

# THE VOLUNTEER STAR

*a monthly newsletter from your friends at the*



**KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION**  
KANSERVE.ORG

**HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE  
KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION!**



**JANUARY IS NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH!**



## January is National Mentoring Month:

Established in January 2002, National Mentoring Month celebrates the powerful impact of mentoring relationships and raises awareness about the increased need for caring adults to become mentors in their communities. Today, one-third of young people in the United States feel isolated from meaningful connections with adults outside their homes, resulting in a “mentoring gap.” Mentors provide youth the support, encouragement, and guidance they need to succeed through academic and personal challenges. The pandemic has taken a toll on young people, and it’s more important than ever to close the mentoring gap and equip youth with the tools needed to lead healthy and productive lives. Every January, the mentoring movement unites in celebration of National Mentoring Month. It uses the power of our collective voice to recruit new mentors, advance the mentoring field’s legislative priorities, and drive meaningful change for young people.

- **National Mentoring Summit | Jan 29-31, 2025**

Get ready for an incredible experience! Join us in Washington, D.C. from Jan 29-31 for 3 days of learning, connection, and so much more at the 2025 National [#MentoringSummit](#)! We can’t wait to see you there. Secure your spot today at [mentoring.org/summit](#) [#MentoringAmplifies](#)

- **Capitol Hill Day | Jan 29, 2025**

Capitol Hill Day is just around the corner! Get ready to join the mentoring movement to elevate advocacy for mentoring. Join us on Jan 29 as we work to drive policy support for the movement! Register TODAY at [mentoring.org/capitol-hill-day/](#) [#MentoringAmplifies](#)





AMPLIFY *Relationships*



[MENTORING.ORG/NMM](https://MENTORING.ORG/NMM)



YOUTH MENTORING MINI GRANT



KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION  
KANSERVE.ORG

For more info visit [mentorkansas.org](https://mentorkansas.org)  
[kanserve.org](https://kanserve.org) or contact [volunteer@ksde.org](mailto:volunteer@ksde.org)  
**APPLICATIONS DUE: 2/10/2025**

## **YOUTH MENTORING**

MINI-GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Mentoring provides a consistent supportive relationship to young people in Kansas. It is also a proven, evidence-based strategy that can help address school attendance, mental health, violence prevention and workforce development.

Mentor Kansas is a program of the Kansas Volunteer Commission, which is a program of the Kansas State Department of Education. We connect mentoring programs with one another, offer training and program support, and provide funding opportunities and other resources to support quality youth mentoring.

To support this purpose, Mentor Kansas announces the availability of grant funds to support youth mentoring programs that start or enhance one or more of the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring (EPPM). The EPPM includes nationally recognized elements that all mentoring programs should implement to ensure consistent, effective, and safe mentoring.

Learn More: [here](#)

Apply Now: [here](#)

**MLK NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE RESOURCES**



# MLK DAY OF SERVICE

## Building a Beloved Community: Celebrate 30 Years of MLK Day

Join us this MLK Day as we come together to build a Beloved Community. Let's honor Dr. King's legacy through service and volunteerism and demonstrate how joining together in service can transform your life and the lives of others. Whether it's a small or big act of kindness, service has the power to unite people, build bridges, and heal divides.

The MLK Day of Service is Monday, Jan. 20.

Learn more about MLK Day at AmeriCorps.gov: [Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service | AmeriCorps](#)

Resources for MLK Day at AmeriCorps.gov: [MLK Day Resources | AmeriCorps](#)  
Share Your Project with AmeriCorps here: [MLK Day Project Registration](#)

**KANSAS RANKS 5th IN THE NATION  
FOR FORMAL VOLUNTEERING**



# Kansas Gives Back.



In 2023, more than **903,000** residents volunteered through an organization.



This volunteering contributed **\$1.6 billion** in economic value.



More than **1.3 million** residents helped their neighbors informally.



AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, has named Kansas as the fifth ranking state for formal volunteering in the nation as highlighted in the latest [Volunteering and Civic Life in America research](#).

Kansas's formal volunteering rate has increased by eight percentage points in just two years. In 2023, 902,960 state residents volunteered through an organization, contributing \$1.6 billion dollars in economic value.

## Other Kansas highlights:

- 96.7 percent of residents talked to or spent time with friends or family.
- 58.4 percent of residents informally helped others by exchanging favors with their neighbors.
- 71.0 percent of residents had a conversation or spent time with their neighbors.
- 34.5 percent of residents belonged to an organization.
- 54.4 percent of residents donated \$25 or more to charity.

“Kansas represents the best of America. Kansans should feel proud to know that their neighbors and friends are looking out for their community, providing invaluable support by serving those in need,” said Michael D. Smith, CEO, AmeriCorps “We can all learn a thing or two from Kansans.”

“The Kansas motto ‘ad astra per aspera,’ to the stars through difficulties, represents a feeling deeply rooted in each of us who call Kansas home. Across the state, we see communities harnessing the power of volunteerism to overcome hardships and meet critical community needs,” said Dr. Jessica Dorsey, Kansas Volunteer Commission Executive Director. “We look forward to seeing the many positive ways that Kansans continue to rise to the challenge and serve in their communities.”

Every two years, AmeriCorps partners with the US Census Bureau to conduct the most robust survey about civic engagement across the United States and over time. The data informs AmeriCorps' Volunteering and Civic Life in America research, a comprehensive look at how Americans make a difference in their communities and promote the common good. The latest research examines trends in formal volunteering, informal helping, and other civic behaviors.

The national volunteering rate has increased more than 22 percent in just two years. This is the largest expansion of formal volunteering AmeriCorps has ever recorded and truly showcases the spirit of volunteerism is on the rise in America.

Formal volunteering involves helping others through organizations. Through local nonprofit and community-based organizations, Americans are afforded new ways to engage with their communities and foster a sense of constructive action, civic participation and belonging. Volunteers support American schools and shelters, hospitals and hotlines, food banks, and civic, nonprofit, tribal and faith-based organizations across the country.

Volunteering doesn't always need to be formal. More than 137.5 million people – or 54 percent of Americans – helped their neighbors informally with tasks like running errands or watching each other's children between September 2022 and 2023. This represents a meaningful three percentage point increase from previous years.

## COMMISSIONER & STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP

At the December 2024 Commission meeting, Commissioners elected Ginger Williams as Chair and Stephanie Kupper as Vice-Chair. Officers will serve in their roles for two calendar years: 2025 and 2026.

Ginger Williams (on the left) joined the Commission in 2020 and served as the Vice-Chair from 2023-2024. Stephanie Kupper (on the right) joined the Commission in 2015 and previously served as the Vice-Chair from 2021-2022.





# KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION ANNIVERSARIES

Thank you all for your hard work!



**JESSICA DORSEY**  
9 Years  
18 YEARS WITH THE  
STATE OF KANSAS



**HALEY BREESE**  
2 Years  
2 YEARS TOTAL WITH THE  
STATE OF KANSAS



**TIERNEY KIRTDOLL**  
2 Years  
21 YEARS WITH THE  
STATE OF KANSAS



**AMANDA NOLL**  
15 Years  
25 YEARS WITH THE  
STATE OF KANSAS



**SARAH NELSON**  
2 Years  
23 YEARS WITH THE  
STATE OF KANSAS



**ELAINE RODRIGUEZ**  
4 Years  
6 YEARS WITH THE  
STATE OF KANSAS



**KAT SEELEY**  
1 Years  
TOTAL WITH THE  
STATE OF KANSAS



## VOLUNTEER GENERATION FUND RECIPIENTS

The Kansas Volunteer Commission has awarded a total of \$120,000 to six Kansas volunteer and mentor organizations through the 2025 Kansas Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grant competition.

