



2022

KANSAS SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

KANSAS SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER





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About the Kansas Small Business Development Center

Our clients tell our story best.

Every year we choose two or three clients from each of our service regions that exemplify small business success. Our objective is to honor them at our annual Kansas SBDC Existing, Emerging, and Exporting (E3) Small Business Awards. Our goal is to highlight both the impact of small business in our Kansas communities and the impact of our work with these same businesses.

This program includes summaries of their stories along with information about the Kansas Small Business Development Center (Kansas SBDC). We hope you find it useful.

Who We Are

The Kansas SBDC is part of America's Small Business Development Center Network, the most comprehensive small business assistance network in the United States.

Our purpose is to help existing and aspiring Kansas business owners achieve their goals in a complex local, regional, and global marketplace. At the Kansas SBDC, we work to understand your business and its opportunities by forging relationships with your team that facilitate trust, cooperation, and ultimately meet your definition of success.

Each year we assist more than 3,000 businesses like the ones featured in this program. Whether you are trying to strengthen an existing business or start one from the ground up, we are here to provide advice, resources, and support. Any current small business owner or individual interested in pursuing a small business is encouraged to contact their regional center (see Kansas SBDC Locations) or visit our website at kansassbdc.net to learn more.

About the Kansas Small Business Development Center

Our Services

The ins and outs of starting a business can seem like a confusing, tangled knot of paperwork, plans, and preparation. Advisors at the Kansas SBDC can simplify and help start-ups and owners through the creation, expansion, and transition of their business.

Start

Get trusted advice from advisors. The Kansas SBDC has been helping Kansas start-ups for over 35 years. Get started with the first steps in the Start-Up Trifecta and learn how to hire your first employee. Along with the initial business planning setup, your advisor can help find loans and grant opportunities for your business. Advisors can also help new innovators and inventions pitch to Tech Scouts for large government SBIR/STTR grants.

Grow

Learn how to improve your business. Make your marketing work better for you. Advisors will take a review of your business approach and provide observations and recommendations. Leverage digital versus traditional marketing to see your business grow. Access exclusive training opportunities, like Profit Mastery, to see key performance indicators. Kansas SBDC Advisors will also work with business owners who are wanting to grow their markets through exporting products outside of the United States. Our advisors can also teach owners how to protect their businesses and mitigate risks. You can protect your business by implementing cybersecurity tactics and protecting your intellectual property as well as developing a continuity plan in case of an emergency.

Exit

Ready to move on to the next phase of your life? Kansas SBDC advisors will help business owners who are interested in selling their business to internal or external buyers. By working with owners on how to make the most of their business value, they address retirement or exit financial needs and plan for what happens after owners sell. Kansas SBDC clients are often unsure of what steps to take to make a smooth transition so we help them plan for a future with which they can be comfortable. Kansas SBDC advising helps reduce the stress of the process.

You can learn more about the services we provide by visiting our website kansassbdc.net.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can you help my business?

We can help in a variety of ways. The primary way we help is by working with you to find out what your needs are and helping you develop a strategy to reach your goals.

How do I use your services?

Start by contacting the center nearest you. A map can be found on the back of this material. To learn more about our services and how to contact your nearest SBDC, visit kansassbdc.net.

Is there a charge for Kansas SBDC services?

Kansas SBDC advising services are provided at no cost to our clients. Workshops, seminars, and online training are offered at low-cost or no-cost to clients as well. However, we do offer specialized fee-based consulting if you need something beyond general advising.

Why do you provide advising at no cost? Why don't you charge?

When the SBDC was established in 1983, the federal government decided that they would not charge for advising. Essentially, since our government is funded by the taxpayer, they decided that the taxpayers had already paid for the service.

Can I see a business advisor without an appointment?

We would suggest scheduling an appointment to meet with us. As a first-time client you can complete some helpful forms before you meet with an advisor to make the most of your time together. Learn about how to become a Kansas SBDC client at kansassbdc.net.

Do I have to become a client to attend one of your online or in-person classes?

No. Online classes and in-person classes, workshops, and seminars are open to anyone that is interested in improving their business performance, starting a business or exploring a business idea.

How do I learn more about a class I might be interested in taking?

Your best option would be to contact the regional SBDC office that is hosting the event. They can provide you with more information on workshops in your area. Find your local SBDC on the back of this program, or visit kansassbdc.net.

I already own a business. Can I still use the Kansas SBDC?

Absolutely! We encourage it. Approximately half of the businesses we serve are already in business when they seek out our help. We can help with marketing, management, operations, expansion, cash flow analysis, inventory control, strategic planning, and pricing your products and services

Does the Kansas SBDC loan money for my business startup?

The Kansas SBDC does not provide loan or grant money. However, we will assist you in developing your business plan and financial projections and identifying potential sources of capital.

Will a Kansas SBDC advisor help me write a business plan?

The Kansas SBDC will provide resources and guidance in the process of writing your business plan. Many centers have accelerated business plan training courses that can help as well.

How confidential are your services?

Our services are highly confidential. We can't even confirm with your business partners if you are our client without your written permission.

How do I find a center in my area?

Look on the back cover or visit us online at www.kansassbdc.net/contact

What kind of impact do you have in Kansas?

