

# Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Annual Report 2025



FOR A GREATER KANSAS CITY





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As we reflect on 2025, I'm proud of what the KC Chamber delivered for our members and for the Kansas City region, and I'm equally focused on how we're strengthening our ability to meet the moment ahead. One of our strategic pillars, Organizational Excellence, is not about internal process for process' sake. It's about ensuring the Chamber is positioned to serve members with consistency, credibility and impact, today and in the high-stakes year to come.

This year, we continued building a high-performing organization guided by clear priorities and disciplined execution. We sharpened how we listen to members and measure outcomes, so we can direct time and resources where they create the greatest return for the businesses and communities we serve. We invested in the tools and workflows that help our team work smarter, respond faster, and deliver a seamless member experience. And we strengthened our culture because a Chamber that champions excellence across the region must hold itself to the same standard.

That approach also reflects our commitment to stewardship. Our members trust us to be thoughtful with time, dollars, and attention. We are committed to sound governance, responsible budgeting, and transparency, protecting the long-term strength of the KC Chamber while maintaining a stable, influential voice for the region's economy. Credibility is earned through results, and it's sustained through continuous improvement and follow-through.

Why does this matter so much right now? Because 2026 will be a defining year for Greater Kansas City.

With FIFA World Cup 26™ on the horizon, the eyes of the world will be on our region. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to showcase Kansas City's strengths: our innovation, our hospitality, our cultural vibrancy, and our uniquely collaborative spirit. But the World Cup is not just an event; it's a catalyst. It will test our readiness and elevate the importance of being aligned across state lines, jurisdictions, and sectors. Meeting that test requires strong partnerships and a Chamber that can convene effectively, communicate clearly, and execute with discipline.

Regionalism is how we win the future. The Kansas City metro is a shared economy. Employers recruit from both sides of the state line. Supply chains, transportation networks and talent pipelines cross municipal boundaries every day. Our prosperity rises—or stalls—together. Ensuring the vibrancy of the entire metropol-

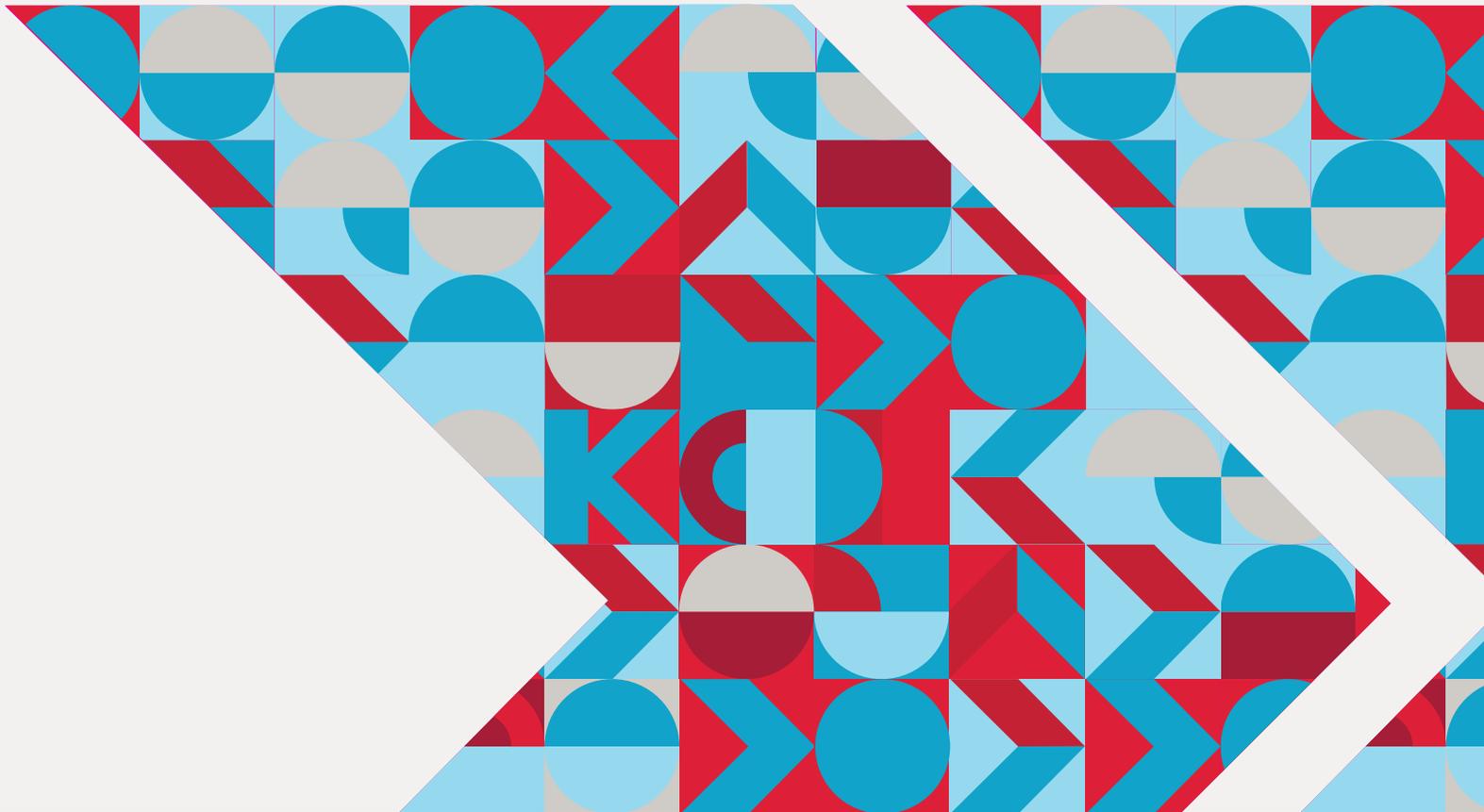
itan area means focusing on the fundamentals that make growth possible: public safety and civic trust, efficient infrastructure and mobility, talent development, attainable housing, and an environment where entrepreneurship and small businesses can thrive.

