



JOHN FIERRO

✉ fierrojohn84@gmail.com

☎ 816.918.8852

📍 1721 Jarboe Kansas City, Missouri 64108

About Me

I was born in Kansas City, Missouri and raised in a housing project in the Westside, an historically Mexican American neighborhood, by two parents in a Catholic, working class household. My father was a Korean War veteran and my mom, who spoke only Spanish, was a homemaker. I also have three older siblings. After leaving college to work full-time as a teenage father of a son, I attended evening and weekend classes towards the successful completion of an undergraduate and two graduate degrees while committing myself to professional positions in community service.

I am a trained public administrator who has worked in Kansas City's not for profit sector for nearly four decades. As the President/CEO of Mattie Rhodes, I have secured national accreditation for the agency from the Council on Accreditation (COA) and have expanded operations to cover three municipalities in the Greater Kansas City area, employing over 60 full-time staff. During my tenure (as both Director of Development and CEO), I have led the agency through three separate Capital Campaigns securing nearly \$10M to expand visual & cultural arts, social services, and violence prevention strategies for over 20,000 low-income children, adults, and families in Kansas City each year.

I have extensive service with municipal government in the Greater Kansas City area. I have been appointed by the last five elected Mayors of Kansas City to serve on various boards and commissions that include: the Bi-State Empowerment Zone, the Housing Authority, Parks and Recreation Department, PortKC, and the Housing Trust Fund.

I have the distinction of being appointed as the first Latino to serve as President of the historic, KCMO Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners. My leadership as Co-chair for the Jackson County Jail Taskforce and as a Mayoral appointee (Sly James) to the KCI Terminal committee has resulted in over \$1.5B in new capital improvements for the Greater Kansas City area.

I was elected to one term as Board Member for the Kansas City Public School District for Sub-District 3, which encompasses the district's largest district for Hispanic children. I served as Chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee, working to advance the District's Legislative Agenda in the State Capital, helped it maintain provisional accreditation by the Missouri State Board of Education and led the last District-wide Redistricting process that resulted in an equitable distribution of representation for people of color.

I have a proven track record of working collaboratively on both sides of the aisle and my dedication and passion for the Greater Kansas City Area can be seen through the multitude of professional and community roles I have served throughout my career.

Work Experience

PRESIDENT/CEO

Mattie Rhodes Center (Kansas City, Missouri)

2006 – Present

Established in 1894, I lead one of Kansas City's most historic, 501(c)3 non-profit organizations focused on community development. I am responsible for executing the Board-approved vision of the organization which is aligned with the Centers for Disease Control's Social Determinants of Health Model that seeks to improve personal health by providing programs and services focused on non-medical factors that influence a person's health and well-being. These include economic stability, education, social and community context, healthcare access and quality, and neighborhood place making.

I am responsible for the leadership, fundraising, Board development and financial management of the agency that operates with \$5.5M in annual revenue to support participants from Clay and Jackson County, Missouri. Specifically, Mattie Rhodes' team of over 60 full-time employees provide children, adults, and families with behavioral health counseling, healthcare services for the uninsured, visual arts programming for youth, youth development after-school enrichment activities, workforce development for adults, and violence prevention strategies.

Accomplishments:

- In 2023, 182 died in Kansas City because of homicides, becoming the deadliest year on record. According to KCPD crime statistics, nearly 10% of all homicide victims in 2023 were Latino. In response, a community violence prevention center was opened and over \$850,000 has been secured to prevent violence amongst Latinos in Historic Northeast KCMO with resources to support therapy, conflict resolution, and social services.
- Lead the agency in a capital campaign to build a new cultural arts center in Kansas City's Westside; securing over \$5M from federal, state, and local government sources as well as from individual contributions and private foundations. Opened in March 2022, the Mattie Rhodes Cultural Center is a public facility that provides adults and children with cultural arts programs, visual art exhibitions and offers the community a gathering place for neighborhood meetings and celebrations.
- Secured funding to build the agency's first affordable house for sale in Historic Northeast KCMO. The home was a net zero (environmentally friendly) house sold to a low income, single mother from the Indian Mound neighborhood of KCMO.
- Secured over \$1M from the state and city to renovate a community center in Historic Northeast KCMO to expand our food assistance program with commercial type amenities for storage and distribution, upgrade IT, enhance safety, and weatherize the facility.
- During the COVID Pandemic, we secured over \$1M in federal funding to provide a weekly groceries program as well as pay for utilities, rent and mortgage payments. In addition, facilitated over 2,000 COVID vaccinations.
- In 2023, a walk-in clinic was established at the agency's Historic Northeast neighborhood targeting uninsured participants. Just under 300 individuals and families have received medical treatment for minor illnesses and injuries, as well as health screenings. The clinic charges each participant, a flat \$35 fee and is only open on Fridays from Noon – 5:00 p.m., 25% of participants present diabetes as the contributing factor for their visit.
- Secured twice in the last decade, the National Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Award, receiving \$200,000 each time in core operating support over two years. Funds have been used to expand community development efforts in the urban core of Jackson County, Missouri.