A huge impact. For every \$1 that was invested in 2020 by the state and federal governments as well as our local funders, we returned \$45 to the tax base. By helping our clients increase sales, more sales tax was paid. By helping our clients grow to hire more employees, more federal and state employment tax was paid.

What if I have more questions?

Call your local center, visit our website at kansassbdc.net, or email info@ksbdc.net. We'll be happy to help!

Impact

We know that helping small businesses in Kansas pays dividends to every citizen living in the state. But did you also know that our work puts money into the federal government?

Why do we care?

Since each and every person that works at the Kansas SBDC is a taxpaying citizen, we take a very concerned interest to ensure that the dollars invested in the Kansas SBDC are well-spent, flowing back into our communities many times over. Why? Because we live and work and take our kids to school in these communities as well. We hold ourselves to the highest level of accountability and measure the difference we make in our clients' businesses every day.

We know that everything we do to help grow small businesses in Kansas needs to make a difference in the short term, interim term, and long term. It needs to make a difference in the small business owner's life, in his or her business, immediate community, county, and beyond.

How do we know that we've made a difference?

Our small business clients tell us.

Each year we conduct a series of surveys to measure impact. Clients are asked to respond and report the difference that the Kansas SBDC has made in their business. We ask how we've helped them grow and retain employees, increase sales, and secure capital to grow their businesses.

Basically, we're measuring a return on your taxes as they are used in the SBDC program. To understand how we calculate our impact, return is measured by calculating sales and income tax on client revenue, jobs created, and jobs retained. Numbers are calculated based on self-reported and affirmed client surveys, independent scientific study, and legislative audit.

Additionally, we compare the performance of our business clients with all of Kansas businesses. We use information from the Kansas Departments of Labor and Revenue to compare our performance. Since we started measuring this in 2002, our clients have consistently outperformed all Kansas businesses when comparing average annual sales and jobs growth.

Impact by the Numbers

DECADE OF IMPACT (2010 - 2020)

32,577

JOBS CREATED OR SUSTAINED
client affirmation and attribution obtained



SMALL BUSINESS
CLIENTS ASSISTED

28,257



3,298

NEW BUSINESSES
STARTED

7,213
TRAINING WORKSHOPS

57,310
ATTENDEES

93.2%

AVERAGE SATISFACTION RATE
FROM CLIENT SURVEYS

23:1

AVERAGE RETURN ON
INVESTMENT IN TAX
REVENUES TO COSTS



\$823.3
MILLION
CAPITAL INFUSION

2020 IMPACT

143

NEW BUSINESSES

\$147 million
CAPITAL INFUSION

\$89.2 million

SALES REVENUE INCREASE

5,636

NEW JOBS CREATED OR RETAINED

450

TRAINING EVENTS

89% of clients would refer our
services to family and friends

1:45

EVERY \$1 DOLLAR INVESTED IN THE KANSAS SBDC
NETWORK GENERATED \$45 IN FUNDING PARTNER ROI

Partners

Alphagraphics-Downtown KC
Apex Business Advisors
Arvest Bank
B2B CFO
Bank Midwest
Bank of Blue Valley
Better Business Bureau, Inc.
Bish Enterprises
BizBuySell
Block22 Foundry
Booz Allen Hamilton
BriefSpace
CBD Plus
Central Bank of the Midwest
Central National Bank
Chanute Regional Development Authority
Cherokee County Economic Development
City of Iola
City of Lawrence
City of Liberal
City of Marion
Commerce Bank
Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete, LLP
Core Bank
Country Financial
Corporate Resources Group, Ltd.
CrossFirst Bank
Crux KC
Culture Index
Davis Business Law
DeSoto Chamber of Commerce
Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation
Douglas County
Eby Contruction
Fanska CPA
First Business Bank
First Citizens Bank
First National Bank
Foreman Law
Formation Ag
FranNet
Gerson Martinez
Global Parts
Great Plains Development Inc.
Grow with Google
GrowHays
H&R Block Hays
The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team, Inc
iBossWell

Heartland Soil Services
Hemp Economic Development Group
Hemp Harvest Works
Hemp Home Styles
Hemp Industry Daily
Hempire USA
Hodgman County Economic Development
Human Plant Solutions
Jennings Social Media & MarTech
John C. Pair Horticultural Center at Kansas State University
Junction City Chamber of Commerce
Kansas Cannabis Business Association
KanCanna
Kansas Farm Bureau
Kansas Hemp Consortium
Kaw Valley State Bank
Keller Leopold Insurance
KLG Social Media
K-State School of Business
Kyle Danner Family Business Advisor
Landmark National Bank
Law Office of Rick Gier
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
Leawood Chamber of Commerce
Lenexa Chamber of Commerce
Liberal Chamber of Commerce
Lillian James Creative
Lyon County State Bank
Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce
Meritrust Credit Union
Oliver Insurance
Montgomery County Action Council
Name Brand IDENTITY
Neosho County Community College
NorthPoint Logistics
Payne & Jones Chartered
Peoples State Bank
Personey M&A Consulting, LLC
Pinots Pallet - Olathe
Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corp.
Prelle Eron & Bailey Development Corp.

