

Page Link: <https://northernkentuckyusa.com/northern-kentucky-receives-new-rise-program-entrepreneurship-grant/>

(Ft. Mitchell, KY; Nov. 29, 2018) – Early this summer, Northern Kentucky Tri-County Economic Development Corporation (Tri-ED) led the creation of the NKY Entrepreneurship Council (NKYEC), a new collaborative of private sector leaders who have been working in different aspects of entrepreneurship and innovation for many years.

The NKYEC announced this week it has received a \$750,000 grant to emphasize entrepreneurship and innovation in Northern Kentucky's economic development. KY Innovation's RISE program awarded the new funds, and the NKYEC plans to match the grant with local dollars to drive greater results for the region.

The NKYEC looks to establish an innovation cluster in Northern Kentucky, which includes Boone, Campbell and Kenton counties. The focus will be on informatics, health innovation and logistics innovation— centers of excellence in the region. Northern Kentucky University (NKU) will leverage its expertise from the College of Informatics and the Institute of Health Innovation to support the council's focus areas. Once established, the innovation cluster will serve as a resource for the entire state and the broader region.

"We are excited by this opportunity to work together with entrepreneurs, startups and existing businesses in our region to help grow their organizations through innovation and to further establish northern Kentucky as a great place to start, locate and expand business," said Gary Moore, Boone County Judge-Executive and current board chair of Tri-ED. "The leaders on this new council are passionate about this work, and they will help bring our business environment to a new level. This is one of many efforts at Tri-ED focused on improving economic development and overall growth in our region."

The RISE funds were awarded to the NKU Foundation, which partnered with Tri-ED to carry out the duties of the grant. Tri-ED established the NKYEC to take a new approach to economic development that collaborates with community partners to share goals and resources. Normand Desmarais, NKU Board of Regents' secretary and co-founder of TiER1 Performance Solutions, serves as chair of the NKYEC.

"This is a great day for all entrepreneurs in Northern Kentucky. We now have the resources and a new private sector driven model to accelerate business success," said Desmarais. "We are adopting and implementing best practices in innovation from entrepreneurial communities around the world, deploying the latest in digital and social technologies, and connecting entrepreneurs to resources specific to their business and personal needs."

Tri-ED compiled a regional collaboration of organizations involved in innovation and entrepreneurship to participate in the NKYEC. These groups come from the public and private sectors, as well as academia. In addition to NKU and Tri-ED, the participants include Aviatra Accelerators, Cintrifuse, Gateway Community & Technical College, Square1 and UpTech. The Commonwealth is using this collaboration as an example of how regions should approach economic development through entrepreneurship.

"We are thrilled that Northern Kentucky has brought so many great partners to the table to develop a strong, entrepreneurship-based innovation cluster focused on informatics, health innovation and logistics innovation," said Brian Mefford, executive director of the Office of Entrepreneurship at the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. "This is exactly the kind of collaboration we were aiming for when developing this new investment approach, and we know the results will show why this was the right approach to take."

The NKYEC plans to leverage strong Northern Kentucky partnerships to have a greater impact. NKU and St. Elizabeth Healthcare will build on their existing health innovation initiative, and NKU will also work with Tri-State Logistics Council to create a model for the logistics innovation sector. CONNETIC Ventures will work on a plan to create an investment fund, and NKYEC will enhance collaboration by establishing a digital learning and connection tool for all organizations in the region.

"It is the combination of state investment, local matching dollars and the passionate commitment of our leaders and partners that will enable us to achieve these very big goals for our region," said Casey Barach, senior vice president for Entrepreneurship at Tri-ED.

The NKYEC consists of:

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Aaron Blutworth	CEO – FERN
Rich Boehne	Chairman – Scripps/ NKU Board of Regents
Craig Carlson	Regional Director – BB&T
Karen Cheser	Superintendent – Ft. Thomas Independent Schools
Norm Desmarais	Founder & Chair – TiER1 Performance Solutions / NKU Regent
Nigel Ferrey	Chairman & CEO – SIDIS Corp.
Kay Geiger	Regional President – PNC Bank
Sarah Giolando	Chief Strategy Officer – St. E Healthcare
John Hawkins	CEO – MPI/Pathfinder
David Heidrich	CEO – Zalla Companies / Northern Kentucky Growth Fund
John Hengelbrok	CEO – Baker Stamping Co.
Matt Hollenkamp	Vice President, Marketing & Communications – St. E Healthcare
Dave Knox	Founder & Managing Partner – Vine Street Ventures
Tony Lamb	Founder & CEO – Kona Ice
MaryAnn Pietromonaco	VP – Morgan Stanley / Chair of Aviatra Accelerators
Tom Prewitt	Chair – Graydon / Chair of UpTech Accelerator
Tim Schroeder	CEO – CTI Clinical Trial & Consulting Services
Chad Summe	Sr. VP – Quotient Technology
Vincent Williams	Co-Founder / Partner – Orchestrate Technologies
Brad Zapp	Founder & Managing Partner – CONNETIC Ventures