

THE VOICE

A Trusted Voice From The Community's Perspective



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City Council candidates in District 1 to participate in forum at WSU

By **Jacinda Hall**
Wichita Journalism Collaborative



The Wichita Journalism Collaborative, of which The Voice is a member, will hold a forum on July 15 for candidates running for the Wichita District 1 City Council seat.

Three City Council seats are up for re-election this fall. But District 1 is the only one with a primary election in August.

The candidates are LaWanda DeShazer, Darryl Carrington, Aujanah Bennett, Chris Pumpelly and Joseph Shepard.

The forum is Tuesday, July 15, at 6 p.m. in the Marcus Welcome Center at Wichita State University. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Wichita State University Political Science Professor Neal Allen said a candidate forum is a good way for citizens to hear from candidates.

"It's hard to expect voters to know much about individual candidates," Allen said.

He said that the election should be competitive.

"This is a nonpartisan race and there are not large issue differences between the candidates," Allen said. "This is a district that is by far the most liberal and progressive in the city, and this district is the one opportunity in city and county politics for the Black community of Wichita to be able to have a strong role in choosing their

representative."

District 1 has had a decades-long history of being represented by Black candidates who have had consensus support of the Democratic Party.

"This is a different election as the local Democratic Party is not clearly backing a single candidate, certainly not single African-American candidates," Allen said. "It will be interesting to see which two candidates emerge from the runoff."

Allen said he has seen a lot of spending by candidates in past City Council races.

"Raising money for a primary election in a district that is ... lower income is very difficult," Allen said. "So, events like a candidate forum are important because chances of a voter getting information on a candidate from traditional campaign advertising channels are nearly zero."

Kansas State Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau, who represents District 29, said that she's excited that so many candidates have entered the race.

Wichita District 1 City Council Candidate Forum

Tues., July 15, 6 p.m.
Doors open at 5:30 p.m.
Wichita State University,
Marcus Welcome Center

"I think like most people, everybody's concerned about economic development, job opportunities. I know that I am for my constituents," said Gaust-Goudeau.

"What will we do with some of the vacant houses? How can we turn that into homes for those living on the streets in downtown Wichita?"

Jacinda Hall is a recent Wichita State University graduate and the summer 2025 intern with the Wichita Journalism Collaborative

Behind the Cartoon: Epstein Client List

By **Clay Jones**

The Justice Department posted a memo last week saying there is no evidence that the late pedophile and Trump party buddy Jeffrey Epstein was murdered, versus committing suicide, or that he kept anything amounting to a much-anticipated "client list."

That's a problem for Trump 2.0 that promised to expose everything upon taking power, with Attorney

General Pam Barbie Bond, an insider in Trump's DOJ, promising to produce Epstein's "client list."

Republicans and MAGAts are seriously upset about the DOJ and Bondi's statement denying the list exists, because they still believe, without evidence, that it does.

MAGAts HATE having their conspiracy theories debunked, especially by another MAGAt. That never happens, right?

CARTOON



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Sean 'Diddy' Combs Gets Standing Ovation From Inmates After Court Victory, His Lawyer Says



By Associated Press

Sean "Diddy" Combs got a standing ovation from fellow inmates when the music mogul returned to jail after winning acquittals on potential life-in-prison charges, providing what his lawyer says might have been the best thing he could do for incarcerated Black men in America.

"They all said: 'We never get to see anyone who beats the government,'" attorney Marc Agnifilo told The Associated Press in a week-end interview days after a jury acquitted Combs of sex

trafficking and racketeering conspiracy charges.

Combs, 55, remains jailed at a federal lockup in Brooklyn after his conviction Wednesday on prostitution-related charges, which could put him in prison for several more years. Any sentence will include credit for time already served. So far that's almost 10 months.

Blunt Trial Strategy Works

The verdict in Manhattan federal court came after a veteran team of eight defense lawyers led by Agnifilo executed a trial strategy that resonated with

jurors. Combs passed lawyers notes during effective cross-examinations of nearly three dozen witnesses over two months, including Combs' ex-employees.

The lawyers told jurors Combs was a jealous domestic abuser with a drug problem who participated in the swinger lifestyle through threesomes involving Combs, his girlfriends and another man.

"You may think to yourself, wow, he is a really bad boyfriend," Combs' lawyer Teny Geragos told jurors in her May opening statement. But that, she said, "is simply

not sex trafficking."

Agnifilo said the blunt talk was a "no brainer."

Lawyers Gently Questioned Most Witnesses

During an eight-week trial, Combs' lawyers picked apart the prosecution case with mostly gentle but firm cross-examinations. Combs never testified and his lawyers called no witnesses.

Sarah Krissoff, a federal prosecutor in Manhattan from 2008 to 2021, said Combs' defense team "had a narrative from the beginning and they did all of it

without putting on any witnesses. That's masterful."

Ironically, Agnifilo expanded the use of racketeering laws as a federal prosecutor on an organized crime task force in New Jersey two decades ago, using them often to indict street gangs in violence-torn cities.

"I knew the weak points in the statute," he said. "The statute is very mechanical. If you know how the car works, you know where the fail points are."

He said prosecutors had "dozens of fail points."

"They didn't have a

conspiracy, they just didn't," he said. "They basically had Combs' personal life and tried to build racketeering around personal assistants."

Some personal assistants, even after viewing videos of Combs beating his longtime girlfriend, Casandra "Cassie" Ventura, had glowing things to say about Combs on cross examination.

Once freed, Combs likely to reenter domestic abusers program.



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Wichitan Mobilizing National Black Women's Equity March in Washington, D.C.

Local advocate Mary Dean is taking her efforts to Washington, D.C., and asking Black women from across the country to join her.

By Ty Davis
Wichita Reporter

At 77 years old, Mary Dean is not slowing down. A long-standing community advocate and president of the nonprofit Kansas Justice Advocate Inc., Dean is organizing a powerful national event.

Her Black Women's Equity March is set to take place on Sat., Sept. 27, in Washington, D.C.

Her mission with the march is clear – to amplify the voices of Black women across the country and demand long-overdue justice and recognition.

“We’re the most disrespected and least protected women in this country,” Dean says, her voice calm but resolute. “Yet we’re also the most educated. It’s time that Black women are heard, seen, and honored for their contributions.”

Why the March?

The march grew out of ongoing conversations among Black women across the country — conversations filled with frustration about inequities in health care, housing, education, and environmental justice. From maternal mortality to contaminated water in Black neighborhoods, from school discipline disparities to workplace discrimination, Dean and her organizing committee say enough is enough.

“We’ve been meeting, talking, and pushing for change. But talk isn’t enough. We decided in 2024 that we were tired of waiting. 2025 is our year to show up,” she



Mary Dean

said.

Dean emphasized that the goal isn’t just local — it’s national.

“We wanted this to be in D.C. because that’s where laws are made. This march is about getting national attention on Black women’s issues from coast to coast,” she said.

Though based in Wichita, the Black Women’s Equity March is a national effort. Dean and her team are working with advocates from Detroit, Texas, Kansas City, and beyond to mobilize voices across the U.S. Monthly planning meetings and a growing network of professionals, faith leaders, and grassroots organizers are fueling what she hopes will become a landmark moment for equity and justice.