Each organization will receive \$20,000 for one year.



The Commission received the VGF grant from AmeriCorps, the federal agency that oversees the nation's volunteer initiatives.

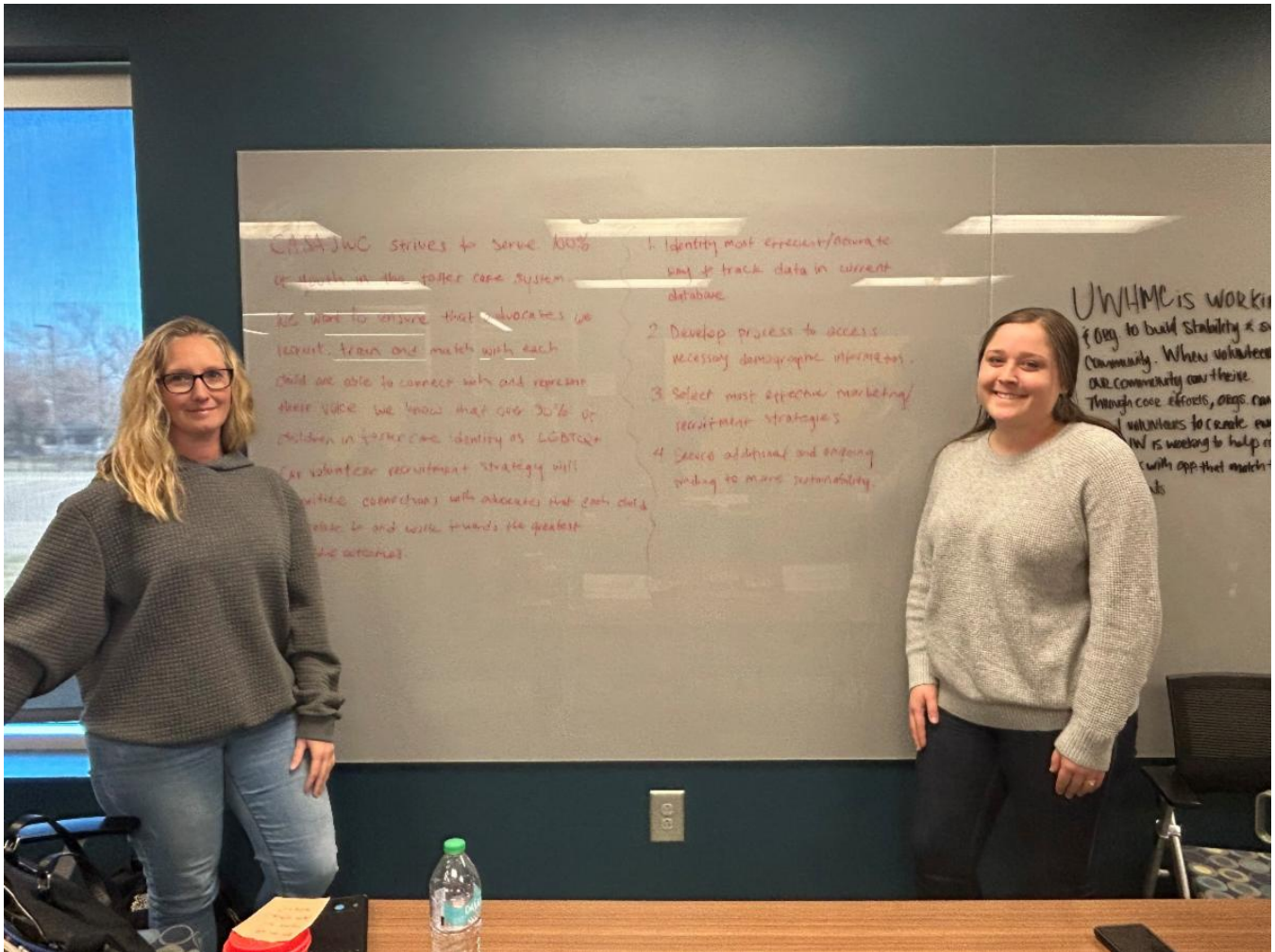
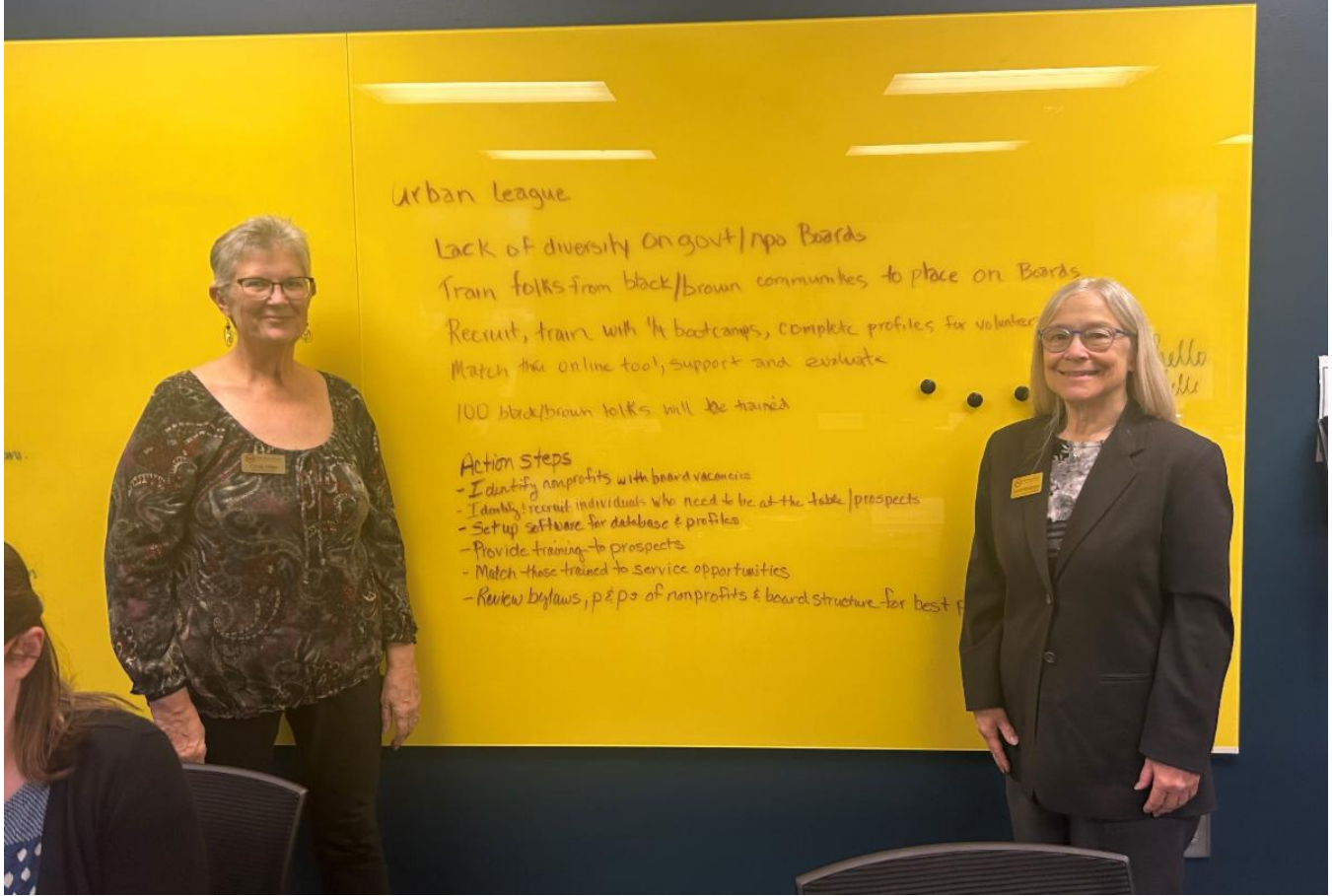
The Commission was granted 2025 AmeriCorps Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) dollars to expand the capacity of Kansas community-based entities that effectively use volunteers and mentors as catalysts to address critical community issues.