The KC Chamber will continue to convene and advocate with an eye toward execution. We will help members prepare to capture opportunity from World Cup-related activity. We will champion policies that strengthen competitiveness and support inclusive prosperity. And we will keep improving how we operate, so we can lead with agility, deliver value with consistency, and meet the scale of what's ahead.

Thank you for your partnership, your investment, and your belief in this region. Kansas City's next chapter is being written now, and together, we'll ensure it reflects the very best of who we are.

**JOE REARDON** @JReardonKC @KCChamber

President and CEO, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce





# ACCESS TO CAPITAL: TURNING CONNECTIONS INTO CAPITAL

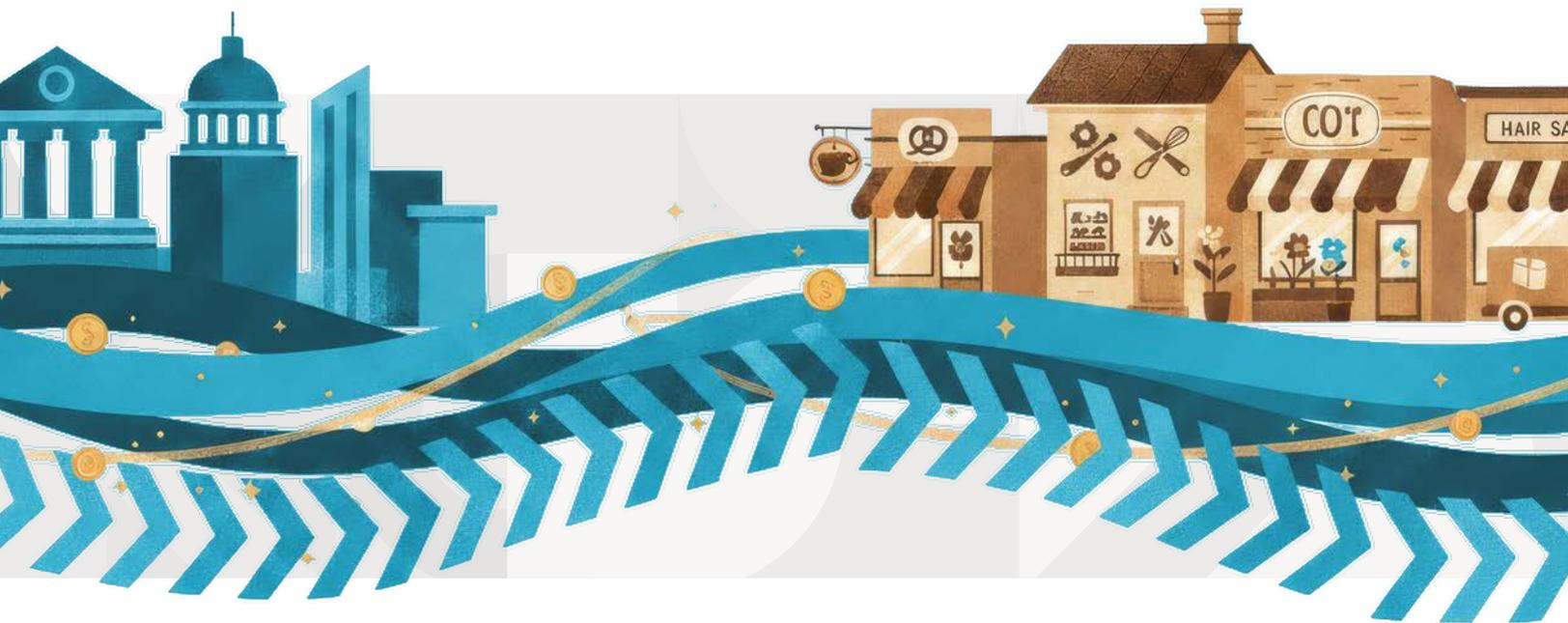
**F**or many small business owners, the greatest barrier to growth is not an idea, a market, or a willingness to work hard. It is access to capital and, just as importantly, access to the relationships and guidance that make financing possible. That is why the KC Chamber launched Access to Capital as part of our Inclusive Prosperity strategic imperative, because a stronger regional economy depends on more entrepreneurs having a fair shot at the resources that help businesses start, scale, hire, and build long-term stability.

From the beginning, the focus was clear: prioritize entrepreneurs who face systemic barriers to capital, create meaningful access to resources and networks, and strengthen the relationships that help businesses move from “hopeful” to “funded.” Over time, Access to Capital evolved from a convening concept into a practical, relationship-driven set of programs that helped entrepreneurs and lenders meet, learn, and follow up in real time.

The cornerstone of this work has been the KC Chamber’s Lenders’ Forums, which

