

2021

ANNUAL REPORT



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FROM THE DIRECTOR

KC Digital Drive was established to be a resource hub for digital innovation and a driver of digital transformation in the Kansas City area. As we pursue our mission to make Kansas City a digital leader, we work in, across and alongside the region's communities to secure our economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for all of us.

We are a small, nimble, and entrepreneurial team, and while we have been able to grow the capacity of our staff over the past two years, the real strength of our organization is in partnerships. Our Solutions Lab approach helps our local government and community partners by leveraging resources from a variety of partner channels: academia, industry, entrepreneurs, civic volunteers, and other community-benefit organizations.

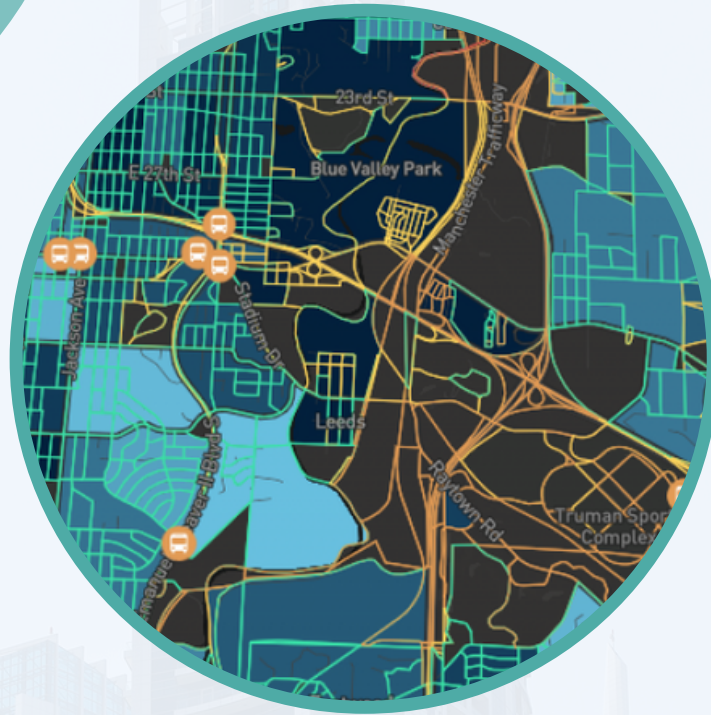
Our organization is founded on the premise that there is enormous untapped energy and commitment to building KC and that we can accomplish great things by offering a platform, resources, and connections for that energy. This capacity is especially critical in emerging technology, where information is fluid and responsibility is ambiguous.

After two years fraught with unprecedented challenges and uncertainty, we look forward with optimism at the progress we're making across the Digital Inclusion and Emerging Innovation ecosystems, where our work continues to take root and where the promise of a better, healthier, more digitally inclusive Kansas City region is visible.



Aaron Deacon
Managing Director





ABOUT US

KC Digital Drive was founded in 2012 by the City of Kansas City, MO, and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS, to address the digital equity issues revealed when Google Fiber launched in Kansas City and to mitigate the gaps in adapting to emerging technologies in the bi-state region.

From the beginning, KC Digital Drive has sought ways to bridge the digital divide and improve life in the community for all, including families and children. As a Missouri nonprofit civic organization, we help to ameliorate equity barriers, increase opportunities for economic prosperity, and elevate the community as a key informant in the innovation process.

YEAR IN PROJECTS



A unified strategy for KC to recover from COVID-19. | comebackkc.com

Comeback KC is a public/private collaboration to create a unified comeback from COVID-19, and under this umbrella we helped launch projects like Vaccine Van, Two Million Arms, Digital Contract Tracing, and COVID-19 Symptom Self-Reporting.



Accelerating innovation to jumpstart KC's comeback from COVID-19

This program supported 26 entrepreneur fellows, hosted 4 design and business canvas workshops and 3 innovation showcase events. It was funded by U.S. EDA and administered by KC Digital Drive and the UMKC Innovation Center's Tech Venture Studio.



