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Founder, MindScapes**Global Startups Invited to Bring Health Solutions to Kansas Communities***NXTUS opens applications for 2026 Community Health & Vibrancy Pilot Competition, connecting emerging health technologies with local partners across Kansas*

Wichita, Kan. – March 17, 2026 – **NXTUS, Inc.**, alongside eight Kansas organizations, has opened applications for the **2026 NXTSTAGE Community Health and Vibrancy Pilot Competition**, presented by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS).

Entering its sixth year, the program connects global startups with Kansas health and community organizations seeking innovative solutions to improve the health of Kansans and support community growth.

Pilot partners represent Kansas health and community organizations seeking innovative solutions to local challenges. They evaluate participating startups and explore opportunities to pilot new technologies in their communities. This year's partners include Thrive Allen County, Livewell Northwest Kansas, Russell Regional Hospital, Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity, Coffey Health System, Coffey County Economic Development, NMC Health, and the Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita.

The 2026 competition builds on momentum from 77 local and statewide innovation projects announced since the program's inception. In the coming months, pilot partners will review applicants and narrow the field to the most promising solutions. This fall, a cohort of eight to 10 startups will travel to Kansas to meet with pilot partners and other potential customers from across the state.

Applications for the 2026 competition are now open [here](#). Startups with technology tools related to wellness, mental health, maternal health, substance abuse, civic engagement, smoking cessation, health tech, or other solutions that enhance community vitality and well-being are encouraged to apply.

"Given the momentum built in the first five years of this unique program, we're excited to see the innovative solutions that will emerge this year," said **Collette Atkinson, NXTUS Program Manager**. "Each application shows how entrepreneurs can change lives by creating the solutions our communities need to become healthier and stronger."

BCBSKS has served as the presenting sponsor of the competition since 2021. Their continued partnership helps community health and economic development organizations across Kansas access promising technologies that can improve health outcomes and strengthen communities.

"At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, we believe healthier communities are built through strong partnerships, practical innovation and a shared commitment to long-term progress," said **Virginia Barnes, BCBSKS Director of Blue Health Initiatives**. "Through this program, we connect emerging technologies with Kansas organizations that are ready to test new ideas, remove barriers and support healthier communities across the state."

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In addition to BCBSKS, the program is made possible with support from Hinkle Law and the Kansas Health Foundation.

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About NXTUS: *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 innovations and to help accelerate the pace of innovation and startup growth in the region, as well as Accelerate Venture Partners, a fast-growing regional angel investor syndicate.*

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas: *For more than 80 years, we've served Kansans by delivering outstanding customer service, administering benefits fairly, and processing claims quickly and accurately. As a not-for-profit health plan, we offer programs, services and tools to help members improve or maintain their health – while operating with integrity and responsibly managing premium dollars. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and serves all Kansas counties except Johnson and Wyandotte. For more information, visit bcbsks.com.*