were launched in 2021 and continued as part of the Access to Capital Kauffman Foundation grant. The Lenders’ Forum created an intentional space for small businesses to connect directly with financial institutions, present their business plans, receive feedback, and build lending relationships. The Chamber hosted 16 Lenders’ Forums, engaging 78 small businesses and 81 individual lenders. Those conversations led to 103 follow-up meetings and ultimately resulted in 13 loans or lines of credit from seven lending institutions. These outcomes represent more than transactions; they reflect trust built over time and doors opened through consistent, accessible engagement, especially for entrepreneurs who may not already have a pathway into traditional lending relationships.

Just as critically, the KC Chamber recognized that entrepreneurs succeed faster when the ecosystem supporting them is aligned. To strengthen that support system, the Chamber convened five ESO roundtables that brought together 29 participants from 19 ESOs, helping reduce silos and in-



crease collaboration across the region. The Chamber also delivered loan packaging training through three in-person and four virtual sessions, engaging 19 participants from 16 ESOs to build practical skills that help entrepreneurs become loan-ready. This “lender plus ESO” approach reinforced a core lesson from the work: relationships matter, but readiness matters, too. Many businesses need targeted support and individualized guidance to navigate funding pathways successfully.

Looking ahead, the KC Chamber will close this chapter with purpose and momentum. We are planning a final Lenders’ Forum this spring to continue making high-quality connections between entrepreneurs and lenders. At the same time, we are working toward a transition plan that will



enable an ESO partner to carry the program forward, ensuring the relationships and learnings built through this work continue to benefit the region beyond the Chamber’s direct involvement.

