



KENTUCKY
COMMERCIALIZATION
VENTURES

KCV EDGE

Impact Report

— Year 2

From Implementation
to Impact



May 1, 2025–April 30, 2026

KCV EDGE is supported by the National Science Foundation. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Number 2345142.

From Implementation to Impact

In its second year, the Kentucky Commercialization Ventures EDGE (KCV EDGE) initiative built on the foundation established in Year 1, advancing sustainable transformation in Kentucky's research infrastructure and strengthening the systems, processes and workforce that enable research and innovation to thrive.

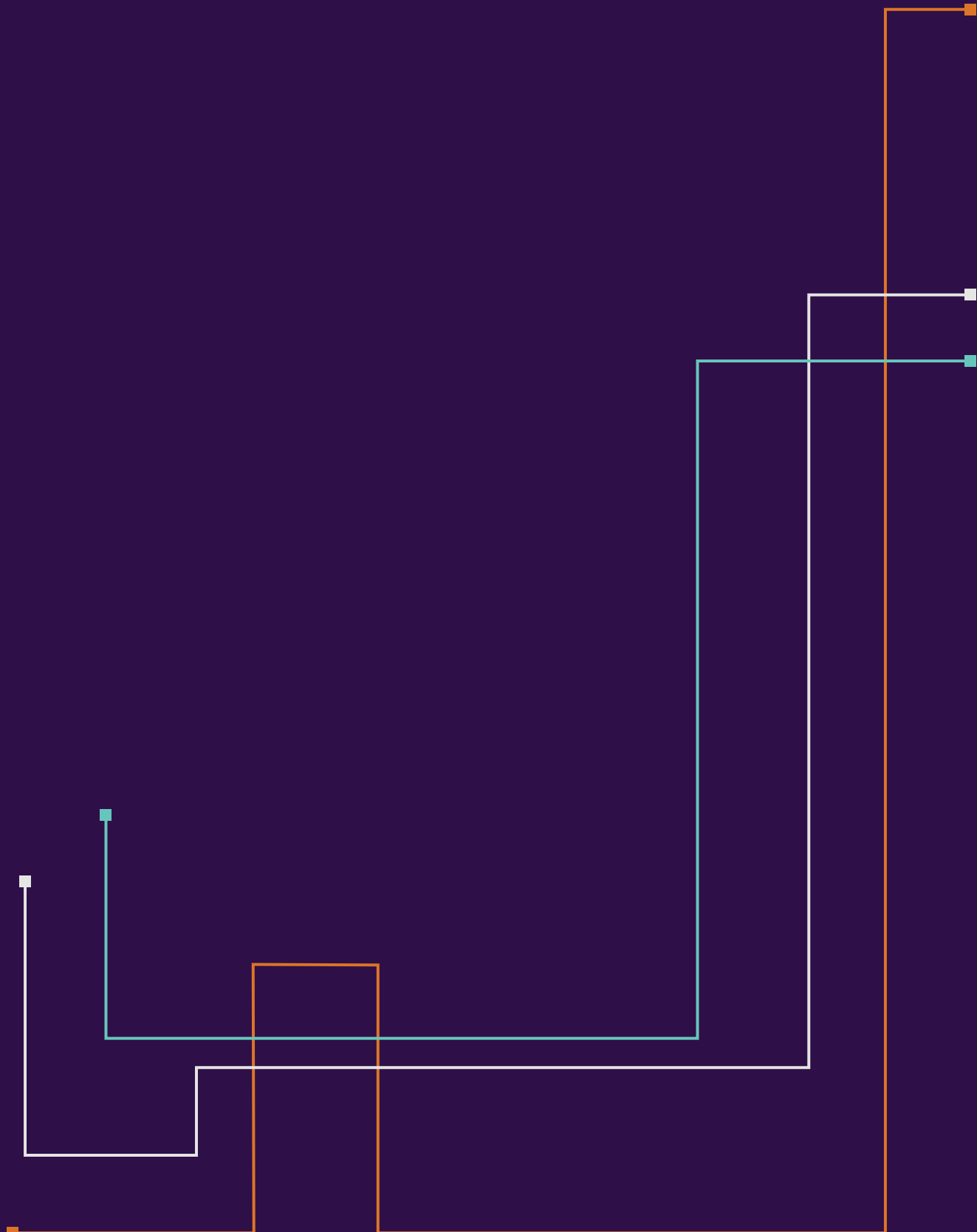
In Kentucky, an NSF EPSCoR state, this work takes on added significance. Rather than reshaping institutional identities, KCV EDGE focuses on elevating existing strengths, expanding participation and positioning institutions to compete and contribute at a national level.

