

How can prevention, training, and clear reporting processes protect our housing?

What are the barriers to making repairs?



SHARED CONCERNS:
Matching Landlords and Renters

Where Landlords and Renters Align

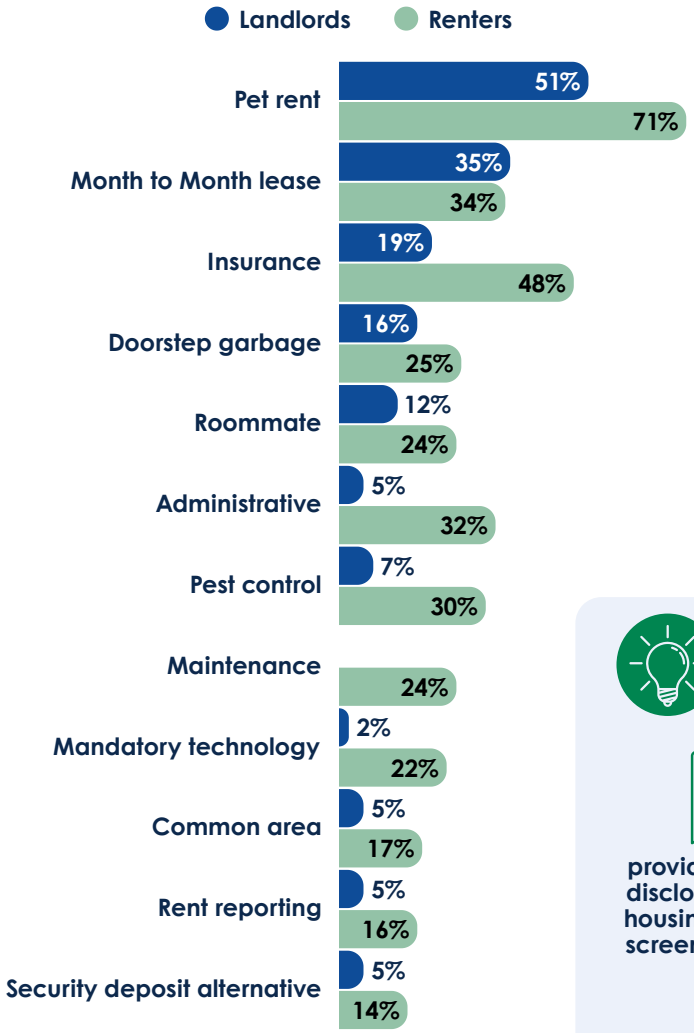
Survey responses point to collaborative solutions.
Renters and landlords agree that the application process and screening criteria, along with upfront costs are a significant barrier to accessing housing and/or staying housed. Landlords report that an empty unit is the most expensive unit.

Two Biggest Housing Concerns

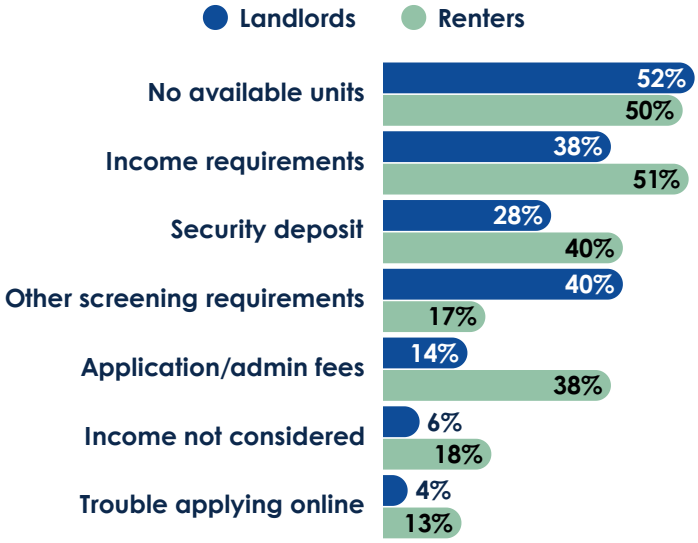
Landlords:
1. Finding qualified renters(89%)
2. Turnover and stability (50%)

Renters:
1. Affordability & availability (91%)
2. Habitability (59%)

Local landlords report charging few added monthly fees, while renters report paying a wide range of fees



Barriers to Housing



Other states improve the match between renters and landlords by:

- providing upfront disclosure of total housing costs and screening criteria
- limiting or refunding unused application fees
- allowing portable tenant screening reports, and/or
- regulating or limiting screening criteria.

Currently Kansas does not require any of these.

What does this look like in other states?

Nevada A.B. 121 (2025): Periodic rent must be listed as a single figure, including fees and utilities. Application fee refunded if the landlord rents to another applicant and does not use the fee for application purposes.

Utah Code Sec. 57-22-4: Before accepting any fee or payment, the landlord must disclose monthly rent, including fixed and use-based fees, availability date, eligibility criteria including criminal history, credit, income, employment or rental history, and refund process.

