



New council members join Kansas City Fed 2019

by: Jeremy Hegle

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New perspectives: Construction, education, health and philanthropy

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City recently announced four appointments to its [Community Development Advisory Council \(CDAC\)](#) for the 2019-21 term. The CDAC was established in 2001 to provide Bank leaders a deeper understanding of the community and economic development issues that affect low- and moderate-income communities.

We recently asked the new council representatives their thoughts on strategies to strengthen low- and moderate-income communities.

Niki Donawa, chief community relations officer, Truman Medical Centers

“As a health-care executive, workforce development is critical in filling the pipeline with individuals that mirror the population that we serve. It's important to engineer opportunities for the underserved by ensuring that they are educated and equipped to fill the many positions available in health care. The correlation between poverty, one's health and the economic health of the community should be of concern for all. Whether it's small business opportunities or ensuring that the digital gap is narrowed in order for all community members to have access to knowledge, information and resources is critical. In my current role, I consistently work on creative ways to shore up the community.”

Don Greenwell, president, The Builders' Association and Kansas City Chapter-Associated General Contractors of America

“It is the belief of The Builders' Association that diversity and inclusion yield improved economic conditions and a more united sense of fulfillment throughout the community. For business owners, the benefit of accessing broader experiences and perspectives has very pragmatic positive impacts, including competitive advantages. By delivering value, we have more than doubled the number of our members certified as minority, woman and disadvantaged businesses over the past three years. We are helping them expand their capacity to do more business.”

Aubrey Patterson, president and chief executive officer, Hutchinson Community Foundation

“The community foundation is involved in funding neighborhood development and housing initiatives. In 2015, for the first time, we made a gap loan to complete the capital stack for a sustainably built workforce housing development which is walkable to downtown and creates a pocket community in a previously blighted area. My current passion is helping other community foundations and anchor institutions in rural Kansas learn how to move beyond grant-making and begin using their financial capital as local investments—or “impact investments”—in terms of loans, loan guarantees and equity investments.”

Awais Sufi, chief executive officer, SchoolSmartKC

“Education is the foundation of a productive and fully engaged citizenry. We’ve seen far too often that due to historic inequities, select communities have struggled to benefit fully from the extraordinary advances we have made socially and economically. Bringing the benefits of this development to all members of our community is a long and challenging road, but must start by ensuring all young people are equipped with the skills and capabilities to succeed in our global economy. My work centers on bringing together stakeholders focused on community development to a common understanding of challenges to our educational system. We then find creative solutions to address these challenges, all to amplify the enormous potential of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.”

The CDAC is composed of community, banking and labor leaders from throughout the Tenth District of the Federal Reserve: Colorado, Kansas, western Missouri, Nebraska, northern New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming.

The new members join existing council members:

- Ruben Alonso, president, AltCap, Kansas City, Mo.
- Marcos Hernandez, vice president-corporate social responsibility manager and CRA officer, U.S. Bank, Omaha, Neb.
- Judy Petersen, executive director, Central Nebraska Economic Development District, Chambers, Neb.
- Shawn Reese, chief executive officer, Wyoming Business Council, Cheyenne, Wyo.
- Rebecca Reynolds, executive director, Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Hugo, Okla.
- Cecilia Robinson-Woods, superintendent, Millwood Public Schools, Oklahoma City, Okla.
- Liddy Romero, executive director, WorkLife Partnership, Denver, Colo.
- Reginald Thomas, president and business manager, Laborer’ Union of North America, Local Union No. 264, Kansas City, Mo.
- Cris White, executive director and chief executive officer, Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, Denver, Colo.

Author



Jeremy Hegle

Assistant Vice President and Community Affairs Officer (CAO)

Jeremy Hegle is assistant vice president and Community Affairs Officer (CAO). In this role, Hegle leads the Tenth District's [Community Development department](#) with responsibility for leading and executing the Bank's districtwide community and economic development initiatives, which address challenging issues affecting lower-income individuals, underserved communities and small businesses' access to credit. He also represents the Kansas City Fed on the Federal Reserve System's CAO subcommittee and will manage the Bank's [Community Development Advisory Council](#). Prior to being named CAO in 2023, Hegle led the Bank's digital equity efforts. In 2019 Hegle co-authored [Disconnected: Seven lessons on fixing the digital divide](#), a layperson's overview of the digital divide. He led efforts to narrow the digital divide using three strategies: Expanding access to affordable home broadband. [Collaborating with state broadband directors](#), federal agencies, and local government on broadband deployment strategies and increased access through [affordable internet programs](#). Increasing the supply of low-cost computers by encouraging employers to [donate their used computers](#) to nonprofit refurbishers, schools and community organizations. [Informing banks](#), foundations, government and policymakers of the complex factors that cause the digital divide, the latest research on the topic, and creative solutions to fix it. Hegle joined the Kansas City Fed in 2015. Previously, he served in the Army National Guard and later helped launch KCSOURCELINK, a small-business support organization that links thousands of entrepreneurs with resources to start, grow and accelerate their businesses. Hegle has a bachelor's in business administration and an M.B.A. from the University of Missouri-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.