\$1M NSF funded youth mobility research project | theconnectkc.org

This CIVIC Innovation Challenge project features a mobile app designed to provide awareness of and access to out-of-school experiences for high schoolers; partners include KC Public Library, University of Kansas, ThrYve, KCATA, zTrip and others.



YEAR IN PROJECTS

AR/VR CHALLENGE

Year-long program spurs emerging tech concepts

The AR/VR Challenge featured a Demo Day with 5 teams and was sponsored by T-Mobile and the Kauffman Foundation in partnership with University of Nebraska Med Center, University of Kansas, University of Central Missouri, and American Jazz Museum.

AIR QUALITY SENSORS

Community-based, low-cost air quality sensor array

Funded by NSF, this US Ignite project provided 50 air quality sensors for homes and libraries in the Kansas City metro area and created a public visualization map of all the sensors to help empower residents with information.

CLEAR MY RECORD (KS)

A simple, safe way to clear a criminal record

This project features a web-based application to determine if a criminal conviction is eligible for expungement, and to complete the filing with the court in an effort to help reduce barriers imposed on people with criminal records.

DIGITAL EQUITY FOR CHWS

360-degree digital equity links healthcare to social services

Community Health Workers are often first responders when it comes to digital use for the clients they serve, and this project aimed to expand CHW's digital skills so they can further train and support their clients with telehealth services, self care and broad digital literacy.



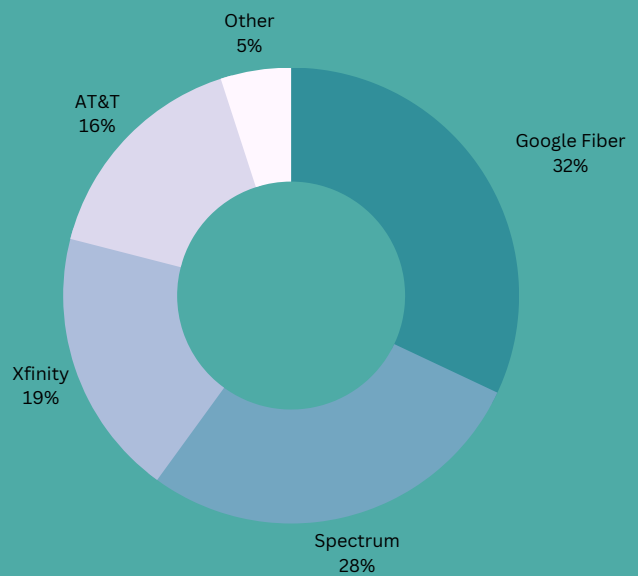
In 2020, the organization launched the Internet Access Support Program (IASP) and quickly administered over half a million dollars in CARES Act Funds from Johnson County to address the affordability gap and support people's ability to participate in digital life with internet access at home. As an intermediary organization, a key priority has been to build lasting, sustainable program capacity on top of one-time federal funds.

Working with the Kansas City Regional COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and Mid-America Assistance Coalition, we built a first-of-its-kind subsidy program to support home internet service as a utility. The program supports the client's choice of ISP, and works directly with service agencies, including school districts, food pantries, churches, and social service organizations, to refer clients, and to help meet them where they are so they can access a path to their digital life.

1,193
Households served through IASP

\$745,059
Allocated to KC area households to pay home Internet bills

Funds allocated to participating ISPs



IMPACT REPORT

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Comeback KC
Ventures
Fellows

