

**INFORMATION NETWORK  
OF KANSAS (INK)**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN IN BRIEF**



Information Network of Kansas, Inc.

Approved by the INK Board of Directors  
February 2, 2023

# OVERVIEW

The Information Network of Kansas (INK) was established by statute in 1990 and is considered the birthplace of e-government. Since that time, INK has been at the forefront of providing a broad range of electronic government services and making government data more available to everyone. This document is an excerpt from INK's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for making progress toward the goals and strategies established by the INK Board. It represents the culmination of a year-long effort by the Board, facilitated by a consulting firm, that included individual stakeholder interviews, presentations by experts in transparency, data, and technology, and a series of sessions to develop goals and objectives to guide INK's future.

We encourage you to review this document to learn about INK's goals and priorities. For more information about INK or to obtain a copy of the entire INK Strategic Plan, please contact:

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## STATUTE IN BRIEF

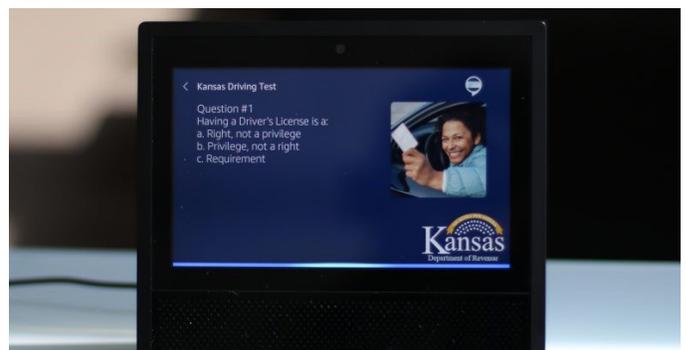
### 74-9301 - DEFINITIONS

**Gateway:** any centralized electronic information system by which public information shall be provided via dial-in modem or continuous link to the public through subscription or through public libraries.

**Public information:** any information stored, gathered or generated in electronic or magnetic form by the state of Kansas, its agencies or instrumentalities, which is included within the information deemed to be public pursuant to the Kansas open records act, K.S.A. 45-215 et seq., and amendments thereto.

**Agency:** any agency or instrumentality of the state of Kansas which stores, gathers or generates public information.

**Network manager:** the entity or person engaged to manage and run the gateway or network on behalf of INK.



# STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA: CUSTOMER



**GOAL:** Enhance access to and use of data resources, along with their security and usability



## STRATEGIES:

- Increase customer outreach
- Incorporate customer feedback into projects and decision-making
- Enhance interagency collaboration
- Maintain affordability
- Leverage Network Manager resources to identify and engage customers
- Anticipate changing customer needs and innovate through new technologies



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Increase the amount, type, and use of government data used by the public
- Expand communication with current and prospective INK customers
- Improve customer satisfaction with INK Services

Professional, business, and other public sector groups and associations initiated the legislation to create INK as a means to improve their access to government information and these customers remain at the center of INK's work. One of its enabling statutes, for example, requires INK to:

*"[S]eek advice from the general public, its subscribers, professional associations, academic groups and institutions and individuals with knowledge of and interest in areas of networking, electronic mail, public information access, gateway services, add-on services and electronic filing of information" (K.S.A 74-9304(b)).*

While INK is no longer in the electronic mail business, it still provides access to thousands of paying subscribers and seeks to learn about new and emerging needs for public information of all potential customer groups. Marketing and business development staff from the Network Manager are in close touch with government and business administrators and present frequently about INK services at statewide association conferences like the Kansas Association of Counties, the Kansas County Treasurers Association, and the City Clerk and Municipal Finance Officers Association.

Government organizations are another vital customer base that both uses and provides services and information through INK. At present, INK provides services to the public in concert with over 30 state agencies and hundreds of units of local government. People throughout the state can make use of innovative INK services. Some examples include:

- Online Marriage Licenses through the Office of Judicial Administration (over 16,000 processed in 2021)

# CUSTOMER

- Telegov, an online appointment scheduling service currently deployed for the Kansas Department of Revenue (used almost 200,000 times since it went live in October 2021)
- Organizations like the Kansas Governor's office distribute information using a website that INK designed and supports without charge
- INK supported a cooperative effort of five state agencies to develop and host the Kansas Business One-Stop, a centralized website with information for the public and business about starting and maintaining a business in Kansas.

