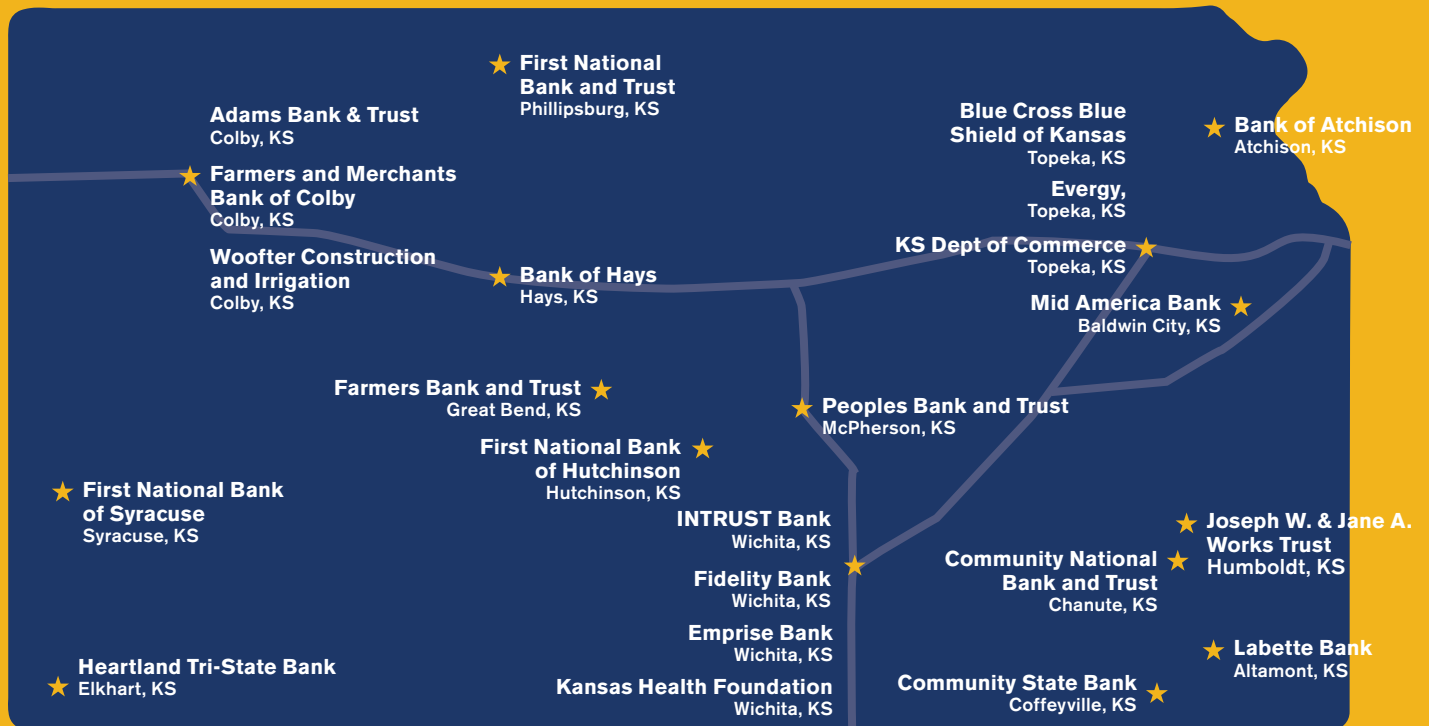




LEADING THROUGH UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

ANNUAL REPORT FY2020

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS*



*Contributor includes donors, major sponsors, and grantors.

THE DIFFICULT TEST OF AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

Fiscal year 2020 began with NetWork Kansas continuing its work to create assets and build capacity that increased connectivity of entrepreneurs to resources to start and grow businesses. This codified capacity would become more important than ever as the year went on.

When the coronavirus (COVID-19) struck our nation, it became vitally important to rely on our entrepreneurial philosophy. Like many businesses and organizations, COVID-19 would challenge our partners, communities, and entrepreneurs like never before.

Through a season of tremendous uncertainty, our entrepreneurial philosophy was put to the test. The results would provide a demonstration model for why entrepreneurial ecosystems should be built. Our entrepreneurial philosophy rests on four tenets:

- 1. Find local citizens who are committed to building an entrepreneurial culture.**
- 2. Build entrepreneurial assets and infrastructure focused on education, expertise, and economic resources.**
- 3. Try something different – inject some chaos into community, regional, and statewide systems.**
- 4. Engage and empower at the local level.**

Our philosophy over the years has led to the establishment of critical programs and partnerships including the NetWork Kansas Referral Center and Partner Network and the Entrepreneurship (E-) Community Partnership (E-Communities). This philosophy and these partnerships provided the necessary infrastructure to respond to unforeseen needs and prepared us for a year like none other.

