

Strategic Economic Development and Expansion (SEED)

Application Guidelines

Opening Date: August 17th

Closing Date: October 19th at 5:00 PM

Webinar Date: August 18 at 2:00 PM

Office Hours:

August 24th	2:00 PM
August 31st	2:00 PM
September 8th (change due to labor day)	2:00 PM
September 14th	2:00 PM
September 21st	2:00 PM
September 28th	2:00 PM
October 5th	2:00 PM
October 12th	2:00 PM
October 19th	2:00 PM

Deadline: October 19 at 5:00 PM

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Overview

The Strategic Economic Expansion and Development (SEED) grant is funded under the Technology-Enabled Fiduciary Financial Institutions Development and Expansion Act (KS Stat § 9-2324 [2021]), which was enacted in 2021 to promote and facilitate the development and growth of trust banks in Kansas; regulate fiduciary financial activities and custodial services and Kansas; and to locate trust bank office space in economic growth zones in rural Kansas.

Purpose

The purpose of SEED grants is to support the economic revitalization of Kansas communities under 5,000 population through investments in quality-of-life initiatives.

Goals

To stimulate economic development, enhance quality of life, and support community-led revitalization through targeted, impactful investments.

Eligible Applicants

- Communities with populations of not more than 5,000 people located in one of the following counties: Allen, Anderson, Barber, Bourbon, Brown, Chase, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Clark, Clay, Cloud, Coffey, Comanche, Decatur, Doniphan, Edwards, Elk, Ellsworth, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Greenwood, Hamilton, Harper, Harvey, Haskell, Hodgeman, Jackson, Jewell, Kearny, Kingman, Kiowa, Labette, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Logan, Marion, Marshall, Meade, Mitchell, Montgomery, Morris, Morton, Nemaha, Neosho, Ness, Norton, Osborne, Ottawa, Pawnee, Phillips, Pratt, Rawlins, Republic, Rice, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Scott, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Sumner, Trego, Thomas, Wabaunsee, Wallace, Washington, Wichita, Wilson or Woodson
- Eligible applicant entities include County or municipal governments, Economic Development Organizations, Local Chambers of Commerce, 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) non-profit organizations, or Tribal Organizations
- Communities that did not receive a SEED 4.0 grant

Ineligible Applicants

- Communities with populations more than 5,000 people
- Counties not included in the eligible county listing
- Communities who received a SEED 4.0 grant

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Timeline

Grant Announcement: August 12, 2026

Application Period: August 17th, 2026

Submission Deadline: October 19, 2026 at 5:00 PM

Award Notification: December 2026

Informational/Grant Application Webinar:

Date: August 18, 2026

Time: 2:00 PM

Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/6417852502106/WN_kfZiRN5ySGaNmi7OptzNhw

Application Procedures

- Online application link can be found here: <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/seedgrants/>
- Questions and submission of additional documentation should be directed to Cassie Alexander at SEED@ks.gov.
- Applications that are incomplete or missing documentation will not be reviewed for rating or considered for funding.

Estimated Time to Complete Application: 1 hour

Funding Availability

- Total Funding Available: \$250,000
- Minimum Award Amount: \$10,000
- Maximum Award Amount: \$25,000
- Expected Number of Awards: 10-12
- Period of Performance: January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2027

The Kansas Department of Commerce expects to announce selected grantees in December 2026. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed, and the period of performance date has started.

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Eligible Projects

Projects must be focused on economic development and revitalization efforts through one of the following quality-of-life categories:

Childcare & Senior Programming – projects that support or enhance these services, such as building improvements, educational materials, supplies and equipment.

Community Vibrancy – Projects that refresh, re-energize and unlock the attractiveness of rural communities, such as art installations, murals and signage. Projects should be permanent and low maintenance.

Food Retail – Projects that support local food sourcing entities with development, renovation and/or expansion. Eligible entities are those selling food including mobile markets and farmer markets. Commercial kitchens which allow multiple businesses or entrepreneurs to produce and sell food without the high cost of maintaining their own standalone kitchen are also eligible.

Libraries – Projects that support providing free and open access to a broad range of materials and services, including reading material, technology, furniture and building improvements

Ineligible Projects

The grant does not support temporary or one-time initiatives. This includes short-term programming such as speaker honorariums, event admission fees, or temporary staffing costs. Additionally, projects that rely primarily on consumable goods—such as food, paper products, or cleaning supplies—are not eligible for funding.