\$745,059

Internet
affordability funds
provided to
households

\$1M

Youth mobility
app +
transportation
research grant
from NSF

7

MetroLab Network
partnerships - 3 Universities
and 4 Cities

1,193

Households
received
assistance
from IASP

21

Presentations given at 11
monthly Health Innovation
Team Meetings

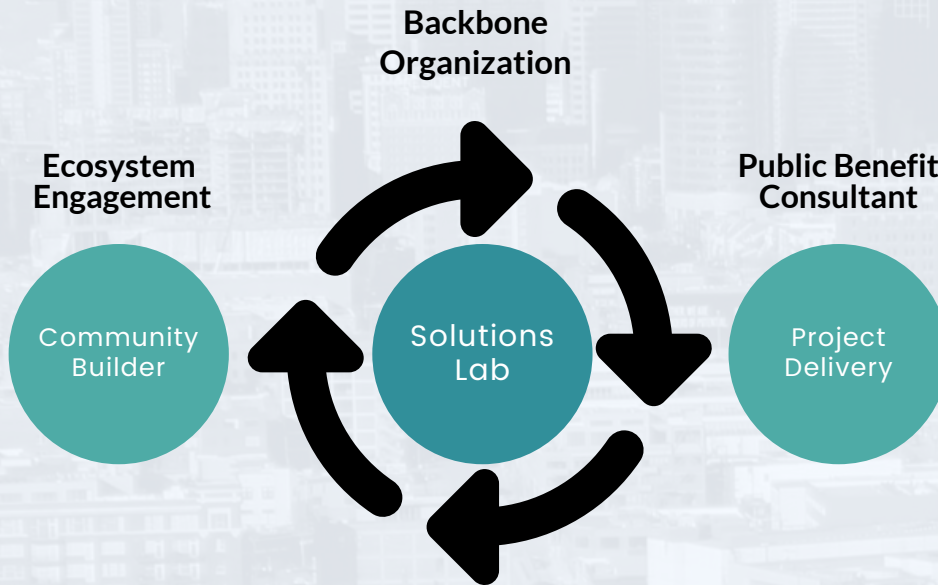
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AR/VR Project
Demos

345

Business opportunities
identified through
community discovery
sessions

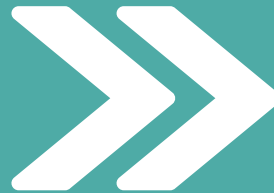
HOW WE WORK



We help communities adapt to digital transformation and rapidly changing technologies with the understanding that it demands action faster than funding and strategic planning come into focus.

solutions lab

the development of technology solutions for vexing public problems



community builder

ideas generated through multi-sector collaboration and the inclusion of diverse voices



project delivery

our proven approach to engage the community and ensure equitable utilization of technology



clients / stakeholders

- Local Government
- Community Organizations

resource partners

- Corporations
- Entrepreneurs
- Universities
- Civic Volunteers
- Community Organizations

DECADE OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP



We are building a resource network for the region focused on emerging technology.

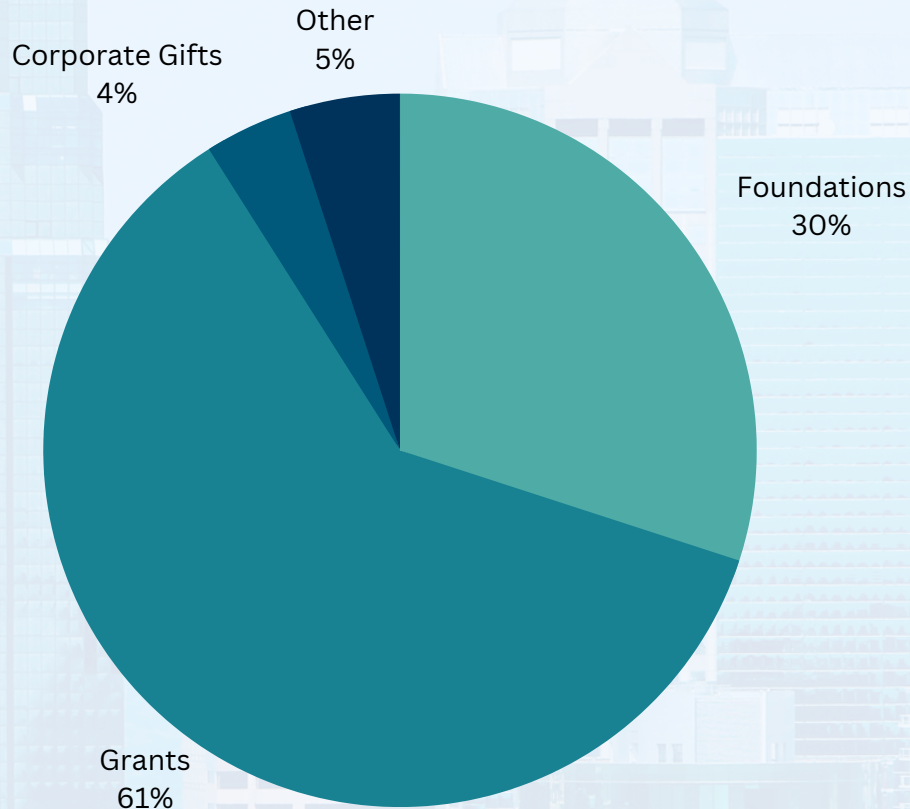
We have established many distinct programs aligned to specific resource categories, each with a focus on the opportunities of innovation, new use-cases, and business creation, as well as the risks in the areas of equity and inclusion, that new technology fosters.

