

Kansas Beats the Virus: *What We Learned from our Mass Civic Action Campaign*

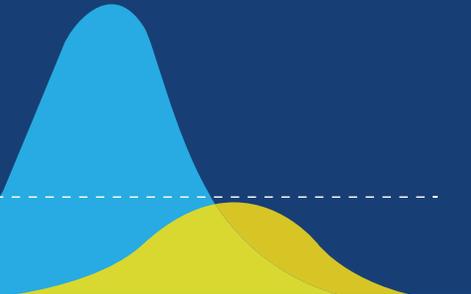


**KANSAS
BEATS
THE
VIRUS**

#KSBeatsTheVirus



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THIRD FLOOR RESEARCH
KANSAS LEADERSHIP CENTER

Third Floor Research reports are published by the Kansas Leadership Center, a first-of-its-kind 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 leadership development practitioners. It provides development grants for civically oriented organizations in Kansas, partners with local community leadership programs and offers customized trainings for businesses. KLC hosts civic leadership forums and encourages Kansans to take an active part in public life for the common good. KLC Press publishes books on leadership and *The Journal*, a nationally recognized, award-winning civic leadership magazine. Based in Wichita, KLC receives core funding from the Kansas Health Foundation.

Third Floor Research is an applied research center operated through a partnership between the Kansas Leadership Center and Kansas State University's Staley School of Leadership Studies. Our research focuses on the impact of leadership training and contributes to global learnings in the field of leadership and adaptive change processes. We create useful findings that address individual development, organizational impact, and community capacity.

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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
<i>5 Useful Findings At-A-Glance</i>	4
<i>Details - Kansas Beats the Virus</i>	6
<i>Useful Finding #1</i>	10
<i>Measuring Impact</i>	11
<i>Kansas Beats the Virus Evaluation</i>	12
<i>Stakeholder Evaluation</i>	13
<i>Useful Finding #2</i>	14
<i>Recruitment and Communication Tools</i>	15
CASE STUDY	16
<i>Groups addressing disparity issues found valuable resource through virus initiative</i>	
<i>Useful Finding #3</i>	18
CASE STUDY	20
<i>Civic-minded residents become empowered through connections, engagement</i>	
<i>Facilitator Evaluation</i>	22
<i>Useful Finding #4</i>	24
CASE STUDY	25
<i>Finding common ground in rural Kansas results in successful project</i>	
<i>Useful Finding #5</i>	26
<i>Action Project Evaluation</i>	28
CASE STUDY	30
<i>Relationships with trusted groups, incentives helped reach the Latinx community.</i>	
APPENDIX	32
<i>Stakeholder Survey Responses and Demographics</i>	
<i>Facilitator Evaluation</i>	

Executive Summary

GAP

COVID-19 has presented an unprecedented leadership challenge around the world.

With virtually no advance warning, communities of every size have been forced to find practical ways to address a public health crisis of a magnitude unseen in over 100 years. In the United States, that challenge was compounded in the fall of 2020 as unprecedented peaks in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths led to nationwide lockdowns, transitions to virtual learning, a deepening economic crisis, mask mandates, and social distancing that demanded new ways of doing business and celebrating winter holidays.

All this while a politically divided nation went to the polls to elect a new president.

In this difficult environment, with the full scale and ultimate impact of the pandemic then (as now) unknown, the state of Kansas recognized the importance of responding to public health concerns with a sense of urgency and maintained a strong desire to implement strategies to encourage Kansans to act. Specifically, identify a credible organization with established networks and proven experience to mobilize small teams across the state to act on behalf of the common good of their communities. The Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) responded to the call for action with a commitment to help communities create local solutions to slow the spread of the virus.

This report details their actions and tells stories of those communities.

OUR CURIOSITY

In response to the spikes in COVID-19 cases and to address the accompanying issues, the KLC partnered with the state of Kansas in November 2020 to launch Kansas Beats the Virus, (KBTV), a civic action campaign to improve public health practices in communities across the state. The KLC recognized that action was needed and mobilized community members to plan and support actions to address public health issues brought upon by the pandemic. The KBTV initiative encouraged local community action by stakeholders who understand what is happening in their specific county. The working hypothesis was that to slow the spread of COVID-19, we needed more Kansans exercising leadership to influence the behavior of their neighbors, friends, families, congregations, and co-workers.

We were curious: **Could established networks and incentives to fund action projects influence local teams to launch activities that would cause more people to engage in healthy behaviors that slow the spread of the virus?**

STUDY PURPOSE

This report details the grassroots efforts and networks mobilized in response to KLC's call to take action to slow the spread of COVID-19. During a five-week period approximately 4,596 Kansans participated in community meetings about the pandemic's impact, with several hundred engaging in more than one meeting or more than one role in the initiative. Outreach to the KLC alumni network included community members across government, nonprofit, for-profit, education, and faith-based sectors. Alumni represent people across the organization chart, with formal and informal authority to exercise leadership, i.e. public officials, teachers, volunteers, or health providers. Individuals who facilitated meetings received a stipend for their time and organizations that convened a meeting received an honorarium. It was an unprecedented display of collective civic action resulting in 851 meetings convened between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day to slow the virus's spread throughout the state of Kansas. The initiative awarded over \$850,000 in grants to implement 827 action projects that were developed directly from community engagement.

Executive Summary

5 Useful Findings At-A-Glance

1.

A network of **MOTIVATED INDIVIDUALS** with a shared purpose can mobilize the masses – and do it quickly.



2.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.

Connections to an organization or particular individual have a direct association to a person's willingness to participate.

3.

IF THEY'RE ENGAGED, THEY'RE EMPOWERED.

As a result of participating in KBTV, Kansans felt more civically minded and ready to exercise their own leadership.



4.

A CLEARLY DEFINED PROCESS LED TO BETTER OUTCOMES.

Experienced, trained facilitators propelled more productive meetings and more impactful projects than the teams could have accomplished themselves.

5.

LEVERAGING RELATIONSHIPS + INCENTIVIZING ACTION PROJECTS enabled thousands of Kansans to come together to develop unique approaches specific to their community's needs.

Details

Kansas Beats the Virus

PURPOSE:

To combat the spread of COVID-19, the Kansas Leadership Center launched Kansas Beats the Virus (KBTV), a public health partnership with the state of Kansas.

STRATEGY:

For its part, KLC called on its partners and alumni to hold 1,000 community meetings across the state by December 31. The goal? To inspire local solutions that would keep Kansans healthy, schools and businesses open and the economy strong amidst the pandemic. A team of professional facilitators guided meetings to produce a specific action project for each group that would help slow the spread of the virus in their community.

In the context of community engagement, “stakeholder” is understood in numerous ways. For example, community members involved in KBTV served in four roles:

PARTNER

an organization that helped coordinate meetings and recruit participants

CONVENER

a person who helped organize and recruit participants

FACILITATOR

a person who facilitated a meeting

PARTICIPANT

a person who participated in a meeting

The project was funded by the state of Kansas through the federal CARES Act. Of the funds, \$800,000 was available to implement action projects across the state. In addition, the Kansas Health Foundation – the nonprofit organization that established KLC in 2007 – contributed an additional \$50,000, making more than \$850,000 available for action projects.

Public health strategic practices suggest incentives may lead to better stakeholder involvement (Kindig & Isham, 2014)¹. Therefore, KBTV provided incentives to partners and conveners who coordinated, organized or recruited meeting participants. Individuals who facilitated meetings received a stipend for each guided conversation.

A facilitated meeting resulted in an action project created by local community participants. The participants could submit a grant proposal for funding to implement and execute their local project. This approach supported the idea that people exercise leadership differently based on what they know about their communities.

Through grassroots efforts, stakeholders engaged in meetings that resulted in action projects to address local public health issues.

