



For Immediate Release

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Community Partners Joining Forces to Help Low-Income Working Families Embark on the Road to Financial Stability by Establishing Low-Cost Bank Accounts

(Kansas City, MO)-----In their lifetime, the average full-time worker who has no bank account or relationship with a credit union will spend up to \$40,000 turning his or her salary into cash. It is hard to believe for those of us who have checking or savings accounts, allowing us to access the money they've earned at little or no charge. It's a huge problem for low- and moderate-income workers who must turn to check-cashing services, pawn shops and payday loan companies to convert their hard-earned money into cash.

During a Saturday morning news conference more than a dozen concerned Kansas City organizations announced they are joining forces with nine area banks to launch an outreach effort designed to help those who are financially vulnerable establish free or low-cost checking and savings accounts. The initiative is called **Bank On Save Up Kansas City**. The goal is to help low-income wage earners establish banking relationships so they can more easily access their money, which will help them get started on the road to financial stability.

Michael Kappas, President and CEO of Apprisen Financial Advocates/CCCS, explains his organization's involvement in the project: "We are proud to be involved in the Bank On Save Up initiative. In our everyday work, we see the negative effects of high-cost financial products on families who lack access to banks – check-cashing fees, high-interest loans, debt spirals. We believe that giving people the tools and resources to achieve a stronger financial future is vital, and bank accounts, especially coupled with financial education, serve as a critical foundation for families seeking economic stability."

According to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) more than 71,000 Kansas City area households don't currently have any type of banking relationship. The FDIC says another 151,000 K.C. area households do have checking or savings accounts but they rely on non-bank check cashing services, payday loans, pawn shops, rent-to-own agreements or non-bank money orders at least once or twice a year. Many of those non-banking type organizations charge high or exorbitant fees, which makes it that much harder for families to stretch their paychecks far enough to buy food and pay their bills.

Bank On Save Up Kansas City will assist unbanked individuals and families open specially-designed starter bank accounts while also providing free opportunities for financial education including a series of two-hour workshops and quarterly newsletters. United Way 2-1-1 will provide information about participating financial institutions and help callers identify other resources to meet their needs.

Partners involved with **Bank On Save Up Kansas City** hope to open as many as 3,000 new accounts over a two-year period with a goal of having at least 80% still open after one year.

They hope that by establishing a banking relationship, families who have struggled financially for years will find their financial footing, making it easier to save some of what they earn, making them better able to handle unexpected expenses and pay their bills.

The community partners involved in **Bank On Save Up Kansas City** include: Apprisen Financial Advocates/CCCS, Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas, the City of Kansas City, MO, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Hispanic Economic Development Corporation, Jewish Vocational Services, KC CASH Coalition, Missouri Credit Union Association, Swope Community Enterprises, the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS, United Way of Greater Kansas City and United Way of Wyandotte County.

The 9 bank and credit unions offering the special no-cost or low-cost checking and savings **at select locations** accounts are:

- Academy Bank
- Central Bank of Kansas City
- Commerce Bank
- Cross Roads Credit Union
- Holy Rosary Credit Union
- M & I Bank
- Morrill & Janes Bank
- UMB

Greater Kansas City residents interested in participating in the program can find specific branch locations of participating banks or credit unions by calling United Way 2-1-1 by dialing 2-1-1 on most phones or (816) 474-5112 if dialing 2-1-1 doesn't work.

For more information about **Bank On Save Up Kansas City**, can visit www.bankonsaveupkc.org

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Members of the Media needing additional information, please contact:

Julie Riddle
United Way of Greater Kansas City
(816) 559-4739