Retreat to Joy
SCCC Business & Industry
Seward County Economic Development Corporation (SCDC)
Shawnee Blinds
Shawnee Chamber of Commerce
SHRMJC
Spring Hill Chamber of Commerce
Standard Construction
Strategy LLC
Summit Employment
Sunflower Bank
Small Business Bank
Tallgrass Hemp
Thrive Allen County
Transworld Business Advisors
TriCorps Security
U.S. Hemp Growers Association
UBS
Wealth Strategies Group
Westar Energy
Westerlund
Wichita State University
Workforce Alliance of South-Central Kansas

Federal

U.S. Small Business Administration
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Patent and Trademark Resource Center

State

Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Air National Guard
Kansas Department of Agriculture
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Department of Labor
Kansas Department of Revenue
Kansas PTAC

Host

Emporia State University
Fort Hays State University
Johnson County Community College
Pittsburg State University
Seward County Community College
University of Kansas
Washburn University
Wichita State University



The Haven Event Space

Capital Access Center

Starting a business is tough. Transforming 40 acres into an event venue in a rural area during a pandemic? Unimaginable. Blake Harris took that risk when he opened The Haven Event Space in Louisburg, Kansas in 2021 and transformed an unused field into a high-tech, unique event space for weddings, parties, and corporate events.

Harris knew he had a golden idea but needed help getting plans off the ground. Initially, Harris reached out to Vince Haworth at the Capital Access Center (CAC) for advising, and then to his local branch of the Kansas Small Business Development Center at Johnson County Community College where he connected with Advisor John Addressi. Both Haworth and Addressi assisted Harris with creating and enhancing his business plan and finding capital infusion opportunities. While Harris worked with Haworth to find the right financing for the construction, Haworth was able to use banking connections with two financial entities. Harris met with bankers within two days, and then had term sheets within a week of joining the Kansas SBDC. Through Harris's vision and help from the Kansas SBDC, The Haven officially opened in October 2021 already booked with 75 events and nearly \$800,000 in revenues. Ground up construction was completed within 6 months during a pandemic.

Harris credits The Haven's success to the advisors' quick communication and solid business referrals.

Harris said, "I was in SUCH a hurry to get my business open that I didn't account for delays! It caused unnecessary stress and pressure if I had just known there is no rush."

Advisors and the Kansas SBDC truly care and take a vested interest in business and client accomplishments. What started out as a field and a dream transformed into a prosperous event venue attracting tourism and creating a dozen new jobs in the community.



chi em Eats

Emporia State University | Emerging

For those in the Emporia, Kansas area looking to eat a traditional Vietnamese meal, Chi Em Eats is the place to visit. Chi Em Eats is a one-of-a-kind eatery offering a blend of unique Asian flavors.

Sharing her passion for food, culture, and cooking, owner Mai Fields designed a menu full of flavorful dishes, including vegan options, where diners can enjoy the relaxing, modern, and contemporary dining space.

Fields and her partners helped fill a need in the Emporia community by opening a restaurant that includes fresh and healthy dishes and provides multiple options for diners on-the-go. The restaurant also promotes sustainable practices such as reusable bags for to-go orders. Fields is very committed to the community and supports local festivities such as The Great American Market, disc golf tournaments, bicycle races and rides, and hosts local live music performances as well as being a host location for the First Friday Art Walk.

The business began to establish itself in 2017, by participating in various events offering some of their cuisine. Before Chi Em Eats officially opened their brick-and-mortar location in 2019, Fields recognized additional outside help would be needed, so she reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center for assistance.

Fields worked with Lisa Brumbaugh, Regional Director for the Kansas SBDC at Emporia State University. Through Brumbaugh, Fields had help with business planning, financial projections and assistance with loans and grants during the pandemic.

Fields expressed her gratitude for the Kansas SBDC's help. "Lisa always took the time to visit with me no matter how big or small my inquiries were at any time of the day."

When it comes to advice for any business owner, Fields advises, "Your attention will be needed in every aspect when you first start your business, and you will be stretched thin so take some time to unwind and relax."



The Building Center

Emporia State University | Existing

In 2017, John Wheeler, along with his brother Jason and son Morgan, became business partners for The Building Center, a retail lumber yard in Marion, Kansas. The Wheelers noticed a market gap and took the opportunity to provide for their community. Although they were excited about this new endeavor, they had the foresight to know that they would need help getting started, so they reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center for assistance.

The Wheelers worked with Lisa Brumbaugh, Regional Director for the Kansas SBDC at Emporia State University. Brumbaugh assisted the Wheelers with creating a business plan, making financial projections, and receiving financial support to open their business. While working in business was not new for the Wheelers, starting a business was, and they refused to let anything or anyone discourage them from setting large business goals.

The first goal they set was for The Building Center's sales to surpass one million in profit. They also had a goal of opening a second store in another community, and within a few years, both goals came to fruition. The Wheelers put in an ample amount of work and effort and shared a few words about their experience with the Kansas SBDC.

"Lisa has helped us from the beginning with all aspects of starting a new business and has been a wealth of knowledge and immense help even now," said John. "Lisa was our standout; she was there for us every step of the way."



