

Amery
and
Bright

MANAGEMENT
REPORT
NOVEMBER 2020

SENDING YOU
WARM WISHES
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



FROM THE DESK OF MATT PIVARNIK

Community Leaders,

Season's greetings to you all. On the cover of this report, you'll find one of our custom holiday greeting cards that we are gearing up to send out to you, our respected partners, stakeholders and friends. With 2020 nearly out the door and this season of lights, giving and goodwill in full swing, I'd like to take a moment to thank the staff for all that they do. Like all of us in the community, the team has been met with trials and tribulations and continues to persevere. And their perseverance has kept the Partnership's dream alive. It might have been said many times, many ways, but teamwork truly makes the dream work.

Please be sure to Shop Small, Buy Local this holiday season so that we might show our small/local business community a little love during what has had to have been one of their most trying years.

Happy holidays to you and yours. See you in 2021.

And be sure to #KeepFighting.



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TOPEKA CRACKS TOP 50 'MOST LIVABLE MID-SIZED CITIES' LIST

In one of its most recent studies, SmartAsset, a personal finance technology company headquartered in New York, named Topeka as one of the top fifty "Most Livable Mid-Sized Cities" nationwide. In crunching the numbers to find the most livable mid-sized cities in the U.S., SmartAsset considered data for 227 cities across the following eight metrics: Gini coefficient, four-year home value change, median monthly housing costs, poverty rate, median household income, July 2020 unemployment rate, percentage of residents without health insurance and average commute time. Out of those 227 mid-sized cities, the Capital City of Kansas ranks in at 42.

"From its low housing cost to the quick commute time and its unemployment rate (5.6% in September 2020 vs. the national average of 7.9%), Topeka is gaining recognition as a great place to call home," said Barbara Stapleton, vice president of business retention & talent initiatives. "The acknowledgement of being among the top tier of 'most livable mid-sized cities' gives our local businesses the advantage when trying to recruit for new and specialized employee candidates to move to the area."

The full report, including the methodology and key findings, can be found here: <https://smartasset.com/checking-account/most-livable-mid-sized-cities-2020>.

TOTAL RESOURCE CAMPAIGN & SPONSORSHIPS UPDATE

The Resource Development Team wrapped up the Total Resource Campaign in November and our volunteers hit it out of the ballpark! We had 100% of our volunteers participate, we welcomed seven new businesses through the campaign. We had new businesses sponsor events and we had seasoned businesses double their total sponsorships for 2021.

Overall, the Campaign was a huge success and we are already making plans for next year!

CAMPAIGN SAYS, 'REMEMBER TO SHOP SMALL, BUY LOCAL'

The Greater Topeka Partnership has launched a campaign to push business to all sectors of our small business community. The Shop Small, Buy Local, Made In Topeka Campaign is an effort to continue to promote the importance of supporting all businesses.

Shop small – with a focus on supporting the local retail and restaurants; buy local products that target the entire small business service industry; purchase "Made In Topeka" promoted items, this includes equipment, products made in Topeka such as steel, art, wine, sauces, etc.

Consider supporting this campaign by spending your money in your community.

SHAWNEE COUNTY HOUSING DEMAND GROWS

The demand for housing in Shawnee County continues to grow rapidly, and record-low interest rates are motivating consumers to either enter the market or refinance their current mortgages. The Sunflower Association of Realtors reported that homes sale in Shawnee County increased by 33% in October 2020, compared to last year. But the month of October was not just an anomaly, we are seeing an aggregate increase in the demand for housing for the entire year.

While the demand for housing continues to increase, the supply of housing is declining over time. In October alone the housing supply decreased by 50% compared to last year; the median days on the market for a home was estimated to be 3 days, while the average was 15 days, both metrics were significantly down compared to last year, with a decline of 79% and 53% respectively.

The high demand and low supply for housing are pushing prices upward, the average sales price in Shawnee County went up by 22% in October 2020 compared to last year. Home prices are not just increasing in the county but in the entire United States. The Wall Street Journal reported that the median single-family home price in the U.S. increased by 12% compared to a year earlier. Even with higher home prices, our community remains significantly affordable. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) ranked the Topeka Metro Area the 14th most affordable metro in the U.S. out of 174 metros.

