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CHOOSE TOPEKA TALENT INITIATIVE TO INCENTIVIZE TALENT TO MOVE TO TOPEKA

Topeka, KS, December 11, 2019– GO Topeka is excited to share that it has received approval from its board of directors as well as the Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) to fund Choose Topeka, a talent pilot program that will offer matching incentives by partnering with employers to encourage talent to move to Topeka & Shawnee County.

“Choose Topeka was created with the intention of investing in employees to live and work in Topeka & Shawnee County, so that we may foster an ‘intentional community,’ one of community support builders.” said Barbara Stapleton, VP of Business Retention & Talent Initiatives, GO Topeka, an organization of the Greater Topeka Partnership.

Incentives will be performance based, after the employee has moved and resided in the community for a year and could be used for all types of moving related expenses. For primary residences only, the rental agreement incentive is \$10,000 - a \$5,000 match of employer and JEDO funds. The purchase or rehabilitation of home is a \$7,500 match of employer and JEDO funds. Moving costs alone to move a 1-2 bedroom apartment can range from \$4,000 to \$7,000 and for a 3-4 bedroom home, range from \$10,000 to \$16,000, depending on the distance and location.

Encumbrance of \$300,000 to fund incentives for the 2021 budget was approved, with a launch and promotion of the initiative in 2020. This will provide incentive funds for 40-60 new resident workers during the program's initial run and could allow for a population growth double or more with families and trailing partners.

"The Momentum 2022 strategic plan indicated that of those workers in the county that made over \$40,000, 40% resided outside the county," continued Stapleton. "This initiative is leading edge and not bleeding edge to shift that migration and not only grow population but attract and retain future growth. As we worked to create it, we received input from community and board members and looked at key programs we've followed as we align our efforts."

The return on investment is based on the economic impact of an average worker moving to the county, making \$60,000 per year. On average, for every \$5,000 provided in incentives, the benefit will be ten times that amount. Economic impact from the total incentives investment after the first year is projected to be over \$2.14M and by the fifth year, totals \$11.38M.

"As we continue to grow and expand, especially in some specialized areas like wealth management and technology and programming, attracting great talent remains one of our biggest challenges. On top of that, growing the population base in Topeka is one of the most important long-term strategies we should be focused on as a community. Thinking outside the box is required today, and we are excited about the Choose Topeka Talent initiative and what it could mean not only for our business but for this community," said David Callanan, co-founder of Advisors Excel.

"With the Choose Topeka initiative, we hope to not only support our local recruiters and HR professionals in their attraction and retention efforts," said Molly Howey, SVP of Economic Development, GO Topeka, an organization of the Greater Topeka Partnership, "but we also intend to showcase just how much Topeka & Shawnee County supports its local talent and is crusading for them to reach that next step in their pathway to success and happiness within the community."

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