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS:

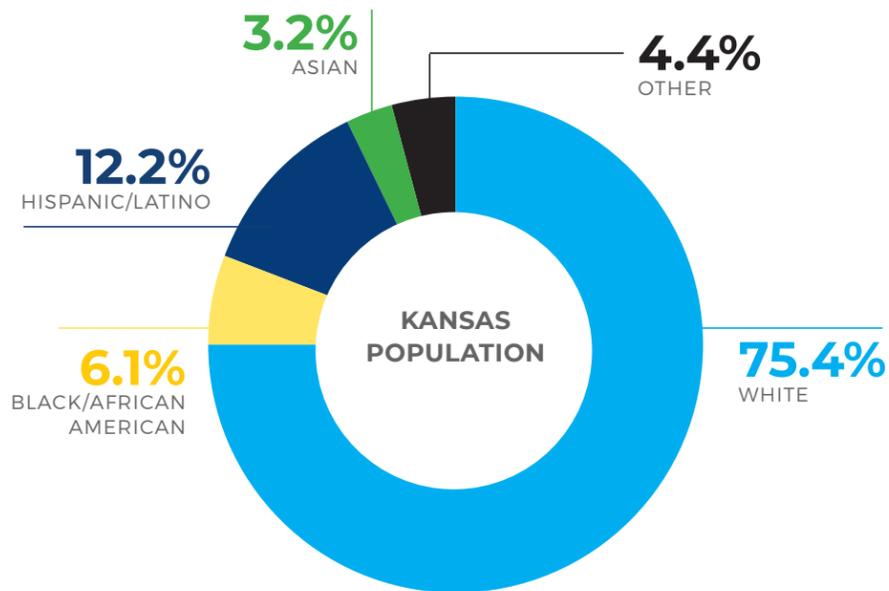
KLC put efforts in place to establish resources for community members to implement and sustain local activities. A digital application was used to organize the KBTV community meetings. KLC partnered with Moonbase Labs, a software design company, to develop a KBTV digital application that provided meeting details and collected basic demographic information of KBTV conveners, facilitators, participants, and partners. All stakeholders were asked to indicate their race/ethnicity, county representation and previous KLC leadership training. Facilitators, conveners, and partners were also asked to indicate any ability to speak Spanish.

¹ Kindig, D. A. & Isham, G., (2014). Engaging stakeholders in population health. *Frontiers of Health Services Management*, 30(4) 3-20.

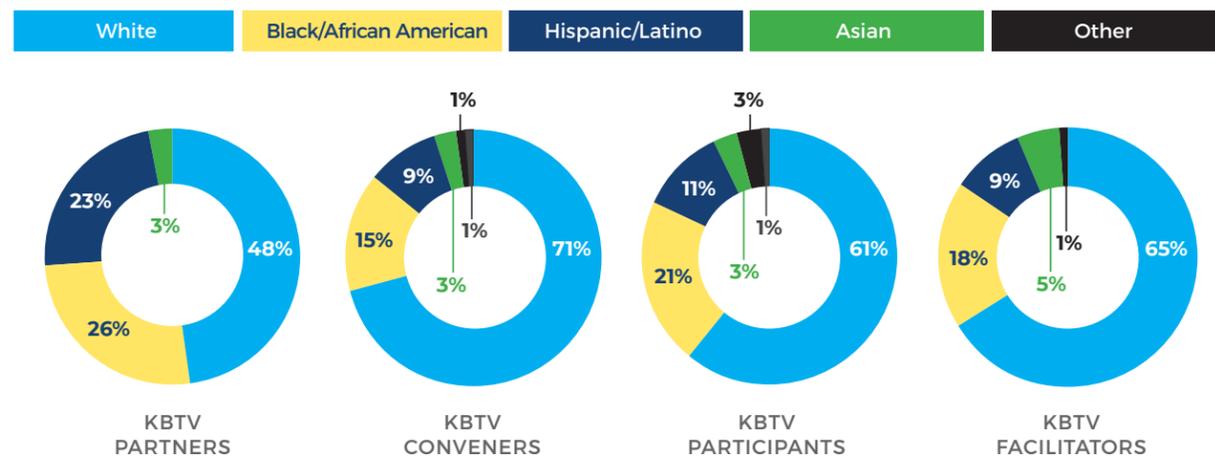
Details

Kansas Beats the Virus

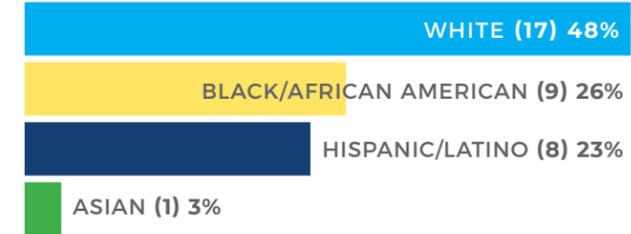
KLC supported leadership practices through the intentional relationships established with diverse people to garner public health changes. Based on demographic data collected from stakeholders, the participants of KBTv are representative of Kansans. According to the United States Census Bureau, population estimates for Kansas from July 1, 2019, included White (75.4%), Black/African American (6.1%), Hispanic/Latino (12.2%), Asian (3.2%), and Other (4.4%).



For comparison, here is a brief description of those who engaged in KBTv.



Of the 44 **PARTNERS** who participated in KBTv:



5% SPOKE SPANISH

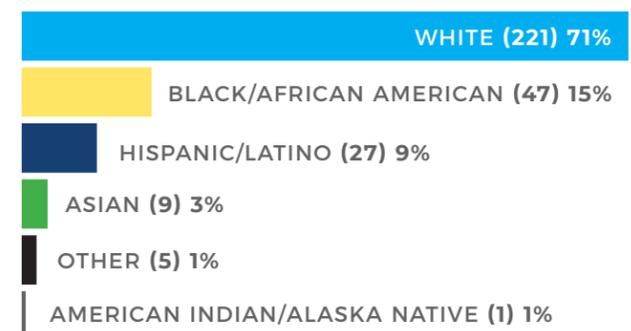
82% PARTNER REPRESENTATIVES WERE KLC ALUMNI

20 OUT OF 105 COUNTIES WERE REPRESENTED

TOP FIVE COUNTIES

SEDGWICK	17
DOUGLAS	3
SHAWNEE	3
WYANDOTTE	3
RENO	2
RILEY	2

Of the 425 **CONVENERS** who participated in KBTv:



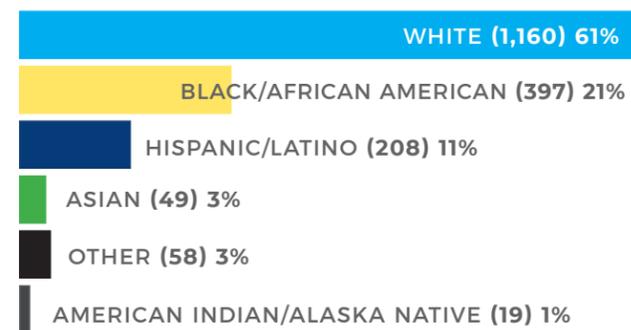
1% SPOKE SPANISH

51 OUT OF 105 COUNTIES WERE REPRESENTED

TOP FIVE COUNTIES

SEDGWICK	141
SHAWNEE	28
DOUGLAS	26
WYANDOTTE	25
RILEY	21

Of the 4,019 **PARTICIPANTS** who participated in KBTv:



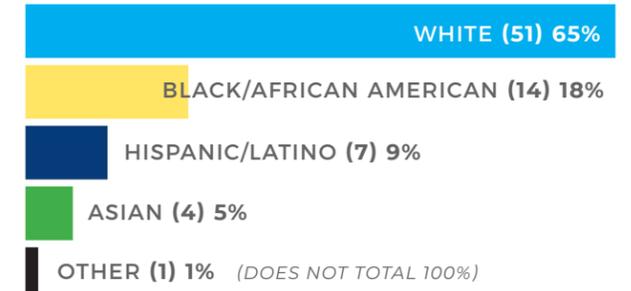
17% WERE KLC ALUMNI

50 OUT OF 105 COUNTIES WERE REPRESENTED

TOP FIVE COUNTIES

SEDGWICK	810
DOUGLAS	255
WYANDOTTE	216
JOHNSON	193
SHAWNEE	174

Of the 103 **FACILITATORS** who participated in KBTv:



3% SPOKE SPANISH

80% WERE KLC ALUMNI

24 OUT OF 105 COUNTIES WERE REPRESENTED

TOP FIVE COUNTIES

SEDGWICK	27
RENO	16
RILEY	7
DICKENSON	6
SHAWNEE	6
WYANDOTTE	6

Useful Finding

Details of Kansas Beats the Virus

1.

A network of **MOTIVATED INDIVIDUALS** with a shared purpose can mobilize the masses – and do it quickly.

Through grassroots efforts and networks, KLC catalyzed 4,596 Kansans to participate in community meetings about the pandemic's impact. It was a remarkable display of collective civic action resulting in 851 meetings convened between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day to slow the virus's spread throughout Kansas. The meetings resulted in 827 action projects and more than \$850,000 in grants was awarded to implement 318 of those action projects in communities across Kansas. Other groups used funds from other sources to purchase supplies and cover printing costs or used in-kind donations from local businesses.

Faced with fighting a common enemy, citizens from all walks of life rallied around a common cause of encouraging people to wear masks, socially distance, and follow other basic public health guidelines. Solutions ranged from holding mask-designing contests, organizing volunteer-operated home-delivery services, and compiling care packages for nursing home residents. To learn more about the solutions that came out of the meetings, see "Useful Finding #5" on page 26 of this report.