VISIT TOPEKA CONVENTION & GROUP SALES

As the end of 2020 draws to a close, the last two months of the year tend to be slower as far as sales and active groups in our community. However, November did bring positive news for 2021. There was a definite booking of a group for the beginning of May. The Tulsa HOG Chapter is working with Visit Topeka staff on a weekend trip hitting numerous attractions, restaurants, and staying in one of our partner hotels. Additionally, a state association group has decided to move their 2021 board meeting to Topeka in addition to a golf tournament and a community tour for their attendees. These two examples show the diversity of groups that our sales team works with and how our local economy is impacted by their business. While we work with clients who have already booked, we are also waiting on board decisions for many leads in our pipeline for 2021 events.

In the past 30 days, our team has turned one group to definite, entered in 2 new leads and worked with multiple clients on their rebooking needs. Our convention/group business is holding steady with 38 leads in the pipeline for an economic impact of \$7 mil from overnight stays and dollars spent in our community. Our team is looking forward to finishing out the year strong working with our partners to attract convention and group business to Topeka for 2021 and beyond.

TYC ANNOUNCES TOPEKA YOUTH-LED GRANT INITIATIVE

With assistance from the Topeka Community Foundation, the Topeka Youth Commission (TYC) is administering the first annual Topeka Youth-Led Granting Initiative.

The Topeka Youth-Led Granting Initiative will provide \$10,000 in funding to several projects led and directed by youth in the Topeka and Shawnee County Area.

Currently youth under the age of 21, accompanied by a local organization, may apply for up to \$2,000 in funding for a project of their choice that falls under the specified theme. Awards will be determined by the quality and strength of the project presented for the identified theme. The theme for the 2020-2021 Youth Development Fund is Stay785.

Stay785 focuses on improving the community by intriguing and keeping youth in Topeka. Youth in Topeka constantly express their dismay and disappointment of the city due to the lack of fun things for the younger generation to do. The goal of Stay785 is to give youth in the community an opportunity to choose what they wish to see in Topeka and bring their vision to life. Examples include, but are not limited to, murals, beautification projects, local events, modernization of attractions, etc.

Be on the look out for updates on our social media channels and sign up to be a part of our email list!

FORGE YOUNG TALENT UPDATE

To remain cautious, Forge continued to offer all November events virtually. Herds got creative in their virtual platforms and were able to extend their reach and engagement online!

The Leadership Herd held a “Leading Through a Crisis” event, which consisted of four community leaders answering questions in a panel-style format. The event was done via zoom, but also streamed live on Facebook. The one-hour event drew local media coverage and had an online reach of more than 1,900 people! If you missed the video, you can find it on the Forge Facebook page.

The Inspire Herd continued their monthly #ForgeCares video series, and featured Shannon Warta with SLI. Shannon discussed how SLI’s annual event, Festival of Trees, will look a bit different this year due to the pandemic. However, they will still have beautiful trees shown virtually, as well as contests, live auctions and more. To learn about this 40th Annual tradition, please click [here](#).

To encourage Forge members to shop local this holiday season, the Health Herd awarded SoulFire Nutrition gift cards to folks who supported local businesses. The Business Development Herd is also doing a BLITZ Week gift card giveaway next month to encourage our community to shop local and support Topeka & Shawnee County owned shops and restaurants.



LEADERSHIP GREATER TOPEKA 2021 CLASS ANNOUNCED

Leadership Greater Topeka (LGT) is excited to announce the names of its 2021 class. For 38 years now, LGT has identified outstanding leaders from the community and teaches the participants aspects of leadership.

Class members attend a retreat and eight day-long sessions. During these classes they will learn about the opportunities and challenges facing Topeka and Shawnee County and how they can work to influence important community issues.

“Topeka & Shawnee County has a strong history of community leadership and we look forward to introducing adaptive leadership concepts and community opportunities to the 2021 class,” said Michelle Cuevas-Stubblefield, LGT facilitator and vice president of strategy for the Greater Topeka Partnership. “While we may need to make adjustments to our approach due to the pandemic, we will not compromise the offerings and quality of the program.”

To see the entire class listing, click [here](#).



BELL NAMED SPORTSKS COALITION PRESIDENT

In statewide tourism news SportsKS elected Mike Bell, vice president of Visit Topeka, as President. SportsKS is a coalition of 23 Destination Marketing Organizations throughout Kansas who champion economic development through sports. The organization has quarterly educational meeting and through cooperative efforts advertises their communities as well as attends tradeshow as a coalition.

To learn more about this coalition, contact Mike Bell at Mike@VisitTopeka.com.