Colorado Rev. Stat. Secs. 38-12-903--904: Application fee must cover actual expense of processing and landlord must refund unused portion within 20 days. Landlord may not charge a fee when applicant provides a qualifying tenant screening report (within 30 days with statement of no material change). Exception: landlord may accept one application fee at a time per unit and refund the total application fee to each failed prospective tenant within 20 days. Landlord must provide a copy of screening report if tenant paid for it.

What are ways Kansas landlords and renters can make the match to housing easier and more efficient and reduce transaction costs on both sides?

What concerns should we address?

What would work in Kansas?

SHARED CONCERNS:
Housing Stability and Reducing Turnover

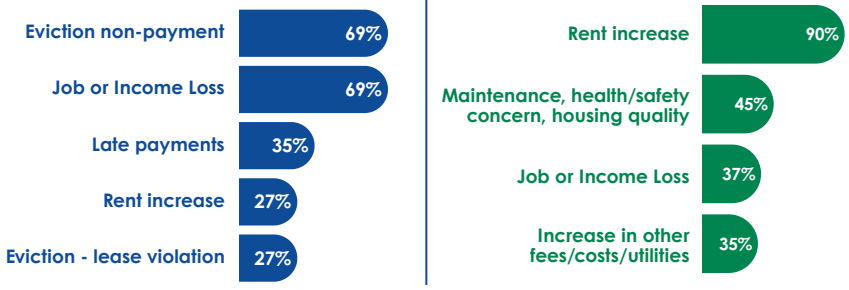
Landlords and renters second biggest concerns are also related: ensuring housing stability and habitability.

Two Biggest Housing Concerns

Landlords:
1. Finding qualified renters(89%)
2. Turnover and stability (50%)

Renters:
1. Affordability & availability (91%)
2. Habitability (59%)

What Contributes to Turnover?



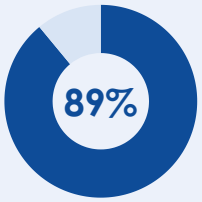
Kansas law, the Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act, outlines core renter and landlord responsibilities: landlords must provide and maintain safe, habitable housing and renters must pay rent and take care of the property.

WHEN PAYING RENT BECOMES A BARRIER

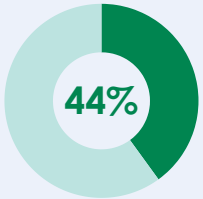
Payment portal or off-site payment required → Added "convenience" fee/processing fee/system problem → Payment rejected or delayed → Late fee or eviction notice

Many renters must pay online through a rent payment portal or at an in-person payment location. Payment systems sometimes fail, leading to late fees and eviction notices that can be difficult or impossible to resolve.

DO KANSAS RENTERS HAVE FEE-FREE WAY TO PAY RENT?



of landlords say renters can pay rent without a fee



of renters report having a fee-free option to pay rent

Small fees add up. Some companies use added monthly fees as profit drivers, adding as many as 35 fees to base rent*

*The Guardian, June 2026

OTHER STATES REDUCE TURNOVER BY SUPPORTING PAYMENTS:

Provide at least one fee-free way to pay rent.
So renters can pay without extra costs.

Provide short grace periods
Helps prevent small delays from becoming evictions.

Set reasonable late fees and fee mark-up limits.
Keeps fees fair and predictable.

What does this look like in other states?

Policy Area	Count	States
Statutory late fee protection	29 states	AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, HA, ID, IL, IO, KY, ME, MD, MA, MN, NV, MN, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, PA, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV
Late fee cap of 5% or lower	At least 10 states	CO, CT, DE, ME, MD, NV, NM, NY, NC, OR
Grace period before late fee may be imposed	At least 14 states	CO, CT, DE, KY, ME, MA, NV, NY, NC, OR, TN, TX, VA, WA
Late fees must be reasonable or tied to actual costs	At least 13 states	AZ, CA, VT, ID, IL, KY, OH, OK, PA, TX, VT, WA, WV
Fee-free rent payment option / convenience fee protection	5 states	Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia

How can we reduce turnover and support making rent payments in Kansas?

What concerns should we address?

What would work in Kansas?

SHARED CONCERNS:
Property Maintenance and Moving

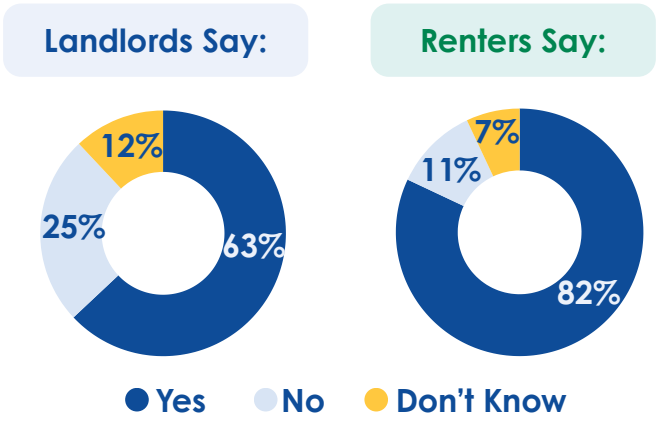
Where Landlords and Renters Align

Landlords and renters agree that poorly maintained properties are a problem.

