

go  
topeka

# Quarterly Report

Q2  
2021



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go  
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**COVER PHOTO:**

The Greater Topeka Partnership's Annual Meeting was "Hotter Than Ever." During the afternoon activities guests got back to momentum while enjoying food, drinks and live music.

**INSIDE COVER PHOTO:**

Attendees at the BioKansas Golf Scramble during the Plug and Play Expo portion of the event. Attendees heard pitches from 10 different startups.

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2021 Go Topeka Board of Directors

Momentum 2022 focuses on five key elements to make Topeka & Shawnee County a better place to live, work, play and do business.

KEY ▶



Develop Homegrown Talent



Create Vibrant & Attractive Places



Grow a Diverse Economy



Promote a Positive Image



Collaborate for a Strong Community

# TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY VITAL STATS

Updated 04-19-2021



## DEVELOP HOMEGROWN TALENT

### GRADUATION RATE

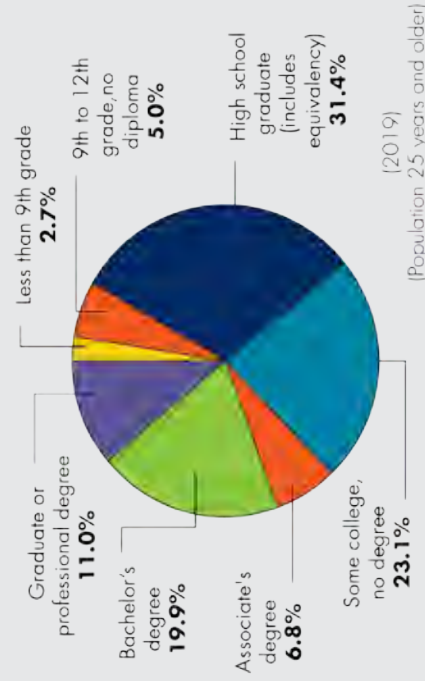


Four-year adjusted cohort formula (all Schools 2019-2020) (1)

### STUDENT-LEVEL METRICS (2019)



### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



### CERTIFICATES EARNED



(Less than a 2-year degree) (2019)



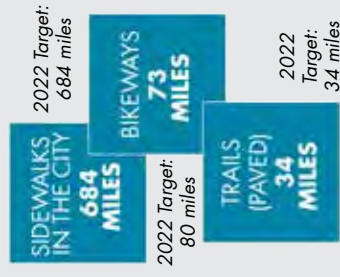
## CREATE VIBRANT & ATTRACTIVE PLACES

### LIVABILITY

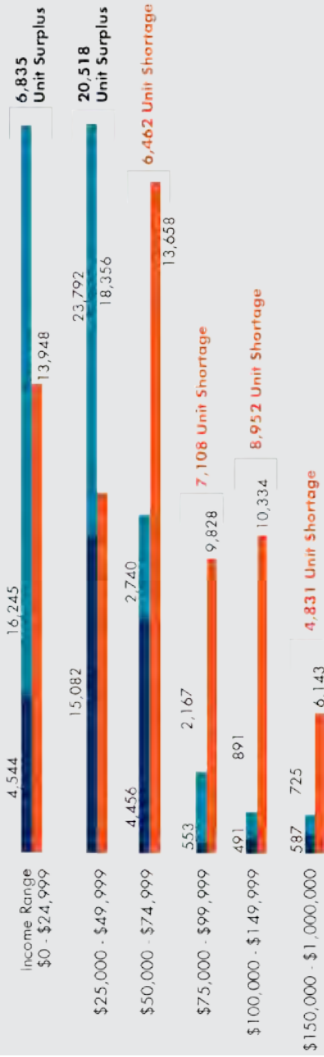
This score rates the overall livability of Shawnee County on a scale from 0 to 100. It is based on the average score of seven livability categories—housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity—which also range from 0 to 100.



### PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLINESS (2021)



### AFFORDABLE HOUSING (2019)



■ # Renter-Occupied Housing Units ■ # Owner-Occupied Housing Units ■ # of Households

\*The analysis does not account for age or quality of housing units, and there is the possibility that upper income households are likely outcompeting lower income households for the same housing units.

