



NORTH CENTRAL REGION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION IMPACT REPORT 2025



**KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY**



KANSAS

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Extension

Location: Manhattan, KS
<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/>



196,011



EDUCATIONAL CONTACTS

83



community or organizational PLANS / POLICIES DEVELOPED

22,235



VOLUNTEER HOURS for community generated work

IMPACT INDICATORS

Educational Contacts	196,011
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	83
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted or implemented	80
Number of participants reporting new leadership roles and opportunities undertaken	26
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	22,235
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours based on Independent Sector hr value	\$773,556
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$2,001,337
Number of participants completing skill development training programs offered through Community Development Extension	307
Dollar value of grants and other resources received by Community Development programs	\$449,918
Number of Community Development full-time equivalents (FTEs) — i.e., FTEs funded by Extension specifically for Community Development Extension programming.	4.2

IMPACT STATEMENTS

■ Kansas Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities

Kansas' inaugural [Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities \(CEC\) Conference](#) was held June 26-27, 2025 with a pre-conference event on June 24. This immersive conference supports rural entrepreneurship across the state in communities with populations of fewer than 10,000 people. CEC focuses on engaging with small communities and highlighting businesses and the people who live and work there. The conference also supports the host town and local economy. The event includes designated activities for participants to explore the host community and shop locally.

The Kingman community (pop. 3,105) and others, saw concrete results from the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference. Some of those results include:

- A business owner sold a building to a conference participant.
- A downtown shop reported its best sales day ever because of the conference.
- One conference participant returned to Kingman and is now considering relocating there to start a new business.
- The Kansas Micro-Internship program, an event sponsor, connected several conference participants and local business owners with student interns to help with projects.
- A couple who attended the conference met a K-State Food Systems Navigator who worked with them to receive a \$50,000 USDA grant to start an incubator kitchen in Sharon Springs.

Nancy Daniels, Conference Chair, credits the success of the conference with state partnerships: Kansas State University and K-State Extension; Network Kansas; the Kansas Department of Commerce Quality Places Division, including the Office of Rural Prosperity and Kansas Main Street; and Thrive Kansas.

■ Kansas Food Business Start-up Summit

In September 2025, the K-State Extension Community Food Systems Team launched the inaugural [Kansas Food Business Start-up Summit](#) in Lawrence, creating a first-of-its-kind working retreat designed to support emerging food and farm entrepreneurs across the state.

Developed in response to more than 250 technical assistance interactions with Kansas food businesses, the Summit addressed recurring challenges entrepreneurs face, including navigating food safety and licensing requirements, accessing financing, developing effective branding and marketing strategies, and identifying reliable distribution channels.

The two-day Summit convened 27 entrepreneurs representing 15 businesses from diverse sectors of Kansas's food economy. Participants worked in small teams alongside experienced entrepreneur-facilitators who guided goal-setting, strategic planning, and problem-solving exercises.



A hallmark of the event was its "speed-dating" technical assistance model, which connected attendees directly with 16 Key Informants from organizations including the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Network Kansas, the Kansas Small Business Development Center, and the Kansas Value-Added Foods Lab. These sessions provided tailored guidance on finance, legal structure, regulatory compliance, branding, co-packing, and market development.

The Summit also featured keynote presentations, facilitated reflection sessions, and a visit to the Douglas County Culinary Commons Incubator Kitchen. Participants reported increased confidence, stronger business readiness, and meaningful new relationships with peers, advisors, and support organizations. Many described the experience as "demystifying" complex regulatory and business systems while helping them gain renewed focus, momentum, and a stronger sense of community within Kansas's growing local food ecosystem.