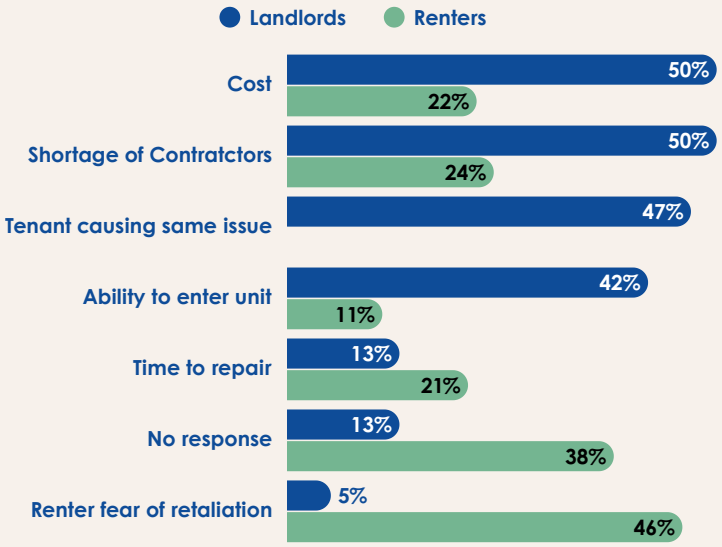
59% of renters identify habitabilty as a top concern and **45%** say it is the reason they move. This directly impacts local landlords bottom line.

Kansas has been underbuilding housing for decades, leading to a housing shortage and increased costs. Protecting the housing stock we have is an important priority for landlords, renters, and the community.

Are poorly maintained properties an issue?



Barriers to Making Repairs



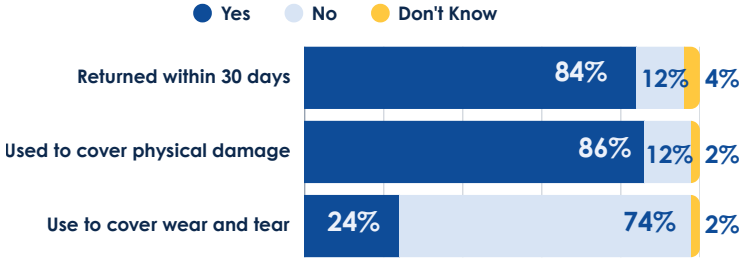
Landlords and renters agree that cost is a barrier to repairs.

Landlords indicate that renters wait to report the need for repairs - resulting in higher costs and loss of profit.

46% of renters report being afraid of facing rent increases or eviction if repairs are reported. **38%** say when they request repairs there is no response.

- ***How can training and communication be improved?***
- ***How can the city support property maintenance?***

At your property, was the security deposit:



WHAT KANSAS LAW SAYS
K.S.A. 58-2550 provides:

Return of security deposit, with itemized receipt, no later than 30 days;

Security deposit may be used to cover physical damage caused by renter action or negligence;

Security deposit may not be used to cover ordinary wear and tear.

What does this look like in other states?

Policy Area	States
Limit security deposit damages: security deposit may not be used for ordinary wear and tear	AL, CA, CO, DE, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, ME, MD, MA, MN, MS, MO, NV, NH, NM, NY, NC, ND, OR, RI, SD, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WI, WY
Limit total security deposit amount	AL, CA, CO, KS, MD, MA, NC, VA
Renters may notify the landlord, make qualifying repairs, and deduct cost from rent	AZ, CA, CO, DE, GA, HI, AZ, CA, CO, DE, GA, IL, KY, LA, ME, MA, MS, MO, MT, NV, NJ, ND, OK, OR, RI, SD, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA
Renters may use procedure to put rent in escrow, withhold, or abate rent to ensure repair	DE, MD, MA, MI, MN, NV, NM, NY, OH, PA, SD, VT, VA, WI

What mechanisms will ensure that landlords receive timely notice of needed repairs and that repairs are made in a timely manner? How can the cities support property maintenance?

What concerns should we address?

What would work in Kansas?

Appendix 2: Housing Powers Kansas Roundtable Presentation

Housing Powers Kansas: Lessons from Kansas Renters and Landlords





kansas housing advocacy network

UCS

Kansas Housing in the News

Kansas City Star

Kansas City leaps into No. 1 spot in ranking of nation's top housing markets. Here's why

KLC Journal

Kansas housing shortage leaves all 'in the same boat'

They are two of the housing projects in various stages of development official

Wichita Eagle

Rising property taxes seen as a persistent housing threat for Kansans, survey finds

Kansas Reflector

In Topeka and all of Kansas, homelessness on the rise

A 2023 annual state count showed an 10% increase in people experiencing homelessness from 2022. Advocates blame factors such as rising housing costs and little...