### ATTENDANCE AT ATTRACTIONS (2020)



Total attendance of the following Shawnee County Attractions:

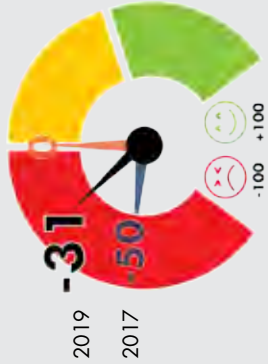
- Topeka Zoo, KS Children's Discovery Center, TPAC, Old Prairie Town, KS State Capitol, TCI, Sunflower Soccer, Mulvane Air Museum, Brown vs Board NHS, Eval Knievel Museum, Museum of KS Nat'l Guard, Combar Air Museum, Jayhawk Theater, Ritchie House, Great Overland Station

2022 Target: 750,000 people

# PROMOTE A POSITIVE IMAGE

## NET PROMOTER SCORE (NPS)

An index ranging from -100 to 100 that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a product or experience to others.



(7)

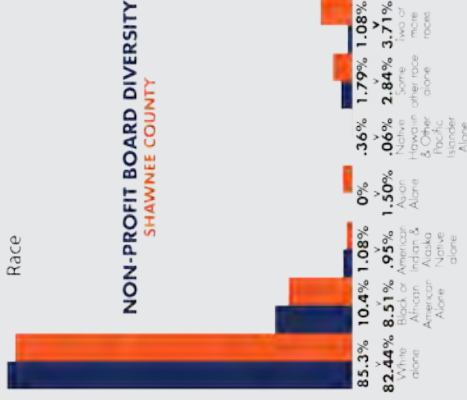
# COLLABORATE FOR STRONG COMMUNITY

## NON-PROFIT BOARD DIVERSITY (2019)



It is intended that non-profit boards are reflective of the community as a whole. To that end, the graphs above should mirror the graphs at right.

## CURRENT SHAWNEE COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS



## NON-PROFIT BOARD DIVERSITY SHAWNEE COUNTY

## PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH (2021)



Average number of physically/mentally unhealthy days reported in past 30 days (age-adjusted)

2022 Target: 2.7 Physical | 3.2 Mental

## INFANT MORTALITY RATE (2021)



(9)

# GROW A DIVERSE ECONOMY

## SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT AT NEW BUSINESSES



(New business is any that has been open less than five years)(2020 Q1) (8)

2022 Target: 7,093 people

## PRIVATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT (JANUARY 2021)



Capital investment is the amount of money new or current businesses spend to create, expand or improve facilities. For this report, capital investment is captured by GO Topeka during regular communications with companies or when companies work with GO Topeka to receive an incentive for an investment. The numbers are self-reported and exclude the cost of maintenance. GO Topeka makes every attempt to gather this info for all companies in Shawnee County, however some will not be captured due to lack of awareness of the investment.

2022 Target: \$350M

## TOTAL PRIVATE JOBS



(Sept. 2020)  
(Private = Non-Government jobs) (5)

2022 Target: 79,000 jobs

## ANNUAL MEDIAN WAGE IN TOPEKA



(2020 MSA) (6)

2022 Target: \$39,000

# GLOBAL METRICS

## GDP OF DOLLARS (10)



Gross domestic product (GDP) is equal to the sum of personal consumption expenditures, gross private domestic investment, net exports of goods and services, and government consumption expenditures and gross investment.



2022 Target: \$11.500 GDP in billions of current dollars

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE WORKING, BUT NOT LIVING IN SHAWNEE COUNTY (2018)



2022 Target: 33%

## PER CAPITA INCOME IN SHAWNEE COUNTY (2019)



2022 Target: \$50,000

## POVERTY RATE IN SHAWNEE COUNTY (2019)



2022 Target: 10%

## STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCHES



(2021)

2022 Target: 48%

All metrics refer to Shawnee County unless otherwise stated.  
Sources: **1** Kansas State Department of Education, **2** U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates, **3** AARP Livability Index, **4** City of Topeka Planning Department, **5** Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, **6** Occupational Employment Statistics, **7** Momentum 2022 Survey, **8** U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, **9** County Health Ranking, **10** Bureau of Economic Analysis, **11** U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

PROVIDED BY



# Business Attraction



GO Topeka continues to see interest from companies considering Shawnee County as a new location. Currently, GO Topeka has 19 active projects. Six in manufacturing and aviation, three in food processing and one in office, education, healthcare and technology.



### Project Helix

**20** New Jobs

Economic Impact **\$135M**

**324%** ROI

### Project Julia

**05** New Jobs

Economic Impact **\$61M**

**142%** ROI

### Project Platinum

**\$15M** Capitol Investment

Economic Impact **\$12.5M**

**172%** ROI

### Project Warrior

**\$3.5M** Capitol Investment

Economic Impact **\$264M**

**49%** ROI

**4** NEW PROJECTS IN Q2

GO Topeka continues to see interest from companies considering Shawnee County as a new location. GO Topeka has 4 new BRE projects in Q2; Project Helix, Project Julia, Project Platinum and Project Warrior.