What to Expect

The march will begin at 9 a.m. outside the Holiday Inn National Mall, 550 C St. SW, Washington D.C. Participants will march across the street to the National Mall, where a rally will begin at 10 a.m. The event will feature speeches, music, and a call to action



encouraging attendees to take the momentum back to their local communities.

Dean is currently working to attract more national speakers and sponsors to increase the event’s visibility. The lineup of confirmed speakers and participants includes:

- Kim Smith, Missouri State Representative
- Danian Taylor, Motivational Speaker and National Bestselling Author
- Carolyn Morgan, Minister and Advocate for Prison Reform
- Pastor Pamela Mason, St. Paul AME Church, Wichita
- Carol Brewer, Wichita Advocate
- Dr. Evelyn Hill, Kansas City Leader
- Janae Reliford, Kansas City Reparations Commission
- Nia Renee, national vocalist and rising artist, will perform live.

Additional speakers and entertainers are expected to be announced in the coming months. Organizers are also

inviting mayors and leaders from major U.S. cities to stand in solidarity with the

mission of the march.

Who Is This March For?

While the focus is on Black women, all allies — including men — are welcome and encouraged to attend.

“We want our brothers to show up too. Black men have always been the backbone of our support,” Dean said. “This is about unity, visibility, and truth.”

Vision, Planning & Transportation

With a vision of attracting hundreds, if not thousands, to the march, Dean is working on plans for transportation from Wichita to D.C.

to make sure Wichita is adequately represented there. Tentative plans call for departure on Sept. 26 and return on Sept. 28.

Additional cities may coordinate group travel as well. “Transportation logistics are underway,” she shared. “We’ll be announcing more details this summer.”

This level of coordination reflects Dean’s organizing skill and her deep roots in advocacy. The planning committee meets every second Friday of the month to update logistics, outreach, and strategy.

See **MARCH** Page 15 →

Through Their Lenses
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Angela Tucker is a transracial adoptee who shares her story through documentary, book, & podcast. She also mentors adoptees & advocates for adoption issues as a speaker & founder of The Adoptee Mentoring Society.



Pastor Cameron Martin is Lead Administrator at St. Mark Cathedral COGIC, where he focuses on fostering spiritual growth, community engagement, and operational excellence within the church. In addition, Cameron is the Continuing Legal Education Director at the Wichita Bar Association.



April Dinwoodie is a thought in transracial adoption & offers tools to help people navigate differences of race, class & culture.



Mayda Berrios, MS is the Founder & Owner of “in Her Shoes, LLC.” she is a distinguished professional speaker, traveling the United States, and recognized for her award winning presentations.



Dr. Sharilyn Ray, LCSW is the CEO and Founder of Restoration Family Services, a non-profit organization focused on helping families & children & holistic healing

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Building Better Fathers:

How Dads Care 2 Supports Wichita's Black Fathers

By Ty Davis
Wichita Reporter

When it comes to fatherhood in Wichita's Black community, too often the narrative centers on what's broken — absent dads, custody battles, and disjointed homes. But for Dennis Fontelroy, founder of Dads Care 2, that story is incomplete.

For more than two decades, Fontelroy has been on a mission to rewrite the narrative on Black fathers — one father at a time.

Fontelroy's commitment to this work didn't begin in an office; it began in his own home.

Becoming a single parent gave him firsthand exposure to the obstacles many fathers face: navigating the family court system, overcoming stereotypes, and fighting to be present in their children's lives.

The experience shifted his perspective from theory to lived reality. Before that, his years in prison ministry had revealed a troubling trend: an overwhelming number of incarcerated men — nearly 80% by his observation — came from homes where



Dennis Fontelroy

fathers were absent.

The connection was clear. Fatherlessness wasn't just a personal issue. It was systemic, generational, and deeply impactful. That clarity led to action.

Fontelroy founded Dads Care 2, a program dedicated to equipping, restoring, and advocating for fathers — particularly Black fathers — who are trying to rebuild relationships with their children and regain their footing as providers and protectors.

Addressing the Real Barriers Fathers Face

Housed at the Urban League of Kansas, Dads Care 2 does more than offer encouragement — it provides tangible support. The program helps men navigate



Dads Care 2 provides services to fathers who are struggling to connect with their families. This non-judgmental program recognizes systemic barriers get in the way and tries to help fathers get over or through these barriers.

legal systems, connect to job training, and access tools for emotional growth and parenting.

For many participants, it's the first time anyone has shown them how to be a father — without judgment, just guidance.

Fontelroy understands child support policies, incarceration, and economic instability create a cycle that's difficult to escape. To help program participants escape these cycles, the program partners with workforce development agencies, community mentors, and legal advocates to help men move forward.

Many of the men who walk through the doors of Dads Care 2 are not absent because they don't care — they're absent because they've been pushed out, priced out, or written off. The program aims to reverse that.

Father-Focused Curriculum Changes Lives

Unlike generic parenting classes, Dads Care 2 uses a

father-focused curriculum built on communication, decision-making, and self-worth. Sessions are hosted in accessible spaces — including Wichita State University — and often include peer-led discussions that foster community and vulnerability.

The results have been powerful. Men have gone from losing custody to sharing parenting time. Some have gone from unemployed to stable providers. Others simply rediscover the confidence to show up and stay present.

Fontelroy has witnessed these changes up close and sees them as nothing short of divine.

"These men aren't just changing their own lives — they're changing their children's lives, too," he said.

Making His Vision a Reality

As the program grows, Fontelroy envisions a future where Dads Care 2 becomes a statewide hub of healing and hope. He believes that empowered fathers lead to empowered families and that, with the right support, every father has the potential to lead well.

His vision for the program includes expanding partnerships, strengthening community ties, and shifting the societal narrative around fatherhood — especially in the Black community.

"When fathers are involved," Fontelroy says, "kids don't have to look to the streets or a screen for identity. They already have it at home."

How to Connect with Dads Care 2

To connect with Dads Care 2, call 316-573-6159. Calls will be directed to the appropriate contact.

Needs are assessed individually after the initial call, and every effort is made to support the caller, regardless of background or circumstance.

Dads Care 2 workshops last six to eight hours and are offered quarterly. Classes are held weekly over an eight-week period and are open to fathers ages 16 to 66.

Referrals are accepted, and walk-ins are encouraged.

Learn More

To learn more about how Dads Care 2 is strengthening Wichita's families, visit dadscare2.com, call 316-573-6159, or stop by the office at 2418 E. 9th St. N., Wichita.

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Affordable and Nutrient Packed: This Food Group is Hard to Beat for its Nutritional Value

In a thousand years, you probably wouldn't have guessed this food group offered so much nutritional bang for the buck. Learn more about how to add this food item to your diet.

By Voice Health News

For many people who struggle to eat a healthy diet, the biggest barrier is often cost: Nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, meat and seafood tend to be a lot more expensive than ultra-processed foods.

But that's not always the case. Some of the most nutritious foods on earth are also among the most affordable: beans, peas and lentils, collectively known as pulses.