This work is supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Growing Research Access for Nationally Transformative Economic Development (GRANTED) initiative and led by PI Kayla Meisner.

Kayla Meisner and evaluator Elizabeth McGee during an EDGE collaboration session at Morehead State University.



KCV EDGE Year 2 Partners & Funders



Year 2 Highlights

Year 2 marked a transition from early-stage planning to active implementation, measurable progress and growing national visibility.

Key milestones reflect a coordinated effort across KCV EDGE partner institutions to align strategy, deploy infrastructure and deepen engagement with faculty, leadership and national partners.

Scale

- \$3M+ proposals
- 17 National presentations and partnerships

Build

- Research enterprise software implementation
- Standardized research systems

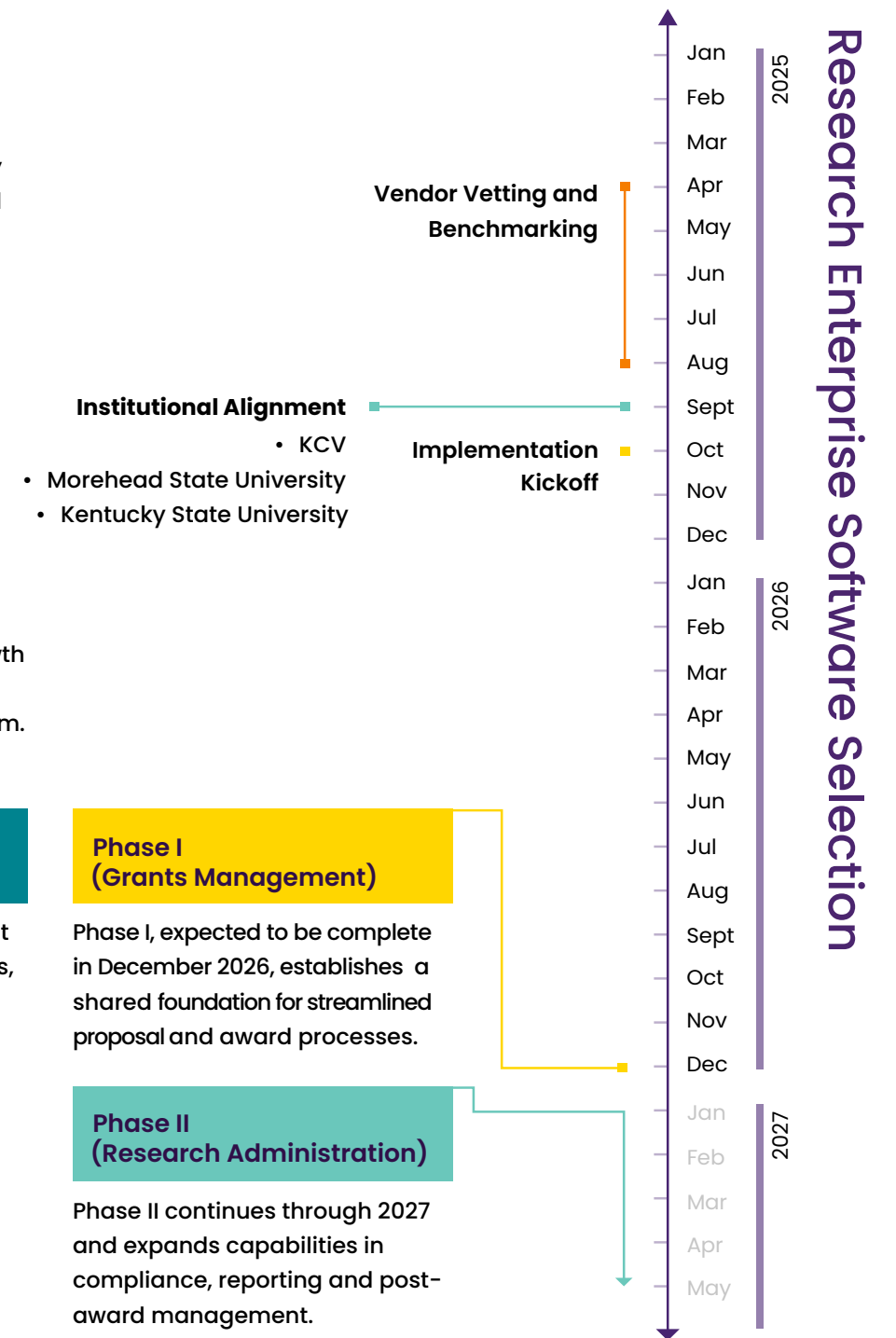
Impact

- 77 sessions across partner institutions
- 59 faculty and students trained in the Innovation Training Series
- 11 partner faculty and staff attended national professional development opportunities