## Business Retention



# Business Retention & Expansion

In the second quarter of 2021 with our Business Retention & Expansion programs, we serve as a liaison and primary resource for existing businesses in the community, making sure we serve the needs of our major employers and meet the needs and future plans for local organizations so they can continue to grow and expand, too. During the May JEDO Meeting, we announced two project expansions, Project Central, which is J-Six Enterprises, and Project Gateway, which is Mercury Broadband Services.

## Project Gateway

On May 12th the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) board approved an incentive agreement to aid in the growth and expansion of Mercury Broadband.

GO Topeka confirmed that the expansion, previously referred to as “Project Gateway,” is expected to produce up to 168 new full-time jobs, with an average yearly wage of \$43,000, including benefits, over the next five years. The total economic impact expected in the next 10 years is \$520 million with a return on investment of 712%.

“The field of technology is always growing, especially within the arena of internet service. With this incentive we hope to dramatically increase our staff and provide specialized training so that they may better serve our customers and grow in their profession,” said Matthew Sams, Chief of Staff, Mercury Broadband. “Mercury Broadband is immensely grateful to the JEDO board and GO Topeka for this incentive and for aiding in our continued growth.”

Mercury Broadband expects to finish renovations on its new call center, where the majority of these new positions will be housed, in the third quarter of 2021. This new office is located at 3400 SW Van Buren.

“It’s always inspiring to see incentives put toward the continued development of talent in our area,” said Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook. “In addition to recruiting and developing talent within our community, Topeka & Shawnee County will be able to reap the benefits of Mercury Broadband’s investment during this growing phase and the extremely positive economic impact of \$520 million that we’ll experience in the next decade.”

“The broadband gap is an ongoing issue many in our city and region are faced with,” said Topeka Mayor Michelle De La Isla. “This project will help meet the needs of our community while also growing our workforce and overall economy.”

“With this project we are not only seeing a substantial investment but also the promising addition of positions along with training opportunities that will help grow our workforce,” said Barbara Stapleton, vice president of business retention and talent initiatives, GO Topeka. “Developing these resources within our community both aids our community and the next generation of professionals.”

The JEDO approved performance-based incentive for this project is up to \$847,000.







## Project Central

Today the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) board approved an incentive agreement to aid in the growth and expansion of J-Six Enterprises, Parent Company of Fairview Mills.

GO Topeka confirmed that the expansion, previously referred to as “Project Central,” is expected to produce up to 50 new full-time jobs, with an average yearly wage of \$40,000, including benefits, over the next five years. Capital investment includes building and facility expenditures and employee training programs of \$9.5 million. The total economic impact expected in the next 10 years is \$150 million.

“I want to take a moment to thank JEDO and GO Topeka for all the support they’ve given us thus far in the expansion of our business in the Topeka area,” said Jason Hammes, special projects manager, J-Six Enterprises, Parent Company of Fairview Mills. “This project will allow us to expand our opportunities as a company to human-grade pet food operation in Topeka, Kansas. We’re excited about the capabilities that Topeka brings already to our team and how this will continue in the future.”

“It’s exciting to see J-Six Enterprises expand in Topeka & Shawnee County,” said Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook. “This project promises new specialized jobs and a promising economic impact of \$150 million in the next 10 years.”

“This is another great example of how Topeka & Shawnee County its growing the animal health ecosystem, locally and regionally,” said Katrin Bridges, senior vice-president of innovation, GO Topeka. “I’m thrilled to learn more about the new facility and job prospects this project will offer this community and the overall industry.”

“This project is a win for the Capital City, especially considering its growing role in the Animal Health Corridor,” said Topeka Mayor Michelle De La Isla. “Projects like this will help us grow as an innovative and diverse business community.”

Molly Howey, president of GO Topeka said, “We anticipate great things from this project: growth and development in our workforce; a powerful economic impact; and new partnerships within the community.”

The JEDO approved performance-based incentive for this project is up to \$284,000.

All economic impact numbers are based on a 10 year calculation. All proposed incentives are performance-based, to be paid out as earned and details of the agreement will be outlined via a formal contract with the company and presented to JEDO for approval at a later meeting.



# Minority & Women Business Development



## Small Business Incentives

THROUGH Q2 OF 2021

LIFE OF PROGRAM

29

Incentives Issued, Totaling

\$130,115

434

Incentives Issued, Totaling

\$1.79M

6

New Businesses

15

Existing Businesses

Some companies may have been awarded more than one incentive.