Pulses are high in protein and fiber. They promote gut health, help with weight loss, and improve blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Health authorities recommend that adults eat one to three cups of beans, peas or lentils each week, depending on your calorie needs. Yet most Americans fall short of that goal, consuming on average just a half cup of beans each week, said Christopher Gardner, the director of nutrition studies at the Stanford Prevention Research Center.

"That's an insanely small amount, given that beans, peas and lentils are such a powerhouse of protein and fiber and other nutrients," he added.

Gardner was part of a government committee of nutrition experts that issued a



report in December that said that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans should emphasize beans, peas and lentils as a healthy source of protein and a good substitute for red and processed meat.

He said that adults should aim to eat at least a half cup of beans, peas or lentils per day - rather than per week.

"We should be doubling and tripling our bean intake - we should be eating them every day," Gardner said. "Nutrient-wise they have all of the good stuff and none of the bad stuff - and they tend to be a lot less expensive than other foods. There are few foods that cost as little as beans, peas and lentils."

How Eating Beans Can Make You Healthier

Pulses typically have several times more protein and fiber than brown rice, corn, wheat and other grains. A single cup of cooked lentils, for example, has 18 grams of protein, the amount in three large eggs. Yet unlike animal foods, they're naturally free of cholesterol and low in

saturated fat.

All pulses are high in fiber and rich in nutrients such as iron, potassium, magnesium and B vitamins. A cup of cooked lentils has 16 grams of fiber - more than half the recommended daily amount of fiber that the average adult needs.

In 2020, a systematic review of randomized controlled trials found that adults who were assigned to eat an average of about a half-cup of cooked beans, peas or lentils daily had striking improvements in their cardiovascular, gut and metabolic health. They lost weight, shrank their waistlines and lowered their cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar levels. They also had reductions in inflammation and positive changes in their gut microbiomes.

Beans, peas and lentils contain a special type of fiber called resistant starch, which gets its name because it resists digestion in the small intestine. Resistant starch travels down to the large intestine,

How to Fit More Beans, Peas And Lentils into Your Meals

One of the simplest ways to include more pulses in your diet is to add them to your favorite meals.

"You don't have to change very much if you're just adding them to the foods that you're already eating," said Jill Weisenberger, a registered dietitian nutritionist.

Here are some examples:

Eating eggs for breakfast? Pair them with black beans, alone or in breakfast burritos.

If you're having a sandwich for lunch, add some chickpeas by spreading hummus on your bread instead of mayonnaise.

If you're having chicken salad, open a can of white beans and mix some in. "Soft white cannellini beans are really good with tuna or chicken salad," Weisenberger said. Just make sure to rinse the beans first, which helps to remove sodium, she added.

If you're making a salad, open a can of cooked beans, peas or lentils and toss a couple spoonfuls in.

If you're having pasta with tomato sauce for dinner, open a can of kidney beans and mix some in. The taste and texture of the kidney beans will complement the sauce, Weisenberger said.

Making chili, soup or stew for a big family dinner? Smash some white beans, and add them to the pot. The smashed beans will thicken up your stew, soup or chili, and no one will even realize they're in there, Weisenberger said.

BEST IDEA YET!!! Anytime you're making a recipe with ground beef, replace some of the beef with cooked brown lentils to stretch the meat and add some fiber and extra nutrients. Brown lentils have a mild flavor, and they resemble the appearance and texture of cooked ground beef. Try adding the cooked lentils in a 2-to-1 ratio with the ground beef (2 cups of cooked lentils for each pound of cooked ground beef).

Stretching ground beef with lentils won't sacrifice flavor, instead the opposite. Lentils have a unique ability to absorb the flavors of the ingredients they are cooked with, making them a fantastic companion for ground beef. They not only add a pleasant, earthy undertone but also complement the meat's savory richness. This blend offers a delightful, well-rounded flavor profile that can take your dishes to the next level.

See **NUTRITION** Page 7 →

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KC Senior & Caregiver Wealth & Wellness Fair Offers Help as Families Face Rising Costs

Free July 19 event connects families to Medicare help, mobile dental care, and financial guidance.

By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

When 37.1 million Americans are spending an average of \$7,242 annually caring for aging family members, finding the right services can mean the difference between financial strain and stability.

That's the reality driving Kansas City District 5 Councilman Darrell Curls to partner with KC Shepherd's Center, Swope Health Services, and others to host his first Senior & Caregiver Wellness & Wealth Fair.

While many programs focus on youth during this time of year Curls decided to focus on the other end of the age spectrum.

"The fair will have



Kansas City District 5
Councilman Darrell Curls

everything from education on Medicaid, Medicare, wills, and trust funds, to connecting folks to various services offered in the area and from the city," says Rita Berry, executive aide to Curls.

The timing couldn't be more critical. According to the Congressional Budget Office,

Congress recently passed legislation that includes more than \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts over the next decade. The cuts could affect services for seniors needing long-term care and support programs that help families access Medicare and Medicaid benefits.

The fair will connect seniors and caregivers with services and resources like:

- **Mobile dental care** from Swope Health Services, which operates mobile units at more than 85 locations throughout the metro
- **Free vaccinations** administered on site
- **Medicare and Medicaid assistance** from community partners who can help families understand

Seniors & Caregivers Wealth & Wellness Fair

Memorial Church
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Sat., July 19
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Free to attend

benefits and apply for programs

- **Free food & refreshments**
- **Trust & will information** for families navigating estate planning
- **Senior property tax guidance** and potential savings programs

See **EVENT** Page 15 →

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NUTRITION, from Page 6 ↓

where it's metabolized by gut bacteria that convert it into health-promoting compounds such as short-chain fatty acids.

The authors of the review also looked into potential downsides. Although beans have a reputation for causing flatulence (gas), the researchers found that cases of gastrointestinal discomfort were fairly rare and not severe.

If you are concerned about gastrointestinal issues, though, one of the best things you can do is to gradually increase the

amount of beans, peas and lentils in your diet. This will give your body time to adjust and as your tolerance rises, any initial increase in flatulence should dissipate, said Chris Damman, a gastroenterologist at the Digestive Health Center at the University of Washington Medical Center

Better For Your Budget

Damman said that when people ask him what they should eat to improve their health, he recommends beans, peas and lentils "above all other foods," for

both their nutrient content and their low cost.

"They're a superfood," he said. "They're healthy, but they're also affordable - and that's really important right now with inflation and today's economy."

Studies have found that pulses are among the lowest-cost sources of protein. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, a pound of dried beans on average costs about \$1.70, compared with about \$6 for a pound of ground beef, roughly \$4.20 for a pound of chicken breast and at least \$4.60 for a dozen large eggs.

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The Affordable Housing Crisis

Americans are struggling to afford both homeownership and rent, with both being increasingly unaffordable to middle-income Americans.

Homeownership: A Struggle to Get in the Market & Stay in the Market

By **Charlene Crowell**

The Center for Responsible Lending

Ah, the American Dream: Owning a home with a two-car garage and a picket fence. It's a reality too few Americans can afford and even those who've bought and paid for their home are finding it difficult to keep them.

For the first time in 30 years, rising home prices and interest rates have translated into a drop in existing home sales and worsening affordability challenges for middle class families.

