

A vibrant street scene in a small town. A large crowd of people is gathered on a street lined with brick buildings. An American flag is prominently displayed on a pole in the foreground. To the right, several blue and green balloons are visible. A yellow banner at the top contains the title text. A yellow banner at the bottom contains the subtitle text. A street lamp is visible on the right side of the image.

# KANSAS RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE GUIDE

"SMALL TOWNS ... BIG PLANS"

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KANSAS

Rural development rarely makes headlines in the big cities. But for the rural communities working to improve their quality of life, small towns are a big deal. Here in Kansas, rural communities remain a crucial part of our state's economy, culture and character. They're woven into our history, and they have a huge role to play in our future.

With this in mind, a number of public and private organizations have set out to help rural communities solve problems, achieve goals and remain viable. While these organizations often have different approaches and areas of expertise, they all work together in pursuit of the same goal — rural development in Kansas.

This brochure provides an overview of the rural development organizations and services available in Kansas. These resources are divided into the following four categories:

- I. Business Development**
- II. Community Capacity Building**
- III. Community Development**
- IV. Regional Assistance**



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- Lawrence Farmers Market, Lawrence courtesy of Harland Schuster
- Somerset Winery, Paola courtesy of Harland Schuster
- East Kansas Agri-Energy, Garnett courtesy of Harland Schuster



## I. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

No two businesses are exactly alike. But there are some things that every business needs to be successful — things like technical assistance, access to capital, an educated workforce and a statewide network of partners committed to businesses development. The following organizations and programs are designed to help rural businesses access the resources they need.

**Kansas Bioscience Authority (KBA)** The Kansas Bioscience Authority was created in 2004 to encourage the growth of Kansas' bioscience industry. The KBA works with a variety of public, private and academic institutions to increase the state's capacity to recruit biotech companies, help existing companies access capital investment, grow Kansas' biotech-related workforce and expand the state's capacity for high-level research and commercialization.  
[kansasbioauthority.org](http://kansasbioauthority.org)

**Kansas Center for Entrepreneurship (NetWork Kansas)** NetWork Kansas is the nation's first statewide network devoted specifically to entrepreneurship and small business growth as a priority for economic and community development. Through its referral center, NetWork Kansas helps entrepreneurs find the resources they need in order to succeed. NetWork Kansas also provides funds for communities and businesses via matching grants and loans, including opportunities for communities to raise capital for rural community projects through the E-Communities program.  
[Networkkansas.com](http://Networkkansas.com)

**Kansas Department of Commerce – Agriculture Marketing Section** The Agriculture Marketing Section works to improve the economic condition of Kansas producers, who in turn boost the prosperity of rural communities. Agriculture Marketing staff offers expertise in ag-related fields such as agritourism, biofuels and product diversification. Technical and financial assistance is provided through the Agriculture Value Added Loan Program, Simply Kansas and other international and domestic marketing programs.  
[KansasCommerce.com](http://KansasCommerce.com)

**Kansas Department of Commerce – Business Development Division** The Business Development Division strives to grow the Kansas economy through the creation and retention of jobs and capital investment. In addition to promoting the growth, diversification and retention of existing business and industry in Kansas, the Division is responsible for the recruitment of new business to the state and the creation of new job opportunities for Kansans.  
[KansasCommerce.com](http://KansasCommerce.com)

**Kansas Small Business Development Center (KSBDC)** KSBDC partners with higher education and economic development organizations to provide Kansas entrepreneurs with no-cost business consulting and resources for starting, maintaining and growing their businesses. KSBDC is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Kansas Department of Commerce.  
[kansas.gov/ksbdc](http://kansas.gov/ksbdc)

**Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC)** KTEC is a public/private partnership established by the state to promote technology-based economic development. The group serves as a direct partner to Kansas businesses by supporting strategic research and development at Kansas universities, providing hands-on business assistance at business incubators and making direct equity investments in early-stage companies.  
[www.ktec.com](http://www.ktec.com)

**Small Business Administration (SBA)** The SBA is an independent agency of the federal government created to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small businesses. The SBA helps individuals start, build and grow businesses through financial and technical assistance. The SBA delivers services to Kansas through an extensive network of field offices and public and private partnerships.  
[sba.gov/ks](http://sba.gov/ks)

## II. COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

Sure, you need to work hard to improve your community. But you also need to work smart — and that means building community capacity through strategic planning and grassroots organization before embarking on specific development projects. The following programs and services are available to help communities undertake capacity-building activities in preparation for specific development projects.

**Center for Community Support & Research (CCSR)** The CCSR at Wichita State University partners with communities and organizations to strengthen Kansas through education, leadership development, facilitation and research. CCSR's staff works directly with community coalitions, non-profit health and human services organizations and self-help groups to facilitate working sessions with these organizations.

[ccsr.wichita.edu](http://ccsr.wichita.edu)

**Home Town Prosperity Initiative (HTPI)** HTPI is a grassroots initiative designed to bring together communities and agencies across Kansas in a comprehensive rural development effort. The HTPI currently is dedicated to working in four strategic areas: building local leadership, expanding community philanthropy, energizing entrepreneurship and engaging youth and young people.