## Incentive Types



8

Construction



12

Marketing



2

Architecture & Design



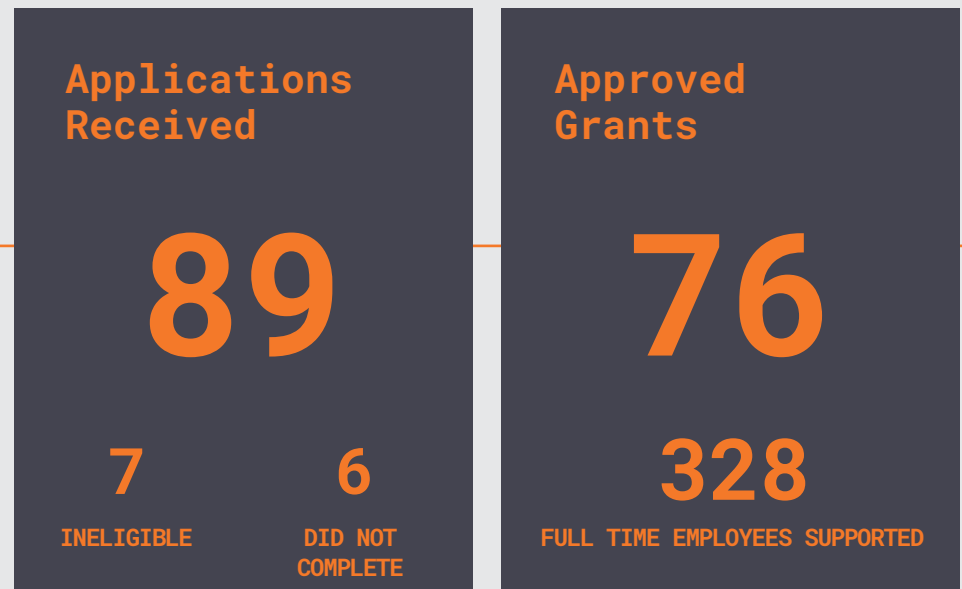
7

Equipment



## JEDO Small Business Grant Relief Program

The Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) approved the funding for JEDO Small Business Grant Relief Program. The JEDO Small Business Grant Relief Program is a grant program of GO Topeka and JEDO to provide relief to businesses suffering financial losses due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Grants range from \$5,000-\$30,000 and are dependent on the small business' employee count. The funding for the JEDO Small Business Grant Relief Program was approved in quarter one of 2021, The results below are up to date as of Q2 of 2021.



**\$688,000**  
**Distributed**

# Kansas PTAC

(Procurement Technical Assistance Center)  
February 1, 2021 - July 28, 2021



# \$35,989,556

Total Contract Awards for KS PTAC Sub-Center Topeka<sup>1</sup>

**\$35,785,253**

Federal

+

**\$0**

State & Local

+

**\$204,303**

Subcontracts

## 10

CONTRACTS AWARDED  
TO SHAWNEE COUNTY  
BUSINESSES TOTALING  
\$8,811,566<sup>2</sup>

## \$540

RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT (ROI)  
FOR EVERY \$1  
JEDO INVESTS<sup>3</sup>

### SOCIOECONOMIC STATS ON FEDERAL CONTRACT AWARDS

30

Small Disadvantaged  
Business

20

Woman-Owned  
Small Business

11

HUBZone

4

Service Disabled  
Veteran-Owned  
Small Business

## 38

NEW CLIENTS  
42% of Goal

## 388

COUNSELING HOURS  
64% of Goal

## 6

EVENTS HELD IN  
SHAWNEE COUNTY  
75% of Goal

## 112

CONTRACT AWARDS<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Service area covers 32 counties in NE KS

<sup>2</sup>Out of the Total Awards Amount shown above

<sup>3</sup>JEDO was requested to invest \$66,689 in the KS PTAC program for FY2021. This is the number used to calculate ROI.

<sup>4</sup>This Procurement Technical Assistance Center is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency. It is funded additionally by Wichita State University, Pittsburg State University, GO Topeka, and Johnson County Community College.



# Innovation & Entrepreneurship



## Topeka Pitches to Plug and Play Startups

A Focus Week is part of the accelerator curriculum for every cohort. Topeka took the opportunity to directly introduce 10 resources Topeka and the Animal Health Corridor have to offer in a virtual resource expo event on May 6. The following organizations presented in this first round:

- **KC Animal Health Corridor**
- **Kansas Department of Agriculture**
- **Network Kansas**
- **Washburn SBDC**
- **Topeka & Shawnee County Library**
- **University of Kansas/BTBC**
- **K-State Innovation Partners**
- **K-State Technology Development Institute**
- **Quantum Alliance**
- **GO Topeka**

Feedback was positive and we look forward to continuing the conversations with our startups and partners. All resource pitches will be available on the GO Topeka Innovations website shortly so any entrepreneur can access them directly.