In each case, the agencies involved work closely with INK on an ongoing basis to design and maintain the deployment.

Along with these and many other services, INK also provides direct outreach to the public through the State of Kansas home page it maintains at [www.kansas.gov](http://www.kansas.gov), a service that was recognized most recently in 2019 with a fifth-place finish nationally in the category of "Overall State Government Experience." This site received over 730,000 unique visits in 2021. INK also maintains a social media presence to publicize government information and services on Facebook and through its Twitter account that currently (2022) has over 20,000 followers. It also deploys services like practice driver exams using Alexa and has been among the first states in the nation to deploy a chatbot, Agent Kay, to alleviate pressure on government call centers.

INK has many diverse customer groups, in size, technical sophistication, and in the information they demand and use. While meeting these needs can be challenging, by planning and coordination with both information providers and users, and a careful eye on the resources required to ensure its long-term feasibility, the INK model continues to be a success in Kansas and in many states across the nation.

## STATUTES IN BRIEF

### 74-302 Purpose & Duties

- Provide public access to public information via a gateway service
- Provide oversight of any network manager
- Explore methods and technologies to expand the type and utility of public information available; implement methods and technologies when appropriate
- Cooperate with the Office of Information Technology Services to achieve INK's purposes

### 74-9304 - Duties & Responsibilities

- Serve in an advisory capacity to the secretary of administration, office of information technology services and other state agencies
- Seek advice from the public, its subscribers, professional associations, academic groups and institutions and individuals with knowledge of and interest in areas of networking, electronic mail, public information access, gateway services, add-on services and electronic filing of information
- Develop charges for the services for subscribers, covering the actual cost of providing services
- All state agencies shall cooperate with INK in providing such assistance as may be requested for the achievement of its purpose. Agencies may recover actual costs incurred by providing such assistance.

# STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA: FINANCIAL



**GOAL:** Leverage INK resources for maximum benefit to customers



## STRATEGIES:

- Increase and diversify self-sustaining revenue streams
- Develop and enhance partnerships
- Focus on affordability for users
- Engage in long-term financial planning



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Increase the effectiveness of financial processes
- Increase the diversity of revenue streams
- Increase effectiveness of grant awards in ensuring highest benefit to customers

INK's innovative financial model has driven its success over the last 30 years and been widely adopted in states across the nation. Receiving no tax revenue, INK is funded primarily by fees paid by commercial, professional, and some public users for enhanced access to state data and services. This user-funded model has several advantages:

- It establishes incentives for INK to identify information and services in demand by business and the public.

- Often there are no upfront charges, providing a no-cost option to government agencies deploying new services.
- Revenue generating projects subsidize the cost of non-revenue generating services, allowing them to be provided at no charge to the public.
- Businesses and other customers minimize the time spent and inconvenience encountered with manual government processes.
- A significant portion of the net revenue from the overall operation are reinvested through grants to state and local organizations to fund projects that expand the availability of public information.

INK collects over \$500 million each year for its government partners, fulfilling hundreds

## STATUTES IN BRIEF

### 9307 - INK Financing & Employees

- INK will self-fund its operations from revenues generated from subscribers, and from money, goods or in-kind services donated from private sources
- No officer or employee of INK is in the classified service or unclassified service under the Kansas civil service act

### 74-9308 - Money, Deposits & Investing

All money received by INK may be deposited in the state treasury, Kansas banks or Kansas savings and loan associations

# FINANCIAL

of contracts with both them and thousands of private sector subscribers. There are many parties depending on the ongoing financial and operational success of INK. To that end, the ongoing fiscal health of INK requires balancing risks and opportunities and the return on investment with broad, affordable access to public information. INK must also continually seek out and build partnerships with government agencies and expand the users of its information and services. For INK to remain relevant, it must innovate and adapt to changing technologies and demands for information. By expanding its ongoing investment in financial planning and along with diversifying its sources of income, INK can help ensure its ability to continue to provide these customers the benefits of this innovative model for many years to come.