Accomplishments:

- Over the last five years, we secured over \$1.2M from a congressional earmark for renovations to our Cultural Arts campus.
- Secured and have maintained over the last decade, Accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA). COA is an international, independent, not-for-profit, child- and family-service and behavioral healthcare accrediting organization.
- Secured accreditation by the Missouri Department of Mental Health for our substance abuse treatment program.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Mattie Rhodes Center (Kansas City, Missouri)

1998 – 2005

Prior to serving as the CEO of Mattie Rhodes Center, I served as the agency's first full-time development director, assisting the executive director for seven years in the development and coordination of the agency's strategic plan, long-term capital improvements and related funding mechanisms. Specifically, I was responsible for grant writing, marketing, community relations and program development.

Accomplishments:

- Grew annual budget from \$650,000 to \$2.1 million; increased employees from 12 to 40; and grew program space from 9,000 square feet to 29,000 square feet.
- Assisted the executive director with the agency's first major gifts campaign securing \$2.1 million in a 12-month period to support capital improvements and program expansion.
- Expanded the agency locations to include operations in KCMO Historic Northeast and KCKS Argentine neighborhood.
- Secured congressional earmark focused on mental health services for Latinos.

STUDENT & FAMILY SUPPORT

Kansas City Public Schools (Kansas City, Missouri)

1996 – 1998

The central purpose of this position was to work with students who were truant and/or underperforming in school as a result of family issues or learning deficiencies. My role was to assist the student and family in accessing appropriate community resources to improve school attendance and academic performance.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hispanic Economic Development Corporation (Kansas City, Missouri)

1996 – 1998

The central purpose of this position was to help establish the organization as its first executive director and to assist Hispanic and Spanish-speaking small business owners secure the necessary licenses and finances to establish a formal business operation. I provided participants with the basics for writing a business plan, as outlined in the FastTrac Curriculum. I was responsible for facilitating the development of a HUD-funded industrial business park located in the Westside.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Guadalupe Centers, Inc. (Kansas City, Missouri)

1986 – 1994

The central purpose of this position was to develop and coordinate community services for the Westside and Hispanic community of Kansas City, Missouri, in the areas of job placement, community crime prevention, advocacy, adult recreation, and legalization programs. I also served as the initial spokesperson for the agency-sponsored Coalition of Hispanic Organizations, a group of over 10 not-for-profit member organizations.

Board Affiliations

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Economic Development Corporation of KCMO

2024–Present

Appointed by Mayor Quinton Lucas to serve as one of 9 board of directors. EDC administers and implements Kansas City Missouri's economic development strategy, and focuses on business and real estate development, job creation, and community investment. Its mission is to shape a vibrant, thriving future for Kansas City and its residents.

JACKSON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

Elected in November 2024

The Jackson County Democratic Committee is the official organization for Democrats in the second largest county in Missouri. The Jackson County Democratic Committee is a 94-person committee composed of committeemen and committeewomen who are elected during the primary election (August) of general election years to represent the wards and townships that compose Jackson County and Kansas City. I represent Ward 1.

PIAC REPRESENTATIVE FOR 4TH DISTRICT, AT-LARGE, KCMO COUNCILMAN CRISPIN REA

Elected in November 2024

As a member of the Public Improvements Advisory Committee (PIAC), I help to process and recommend projects to be funded by a 1% sales tax that generates over \$30M annually (\$5M per council district) to support: stormwater drainage/flooding, bridges, public property improvements, street/roadway improvements, municipal building improvements, community centers, street lighting and traffic lights, sidewalks, curbs, and gutters, park facility improvements, monuments and fountains, and ball fields and swimming pools.