Eligible Program Costs

Childcare Programming:

- Educational materials such as books, art supplies, developmental toys and learning activities
- Program supplies, including but not limited to, materials needed for safe sleep and nutrition
- Indoor and outdoor play, fencing, and recreation items
- Educational curriculum
- Developmental health screenings and materials
- Supports for breastfeeding (e.g. information, privacy room, refrigerator, etc.)
- Materials and support for family engagement and outreach

Senior Programming:

- Health, wellness and nutritional materials, equipment, and resources
- Indoor and outdoor recreational materials, equipment, and resources
- Technology

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- Art materials, equipment, and resources

Community Vibrancy:

- Permanent public art installations
- Murals
- Community placemaking improvements such as downtown seating, equipment for main street sound systems or projectors for gathering places
- Park and recreation equipment improvements
- Signage for communities, including welcome signs, downtown light pole banners, and wayfinding signs
- Downtown façade improvement or beautification of downtown

Food Retail:

- Coolers, appliances, display tables, containers or furniture
- Cash registers or similar equipment and technology
- Energy efficiency improvements
- Building rehabilitation

Ineligible Program Costs

One-time programming such as speaker feeds, event fees or salaries; consumable products such as food, paper goods, cleaning supplies, etc.

Match Requirement

A 10% cash match is required for this program. The proof of match should be documented via a signed bank letter, grant award letter or agreement, or another other signed official document verifying the match is “in hand.”

Matching funds can include Community Service Tax Program funds, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, other state grant awards, USDA program, and funds from a general operating account as long as those funds are for the same project.

Funding Priorities

By funding projects in the areas of childcare and senior programming, community vibrancy, food retail and libraries; the SEED grant aims to revitalize rural economies, improve living standards, and make small towns more attractive and sustainable places to live and work. Communities that have not received funding from SEED in the past will receive priority funding.

Authority

SEED grants are funded under the Technology-Enabled Fiduciary Financial Institutions Development and Expansion Act (KS Stat § 9-2324 [2021]), which was enacted in 2021 by the

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Kansas Legislature to promote and facilitate the development and growth of trust banks in Kansas; regulate fiduciary financial activities and custodial services and Kansas; and to locate trust bank office space in economic growth zones in rural Kansas.

Definitions

50% Complete: Achieved when the original scope of work outlined in the application is halfway complete.

100% Complete: Grant and matching funds have been spent, a final visit has taken place (for construction related projects only) and reporting is complete include the project closeout form and final pictures.

Quarterly Update: Forms to be completed by the grantee each quarter the grant award is open. Forms are due March 30, June 30, September 30 and December 31.

Amendment Request: Form to be completed by the grantee if the scope of work is needing to be changed either in budget or timeline by more than 10% of the total project.

KHRI: Kansas Historic Resources Inventory - <https://khri.kansasgis.org/>

SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office

Site Visit Team: Sites are assigned to Kansas Commerce employees based on their location within the state.

Grantee: The organization that will serve as the primary point of contact. This organization will be responsible for checking that all documentation (receipts, pictures, reports, etc.) are uploaded in a timely fashion.

Signee: The official person who has the authority to bind the grantee to the contract issued by Kansas Commerce.

Project Contact: The main contact person who would be able to answer questions regarding the status of the project and who the SEED team would call if there were any questions on the project.

Release of Information:

Information submitted to the Kansas Department of Commerce relating to the application may be subject to the Open Records Law (K.S.A. 45-215 et seq.).

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Application and Submission Instructions

Application Content

Please see the attached sample application.

Required Attachments

Attachments and support materials must be uploaded into the application through Salesforce. Attachments and support materials will not be accepted by any other method. Required attachments are required for eligibility. The required attachments are:

1. A signed copy of the State Policy Regarding Sexual Harassment Acknowledgment Form. Blank form [here](#).
2. A complete and signed copy of the applicant organization's W-9 Form. Blank form [here](#).
3. A signed copy of the OPC Form. Blank form [here](#).
4. Project photos – maximum of 10 may be submitted.
5. Letter(s) of support – One letter is required and up to three may be submitted.

Supporting Materials (Optional)

- Architectural and engineer reports
- Project bids and estimates – highly encouraged if your project(s) involve construction
- Business and marketing plan

Submission Instructions

Applications are to be submitted through the Salesforce platform. Applicants will need to create an account or log into an existing account prior to completing the application itself. If there are any technical questions about Salesforce, please contact KDC_Salesforce.Admin@ks.gov. For any program related questions, please contact SEED@ks.gov.

Once in the Salesforce portal, navigate to the SEED 5.0 funding opportunity. Complete the required prompts on the funding opportunity. Applicants will be able to save their progress in the portal. Upon successful submission of the grant application, the primary email connected to the application will receive a confirmation email including a PDF attachment of the application.