Among the nation's 46 million renter households, only one in seven - 6 million - in 2024 earned at least \$126,700, the amount needed to afford a \$2,570 monthly payment on a \$412,500 median-priced home. And these escalating costs likely contributed to the 771,480 people who were unhoused in 2024.

For Black Americans, the homeownership gains that occurred between 2019 and 2023 have halted. Last year, the White-Black homeownership gap remained stuck at 27.7 percentage points, and the same measure for Latino families was 25.2 percentage points.

These are among the findings in "The State of the Nation's Housing 2025," an annual report published by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS). Regarded by researchers and housing stakeholders as one of the most comprehensive assessments of the entire housing market, its findings share year-to-year changes and trends in construction, housing for owners and renters, as well as the effects of policy changes and proposals on the market.

Beyond its substantive findings, this year's report is also a call to action.

"There must be a concerted effort to do more to address the affordability and supply crises," says Chris Herbert, managing director of JCHS. "The potential consequences of inaction are simply too harmful to the macroeconomy and the millions of households striving for a safe, affordable place to call home."

As of early 2025, home prices are up 60% nationwide since 2019 and are increasing 3.9% year over year. This year, a median-priced new home comes with a price tag of \$459,826. Additionally, last year marked the fewest home sales on record since 1995.

"This is a shocking five times the median household income," says Daniel McCue, a



senior research associate at JCHS. "This is also significantly above the price-to-income ratio of 3 [a price of a house should not be more than three times a person's annual income] that has traditionally been considered affordable."

Two key factors affecting the costs of homeownership - home insurance and taxes - continue to rise. Home insurance premiums jumped 5% from 2019 to 2024, according to Freddie Mac.

Locals with the most severe weather-related disasters were hardest hit. Tornadoes, floodings, wildfires, and hurricanes impose financial tolls on renters and homeowners alike. For example, in Miami where weather-related disasters frequently occur, the cost of home insurance for a median-priced home is \$920 per month, or more than \$11,000 per year.

"The scale and frequency of climate disasters has prompted private insurers not only to raise premiums, but in some cases to reduce coverage or pull out of markets entirely, as in California, Florida, and Louisiana," the report says.

Rising property taxes add yet another affordability challenge.

In states considered "low tax," average annual property tax costs can be as low as \$1,100, as in Alabama, or as high as \$10,100 in New Jersey, generally considered a "high tax" state.

Nationwide, the average 12% increase in 2021 and 2023 led to an annual \$4,380 tax bill. While tax abatement programs have been implemented by some state and local governments, these cost-saving options tend to be limited to either senior citizens and/or low-income households.

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending.

Regional Homeownership Price-to-Income Ratio

The price-to-income ratio of 3 has typically been considered affordable.

The ratio means the price of the home you want to buy should be no more than three times your annual income.

This year, a median-priced new home comes with a price tag of \$459,826. Nationally, it will take an average household income of \$137,946 to afford that house.

Thank goodness, the prices in our area aren't quite as bad. Average house prices are not as high as they are in some parts of

the country, but neither are incomes, which leaves the average price-to-income ratio hovering slightly above 3.0 in some areas, but as high as 4.3 in others.

Still, the once typically affordable mid-western home has become less affordable over the past three decades with price to income ratios of around 2.0 in the 1990s and a still affordable 2.6 in 2020.

The big change has happened in the four years post COVID. As of early 2025, home prices are up 60% nationwide since 2019 and are increasing 3.9% year-over-year.

Regional Readership Area Price-to-Income Ratio Chart

City	1990	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Kansas City	2.3	2.6	3.4	3.8	4.0	4.0
Lawrence	2.8	3.3	3.7	3.8	4.2	4.4
Wichita	2.0	2.6	2.7	3.2	3.2	3.3
Topeka	1.9	2.3	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.1
St. Louis	2.0	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.3

Financial Strain on Renters Continues to Grow

Affordability of rental units is worse than it is for homeowners.

By **Bonita Gooch**
Editor-in-Chief

Fully 24% of homeowners were considered burdened, or spending more than 30% of their income on housing, but that paled to renters - with 50% of renters house-burdened and more than 24% of all renters spending more than 50% of their income on housing.

Just like housing prices, rental rates have increased considerably over the last few years. Between December 2017 and September 2022, the median rent for newly leased units rose nearly 32%, with nearly all of that increase occurring in 2021 and 2022.

The lack of affordable housing is especially hard for families with the lowest incomes to absorb with houses they can afford, often being taken by people who could afford more, but don't step up. The share of homeowners with income under \$30,000 that were cost-burdened grew to a record-high 83% in 2023.

Affordability challenges have grown most rapidly for middle-income renters. Indeed, 70% of renters earning \$30,000-\$44,999 had cost burdens in 2023. Cost burdens among households earning \$45,000-74,999 was 45%.

See **STRAIN** Page 9 →

The Downpayment Toward Equity Act Could Address Some of the Shortfall

Solutions aren't easy to come by, but here's one that's been floating around in Congress for several years.

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

Finding a solution to America's affordable housing crisis won't be easy, especially in the midst of cuts by the current administration to the nation's only housing agency.

"There must be a concerted effort to do more to address the affordability and supply crises," says Chris Herbert, managing director of JCHS.

For rentals, Closing the housing affordability gap will require a comprehensive housing strategy, including developing new units, preserving existing affordable housing, and expanding rental assistance.

Most of the problems with the housing market stem from a shortage of homes. Freddie Mac estimates that the U.S. is short 4 million homes.

In 2024, President Joe Biden's proposed housing plan included a one-year tax credit of up to \$10,000 for middle-class families selling their starter homes to another owner-occupant. This credit would encourage more homeowners to sell and upgrade to a home that better meets their needs, freeing up their prior home for a new first-time homebuyer.

Another proposal from Biden was a mortgage relief credit for middle-class first-time homebuyers of up to \$5,000 for two years.

This credit aimed to make homeownership more accessible by effectively reducing a buyer's mortgage rate by over 1.5 percentage points for two years.

Also included in Biden's plan was "The Downpayment Toward Equity Act" that has been floating around Congress for several years. The bill would provide \$100 billion in direct assistance to help first-time, first-generation homebuyers purchase their first home.

"For too long, families of color and first-generation buyers have faced insurmountable barriers to owning a home due to predatory lending, high downpayment requirements, and increasing home prices," said California

Congresswoman Maxine Waters, a co-sponsor of the bill.

The program would extend a \$25,000 grant to first-time and first-generation homebuyers. One of the biggest advantages of the \$25K first-time homebuyer grant is that, instead of receiving the funds in the form of a tax credit, grant funding is awarded in cash at the time of closing.

The program established household income limits for program participants to 120% of the area median income, but could go higher in high-cost real estate markets.