## EXAMPLES OF INK GRANT AWARDS

**Digital Signature Project** (Kansas Secretary of State)

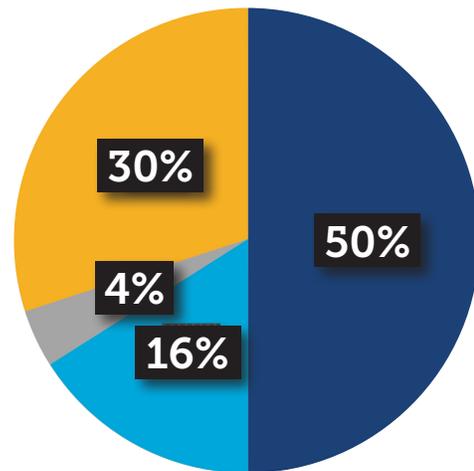
**Kansas Memory Online Digital Repository** (Kansas Historical Society)

**Audio Streaming of Legislative Committee Hearings** (Kansas Legislature)

**Website Accessibility Testing Software** (Office of Information Technology Services)

**Statewide Broadband Mapping** (Department of Commerce)

## SOURCES OF FUNDS BY TYPE



- Records sales (primarily record relating to vehicle use and court records)
- Payment processing (from a broad array of state and local customers)
- Online Filing (primarily from filings by businesses)
- All Other (a variety of online government services)

To date, over  
**\$9 MILLION**  
in grants have been  
awarded



# STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA: INTERNAL PROCESSES



**GOAL:** Optimize INK’s resources and performance outcomes



## **STRATEGIES:**

- Establish performance expectations for the Network Manager and monitor results
- Develop Key Performance Indicators for operations and management
- Seek customer feedback on their experience working with INK
- Provide staffing and use outside consultants or resources to meet INK’s mission
- Develop / institute process to regularly evaluate all contract relationships
- Establish and maintain internal policies and procedures
- Define staff roles and responsibilities



## **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:**

- Increase the performance of INK operations
- Improve processes to reduce risk and ensure consistent results

INK’s structure as a public-private partnership is core to its success. From its inception, INK has contracted with a “Network Manager” to operate INK using a self-funded model. Capitalizing on the flexibility and innovation of the private sector, coupled with financial incentives for the Network Manager to identify government information of commercial value to fund its operations, INK’s approach remains groundbreaking.

The public-private structure has a natural tension between the profit-seeking nature of the private sector and the INK’s mission to expand the amount and type of all information, not just the types that generate a profit. In turn, both parties see the mutual benefit of providing diverse types of information and have an interest in ensuring that the operation is run efficiently and cost-effectively. At present, INK collects over \$500 million on behalf of government organizations annually while INK’s operating budget is less than 2% of that amount.

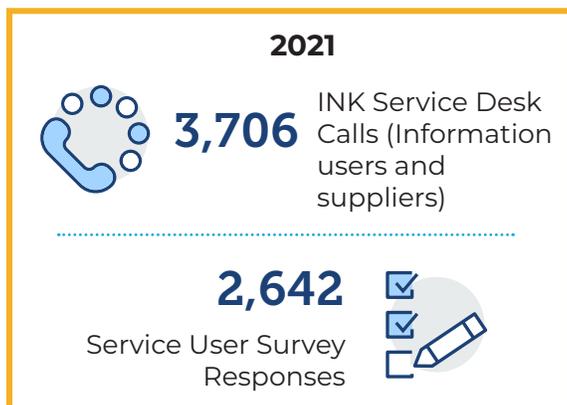
In the early 2000s, the Board hired an Executive Director to assist in managing its affairs and in providing oversight of the Network Manager. The scope of work and performance of the Network Manager is governed by duties outlined in statute, the requirements of a multi-year contract, and an annual business plan approved by the Board. The Board and its Executive Director then work closely to ensure the execution of this plan through monthly and quarterly reports on operations. With the advent of this strategic plan, the business plan will now be able to directly align with current strategy and anticipate new multi-year initiatives that support it.

# INTERNAL PROCESSES

INK solicits feedback directly through its help desk, user surveys, and via outreach to user associations and subscribers. In the face of changing demands for public information and related practices by government and the public, an ongoing focus on integration of customer feedback is critical.

And, as INK creates no data itself, its effectiveness also depends on the support of government suppliers of information. The Legislature recognized the importance of this relationship by requiring that “All state agencies shall cooperate with INK in providing such assistance as may be requested for the achievement of its purpose.” (K.S.A. 74-9304(3)(b))

By dedication to ongoing improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations while strengthening its relationships with government agencies and end users, INK will be well-positioned as a partner in expanding public access to information.