The Daily Grind

Fort Hays State University | Emerging

When the only place to get a good cup of coffee or hot breakfast in town is a convenience store, a market opportunity arises to fill a much-needed gap. Chelsey Peterson decided she would be the one to fill that gap in her small town of Stockton, Kansas. Opening the doors in 2021, The Daily Grind Bakery offers hot coffee and fresh-baked goods, focusing on a high-quality and affordable menu for their customers.

Before opening The Daily Grind Bakery, Peterson reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center to ensure she was on the right track to start her business. Working with her local Kansas SBDC branch at Fort Hays State University, Peterson received assistance from Advisor Susan Penka and Regional Director Rick Feltenberger in developing her business plan and financial projections. Peterson also worked with local economic development offices to further create the business plan tools she needed.

One standout aspect of working with Feltenberger and Penka was the personalized approach they took to advising her business.

“While Rick knew all the statistics, Susan was able to help me apply them to my small town, rather than someone treating me like I lived in a city.”

Peterson offers this piece of advice to those wanting to start a new business: “Don't be afraid to start small. Work on mastering your trade before jumping in and adding too much to your plate. You're only human!”



Nesting

Fort Hays State University | Existing

New parents have a lot to figure out in a seemingly short amount of time. Nesting is a parent boutique store specializing in providing the necessary items a family needs in their parenthood journey. Based in Colby, Kansas, Nesting has everything new parents need and provides education, support, supplies, and a compassionate environment.

Christina Beringer established Nesting in 2016 and is one of the only retail stores from Denver to Salina that specializes in the needs of new mothers and young families. Nesting has offered many resources to the Colby community, including helping young mothers find equipment - such as nursing bras, carriers, swaddles, and lactation supplies - while also providing resources needed to successfully raise a baby.

Beringer reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center where advisors helped with creating business plans, financing opportunities, and developing financial strategies. Advisors Jennifer Thompson and Sue Rundle, and Regional Director Rick Feltenberger provide regular support. Thompson has shared information about financing workshops, leads on business grants, and loans, and actively works to grow Nesting. Thompson also continually looks at market trends, customer demographics, and business resource guides to improve and expand the business.

"Rick, Sue, and Jennifer are equally helpful. However, Jennifer has made a tremendous effort to get to know me and my business. Rather than waiting for me to contact her, she regularly reaches out to see if I need anything," Beringer states. "I couldn't have opened Nesting without support from the Small Business Development Center and I wouldn't have had the confidence to grow without the market research and other materials provided by Jennifer."

Beringer's advice to new business owners is to stay informed. "Knowledge is power," she said. "Do your research, take those extra economics, business administration, and tax classes BEFORE you open your doors to customers because once the flood gates are open, you won't have time!"



Smart Restoration

Johnson County Community College | Emerging

Experience and knowledge go a long way in instilling trust in a business. Established in 2020, Smart Restoration, LLC, is a Kansas City, Kansas-based business that specializes in commercial and residential building restoration such as mold remediation, water mitigation, sanitization cleaning, construction cleaning, and pressure washing. One hallmark Smart Restoration, LLC boasts is the expertise and experience of the nine staff members. With decades of experience, the staff stands out compared with Kansas City's more established competitors, which is unusual for a newer business.

Owner Marie Gronberg worked with Kansas SBDC advisor Jack Harwell to access CARES Act programs and funding and establish a business valuation for the future. Always looking ahead, Gronberg attended the Digital Marketing Day conference where she met Kansas SBDC Advisor John Addressi. She is a very "hands on" owner and wanted to understand the various options and best practices for marketing her service business. From there, Addressi helped Gronberg reach new business goals such as expanding finance and marketing knowledge. Marie immediately began to implement their plan. One of the most influential steps included hiring a search engine optimization (SEO) company to improve and revise the business website, a vital aspect to stay ahead of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic economic slowdown. The improved website traffic increased brand awareness and in turn created more organic leads and increased business.

Gronberg believes the success of her work with the Kansas SBDC comes from the work of her advisors. "The Kansas SBDC stands out because the advisors they have on staff truly care and are very genuine individuals. Their goal is to help your company succeed! The level of support they provide to all of the companies they assist is just phenomenal along with the classes that they provide, too." Marie is not at all afraid to do the hard work of managing her business and acts on the information and counsel provided. The Kansas SBDC looks forward to working with this smart, intentional, hardworking client through Smart Restoration, LLC's success and growth.



Environmental Advisors & Engineers **Johnson County Community College | Existing**

Environmental Advisors and Engineers Inc. (EAE) located in Shawnee, Kansas was established in 1998 by Jill Biesma and Robert Bens. The engineering firm's team focuses on creating and providing high-value and customized consulting services to clients. The firm provides multiple services in various business sectors ranging from but not limited to water and stormwater engineering to architecture design to construction monitoring, and much more. EAE stands out from competitors due to the focus on responsive and high-quality technical services and deliverables. This focus goes across all business practices from hiring top-shelf technical staff members to developing client-focused scopes of work, conducting comprehensive detailed analyses, and preparing well-written, defensible reports. EAE is committed to investing in the appropriate tools and training for staff so that the team can provide excellent support to clients.