## JEDO Approves \$5.8M in Topeka Innovation Campus

JEDO's approval of up to \$5.8M on May 12 is a significant milestone in the launch of the Topeka Innovation Campus. Under the guidance of the Innovation Advisory Board and after approval of the GO Topeka Board of Directors, GO Topeka has entered into a partnership with BioRealty, a nationally recognized developer specialized in life sciences buildings, to develop phase 1 of the campus. The site identified for this development is located in downtown Topeka. Total estimated project costs are between \$12M-\$13M for a total rentable square footage of approximately 63,700 sf.

"This is a historic day for our community. The vote to support funding for an innovation campus in Downtown Topeka will secure this city's role as a leader in animal health and startup entrepreneurship for years to come," said Michelle De La Isla, Mayor of Topeka. "The effort is truly bold and visionary. I firmly believe in 20 years we will look back on this project and see that it was the beginning of a transformative era for business and innovation in the Capitol City."





*Aerial shot of the Plug and Play Topeka Expo at the BioKansas Golf Scramble*

## BioKansas Golf Scramble and Plug and Play Topeka Batch 1

On June 10, GO Topeka, Plug and Play Topeka and BioKansas hosted their first ever joint networking event on Firekeeper Golf Course bringing together networks in biosciences from across the region and country. The many highlights of the day included a final virtual pitch of the 10 startup companies in Batch 1, keynotes from industry leaders as well as a 19th hole celebration at Evergy Plaza drawing 150+ participants including John Brown,

CEO of StenCo, a cohort member who had traveled from Birmingham, AL to meet with corporate partners. The event marked the successful conclusion of the first full Plug and Play cohort focused on animal health and sustainability.

In numbers: 100+ startups had been sourced for this batch, 60 were shortlisted, 15 presented to the selection committee and 10 startups were selected to participate. 9 NDA's

(non-disclosure agreements) have been put in place between startups and corporate partners and 5 pilot projects have been started. These pilots create the perfect opportunity to develop a long-term relationship and lays the groundwork for the ability to scale a technology for the global market. We look forward to the next group of startups joining batch 2 in the fall!



# Innovation & Entrepreneurship



## Local Plug and Play Topeka Team Forming

June saw the launch of the third group of local small businesses participating in a 12-week Wheelhouse Incubator program after a break of almost 12 months. Seven main street businesses looking for new ways to grow their business are paired with mentors and are guided by the proven GrowthWheel program to achieve specific objectives defined at the beginning of the program. Participating Shawnee County companies include:

- 
- **Cashmere Popcorn**
  - **Dialogue Coffee House**
  - **Heat & Home Design Co.**
  - **Circle Coffee Company**
  - **Kansas Business Solutions**
  - **Farm Bureau Financial Services**
  - **Shannon Nichol, Realtor**
- 

Owners are targeting their growth plans, training and hiring new employees, developing a new product line or expanding B2B sales, opening a second or establishing a first storefront location, and building a larger manufacturing facility separate to increase product production and sales region. The success of the program is fueled by mentors who have joined the mentor committee led by Scott Gales, CEO of Architect One. A big shout-out to all the mentors volunteering their time to help Topeka businesses grow!

## Topeka Visits Manhattan to Scout Available Resources

With the launch of Batch 1 of the Plug and Play cohort, the need for connectivity with regional resources is more important than ever. A group of 10 Topeka community representatives, including city council, Plug and Play, the Innovation Advisory Board and The Partnership, met with our partners in Manhattan on May 20 for a day of introductions, discussions and learning. There is a genuine interest in collaboration with Plug and Play and Topeka. Clearly, Manhattan, KS, is home to many leading organizations in agriculture, animal health and research: Kansas Department of Agriculture, KSU College of Engineering, College of Agriculture, College of Vet Med, Greater Manhattan Chamber, K-State Innovation Partners, K-State Vice-President of Research Team, and the National Bio-Agro Defense Facility (NBAF). We look forward to cultivating these connections and thinking of new ways to help our entrepreneurs and innovators succeed.



