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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Kansas Leadership Center gifted \$90K to shift the narrative in Wyandotte County for more equitable health outcomes**

Wichita, Kan. – The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) has received \$90,000 in funding from the Health Forward Foundation to convene Wyandotte County partners to build stronger collaborations in the region and bolster their internal capacity to reshape harmful narratives into asset-based storytelling that results in more equitable health outcomes.

“The mission of the Kansas Leadership Center is exceptionally well-aligned with that of the Health Forward Foundation, and we are excited for this opportunity to partner on this project. We cultivate inclusive, powerful and healthy communities by equipping individuals and organizations to lead through adaptive challenges. KLC doesn’t just support narrative change—we cultivate the conditions for it to thrive,” said Rebekah Starkey Keasling, director of learning networks at the Kansas Leadership Center.

KLC will use the funds to design and host a series of in-person and virtual sessions to strengthen peer relationships and collaboration among the organization’s Wyandotte County partners, who will receive a stipend for their participation. Convenings will be co-designed around the needs of the partners and include facilitation around components of KLC’s leadership framework to continue building momentum and progress towards creating action plans that shift the narrative and vividly illustrate what communities need to thrive.

“KLC was founded on the belief that we can improve the health of Kansas communities by inspiring and equipping people to do difficult work together, for the common good. A crucial aspect of this effort involves collaborating with nonprofit organizations that address the systems and narratives that contribute to health inequity—particularly in areas like Wyandotte County, where the long-term effects of these systems are evident,” said Kaye Monk-Morgan, president and CEO of the Kansas Leadership Center.

Health Forward Foundation has awarded \$1,090,000 to 13 organizations across its service area to advance narrative change efforts that strengthen understanding of the connections between racial equity, economic inclusion and health. The awards support organizations working to challenge harmful, inaccurate narratives that contribute to health inequities and replace them with narratives grounded in shared responsibility,

opportunity and community well-being.

Many health outcomes are driven by social, economic and environmental factors — yet public discourse often frames health as a matter of personal choice. Through coordinated narrative strategies, the funded organizations will work to increase understanding of how race, place and economic opportunity influence health and to build broader support for equitable solutions.

“By equipping partners with clear, tested language and a shared framework, we are strengthening the region’s ability to move audiences from awareness to collective action,” said Jennifer Sykes, director of communications and narrative change at Health Forward Foundation.

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**About the Kansas Leadership Center**

The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) is a first-of-its-kind nonprofit educational organization with a civic mission, national reputation and global reach. Founded in 2007 with core funding from the Kansas Health Foundation, KLC’s mission is to inspire and equip people, together, to do difficult things for the common good. KLC partners with other nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, businesses, philanthropies, and communities to build cultures that are mobilized to make progress on their toughest challenges and thrive. Its publications include leadership books available from Bard Press, Third Floor Research, an applied research center with the Staley School of Leadership at Kansas State University, and The Journal, a nationally recognized, award-winning civic issues magazine.

Over the past 18 years, KLC has built a strong and respected institution in Kansas designed to deliver leadership development and culture change at unparalleled scale. Now, organizations across the country and around the world look to us to provide resources and consultation to support their own aspirations for mission-driven leadership education. Learn more at [www.kansasleadershipcenter.org](http://www.kansasleadershipcenter.org).

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