Strengthening Research Infrastructure

A major milestone in Year 2 was the selection and implementation of a shared research enterprise software platform across KCV, Kentucky State University and Morehead State University. The system streamlines pre- and post-award processes, reduces administrative burden and standardizes workflows.

This effort aligns with NSF GRANTED priorities by strengthening research infrastructure and improving the systems that support proposal development, award management, long-term growth and increased participation in the national research ecosystem.



Phased Outcomes

Implementation is underway at two of three partner institutions, with significant progress in system customization to meet institutional needs.

This phased approach reflects GRANTED’s emphasis on scalable infrastructure across the full research lifecycle.

Advancing Infrastructure Through Engagement

Strengthening the research enterprise workforce is a core pillar of the NSF GRANTED initiative. In Year 2, KCV EDGE expanded engagement through roadshow programming and on-campus sessions, equipping faculty and staff to navigate funding opportunities and contribute to institutional research growth. **The KCV Roadshow served as a central driver of this engagement.**

KCV led collaborative sessions across all three partner institutions during the annual roadshow, creating a forum to identify challenges, co-develop solutions and advance institution-specific and shared goals in research and commercialization.



KCV's Tucker Jewell engages members of the Morehead State University community at the 2026 Celebration of Student Scholarship.

77

Engagement Sessions Delivered



Dr. Peter Hoffmann and NKU leadership participate in an EDGE collaboration session.

Roadshow Takeaways

Collaboration and Insight

Collaborative sessions across partner institutions surfaced key challenges and informed shared strategies, supported by an external evaluation conducted by LEAP Consulting.

- Facilitated cross-institution collaboration sessions led by KCV
- External evaluation by LEAP Consulting:
 - ◊ Highlighted key findings, including institutional strengths, challenges and opportunities
 - ◊ Provided feedback on facilitation and faculty engagement to inform future roadshows

Strategic Engagement with NSF Leadership

Direct engagement with NSF GRANTED Program Director Dr. Sarah O'Brien provided access to national priorities and expanded visibility into NSF funding opportunities.

- Multi-day visit across KCV EDGE partner institutions
- Designed to broaden access to NSF resources and guidance
- Engagement activities included:
 - ◊ Campus-wide presentations on NSF priorities and funding opportunities
 - ◊ One-on-one meetings with faculty, research staff and leadership
 - ◊ Participation in collaboration sessions as a subject matter expert
- Provided guidance on proposal positioning, institutional readiness and navigating the federal funding landscape
- Extended engagement beyond existing NSF-funded innovators

Strengthening Institutional and National Alignment

Engagement created intentional opportunities to strengthen alignment across Kentucky's research and innovation ecosystem, connecting national priorities with institutional and statewide efforts.

- Connected national NSF priorities to Kentucky's research landscape
- Reinforced collaboration across institution types, including R1 institutions the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville
- Supported a coordinated, statewide approach to strengthening research capacity
- Aligned research capacity-building with economic development priorities, including engagement with:
 - ◊ Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation
 - ◊ Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development

"Strong Overall Usefulness of the Roadshow: All respondents (100%) indicated that the roadshow was very useful, reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the event."

– KCV EDGE Evaluator Elizabeth McGee of LEAP Consulting

"KCV EDGE is already transforming the research enterprise in Kentucky by building high-quality administrative functions that are necessary for the research that leads to commercialization. Projects like this one leverage relationships to improve research support infrastructure for everyone across the commonwealth, which is an effective and efficient way to enhance the research capacity in Kentucky."

– NSF GRANTED Program Director Dr. Sarah O'Brien

Leading National Research Infrastructure Innovation

KCV EDGE is positioning Kentucky as a national leader in research infrastructure innovation by contributing to broader conversations on how institutions build capacity, support the research enterprise and expand access to funding opportunities.

Thought Leadership and Visibility

KCV EDGE expanded national visibility through conference participation and national presentations, highlighting its scalable model for strengthening research capacity and commercialization.

