

The background of the entire page is decorated with an abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous teal-colored cubes of various sizes, some of which are 3D-rendered to show depth. These cubes are interconnected by a network of thin, dark grey lines that form a complex, web-like structure. The overall aesthetic is modern and technological.

iSTEAMKC

2022

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
SYMPOSIUM

SUMMARY REPORT
Pat Jordan, Founder
iSTEAM KC



SUMMARY REPORT

In September 2022, the Gem Cultural and Educational Center celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the Gem Theater with a Workforce Development Symposium. At the event, Pat Jordan, President, made an announcement of the organization's re-branding with a focus on a new Workforce Development STEAM (arts + technology) program matching employers with students in traditionally underserved zip codes in Kansas City.

The results of the symposium suggest that Kansas City may not be prepared to meet the demand of more than 18,000 jobs estimated to become available in the near future.

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

03

The Symposium featured representatives from Kansas City's workforce and foundation entities. Four Workforce Development Round Table Discussions were held onstage at the Theater in the morning, followed by two panel discussions in the afternoon. Over 125 representatives from agencies and companies were in attendance.

Leaders of the Symposium's Round Table Discussions were:



Tammy Buckner
Founder & CEO
WeCode KC



Andrea Ellis
Director
KC Action Fund



Dr. Auburn Ellis
Content Creator
Jewell Unlimited



Sharmelle Winsett
Director
KC Scholars





The afternoon session included the following panel discussions:

1

"The Role of Philanthropic and Educational Communities in Workforce Development"

Moderator: Maurice Watson

Panelists:

- Dr. Leigh Anne Taylor Knight, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, The DeBruce Foundation
- Dr. Elizabeth MacLeod Walls, President, William Jewell College
- Dr. Angelique Nedved, Chief Program Officer, SchoolSmart KC
- Susan Wally, President & CEO, PREP-KC
- Kara Lowe, CEO, KC Tech Council

2

"The Role of The Kansas City Corporate Community in Workforce Development"

Moderator: Susan Chambers

Panelists:

- Terry Riley, Client Relationship Executive, Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Bill Zahner, President, Zahner Company
- Sheri Gonzalez, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives & Community Relations, University of Kansas
- Peter Sloan, Senior Principal, HOK
- Carolyn Watley, Vice President of Community Engagement, CBIZ

"Kansas City may not be prepared to fill an estimated 18,000 jobs"

05

Round table discussion group attendees suggested that community organizations need to work more closely together, and if the City and Region expect to meet the workforce demands in the near future, collaboration among these organizations needs to be supported. In the past, an environment of competition for philanthropic dollars has also been an obstacle. Key outcomes included:

- 1 There will be a need for employees to fill the demand of over 18,000 new jobs in Kansas City.
- 2 Many companies are frustrated with habits, attitudes and expectations of new to work employees
- 3 Young, primarily minority employees are not prepared to work in what are sometimes "hostile environments"
- 4 Employers need to be encouraged to better understand and accommodate workforce's desires for flexibility, culture, meaning, and overall work-life balance
- 5 "Everyone is struggling to find workforce"
- 6 Corporations are not prepared to accept under-skilled majority and minority employees
- 7 School districts need to identify basic IT career skill requirements that can be offered through courses or career exploration activities
- 8 There is a need for more collaboration among workforce development agencies

Additionally, some surmised that Kansas City continues to have barriers to getting people to work and work to people, including:

1. Transportation

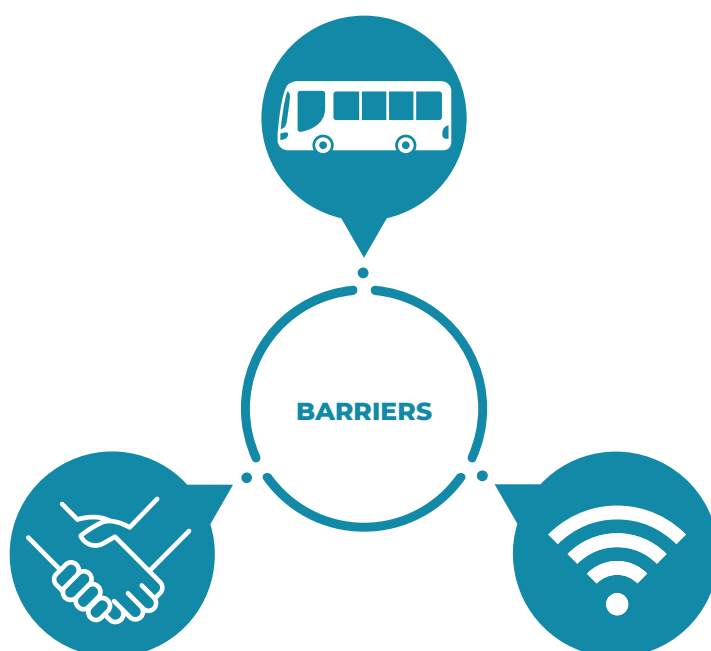
Lack of adequate, reliable and wide-spread mass transit

2. Connectivity

Lack of wide-spread reliable high-speed internet access

3. Trust

Pervasive culture and political climate of distrust and disinterest in forging meaningful pathways across these barriers



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: FEC

06

In response to the summary information gleaned from the Symposium, Clyde McQueen, President & CEO of Kansas City's Full Employment Council (FEC) agreed KC is operating in "too many silos" with "not enough connectivity".

McQueen said he recently hosted a 3- hour meeting in Kansas City at FEC with Lenita Jacobs Simmons, Deputy Assistant Secretary United States Department of Labor/ Employment and Training Administration, along with selected key employers and civic organizations. McQueen said of the meeting: "There were many heartfelt moments as it became evident how success for job seekers and employers alike could be achieved through collaboration, system coordination and elimination of redundancy by workforce system partners serving job seekers and employers. The results of the meeting, McQueen said, concluded that Kansas City needs to coordinate efforts to work toward the following:

Transportation

Work with Kansas City Area Transportation Authority and large corporate employers to develop a Workforce Development Transportation Plan.

Workforce Housing & Childcare

Help companies develop housing and childcare solutions that "fit the needs of each company's targeted workforce" and most importantly, work along with community organizations already working "on the ground" in disadvantaged communities.

Workforce Development for Underserved Communities

Develop workforce education programs that prepare emerging youth to enter the workforce in a meaningful way, with a trajectory for ongoing success and career development.

McQueen, whose organization is required to track the success of its employee-clients, advocates that Kansas City needs to work on these issues simultaneously in order to not just move the needle but keep the needle moving.



The Gem Organization and Workforce Development

At the Symposium, the Gem organization formally announced its STEAM concept and gained information and insight into successes and challenges within Kansas City's workforce development world. What emerged is the establishment of ongoing and regular communications among organizations with a shared mission of prosperity for previously underserved sectors of our community, each addressing specific needs in transportation, childcare, workforce housing, and workforce development. The Gem's Steam program fits into that shared mission - and will identify need - through workforce development programming for students in the Urban Core.

The Gem's STEAM Program will begin in 2023 with a prototype initiative matching highly motivated late stage high school and college-aged students with companies interested in providing paid internships, mentorships and job shadowing. Company representatives interested in signing up for the program can do so by logging onto the website at www.isteam-kc.org.

This initial prototype program will serve as a proving ground for developing and implementing a multi-year master plan for the establishment of a place-based Information Technology and Communication Arts and Media center in the Urban Core. The organization also announced its plan to move its headquarters from 21st & Vine into a soon-to-be renovated Wendell Phillips School nearby, where the place-based institute will be built

For further information about the iSTEAMKC Program, please visit our website at www.isteam-kc.org or contact Pat Jordan at pjordankc@aol.com or 816-645-1052.



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