

Partnership for the Future

Purpose

Partnership for the Future is a launch pad for a post-pandemic public-private partnership structure to: 1) develop a portfolio of innovations ranging from action labs (small investments for safe-to-fail experiments) to demonstration projects (larger one-time investments); 2) support local-to-state partnerships to translate ideas into innovations to strengthen early childhood systems; 3) ensure that the needs of the present are met while considering the needs of future generations; and 4) amplify the reach of innovative and entrepreneurial leaders across the State.

Data-Driven and Results-Oriented Investments

The Partnership will lead innovation efforts with embedded data strategies that produce actionable information for decision-makers. Using the same technologies and analytic methods that savvy businesses leverage, the Partnership will make quality Insight and Foresight common practices in early childhood and social services. Data and analytics for Insight gives the Partnership the capacity to accurately and deeply understand what matters now for children and families. Foresight data and methods will allow the Partnership to anticipate what will be needed in the future and what matters next for children and families. Investing in the future of children means using all available data and information in more meaningful ways to make the right decisions for the betterment of that promising future.

- Develop a portfolio of innovations ranging from action labs to demonstration projects (one-time investments). The portfolio will be based on a safe-to-fail approach that accelerates decision making, kick-starts solutions to known problems, and anticipates future issues. *Action labs* provide seed money for emergent ideas generated from community members and stakeholders, which are then paired with lived experiences and external incubation supports. The intent is to respond before small issues become big problems and transform ideas into innovations. This type of funding provides flexibility to recognize the ingenuity of the local community to design solutions that fit the local context. The overall approach also provides a sandbox for other ideas that emerge organically through existing state or local funding initiatives such as the Preschool Development Grants subgrants. *Demonstration projects* will be one-time start-funds to implement multiple approaches to address a specific problem. The portfolio will be aligned with the *All In for Kansas Kids* plan and be

evaluated. Ideas that show promising results will be considered for future funding, replicated, and scaled, as appropriate. The *Kansas Common App* will be used to award funding for innovative solutions to complex problems.

- Implement local-to-state partnerships to strengthen early childhood systems. The 2019 Needs Assessment reported that where you live matters—the distinct attributes of local communities require expertise and experience of community leaders to design responsive solutions. However, the best ideas don't often see the light of day if there is no support or time to incubate them. The Partnership intentionally creates the space to explore ideas and nurture them into innovations. Portfolio investments will be targeted towards locally developed approaches that have not been implemented or evaluated. Bi-directional communication, flexible funding to explore new ideas without jeopardizing existing services, and technical assistance are key strategies for to transform fleeting ideas into transformational actions. Technical Assistance topics include using stories and data to generate ideas, balancing operations demands with innovating, identifying funding sources, and those topics generated by the portfolio contributors. We will also create intentional linkages with Department of Commerce business support services to maximize existing business incubators for innovation in the social sector.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met while considering the needs of future generation. The portfolio will follow the future generations principle to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Ideas will be assessed in their ability to balance short-term and long-term needs, act preventatively, and anticipate future risks and implications. Potential recipients of portfolio funds shall consider the future generation's economic, social, and cultural well-being.
- Amplify the reach innovative and entrepreneurial leaders across the State. The Partnership will identify a cohort of three to five Futures Fellows who take action to build community, support families, and move ideas to innovation. KCCTF leadership will convene the fellows quarterly to stay attuned to locally-generated solutions, inform the emerging portfolio, and connect them with national and international leaders with the intent of leveraging philanthropic investments and business supports. The grow our own strategy may include support for participation in business roundtables; acting as peer mentors and hosting "Ask an Innovator" office hours; and participating in innovation supports to learn about how to shape the idea to get the change wanted.

In addition to the innovators today, we also need to nurture the innovators of tomorrow by involving them in the process. The Partnership for the Future will leverage existing networks to position youth for success and also deepen our innovation bench since young people represent the future workforce, future parents, and future leaders.

Administration

The Partnerships for the Future will serve as the basis for a public-private model for thriving families. The venture recognizes the entrepreneurial spirit of Kansans and the resilience of communities to identify problems and generate solutions. Support for the Partnership will be provided by the Preschool Development Grant.