Biesma contacted the advisors at the Kansas Small Business Development Center for help with a variety of services. EAE worked with advisors Stephanie Willis, Elisa Waldman, Jack Harwell, and John Addressi to improve a variety of business aspects such as strategic planning, sales, and marketing strategy, operational improvements, and financial management. Biesma also took advantage of the Growth through Action, Management and Engagement (GAME) series offered through the Johnson County Community College branch of the Kansas SBDC. The firm also worked with Network Kansas Economic Gardening to further gain insights through free market research to assess the key business sectors. Kansas SBDC advisors helped EAE connect with Cares Act funding for staff and access free technical and managerial training classes through Johnson County Community College during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Kansas SBDC also introduced EAE to the Mid-America Trade Adjustment Assistance Center (TAAC) that provided grant funds to EAE for supporting business development initiatives and facilitating several corporate system improvements.

Support is crucial for business owners. Biesma believes in taking advantage of small business support and training programs early and networking with other small businesses to better learn and help each other. She also advises implementing good business practices to increase knowledge to retain existing employees and attract the best future employees for the business.



Fields & Ivy Brewery

University of Kansas | Emerging

In 2019, Cory Johnston established Fields & Ivy Brewery in Lawrence, Kansas. Johnston had a vision to create a brewery that offered his community beers produced from homegrown grains in Kansas. Before his dream could turn into reality, Johnston needed help getting started.

Johnston reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center and was immediately connected with University of Kansas Regional Director Will Katz. Katz assisted Johnston in developing his business plan and cash flow analysis. Johnston was also connected with a student team, which helped in even more ways.

Johnston shared that the “expert advice and unexpected networking opportunities” made his experience stand out when he worked with the Kansas SBDC. Although Johnston enjoyed his experience working with the Kansas SBDC, Katz had a few words to say about his experience helping Johnston.

“Cory has done a fantastic job of communicating a vision, then executing on that vision,” Katz said. “As often happens, there have been some roadblocks that could not have been anticipated. F&I has shown a lot of resilience in overcoming.”

To any individuals looking to start up a business of their own, Johnston shared a small piece of advice. “Have access to capital, use consultants if you’re not an expert, hire the best talent you can afford,” Johnston said.



Home Sweet Homes University of Kansas | Existing

Dogs become a part of our families and appreciate their human caretaker, and what better way to show appreciation than through a visit to Home Sweet Home Dog Resort in Lawrence, Kansas. Owner Anthony Barnett is proud to operate a business that has provided such a fun experience for the people and their dogs in his community for over 17 years.

Although the business had already been established for several years by the time Barnett reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center, Barnett was seeking an outside perspective and got exactly that when he connected with Will Katz, Regional Director for the local SBDC office at the University of Kansas. Katz helped him develop a business plan, cash flow assistance, market analysis, and access to capital.

After working with Katz, Barnett said, "Will is fantastic. He is very smart, has good thoughts and questions, and bouncing ideas off someone I think so highly of gives me confidence to make some tough decisions."

Barnett understood that he was not the only one that needed help with business needs, so he had a few words of advice for others that are considering a similar path.

"There is always a way, just keep at it and you will find the right path and the right time."



TOAST

Pittsburg State University | Emerging

Established in 2019, and seated in the heart of downtown Pittsburg, Kansas, TOAST brings a unique appeal to the restaurant scene. Featuring clever flavor combinations on artisan, local breads, TOAST has set itself as a Southeast Kansas singularity. Owner Heather Horton makes a point to connect to the community by sourcing ingredients locally. She is also highly active in the Pittsburg Arts community and gives back to her community in the form of providing food and gift certificates to various committees.

Heather Horton and her husband, Roger, were one of the first to start the downtown Pittsburg revitalization with their first business, Sweet Designs Cakery in 2009. In 2013, the bakery won Emerging Business of the Year, and today the two businesses work side-by-side with Roger making the bread and baked goods to provide to the restaurant as well as supplying to his other wholesale clientele throughout the community. The duo had utilized the Kansas SBDC services then and knew they would reach out again when opening TOAST. The Hortons talked with Kansas SBDC Advisors Dacia Clark and Randy Robinson to strategize and build the new business. Clark and Robinson helped the Hortons figure out general business operations such as cash flow projections, financing negotiations, and funding opportunities, and how to pivot operations during the Covid-19 pandemic. Clark and Robinson also helped with business specifics such as establishing restaurant hours, setting community-sustainable menu pricing, and managing payroll, and how to pay retail sales and liquor tax.

Horton believes the best way to know a business is to submerge oneself in all aspects of the chosen profession. "Do your research and be flexible," she said. "Volunteer to work all aspects of the business even if it's just washing dishes. Learn the business from the ground up. Ask a lot of questions. Know how to adapt and change with the business climate. You can plan the details but outside sources can always have an effect on your plans. So, learn how to be creative and problem solve above all."



Parsons Katy Golf Association

Pittsburg State University | Existing

The historical Parsons Katy Golf Association in Parsons, Kansas was first opened in 1926 by the Katy Railroad. Built in a time of great prosperity and ingenuity, the golf course debuted with 150 chartered members and operated as a member association until 2014. The historical golf course boasts a great-quality, challenging course layout and is a family-oriented setting for both golf and food.