# Workforce & Talent



## 2021 Q2 Workforce Data

<b>Total Population</b>	<b>123,388</b> TOPEKA	<b>174,355</b> SHAWNEE COUNTY	KS 2,238,647 US 261,217,000
<b>Labor Force Participation</b>	<b>63,563</b> TOPEKA	<b>91,844</b> SHAWNEE COUNTY	KS 1,508,008 US 161,051,000
<b>Employment</b>	<b>61,298</b> TOPEKA	<b>88,864</b> SHAWNEE COUNTY	KS 1,450,397 US 151,740,000
<b>Jobs</b>	<b>78,031</b> TOPEKA ▲ 3.1% FROM 2020	<b>92,091</b> SHAWNEE COUNTY ▲ 3.4% FROM 2020	KS 1,322,449 US 139,211,600
<b>Average Wages</b>	<b>\$50,782</b> TOPEKA ▲ 7.0% FROM 2020	<b>\$50,786</b> SHAWNEE COUNTY ▲ 7.1% FROM 2020	KS \$52,577 US \$65,465

**Labor Force Participation Rate**

**51.51%** TOPEKA

**52.70%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 67.36%  
US 61.65%

**Employment-Population Ratio**

**49.68%** TOPEKA

**51.00%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 64.79%  
US 58.09%

**Unemployment Rate**

**3.6%** TOPEKA

**3.2%** SHAWNEE COUNTY

KS 3.8%  
US 5.8%

\*Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population



# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statements

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion assisted with the creation of DEI Statements for GO Topeka, Visit Topeka, Topeka Chamber, Greater Topeka Partnership and Downtown Topeka.

### Greater Topeka Partnership

As members of the Greater Topeka Partnership's Chairs Council, we commit to practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion on every level and in all business strategies. We understand that these principles are essential business drivers and must be integrated in all that we do. They serve as keys to innovation and are the impetus for new product development. As we continue to move toward building a strong and viable Topeka & Shawnee County, let it be known that each of our organizations will endeavor to represent the diversity of people, places, products and services, and embrace the different perspectives and experiences of our citizens.

### Downtown Topeka

Downtown Topeka is the heart of the community and serves as the mirror that reflects, demonstrates, and celebrates the diversity of its citizens.

It has a strong history rooted in commerce and inclusion and represents diversity of cultures, arts, entrepreneurs, innovative products, and services.

As representatives of Downtown Topeka, Inc., we strive to be a symbol of pride, prosperity, and diversity. We stand together against racism and discrimination and commit to being intentional in identifying factors that harm, exclude and eliminate members of our community.

As members and representatives of Downtown Topeka Inc., we pledge to foster an environment where all citizens and visitors feel welcome.

### GO Topeka

DEI Statement: GO Topeka is passionate in its vision to become a strong advocate for the inclusive, equitable and diverse growth of Shawnee County.

We will execute on this vision with integrity by creating a culture of belonging, understanding and appreciation for all people.

As the Economic Development entity, we believe that this passion and commitment for DEI will create a stronger, more prosperous business environment and serve as a key economic driver for the region.

### Chamber

We, the Board of Directors of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, envision a community in which every person can attain their full potential and have the opportunity to create economic success. We will actively pursue and support policies and programs that provide for all community members to achieve this potential and have these opportunities without being disadvantaged by race, gender, ethnicity, social position, group identity, or other socially determined circumstance.

We are committed to achieving that vision by advancing core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion across all aspects of our community, including business, public service, education and arts. We will work to ensure inclusion and support efforts of equality on every level of economic and community development. We stand united to speak out against systematic racism and discrimination in Topeka and Shawnee County. It has no place here.

We will challenge the notion of neutrality while producing programming that educates and empowers individuals and organizations. We welcome the partnership of our allies to ensure inclusive practices as it relates to this community. We will work to eradicate injustice, defy discrimination, and dismantle the platform of racism as we seek to grow a better economy and business environment in Topeka and Shawnee County for all of its citizens.

### Visit Topeka

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are core values of Visit Topeka and the Greater Topeka Partnership. It is practiced in all aspects of our organization. As the lead tourism authority for the region, it is our role to invite the world to celebrate the rich and diverse tapestry of ideas, people, and places that our community brings to life.

We are committed to building a variety of strong and diverse relationships. We will intentionally seek to attract visitors from diverse groups and markets. We will exhibit an authentic and welcoming environment to all residents and visitors alike.

## Events and Activities

### JULY 27

Strategies and Achievements – Best Practices Panel Discussion: Actionable Steps to Move the DEI Needle CEO DEI Roundtable (Invitation Only)

### AUGUST 24

Design or Redesign Your DEI Strategy Workshop

### SEPTEMBER 21

DEI Summit

### OCTOBER

Minority Students Corporate FAM Tour

## Seat at the Table

Launched in September 2020, A Seat at the Table has hosted 8 Seat at the Table Events and 72 participants (3-4 per group per meetings). More than 150 pre- and post-event surveys have been completed and speak to the need to continue the conversation about the importance of DE&I.