In addition, the KC Chamber received an Access to Capital Grant from the U.S. Bank Foundation. As part of this grant, the KC Chamber is partnering on a program designed specifically for small businesses, highlighting the value of relationship-building with lenders, and elevating the ESO resources available across Kansas City. As Access to Capital moves into its next phase, the goal remains

the same, and it remains central to our Inclusive Prosperity work: make the path to financing clearer, more human, and more achievable, so more businesses can start, grow, and thrive, strengthening the Kansas City region for everyone.



# HEALTHY KC: ADVANCING A STRONG WORKFORCE THROUGH HEALTH, WELLNESS AND REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

**H**ealthy KC is built on a straightforward belief: a strong workforce depends on healthy people. That's why this work lives within the KC Chamber's Strong Workforce strategic imperative, supporting employers as they compete for talent, retain teams and build workplaces where people can thrive. Created in partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City, and supported by business, medical, philanthropic and community health organizations, Healthy KC helps advance a culture of health and wellness in Greater Kansas City.

Healthy KC has consistently stepped into the issues that matter most to employers and families, especially when progress requires collaboration and leadership. In 2015, Healthy KC played an instrumental role in the region's Tobacco 21 advocacy efforts, contributing to local action that resulted in 25 municipalities limiting tobacco purchases to people age 21 and over. In 2017, the Resilient KC project examined the effects of adverse childhood experiences on adults in our region, reinforcing what employers see every day: workforce readi-

ness and community wellbeing are inseparable.

When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted workplaces in 2020 and 2021, the KC Chamber through Healthy KC, distilled and communicated updated regulations and facilitated employer dialogue around best practices as businesses navigated constant change.

Following the pandemic, Healthy KC's work moved forward through two connected paths: a Behavioral Health Action Team offering mental wellness programming, and a Workplace Wellness Action Team providing a certification program aligned with World Health Organization guidelines, producing a resource guide, hosting forums, and convening the annual Healthy KC Expo.

This work has built a committed community. In 2025, the Healthy KC Expo marked its 10th year at Union Station, drawing roughly 200 guests for a trade show featuring wellness organizations and recognizing employers through Workplace Wellness Certification plaques. While Expo engagement has been stable, certification submis-



sions have decreased, an important signal that Healthy KC must evolve to deliver broader value and impact for employers.

Healthy KC is now positioned for its next chapter: aligning efforts into a single, unified program that can go deeper on timely workforce health challenges and translate both research and real-world experience into clear, actionable recommendations. In that spirit, Healthy KC is returning to advocacy (similar to Tobacco 21) by focusing on one of the most urgent workforce issues of our time: the collective mental wellness state of our regional workforce.

Looking ahead, Healthy KC will examine the impact of the mental health crisis on business by sponsoring research into the economic and workforce implications of youth mental health challenges, using both qualitative and quantitative methods and building on existing local efforts. Just as important, findings won't stay on a shelf. Results will be translated into a "state of"

workforce content kit, with presentations, infographics, social media content and more, paired with commentary from regional subject matter experts to help employers take practical action and, potentially, inform policymakers. To maximize focus and regional momentum, Healthy KC is also planning a convening aligned with the Chamber's State of Series to share insights and recommendations.

As this evolution advances, the Workplace Wellness Certification program will sunset after 10 years, and the work will be guided through an advisory structure and research partnership, including engagement with UMKC's Bloch School, to shape deliverables and recommendations.

Healthy KC's evolution reflects the KC Chamber's role as a convener and catalyst, helping employers support their people today while strengthening the foundation for a healthier, more resilient regional workforce tomorrow.



# WELCOMING & BELONGING: BUILDING A REGION WHERE EVERYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE

**W**elcoming KC began with a clear premise that is also a business imperative: Greater Kansas City's long-term growth depends on our ability to attract and retain talent, support employers' workforce needs, and ensure that people who choose to build a life here can fully participate in civic and economic life. As part of the KC Chamber's Connect KC strategic imperative, Welcoming KC brings together local government, nonprofits, education partners, and employers to strengthen immigrant inclusion, expand language access, and reinforce a culture where newcomers and long-time residents alike feel connected to community.

