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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Kansas Leadership Center and Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation Launch 'Heartland Together' Partnership with Multi-State Listening Tour**

Wichita, Kan. – In an effort to address the systemic challenges that make it hard to start and grow local businesses in rural communities, today the [Kansas Leadership Center](#) (KLC) launched a two-week listening tour with stops in Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska.

The tour marks the opening phase of 'Heartland Together,' a partnership with the [Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation](#) (EMKF) to grow and strengthen support for entrepreneurs in these four Midwestern states.

From March 21 to April 5, KLC facilitators will conduct listening sessions in more than 20 communities to elevate the conversation of healthy entrepreneurial ecosystems and build local civic engagement capacity. Several of the listening sessions will be facilitated in Spanish.



"At the Kansas Leadership Center, we believe that anyone can exercise leadership at any time. We know that leadership at scale is required to create the conditions necessary for a thriving local business community," said [Dennis Clary](#), director of custom civic engagement at KLC. "Thanks to the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, we are excited to step out on this listening tour to foster leadership for stronger, healthier and more prosperous Heartland communities."

## Heartland Together listening tour sessions will take place in the following cities, towns and communities:

- Nebraska: Sidney, Ogallala, McCook, Norfolk, Holt County/O'Neill, Grand Island
- Kansas: Liberal, Cowley County, Hutchinson, Dodge City, Liberal, Independence
- Missouri: Carthage, West Plains, Joplin, Maryville, Kirksville
- Iowa: Belmond, Iowa Falls, Marshalltown, Marion County



"Stronger communities depend on new and diverse ventures, what we traditionally refer to as entrepreneurship. We further know the success of entrepreneurs depends on the environment that supports them—their ecosystem. We are eager to learn more about the challenge of ecosystem building to inform how we can help more people and communities achieve economic prosperity in the heartland region," said [Lucy Petroucheva](#), civic engagement manager at KLC.

## Follow the Listening Tour

Follow our social channels or search the hashtag *#heartlandtogether* for updates from our four state teams on the road during the tour.

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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 to foster leadership for stronger, healthier and more prosperous Kansas communities, KLC receives core funding from the [Kansas Health Foundation](#) (a private, philanthropic organization). It partners with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, businesses and communities to build cultures that are healthy, productive and well-positioned to make measurable progress on daunting challenges and emergent opportunities. KLC Press publishes leadership books and [The Journal](#), a nationally recognized, award-winning civic issues magazine.

Over the past 15 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 [kansasleadershipcenter.org](http://kansasleadershipcenter.org).

## About the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is a private, nonpartisan foundation based in Kansas City, Mo., that seeks to build inclusive prosperity through a prepared workforce and entrepreneur-focused economic development. The Foundation uses its \$3 billion in assets to change conditions, address root causes, and break down systemic barriers so that all people – regardless of race, gender, or geography – have the opportunity to achieve economic stability, mobility, and prosperity. For more information, visit [www.kauffman.org](http://www.kauffman.org) and connect with us at [www.twitter.com/kauffmanfdn](https://www.twitter.com/kauffmanfdn) and [www.facebook.com/kauffmanfdn](https://www.facebook.com/kauffmanfdn).

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