PRINCIPALS CONNECT

2023–Present | Board of Directors

Launched in 2017, Principals Connect recruits and supports retired professionals who volunteer to serve urban school principals. We attract professionals who are well-connected in the KC community and have a passion for urban education.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – HOUSING TRUST FUND BOARD

2022–2024

Mayor Quinton Lucas appointed me as one of nine people to serve on the city's inaugural Housing Trust Fund board. Board members are tasked with helping the city figure out which affordable housing projects it should invest in, prioritizing projects that will stay affordable over longer periods of time and are accessible to lower income residents.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – KANSAS CITY HEALTH COMMISSION

2017–2020

Appointed by Mayor Sly James to be one of 17 health commissioners. The commission provides guidance and advice to the city's health department. As a member, I also served as a liaison to the Violence Free KC Committee, serving as a co-chair and responsible for implementing "KC Blueprint," a new plan to curb crime in Kansas City.

SACRED HEART–GUADALUPE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

2019–Present | Chair

The role of the Parish Finance Council is to assist and advise the pastor, in overseeing and controlling the financial affairs of the parish. During my tenure, I have led two capital improvement projects by securing over \$400,000 from public, private and individual financial support for façade improvements as well as a roof and boiler replacement, the parish consists of two stand-alone churches in Kansas City's Westside neighborhood and operates with annual budget over \$400,000 with over 700 parishioners.

CO-CHAIR OF JACKSON COUNTY JAIL TASKFORCE

2017–Present

Appointed by Jackson County Executive Frank White as co-chair for a new task force that will look at how much it costs to run the existing Jackson County Detention Center, how much it would cost to renovate it, and what the size, design, and cost of a new jail would be to improve safety and streamline jail operations. The Jackson County Legislature has approved the next steps in replacing the jail.

PRESIDENT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COUNCIL, UNITED WAY OF WYANDOTTE COUNTY, KANSAS

2017–2019

Elected by my peers to represent them on the Board of Directors for the United Way of Wyandotte County. In this position, I worked with the Executive Director to provide regular updates to United Way Partner Agencies, help promote the annual campaign and establish/maintain relationships with the corporate, government and nonprofit sectors.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, SUB-DISTRICT 3

2016–2019

Elected in April 2016 to the Kansas City Public Schools' nine-member board of directors for a three-year term. The board of directors has many duties, including governance, monitoring the use of financial and human resources, education planning and evaluation, appointing the chief administrator (the superintendent of schools), and facilities management. The district has an annual budget of \$227,685,902 and a student population of 15,568 students (pre-kindergarten to grade 12) enrolled in 35 different schools, centers, and programs. Appointed by the school board president to serve as chair for the board's government relations committee, whose focus is to establish and seek the approval of federal and state legislative priorities.

FOUNDER AND MEMBER – LATINO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE (LCEC)

2008–2015

The Latino Civic Engagement Collaborative is a group of six executive directors for not-for-profit organizations focused on the Hispanic population of KC. Combined, the group brings over 200 years of operational experience and it operates annually with \$10 million in revenues and employees over 125 workers to provide the Hispanic community with education, small business development, health and mental health, housing, youth development, and economic development services to over 15,000 individuals annually. I served as the initial convener, acting as the chief spokesperson, interacting with elected officials, municipal employees, community organizations, and my peers in facilitating the achievement of its strategic plan. During my tenure, I helped to secure \$70,000 from area foundations and the City of Kansas City, Missouri, to develop a metropolitan-wide Hispanic Needs Assessment. The project was developed by UMKC's Institute for Human Development.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – PORT AUTHORITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

June 2011–2016

Appointed by Mayor Sly James to be one of nine commissioners. The Port Authority's mission is to enhance the economic vitality of Kansas City, Missouri, as a redevelopment entity through transportation, trade, commerce, and riverfront development within the statutory authority granted by the State of Missouri and the City of Kansas City. Presently, I am a member of the finance committee for the Port Authority and am responsible for reviewing all financial documents for the organization monthly and for directly assisting the CEO and CFO with the development of the annual budget. The Port Authority has an operating budget of \$5 million and assets exceeding \$28 million.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

April 2011–2013

The Metropolitan Community College (MCC) Foundation & Alumni Association was founded in 1975. The foundation supports the mission of MCC: Preparing Students, Serving Communities, Creating Opportunities. As the nonprofit fundraising arm of MCC, the foundation serves over 43,000 students annually by addressing their financial and educational needs through scholarships, educational enhancement programs, and the improvement of learning facilities.