## STATUTES IN BRIEF

### 74-9305 - Network Manager

INK has the authority to hire a network manager (can be a person or a company or corporation). INK will work with the Office of Information Technology Services (OITS) to develop network manager requirements.

The network manager:

- Directs and supervises the day-to-day operations and expansion of such gateway and network, including the initial phase of operations necessary to make such gateway operational, and:
- May employ, supervise and terminate such other employees of INK as designated by INK
- Attends INK meetings
- Keeps a record of all gateway, network and related operations of INK (records are the property of INK)
- Maintains all financial and operational records, documents and papers filed with INK
- Updates and revise the business plan of INK, consulting and under the direction of INK

Other provisions:

- INK is authorized to negotiate and enter into contracts for professional consulting, research and other services
- INK may accept gifts, donations and grants
- INK is not subject to state purchasing laws

### 74-9306 - Office of Information Technology Services Role

The office of information technology services shall provide to INK such staff and other assistance as requested. INK will pay for the actual costs of assistance

# STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA: GOVERNANCE



**GOAL:** Provide leadership through policy to maximize the effectiveness of INK



## STRATEGIES:

- Align resources with INK's strategic priorities
- Leverage Board member networks and associations for the benefit of INK
- Increase collaboration with the State and IT governance
- Ensure efficient and effective operation of the Board and INK



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of INK governance processes
- Increase sponsorship of INK strategies by the Board

The Information Network of Kansas, Inc. (INK) Board of Directors was created in 1990 to bring together executives from suppliers of state government information and representatives from associations that use it. The Board's purpose was to guide and promote its statutory mission of expanding the amount and type of information available to the public in Kansas. The Board is composed of nine members, five of whom represent these associations and their users.

These associations include permanent seats for representatives from the Kansas Bar Association and Kansas Library Association. The four remaining representatives are from government: The Secretary of State, two agency chief executive officers, and the Executive Chief Information Technology Officer. The Board meets monthly and all members serve without compensation.

The key to INK's success is its public-private partnership model. By statute, a private partner runs the Network on a day-to-day basis with oversight from the Board and its Executive Director. The Board sets the high-level direction and the partner brings private sector innovation

## STATUTE IN BRIEF

### 74-9303 - Governing Board

- The nine-member board includes the secretary of state and the executive chief information technology officer and seven members appointed by the governor, including:
- Two members who are chief executive officers of agencies of the executive branch
- One member from the Kansas bar association members submitted by such association (3-year term)
- Three members from other, separate user associations of a statewide character; the list of potential members is compiled by the INK board and sent to the governor (3-year term)

# GOVERNANCE

and expertise in technology, service delivery, and promoting government information. The Board also determines which services are to be offered to the public and works with information providers to arrive at fees, if any, that are charged to users for access.

INK operates in a complex set of relationships among business and public users, along with government information providers. INK has a mandate to continuously expand availability and use of information while ensuring an adequate return on investment. The operating environment involves fast-changing consumer and business trends and a competitive marketplace for both technology and venues for data access.

In addition to change related to technology and data access, INK has also experienced frequent changes in Board representation. While 2022 represents the 30th year of INK operations, in just the last 10 years (2012-2021), over 30 individuals have served as Board members, representing 8 agencies and 10 user associations. The expertise, relationships, and contributions of INK Board members are vital to the success of INK. By strengthening its relationship with state government and emphasizing policy-driven decision-making, the Board is well-positioned to meet its mission in the coming years.

## ASSOCIATIONS AND AGENCIES REPRESENTED ON THE INK BOARD FROM 2012-2021

### Associations

- Kansas Association of Counties
- Kansas Association of Insurance Agents
- Kansas Association of Mappers
- Kansas Association of School Boards
- Kansas Bankers Association
- Kansas Bar Association
- Kansas Farm Bureau
- Kansas Grain and Feed Association
- Kansas Library Association
- Kansas Rural Water Association

### Agencies

- Kansas Department of Commerce
- Kansas Department of Labor
- Kansas Department of Revenue
- Kansas Department of Transportation
- Kansas Governor's office
- Kansas Lieutenant Governor's office
- Kansas Secretary of State
- Office of Information Technology Services

## INK BOARD MEETINGS THROUGH THE YEARS



1992



2022





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**Kansas**  
Information Network of Kansas, Inc.