# Choose Topeka Relocation Incentive



**2,150+**

CALLS TO DATE  
(FROM CANDIDATES & EMPLOYERS)

**5,400+**

SUBMISSIONS WITH  
RESUMES OR QUESTIONS

**350+**

REMOTE WORKER  
SUBMISSIONS

**30**

EMPLOYER CANDIDATES  
ACCEPTED, EQUALING

**19**

REMOTE WORKERS  
ACCEPTED, EQUALING

**\$180,000**

IN MATCHING JEDO  
FUNDS COMMITTED

**\$120,000**

IN RELOCATION  
INCENTIVES

**\$300,000**

IN TOTAL COMMITTED FUNDS FROM THE EMPLOYER  
MATCHING FUNDS AND REMOTE WORKER OPTIONS

## ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

**49**

CANDIDATES

**\$87K**

AVERAGE SALARY

**11.8x**

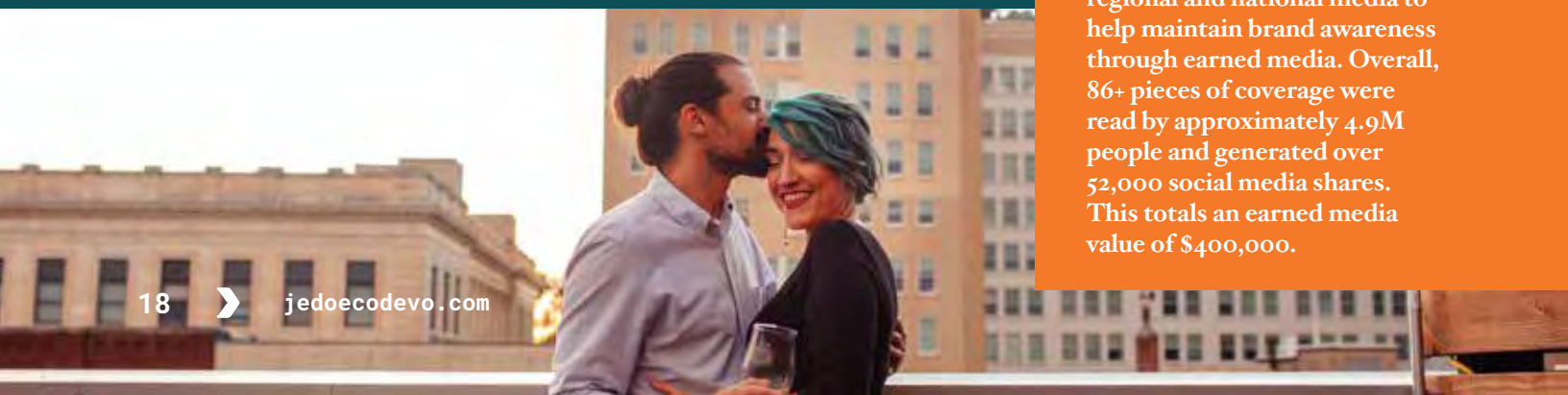
RETURN ON INVESTMENT

**\$3.2M**

IN ECONOMIC IMPACT,  
YEAR ONE

## CHOOSE IN THE NEWS

GO Topeka uses several public relation tools and have cultivated relationships with regional and national media to help maintain brand awareness through earned media. Overall, 86+ pieces of coverage were read by approximately 4.9M people and generated over 52,000 social media shares. This totals an earned media value of \$400,000.



# Forge



## April

The Leadership Herd held part 1 of a quarterly series: "Getting Hired 101" panel event. Local leaders answered questions regarding resume tips, interview tricks, and much more! You can view the zoom video here.

The Inspire Herd is continuing their ever popular #ForgeCares video series this quarter. These interview-style videos spotlight local non-profits and inform young professionals on how to get involved and/or volunteer with these organizations. Several featured in the 2021 lineup include: Capper Foundation, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Greater Topeka Youth Foundation and Community Blood Center.

For the last two weeks of April, Forge held a virtual gift card giveaway to showcase two local businesses, while also engaging members online and giving away \$500 in cards to be spent right here in Topeka! The giveaway had a reach of nearly 5,500 people online, and twenty lucky winners were sent cards to Sunflower Chiropractic and Lean Kitchen!

Also in April, Forge conducted a community-wide health survey, in hopes to gauge members' readiness for in-person programming, as well as gain insight into their desires for future health-focused events. More than 550 Forge members completed the survey! We will use these results to be more intentional with both our physical and mental health programming moving forward.