ELECTED BOARD OF DIRECTORS – NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION (NRPA)

October 2010– October 2012

Founded in 1965, NRPA is the leading advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks and recreation opportunities. The board is comprised of 21 members who are professionals and consumers. I was elected to a seat on NRPA Board of Directors, placed on the finance committee, and provided input on fundraising. In addition, I attended several of NRPA's Annual Congress events.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – KANSAS CITY MISSOURI PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

President of the Board – appointed by Mayor Mark Funkhouser (June 2007 – June 2011)

Commissioner – appointed by Mayor Kay Barnes (September 2005 – June 2007)

Served as one of five mayoral appointees to the Parks Board, which is responsible for managing a parks system of 11,300 acres of parkland, 220 parks, 5 golf courses, 10 community centers, and 130 miles of boulevards and parkways, and which oversees an annual operating budget of approximately \$40 million and a capital budget of over \$12 million.

I served as the board president for the Parks and Recreation Department for a full four-year term (while employed as the full-time executive director of MRC) under the leadership of Mayor Mark Funkhouser. I regularly interacted with the mayor, city council and city manager. The board members worked together on priorities for capital improvements, strategic planning, annual budget appeals to the city council and mayor, and regular communication with community stakeholders; this included leading the effort to build a \$2 million state-of-the-art soccer park in Kansas City's Historic Northeast Neighborhood.

VICE CHAIR, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – HOUSING AUTHORITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

April 2002 – September 2005

Appointed by Kay Barnes, mayor of Kansas City, to serve on the inaugural board (post federal receivership), responsible for governance of the agency. The housing authority manages 1,925 public housing apartments located in 15 developments, including eight mixed-financed, mixed-income developments.

Education

LEADERSHIP NORTHLAND (KCMO)

Class of 2014

DRIVING GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Harvard University

B.S. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Park University

MBA

Rockhurst University

(Helzburg Executive Fellows Program)

MPA (BUSINESS/GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS)

Park University

Professional Accomplishments

In September 2023, named by the Kansas City Business Journal as “20 to Know” series of Kansas City -area nonprofit leaders.

Awarded in September 2022, William F. Yates Distinguished Service Medallion from William Jewell College. The Yates Medallion, along with the Citation for Achievement, is the highest non-degree award William Jewell College bestows. I was awarded for my leadership and commitment to service in the KC community.

Selected to be the 2017 Park University (Parkville, Missouri) Commencement Exercises Speaker.

Recipient of the 2013 Director’s Community Leadership Award. This special award, presented on behalf of the director of the FBI, was formally created in 1990 to honor individuals and organizations for their efforts in combating crime, terrorism, drugs, and violence in America.

Recipient of the Ohtli Award by the Consulate General of Mexico in Kansas City, awarded to distinguished individuals who through their work have contributed to the betterment of our community and Mexicans living abroad.

Led the efforts to raise \$75,000 from local private and public funders to develop and produce for public distribution a Hispanic Needs Assessment utilizing 2010 Census Data. The nearly 300-page document offers elected officials, civic leaders, community members and government officials’ statistics as well as individual input on various socio-economic needs within the Hispanic population of greater Kansas City.

An appointee of Mayor James to the REFORM REPEAL REPAIR committee focused on passing Question 1, which strategically reformed the tax code and provided stable funding and enhanced services for the entire parks system, while simultaneously creating a dedicated street repair fund. The initiative was overwhelmingly approved by the voters.

Appointed by KCMO Mayor Mark Funkhouser as first Hispanic board president in the 115- year history of the Parks Board.

Park University Hauptmann School for Public Affairs – Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Named to Kansas City’s “Up & Coming 25 Hispanics” by Dos Mundos Bilingual Newspaper in February 2005.

Recipient of the Helzberg Executive Fellows MBA scholarship at Rockhurst University in 2003.

Received Guadalupe Centers’ Dorothy Gallagher Employee of the Year award in 1993.