



How Investment Connection helped bring tea cakes to Denver

by: Jennifer Wilding

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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.

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Jennifer Wilding, a community development specialist for the Kansas City Fed, provides communications, engagement, and research for the community development department. Wilding edits the Kansas City Fed's community development newsletter, "[Community Connections](#)" and takes on special projects. For example, she serves as project director for a community-engaged research partnership. The Kansas City Fed, a nonprofit and a neighborhood organization joined together to hear from neighborhood residents about broadband internet. The report will be shared nationwide. Before joining the Kansas City Fed in 2018, she was executive director of Consensus KC, a nonprofit consulting firm specializing in public policy and civic engagement. She worked on philanthropically funded projects in metro Kansas City, and for clients here and around the U.S. Wilding 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. Highlights of her work include: [Getting to 'We Have a Deal.'](#) The three-part article shares how Investment Connection bridges bankers and community-based organizations. The article is on [Fed Communities](#), the national website about the Fed's work in communities. [Disconnected: Seven lessons on fixing the digital divide.](#) A layperson's guide to putting broadband, devices and training within reach of a community. [Focus groups with unemployed individuals](#) and with people from nonprofits that serve them, held in Chicago, Detroit, Denver and Kansas City. **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.