BOARD GOVERNANCE

Each of the Partner boards of directors has elected the slate of directors which will join them in 2021, as well as, the individual directors who will step forward as officers and executive committee members of each. With tremendous gratitude for the leadership our volunteers provided during 2020, the Partnership boards look forward to getting 2021 and a full recovery underway.

In mid-December, all the new incoming board members joined Partnership staff for an orientation ZOOM. They learned about the Partnership structure as a whole and the important role their specific Partner organization plays in advancing Momentum 2022. They also heard about the GTP's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and met the Partnership team. The new directors were later joined virtually by their existing colleagues on the boards – a total of over 100 volunteers – for a final toast to the tumultuous year just ending and to the much more promising one ahead.

CHOOSE TOPEKA UPDATE

To date the Choose Topeka program has seen:

- Over 4,600 submissions with resumes or questions
- Over 1,800 calls (from candidates & employers)

Employer Matching Funds Option:

- 23 candidates accepted
- 13 employers have matched funds
- \$138,750 in matching JEDO funds committed
- Submissions from 14 states

Remote Worker Option:

- Over 65 remote worker submissions to date
 - 8 candidates submitted all necessary documents
 - 5 candidates interviewed, 3 more to be scheduled
- \$45K encumbered
- Submissions from 17 states

KS PTAC UPDATE

This month the Topeka PTAC Subcenter:

- Guided 88 new small businesses through the process of becoming registered to do business in the federal market space.
- Held 491 hours worth of one-on-one counseling sessions with existing and new small businesses.
- Have held 8 virtual training sessions, introducing businesses to federal contracting and requirements to be successful.
- Assisted KS PTAC Clients across the state with obtaining 1,089 new Federal Contract Awards worth \$154 million.
 - o These contracts have been awarded between 2/01/2020 and 12/07/2020.
 - o Topeka Subcenter service area was awarded 155 of the contract awards worth \$17.2 million.
 - Shawnee County received 31 contract awards worth \$1.7 million
 - o Topeka is continuing to providing coverage for the JCCC Subcenter as there is a vacant KS PTAC position.

PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP

November seemed to have flown for the Resource Development and Events Team! Even though we have not had events, our team has been working to think outside the box for our upcoming December events and figuring out ways to make them happen. We welcomed the following new members to the Partnership:

Heart and Home Design

Topeka LifeStyle Magazine

Dick's Sporting Goods

Clad Astra

Omni Circle Group

Kristen O'Shea Strengh Coaching

Ardiah Manages Services

Tender Loving Care

We hosted a Ribbon Cutting for Big Biscuit on October 30 and Heart and Home Design's Ribbon Cutting on November 13.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

During November, GO Topeka hosted a site visit for a new business attraction project, Project Silver. Project Silver is a food manufacturing company looking to build a \$175 Million new state-of-the-art production facility. Project Silver projects the addition of roughly 220 jobs to the community selected for development. GO Topeka hosted the project guest for a series of meetings with state officials, local utilities and workforce partners. A location selection for Project Silver is expected to take place by January 2021.

Additionally, with existing businesses this year, we have had 11 projects YTD and announced six projects wins, adding 339 new jobs, totaling \$54 million in capital investment and providing a little over \$2M in incentives. Average wages at the companies range between \$40K and \$85K annually, and economic impact over 10 years of almost \$1 billion.

Throughout 2020 GO Topeka has also worked with 37 new businesses considering relocating to Shawnee County.

UNEMPLOYMENT, LOCAL CONSUMPTION & CONSUMER SPENDING

The Kansas Department of Labor reported that the unemployment rate in Shawnee County slightly decreased to 5.1% in October 2020 from the previous month; this represents a decrease of 0.5 percentage points from the previous month (September 2020), but an increase of 2.1 percentage points from the previous year (October 2019). While the number of unemployed workers in the county are continuing to decrease month over month, the rate of change is starting to flatten. Historically, the county has seen on average between 3,000 and 3,500 workers out of work every month, as of now, we are hovering around 4,600 unemployed workers. The county's labor force shrank by 1.8% or 1,653 workers.

Average weekly earnings had a modest 2% increase compared to last month, but it remained around 6% lower compared to last year. Both, unique claims and initial claims for unemployment benefits increased for the past four weeks.

Overall, the local labor market improved in the summer months, but recovery is slowing down.

On the other hand, retail consumption continues to move in the right direction. The October 2020 sales and use tax distribution report shows that both the City of Topeka and Shawnee County are seeing strong sales. On average both (City and County) saw an overall increase in sales activity by approximately 6% compared to last year. While in person sales were up by 4%, online sales (in some cases referred to "use" sales) increased by more than 20%.

