



Upward Mobility Transformation Fund 2026 Recipient Project Descriptions

Black Entrepreneurs of the Flint Hills

- To support the Commerce Uplift Innovation Lab, a 12-month initiative helping early- and growth-stage entrepreneurs move from planning to implementation. Participants will receive individualized coaching, professional services, technology support and flexible implementation grants.

Build WyCo

- To expand a high-cost loan refinance program that connects Wyandotte County households with fairer financial products and financial counseling. The project will add lending staff and technology to serve more residents.

Community Foundation of Dickinson County

- To launch the Rural Business Health Initiative, a preventive support system for small businesses and entrepreneurs in Dickinson, Clay and Washington counties. A Business Health Navigator and network of experts will help businesses address challenges before they threaten stability or growth.

Credit and Homeownership Empowerment Services (CHES, Inc.)

- To expand access to dependable used vehicles through the Affordable Auto Loan Program and help lower-income households reduce debt through the FRESH START program. The programs will serve Wyandotte, Leavenworth, Miami and Allen counties, with mobile services extending their reach.

EI Centro

- To expand bilingual, culturally responsive navigation services to Dodge City, Ulysses, Liberal, Garden City and surrounding southwest Kansas communities. Community Resource Navigators will connect Latino families with housing, health care, education, workforce and financial resources.

<MORE>

Habitat for Humanity of the Northern Flint Hills

- To launch the Flint Hills Housing Trust Fund serving Riley, Pottawatomie, Geary and Wabaunsee counties. The project will establish the fund's governance and investment model, build initial capital and complete a demonstration housing project.

Kansas Action for Children

- To support a statewide campaign to establish a dedicated public revenue source for affordable child care. The project will develop a cost model, evaluate revenue options, conduct public-opinion research and mobilize families, employers, providers and community leaders.

Kansas Children's Service League

- To expand a statewide initiative helping employers strengthen policies that support working families, particularly younger and lower-wage workers. The project will engage 20 employers through employee surveys and technical assistance, with a goal of helping 15 earn the Family-Friendly Workplace designation.

Kansas Department of Commerce

- To expand CRAFT to five rural Kansas high schools, strengthening construction career and technical education. Students will construct or rehabilitate affordable homes, with sale proceeds reinvested in future student-led housing projects.

Kansas State University

- To launch the Kansas Futures Project, helping high school students make informed decisions about education, training and careers. The statewide initiative will integrate postsecondary planning, career exploration and financial literacy while supporting Kansas' new financial literacy graduation requirement.

Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)

- To expand Community Health Worker career pathways for justice-involved adults in Kansas correctional facilities. Participants will receive training, coaching, certification, peer-support experience and connections to employment after release.

Omni Circle

- To launch a 12-month entrepreneurship residency for under-resourced Topeka-area founders. Participants will receive six months of financial support followed by coaching, mentorship and connections to capital as their businesses grow toward self-sustaining income.

<MORE>

Opportunity Wichita (Greater Wichita Partnership)

- To create a regional No Wrong Door network connecting workforce, education, health care, employers and community supports across 10 south-central Kansas counties. The initiative will help ALICE households more easily access education, training, living-wage employment and related services.

SENT, Inc.

- To develop and test a financial education and debt-transformation model serving at least 250 Shawnee County residents, including individualized coaching for 75 adults. The project will also explore fairer alternatives to high-interest loans and document the model for possible expansion across Kansas.

The Building Community

- To launch the SEK Futures Hub, a workforce and entrepreneurship center serving five Southeast Kansas counties. The hub will provide skilled-trades training, industry credentials, career navigation, employment services and connections to supportive services.

Thrive Allen County

- To develop a regional housing nonprofit serving Allen, Neosho, Anderson and Woodson counties. The organization will rehabilitate and preserve affordable housing, expand homeownership, provide financial counseling and advance housing policy reforms.

University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research

- To launch a statewide collective-impact initiative aligning public, private, philanthropic and community partners around entrepreneurship. The initiative will expand equitable access to capital, mentorship and business support for Black and Brown entrepreneurs.

Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas

- To launch a Tri-Share Child Care Pilot across six south-central Kansas counties, dividing child care costs among employers, employees and philanthropic partners. The pilot will help ALICE families remain in the workforce while testing a scalable, employer-supported approach to affordable child care.

Wichita State University Center for Public Policy and Research

- To serve as the statewide coordinating entity for the Upward Mobility Blueprint. The center will coordinate grant projects, establish shared measures and use the Kansas Data Trust to track progress and identify system-level learning.