Owner Jeff Perez has been familiar with the Kansas Small Business Development Center, and regularly referred business owners to the service. Perez approached the Kansas SBDC to help establish a business plan when he took over ownership. Although Katy Golf had been a long-established business, Perez needed to reevaluate operations. Kansas SBDC Advisor Randy Robinson helped Perez create business and marketing plans. On top of that, Robinson helped Perez create a greater connection to the community by leveraging the beautiful outdoor space into a venue for events and weddings, updating pricing structures and sponsorship recognition, and establishing a board of outside advisors made up from business and community leaders. Perez and Robinson also worked with Jim Zaleski, Director of Parsons and Labette County Economic Development to work on strategic planning.

Perez's advice to new businesses is to have a business plan. "I wished I had written a business plan first thing as a new owner. I thought the existing business was sustainable, but I was wrong... A business plan is a vital playbook to any person wanting to start a business."

Overall, through the help of the Kansas SBDC, Katy Golf saw increased revenue. The quality of the golf course also increased by shaping the venue into an entertainment and sports attraction venue for events and get-togethers as well as creating a high quality of living for the citizens of Parsons and Labette County.



Prairie Sage Functional Medicine

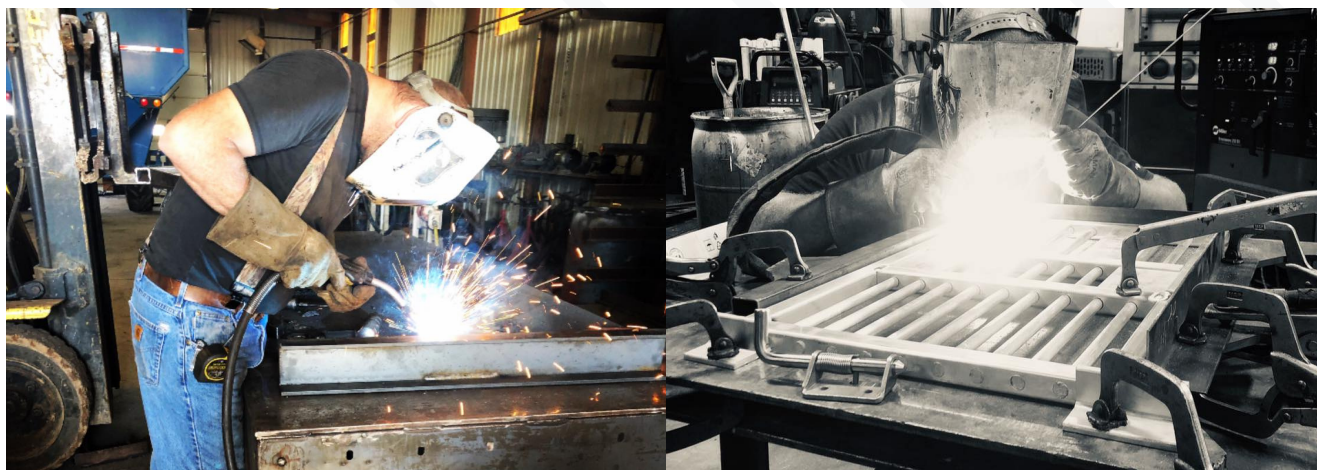
Seward County Community College | Emerging

Prairie Sage Functional Medicine and Kinesiology first started in 2016 when owners Dr. George and Dr. Michelle Stanton sought to bring functional medicine and kinesiology closer to home. With the closest similar services located four hours away, the Stantons set out to give patients the education and services needed to live healthy, functional lives closer to home in Garden City, Kansas.

The Stantons contacted the Kansas Small Business Development Center in August of 2020 looking for assistance to expand their current space and develop strategic business plans. With their growing list of services, the Stantons realized that they needed to align resources to meet the needs of the growing clientele. Maria Dennison, Regional Director for the Kansas SBDC at Seward County Community College, helped by assembling a business report, looking at performance reviews, business industry reports, and strategic planning. They also worked with Vince Haworth, Director of the Kansas SBDC Capital Access Center, to source funding opportunities. Additionally, staff attended specialized education courses such as Profit Mastery and accessed recorded webinars hosted on the Kansas SBDC website.

"They helped guide us and figure out which direction would be most beneficial for our business to pursue," said the Stantons. "Maria is very knowledgeable and has shown a sincere interest and enthusiasm for our business which I really appreciate."

For those seeking to start their own business, Dr. Michelle suggests to "get everything in writing, and keep organized and detailed records. Ask a lot of questions until you understand what you are doing when it comes to running the business. Don't feel bad about asking a LOT of questions, and work with organizations like the SBDC! There's no use in reinventing the wheel, and when people want to help you, let them!"



Owens Welding & Custom Fabrication

Seward County Community College | Existing

Welding is an ever-expanding industry in today's day and age. With the need for welders and fabricators growing every year, it was an obvious choice for husband-and-wife duo AJ and Alisha Owens to open a welding and fabrication business in Hugoton, Kansas. Established in 2008, it was the Owens' goal to improve the quality of welding in the area. Recently, they have been able to expand services with the purchase of Liberal New Iron and Metal in Liberal, Kansas.