SHOP SMALL SATURDAY IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE SHOP SMALL SEASON

In Topeka's sixth year celebrating Small Business Saturday, this year's promotion was just what the local small retail businesses needed to give them a boost in business. According to a survey conducted by the founder of Small Business Saturday, American Express, more than 50% of Americans who reported shopping small on the day said they supported a small business through social media by endorsing local shops or shopping at a small business because of a recommendation on social media. Also, online shopping at a small business on the day was up significantly, with 56% of shoppers making a purchase online, up from 43% in 2019.

Overall, American Express representatives say results have been encouraging, with more than half of Americans who shopped small on the day saying they supported a small business via social media — either by recommending their favorite small businesses on social media or shopping at a small business because of one they saw on social media. Hundreds of thousands of people joined the conversation, shouting out their favorite small businesses, sharing promotions and activities, encouraging shopping small and more across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter using #ShopSmall, #SmallBizSat and/or #SmallBusinessSaturday.

Remember, it is critical that we continue to support local small businesses throughout the pandemic as they provide foundational infrastructure to our growing community. For every dollar you spend, 68% remains in the community and is circulated at least seven times. It is up to all of us! Continue to Shop Small. Small businesses are depending on us!

DOWNTOWN RINGS IN HOLIDAYS WITH REVERSE PARADE; FRYE SELECTED AS GRAND MARSHAL

Thousands of people took to their cars for this year's Miracle Around the Statehouse Parade, presented by Frito-Lay. Previously called Miracle on Kansas Avenue, was held on Saturday, December 5. Organized by the Greater Topeka Partnership events team, the event operated as a "reverse parade" to best execute COVID-19 safety protocols, meaning parade onlookers observed sedentary floats and other displays located around the grounds of the Kansas State Capitol Building from their cars.

The Grand Marshal and Junior Grand Marshal for the 2020 Miracle Around the Statehouse Parade were Vince Frye and Jasmine Villalobos, respectively. In early-December 2020, Frye transitioned into retirement as incoming DTI President Rhiannon Friedman assumed the role's mantle of responsibilities. Villalobos is a seventh grader at Shawnee Heights Middle School and is very proud to be involved in her community.

In total, the Parade had 30 floats, saw 4,000 cars come through, and collected 2,000 lbs. of canned goods donated to Harvesters!

PLUG AND PLAY TO HOST EVENT TO ENHANCE 'CUSTOMER JOURNEY'

GO Topeka's Office of Innovation is inviting the public to join a virtual workshop powered by Silicon Valley-based innovation platform, Plug and Play, and Amazon Web Service (AWS), a subsidiary of Amazon. The AWS and Plug and Play Business Innovation Unlocked: Transforming the Customer Journey, scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 10:30 – 11:45 a.m. CST, will feature six growth stage startups that can radically enhance your company's customer experience. These startups leverage the latest technology in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation to help deliver the best customer experience. Participating startups include Uniphore, Uneeq, MindTickle, Fractl, MoEngage and FarEye.

"This virtual event offers pertinent information for any business and entrepreneur who is thinking about improving the customer experience and engagement," said Katrin Bridges, senior vice president of innovation, GO Topeka.

To learn more about this event or register, visit <https://www.plugandplaytechcenter.com/events/business-innovation-unlocked/>.

VISIT TOPEKA SPORTS SALES REPORT

The first week of November Visit Topeka staff had a first-time experience with a site visit, on a boat, in the middle of Lake Shawnee. Luckily, it was during a glass in the weather so a sunny 75-degree day on a glass still lake in November made selling the attributes of the city very enjoyable. The promoter is looking at the lake a possibility for a race in late summer 2022 and was impressed by Topeka's facilities in and around the Lake Shawnee area.

Midwest Sports Productions (MSP) which hosts several youth baseball and softball events in Topeka each year made a major announcement mid-month regarding the future of competition in Topeka. After a lengthy partnership with the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) MSP decided to sever the relationship and partner now with Perfect Game, a nationally recognized company primarily devoted to furthering the development of baseball players.

COVID-19 continues to change how sports function and planned in Topeka. The Special Olympics of Kansas (SOKS) confirmed they are still looking to move forward with their State Basketball tournament in March but are reviewing their plans determining appropriate action(s) to ensure the health of their athletes and to comply with the mandates of Shawnee County health orders.