Measuring Impact

Kansas Beats the Virus



To develop a better understanding of the impact of KBTV, we analyzed the overall experience of participating in a KBTV meeting as well as the action projects that resulted from those meetings. First, Third Floor Research at KLC surveyed all of the conveners, facilitators, participants, and partners who were part of the initiative. Second, Kansas Business Services, LLC conducted an analysis of the KBTV action projects that were created. This report focuses on the responses of participants and facilitators along with key learnings from action projects. The aim is to document the KBTV initiative and learn more about the process of engaging communities and implementing action projects.

The report provides data and analysis from three perspectives/areas:

PARTICIPANTS

Community members in Kansas and two counties in the Kansas City, Missouri metropolitan area.

Data Source: An online survey sent to all KBTV participants focused on measuring Kansans' motivation to participate in KBTV.

FACILITATORS

Experienced professionals who had received training from KLC on conducting KBTV meetings.

Data Source: An online survey and a virtual debrief with facilitators regarding the KBTV process.

ACTION PROJECTS

The community-based project plans created and implemented by KBTV participants.

Data Source: An online survey and follow-up phone calls with a key contact related to each action project.

Kansas Beats the Virus Evaluation

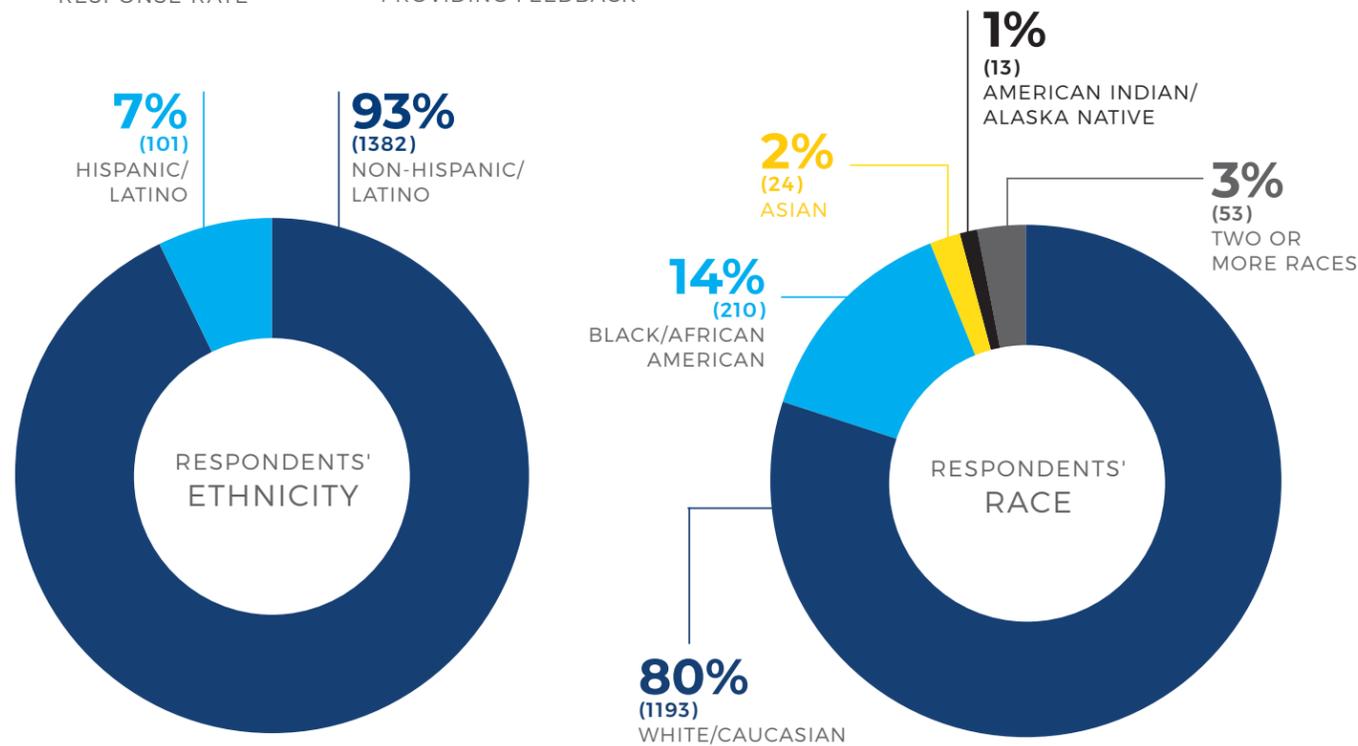
METHODOLOGY

The KBTV evaluation used mixed-methods consisting of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data collection included online surveys and a virtual debrief that supported a multimethod approach. The debrief consisted of facilitators responding to questions about their experiences (see pages 22 and 34).

The KBTV evaluation assessed the experiences of community stakeholders including: partners, conveners, facilitators, and participants and the action projects developed as a result of KBTV.

33%
OVERALL SURVEY
RESPONSE RATE

1,517
SURVEY RESPONDENTS
PROVIDING FEEDBACK



NOTE: NOT ALL STAKEHOLDERS ANSWERED THIS QUESTION

Stakeholder Evaluation

All community stakeholders (partners, conveners, facilitators and participants) received an online survey from the Third Floor Research team capturing quantitative data. The survey was administered one to two months after the KBTV meetings and action projects had occurred. The survey collected information about stakeholder demographics, motivation to participate in KBTV, and the impact of KBTV participation on an individual's sense of confidence to contribute; connection to others; responsibility for the community; and willingness to participate in the future.

Survey responses of the 1,139 stakeholders who completed the survey:
TIMELINE: FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 8, 2021