The Owens turned to the Kansas Small Business Development Center with the goal of finding ideas for funding for business expansion. Maria Dennison, Regional Director for the Kansas SBDC branch at Seward County Community College, helped the duo develop a business plan and find financing with banking partners. They also worked with Bob Owens from the Great Plains Development Center to round out business education and opportunities. Purchasing the Liberal New Iron and Metal also had a profound impact on the community. The Owens and Dennison recognized the potential loss of a business would have detrimental effects on the community, leaving an industry gap had it closed. The Owens further contribute to the community by sponsoring local events such as triathlons, wrestling tournaments, and participating in their local chamber of commerce.

The dedication and forward-thinking shine through with both Owens.

Dennison stated, "The enthusiasm of AJ and Alisha is contagious. They are honest, hardworking individuals who truly care about their community and their employees, and they strive to make, and effect, change both in their business and through their community involvement."

The Owens acknowledge that knowing the business structure and future plans is necessary for new business owners.

"Figure out what kind of employees you will need. Is it a skilled trade that will be hard to fill positions? Make sure you have a succession plan in mind."



Willcott Brewing Company

Washburn University | Emerging

In 2020, Sean and Jennifer Willcott founded Willcott Brewing Company in Holton, Kansas. The brewery and taproom are nestled into a beautiful historic renovated limestone building and extend a friendly 'Welcome!' to visitors as they drive into town.

The Willcotts are transplants to the community, having moved to and from Holton on three separate occasions. They have found the community to be a wonderful place to raise a family and really wanted to contribute to that.

They cite their family, friends, their team members, their bank, and the community for their help in making this idea a reality, and the Willcotts seek to return the community's support by finding ways to collaborate with and highlight other local businesses. A few examples include the Grand Opening when local businesses were invited and actively participated in the long-awaited celebration by providing a variety of different food options on-site. The Tap Room was built without a food kitchen, and patrons are invited to bring meals in from any of the other established local eateries, to enjoy with their beer. A Mug Membership celebrates a wonderful local glass blowing business on the square, wherein members get to blow their very own beer mug to use in the Tap Room!

Sean shares, "I have this belief that if we do the right things, for the right reasons, with the right people, everything else will take care of itself. I believe if we continue to focus on our community and ways we can bring value to others, the Willcott Brewing Company will be successful by default. We have many more plans on ways we can bring value to others, and plan to grow our business to be able to achieve those ideas. Some of these things will take trust and belief from partners. Other ideas will take the hard work and commitment from our team members. But if we can keep our focus on bringing value to others, I feel confident we will not only stay successful but grow our rate of success."

The Kansas Small Business Development Center was pleased to support the Willcotts in the business planning process.



Leaping Llamas

Washburn University | Existing

In 2016, Alicia VanWalleghem took a leap of faith when she opened the Leaping Llamas Artisan shop in downtown Topeka, Kansas. VanWalleghem focused on building and fostering relationships that help many artists succeed, intending to bring artistry to her community. But like many businesses, the start-up process can be challenging, and VanWalleghem reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center for help.

After connecting with her local branch of the Kansas SBDC at Washburn University, she began working with Regional Director Karl Klein. Klein was able to provide VanWalleghem with assistance in marketing and business growth strategies. VanWalleghem also attained her goal to kick start a global art collection that would showcase the creative process of artists around the world.

Not only has VanWalleghem provided a lane for global artists, but she also provided a particular lane for herself. By bringing a woman-owned business to the community of Topeka, she showed that determination and hard work could realize success. For other people interested in opening a small business of their own, VanWalleghem had a few words of advice.

“Everyone is learning as they are building their business. No one started out with all the answers so don’t be afraid to ask questions. Be kind and patient with yourself and keep moving forward.”



Paragon Precision Metals, LLC

Wichita State University | Emerging

The leadership and persistence of a business owner shape the success of a business. Bob Williford established Paragon Precision Metal in 2019 in McPherson, Kansas. The focal points for the company are to invest in the future of its employees and their families, support the communities in which it operates and bring value to the customers it serves. While there are multiple operational strategies at work to support these visions, a key element is providing high-quality parts and services, utilizing state-of-the-art equipment, in a way that brings tangible value to customers. Paragon has demonstrated its ability to achieve this goal in the community, the state of Kansas, and surrounding states.

With the help of Kansas Small Business Development Center advisor Frank Choriego, Williford was able to work through and navigate startup-related concerns. Expanding on the services provided, Williford was able to access specific Kansas SBDC training programs, find SBA financing opportunities, and even network with local manufacturers. Paragon, which started commercial production in early 2020, was able to survive through the pandemic and grow into a self-sustaining business, in part due to assistance from the Kansas Small Business Development Center.

Through Williford's commitment to his vision, as well as the Kansas SBDC services and advising from Choriego, Paragon has achieved a six-figure sales month.

"Our SBDC advisor, Frank Choriego, has significant experience and history in the industry which we are entering," Williford, said. "His background and networking within the industry were beneficial to finding industrial customers and introductions into the network. The SBDC training programs were exceptional as it related to the 'know-how' of starting a new business. Great responsiveness to questions and assistance at getting issues resolved was also valuable during our startup."

Williford offered some key insight. He said, "Don't underestimate the importance of cash flow, don't overcommit your capacity, and always include timing for the unknown issues. In a startup business, slow and steady is a great foundation for sustained growth."



