



## How Investment Connection helped bring tea cakes to Denver

by: Jennifer Wilding

April 25, 2022

---

Tea cakes meant summer and freedom and love to the little girl in glasses and pigtails. They also meant a 17-hour car ride from the crisp mountain air of her hometown of Denver to Simmesport, Louisiana, where the hot summer breeze packed a wet wallop. Grandma Helen grew up in Simmesport, and Grandma Helen made tea cakes. In Simmesport, a little girl with tea cakes in her pocket could spend an entire summer day exploring the fields and bayous around the town on Louisiana Highway 1, close by the Atchafalaya River in Avoyelles Parish.

“Tea cakes were a big part of my childhood. They were how my family showed me love,” Pamela Richard said. Today, Richard is owner of [Miss Peabody’s Southern Tea Cakes](#). She found her pathway to entrepreneurial freedom when she connected midcareer with the Rocky Mountain MicroFinance Institute ([RMMFI](#)).

Find out how a unique program from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City called Investment Connection helped RMMFI raise the funds needed to help Richard and other entrepreneurs in [Getting to “We Have a Deal”: Fed program offers bridge to connect nonprofits seeking investment with banks seeking CRA credit](#).

Investment Connection, now offered by eight of the 12 Federal Reserve Banks, has led to more than \$60 million in investments and ongoing working relationships between banks and nonprofits. Stories from the Federal Reserve Banks of Kansas City, [Minneapolis](#) and [St. Louis](#) show what’s possible and what’s at stake as banks step in to support their communities.

---

## Author



### Jennifer Wilding

#### Community Engagement Advisor

Jennifer Wilding, community engagement advisor for the Kansas City Fed, uses writing and public engagement skills on special projects for the community development department.

**Writing**In 2026, the Kansas City Fed released Wilding's "[The Byways Report: The Scenic Route to Rural Prosperity](#)," examining how small towns have used route-based tourism as a strategy for economic development. Along with expert interviews and technical resources, the report includes stories from several byways, with a focus on Route 66 in Oklahoma. Her [three-part series on Investment Connection](#), the Kansas City Fed's signature program, appears on the [national website](#) about the Fed's work in communities. Wilding co-authored [Disconnected: Seven lessons on fixing the digital divide](#), a layperson's guide to putting broadband, devices and training within reach of a community. In addition to special projects, Wilding edits the Kansas City Fed's [community development newsletter](#). [Subscribe here](#). **Engagement** Wilding served as project director for community-engaged research in a neighborhood where broadband subscriptions were very low. The engagement [built understanding](#) of barriers to connection. She also led [focus groups with unemployed individuals](#) and with people from nonprofits that serve them, held in Chicago, Detroit, Denver and Kansas City. Before joining the Kansas City Fed in 2018, Wilding was executive director of Consensus KC, a nonprofit consulting firm specializing in public policy and civic engagement. She holds a B.A. in urban affairs from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her hobby is letterpress printing, using a 1,500-pound cast-iron press from the late 1800s. **About the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City** The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is one of 12 regional Reserve Banks that, along with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., make up our nation's central bank. We work in the public's interest by supporting economic and financial stability. The Kansas City Fed's territory includes Colorado, Kansas, western Missouri, Nebraska, northern New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Our headquarters is in Kansas City, with branch offices in Denver, Omaha and Oklahoma City. The Kansas City Fed Community Development Department promotes economic development and public understanding that leads to progress for lower-income individuals and communities. Our focus areas include community development investments, digital inclusion, small business / entrepreneurship, and workforce development.