



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Erik Pedersen
316.425.8841
epedersen@networkkansas.com

For Immediate Release
June 13, 2019

FIVE NEW COMMUNITIES SELECTED TO JOIN THE E-COMMUNITY PARTNERHSIP *Impacting Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Across Kansas*

Wichita, Kansas, June 13, 2019 --- Five communities have been selected by NetWork Kansas to participate in its innovative Entrepreneurship (E-) Community Partnership. Bourbon County, Ellsworth County, Harvey County, Miami County and Kansas City, Kansas (Urban) were selected in the 2019 competitive process. As an E-Community, they will be allocated an amount of gap financing funds to be loaned to local businesses. They will also be able to participate in NetWork Kansas board certified programs such as Ice House Entrepreneurial Mindset, Destination Boot Camp and Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, ultimately creating a dynamic entrepreneurial environment.

“We welcome these five great communities to the E-Community partnership, bringing the total to 64,” said Erik Pedersen, Vice President of Entrepreneurship for NetWork Kansas. “As we spent time meeting their leadership teams and financial review boards, it was apparent these passionate leaders will strive to find innovative and creative ways to grow an entrepreneurial ecosystem in their community.”

The E-Community partnership, now in its twelfth year, has grown from six communities in 2007 to 64 in 2019. To date, E-Communities have provided \$18.9 million to businesses, leveraging an additional \$88.1 million. This funding has spurred the creation or retention of many jobs in these communities and has immeasurable positive effects on the entrepreneurial ecosystems of these participating areas.

A NetWork Kansas E-Community has made a decision to proactively pursue entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy. The following components are present in all E-Communities:

- Local leadership teams, committed to meeting regularly to provide the overall direction and leadership for the E-Community and by working closely with an E-Community coach, they engage in strategic planning, initiate activities and introduce entrepreneurship programming to generate entrepreneurial development.
- Local financial review board, tasked with acting as the loan committee for E-Community loan applications.
- Locally-controlled loan fund that allows for matching loans to new and expanding businesses.
- Active engagement with local sources of public and private funding.
- Access to a statewide network of over 500 partners, focusing on connecting entrepreneurs and small business owners to the education, expertise and economic resources they need.
- Access to entrepreneurship programming designed to benefit different types of businesses.
- Access to funds to support the development and/or implementation of pilot projects and initiatives.

About NetWork Kansas:

NetWork Kansas was established as a component of the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004 to further entrepreneurship and small business growth as a priority for economic and community development in the State of Kansas. Backed by more than 500 partners statewide, the NetWork Kansas service promotes an entrepreneurial environment by connecting entrepreneurs and small business owners with the expertise, education and economic resources they need in order to succeed.

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.

For more information about the Entrepreneurship (E-) Community Partnership, visit www.networkkansas.com/ecomunities, or call [877.521.8600](tel:877.521.8600).

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