28%
OVERALL SURVEY
RESPONSE RATE

1,139
SURVEYS
COMPLETED

309
INVITED OTHERS TO
PARTICIPATE IN KBTV

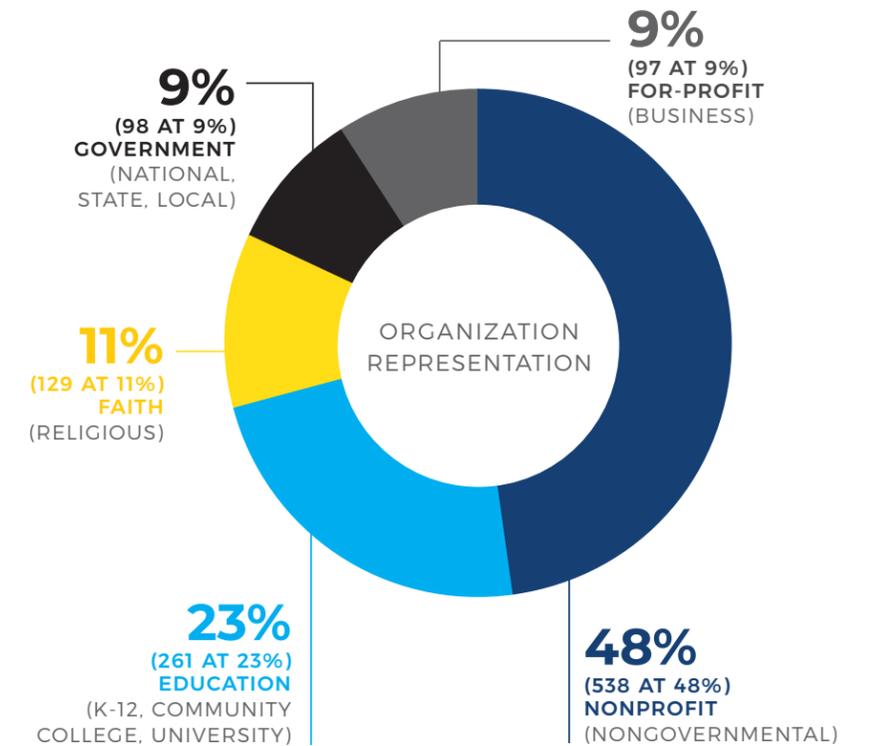
294
(25%) REPORTED
ATTENDING MORE
THAN TWO MEETINGS

43 OUT OF 105
COUNTIES WERE REPRESENTED

TOP FIVE COUNTIES

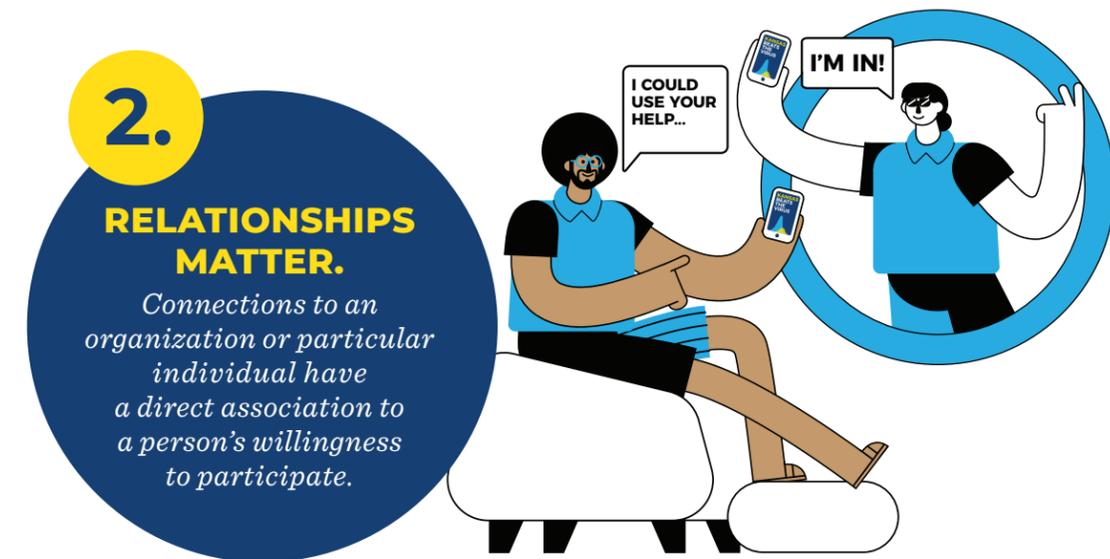
SEDGWICK	319
DOUGLAS	88
JOHNSON	75
SHAWNEE	61
WYANDOTTE	57

NOTE: NOT ALL STAKEHOLDERS ANSWERED THIS QUESTION



Useful Finding

KBTV Survey: Participant Role



2.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.
 Connections to an organization or particular individual have a direct association to a person's willingness to participate.

The KBTV survey found that the top two indicators motivating community members to take part in KBTV are “invitation by an organization I feel connected to” and “invitation by an individual I respect.”

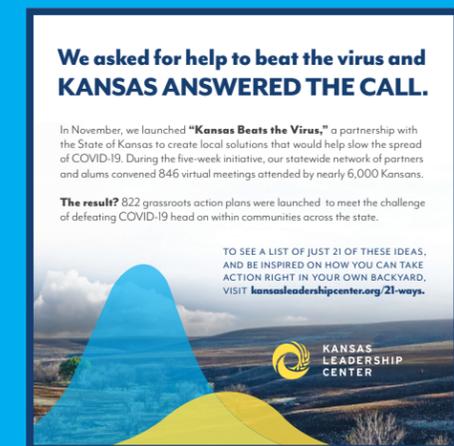
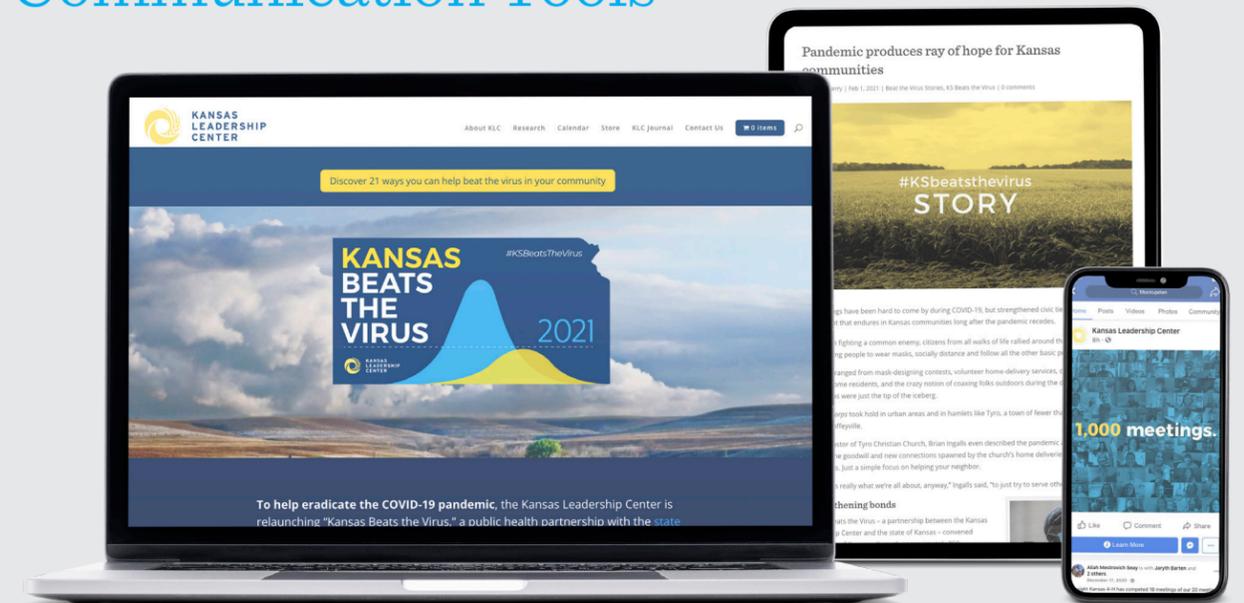
PARTICIPANTS SELECTED THEIR TOP TWO REASONS FROM THE LIST BELOW

Invitation by an organization I feel connected to	440
Invitation by an individual I respect	421
Desire to encourage healthy behaviors related to the pandemic	349
Concern about the pandemic	319
Invitation by the Kansas Leadership Center	173
Concern about a specific community	150

MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE

The evaluation demonstrates that people participated in KBTV because they had an invitation from an organization they were already connected to or from an individual they respect. This suggests that slowing the spread of the virus is a relational activity. Experts play a part, but leveraging relationships is key. Therefore, intentional efforts should be made to engage conveners and partners who have access to the population with COVID-related disparities.

Recruitment and Communication Tools



Digital tools that encouraged recruitment and correspondence among action project participants included a meeting registration app, an in-depth web page, featured stories, digital ads and a Facebook group.

CASE STUDY

Groups addressing disparity issues found valuable resource through virus initiative

With disproportionately high COVID-19 infection and death rates among non-White populations the pandemic put a spotlight on racial disparities in health care.

In Wyandotte County, community leaders and influencers such as Broderick Crawford, Adrion Roberson, Mary Ricketts and Todd Moore are well aware of health care disparities. Through various organizations, they've been addressing those inequities in the African American communities they live and serve within for some time. The Kansas Beats the Virus (KBTV) initiative provided a resource to help mitigate some of those disparities.

According to post-initiative findings, African Americans participated at twice their population rate in the state, with Wyandotte County being particularly active. According to 2019 U.S. Census data, Blacks comprise 6% of the Kansas population, with Wyandotte County having the highest number of Black residents; they make up 22.3% of the county's population.

Nearly 50 projects in Wyandotte County were funded during the KBTV initiative, making it the second-highest county receiving KBTV grants.

NBC Community Development Corp., which Crawford leads, was a particularly prolific facilitator and convener, arranging nearly 90 meetings. NBC CDC has been addressing health inequalities for more than a dozen years.

Roberson, a co-pastor of Berean Bible Fellowship Church who operates KC United! Youth/Family Sports and Education Initiative, convened or facilitated about 30 KBTV meetings. Ricketts, CEO of Turning Point Training and Development, said there were days she "was numb from sitting, but it was worth it," as she facilitated and convened about 40 meetings in a couple of weeks. Some projects involved students at Kansas City Kansas Community College, where non-Whites comprise the majority of the student population. Ricketts is the college's foundation board chair.

The director of pastoral care with Evangelistic Center ministries, Ricketts also reached out to other faith-based communities in Leavenworth and Kansas City to get them involved in projects.

Some of the best projects, Ricketts said, were those that "met people where they are." One project involved putting together cleaning and sanitizing kits that were dropped off at apartment complexes, while another involved stocking self-care kits in food pantries. One project funded a refrigerator in the community college's food pantry.

Moore, a project director at the University of Kansas Medical Center and active volunteer with area nonprofits, also helped convene and facilitate meetings. Several of his projects involved student groups.