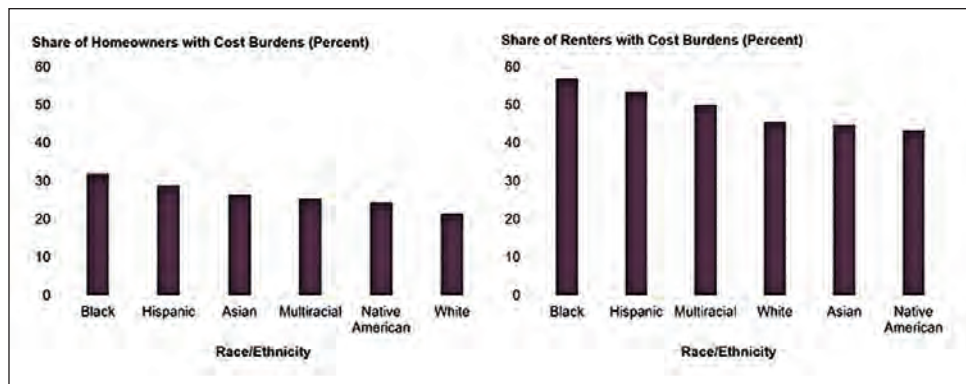
The grants could be used to buy a single-family home, condo, manufactured home or a multi-unit

home with up to four units, provided the grant recipient lived in one of the units while renting out the others. Grant recipients would be required to live in the house for at least a year or be forced to repay all or a portion of the funding.

"This is exactly the type of policy this moment demands – and Congress must pass it without delay," said Massachusetts Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, another co-sponsor.

The legislation has the support of diverse housing stakeholders: Americans for Financial Reform, the National Council of State Housing Agencies, the National Fair Housing Alliance, and the National Association of Realtors.

Households of Color Generally Face Greater Affordability Challenges



Regional Rental Housing Burden Rates

	Cost Burdened Renter Share	Severely Cost-Burdened Renter Share	Cost-Burdened Renters	Median Renter Household Income	Median Renter Monthly Household Costs
Kansas City, MO-KS	45.4%	20.7%	140,102	\$50,000	\$1,250
Lawrence, KS	51.6%	29.2%	13,390	\$35,900	\$985
Wichita, KS*	41.9%	21.4%	38,186	\$43,000	\$962
Topeka, KS	36.6%	18.2%	10,619	\$42,000	\$952
Columbia, MO	44.8%	26.7%	16,908	\$45,000	\$1,077
St. Louis, MO	43.6%	21.8%	150,846	\$45,200	\$1,080

*Among the 100 largest cities in America, Wichita had one of the lowest 10 rates of cost burdened renters in the country.
Renters that are cost burdened spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Renters who are severely cost burdened spend more than 50% of their income on housing

Source: "The State of the Nation's Housing 2025," published by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Homeownership Affordability Facts

- Only 1 in 7 renters can afford a median-priced home.
- For the first time in 30 years, rising home prices and interest rates have translated into a drop in existing home sales
- For Black Americans, the homeownership gains that occurred between 2019 and 2023 have halted.
- Last year, the White-Black homeownership gap remained stuck at 27.7 percentage points, and the same measure for Latino families was 25.2 percentage points.

STRAIN, from Page 8 ↓

The demand for rental housing is further strained by renters who would typically have purchased a home, but can't afford to because of the high price of houses. In fact, among the nation's 46 million renter households, only one in seven earned at least \$126,700, the amount needed to afford a \$2,570 monthly payment on a \$412,500

median-priced home.

This increase in demand is absorbing the wave of new multifamily rental units: in 2024, multifamily developers completed 608,000 new units, the most in nearly four decades. However, much of this construction was at the upper end of the market; the number of higher-rent units has increased dramatically while the number of lower-rent units has fallen substantially.



Apartment leasing sign promote the rental property and shows direction where the rental office is located.

The Merc Co-op to Close KCK Location

Failed area development likely contributed to grocery store's struggles

By **Thomas White**
Kansas City Reporter

The Merc Co-op will close its Kansas City, KS, location Dec. 30, ending a five-year effort to bring fresh food to downtown residents who lived in a food desert for decades.

The cooperative grocery store at 501 Minnesota Ave. notified the Wyandotte County Unified Government on June 30 that The Merc would “terminate its operating agreement.” The closure affects 12 employees and threatens to return downtown KCK to food-desert status unless another grocer takes its place.

Management cited poor financial performance as the reason for closing the 14,000-sq.-ft. store that cost



Shoppers browse fresh produce and locally sourced items at The Merc Co-op in downtown KCK.

taxpayers \$7.2 million to build.

“This decision is based on what’s best for the long-term viability of the co-op and the location’s financial performance,” said Laura Marsh, The Merc’s marketing director.

The store opened in July 2020 after three years of planning to address critical food access needs. Residents previously shopped at dollar stores that lack fresh produce

and healthier food options.

The Unified Government invested around \$7 million from hotel taxes and other sources to build and equip the store. Financing included \$3.2 million from hotel revenue, \$1.6 million from tax increment financing, and \$1.42 million in bonds.

Planners expected traffic at The Merc to be buoyed when a proposed

housing development brought 85 to 100 apartments to the former Reardon Convention Center site across the street. After years of extensions in the project’s development agreement, the \$25 million housing project died in February when developer Willie Lanier Jr. missed the final construction commencement deadline.

The store also battled a growing homeless population downtown and shoplifting losses that hurt profits.

The Merc focused on organic and locally sourced products, with 30% of offerings coming from more than 200 local producers, including 13% from minority-owned and 11% from Black-owned businesses.

The unique cooperative model let community members buy \$75 shares for voting rights and year-end rebates. The store had more than 8,000 “owners” from Lawrence and KCK.

At opening, 66% of staff were

Black, Indigenous or people of color. Eighty percent of supervisors came from these communities, and 86% of all staff were KCK residents. Management says they plan to help its dozen current KCK employees transition to its Lawrence location or find other work. “We’re committed to exploring every opportunity to transition these dedicated employees,” said Marsh.

The store will operate through Dec. 30. The Lawrence location — open for 47 years — remains unaffected.

The downtown grocery store’s demise adds to a string of development misfires in the area. The Minnesota Avenue Triangle Project, a \$145 million mixed-use development, also collapsed last year when developers cited funding gaps.

These setbacks underscore the challenges facing downtown KCK as city leaders work to revitalize the area and attract sustainable businesses that serve the community’s needs.

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Explainer: How Student Loans Will Change Under Congress' New 'Big, Beautiful Bill'

Changes impact those applying for funding after July 1, 2025, and those with existing debt.

By Bonita Gooch
Editor-in-Chief

The broad sweeping budget bill that just passed congress has major impacts in numerous areas including the federal student loan system. Signed by President Donald Trump on July 4, the nearly 900-page legislation dramatically rolls back many Biden-era policies, including those offering student debt relief.

The impact is not just for



those who've already borrowed for their education, but for those who will apply beginning July 1, 2025.

Student Loan Repayment Overhaul

The bill significantly

scales back flexible repayment options.

All of the previously existing income contingent repayment plans are gone, loan forgiveness programs that have been in place for years, and payment

requirements that previously benefited disadvantaged lower-income families have been altered.

The exception is for the 8 million borrowers enrolled in Biden's SAVE (Saving on a Valuable Education) repayment plan, who will stay in limbo awaiting a judge's decision about the program's legality. SAVE adjusted monthly payments based on income and forgave balances after a set number of years.

In its place, only two repayment options will remain:

Standard Repayment Plan – Borrowers repay loans with a fixed monthly payment over a period of 10 to 25 years based strictly on the size of their loan, with

no income considerations. The current standard plan has a loan term of 10 years, regardless of the amount borrowed.