Many of our programs act as nodes into national networks, serving as foundational models for other communities, and providing access to a broader resource network for the region.

What it means to be a digital leader

Technology infrastructure	The foundation of hardware, tools, and software needed to function in the digital world
Data	Machine-readable information about the infrastructure, environment, and the people who use it
Meaningful use cases	How the tech and the data are used to make the world a better place (often trials, pilots, or test cases)
New businesses, products and services	How to make these uses sustainable and widespread, with economic development benefits to boot
Equity and inclusion	Intentional process, thoughtfulness, vision, and leadership to ensure new tech is people focused and sensitive to our most vulnerable
Tech literacy and liberty	Sufficient education from regular citizens to civic leaders to support workforce needs, democratic governance, and good decision-making

FUNDING SOURCES



FUNDERS

COVID Relief Fund
Health Forward Foundation
Heart to Heart International (HRSA Grant)
Kansas Health Foundation
Kauffman Foundation
Mid-America Regional Council
Patterson Family Foundation
T-Mobile
University of Kansas (NSF Grant)
University of Missouri-Kansas City (EDA Grant)
Urban Neighborhood Initiative
US Ignite

OUR TEAM



Aaron Deacon
Managing
Director



Adrian Torres
Inclusion &
Innovation Vista



Anurag Patel
Digital Health
Strategist



Jim Starcev
Solutions Lab
Program Manager



John Fitzpatrick
Community Health
Strategist



Kari Keefe
Director of
Operations



Kiley Larson, PhD
Researcher in
Residence



Leslie Scott
Digital Inclusion
Program Manager



Linda Williams
Executive
Coordinator



Paul Barham
Captain,
Code for KC



William Crumpler
Program
Analyst

2021 BOARD

Greg Elliott, President
Vice President of Business Development
1623 Farnam

Melissa Kozakiewicz, KCMO City Seat
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City of Kansas City, MO

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Assistant County Administrator and Chief
Knowledge Officer, Unified Government of
Wyandotte County and Kansas City, KS

Ellen Suni
Dean Emerita and Professor of, Law, University of
Missouri-Kansas City

Shawn Etheridge
SVP Corporate Development & Strategy, ECCO
Select

Aaron Deacon
Managing Director
KC Digital Drive



NETWORK PARTNERS

Partners are organizations who have taken an active role in one of our projects.