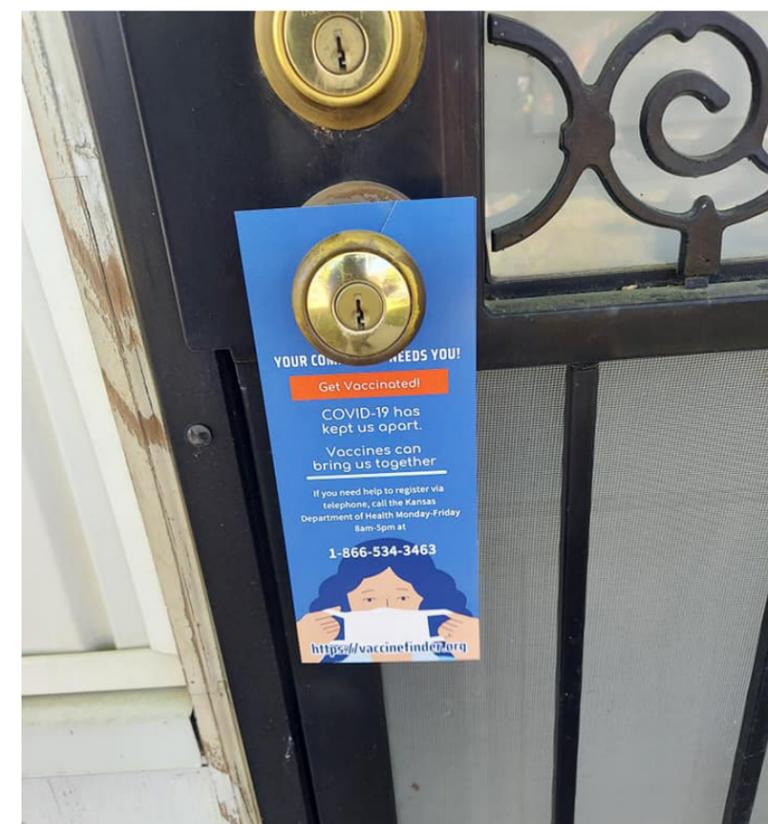
For example, Moore worked with the KU Med Center Academy Health Student Chapter, which created and distributed COVID vaccine door-hangers within the Rosedale neighborhood where the center is located in Kansas City, Kansas.

During one meeting Moore convened with youth, the kids decided they wanted to address reducing concerns about COVID-spread in multigenerational households. Moore later heard from the adults involved with those youth that "they were excited to have a space to talk about how (the pandemic) was affecting their family and actually coming up with solutions." The solutions involved providing face masks and gift cards for delivery services.

Moore said he was "pleasantly surprised" at the level of engagement he saw happening with the KBTV initiative in Wyandotte County; it showed that people were eager to have an impact.

Ricketts agreed. "What worked well was this was an opportunity to bring people together ... people who are passionate about their community and about making an impact in their community. When people get excited to make an impact, it's easy for the chain reaction to happen."

Wyandotte County already has "a fairly well-connected community among those who have worked on equity issues," which helped create successful KBTV projects, Ricketts said. "The best time to know your community is yesterday. Don't wait for a major issue to happen. Know your influencers in the community and build good relationships."



"The best time to know your community is yesterday. Don't wait for a major issue to happen. Know your influencers in the community and build good relationships."

MARY RICKETTS

Useful Finding

KBTV Survey: Participant Role



3.

IF THEY'RE ENGAGED, THEY'RE EMPOWERED.

As a result of participating in KBTV, Kansans felt more civically minded and ready to exercise their own leadership.

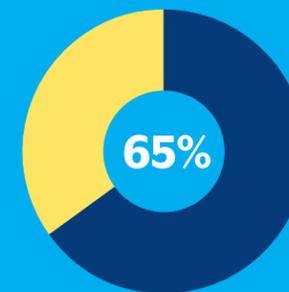
The survey found that participants' perception of confidence, connection, responsibility, and willingness is greater now than before participating in KBTV. Participants responded to a five-point scale, with one being less now than before participating in KBTV and five representing greater now than before participating in KBTV.

COMMITMENT TO THE ISSUE AND COMMUNITY:

Confidence, Connection, and Responsibility Increase

Survey results show that two-thirds of participants feel more confident, more connected, a better sense of responsibility, and a willingness to engage in public health initiatives. These results indicate that by starting where individuals are and empowering them to exercise leadership in this way, we are mobilizing an ever-expanding network of Kansans that are committed to leveraging their relationships and using their own leadership to combat the virus. This is an opportunity to continue to build on civic engagement activities.

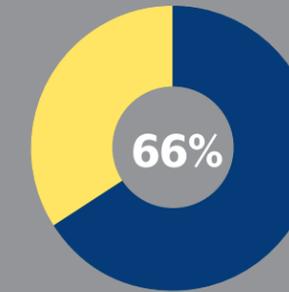
CONFIDENCE:



65% feel slightly or greater confidence that they can contribute to making things better in their community after participating in KBTV.

(615 AT 65%, 324 AT 35%)

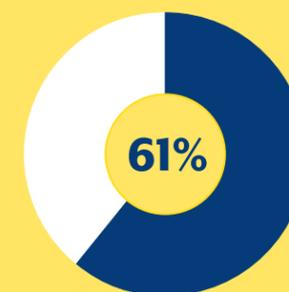
CONNECTION:



66% feel slightly or greater connection to others who are working to make things better.

(623 AT 66%, 316 AT 34%)

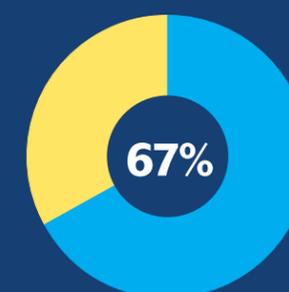
RESPONSIBILITY:



61% feel slightly or greater sense of responsibility for the health of their community.

(578 AT 61%, 364 AT 39%)

WILLINGNESS:



67% feel slightly or greater willingness to participate in something like this in the future.

(634 AT 67%, 307 AT 33%)

CASE STUDY

Civic-minded residents become empowered through connections, engagement



“Look, regardless of whether you believe in the virus or not, it’s creating effects on your organization. What are those effects and how can we go about mitigating them?”

PHIL BLACK, SALINA CITY COMMISSIONER

When an email announcing the Kansas Beats the Virus (KBTV) initiative hit a Salina city commissioner's inbox, he quickly identified someone in the community who could help mobilize the community's participation.

Since moving to Salina in 2002, Phil Black has been building connections with residents as an elected member of the local school board, candidate for state legislature, a member of various community groups and local government committees, and a musician playing local gigs.

For three weeks in December 2020, Black worked those connections, becoming one of the initiative's most prolific meeting organizers overall and the most prolific in Saline County. He organized 17 of the 20 meetings held in Saline County. He led several projects himself and enlisted others to take on projects as well.

“As far as I was concerned, that was my job for that time,” said Black. “I found small groups who could be more flexible and could make things happen a lot quicker and easier than going through boards of directors. The way I would pitch it to people was to say, ‘Look, regardless of whether you believe in the virus or not, it’s creating effects on your organization. What are those effects and how can we go about mitigating them?’ That really helped people think seriously about how it was affecting them.”

The resulting projects affected diverse segments of Saline County's population: hospitalized COVID-19 patients, domestic violence survivors, transient families, lower-income and underserved residents, isolated seniors and even those who wanted to support local musicians.

“After Phil called, I got busy,” said Sandy Beverly, who secured grants on behalf of the local NAACP chapter and North Salina Community Development. Neighborhood residents and business owners comprise the latter group. Beverly is an officer with

both organizations, which had already done some pandemic-related projects in the summer.

With KBTV grants, Beverly's groups provided personal care packages and information on testing and vaccination sites to transient families living in old hotels and residents of two 76-unit apartment buildings in the economically depressed neighborhood of North Salina. The money also funded free drive-through testing for those residents.

Megan Gladbach, who works at the Land Institute, was among the many local musicians who endured months of not having gigs. Again, it was Black who encouraged her to think of a creative and innovative way to share talents and help make a difference in curbing the steadily growing confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Gladbach staged a virtual mini music festival in mid-February. Besides showcasing Gladbach's band, The Radicles, the festival included two other popular area bands, Don Wagner and Friends and the husband/wife duo Treehouse.

To encourage pandemic awareness among festival viewers, The Radicles offered the first 100 audience members who shared their personal plans to beat the virus a free copy of the band's first CD, “Seed.” While isolating in 2020, the band members had written and recorded songs about hope, growth and resilience, themes that resonated during a pandemic.

The last track on the CD was used as the soundtrack for a 90-second COVID-19 safety plan video produced by Chisholm Life Skills Center, a Wichita public school that helps developmentally challenged young adults transition from school to adulthood.

Facilitator Evaluation

After all facilitators participated in an online survey, a third of the group engaged in a virtual debrief discussion where they were asked questions regarding the overall process of KBTV. The team engaged in an interactive conversation using the Jamboard virtual tool.

What were the characteristics of a great KBTV meeting?

“Groups that already knew each other or had some sense of shared connection when they came to the meeting.”

“The prep work the convener did with the small group was important. And the work the convener would do after to keep the momentum going.”

“Clear objectives and purpose outlined at the beginning. Many came in (to the planning meeting) unclear but left feeling they had accomplished something.”

What should we change if we do something similar again?

“Add criteria for a good action plan – something we can all contribute to.”

“Shore up the mini-grant process – clear talking points about the mini-grants, perhaps lower the amount, more time for the grant process.”

“Develop strategies beyond the 501(c)(3) sector.”