In 2025, Welcoming KC implemented all major activities in its project plan and made strong progress across the region. In Kansas City, Missouri, the initiative supported the city through the Certified Welcoming cohort by coordinating evidence collection, strengthening interdepartmental collaboration, and expanding the internal team. New engagement from the Office of Language Access and the City Manager's Office increased the city's capacity to build durable

systems to better serve residents, customers, and employees. Regular meetings with Councilmember Wes Rogers, along with engagement from state legislators, also deepened understanding and support for this work.

In Johnson County, Welcoming KC focused on coalition-building and local leadership development. Extensive outreach led by intern Komal Kaur helped form a strong countywide network that launched with a successful kickoff event hosted by REACH Healthcare Foundation. That momentum helped position Johnson County for long-term action, including selection for the 2026 Gateways for Growth cohort, which will provide structure and support to formalize and scale immigrant inclusion strategies.

Across the region, Welcoming Week activities were completed, including a second Naturalization Ceremony, mini-grant outreach, and community engagement designed to strengthen civic belonging. Welcoming KC also convened two regional coalition forums that brought together elected officials, nonprofit leaders, and business partners from both Kansas and



Missouri to discuss immigrant workforce impact, economic opportunity, and shared talent needs. Two Naturalization Ceremonies (one at Union Station and one during Welcoming Week) reinforced community pride and highlighted the many ways new citizens strengthen our region.

This year also underscored the importance of safety, thoughtful narrative leadership, and cross-sector collaboration in a shifting political climate. At times, Welcoming KC adjusted activities and communications to prioritize partner and participant safety while continuing to move the work forward. In the Certified Welcoming process, Kansas City, Missouri made meaningful strides in coordination and evidence collection, with a clear set of criteria identified for

continued progress in the months ahead.

Looking forward, Welcoming KC will build on a strong foundation. The next phase will focus on supporting Kansas City, Missouri as it strengthens policies, processes, and procedures tied to certification, while Johnson County begins its Gateways for Growth planning process. We will also deepen outreach to KC Chamber members because the opportunity is clear: many employers need workers, and immigrant communities are ready and qualified to help meet the region's workforce demands. Through coalition-building, language access partnerships, and strategic communications, Welcoming KC will continue advancing a more welcoming region where everyone can belong and contribute.

# 2025 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## Consolidated Revenue and Expenses

*October 31, 2025 and October 31, 2024*

	2025 <i>Audited</i>	2024 <i>Audited</i>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$7,461,125</b>	<b>\$7,370,182</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$7,421,205</b>	<b>\$7,319,061</b>



# 2025 KC CHAMBER AWARD WINNERS

## **SPORTS & CIVIC VISIONARIES NAMED 2025 KANSAS CITIANS OF THE YEAR**

The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce announced Cliff Illig and Kathy Nelson as the 2025 Kansas Citians of the Year, recognizing their extraordinary leadership in elevating the region's national and global profile through innovation, sports, and tourism, and their deep commitment to making opportunity and civic pride accessible to communities across the metropolitan area.

Illig, a native Kansas Citian, co-founded Cerner Corporation and helped build it into one of the world's leading health care information technology companies, creating thousands of jobs and cementing Kansas City's place on the map as a hub for health innovation and high-tech growth. He is also a principal owner of Sporting Kansas City and a driving force behind the ownership group that revitalized the club, invested in world-class soccer facilities, and helped position Kansas City as a premier soccer city in North America. His philanthropic and civic leadership span entrepreneurship, life sciences, and education, reflecting a long-held belief that bold ideas, backed by long-term investment, can transform an entire region.

Nelson serves as President and CEO of the Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation and Visit KC, leading the teams responsible for bringing some of the nation's highest-profile events to the region, including the 2023 NFL Draft and FIFA World Cup 26™ matches. Under her leadership, Kansas City has become a powerhouse in sports tourism, attracting NCAA and Big 12 championships, national championships, and signature events that drive economic activity while showcasing the region's hospitality, creativity, and passion for sport. A champion for women's sports and inclusive community engagement, she has been widely recognized as one of the most influential leaders in Kansas City sports and a trusted ambassador for the city on the national stage.