"The Kansas Volunteer Commission is proud to support the VGF recipients with funding, training and technical assistance to build their capacity and more effectively meet local community needs," said Dr. Jessica Dorsey, Kansas Volunteer Commission executive director.

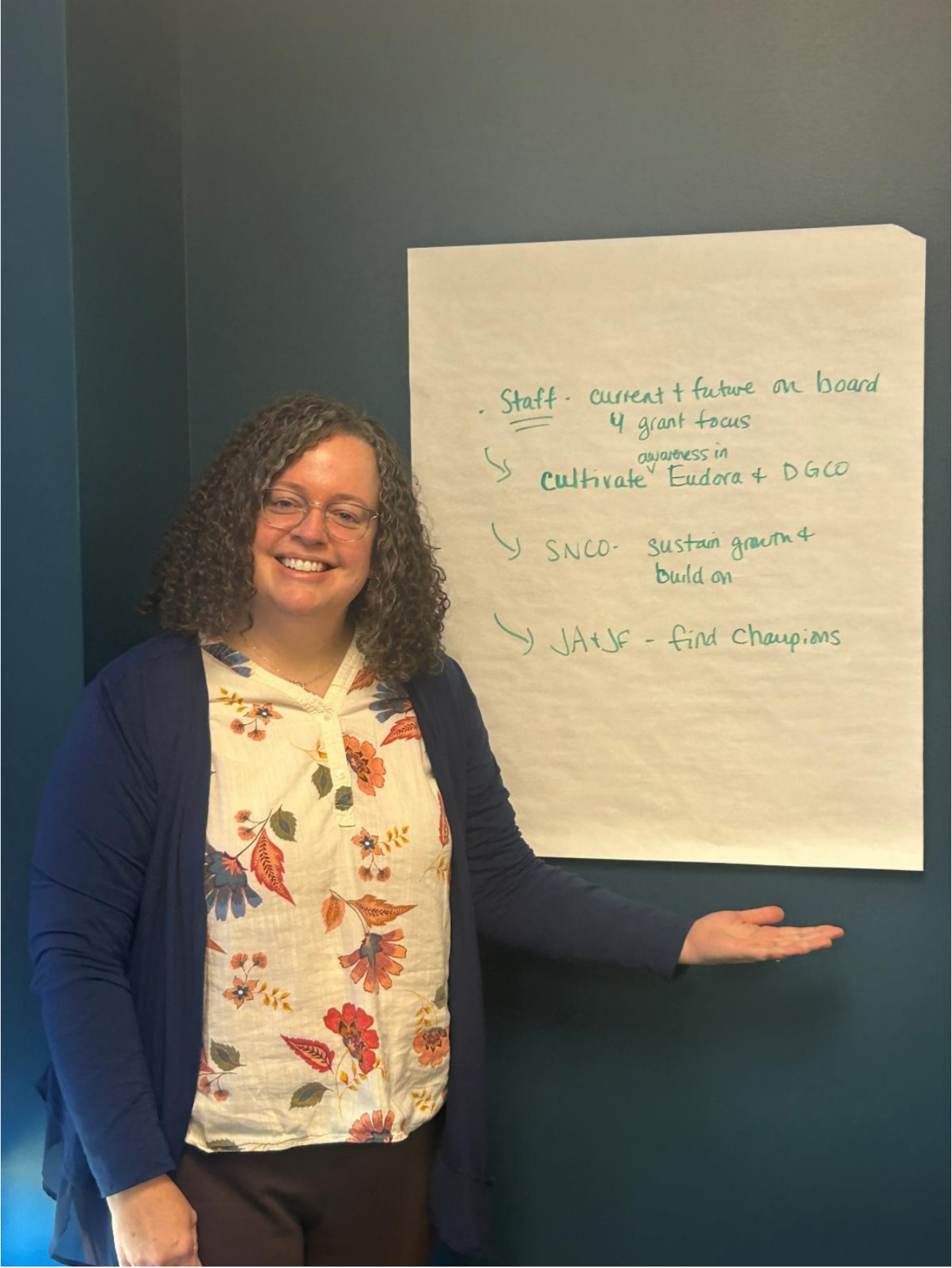
2025 Kansas Volunteer Generation Fund Grant recipients:

- **CASA of Johnson & Wyandotte Counties** – Serving Johnson and Wyandotte counties
- **Girl Scouts of Northeast Kansas and Northwest Missouri** – Serving Anderson, Atchison, Brown, Clay, Doniphan, Douglas, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Linn, Marshall, Miami, Nemaha, Pottawatomie, Rilee, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Washinton, and Wyandotte counties
- **Harvey County United Way** – Serving Harvey and Marion counties
- **Rosedale Development Association** – Serving Wyandotte county
- **United Way of Kaw Valley** – Serving Douglas, Jefferson, Jackson and Shawnee counties
- **Urban League of Kansas** – Serving Sedgwick county

Below are images from the December 10, 2024 VGF Training. From top to bottom: Urban League of Kansas, CASA of Johnson & Wyandotte Counties, United Way of Kaw Valley, United Way of Harvey and Marion Counties, Girl Scouts of Northeast Kansas and Northwest Missouri.







• Staff - current + future on board  
4 grant focus

↳ cultivate <sup>awareness in</sup> Eudora + DGCO

↳ SNCO - sustain growth +  
build on

↳ JA+JE - find champions





# 2025 MINI GRANT SERIES

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## *Guidelines and Application release dates*

### YOUTH MENTORING

*Releases: 1/03/2025*

### YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

*Releases: 2/07/2025*

### JUNETEENTH NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE

*Releases: 4/04/2025*

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

*Releases: 5/09/2025*

### RURAL & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

*Releases: 6/06/2025*

### 9/11 NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE

*Releases: 7/03/2025*

### MLK NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE

*Releases: 10/03/2025*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

These groups are intended to build and engage a network of volunteer managers and cultivate a volunteerism culture.

### M.O.V.E.

Meets the Third Wednesday of Each Month

9:00 to 10:00 AM

To learn more, please visit [www.moveks.org](http://www.moveks.org).

Or reach out via [Facebook](#).

### Peer Association of Volunteer Engagers (P.A.V.E)

Statewide - Virtual

Meets the Fourth Thursday of Each Month

9:00 to 10:00 AM

To learn more, please email Meg Pearson

[meg.carrie.pearson@gmail.com](mailto:meg.carrie.pearson@gmail.com)

**Volunteers United: Newton**  
**Meets the Fourth Thursday of Each Month**  
12:00 to 1:00 PM  
To learn more, please email Dalton Black  
[director@uwhmc.org](mailto:director@uwhmc.org)

NOTE: The above dates, times, and locations are subject to change.

## CONNECT WITH OUR STAFF



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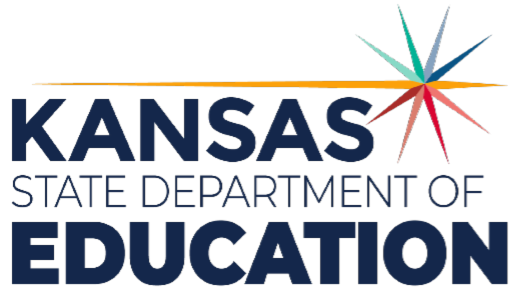


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