“KLC leveraged technology in every way possible; find ways to use (the online) platform and interaction on the platform to collect data related to health and civic outcomes.”

“Explore diverse networks and how they might engage with KLC/mass action efforts across race, class, sectors, community development organizations, health organizations, and organizations that support people traditionally underserved, etc.”

FUTURE ACTIONS: As Recommended by Surveyed Facilitators

ESTABLISH

clear and transparent criteria for developing good action projects and the grant process.

CREATE

guidelines building trust in the process.

ADVANCE

strategies that engage sectors other than nonprofit.

LEVERAGE

technology to update the Moonbase application and website in real-time to demonstrate action plans conducted.

ADDRESS

technology hurdles including access to broadband internet in rural communities.

ENGAGE

in purposeful and intentional conversation with broader networks to increase the reach and impact of KBTV.

Useful Finding

Facilitator Survey

4.
A CLEARLY DEFINED PROCESS LED TO BETTER OUTCOMES.
Experienced, trained facilitators propelled more productive meetings and more impactful projects than the teams could have accomplished themselves.

PROCESS:

Purposeful Meeting Facilitation

The preparation of facilitators with tools and an agenda to support a fair and purposeful process to engage others is crucial. In this case, experienced facilitators received training, guides, and slide decks before leading their own community discussions. Therefore, providing the space for facilitators to come together and become familiar with the process may influence their beliefs that the meetings were fair and had a purpose to make progress on the issue.

DEBRIEF:

Criteria, strategy, technology, and broad outreach should influence future activities.

Facilitators conveyed that connection, preparation, and clarity contributed to a great KBTv meeting. Those surveyed also expressed the importance of creating communities made up of individuals with shared connections and purpose to advance the conversation. Additionally, facilitators indicated that laying the groundwork for a meeting and ensuring participants understand the expectations aided in the progression of the conversation and development of action projects. These results suggest the important role conveners play in activating their networks. Therefore, preparing conveners before outreach is a crucial component in creating a conducive environment. (See more recruitment and communication tools used on page 15.)

CASE STUDY

Finding common ground in rural Kansas results in successful project

By finding common ground, a health and wellness coalition and its volunteers in a rural southeastern county created a Kansas Beats the Virus (KBTv) initiative that helped change residents' behaviors and benefited local businesses, while leaving polarizing debates of masks and the pandemic on the sidelines.

For its project, Live Well Crawford County — a multipartner organization established in 2007 with a Kansas Health Foundation grant — created a county-wide guide of 20-plus stores selling grocery items that offered contactless delivery and curbside pickup. The guide included national chains like Walmart, Dollar General and Aldi's along with local and smaller ethnic stores.

With social media ads and regular posts, the campaign “went as viral as something gets in southeast Kansas,” O'Malley said. The social media ad campaign achieved 16,000 separate views, with nearly 3,000 people clicking on the ad and 114 shares.

The idea for the guide came out of a meeting the coalition convened among 10 community leaders from the county's health department, county extension office, economic development offices and other agencies in December 2020.

The resource is listed on the coalition's website, and paper copies were distributed throughout the county to child care centers, schools, service organizations and COVID testing sites including a mobile unit, as well as the participating stores. Many recipients made more copies to share as the ones provided by the coalition ran out.

To come up with a solution, “we defaulted to health department employees because they were on the frontline,” talking to residents about precautions they needed to take while waiting for COVID test results, said Matt O'Malley, Live Well Crawford County's director of outreach and development. After hearing they needed to isolate for 14 days, most residents responded, “I better go to the grocery store now.”

For smaller businesses, especially those that were competing with online ordering services offered by national chains, it was an opportunity to spread the word about their new delivery and pickup options, O'Malley said.

“They were trying to figure out how to evolve, too.” The project was covered multiple times in local media outlets, with some of the businesses initiating calls to reporters to let them know of their participation.

With rising positive test rates in the county, the guide was created to reduce the risk of COVID-positive shoppers visiting stores in person, said O'Malley. He developed the guide and created an extensive distribution campaign to raise awareness of the resource.

The Pittsburg-IGA supermarket, Ron's, which offered deliveries to two other smaller communities and tracks its customers' data, reported bringing in new customers, O'Malley said.

According to 2019 Census data, Crawford County has less than 39,000 residents, with about half of its population living in Pittsburg. Stores located in Pittsburg comprised 11 of the 20-plus businesses listed in the guide, while the other half were stores located in seven of the county's other 10 towns.

O'Malley said he thinks the campaign was successful because “this wasn't spreading information that someone could see as divisive. If we had picked a more divisive project, it likely wouldn't have reached as many people.”

As for his part, O'Malley said, “This was one of the neater things I've done and it had such a large impact.”

A DETAILED GUIDE WAS CREATED FOR MEETING FACILITATORS WITH TALKING POINTS AND TIPS.



Useful Finding

Action Projects

5.

LEVERAGING RELATIONSHIPS + INCENTIVIZING ACTION PROJECTS enabled thousands of Kansans to come together to develop unique approaches specific to their community's needs.

Kansas Business Services further analyzed the impact of the 827 action projects and over 800 meetings that took place between November 25 and December 25. The purpose of this study was to assess how intentional, coordinated critical-thinking discussions—combined with expert facilitated guidance and financial incentives—will produce outcomes linked to increased prevention, education, and deceleration of COVID-19 infection throughout Kansas communities.

Of the 846 total meetings convened, 40% of the plans were funded, 20% were denied funding or submitted proposals after grant funds were depleted, and 40% did not request funding (see table below).

For this initiative, KLC identified funding parameters to implement community action projects:

FUNDED

Approved requests made within the grant application timeframe

UNFUNDED

Unapproved requests made within the grant application timeframe

NRFF (No Request for Funding)

Requests for funding were not made or the request was received outside the grant application timeframe

SURVEY RESPONSE RATE:
28.3% (235 RESPONDENTS)

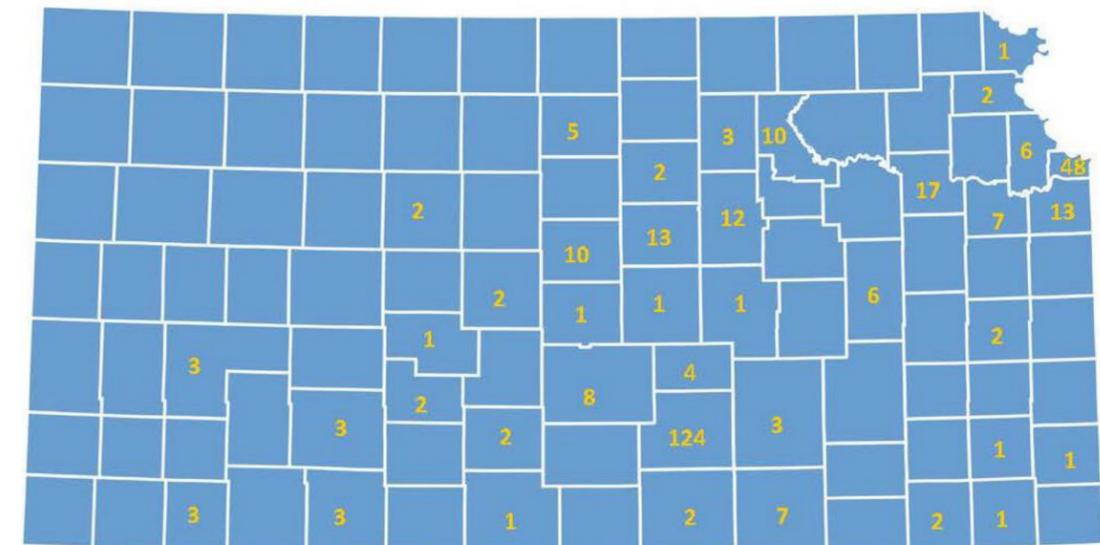
SURVEY TIMELINE:
FEBRUARY - APRIL 2021

FUNDED PROJECTS		
Funded (KDHE)	\$798,924.07	300
Funded (KHF)	\$49,725.00	18
	\$848,649.07	318
UNFUNDED PROJECTS		
Denied	\$93,999.00	35
Eligible but funds depleted	\$130,884.98	58
	\$224,883.98	93

Forty-six counties received \$848,649 to implement 318 action projects in their local communities. The grant awards averaged \$2,505.68 per funded project. There was over \$224,000 in unfunded grant requests to implement an additional 93 action projects.