[htccommunity.org](http://htccommunity.org)

**Public Square Communities, LLC** Public Square Communities, LLC consults with cities and counties to improve capacity in four key areas: business, education, health/human services and government. Service is provided through a grassroots process, utilizing interviews, community conversation, goal setting, citizen action teams and public accountability. Expected outcomes include a change in community attitude, entrepreneurial activity and the development of new leaders and partnerships in all four areas.

[publicsquarecommunities.com](http://publicsquarecommunities.com)

**Kansas Leadership Center (KLC)** KLC's mission is to cultivate civic leadership in Kansas. KLC aspires to create and deliver educational programs to improve the leadership skills of Kansans who wish to demonstrate leadership in their communities, neighborhoods and organizations via public service. Various leadership development programs are offered several times each year. KLC is supported by the Kansas Health Foundation.

[kansasleadershipcenter.org](http://kansasleadershipcenter.org)

**Kansas State University Center for Engagement and Community Development (CECD)** CECD links Kansas State University faculty and community leaders to address community challenges through University outreach and engagement. CECD organizes the research, teaching and resources of K-State to meet community development needs in Kansas.

[k-state.edu/cecd](http://k-state.edu/cecd)

**KU Institute for Policy & Social Research (IPSR)** IPSR brings together social scientists from a broad range of disciplines to conduct research and reinforce local capacities for advancing economic development among Kansas communities. IPSR works with the KU School of Business on the KU Entrepreneurship Works for Kansas University Center, which is designed to strengthen economic competitiveness in underserved areas of Kansas. Activities include demographic and economic trend analyses, feasibility studies and business plan development.

[www.ipsr.ku.edu](http://www.ipsr.ku.edu)

**Kansas PRIDE** PRIDE is a partnership of K-State Research and Extension and the Kansas Department of Commerce that helps local governments and volunteers improve their communities. Through PRIDE, local volunteers organize to implement an inclusive approach to community improvement. PRIDE is able to provide educational support, evaluation and public recognition for successful community efforts.

[www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu](http://www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu)

### III. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

For communities that have already collaborated on a strategic plan, the next step is exploring financial and technical resources available to undertake community development projects. The following organizations and programs are designed specifically for communities engaging in community development projects.

#### **Kansas Department of Commerce Rural Development Division – Community Development**

**Community Assistance Services (CAS)** Community Assistance Services encompass all state-funded community development efforts within Commerce. Areas of focus include sustainable downtown districts, local planning efforts and projects that improve quality of life, increase local capacity and support rural development in collaboration with local partners. Assistance includes tax credits and a variety of financial and technical support. Programs include the Community Capacity Building Grant (CCB), the Small Communities Improvement Program (SCIP), the Kansas Main Street program and Kansas PRIDE.

[KansasCommerce.com/cas](http://KansasCommerce.com/cas)

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** The CDBG program allows Commerce to distribute federal funds to Kansas cities and counties for community development. To qualify for funds, a community must demonstrate that a proposed project: benefits low- or moderate-income individuals; removes or prevents slum or blight conditions; or eliminates an urgent need created by a severe natural or other disaster when local funds are not available.

[KansasCommerce.com/cdbg](http://KansasCommerce.com/cdbg)

**Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)** KDHE serves rural Kansas in multiple capacities. The Kansas Brownfields Program can help communities pay for and perform environmental assessments on potentially contaminated properties. The Office of Rural Health connects rural communities with state and federal resources related to sustainable health care delivery systems and to ensure access to services in rural Kansas. KDHE also invests in water, wastewater and sewer infrastructure.

[kdheks.gov](http://kdheks.gov)

**Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)** KDOT helps its partners identify and apply for state and federal funds for transportation projects throughout the state. A number of KDOT programs focus on important aspects of community development, including safety, economic growth and maintaining infrastructure. Specific funding is available for streetscapes, landscapes, safe school routes and other enhancements.

[ksdot.org](http://ksdot.org)

**Kansas Energy Office (KEO)** The KEO's Facility Conservation Improvement Program (FCIP) assists public entities in using performance contracting to finance energy-efficiency upgrades in public buildings. Other KEO programs are available to assist the public sector with energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

[kcc.ks.gov/energy](http://kcc.ks.gov/energy)

**USDA-Rural Development** USDA-Rural Development offers financial programs to support essential public facilities and services such as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service. The office promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. Technical assistance is provided to help agricultural cooperatives and communities undertaking community empowerment programs.

[www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks)

## IV. REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

Rural development begins at the local level with local organizations. But don't forget to explore the regional organizations and resources available here in Kansas. The following community and business development organizations and services are administered at the regional level throughout Kansas.