Jun 14, 2024

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

First-Time Home Buyer Share Falls to Historic Low of 21%, Median Age Rises to 40

TFD inspectors find various fire code violations at Timberlee Apartments

Condemned: Residents given 48 hours to move out of Johnson County apartments

Sedgwick County has the most evictions in Kansas. One landlord is responsible for a quarter of them

KMUW | By Celia Hack

Lunch & Learn Tours:

Olathe, Manhattan, Pittsburg, Wyandotte, Dodge & Garden City, Leavenworth, McPherson





Kansas: Working on Housing



KANSAS HOMES, KANSAS VALUES

Ensuring Safe Homes, Strong Neighborhoods under the Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act (KRLTA)

The Kansas rental market has shifted from a "mom and pop" market invested in local community success to a corporate, private equity market[1] focused on the bottom line. The Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act (KRLTA) assumes good faith on the part of landlords, but provides no real tools for renters, cities, or the Attorney General to ensure the safe, habitable housing it guarantees.

The result? Corporate owners can—and do—buy up single family neighborhoods[2], townhomes, and apartments and significantly increase rent, **evict 3.7 times more often** than local owners, and are **cited for code violations 1.6 times more often**[3]. They push "mom and pops" out of the market and prevent Kansas families from becoming homeowners. Cities across the state—Topeka, Wichita, Gardner, Kansas City—are left with growing stocks of poorly maintained rental housing and few options to protect their residents. Without action, more tragic situations like Aspen Place[4], Timberlee[5], Hillsdale[6] and Emery Gardens[7] will threaten neighborhood safety, family stability, and local property values.

Rep. Leah Howell, Rep. Cyndi Howerton
Sen. Doug Shane
Rep. Robyn Essex, Rep. Sean Tarwater



PUTTING KANSANS FIRST IN HOUSING

Building Stability through the Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act (KRLTA)

The Kansas rental market has shifted from a "mom and pop" market invested in local community success to a corporate, private equity market[1] focused on profit. The Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act (KRLTA) assumes good faith on the part of landlords, but provides no real tools for renters, cities, or the Attorney General to ensure the safe, habitable housing it guarantees.

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Sen. Dinah Sykes
Rep. Rui Xu

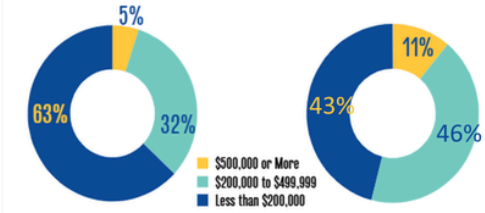
Every Kansas Story Starts at Home: What Renters, Landlords, and Communities Can Build Together

4 Roundtables
- Topeka
- Wichita
- Western Kansas
- Overland Park

KS Public Policy Forum
Nov. 18th at 9 a.m.
Overland Park, KS



KANSAS



Change in Owner Occupied Home Value 2018-2023

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 and 2023 1-year estimates

Home prices have increased and housing supply has stalled.

Shift in Rental Home Ownership: Rise in Corporate Ownership of Single Family and Multifamily Homes

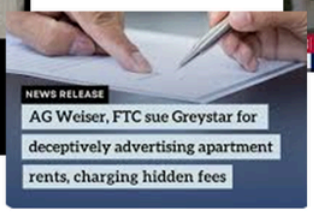


Buying the Block

The Impact of Corporate Owners on Tenants, and How to Promote Community Accountability

Rental Housing: Technological Changes







The KHAN Rental Housing Survey

Current and former (within 5 years) Ks renters and landlords.

Topics:

- Access to Housing/Finding Qualified Renters
- Affordability and Availability of Rental Housing
- Habitability: Housing Quality and Property Maintenance
- Communication and Accountability
- Turnover and Stability
- Priorities and Final Thoughts