- Academie Lafayette
- Accessibility Medical Equipment
- Adelante Thrift
- AllianceNow
- American Jazz Museum
- Amethyst Place
- aSTEAM Village
- AT&T
- Avenue of Life
- Bank of America Foundation
- Barham House
- Beacon Hill Home Owners' Association
- Benilde Hall
- Bethel Neighborhood Center
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- BikeWalk KC
- Black & Veatch
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas City
- Blue Hills Neighborhood Association
- Blue Symphony
- Boston Heights Neighborhood Association
- Bundle of Rays
- CableLabs
- Camp Encourage
- Caritas Clinics, Inc.
- CASA of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties
- Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas
- Center City Neighborhood Council
- Center for Developmentally Disabled
- Center For Recorded Music
- Children's Mercy
- City of Independence, MO
- City of Kansas City, KS
- City of Kansas City, MO
- City of Lawrence, KS
- CityFi
- Clay County Children's Services Fund
- Clean Air Now KC
- Code for America
- Comcast
- Community Capital Fund
- Community Housing of Wyandotte County (CHWC)
- Connections to Success
- Creative Emajinations
- Crossroads Academy
- Digital C
- Douglas County District Attorney
- Douglas County Legal Aid Society (KU)
- EarlystART
- Emerging Builders Inc.
- Emmanuel Family & Child Development Center
- First United Methodist Medical Closet
- Flourish Furnishings, Inc.
- Friends of Johnson County Library
- Full Employment Council
- Fuller Center for Housing of Greater Kansas City
- Goodwill of Western Missouri & Eastern Kansas
- Google Fiber
- Great Plains SPCA
- Green Works in Kansas City
- Habitat for Humanity of Kansas City
- Healing House
- Health Resources & Services Administration
- Heart to Heart International
- Historic Manheim Park Association
- Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy
- HyperCubd
- Ice Studios School of Dance
- Idealect
- Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council
- Johnson County
- Johnson County Clerk
- Johnson County District Attorney
- Kansas City Beacon
- Kansas City Dream Center
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Kansas City Public Library
- Kansas Legal Services
- Kansas Office of Broadband Development
- Kauffman Foundation
- Kaye's Learning Corner
- KC CARE Health Center
- KC Jazz
- KC Media Collective
- KC STEM Alliance
- KCATA
- Key Coalition Inc
- KU Medical Center
- KU School of Nursing
- KU Transportation Center
- Local Investment Commission (LINC)
- Literacy KC
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

NETWORK PARTNERS

Partners are organizations who have taken an active role in one of our projects.

- Lykins Neighborhood Association
- MediView
- Melissa's Second Chances
- Memorial Church International
- MetroLab Network
- Metropolitan Energy Center
- Mid-America Assistance Coalition
- Mid-America Regional Council
- Mission Adelante
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- Missouri Office of Broadband Development
- motionL
- MTAR
- National Science Foundation
- Newhouse
- Northpoint Development
- NourishKC
- One Kansas City Radio
- Our Healthy KC East Side
- Outfront
- Parker Dewey
- Patterson Family Foundation
- PCs for People
- Pet Resource Center of Kansas City
- Rainbow Center for Communicative Disorders
- Regal Health and Wellness, Inc.
- Resurrection Catholic School
- Re.Use.Full
- Rightfully Sewn
- Road Worthy USA
- Russell Stover
- Samuel U Rodgers Health Center
- ScrapsKC
- Sedgwick County DA
- Shawnee County DA
- Sleepyhead Beds
- Squier Park Neighborhood Association
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Kansas City, Kansas
- Swagg, Inc.
- Swope Health Center
- T-Mobile
- Telus
- The Enterprise Center
- The Latino Coalition
- The Prospect Urban Eatery
- The Rescue Project
- The Role-Players Guild of Kansas City
- The Sewing Labs
- The ShareWaves Foundation
- The Single MOM KC Clothed With Dignity Boutique
- ThrYve
- Topeka Bar Association
- Transition Zone, Inc.
- Troostwood Neighborhood Association
- True Light Family Resource Center
- Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity
- Turn the Page KC
- UMKC Innovation Center
- UMKC Tech Venture Studio
- Unified Government of Wyandotte County & Kansas City, KS
- Union Station
- University of Central Missouri
- University of Kansas
- University of Kansas - Salina Campus
- University of Kansas School of Law
- University of Missouri
- University of Missouri Extension, Platte County 4-H
- University of Missouri-Kansas City
- University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law
- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- University of Utah
- Urban League of Greater Kansas City
- Urban Neighborhood Initiative
- Urban TEC
- US Engineering
- US Ignite
- Varsity Esports Foundation
- Velocity Fiber
- Veronica's Voice
- Victory XR
- VMLY&R
- Wendell Phillips Downtown East Neighborhood Association
- Willoughby Design
- Wyandotte County Economic Development Council
- Wyandotte County District Attorney
- Wyandotte County Public Health
- zTrip

This is partial list of all partners.



KC DIGITALDRIVE

2021





Contact Us

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@KCDigitalDrive

Making Kansas City a digital leader since 2012