DATA RELEVANCE: IDENTIFICATION OF GRANT ALLOCATIONS BY NUMBER AND DOLLAR AMOUNT PER COUNTY

DATA VISUALIZATION: DENSITY MAP, DATA TABLE



County	# of Grant Awards	Amount Received (\$)	County	# of Grant Awards	Amount Received (\$)
ANDERSON	2	2,500.00	LYON	6	14,950.00
ATCHISON	2	3,599.00	MARION	1	2,750.00
BARBER	1	3,000.00	MCPHERSON	1	3,000.00
BARTON	2	1,799.00	MITCHELL	5	15,000.00
BUTLER	3	3,975.00	MONTGOMERY	2	5,900.00
CLARK	3	9,000.00	NEOSHO	1	3,000.00
CLAY	1	3,000.00	OTTAWA	2	4,010.47
COWLEY	7	17,898.00	PAWNEE	1	2,788.30
CRAWFORD	1	400.00	PRATT	2	3,599.00
DICKINSON	12	32,393.80	RENO	8	19,750.00
DONIPHAN	1	2,730.00	RICE	1	500.00
DOUGLAS	7	19,600.00	LYON	6	14,950.00
EDWARDS	2	5,940.00	MARION	1	2,750.00
ELLIS	2	6,000.00	MCPHERSON	1	3,000.00
DOUGLAS	7	19,600.00	MITCHELL	5	15,000.00
EDWARDS	2	5,940.00	RILEY	10	28,803.06
ELLIS	2	6,000.00	SALINE	13	37,791.50
ELLSWORTH	10	26,750.00	SEWARD	3	7,050.00
FINNEY	3	9,000.00	SEDGWICK	124	327,587.94
FORD	3	5,099.00	SHAWNEE	17	42,405.00
HARVEY	4	10,150.00	SUMNER	2	6,000.00
JOHNSON	13	35,775.00	WYANDOTTE	48	140,040.00
LABETTE	1	3,000.00			
LEAVENWORTH	6	17,692.00	TOTAL		\$894,526.07

Action Project Evaluation

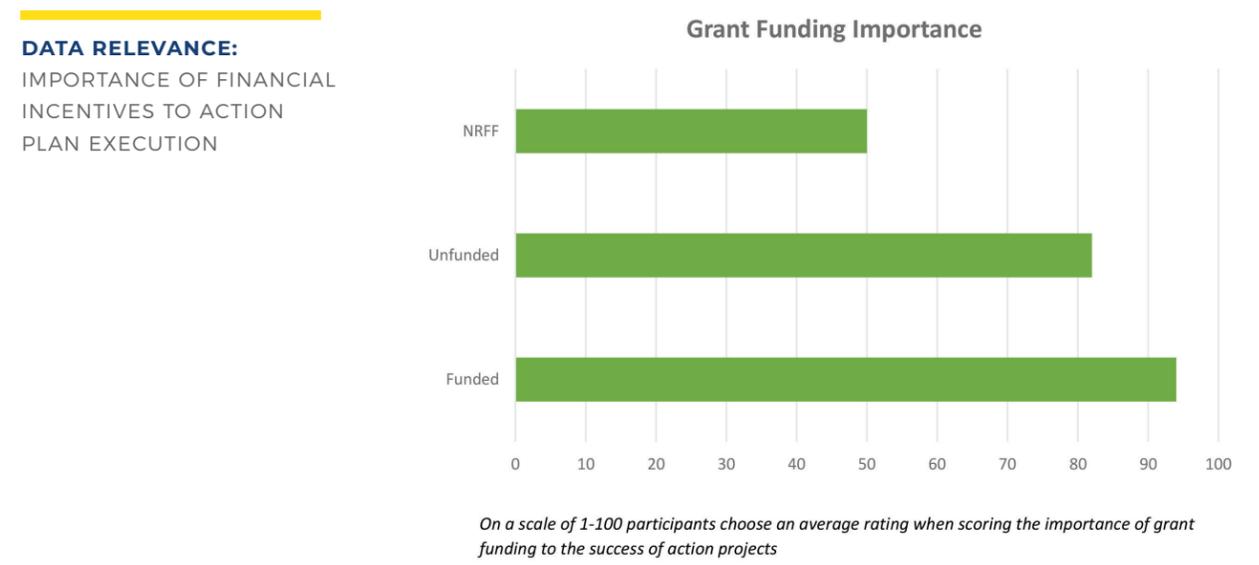
Surveys were distributed to the contact person indicated on the grant application or the person who convened the meeting. Survey participation included: 165 funded projects, 18 unfunded projects, and 52 NRFF (No Request for Funding) projects. The top three priorities for action projects among all three groups were: (1) promote healthy and safe behaviors, (2) increase awareness, and (3) support vulnerable community members.

TOP THREE PRIORITIES FOR ACTION PROJECTS			
	Funded	Unfunded	NRFF
Promote healthy and safe behaviors	83%	78%	63%
Increase awareness	56%	56%	62%
Support vulnerable community members	45%	61%	40%
Promote vaccinations	15%	28%	12%
Increase testing	12%	17%	10%

The three groups were also asked to provide an estimate of how many people were - or will be - served by each action project. More than 66% of those with funded plans estimated that action plans reached over 100 or more Kansans, while more than 50% of those representing NRFF plans believed that they reached over 100 or more Kansans. Based on overall responses, the estimated reach for recorded action plans is over 96,305 Kansans.

OUTREACH OF KBTV ACTION PROJECTS			
	Funded	Unfunded	NRFF
0-20	5%	28%	21%
20-100	29%	28%	29%
100-500	45%	17%	27%
500-1,000	9%	22%	15%
+1,000	12%	5%	8%

All three groups were asked the importance of financial incentives to executing their action. They responded on a scale of 0-100 with a numerical percentage of importance. Those who received funding believed that more than 90% of their action project was dependent on funding.



RESOURCES IMPACT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Resources provided by the state of Kansas and KLC included resources for meetings and action plans. These financial resources helped recruit a diverse cross-section of Kansans to participate in KBTV meetings. The stipends also assisted with securing trained facilitators to run the 800+ meetings. In addition, financial resources were provided to organizations for convening meetings and for the development and execution of 40% of the local action projects. Based on feedback from the facilitators and conveners, these resources were a big motivator for convening meetings and invaluable to launching a mass-action civic engagement project, particularly in a limited time frame.

CASE STUDY

Relationships with trusted groups, incentives helped reach the Latinx community

To help reach the state’s largest group of non-White residents in the KBTV initiative, some project leaders used incentives, innovative ideas and established relationships with the Hispanic/Latinx community.

Hispanics/Latinxs comprise 12.2% of Kansas’ population, according to 2019 U.S. Census Bureau statistics. The initiative’s participation rate among this ethnic group was half of the Hispanic population rate.

Lalo Muñoz was one of three Kansas Leadership Center Spanish-speaking facilitators who worked with Spanish-speaking conveners and groups during the KBTV initiative. The executive director of El Centro de Topeka, a Catholic social services organization, Muñoz identified some challenges that could explain a lower initiative participation rate among Latinos.

“Zoom is used by individuals who sit in an office and many immigrants don’t work in an office. Being among the working class was a barrier. They have phones, but limited data plans. Some don’t have email.”

Nevertheless, the opportunity to connect and make a difference was powerful for those who did participate, Muñoz discovered.

Convener Blanco Soto, who was with Kansas Appleseed at the time of the initiative, and project convener Araceli Amador, a Wichita-based cosmetics distributor, agreed.

“I think the biggest thing was that this was the first time participants felt they had a voice and could take action,” said Soto, who also worked with participants applying for grants.

Amador said she has already heard from project members that they are eager to help with similar efforts in the future. Amador spearheaded a total of three projects by tapping into her statewide business connections and former co-workers, including a doctor with the Sedgwick County Health Department.

“They loved it,” Amador said. “They said the next time you have a project like this we would love to participate. I think they felt they were participating in something that was important for the whole community, that they were doing something for everyone.”

Two of Soto’s most successful projects were those that involved existing adult learner groups: English-as-a-second-language students at Dodge City Community College and Spanish-speaking clients taking parenting classes through the Kansas Family Advisory Network. Students, who were given \$30 gift cards as incentives, were able to use the organizations’ technology infrastructure. Soto provided gift card incentives to all of the groups she worked with during the initiative — about 10 altogether. For one project that went unfunded, she donated her convener honorarium so that the project could proceed.

Not only did these adult learners help inform others in the community about safety protocols

and testing centers they also used the opportunity to inform themselves.

“This became their opportunity to ask questions that they weren’t able to ask in other settings. Most of the times, the meetings ran longer (than scheduled),” said Soto, who in February 2021 became the first Hispanic woman selected to the Dodge City city commission.

Like Soto, Amador allowed those who worked with her to come up with the project focus. One of the groups Amador worked with created gift packages of masks, sanitizers and sweet treats distributed to 15 isolated senior citizens in the Latino communities in Wichita, Emporia and Kansas City.

“It let them know that while they are living alone, they were not alone,” Amador said.