Repayment Assistance Plan – Payments range from 1% to 10% of discretionary income, but this plan offers fewer protections than previous income-driven repayment programs.

Borrowers whose loans are dispersed on or after July 1, 2026, and those enrolled in SAVE, ICT or PAYE will have between July 2026 and June 30, 2028, to select a new plan. If they don't act, they'll be automatically placed into the Repayment Assistance Plan on July 1, 2028.

Loan Forgiveness Programs Slashed

The bill also guts long-standing federal loan forgiveness programs, including those that benefit public service workers and those working in low-income fields. Many borrowers who expected relief after years of qualifying payments will now face full repayment, with no forgiveness in sight.

Borrowing Caps for Students and Parents

The legislation also eliminates the Graduate PLUS Program, which allows students going to graduate or professional school to cover the full cost of attendance. In an effort to curb what supporters call "overborrowing," the bill introduces lifetime borrowing caps for federal student loans:

- Graduate students: \$100,000
- Medical and law students: \$200,000
- Parent PLUS loans: \$65,000

Parent PLUS loans, which many families rely on to bridge tuition gaps, will no longer qualify for repayment programs, placing a greater financial burden on middle- and lower-income families.

Fewer Options for Deferment and Forbearance

Borrowers facing financial hardship will also have fewer safety nets. Borrowers struggling to repay their loans will no longer be able to defer due to unemployment or economic hardship, but it would also give borrowers the ability to rehabilitate defaulted loans twice instead of the current one time that is allowed.

Pell Grant Expansion

The bill expands Pell Grant use for short-term training programs – often designed to quickly prepare students for in-demand jobs. Before this bill passed, Pell Grants could only be used for programs that are at least 600 clock hours and 15 weeks long. The Workforce Pell portion, which will go into effect on July 1, 2026, and includes a number of metrics and provisions that were part of other bipartisan versions introduced in recent years.

Impacts on Future Borrowers

There's a lot more in the bill still to be sorted out. While current borrowers – 40+ million Americans – may not be immediately affected, new borrowers and students planning graduate or professional degrees will feel the changes most acutely.

See **STUDENT LOANS**
Page 15 →

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Downtown Restaurant Fires up Bar & Grill in Former KC Daiquiri Shop

By Joyce Smith
Startland News

AJ's Bar & Grill managing partner Matthew Hill stands by the kitchen window, fielding lunch orders for both to-go, dine-in and delivery (he was running some orders to nearby offices in sweltering 90-degree-plus temperatures).

Inside the new restaurant, it's cool and low-lit, with customers gathered at the bar and couples cozying up at tables.

The menu at 1116 Grand Blvd. — the former KC Daiquiri Shop — includes such loaded baked potato options as The Brisket with hot or cold cheese, sauteed onions and a choice of sauce; the chicken with butter, cheese, pico de gallo, sauteed onions, sour cream, green onions and parsley; and the vegetarian with butter, broccoli, sauteed mushrooms, bell peppers, onion, cheese and sour cream.

During the soft opening, many AJ's Bar & Grill customers were opting for the freshly grilled Philly cheesesteaks. The spot also features burgers, wings, wraps, salads, tater tots and fries, and loaded tater tots and fries.

Hill's family has been in the restaurant business for years. He worked for his father's Raytown barbecue restaurant, ran concession stands, and was a store manager for a couple decades. He is now regional vice president at Primerica.

He also aided promotions for the previous tenant, KC Daiquiri Shop, and liked the space's proximity to the Power & Light District. He spent about three months renovating. It has two VIP rooms with glass walls looking out to the main dining room, a full bar, and 16 TVs with more coming (he likes the vibe).



AJ's Bar and Grill has opened in downtown Kansas City in the former KC Daiquiri Shop at 1116 Grand Blvd.

The grand opening for AJ's Bar & Grill was July 1, with drink specials and more.

"I want to make my dad proud and I get a chance to inspire people, to show them what we can do," Hill said.

The bar and grill is named using the initials from the middle names of two of the three business partners behind the venture: Hill, his fiancée, Larissa Grayson, and Grayson's cousin, Diana Ogilvie. (The women have full-time jobs and help out in the evenings and weekends.)

"We wanted to be a place where people can come in to watch the game, to enjoy good food," he said. "A friendly place to have a great time."

Hours are set for 10 a.m. to midnight Mondays through Saturdays, and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sundays.

KC Daiquiri Shop closed in late 2024

after "six incredible years."

On a Nov. 25 Facebook post, the former owners said: "We have faced a slow economy, challenges with local and state government, and ongoing legal battles with neighboring businesses that have been less than supportive."

ICYMI: KC Daiquiri Shop
Closing Dec. 1 (11/30/24)



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Thu., July 17 @ 5 pm - 9 pm

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WICHITA

Fri., July 18 @ 5 pm - 9 pm

2025 Definers Dinner

Sweet Spot Restaurant & Lounge 7703 E Douglas, Wichita, Kansas

Celebrating 10 Years of Excellence in Entrepreneurship Featured Guest, Davontae Harris NFL Veteran - Wichita native - Serial Entrepreneur It's a night of giving and celebration. Create Campaign \$125

Sat., July 26 @ 9 am - 4 pm

Hope Wichita: Convoy of Hope

McAdams Park 1329 N Ohio, Wichita, KS

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TOPEKA

Thu., July 24 @ 6 pm - 11 pm

For The Culture Festival

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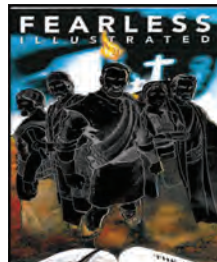


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Different Type of Flava: Wichita Sisters Serve Up Food, Culture, and Opportunity

By Ty Davis
Wichita Reporter

Wichita's culinary scene just got a new kind of flavor: bold, soulful, and rooted in purpose. Sisters Kara Korean and Atlantiz Pete, co-owners of Different Type of Flava, opened their second location last month at 4601 E. 13th St. N, the former site of Miller's Bar-B-Que.

Their goal? To bring more than just good food to the community. They're building culture, creating jobs, and pouring into the next generation.

After establishing their first location in Dallas six years ago, the sisters decided it was time to return home. The Dallas shop is famous for its daiquiris — with original flavors named

after songs, celebrities, and local artists — and for offering a cultural experience that blends food, music and vibe.

Wichita's new location carries the same vision. While the daiquiris are not yet available, the heart of the brand remains. Different Type of Flava offers specialty lemonades like "Berry Fruition," "Prickly Passion," and "Skwa- Berry. The alcohol-based versions, like "Berry Fruition Blues," will launch once their application for a Kansas liquor license is approved.

On the Menu

Different Type of Flava is currently takeout-only, with a drive-thru to be added once staff are fully trained. This decision was made for safety,

simplicity, and to stay true to the classic daiquiri shop model — pick-up and go.

"The joy is you can take your food or drink wherever you want and enjoy it in the comfort of your own space," Korean said.

Inside the kitchen, flavor comes first. Their menu brings a range of Creole, Cajun, Caribbean, and Southern comfort dishes to the table. Quesadillas are one of the top sellers—grilled to order and packed with cheese, protein and seasoning. Other popular options include the Jerk Chicken Quesadilla and the Philly-style beef with sautéed peppers.