“While NetWork Kansas is always at the forefront of assisting communities, its work during the COVID-19 crisis has been outstanding. The work the NetWork Kansas staff did with the HIRE program was amazing. Their dedication and knowledge made an impact with helping those businesses desperately in need. NetWork Kansas continued its strong support through making funds available with Restart KS and other programs. Grow Neosho County is grateful for all that NetWork Kansas has done to help our communities, especially rural ones, survive and continue to prosper.”

Jane Brophy
Chanute Chamber of
Commerce Director

OUR PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION

1. Find local citizens who are committed to building an entrepreneurial culture.

In fiscal year 2020 NetWork Kansas continued to provide loans to businesses through statewide loan programs and E-Communities. This continued buildout of an entrepreneurial culture throughout the state strengthened communities and entrepreneurial ecosystems. The steady growth of community, regional, and statewide capacity was especially important when COVID-19 arrived in Kansas. As you will see throughout this report, local residents and partners provided the conduit by which businesses were able to receive rapid assistance.

2. Build entrepreneurial assets and infrastructure focused on education, expertise, and economic resources.

Beginning in 2019, thanks to Senate Bill 90, NetWork Kansas was able to increase collaboration with Kansas banks. In turn, Kansas banks continued to lead in supporting Kansas entrepreneurs by donating to NetWork Kansas utilizing the [Entrepreneurship Tax Credit](#). In addition, the Kansas Community Investment Fund (KCIF) created through a partnership between NetWork Kansas and the Kansas Health Foundation continued to expand and attract new partners to support businesses and nonprofits throughout the state.

3. Try something different – inject some chaos into community, regional, and statewide systems.

Trying something different marks the beginning of building entrepreneurial ecosystems in local communities. But once an entrepreneurial ecosystem infrastructure is in place at the local, regional, and state level, doing something different during times of crisis can greatly increase the chances of success. This indeed became the case when COVID-19 hit Kansas in March of 2020. NetWork Kansas, its partner network, E-Communities, the Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas banks, the Kansas Health Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, Evergy and many more partners created multiple programs overnight to inject assets into small businesses and nonprofits as swiftly as possible.

From mid-March through June of 2020, NetWork Kansas and its partners created, launched and funded four (4) programmatic responses to the pandemic:

- Hospitality Industry Emergency Relief Fund (HIRE): An emergency loan program funded by the Kansas Department of Commerce and administered by NetWork Kansas
- Restart Kansas: A loan program created by NetWork Kansas supported by banks across Kansas
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) Grants: Administered by NetWork Kansas, BCBSKS provided \$250,000 in grants to businesses, universities, community colleges, and economic development agencies to support the production of PPE equipment for Kansas hospitals and healthcare facilities.
- Camp Destination Innovation: Administered by NetWork Kansas, Camp Destination Innovation created a statewide youth entrepreneurship competition administered by NetWork Kansas

“The assistance provided by NetWork Kansas throughout the ongoing pandemic has been nothing short of miraculous! With such a small staff it is remarkable how thorough, effective, and efficient the team has been in notifying the economic development directors, providing detailed information for each funding opportunity and ensuring that the available financial assistance is equitably distributed to those small businesses in most need across the State. Chase County would not have been able to face the ramifications of this unprecedented economic challenge without the diligent, empathetic and trusted guidance of NetWork Kansas.”