Amador’s other project — a TikTok contest — had a broader reach, with videos produced for the contest garnering a total of 7,000 views. The project members used their social media connections, including Latino Facebook groups in Liberal, Garden City, Salina and other parts of Kansas, to share a Facebook page Amador created to spread the word about the contest. Amador continues to post information about the virus on the Together podemos (Together We Can) page.

While initially the Together podemos TikTok contest was directed at competitors ages 15 to 20, project members soon heard from people both younger and older who wanted to create videos and compete. The contest was expanded to include ages 10 to 50, with the prize money being \$200 for first, \$150 for second and \$100 for third place. The videos, ranging between 15 to 60 seconds, had to feature original content addressing COVID prevention facts.

One of the prize-winners was Brianna, a young Kansas City girl, who used stuffed animals to convey the concept of social distancing.



“I think the biggest thing was that this was the first time participants felt they had a voice and could take action.”

BLANCO SOTO, CONVENER

Appendix

Kansas Beats the Virus Survey Responses

STAKEHOLDER SCALE QUESTIONS

Motivators:

Indicate the motivators causing you to participate in the way you did with KBTV. Choose your top two from the list below:

- Invitation from the Kansas Leadership Center
- Invitation by an organization I feel connected to
- Invitation by an individual I respect
- Concern about the pandemic
- Concern about a specific community
- Desire to encourage healthy behaviors related to the pandemic

Impact of Participation:

On a scale from 1-5, (1 less, 2 slightly less, 3 same, 4 slightly greater, 5 greater), please rate the impact of your participation in KBTV on you:

- Confidence that I can contribute to making things better in my community
- Connection to others who are working to make things better
- Sense of responsibility for the health of my community
- Willingness to participate in something like this in the future

Impact of Stakeholder Behavior:

Check all that apply. As a result of participating in KBTV, I did the following:

- Committed to participating in an action project
- Followed through and worked on a project with the group
- Increased my attention to healthy behaviors
- Encouraged others to help slow the spread of the virus
- Took on additional work or plans to slow the spread of the virus
- Other
- Nothing

AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

Under 18	64	4%
18-24	41	3%
25-34	198	14%
35-44	327	21%
45-54	281	19%
55-64	315	21%
65 and over	273	18%
Total	1,499	

GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS

Female	1019	70%
Male	412	29%
Cis-Female	3	<1%
Other	5	<1%
Total	1,439	

ROLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Participated in a meeting	1,139
Facilitated a meeting	103
Convened a meeting	175
Registered but did not participate	100
Total	1,517

COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Allen	1	Harper	1	Ottawa	9
Anderson	7	Harvey	44	Pawnee	5
Atchison	12	Haskell	1	Pottawatomie	11
Barber	2	Jackson, MO	32	Pratt	20
Bourbon	1	Jefferson	6	Rawlins	1
Brown	4	Johnson	98	Reno	41
Butler	23	Kearny	1	Republic	1
Chautauqua	1	Kingman	2	Riley	72
Clark	10	Labette	5	Rooks	4
Clay, MO	5	Leavenworth	28	Russell	2
Cloud	2	Lincoln	2	Saline	49
Cowley	46	Logan	1	Sedgwick	424
Crawford	14	Lyon	33	Seward	8
Dickinson	18	Marion	20	Shawnee	90
Douglas	116	Marshall	3	Sherman	1
Edwards	4	McPherson	7	Stafford	2
Ellis	1	Mitchell	17	Stevens	1
Ellsworth	6	Montgomery	18	Sumner	12
Finney	19	Morris	2	Thomas	4
Ford	11	Morton	3	Wilson	8
Geary	1	Neosho	4	Woodson	1
Grant	2	Norton	1	Wyandotte	72
Gray	1	Osage	1		
Hamilton	1	Osborne	2	Total	1,449

Appendix

Facilitator Survey Responses and Debrief

FACILITATOR SURVEY

All facilitators received an online survey from the Third Floor Research team focused on quantitative data collection and analysis and were invited to a debrief discussion. The facilitators completed the process quality index (Hicks, 2020). Following the survey, a third of the facilitators engaged in a virtual debrief discussion.

Survey Responses of the 91 facilitators who completed the survey:

TIMELINE: FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 8, 2021

DEBRIEF SESSION WITH FACILITATORS: MARCH 10, 2021

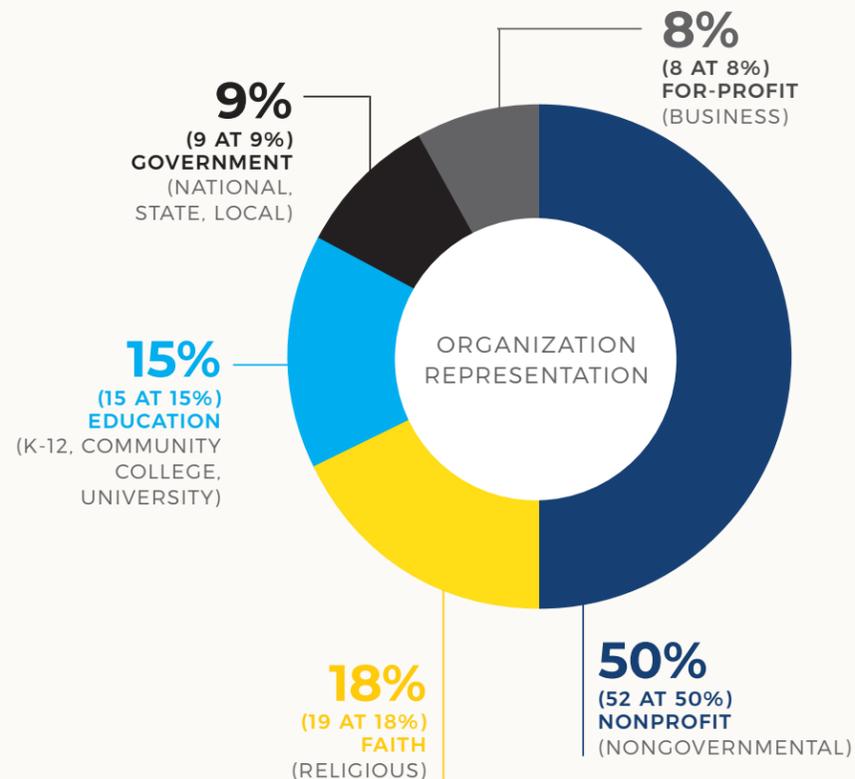
88%
OVERALL SURVEY
RESPONSE RATE

91
SURVEYS
COMPLETED

DURING THE DEBRIEF DISCUSSION, FACILITATORS WERE ASKED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

What were the characteristics of a great KBTv meeting?

What should we change if we do something similar again?



KBTv facilitators responded to questions about the overall quality of the KBTv process using the scale developed by Darrin Hicks. These individuals responded to a six-point scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree with statements regarding the KBTv meeting process. The results are shown in the table below.

Overwhelmingly, facilitators evaluated the meeting process as high quality, particularly in being (1) fair, (2) free of favoritism, and (3) focused on the purpose of the meeting. In terms of process, it was indicated that the quality of KBTv meetings could be improved by placing more emphasis on the process for securing grants.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	AGREE MORE THAN DISAGREE	DISAGREE MORE THAN AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The process was free of favoritism	36%	42%	15%	3%	3%	0%
The process responded fairly to the needs of its members	24%	49%	19%	5%	2%	0%
The people involved in the process usually were focused on broader goals, rather than individual agendas	30%	42%	15%	3%	1%	1%
In the process, everyone had an equal opportunity to influence decisions	32%	40%	22%	5%	0%	1%
Decisions made in the process were based on fair criteria	22%	43%	26%	5%	2%	1%
The decisions made in the process were consistent	13%	48%	30%	6%	2%	1%
Decisions were based on accurate information	14%	46%	36%	2%	2%	0%
In the process, there was sufficient opportunity to challenge decisions	6%	50%	27%	14%	3%	0%
The allocation of resources were decided fairly	15%	38%	37%	3%	3%	1%
The criteria for allocations were fairly applied	15%	38%	37%	3%	3%	3%
Often decisions were made in advance and simply confirmed by the process	5%	18%	21%	23%	24%	10%
In the process, strings were being pulled from the outside, which influenced important decisions	0%	6%	7%	18%	46%	24%
In the process, some people's merits were taken for granted while other people were asked to justify themselves	1%	3%	7%	23%	46%	20%
In discussions about decisions or procedures, some people were discounted because of the organization they represent	0%	4%	3%	16%	49%	27%

Note. For more information about the scale reference: Hicks, D. (2020) Affective energy, authentic power, transforming communities: toward a phenomenology of collaboration, *Global Discourse*, 10 (1), 11–35.



**KANSAS
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