kansas housing advocacy network

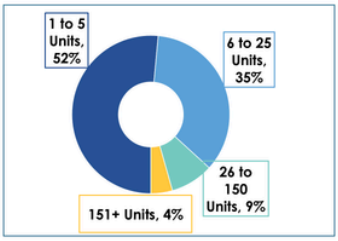
UCS



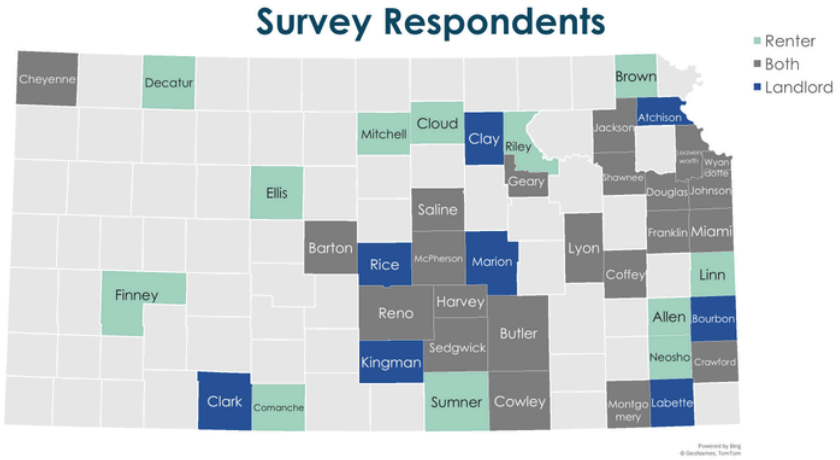
Survey Respondents

Respondent Type	Total
Renter	236
Former Renter	61
Landlord	62
Former Landlord	7
Total	366

Landlord Size



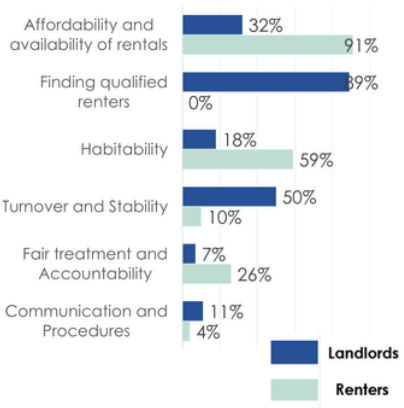
Survey Respondents



Two Biggest Housing Concerns

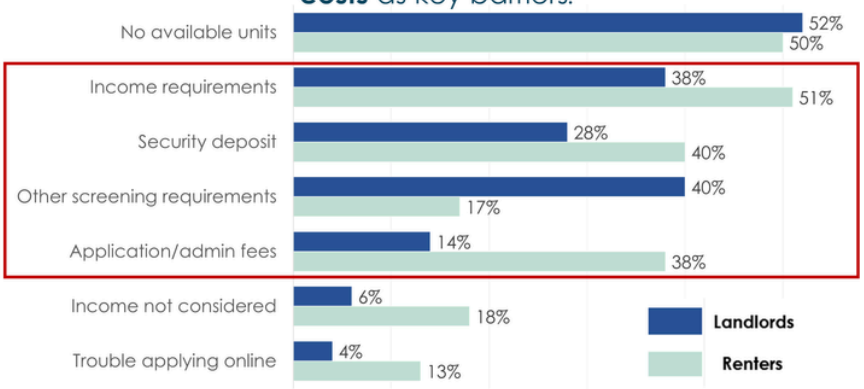
Landlords:
finding qualified renters (89%)
turnover and stability (50%)

Renters:
affordability and availability (91%)
habitability (59%)



Barriers To Accessing Housing

Landlords and *renters* see **screening requirements and upfront costs** as key barriers.



Takeaways

Housing is a core building block for economic growth and individual, family, and community success.

Kansas landlords, renters, and communities are experiencing related challenges due to housing market changes.

Transparency and predictability are critical: everyone benefits from clear expectations and informed decision-making.

Proactive education and communication save money.

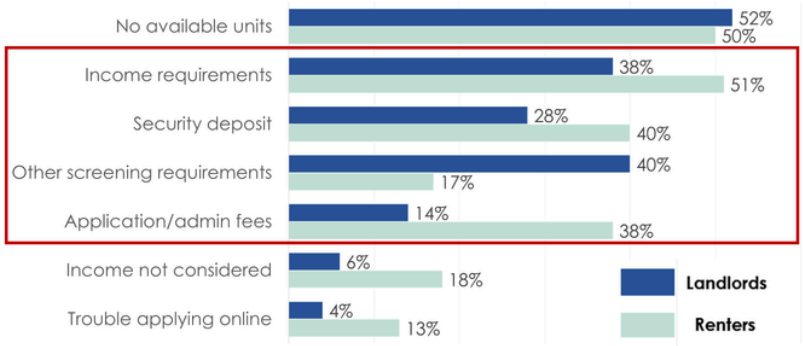
Roundtable: Shared Concerns

Shared Concern	Landlords Say	Renters Say
Matching renters and landlords	Finding qualified renters (89%) due to application costs, screening criteria	Finding affordable available housing (91%) due to application costs, screening criteria
Housing stability or reducing turnover	Fees and turnover (50%)	Habitability (59%) and fee and rent increases (90%)
Protecting our housing: property maintenance and moving	Poorly maintained properties an issue (63%), Cost of repairs (50%)	Poorly maintained properties (83%), Fear of reporting repairs (46%), no response to repair request (38%)

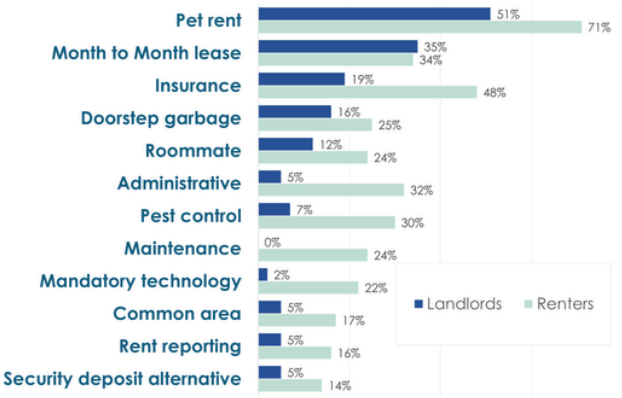
SHARED CONCERNS:
Matching Landlords and Renters

Matching Landlords and Renters

Landlords and *renters* see **screening requirements and upfront costs** as key barriers.