Expert Auto Center

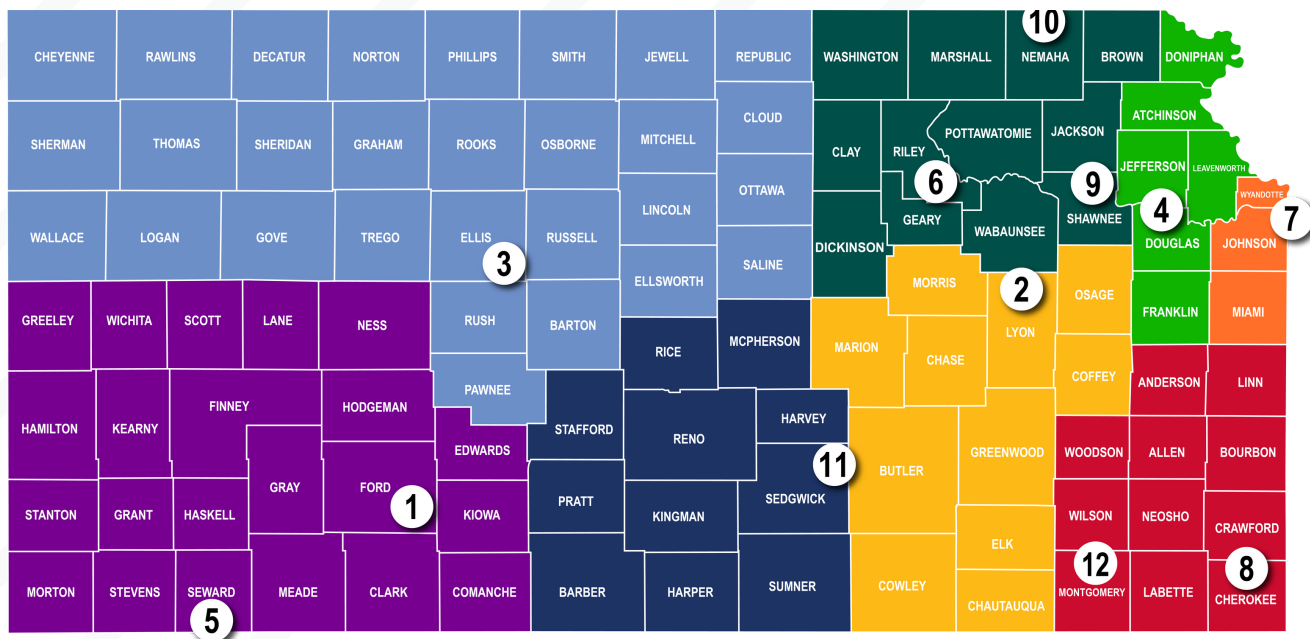
Wichita State University | Existing

In 1994, Liban Faissal established Expert Auto Center in Wichita, Kansas. Committed to success and providing high-quality customer service, Expert Auto Center has been a vital part of the community, providing over 30 jobs in five locations. Faissal and his team also pride themselves on being active members of the community, partnering with charity organizations such as the St. George Orthodox Christian Church.

When Faissal was ready to open his 5th location, he reached out to the Kansas Small Business Development Center seeking help in securing a loan for new shop construction. With the help of Kansas SBDC advisor Frank Choriego, Faissal developed a business plan and cash flow projections to successfully apply for a loan with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Choriego noted that he was most impressed with the fact that Faissal and his team were “committed to success by having high-quality operations, staff, customer service and following through with action items to make things happen.”

“You have to be passionate about the business,” says Faissal. “It must be among the top priorities for the business owners. Have a good relationship with your bank and have a plan to help identify challenges.”



7 day a week assistance (800) 949-7661 English • (800) 707-0580 Spanish

1. Dodge City (SCCC region)

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ksbdc@sccc.edu | 620-371-3871
Counties Served: Seward Outreach

2. Emporia - Kansas SBDC at ESU

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ksbdc@emporia.edu | 620-341-5308

3. Hays - Kansas SBDC at FHSU

600 Park Street, Custer Hall 110, Hays, KS 67601
ksbdc@fhsu.edu | 785-628-5615

4. Lawrence - Kansas SBDC at KU

718 New Hampshire, Lawrence, KS 66044
785-843-8844

5. Liberal - Kansas SBDC at SCCC

2215 North Kansas Ave. Liberal, KS 67905
ksbdc@sccc.edu | 620-417-1955

6. Manhattan - Kansas (WU region)

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Counties Served: Riley Outreach

7. Overland Park - Kansas SBDC at JCCC

240 Regnier Center, 12345 College Blvd. Overland Park, KS 66210
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8. Pittsburg - Kansas SBDC at PSU

402 North Broadway, Suite B, Pittsburg, KS 66762
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9. Topeka - Kansas SBDC at WU

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10. Wetmore (WU region)

334 2nd St. Wetmore, KS 66550
ksbdc@washburn.edu | 785-207-0267
Counties Served: Nemaha Outreach

11. Wichita - Kansas SBDC at WSU

5015 East 29th St. N, Wichita, KS 67220
ksbdc@wichita.edu | 316-978-3193

12. Independence (Montgomery County Action Council - PSU Region)

115 S 6th St, Independence, KS 67301
ksbdc@pittstate.edu | 620-331-3830
Counties Served: Montgomery Outreach



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