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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Kansas Leadership Center awards grants and support to 9 Kansas organizations serving communities of color**



**Wichita, Kan.** – In an effort to cultivate leadership and inspire hope for the future among Kansans of color, the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) has launched a new initiative, *Creating Leadership Together*, and has selected nine Kansas organizations to serve as partners.

“We’re excited to launch *Creating Leadership Together* and create a community development partnership with nine organizations that work with Kansans of color who are typically under-represented in leadership programs. Each partner has committed to sustainable, ongoing training sufficient to make a difference while working toward the common good of their community. In return, we are providing an all-encompassing, from-the-ground-up package of support that will position these community-based organizations to offer a sustainable leadership program under their own direction,” said Racquel Thiesen, director of community partnership at Kansas Leadership Center.

### **KLC’s partners for *Creating Leadership Together* are:**

- Urban League of Kansas (Wichita)
- Kansas State Conference of NAACP (Wichita)
- Salud + Bienestar (Wichita)
- Topeka Latino Professionals (Topeka)

- Wichita Urban Professionals (Wichita)
- WSU Office of Diversity and Inclusion (Wichita)
- Start at Zero (Kansas City)
- Made Men (Kansas City)
- Opus Media (Overland Park)

“Wichita Urban Professionals has been wanting a leadership program for a long time. We’ve worked alongside the KLC for a number of years and this program is providing a true pathway to get a program off the ground,” said Danielle Johnson, Wichita Urban Professionals lead and executive director of Habitat for Humanity.

“At Start at Zero, we believe deeply that parents and caregivers are capable and responsive to the needs of their children and are also the experts on their children. Our parent and family-centered early education programming set parents and children up for success, and we make it our mission to go above and beyond to meet families where they are. We will utilize this grant to develop the skills and capacity of families as they learn to exercise adaptive leadership in all spheres of their lives,” said Jumesha Wade, executive director of Start at Zero.

“Through Creating Leadership Together, we will empower youth and Latino entrepreneurs to develop community partnerships and promote strong civic engagement and business development practices that will allow our communities to flourish in the coming years,” said Luis Estrada, founder/ex officio director of Topeka Latino Professionals.

Research conducted by [Third Floor Research](#), KLC’s research partnership with Kansas State University, studied the [impact of community leadership programs in Kansas](#), particularly those that adopt KLC’s approach to leadership as an activity, not a position. The results revealed a link between these programs and increased workforce and community engagement. Participants who graduate from these programs:

- Feel more confidence in their leadership efficacy
- Develop significant new leadership skills for the workplace
- Are three times more likely to want to serve their communities in a civic role

“We know that community leadership programs develop the capacity of both individuals and the communities where they have influence and impact. Yet providing personal development programs is too often an unaffordable or unknown luxury for many community-based groups. That’s why we came up with Creating Leadership Together, to strengthen resources and infrastructure in these Kansas communities,” said Thiesen.

Through Creating Leadership Together, Kansas Leadership Center is offering \$10,000 worth of in-kind leadership development training and program design consulting for each of the Kansas-based organizations selected as partners in the initiative. Additionally, each partner is eligible to receive up to \$10,000 in seed money for their first two years of programs.

Starting this month, core teams from each partner organization have the option of attending KLC's programs and will participate in required mentor conversations through October 2022. Learn more [here](#).

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**About the Kansas Leadership Center**

The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) is a singular educational organization founded to foster civic leadership for healthier Kansas communities. Its programs and teachings present leadership as an activity available to anyone at any time. KLC offers training for organizations, teams and individuals as well as advanced programs for leadership development practitioners. It provides development grants for civically oriented organizations in Kansas, partners with community leadership programs and offers customized trainings for businesses and non-profits alike. KLC hosts civic leadership forums and encourages Kansans to take active part in public life for the common good. KLC Press publishes books on leadership and The Journal, a nationally recognized, award-winning civic issues magazine. Based in Wichita, KLC receives core funding from the Kansas Health Foundation. [Learn more](#).

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