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Columbia, MO – Love Columbia announces an increased need in rent assistance for low-income neighbors following the exhaustion of remaining pandemic funds for eviction prevention.

Love Columbia exhausted its remaining eviction relief assistance in August and received notification on August 19 that no further funds are available from federal stimulus sources carried over from the pandemic. This leaves only very limited non-pandemic grant funding for rental assistance and private fundraising to assist our neighbors in keeping their homes. Love Columbia leveraged over \$800,000 of pandemic funds to prevent evictions in Boone County and help households experiencing housing instability. In the first half of 2024, Love Columbia served 2,049 households and prevented 712 evictions through supportive services, financial assistance, and housing counseling.

Columbia rent prices have steadily risen since 2019, with average rents ranging from \$861 for a one-bedroom to \$1,620 for a four-bedroom, requiring hourly wages of \$16.56 to \$31.15 an hour to afford housing without being cost-burdened. The leading predictor of eviction is having children. Once a family tumbles into homelessness, it is very difficult for them to regain stability, leading to both generational and community risks. Columbia Public Schools reported 614 students experiencing homelessness during the 2023-24 school year. Transiency is the leading cause of poor academic performance, and children are at greater risk for child neglect and abuse following an eviction. Children not only lose the familiarity of schools and neighborhoods, but they are more likely to be placed in foster care.

Donations to Love Columbia's rent assistance fund can be made at <https://lovecolumbia.org/rent>

About Love Columbia

Love Columbia is a non-profit organization in Columbia, Missouri, with over 16 years of investment in connecting community relationships and resources to love people forward. Love Columbia serves anyone in Columbia who is struggling to provide for their basic needs or improve their life and wants to create a path forward.