Jenn Laird, Owner
Authenticity Inspired

4. Engage and empower at the local level.

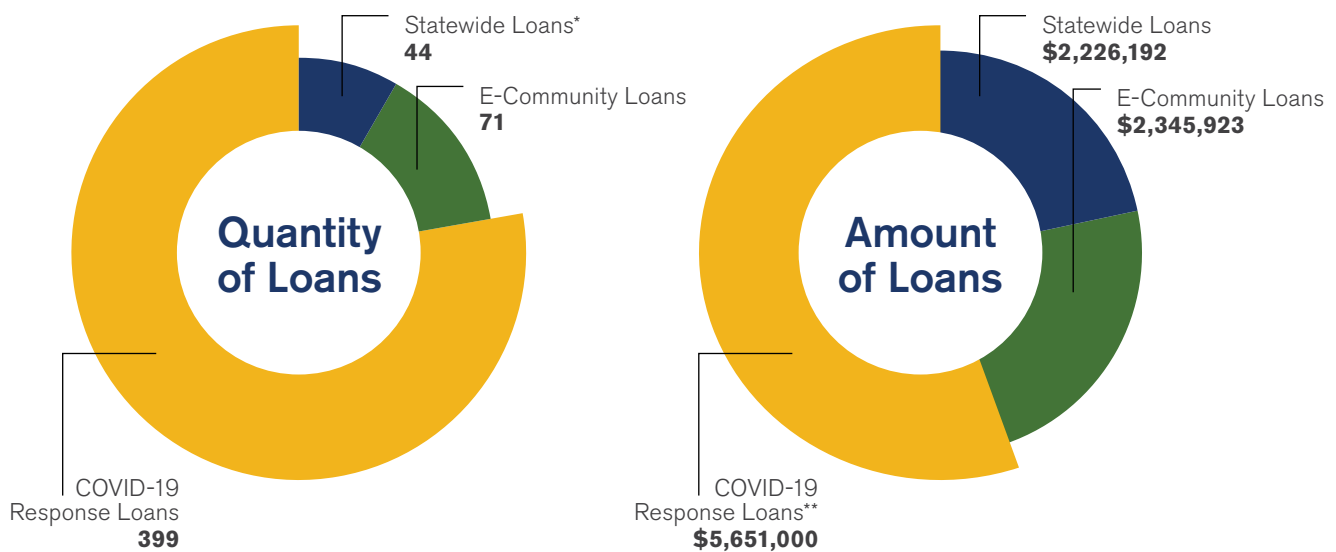
An Entrepreneurship (E-) Community is a partnership that allows a town, a cluster of towns or an entire county to have access to NetWork Kansas capital that can be used as a loan fund for local entrepreneurs. The loan fund is intended to serve as gap financing that the community has local decision making over which businesses to loan the money to. Each E-Community works closely with a NetWork Kansas E-Community coach to engage in strategic planning, goal setting, initiate activities and to introduce entrepreneurship programming to generate entrepreneurial development and/or engage youth in entrepreneurial education. The partnership is competitive in nature and is focused on communities that have chosen to make entrepreneurship and small business a priority of their economic development strategy. E-Communities play an important role in every strategy developed and implemented by NetWork Kansas.

There are now **sixty-six (66) E-Communities** across the state of Kansas.

REALIZING THE RESULTS OF A ROBUST ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

Fiscal year 2020 demonstrated the success of NetWork Kansas' unique infrastructure for assisting small businesses. The numbers reflect the ongoing asset building through existing statewide loan programs and E-Community loans. Furthermore, the COVID-19 Response programs and partnerships created in three months demonstrate the potential these systems offer.

Statewide and E-Community loans were for the fiscal year (7/1/19-6/30/20), a twelve month period. COVID-19 Response Loans were created, launched, and funded from mid-March 2020 through June, 30, 2020, three and a half months. Years of work by communities, regions, and the state of Kansas created a demonstrated model for what a statewide entrepreneurial ecosystem should look like and, more importantly, what it is equipped to do.



*Statewide loan programs include StartUp Kansas, Capital Multiplier, and the Kansas Community Investment Fund

**COVID-19 Response Loans also include \$250,000 in grants provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas

Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, Douglas County E-Community, Cherokee County Economic Development, City of Hoisington, Great Bend Chamber of Commerce, Pawnee County Economic Development Commission, Hodgeman County Economic Development, City of Humboldt, Anderson County Economic Development, Chase County Economic Development, Pottawatomie County Economic Development, Quest Center for Entrepreneurs, Grow Hays, Newton Area Chamber of Commerce, Grow Neosho County, El Dorado Chamber of Commerce, Phillips County Economic Development, McPherson Chamber of Commerce, Startup Hutchinson, Edwards County Economic Development, Cowley First Economic Development, Thomas County Economic Development Alliance, Innovative Business Resource Center / Fab Lab ICC, Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (wKREDA), Wichita Downtown Development Corporation, Greater Wichita Partnership, Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Development Centers

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County Economic
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County Economic
Development, City of
Atchison, Thrive Allen
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Kansas Prosperity
Foundation