Pasta lovers can explore the creamy Cajun Persuasion or the tomato-based Jammin'



The operators of Different Type of Flava are (back row) sisters Kara Korean and Atlantiz Pete, in front of their store with some of the youth workers they're mentoring in the restaurant.

Jambalaya, which also comes in a vegan-friendly version. Most meals are available in snack, small, and large sizes to meet any appetite or budget.

Korean has introduced a new option called the Flava Box. This sampler meal includes small portions of pasta, one taco, and one quesadilla, or can be upgraded for a larger portion at a bundled price.

Their dessert line includes Cake Cups, 5.5 oz layered treats served in to-go cups that are quickly becoming customer favorites. These handheld sweets come in flavors like Strawberry Shortcake, Peach Cobbler Crumble, Chocolate Oreo Drop, and Butterfinger Delight — each layered with cake, cream, and crumble for a bite-sized indulgence.

Restaurant with a Mission

What sets this brand apart isn't just the food, it's the mission. Different Type of Flava is also a workforce development hub. Korean and Pete actively hire teens as young as 14, as long as they're teachable and respectful.

"We believe in giving young people their first shot," Korean said. "We place them where they shine, whether that's the front counter, prepping food, or



The menu brings a range of Creole, Cajun, Caribbean, and Southern comfort dishes to the table. Quesadillas are one of the top sellers—grilled to order and packed with cheese, protein and seasoning

managing orders."

The Vibe

To match the energy of their food, music plays a central role in the shop's atmosphere. Playlists vary by day. Fridays lean hip hop, Saturdays blend old and new R&B, and Sundays slow it down with jazz and gospel. The vibe is intentional: they want customers to feel at home, energized, and connected.

Different Type of Flava is a cashless establishment, accepting debit/credit cards, CashApp, Zelle, PayPal, and Venmo. This decision was made to increase staff safety and minimize risk.

As Korean puts it, "This isn't

just about feeding people, it's about feeding the culture."

For job inquiries or community partnerships, email ks.daqs2geaux@gmail.com.

Different Type of Flava

4601 E. 13th St. N.
(the former Miller's Bar-B-Que) Wichita

Current hours of operation:

Thu.: 5 p.m. – 10 p.m.
Fri.: 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Sat.: 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Sun.: 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

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Black Creatives Set to Shine at KC Fringe Festival 2025

From jazz tributes to afro-futuristic musicals, check out the diverse Black voices shaping this year's 21st annual festival through July 27.

By Thomas White
Kansas City Reporter

The KC Fringe Festival, the largest celebration of arts and culture in the Kansas City area, has returned for its 21st season now through July 27. The annual summer-time event showcases an array of shows, films, and visual arts exhibitions with several area Black artists in the lineup.

All KC Fringe live performances clock in at 60 minutes and range from family-friendly shows to those intended for mature audiences. Festival goers are liable to see everything from circus, theater, and improv to musicals, storytelling, and comedy.

KC Fringe Festival comes from the spirit of the overwhelmingly popular Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, where artists line the streets with uncurated and often unusual but highly entertaining shows. KC festival participants describe the local festival as essential for emerging and experimental artists.

"I describe Fringe as Coachella for the local arts," said playwright and director Terrace Wyatt Jr., who returns this year with a new production. "It's a wonderful opportunity to get to know new faces in the business and see their craft."

KC Fringe offers artists an experimental platform without financial barriers, such as finding and paying for a venue.

"The best thing about Fringe is that part [logistics and financial] has been covered," says Wyatt. "They just want you to focus on putting your work out there."

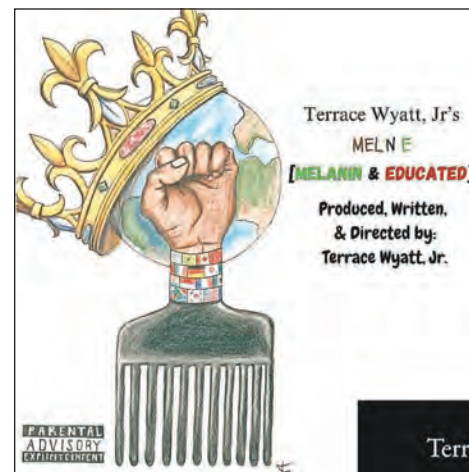
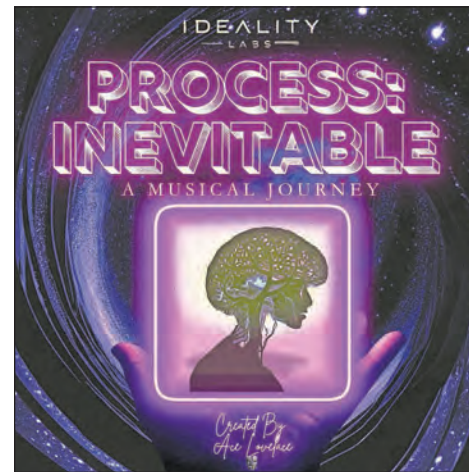
The mostly volunteer-run organization has been supporting artists, cultivating creators and attracting adventurous audiences since 2005. KC Fringe also actively seeks diversity through the festival's Amplified Voices Program, which supports BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and differently abled artists through scholarships and targeted marketing.

Notable Black-Centered Productions in this year's festival (links for show times & venue) include:

- **"Terrace Wyatt Jr's Mel'N E":** This comedy-drama explores the word "melanin" and its impact on identity at predominantly White universities. A Black student must present a last-minute senior capstone, taking the audience on a rollercoaster

exploration of race, community, and humanity. Wyatt has cast three different actors to perform the same role on different dates: Gideon Madison, Maya Zai, and Marcus Ray. Five showings July 19, 22, 25, and 26 at Music Theater Heritage in Crown Center.

- **"It's Not Over Till the Legends Sing Pt 2: Back to Love" by Brother John Anderson:** The sequel to last year's Best of Venue winner continues Anderson's musical journey channeling legendary voices like Marvin Gaye, Bob Marley, and Frank Sinatra through personal storytelling and powerful vocal performances. Five showings July 19, 20, 24, 25, and 26 at Kansas City Oasis, at 1717 W 41st St. in KCMO.
- **"Jazz: The Women Who Shaped Me" by Eboni Fondren:** One of KC's premier jazz vocalists presents a tribute to the female pioneers who shaped jazz music. Fondren explores the rich history of women in jazz through performance and storytelling. Five showings July 18, 19, 20, 23, and 25 at Music Theater Heritage in Crown Center.
- **"JD Rowland: My Life at 40":** A personal reflection on reaching middle age that blends humor with introspection about life's unexpected turns and the realities of adult milestones. Five showings July 18, 19, 20, 25, and 26 at Black Box located at 1060 Union Ave, KCMO.
- **"Process: Inevitable":** A young dancer named Iam's performance is interrupted by a chaotic figure named Ego, who sends him embarking on a journey to the 5th dimension. Upon arriving he is challenged to a series of trials by three Vices in a metaphysical quest to process his grief. Five showings July 19, 20, 22, 24, and 26 at Unicorn Theatre located at 3828 Main St, KCMO.
- **"The Strong Black Girl is a Myth 3.0":** A theatrical play based on Cia Michelle's debut book of the same name, Michelle's third "TSBG" Fringe entry is set in an afro-futuristic timeline. The musical sees that strong Black girls have been able to thrive abundantly due to streamlining the process of overcoming racial and epigenetic trauma. But due to a bizarre ancestral invention, moral and genetically modified trouble is afoot! Five



showings July 18, 20, 23, 25, and 26 at the Center for Spiritual Living, at 1014 W. 39th St., KCMO.