Matching Renters and Landlords: Total Monthly Cost



Matching Renters and Landlords

What are other states doing?

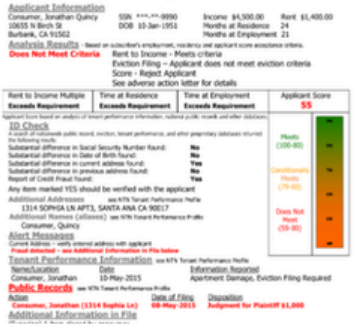
21 states provide transparency in pricing and manage application fees, such as:

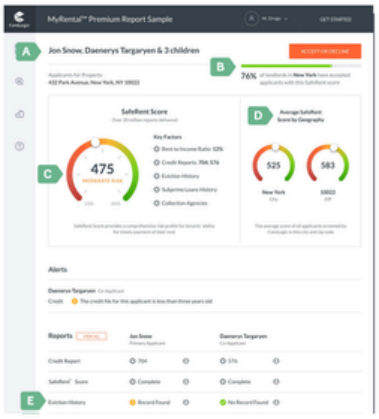
- Upfront disclosure of "All-In" or total monthly pricing
- Eliminate or limit added fees (include in total price)
- Eliminate or limit application fees ($50)
- Refund application fee if renter is not screened or a unit is not available

Matching Renters and Landlords

State	Transparency in pricing, application fees
Nevada A.B. 121 (2025), enrolled bill	Periodic rent must be listed as a single figure, including fees and utilities. Application fee refunded if landlord rents to another applicant and does not conduct the activity for which the fee was collected (e.g. obtain credit report, background check).
Utah Code § 57-22-4	Before accepting any fee or payment, landlord must disclose monthly rent, including fixed and use-based fees, availability date, eligibility criteria, and refund process.
Virginia Code § 55.1-1204.1	Rental agreement must itemize security deposit, periodic rent, and one-time charges on the first page; additional security deposits or rent cannot be charged except by addendum.
Maryland Code Ann., Real Prop. §§ 8-213, 8-218	Application fees over $25 must be returned except amounts actually used for credit check or application expenses.
Minnesota §§ 504B.113, 120, 173, 177	Total Monthly Payment, including rent and all mandatory fees must be on first page of the lease. Screening fee refunded if rejection is based on undisclosed criteria, prior applicant accepts unit, or fee not used for checks.
Montana HB 311 (2025)	Application fee itemization required; refund required if applicant does not lease, less specific itemized costs.

Tenant Screening Reports





Matching Renters and Landlords

What are other states doing?

24 states provide transparency in screening criteria or limit screening criteria:

- Itemized, written disclosure of screening criteria before accepting application fee
- Reusable or portable tenant screening reports
- Regulate or limit screening criteria
  - Look back period of 5 or 7 years
  - Limit use of criminal history
  - Require acceptance of all income
  - Limit use of eviction history

Matching Renters and Landlords

State	Disclosure of screening criteria, portable tenant screening report
Minnesota Stat. § 504B.173	Before accepting a screening fee, landlord must disclose the screening service and the criteria on which the rental decision will be based; rejection notice must identify failed criteria.
Utah Code § 57-22-4	Before accepting an application fee or other payment, owner must disclose the criteria used to determine eligibility, including criminal history, credit, income, employment or rental history.
Colorado Rev. Stat. § § 38-12-903, 904	Application fee must cover actual expense of landlord in processing application and must refund unused portion within 20 days. Landlord may not charge an application fee when applicant provides a qualifying tenant screening report (within 30 days with statement of no material change). Exception: landlord may accept one application fee at a time per unit and refunds the total application fee to each failed prospective tenant within 20 days. Landlord must provide a copy of screening report if tenant paid for it.
Illinois: 765 ILCS 705/25	If prospective tenant provides qualifying reusable tenant screening report, landlord may not charge a fee to access report or an application screening fee for additional report.

Matching Landlords and Renters: A Kansas Approach

What is Kansas doing now?

No clear disclosure requirements for screening criteria, application costs, or total monthly fees and costs.

No limits on screening criteria or application fees.

No requirements that applications must be screened or a refund issued.

No provision to provide a copy of or accept recent tenant screening reports to reduce costs.

Matching Landlords and Renters: A Kansas Approach

How can Kansas make the match between renters and landlords easier and more efficient and reduce transaction costs?