While it is positive SOKS is still moving forward Topeka did lose a couple of events in November. Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) decided to move their 4A State Football game from Topeka to Hutchinson citing restrictions related to the Shawnee County health order. Other losses included a possible sports management conference coming to Topeka. This conference is going to a virtual platform in 2021 and the foreseeable future.

In November Visit Topeka booked three events with 650 room nights representing \$280,000 in economic impact but lost six events for 1,500 room nights and \$800,000+ in economic impact. At current, Sports sales has 11 leads with 4,900 room nights for \$6.8 million in economic impact awaiting decisions. While the picture was not always positive this month there is still a firm belief that sports in our community will be the stimulus to economic recovery for the tourism sector.

METL UPDATE

The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce is working with the chambers from Manhattan, Lawrence and Emporia to forge the METL Coalition's 2021 legislative agenda. Many of the particulars from 2020 remain worthy objectives: seeing the Polk Quincy Viaduct through to completion; expansion of Medicaid; coordination of resources to ensure every Kansan has what they need to enter the workforce; and a call for a statewide strategic economic development program. However, these matters will necessarily be taken up beneath the shroud of COVID-19. METL pledges to work side-by-side with state officials to maintain fiscal responsibility while balancing diminished resources against Kansans' dramatically increased needs; to help lead the recovery in our communities; and to seize the opportunities and new ways of succeeding upon which COVID-19 may have, albeit accidentally, shone a fresh light.

MOMENTUM 2022 COMMUNITY SURVEY

Final total for Community Survey submissions is 2,165!

The community survey has provided a number of ah ha's and nuggets of information that can have great impact on efforts moving forward. An executive summary and final report is being created and will be shared in the coming weeks.

Upon completion of the report, the Momentum 2022 Executive Committee will work to determine final recommendations to finish out the next 22 month left of the five year strategy. The recommendations will be reviewed by the Chairs Council for final approval and the work will continue.

INFORMATION SESSION: YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP INTERMEDIARY PROJECT

GO Topeka will be hosting an information session for employers, school districts, colleges and workforce development organizations to hear from former Kansas Secretary of Labor, Lana Gordon, about the work she is continuing to support and improve with workforce and talent pipeline needs in Topeka and Shawnee County. Lana is consulting with the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation, in partnership with the Urban Institute and the US Dept of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship to support a funded project to link schools, colleges, employers and workforce development organizations together to increase the quality and quantity of youth apprenticeships. Please join us Thursday, December 17 at 10 a.m. for an information session to learn more from her and her colleagues.

This is an information session, with no commitment, just the opportunity to see how it could assist you long term in your talent pipeline and workforce training needs. The beauty of this includes the services and partnership opportunities as well as extensive support to create successful talent pipeline outcomes.

Please contact Barbara Stapleton at barbara.stapleton@topekapartnership.com to receive zoom details.

FEDERAL COVID RELIEF

Having been in the throes of the 2020 elections, Congress had, predictably enough, made little progress towards passing a final COVID relief package. Then, as December started Senators and House members redoubled their efforts to address COVID relief in the lame duck session. Whereas negotiations heretofore have largely been conducted in close quarters by House and Senate leaders, now rank and file members in both chambers are said to be working rapidly to resolve a number of stubborn issues. Hopes are rising they will reach agreement on a package rumored to cost just over \$900 million. It will provide renewed, though moderated, aid to individuals impacted by the pandemic, help for businesses and for state and local governments. The Chamber has been engaged with the Kansas delegation in Washington DC urging them to expand the Paycheck Protection Program to include 501(c)(6) tax-exempt entities and to provide liability protection for businesses which have tried to comply with applicable COVID-19 rules.

PPP LOAN FORGIVENESS UPDATE

The Partnership hosted a Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness workshop. Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) borrowers may be eligible for loan forgiveness if the funds were used for eligible payroll costs, payments on business mortgage interest payments, rent, or utilities during either the 8- or 24-week period after disbursement. A borrower can apply for forgiveness once it has used all loan proceeds for which the borrower is requesting forgiveness. Borrowers can apply for forgiveness any time up to the maturity date of the loan. If borrowers do not apply for forgiveness within 10 months after the last day of the covered period, then PPP loan payments are no longer deferred, and borrowers will begin making loan payments to their PPP lender. For additional information, contact Sheila Forrester, US Small Business Administration, Kansas City District Office at 816-426-4708.

