

Northwest Kansas Early Childhood Endowment

A permanent source of support to help address the funding gap for childcare in Northwest Kansas.

Summary: September 2024

Kansas recognizes the importance of quality childcare to ensure a prosperous future for the state. In the [Blueprint for Early Childhood](#), produced by the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund, as well as in the work of the Kansas Early Childhood Education Task Force, the value of quality early childhood education and the role it plays in developing the future workforce for a thriving Kansas economy has been clearly stated. It has been further stated that public private funding is desired to address important social issues such as childcare.

The endowment:

- A regional endowment was established in May 2024 to provide ongoing, sustainable community-level childcare solutions in the 26 counties in Northwest Kansas. The goal is \$15,000,000, over five years.
- The endowment will be a permanent source of grant revenue primarily focused on sustainability of childcare programs. Success in this effort can serve as a model for other regions of the state.
- Donations to the endowment are prudently invested. After one year, income from the invested funds becomes available for ongoing grants.
- Grants will be awarded to qualified childcare centers or qualified family childcare homes that have an emergency need or budgetary shortfall to ensure continued operation.
 - The opportunity for such “gap” funding can mean the difference between opening or not opening a childcare facility for many communities. A school board, city or county commission, or other nonprofit board may be reluctant to pursue a needed facility if they anticipate a budget shortfall.
- After the primary awards to ensure sustainability of existing programs are met, excess funds can be offered for other grants designed to help address the needs of existing providers and elevate the quality of care.
- Applicants will meet eligibility guidelines including but not limited to licensure, nonprofit or governmental status, year-round operations, acceptance of infants and location in Northwest Kansas.

Funding Commitments:

- The Dane G. Hansen Foundation has pledged \$5,000,000 to be paid over five years. The first \$1,000,000 was contributed in May to establish the endowment.
 - This commitment is an extension of the millions of dollars the Foundation and the Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center (dba the Innovation Center) have already granted to address the need for quality childcare slots in Northwest Kansas communities.
- The initial contribution from the Hansen Foundation was matched by the Patterson Family Foundation in July, with an invitation to apply for continued matches in the future.
- With the addition of the promised funding from the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, a true public-private partnership to support early childhood care and education in Northwest Kansas will become a reality.

Administration:

- The endowment is housed with the Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation, (GNWKCF), a 501(c)3 organization that has experience with and is uniquely qualified to hold and administer a regional grant fund.
- Grants will be accepted monthly and awarded quarterly to eligible organizations.
- Grant review will be by a committee led by the Childcare Program Specialist at the Innovation Center and will include a committee of qualified reviewers — including a representative from the Children’s Cabinet.

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