Other state approaches:

Upfront disclosure of screening criteria, application costs, total monthly costs

Eliminate, limit or refund application fees

Portable Tenant Screening Reports

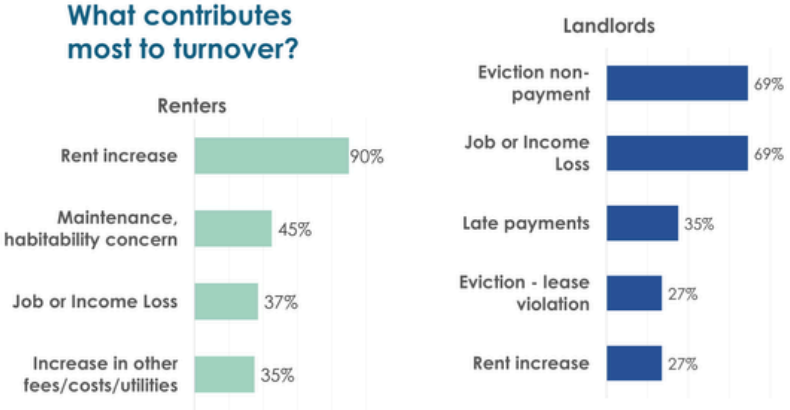
Limit Screening Criteria (lookback period of 5-7 years, income, eviction, criminal history)



SHARED CONCERNS:
Housing Stability and Reducing Turnover

Housing Stability: Reasons for Turnover

What contributes most to turnover?



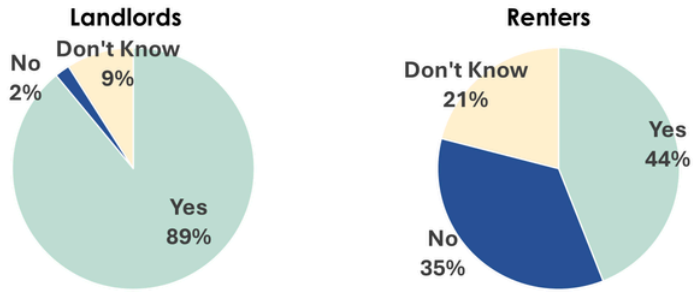
Housing Stability: Reducing Turnover

What are other states doing?

Reducing friction to making payments by ensuring:
- at least one fee-free way to pay rent,
- providing short grace periods,
- setting reasonable late fee and fee mark-up limits.

Housing Stability: Paying a Fee to Pay Your Rent

Do renters have at least one way to pay rent without an added expense or fee?



Housing Stability: Reducing Turnover

What are other states doing?

29 states increase stability and reduce turnover through:

- 10 states cap late fees at 5% or lower
- 18 states have explicit "reasonableness" standards or tie late fee to actual costs
- 14 states provide a grace period before a late fee
- At least 5 states require a fee-free way to pay rent

Nevada: 3-day grace period, 5% late fee cap, fee-free rent payment option

Housing Stability: Reducing Turnover

Policy Area	Working Count	States
Statutory late fee protection	29 states	AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, HA, ID, IL, IO, KY, ME, MD, MA, MN, NV, MN, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, PA, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WV
Late fee cap of 5% or lower	At least 10 states	CO, CT, DE, ME, MD, NV, NM, NY, NC, OR
Grace period before late fee may be imposed	At least 14 states	CO, CT, DE, KY, ME, MA, NV, NY, NC, OR, TN, TX, VA, WA
Late fees must be reasonable or tied to actual costs	At least 13 states	AZ, CA, VT, ID, IL, KY, OH, OK, PA, TX, VT, WA, WV
Fee-free rent payment option / convenience fee protection	5 states	Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia

Nevada: 3-day grace period, 5% late fee cap, fee-free rent payment option

Supporting Housing Stability and Reducing Turnover: A Kansas Approach

In *Schutt vs. Foster* (2025), Kansas Supreme Court upheld $21,240 in late fees on $5,700 in late rent.

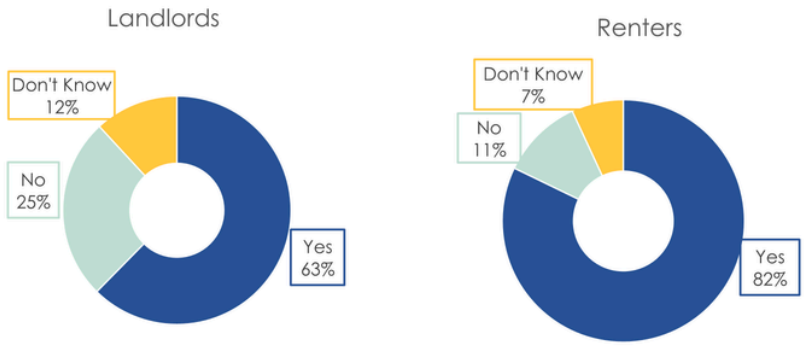
What Does Kansas Do Now?
No grace period, no late fee cap, no requirement to provide a fee-free rent payment option.