FORGE VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED

Forge Young Talent is pleased to announce that Megan Burton, senior archivist with the Kansas Historical Society, and Del-Metrius Herron, realtor with Keller Williams Realtor Partners, LLC, have been named as the 2021 Forge Chair and Chair-Elect, respectively. The Topeka community is extremely lucky to have these two ladies in volunteer leadership roles for the organization!

STRATEGIC PROGRESSION

Partnership's Executive Leadership Team continues its ongoing review of the company's activities to ensure resources are directed to mission fulfillment and are being put to their optimal use. As a result of this Strategic Progression, the decision was made to discontinue the EmpowHer Conference and consolidate the many worthy aspects of that program with the GTP's other women's initiatives. Far from denoting a step away from its commitment to issues around gender equality, this consolidation will enable the company to focus more intently on the topic. Likewise, the Science and Tech Fair will be discontinued in lieu of the Innovation Advisory Council's sweeping efforts to grow Topeka's innovation ecosystem. This methodical review will drive the Partnership to consistently develop fresh approaches and offerings.

HOST PUBLIC PROGRAM RESULTS

As the HOST Public Program comes to an end, we are honored to report that staff has delivered an award-winning support program to the community. It has served as an asset to the small business community and has provided tremendous encouragement.

Since Spring 2020, the HOST Public Grant has disbursed more than \$500,000 with \$68,500 pending in financial support.

RIVERFRONT ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

In November, the Riverfront Advisory Council met to convene on the findings from its October Strategic Planning Session. These findings culminated in the priorities of each of the Council's committees: Education & Environment; Funding & Finance, Development; Government, Management & Partnerships; and Access, Activities & Equity. Committee members are currently in the process of meeting to develop priorities and execute "first-step" action items.

These committees are still in their earliest stages and will continue to evolve in the near future.

Details on these committees and any strategic development therein will be made available at a later date.

VISIT TOPEKA MARKETING

Visit Topeka is continuing work on the 2021 Visitors Guide layout and content for release in the spring. Visit Topeka blogs have posted multiple new articles featuring seasonal themes, local businesses/events/restaurants support, and are being shared through all marketing channels. Visit Topeka has been working to plan for 2021; this includes a marketing plan, new events like Thunder Over the Heartland promotions, and partnerships with multiple local attractions.

Recent Facebook post sharing Topeka's newest holiday event, "Zoo Lights," has over 17,000 impressions organically and is continuing to grow.

HUMAN RESOURCES BREAKOUT

In November, GO Topeka hosted an HR Breakout session: Unemployment Fraud with the KDOL for Employers with Laurel Searles and Nicholas Beech from the Kansas Department of Labor. They presented a shared session and discussed Unemployment Fraud issues in the state and how it impacts employers, as well as a Q & A portion from those virtually in attendance.

PARTNERSHIP STAFF RETREAT

In November, the Partnership held its All-Staff Retreat. Facilitated by Leo Presley, Presley & Associates, the retreat centered on a deep dive into the “3 Virtues of a Team Player,” workshopping individual goals for the upcoming year, and bringing staff members together to better get to know one another.

Each member of our staff is currently working with their direct supervisor(s) to finalize these goals. We will come to you with an update on this progress in 2021.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

November 16 was the deadline for the organization’s 990 returns. For the first part of November, the Finance Team was busying compiling the 990 information for each of our 7 returns that were due. All Partnership organization’s 2018 and 2019 audit reports are final! It has been a long haul but it feels amazing to have the first year audit of the partnership behind us. The team is nearing completion of the 2021 budget. The Partnership Finance Committee will meet to review and approve it in early December. The Partnership is also looking for its next audit partner. RFPs were circulated and the Finance Committee will be reviewing those in December as well. Also with December, comes year end close activities. This is the organizations first year end close on a full accrual basis of reporting. The Finance Team is busy not only working through those process, but in some cases developing them as we go. We are excited to have our first full year of accrual basis complete which will provide invaluable year-over-year comparability going forward.

INCLUDED UPDATE

iiINCLUDED will host the Greater Topeka Partnership’s own Glenda Washington, Chief Equity & Opportunity Officer in December as we provide an information session on what the Partnership and the greater community has been and can continue to do as we develop our organizations and our community around diversity, equity and inclusion. Watch for more details from the partnership and join us on December 9 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom.



HOST RELIEF FUNDS STILL AVAILABLE

The deadline for the **HOST (Helping Others Support Topeka) Relief program** is December 30. Funds are still available to assist small businesses. If you or someone you know needs support for your small business, please contact Glenda Washington at 785-246-6205 or Glenda.Washington@TopekaPartnership.com.