Even More Fringe: Visual Arts, Film & Workshops

Visual art exhibitions run now through July 26 at two locations. The main gallery at Union Station's Grand Hall features 43 artists. The adults-only "Fringe Benefits Gallery" at Gael's Public House (5424 Troost) showcases mature-themed works.

Black artists featured include:

- **KE Griffin**
- **Avrion**
- **Creativepeace's Megan Buchanan**

Films screen (<https://kcf fringe.org/film>) July 18-20 at Stray Cat Film Center, featuring everything from local independent works to comedy showcases. Notable offerings include **"Look at the Darkness (Don't Stare)" by Maya Tillman-Rayton** (<https://bit.ly/4JJoNFR>), which explores resilience through hip-hop and street dance.

Educational workshops (<https://kcf fringe.org/workshops>)

include a storytelling workshop with internationally acclaimed comedian Jon Bennett and a teen playwriting workshop at The Coterie for students entering 8th-12th grade.

Getting Your Fringe On

Live shows run July 17-27, with all performances lasting one hour. Individual tickets cost \$15 for adults and \$8 for children ages 3-12. Multi-show passes offer savings: five shows for \$65 or ten shows for \$120. Shows are rated like movies: AA (All Ages), PG (Parental Guidance), or MA (Mature Audiences).

All attendees must also purchase a \$5 Fringe Button (free for children 12 and under) to enter any Fringe event. Buttons are available at every venue during the festival and at Fringe 411 headquarters located at The Bird Comedy Theater (103 W. 19th St.).

More details and tickets are available at kcf fringe.org. Festival info is also available by phone at 816-819-0639.



COME BE A PART OF THE
**BERKLEY RIVERFRONT
 UNIT TENANT IMPROVEMENT**
with Hardscape & Amenities Package

VCC is soliciting proposals from qualified subcontractors to work on the Berkley Riverfront Unit TI with Hardscape and Amenities package in Kansas City, Missouri. Project documents are available for review through **Building Connected** under the “Files” Tab. Please contact the VCC Team for project access.

Bids are 7/14/25, with scope review to be complete by 7/21/25 and contractor award 7/28/25.

We encourage all MWBE companies to submit a bid.

We are looking for submissions from the following trades to help on this project!

Tenant Improvement Package:

- Drywall
- Paint
- Wall Coverings
- Blinds
- Cabinets
- Countertops
- Custom Mill/ Casework
- Wood Wall Paneling
- Flooring
- Doors & Hardware
- Trim
- Bathroom Accessories
- Mirrors
- Shelving
- Mailboxes
- Shower Doors
- Trash Chutes

Hardscape & Amenities Package:

- Asphalt Paving
- Pavers
- Landscape & Irrigation
- Hardscape
- Bike Racks
- Benches
- Trex Seating Deck
- Fire Pits
- Grill Stations
- Outdoor Trellis
- Pools

If you are interested in additional information about the job opportunities during the construction phase of the Berkley Riverfront Unit TI with Hardscape and Amenities package contact:

Jerry Salo: 678-510-4429 or JSALO@VCCUSA.COM

Travis Mason: 214-425-9021 or TMASON@VCCUSA.COM



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vccusa.com



Dorothy Adams, 89

September 25, 1935 - July 1, 2025
 Service will be held at 10 am on July 17, 2025 at Jackson Mortuary Chapel, 1125 E. 13th St

Elder Herman A. Green, Sr. 60

December 5, 1964 - June 30, 2025
 Service was held July 11, 2025 at the Upper Room Church.

Willie Howard, 73

September 3, 1952 - June 28, 2025
 Service was held July 10, 2025 at Jackson Mortuary Chapel.

Kevin Dwayne Cudjo, 68

November 4, 1956 - June 25, 2025
 Service will be held at 11 am on July 18 at Jackson Mortuary Chapel, 1125 E. 13th St

Donna C. Burns-Revels, 76

Jan. 26, 1949 - June 14, 2025
 Service was held June 30, 2025 at Lakeview Cemetery.

MARCH, from Page 4 ↓

How to Get Involved

There are multiple ways to support or participate in the movement:

1. **Attend the March** – Show up in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 27 and add your voice to the cause.
2. **Donate or Sponsor** – Contributions can be made via Zelle to TiraBolder1@gmail.com or by mailing checks to: Kansas Justice Advocate Inc., 3327 E. Bel Air Ct., Wichita, KS 67218 For more info, supporters

may also call Dean directly at 316-371-2253.

3. **Join the Planning Committee**

Community members, organizers, and supporters are invited to take part in monthly planning meetings that take place on the second Friday of each month, and to join in other ways to help shape this historic effort.

A Legacy of Advocacy

For Mary Dean, this march is not a one-time event – it’s part of a lifetime of advocacy. Whether she’s addressing

mental health disparities, housing discrimination, or civil rights issues, her goal remains the same: educate, empower, and equip people to rise above the barriers they face.

Dean is also the author of Black Legends of Kansas (2015), a book that profiles more than 100 influential Black women in the state – trailblazers whose stories laid the groundwork for today’s movement.

“Justice delayed is justice denied,” she says. “And we’re not waiting another 400 years.”

EVENT, from Page 7 ↓

- **Diabetes information and testing** with healthcare professionals
 - **Chair aerobics** adapted for older adults
 - **Games for children** – acknowledging that caregivers often bring family
 - **Giveaways** and take-home resources
- Attendees should bring identification,

Social Security cards, Medicare cards, and income documentation to receive personalized assistance with benefit applications.

The event is free to attend, but RSVP registration is encouraged at bit.ly/SeniorsCaregiverFairKC, by phone at 816-513-6519, or by email at rita.berry@kcmo.org. Free transportation will be provided for registered senior groups.

STUDENT LOANS, from Page 15 ↓

The bill’s student loan provisions reflect a broader ideological shift – away from income-based relief and toward fixed, limited borrowing. While Republican leaders argue these measures promote personal responsibility and fiscal discipline, critics warn they could

deepen inequities in higher education access and saddle millions with long-term debt.

What Else is in the Bill?

- Beyond student loans, the bill:
- Makes Trump’s 2017 tax cuts permanent
 - Provides narrow tax breaks for tips and overtime
 - Introduces new business benefits

• Rolls back clean energy tax credits from the Biden era

- Cuts Medicaid, potentially leaving 12 million Americans uninsured
- Reduces access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for 2 million people

Contributing sources: USA Today, Student Loan Sherpa, and The Hill.



Support local businesses with every goal.



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Shawn

Shawn Lancelot
President, Bank of America Wichita

#1 Business Lender
in America

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businesses

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specialists

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