



News from the Office of the Mayor

Mayor Sylvester "Sly" James, Jr.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayor Sly James and Community Partners Announce Project Rise

Project will provide paid internships and job readiness training to help unemployed young adults reach their potential.

(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI) --- Mayor James, along with community partners including the United Way of Greater Kansas City, Catholic Charities of Kansas City- St. Joseph, and the Full Employment Council, today announced Project Rise, a collaborative effort with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, Center for Economic Opportunity, and the federal Corporation for National and Community Service. Project Rise is a three-year pilot program designed to re-engage young adults (ages 18 to 24), who are not working or going to school, by placing them in paid internships and encouraging them to continue their education.

Participants in Project Rise will prepare for their GED, participate in service learning, and receive job training that leads to long-term, sustainable employment. Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph and the Full Employment Council will implement the internships and training components of this project.

Kansas City is one of eight urban cities who will be replicating successful anti-poverty programs already implemented in New York City. Other cities participating in this effort in addition to New York and Kansas City include Memphis, Tennessee; Newark; New Jersey, Cleveland, Ohio; Youngstown, Ohio; San Antonio, Texas; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. These cities are further refining and testing program models, building a multi-site body of evidence in support of promising, cost-effective interventions. The pilots will be evaluated by MDRC, a social policy research organization.

"I'm proud that Kansas City was chosen as one of the pilot communities for this initiative," Mayor James said. "This is an excellent example of the collaboration taking place in Kansas City between public and private interests to eradicate poverty from our City and gives hope to those who need it most. Ignoring the problems afflicting this demographic of this community won't get us anywhere. By investing in at-risk young adults, we are sending the message that they are valuable members of our community."

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City is dispersing funds originated from the Social Innovation Fund of the Corporation for National and Community Service, to pilot cities. Project Rise has a budget of \$3.8 million, with the Social Innovation Fund investing \$700,000, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation investing \$720,000,

and United Way of Greater Kansas City (UWGKC) investing another \$525,000. The project will also receive some support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and Open Society Foundations. United Way will be working with the local philanthropic and business community to raise another \$300,000 to complete funding for the 3-year project.

UWGKC President & CEO Brent Stewart says, "This exciting opportunity closely aligns with and will become part of United Way's *Decade of Difference* initiative launched last year. At United Way, we are committed to innovation that leads to greater results for young adults during the critical decade of ages 16 to 26, when young people across our region are entering adulthood. Research tells us it is a time in their life cycle, that can lay the foundation they need to escape escaping poverty and establish life-long success, for both them and their children."

Mayor James today announced the appointment of a 10 member Project Rise Advisory Committee. The group of community champions will promote the concept of serving older, disconnected, extremely high risk youth and oversee the parameters of this initiative.

Members of the advisory committee are:

Allison Bergman - Lathrop & Gage

Erika Brice – Youth

Andres M. Dominguez -Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City

Patrick "Duke" Dujakovich - Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO

Dr. Janice Ellis - USARiseUp.com

Tracy McFerrin Foster - Hall Family Foundation

Jo Ann Gabbert – United Way

Kevin W. Kelly, Ph.D. – Metropolitan Community College Institute for Workforce Innovation

Nancy Seelen – St. Luke's Hospital

Linda N. Winter - Arnold Newbold Winter & Jackson, P.C.