Together, Illig and Nelson have helped reshape how the world sees Kansas City, demonstrating that strategic partnerships, visionary investment, and a relentless belief in community can turn big dreams into reality. Their work has sparked new momentum for neighborhoods, small businesses, hospitality, and future generations of Kansas Citians.

The Kansas Citian of the Year Award, the Chamber's most prestigious honor, is given annually to individuals whose civic and business leadership has brought about significant and lasting impact on the community.



## 2025 KC CHAMBER SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS



**1 Mr. K Award / Small Business of the Year**  
Presented to Amber Reed of Resolve Counseling & Wellness



**2 Weida Award for International Small Business of the Year**  
Presented to Jay Devers of Bestway International

**3 Luminary Arts & Creative Small Business Award**  
Presented to Keisha Jordan of Complex Flavors Home + Life

**4 Emerging Small Business Award**  
Presented to Annie McGinnis and Elliott Ivory of Vine Street Brewing

**5 Legacy of Kansas City Award**  
Presented to Leonard Graham and Hagos Andebrhan of Taliaferro & Browne

**6 Small Business Equity Award**  
Presented to Dulcinea Herrera and the Herrera Family of Cafe Corazon.



## 2025 KC CHAMBER DIVERSITY AWARDS



**1 Nonprofit Champion of Diversity**  
Presented to Stephanie Boyer of  
restart, Inc. **2 Ace Award** Presented  
to Joseph Hines II of the University  
of Kansas Cancer Center **3 Ace  
Award** Presented to Goldie Owoobattlet of i.c.stars Kansas City and  
Cyber Creationz **4 Ace Award**  
Presented to Jorge Soberón-  
Hernández of Arvest Bank

2025 KC CHAMBER  
ATHENA AWARDS



**ATHENA Young Professional Leadership Award**, presented to DePrice Taylor, KC Current  
**ATHENA Leadership Award**, presented to Christine Kemper,  
Kansas City Girls Preparatory Academy



# 2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Effective November 1, 2025

» BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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*Partner*  
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Corporate Secretary*  
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Partner*  
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Chamber of Commerce

*\*Indicates Executive Committee*

» BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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**JACK BEAL**  
*SVP of Cancer  
Center and Chief  
Administrative Officer  
The University of  
Kansas Health System*



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Canadian Pacific Kansas  
City*



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Head of Finance  
American Century  
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Partnerships  
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Pinnacle  
Nursing Director  
The University of  
Kansas Health System*



**KELLY CARLSON**  
*President and CEO  
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City*



**SANDRA CASSADY**  
*President & CEO  
Rockhurst University*

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 Cherry Co.



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**GRETCHEN IVY**  
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 Alliant Insurance Services



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Visit KC and Kansas City Sports Commission & Foundation



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Parris Communications



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*Managing Market  
Leader in KS, OK, IL &  
MI Institutional Client  
Group*  
US Bank



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Journal



**ALEJANDRO QUIROGA**  
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Children's Mercy



**AMBER REED**  
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*Owner & Therapist*  
Resolve Counseling



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*President and CEO,*  
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UMB Bank, n.a.



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*National Managing  
Principal*  
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*President*  
Tico Productions LLC  
and Tico Sports



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H&R Block



**DR. DEANGELA  
BURNS-WALLACE\***  
*President & CEO*  
Ewing Marion Kauffman  
Foundation



**CAITLIN O'BYRNE  
WATERS**  
*President, Employee  
Benefits - Kansas City*  
CBIZ



**ERIC WOLLERMAN\***  
*President & CEO*  
Honeywell Federal  
Manufacturing &  
Technologies



**JULIAN  
ZUGAZAGOITIA**  
*Director & CEO*  
The Nelson-Atkins  
Museum of Art

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St. Joseph, MO

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Commissioners*  
Johnson County, KS