**Kansas Association of Certified Development Companies (KACDC)** The KACDC promotes the development of small-business concerns through its support of local Certified Development Companies (CDCs). Kansas CDCs assist businesses by developing loan packages that often contain more than one source of project funding (including federal and state government sources), thus providing the small-business customer with the best combination of rates and terms possible.  
[kacdc.com](http://kacdc.com)

**Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT)** KACCT is the organizational body for the trustees of the state's 19 community colleges. These colleges provide many assets to communities and locally driven economic development endeavors through workforce development programs and apprenticeships. A number of colleges leverage resources with other state resource partners, including the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas Small Business Development Center.  
[kacct.org](http://kacct.org)

**Kansas Association of Community Foundations (KACF)** KACF provides support for community foundations dedicated to strengthening Kansas communities through charitable giving and building endowments that support current and future needs throughout the state. These foundations help individuals, families and businesses plan and implement their charitable giving via a network of local community foundations. KACF has received funding assistance from the Kansas Health Foundation.  
[kansascfs.org](http://kansascfs.org)

**Kansas Department of Commerce – Enterprise Facilitation** Enterprise Facilitation is designed to utilize community intelligence, train local citizens and increase local capacity to develop new small businesses. Community Development Block Grant technical assistance and State funds were used for training, to hire an Enterprise Facilitator and to build capacity within a large community enterprise board.  
[KansasCommerce.com](http://KansasCommerce.com)

**Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB)** KFB represents 40,000 farmers and ranchers who make their livings through production agriculture. KFB members have adopted policies supporting the development of rural community leaders, fostering entrepreneurship, retaining community wealth and attracting and retaining young people. With its county leadership systems already in place, KFB is positioned to help provide a strong support structure for rural development.  
[kfb.org](http://kfb.org)

**Kansas Regional Foundations** Kansas Regional Foundations are certified by the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce to receive Rural Business Development Tax Credits. All 105 counties are covered by one of these foundations. Tax credits are offered to the foundations for use in raising capital for local economic development initiatives.  
[ksrevenue.org/taxcredits-RegionalFoundation.htm](http://ksrevenue.org/taxcredits-RegionalFoundation.htm)

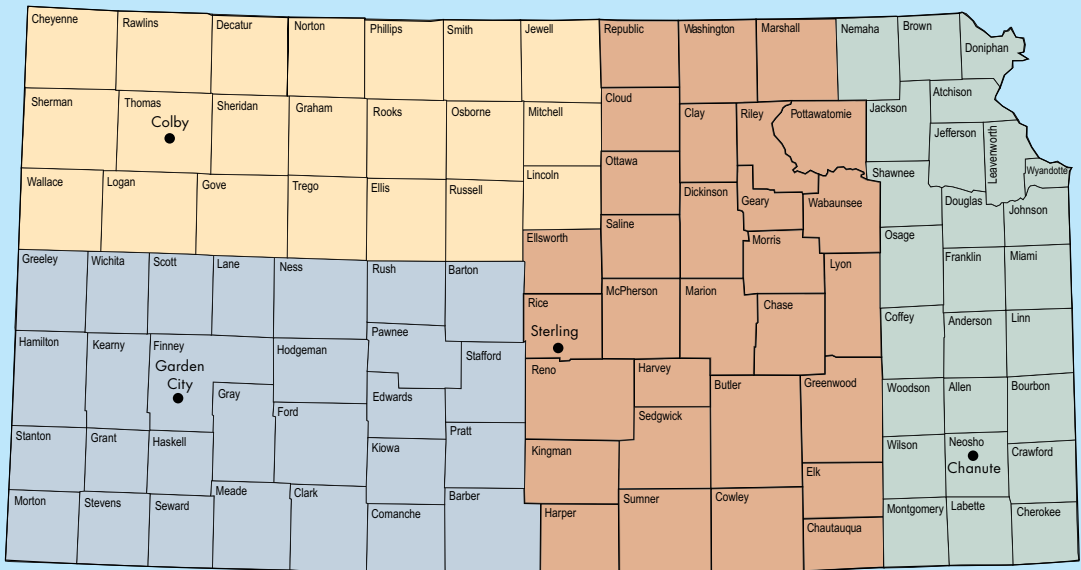
**Kansas State University Research and Extension (Extension)** K-State Research and Extension provides education and outreach on issues related to rural environmental, economic, social, human and community health. Working to address the needs of the entire system of rural living, Extension provides a variety of programs focused on creating and sustaining healthy people, food and agricultural systems and communities. Extension has at least one professional living and working in each county in Kansas.  
[ksre.ksu.edu](http://ksre.ksu.edu)

# OFFICE OF RURAL OPPORTUNITY

The Office of Rural Opportunity is designed to spur rural development in Kansas communities of 5,000 or less. Housed within the Rural Development Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce, the Office serves rural communities seeking assistance in the development of strategic plans to attract businesses, workers and investment. The Office is also designed as a one-stop contact for information on all of the organizations and resources listed in this brochure.

The Office has four regional locations throughout Kansas. You can locate and contact your regional Office representative by using the map below.

## OFFICE OF RURAL OPPORTUNITY REGIONS



### Northwest Kansas

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### Southwest Kansas

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### Central Kansas

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### Eastern Kansas

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Photo courtesy of Harland Schuster

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT:**

  
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