Year 2 Panel Engagements

- AUTM
- CLASP
- Kentucky EPSCoR
- University of Louisville

KCV participated in

17 national presentations in Year 2.

“Year 2 of KCV EDGE represents a meaningful shift from planning to action, where we are not only strengthening research infrastructure, but actively positioning Kentucky’s institutions, faculty and workforce to compete and lead on a national stage. Through this work, we are building a more connected, resilient and opportunity-driven research ecosystem that will drive long-term impact for the commonwealth.”

– **KCV Executive Director and KCV EDGE PI Kayla Meisner**

Collaborations and Funding Activity

- \$5K Partnership for Inclusive Innovation funding for MITTN in collaboration with LaunchTN (October 2025)
- AUTM Annual (February 2026)
- Participants
 - ◊ NKU EDGE Co-PI and KCV Champion: Dr. Peter Hoffmann
 - ◊ KCV EDGE: Kayla Meisner, Mandy Hartman and Christy Stanley

Statewide Engagement and Alignment

- KCV Advisory Board Meet and Greet (March 2026)
- Connected R1 leadership, regional institutions and state stakeholders
- Demonstrated a coordinated, statewide approach to strengthening research capacity
- Aligned with both GRANTED and EPSCoR priorities
- University of Kentucky engagement
 - ◊ Presentation to research staff and administrators on NSF GRANTED
 - ◊ Faculty and public-facing session on NSF proposal preparation and policy updates

Advancing Research Capacity & Workforce Development

Participation in training and proposal development reflects KCV EDGE’s broader effort to strengthen human capital within the research enterprise, a central focus of the NSF GRANTED initiative.

In Year 2,

59

participants completed the Innovation Training Series, gaining knowledge in innovation, commercialization and entrepreneurship.

Proposal Activity

Supported or led proposal submissions including:

- NSF ART (3 proposals, subaward role)
- INVENT (in collaboration with NKU)
- ARC Arise (multi-state effort)
- Delta Analytics
- Kaufmann Award (awarded)

Training and Education

KCV expanded access to innovation and commercialization education through its asynchronous Innovation Training program, developed in collaboration with Launch Blue.

Professional Development and Leadership

KCV EDGE supported professional development across partner institutions, enabling staff to engage in national training programs and conferences.

In Year 2, 11 participants attended leading organizations such as SRAI, NCURA, AUTM and UIDP, strengthening skills in research administration, compliance and partnership development. Notably, KCV EDGE team member Christy Stanley served as a mentor in NCURA Region III Leadership Cohort (R3 LEAP).

This investment directly supports GRANTED priorities by developing the human capital necessary to sustain competitive, high-functioning research enterprises.

Marking a milestone in Year 2 of EDGE, KCV and Kentucky State University team members join NSF Program Director Dr. O'Brien to celebrate progress and strengthen partnerships advancing research capacity across Kentucky.



Meet The EDGE Team

Project Lead



Kentucky Commercialization Ventures

- Kayla Meisner, Executive Director
- Mandy Hartman, Associate Director of Research
- Christy Stanley, Grants Manager

External Evaluator



LEAP Evaluation Consulting

- Daniel Cicala, CEO and Co-founder
- Elizabeth McGee, Co-founder and Senior Consultant

Partner Institutions

All three institutions are PUIs with modest research funding and limited federal grant infrastructure.



Morehead State University (MoSU)

Regional comprehensive university

- Shannon Harr, Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
- Janet Cline, Director of Research Integrity and Compliance and KCV EDGE Co-PI
- Nellie Middleton, Grant and Contract Administrator, Senior Grants Specialist
- Debbie Ross, Research Integrity Officer, Grants and Contracts Specialist

Dr. Shannon Harr,
MoSU Champion



“KCV EDGE funding continues to be instrumental in our success at Morehead State. The collaborative relationship with KCV has enhanced our ability to offer more robust and meaningful services to our faculty and staff. Further, by making it possible to invest in software solutions that will transform our workflow, we are streamlining our processes, allowing us to be more efficient and to also provide our stakeholders with better reporting and data.”



Kentucky State University (KSU)

HBCU and land-grant institution

- Dorothy Daley, Interim Director Sponsored Programs
- Maja Bursac, Research Development Associate
- Sujeet Acharya, Research Development Associate and Innovation Associate

Dorothy Daley,
KSU Champion and
KCV EDGE Co-PI



“We’ve made strong progress towards implementing Quali, a step that will significantly enhance our research administration capabilities. In addition, attending a Research Administration conference contributed meaningfully to our professional development and strengthened our ability to expand research capacity. The KCV roadshow was the best one yet, as we have increased participation over the last year. We are thankful for our collaboration with KCV.”