## May

Forge Executive Director Kelli Maydew presented to the IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) on May 6. The virtual presentation dove into Forge initiatives, ways to get involved, the importance of benefactors/sponsors, and a Q/A session.

Forge announced that the organization is back to in-person events and programming!

In early May, the Health Herd had a "Mimosa Yoga on the Terrace" event at the Foundry Event Center. Attendees were able to partake in bottomless bubbly while getting yoga instruction from the Topeka Yoga Network. It was a beautiful evening with blue skies and sunshine, and each attendee left with a complimentary souvenir tumbler. Due to Covid-19, this was the first in-person Forge event since late 2019, and it SOLD OUT!



Also in May, Forge, along with Choose Topeka, hosted a meet & greet social at the Redbud Park Pavilion in NOTO, adorned with ours 'devours, beverages and a local band for entertainment. This event was part of NOTO's First Friday initiative.



## June

The Inspire Volunteers Herd spearheaded June's Forge Young Talent Day of Service. This event provided a fun opportunity for corporate and local nonprofit agencies to work together on special projects, to give back to our community and make a difference.

Volunteers selected projects provided by the partner agencies.

The Forge Your Future Herd hosted a month-long historical tour around TopCity! This "Past-Port" event took young professionals on a journey around the Capital city, with civic stops all along the way! Participants marked their progress on the provided map, and then submitted for a chance to WIN a \$50 downtown gift card! This free event ran June 9 to July 9.

Forge was excited to announce the first VIP Tour of 2021! Our members have likely driven or walked by Every Plaza or possibly even attended an event there, but they may not know all the ins and outs of this new downtown Topeka hotspot. Forge hosted a private behind-the-scenes tour of the venue, and then treated attendees to beverages across the street at Iron Rail. The Every Plaza VIP Tour was June 16 and was free for members. The event boasted the largest VIP Tour crowd in Forge history, with over than 40 attendees!

Later in June, Forge had a presence at both Tap That, as well as Country Stampede at the Heartland! Volunteers handed out Forge swag, engaged with attendees and signed up new members.

## Looking Ahead

In an attempt to better understand our members and gain some valuable insight, Forge is conducting an informational survey, which includes questions regarding gender, race, ethnicity, familial status, and salary/career information. We hope to analyze this data and use the metrics to be intentional with future programming, as well as to improve our recruitment efforts.

So far, we have more than 150 anonymous responses, so we feel confident that this data mining will be fruitful for our planning efforts in 2022 and beyond.



The Forge Executive Team, along with the full Leadership Team, are thrilled to announce that our organization now has a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Oversight Committee.

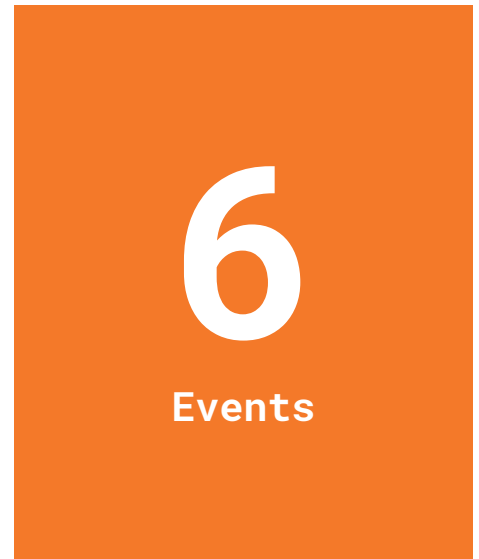
The Forge Executive Team is in the process of filling the committee's member slots and are confident that they will be fully operating by Fall of this year.

Mark your calendar! August 28 will be a day of fun in downtown Topeka – hosted by Forge! ForgeFest 2021 will take place at 5:30 PM and include: food trucks, beer gardens, live entertainment, contests, giveaways, and much more! All Forge benefactors and sponsors will be recognized throughout the evening on the Every Plaza big screen. Details and promotion will begin later this month!

Our herds are already brainstorming additional ideas for Q4 and even into 2022; we cannot wait to show you what we have planned!

# TopCity Interns

The TopCity Interns Committee has been actively planning over the last handful of months. This year there will be a total of 6 events including a Kick Off at the Zoo, Pennant Social, Brew Tour, Influential Leaders Panel Lunch, Financial Literacy Lunch, and an End of the Year Bash. As far as attendance expectancy this year – based on our survey, we’re expecting up to 60-70 in-person interns at our events. In previous years, we have about 150 interns involved in the program. About half of employers who took our survey are providing virtual options for internships. Our survey also revealed 33% of internships will be 100% virtual. Two of our events will have a virtual option.



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