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KSDE Newsroom

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NEWS RELEASE



Questions about this page contact:

Ann Bush
(785) 296-7921
abush@ksde.org

Give Back Kansas Challenge winners announced

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Author: [Ann Bush](#)

Challenge encourages employer-supported volunteering

Three Kansas employers have been announced as winners of the third annual Give Back Kansas Challenge.

Sixteen businesses participated in this year's challenge and were placed into three categories based upon the number of employees they had – small, medium and large.

This year's winners are:

- Small organization: Wichita Festivals Inc., Wichita.
- Medium organization: City of Carbondale.
- Large organization: Cloud County Government, Concordia.

The Give Back Kansas Challenge is hosted by the Kansas Volunteer Commission and Volunteer Kansas and ran from April 17-June 9, 2023, with the purpose of engaging Kansans in employer-supported volunteering.

Collectively, 7,092 volunteer hours were completed at various organizations across Kansas by 1,305 employees, for an average of 5.43 volunteer hours per employee participant. This is significantly higher than the 2022 Give Back Kansas Challenge, which ran from April 18-June 10, 2022. However, 10 organizations took part in last year's initiative, compared to 16 this year. Collectively in 2022, nearly 2,956 volunteer hours were completed at various organizations across Kansas by 790 employees, for an average of 3.74 volunteer hours per employee participant.

The Independent Sector, a national membership organization that brings together a diverse community of changemakers, reports that each volunteer hour in Kansas is valued at \$28.50, which makes the total contribution of this year's Give Back Kansas Challenge \$202,122.

"Volunteer Kansas' goal for the challenge was to engage businesses and their employees in giving back to their communities in service," said Nola Brown, executive director of Volunteer Kansas. "The challenge is a quadruple win. The employees who participated reaped the personal reward of helping others; the businesses are better known in their communities for corporate caring; multiple organizations benefitted from the helping hands of volunteers; and three charities will receive grants to help them achieve their

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2019 (65)	+
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missions.”

Each of the winning employers designated a charity to receive a \$1,000 grant - on their behalf - from Volunteer Kansas.

- Wichita Festivals Inc. accepted the donation for their own nonprofit organization and plans to utilize the funds in their volunteer program. They have more than 9,000 volunteers who help with community events like Riverfest and Autumn & Art.
- The City of Carbondale selected Hope Against Hunger Inc., which reduces food insecurity in the community by connecting people with affordable and accessible food resources. The organization also established a clothing closet that provides free clothing in a respectable way.
- Cloud County Government selected the Concordia Lions Club. These funds will support Cloud County Community Suppers, which provide a free meal the first two Wednesdays of each month. Volunteers and financial support are two important factors that keep the community suppers going.

“Although the Challenge has concluded, the Commission encourages participating employers to maintain their high commitment to volunteerism”, said Dr. Jessica Dorsey, executive director of the Kansas Volunteer Commission. “Research of employer volunteer programs has shown a positive impact on employee engagement, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and retention.”

*The **Kansas Volunteer Commission** is a program of the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). The vision of the Kansas Volunteer Commission is to empower all Kansans to meet community needs through service. The Commission's primary role is to provide resources and leadership to support local initiatives that tackle community needs. As the state service commission, the Commission directs effective national service programs, provides volunteer management training opportunities and supports the work of Mentor Kansas. For more information, visit www.kanserve.org.*

Volunteer Kansas Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charity based in Wichita. The organization's website, www.Volunteerkansas.org, is devoted to increasing volunteerism in the state of Kansas. The website is a free service to individuals and nonprofits.

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