Allen County E-Community, Great Plains Development Corporation, Landmark Bank, Mid-America Bank, Grow Leavenworth County Development Corporation, Emporia Main Street, McPherson County Small Business Development Association, Rice County Economic Development, Fort Scott Chamber of Commerce, K-State Research and Extension, Camp Destination Innovation, Kansas Manufacturing Solutions, Fidelity Bank, Bank of Hays, Heartland Tri-State Bank, First National Bank of Hutch, First National Bank & Trust, Phillipsburg, KS, INTRUST Bank, Farmers Bank & Trust, Farmers & Merchants Bank of Colby, Emprise Bank, Adams Bank & Trust, Peoples Bank & Trust Company, Community National Bank & Trust, Joseph W. & Jane A. Works Trust, Kansas Health Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, Evergy, Kansas Department of Commerce, Woofter Construction & Irrigation, First National Bank & Trust, Phillipsburg, Fort Scott Chamber of Commerce, Anderson County Economic Development, K-State Research & Extension

From mid-March to June 2020, NetWork Kansas was able to establish new loan and grant programs to provide funds to those entrepreneurs who needed them most. All decisions on loans and grants were made by partners and E-Communities further emphasizing the importance of empowering and engaging at the local level.

HIRE Fund

In conjunction with the Kansas Department of Commerce's commitment of \$5 million to provide assistance to businesses in the hospitality industry, NetWork Kansas moved swiftly to stand up the HIRE Fund program and process applications to get critical dollars into the hands of businesses across the state. Announced on a Friday, applications came quickly leading to 346 businesses receiving 0% interest emergency loans with deferred payments for the first three months. Five million in loan funds were distributed in a week's time.



Statewide Virtual Youth Entrepreneurship Competition

NetWork Kansas partnered with Camp Destination Innovation for the first-ever Kansas Youth Virtual Entrepreneurship Challenge, an event designed to engage quarantined youth in late Spring and spark their innovation and creativity for a chance to win cash prizes. The competition took place in May 2020. The virtual competition was held through NetWork Kansas' new tool, VentureDash. VentureDash is an online entrepreneurship competition management system designed to streamline the facilitation of entrepreneurship fairs and business plan competitions held throughout the nation.

Both Camp Destination Innovation and NetWork Kansas work to expose youth to entrepreneurial thinking, get their creativity flowing, and help them think outside the box to develop an entrepreneurial mindset regardless of their circumstances.



Restart Kansas

Supported through donations from Kansas banks and Evergy, Restart Kansas provided low-interest loans up to \$20,000 to business owners to maintain or restart their businesses due to COVID-19. In addition, loan repayments will stay in the counties where Restart Kansas loan recipients reside. While these funds supported the immediate needs of local businesses due to the COVID-19 crisis, they also provided critical infrastructure to better meet the long-term needs of counties with additional loan dollars to address future emergency situations.



Greater Wichita Partnership



\$250,000 from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) for PPE

BCBSKS reached out to NetWork Kansas with the hopes of finding businesses, universities, community colleges, and economic development organizations producing PPE equipment for Kansas Hospitals and healthcare organizations. NetWork Kansas' outreach to partners and E-Communities quickly yielded the desired results. Grants were given to nine colleges and small businesses in Kansas that are making personal protective equipment (PPE) for Kansas healthcare workers with low supply during the COVID-19 outbreak. The funding is part of the BCBSKS Blue Health Initiatives Trailblazers grant that was given through NetWork Kansas. Trailblazers builds partnerships to blaze a trail to a healthier future by finding innovative solutions that improve social determinants of health, increase access to care, and streamline the coordination of services.



BlueCross BlueShield

Kansas

Support Kansas Entrepreneurs – Donate and receive a state Entrepreneurship Tax Credit

Interested parties, please contact us at info@networkkansas.com, call 877-521-8600 or visit our website [here](#).

WHO WE ARE

About NetWork Kansas

NetWork Kansas, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is dedicated to making entrepreneurship a priority for economic and community development in the State of Kansas. NetWork Kansas connects aspiring entrepreneurs, emerging and established businesses, to a deep network of business-building and community development resource organizations across the state. NetWork Kansas is also the home of e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (e2). e2 provides best practice solutions to entrepreneurial ecosystem building in Kansas and nationally.

NetWork Kansas facilitates the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem within participating communities through the E-Community Partnership. Contributing factors to successful development include availability of financial capital, support by local leadership and development of educational resources. All of these factors combine to increase entrepreneurial activity in participating towns, leading to increased startup activity, business expansion, job creation and more.

Our Vision

To be recognized nationally as a leading organization devoted to the establishment and growth of entrepreneurship and small business as a priority for economic and community development.

Our Mission

To promote an entrepreneurial environment throughout the state of Kansas by establishing a central portal that connects entrepreneurs and small business owners with the right resource; expertise, education, and/or economic, at the right time.



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