Late Applications

To maintain a fair application process, the Kansas Department of Commerce will not accept late grant applications.

For emergency circumstances please contact the SEED Team at SEED@ks.gov to discuss any extenuating circumstances that led to late submission.

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Application Review Information

Kansas Commerce strives to review grants through an objective and unbiased process. Grants will be reviewed based on rubric criteria by a panel.

VALUE	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
EXEMPLARY	Clearly explains the project and its significant public value, justifying the allocation of financial support from the State of Kansas.	92-100
EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	Satisfactorily explains the project and its public value, justifying the allocation of financial support from the State of Kansas.	80-91
MEETS EXPECTATIONS	Sufficiently explains the project and its public value, and may justify the allocation of financial support from the State of Kansas.	68-79
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	Does not sufficiently explain the project or its public value; does not warrant the allocation of financial support from the State of Kansas.	56-67
INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE	Provides an incomplete and/or inadequate explanation of the project or its public value. The information is confusing, not very clear, and/or doesn't give enough details. Does not warrant funding from the State of Kansas.	0-55

Rubric

Grants will be reviewed and scored based on the provided rubric available in the application package.

Scoring

The maximum number of points an application can earn is 100. Reviewers will individually score each application or each section that is assigned to them. A scoring rubric will be published with the grant opportunity and on the grant webpage. Funding priority criteria may be allocated a higher percentage of the total score or weighted more.

Applications must earn enough points for their application to fall under “Meets Expectations”, “Exceeds Expectations”, or “Exemplary” to be recommended for funding. Meeting one of these values does not guarantee funding for a project.

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Selection Criteria

Kansas Commerce will have \$250,000 available for the SEED grant, subject to funding availability. All grant applications approved by the Department of Commerce will be funded according to the process set forth in the following:

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for eligibility and threshold criteria, as outlined in the guidelines. Eligible applications will then be reviewed and rated according to the established rubric and scoring matrix.

Kansas Department of Commerce may determine which grant applicants will receive state grant funds based on a number of factors, including:

- Grant reviewer scores
- Geographic distribution of grant applicants
- Services to specified populations
- History of grant applicant as a state grantee
- Applicant's capacity to perform the work
- Pre-award capacity assessment of applicant

All awards must be approved by the Secretary of Commerce.

Award Notification

Kansas Commerce strives to notify applicants of awards in a timely manner.

All applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email with a signed letter from Kansas Commerce in December 2026.

Grant Provisions

As referenced in the Technology-Enabled Fiduciary Financial Institutions Development and Expansion Act (KS Stat § 9-2324 [2021]), which was enacted in 2021 to promote and facilitate the development and growth of trust banks in Kansas; regulate fiduciary financial activities and custodial services and Kansas; and to locate trust bank office space in economic growth zones in rural Kansas.

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking or traffic violations

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- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Kansas will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

Grant Performance Expectations

In addition to Applicant Eligibility, all grantees are expected to:

1. Complete all proposal activities within the grant period
2. Include only allowable expenses in the proposal budget
3. Comply with all grant administration requirements:
 - Provide the required information for grant award agreement
 - Sign and return the grant award agreement to Commerce within 30 calendar days of receipt.
 - Request approval for any changes to the grant award agreement.
 - Complete a final report no later than **December 31, 2027**.
 - Maintain complete and accurate grant records, including all documentation, for a minimum of three years after the end of the grant period.
 - Comply with the requirements of the State of Kansas Policy Against Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation established by Executive Order 18-04.
 - Use the appropriate credit line or approved logo to acknowledge grant funding in all publications. See grant contract for credit requirements.

Accountability and Reporting

Upon being awarded, Grantees will be required to:

- Sign the grant agreement which is routed through DocuSign by KDC Legal
- Complete quarterly reporting forms (sample included)
- Upload project receipts or proof of payment documentation
- Upload regular progress photos
- At project completion, Grantees will be asked to fill out a project closeout form (sample included)
- At project completion, Grantees will be asked to fill out a perception survey (sample included)

Grant Payments

The first payment (half of the total grant award) will be distributed following a fully signed and executed grant agreement. The second payment (half of the total grant award) will be distributed at 50% project completion.

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Release of information

Information submitted to the Kansas Department of Commerce relating to the application may be subject to the Open Records Law (K.S.A. 45-215 et seq.). Confidentiality will not be guaranteed.

Contact Information

For more information about this grant, please contact:

SEED Team
Kansas Department of Commerce
107 ½ N. Penn, Suite 2ABC
Independence, KS 67301
Email: SEED@ks.gov
Phone: 785-631-0893