How can we reduce turnover and support making rent payments in Kansas?

SHARED CONCERNS:
Property Maintenance and Moving

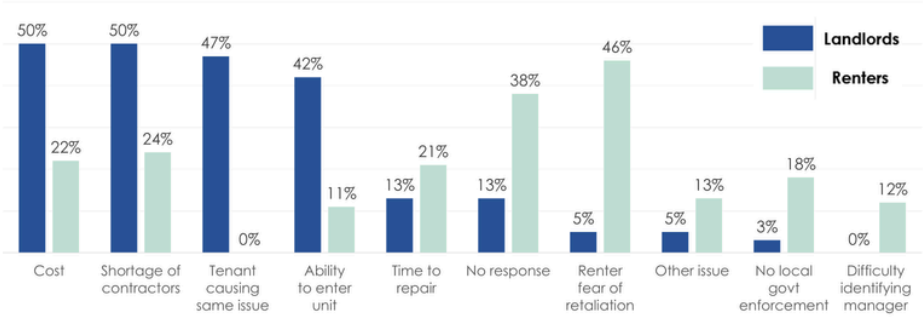
Protecting our Housing

Are poorly maintained properties an issue in your region?

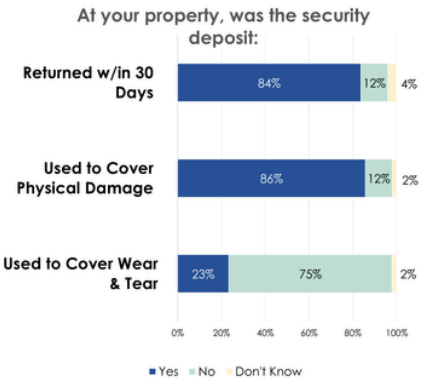


Protecting our Housing: Property Maintenance

Barriers To Resolving Maintenance Issues



Protecting our Housing: Exiting Housing



Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act requires:

- Return of security deposit, with itemized receipt, no later than 30 days
- Security deposit may be used to cover physical damage caused by renter action or negligence
- Security deposit may not be used to cover ordinary wear and tear

Protecting Our Housing: What are other states doing?

32 states provide a method to ensure that repairs are made and rental housing is habitable:

- 32 states limit security deposit damages
- 26 states have repair and deduct statutes if the renter provides notice and follows procedure
- 14 states allow the renter to withhold or escrow rent if, after providing notice, the landlord does not make repairs required by law

Protecting Our Housing: What are other states doing?

Policy Area	Working Count	States
Limit security deposit damages: security deposit may not be used for ordinary wear and tear	At least 32 states + D.C.	AL, CA, CO, DE, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, ME, MD, MA, MN, MS, MO, NV, NH, NM, NY, NC, ND, OR, RI, SD, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WI, WY
Limit total security deposit amount	At least 8 states	AL, CA, CO, KS, MD, MA, NC, VA
Renters may notify the landlord, make qualifying repairs, and deduct cost from rent	26 states	AZ, CA, CO, DE, GA, HI, AZ, CA, CO, DE, GA, IL, KY, LA, ME, MA, MS, MO, MT, NV, NJ, ND, OK, OR, RI, SD, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA
Renters may use procedure to put rent in escrow, withhold, or abate rent to ensure repair	14 states	DE, MD, MA, MI, MN, NV, NM, NY, OH, PA, SD, VT, VA, WI

Protecting our Housing: A Kansas Approach

How do we return abandoned housing to the housing market?

How do we ensure actively rented housing is maintained to the basic standards of the Kansas Residential Landlord Tenant Act?

Protecting our Housing from Fraud

Property Verification

- Non-owner-occupied residential rentals register annually with state
- Owner information, property manager, local agent for service, type of property and number of units
- Nominal annual fee (mom and pop landlords, nonprofit, housing authorities fee exempt)

Why?

- Prevents fraud in rental housing market
- Allows clear communication between property owners and potential renters
- Private market operates more efficiently
- Cities can ensure housing is safe and habitable

Shared Value: Protecting our Housing Supply

Clarify city right to periodic inspections under K.S.A. 12-16,138

Allow for periodic interior inspections with tenant consent, *with an administrative warrant, and with reasonable notice where probable cause exists to believe a dangerous condition exists in such building or on such premises.*

Apply city right to abate nuisances, K.S.A. 12-1617e, to code violations and provide ability to delegate that authority to county.

What Can We Build Together?

Our Concern	Other States Responses
Matching renters and landlords	Upfront disclosure of screening criteria, total monthly pricing; limit, eliminate or refund application fees; limit screening criteria; use portable screening reports
Housing stability, reducing turnover	Fee-free monthly payment options, limiting fees – including late fees, short grace periods
Protecting our housing: property maintenance and exiting housing	Security deposit limitations, renter repair and deduct or rent withholding, city authority, property licensing or verification