**PHIL LEVOTA**  
*County Executive*  
Jackson County, MO

**QUINTON LUCAS**  
*Mayor*  
Kansas City, MO

**JULIE SAYERS**  
*Mayor*  
Lenexa, KS

**CURT SKOOG**  
*Mayor*  
Overland Park, KS

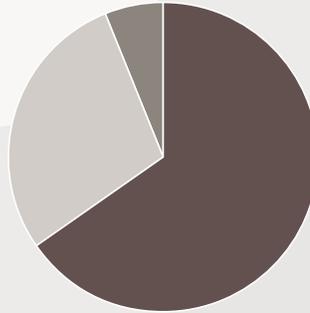
**MARIO VASQUEZ**  
*City Manager*  
Kansas City, MO

**CHRISTAL WATSON**  
*Mayor & CEO*  
City of Kansas City, KS/  
Unified Government of  
Wyandotte County

# 2025 MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

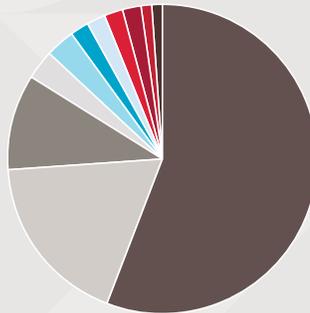
## Geography

67% MO  
30% KS  
3% Other



Other  
KS  
MO

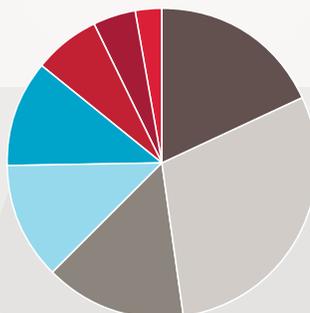
54% Kansas City, MO  
12% Other Municipalities  
10% Overland Park, KS  
4% Kansas City, KS  
4% Olathe, KS  
3% Lenexa, KS  
3% Leawood, KS  
3% Lee's Summit, MO  
3% Independence, MO  
2% Shawnee, KS  
2% Prairie Village, KS



Prairie Village  
Shawnee  
Lenexa  
Lee's Summit  
Leawood  
Independence  
Olathe  
Kansas City, KS  
Overland Park  
Other  
Kansas City, MO

## Business Type

21% Financial Services  
19% Restaurants, Food & Entertainment  
17% Nonprofits & Community Orgs  
14% Real Estate & Property  
13% Professional Services  
8% Construction & Trade  
5% Healthcare  
3% Government & Public Institutions



Financial Services  
Restaurants, Food & Entertainment  
Nonprofits & Community Orgs  
Real Estate & Property  
Professional Services  
Construction & Trade  
Healthcare  
Government & Public Institutions



# KC CHAMBER FOUNDATION

## FY25 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Centurions

- Launched the Centurions Alumni Online Directory, providing a new connection tool for the over 1900 Centurions Actives and Alumni.
- Hosted 18 Centurions Task Force days focused on the KC Chamber's Strategic Plan, including Inclusive Prosperity, Health and Wellness, and Connect KC, and led two Benchmarking Trips to Tampa, FL, and Boston, MA. Additional leadership opportunities were opened beyond Centurions participants through the Women's Leadership Forum, Board Symposium, and Welcoming and Belonging Leadership Summit.
- Contributed over 7,000 volunteer hours across more than 200 unique service opportunities, reinforcing Centurions' strong commitment to community service.

### genKC

- Members of genKC put on 7 in person events in 2025 that brought together over 800 emerging professions from the Kansas City area.
- genKC's Professional Development committee had over 300 attendees for the 2025 Financial Literacy panel that discussed investing and loans.
- genKC's Community Leadership committee hosted a networking event where more than 540 pounds of food and hygiene items were collected.
- In 2025 genKC debuted a new event: Coffee & Conversations! Emerging professionals gathered for a dynamic morning of roundtable dialogue with active and alumni Centurions focused on leveling up your career.

### Workforce

- KC Chamber signed an MOU with Great Jobs KC to provide business workforce referrals.

### Access to Capital

- See story on page 6.

### Welcoming KC

- See story on page 610.



FOR A GREATER KANSAS CITY

Union Station  
30 W Pershing Road  
Suite 301  
Kansas City, Missouri 64108

For membership information,  
call (816) 221-2424  
or email [info@kcchamber.com](mailto:info@kcchamber.com)

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