Northern Kentucky University (NKU)

Comprehensive metropolitan university

- Peter Hofman, Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach (GERO)
- Mark Lackey, Manager Research Operations
- Steve Manning, Senior Grant Administrator

Dr. Peter Hoffmann,
NKU Champion and
KCV EDGE Co-PI




“Our close partnership with KCV has strengthened our capacity across research, grants and contracts, allowing us to process a higher volume of grants while providing faculty and staff with more comprehensive support, from proposal development to workshops, outreach and contract review. Through this collaboration, NKU has also launched an internship program connecting students with start-up companies, and we continue to build a robust research transfer infrastructure to support the university’s long-term growth.”

Sharpening Kentucky's Competitive Edge

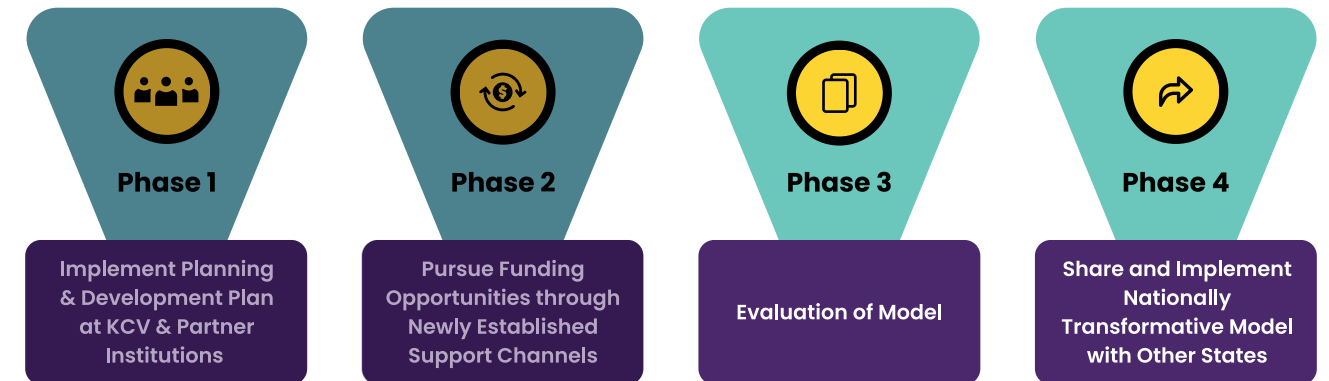
Collectively, KCV EDGE demonstrates how targeted investments in research enterprise infrastructure, aligned with NSF GRANTED and EPSCoR priorities, can strengthen competitiveness and position institutions for long-term impact within the national research landscape.

By strengthening research infrastructure and workforce capacity, the program is:



 **Through these efforts,** Kentucky is positioned not only to compete, but to lead in the national research landscape.

Looking Ahead (Years 3-5)



As KCV EDGE moves into its next phase, the focus will be on:

- Creating a collaborative infrastructure model for research growth and technology transfer
- Increasing proposal success rates and funding outcomes
- Scaling successful models across institutions and regions
- Continuing alignment with NSF GRANTED and NSF EPSCoR priorities

Phase 3 – Year 3

- Advance institution specific strategic projects aligned with evaluation findings, needs assessments and emerging partner priorities to strengthen research capacity and sustainability
- Evaluate and publish program successes and tools
- Fill staffing gaps to support growth
- Boost proposal submission rates and indirect cost recovery
- Conduct a comprehensive model evaluation to assess implemented practices, proposal success rates and partner engagement

Phase 4 – Years 4 & 5

- Establish EDGE as a fully developed model encompassing funding, administration, commercialization and leadership
- Collaborate with states, territories, agencies and consortia to implement successful EDGE practices
- Provide tailored guidance to help others strengthen research infrastructure
- Reduce institutional burden and improve responsiveness to funding opportunities

 **With a strong foundation** in place and clear progress, KCV EDGE is positioned to drive sustained impact by strengthening research ecosystems across Kentucky and serving as a model for national replication.



kycommercializationventures.com/kcv-edge

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*The KCV team attends the
AUTM Annual Meeting in
Seattle, WA to connect with
other research, tech transfer
and commercialization
professionals.*





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