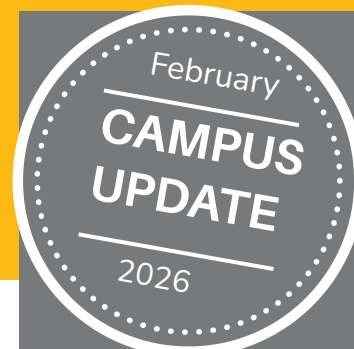




FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY



Kansas Small Business Development Center delivers strong economic impact across the state

About the Kansas Small Business Development Center

Headquartered at Fort Hays State University with several regional centers located throughout the state, the mission of the Kansas Small Business Development Center is to empower entrepreneurs with the tools, knowledge, and resources they need to succeed.

Between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025, the Kansas SBDC supported 2,583 small businesses through one-on-one advising and reached more than 4,100 Kansans through 281 training events. These efforts translated into measurable economic outcomes across urban and rural communities statewide.

2025 Kansas SBDC Impact Highlights:

- 205 new Kansas businesses started
- 1,067 jobs created
- 5,657 jobs retained
- \$38.9 million in small business loans facilitated
- \$15.0 million in equity capital secured
- More than \$411 million in gross revenue reported by assisted businesses
- 2,272 clients served in underserved communities

In total, Kansas SBDC assistance helped small businesses access nearly \$54 million in capital, providing entrepreneurs with the resources needed to start, grow, and sustain their operations.

“These numbers represent more than economic output; they reflect real Kansas businesses, real jobs, and real communities strengthened by smart investment in small business support,” said Dan Lara, State Director of the Kansas Small Business Development Center. “The Kansas SBDC delivers a strong return on investment by helping entrepreneurs make informed decisions, access capital responsibly, and build businesses that contribute to long-term economic stability across our state.”

To learn more about Kansas SBDC services or to connect with an advisor, visit www.kansassbdc.net.

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The Hidden Mental Health Burden on America's Agricultural Heartland

In its commitment to supporting the mental well-being of students from pre-kindergarten through college, the FHSU Department of Advanced Education Program presented the Olliff Family Educational Symposium on Thursday, Feb. 5.

The symposium featured a keynote address by Will Stutterheim, M.S., LCP, from the Department of Psychology at FHSU. Titled "Fields of Stress: The Hidden Mental Health Burden on America's Agricultural Heartland," the presentation focused on a critical, yet often overlooked challenge – the mental well-being of those within the agricultural community. Given the vital role agriculture plays in western Kansas, this session provided essential insights for educators and mental health professionals supporting individuals from farming and ranching backgrounds.

Will Stutterheim is an instructor at FHSU with more than 20 years of experience in mental health therapy and education. Having grown up on a multi-generational farm in northwest Kansas, Stutterheim brings a deeply personal perspective to his clinical expertise. After 13 years as a therapist in the rural farming community of Phillipsburg, he specializes in helping families navigate the unique stressors of agricultural life.

Law enforcement officers from several states recertify in de-escalation techniques at FHSU

Fort Hays State University's Department of Criminal Justice is the home of the Central Regional Training Center of the National De-Escalation Training Center. Since the Center began operations in 2001, FHSU-led instructors have trained more than 5,000 law enforcement officers across the United States.

Law enforcement officers from across the U.S. gathered on the campus of FHSU on January 30 to recertify their qualifications in de-escalation techniques. Based on the DISC personality model that focuses on four distinctive human personality types, NDTC training gives law enforcement officers an additional set of skills they can employ in their interactions with the public. This training teaches officers to identify a personality type quickly (sometimes in just seconds) so they can adjust their approach to maximize effective communication and interaction with a subject.

According to data recently released by FHSU's National De-escalation Training Center, 95% of the law enforcement officers who completed the training demonstrated high levels of skill in applying de-escalation techniques (compared with 30% before training). Also, as a result of the training, almost 60% of the trained officers were better able to identify and respond to escalating situations.

