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[nxtus.io](http://nxtus.io)

## Community Health & Vibrancy Innovation Projects Launching Across Kansas

*Pilot competition creates dozens of initiatives to tackle rural health, growth challenges*

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**Wichita, Kan.** – June 23, 2022 – **NXTUS, Inc.’s** NXTSTAGE Community Health & Vibrancy Pilot Competition, presented by **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS)**, announced 22 pilot projects, as well as 13 additional potential future projects, all aimed at improving Kansas’ population health and economic vibrancy.

At an innovation showcase held at Mark Arts, leaders from organizations around Kansas committed to implementing promising technology tools aimed at tackling key issues such as access to mental health care and addiction treatment, improving senior care and expanding charitable giving.

Here are the winning startups chosen by the NXTSTAGE pilot partners:

- **Healthy Bourbon County Action Team** committed to pilot projects with **Small Bites Adventure Club, SpairTime and SoulFIRE Health**, and is connecting **Akesa Health, Caregivers Insight** and **Embrace Prevention Care** with care providers in the county to scope out future projects. They are also continuing discussions with **Kadogo** to construct a collaboration.
- **Hodgeman County Economic Development:** Awarded pilots to **Debtle, PursueCare, Small Bites Adventure Club, SoulFIRE Health and Televeda**. They are still exploring collaborations with three additional finalists.
- **LiveWell Northwest Kansas:** Doing pilot projects with **PursueCare** and **Akesa Health** and joining other partners in expanding **Televeda’s** work in Kansas.
- **Scott County Development Committee:** Awarded a pilot project to **Televeda** and committed to a multi-entity project, alongside Stepping-Up Ministries, with **Akesa Health, PursueCare, SoulFIRE Health** and **Vincere Health**. SCDC’s leader has also committed to a personal pilot for **Caregivers Insight**.
- **Thrive Allen County:** Awarded four new and one continuing pilot: **Akesa Health, PursueCare, Small Bites Adventure Club, SoulFIRE Health, and Televeda (continuing)**. They are also continuing to explore funding for 6 more projects, with **Caregivers Insight, Embrace Prevention Care, Kadogo, Ringorang, SpairTime and Vincere Health**.

“We’re thrilled to play a part in connecting entrepreneurs with local community organizations to improve health outcomes and the economic well-being of our state,” said **Virginia Barnes, Blue Health Initiatives director at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas**. “Our communities have unique health needs and the technology being implemented as a result of this competition has the potential to improve the lives of thousands of Kansans.”

“Matching Kansas’ future-minded leaders with leading innovators means new tools can be put to work right now, to change Kansans’ lives for the better,” said **Mary Beth Jarvis, NXTUS executive director**. “We’re working to help connect entrepreneurs to customers here, so they can grow companies of significance and help Kansas communities thrive.”



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After the 2021 competition resulted in six innovation projects state-wide, the 2022 contest attracted **119 competitors from 28 states and 7 countries** and had very diverse participation; 94 percent of applicants had minority and/or female founders. Of the finalists, which came from nine states, 100 percent had ethnic minority or females as founders.

In addition to presenting sponsorship from the Blue Health Initiatives of BCBSKS, this competition also received a grant from the **Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation**, support from the **Greater Wichita Partnership** and the **University of Kansas Medical School's Wichita Medical Practice Association**, as well as assistance from **NetWork Kansas**.

### 2022 NXSTAGE Community Health & Vibrancy Pilot Competition Finalists:

- [Akesa Health](#) offers a guided self-therapy that helps users transform distress into resilience using their cell phones.
- [Caregivers Insight](#) empowers caregivers to alter daily care using easy-to-understand graphs of one's changing health condition. Better Insights. Better Care.
- [Debtle](#): Every year, 70 million Americans experience difficulty paying for their healthcare. Debtle's cloud-based software automates the negotiation, settlement and payment of overdue medical bills.
- [Embrace Prevention Care](#) provides value-based care via an integrated suite of Medicare-reimbursed services to help older adults take actions to stay healthy & out of the hospital, and independently age in place.
- With [Kadogo](#), individuals can give others' money away while saving on taxes. The app makes it simple to fill a Giving Account with outside funds, like charitable donations matched by employers and brands.
- [PursueCare](#) provides comprehensive telemedicine treatment for addiction & mental health issues through a smartphone app. The company partners with health systems and community resources to rapidly get patients into virtual treatment, reducing overuse of high-cost in-patient & ER visits.
- [Ringorang](#), by Knowledge as a Service, is clinically proven software that ensures people form lasting habits through microlearning and repetition, helping companies and communities achieve and measure real-time results from education campaigns or training initiatives.
- [Small Bites Adventure Club](#) helps teachers and community programs promote healthy eating and a love of fresh fruits and vegetables via online materials and a subscription for activity kits.
- [SoulFIRE Health](#), a program of 5<sup>th</sup> Dimension Strategies, presents evidence-based healthy nutrition and activities content, targeting communities and health coaches working with persons with chronic disease.
- [SpairTime](#) is a community-focused marketplace designed to improve the discovery process of local microbusinesses and facilitate purchases of their products and services.
- [Televeda](#) alleviates social isolation and loneliness by helping community-based organizations efficiently and effectively reach, engage and track the mental wellbeing of their members via virtual/hybrid programs.
- [Vincere](#) offers a smoking (and vaping) cessation program accessible to lower-income residents that provides instant rewards and coaching that intercepts smokers earlier in their quitting journey.

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*NXTUS, Inc helps entrepreneurs grow companies of significance. The organization works to connect startup founders with community resources, capital and customers. NXTUS manages NXTSTAGE programs, which are aimed at connecting startups to mature businesses and regional partners looking to become customers for their innovative technologies and to help accelerate the pace of innovation in the region, as well as Accelerate Venture Partners, a fast-growing regional Angel investor syndicate.*

*For more than 80 years, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas has built a reputation of trust with its members and contracting providers by providing outstanding customer service while quickly and accurately processing claims; fairly administering benefit plans and contracts; offering programs, services and tools to help members improve or maintain their health; and operating under the highest ethical standards while being good stewards of premium dollars. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and is the state's largest insurer, serving all Kansas counties except Johnson and Wyandotte. For more information, visit [bcbsks.com](http://bcbsks.com). Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. NXTUS and the NXTSTAGE Community Health and Vibrancy Competition are not affiliated with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas.*