

UNCOMMON LEADER AWARD

Visionary Award Nomination Form

All nomination forms must be submitted by Monday, June 1, 2026, at 5 p.m. CT.

A person nominated for the Visionary Award must be a full-time, Executive Leader employee of a 501(c)(3) public charity organization aligned with the Foundation's mission to advance economic mobility, and who demonstrates significant contributions to the Kansas City region's well-being, growth, and empowerment.

This form is designed to nominate one person at a time. While one person can submit multiple nominations, a new nomination form will need to be completed for each individual being nominated.

Please use this fillable PDF to draft and save your responses before entering them into the online nomination form. The system does not save your progress, so you will not be able to leave the form and return later to continue where you left off. To avoid losing your work, you must complete and submit the entire nomination in one session.

Once you have completed the online nomination form, the individual you nominated will be notified. They will be asked to fill out more information about their work history that aligns with the award criteria outlined below. If they do not complete that information by the stated deadline, they will not be considered for the Visionary Award.

Please keep in mind that individuals being nominated must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Nominees must be full-time Executive Leaders (defined below) at a 501(c)(3) public charity organization and be in good standing with their organization at the time of nomination.
- Organizations are required to be based in the following six counties – Jackson, MO, Clay, MO, Platte, MO and Cass, MO, Johnson, KS, Wyandotte, KS.
- Nominees must serve in a staff leadership capacity, not solely as a volunteer or Board member, at the 501(c)(3) public charity organization from which they are being nominated.
- Nominees must not have served as an employee or Board member of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation within the past 5 years.
- Nominees must not be an immediate family member of an associate of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.
- Consent to a background check as part of the application and verification process.

An Executive Leader is a senior organizational leader who is the CEO, or reports directly to the CEO. This may include titles such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), Executive Director, Vice President, or Director. Because titles vary across organizations, a formal Executive Leader title is not required.

Section 1. Your Contact Information

This section is to collect information from you, as the nominator. This information is important to determine authenticity of the submission, and to have a contact in case further questions arise about the nominee.

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Organization Affiliation (enter n/a if not applicable)
4. Email
5. Phone Number
6. Relationship to the Nominee
7. Length of time you have known the nominee

Section 2. Who are you nominating?

Provide the following information about the person you are nominating for the Visionary Award.

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Email
4. Phone Number (optional)
5. Name of 501(c)(3) public charity organization where nominee works
6. What is this person's executive role?

Section 3. Award Criteria

There are six criteria, outlined below, that define the ideal nominee for the Uncommon Leader Visionary Award. The award criteria are based on Mr. Kauffman's core values of community impact, innovation, equity, collaboration, economic mobility, and enduring executive leadership in service of the Kansas City region.

In order to submit your nomination, you are asked to provide a short, concise response on how the nominee meets the following award criteria. Please do not exceed three paragraphs per criterion.

Community Impact

Mr. Kauffman wanted his philanthropy to have a positive effect on Kansas City.

- The nominee demonstrates measurable contribution to the Kansas City region's well-being, growth, and empowerment through their executive leadership.
- The nominee's work shows sustained or durable benefits that extend beyond a single program, initiative, or funding cycle.

Please describe how the nominee has contributed to the Kansas City region's well-being, growth, and empowerment through executive leadership.

Examples can include measurable impact and any sustained benefits that extend beyond a single program, initiative, or funding cycle.

Economic Mobility & Systems Change

Mr. Kauffman was deeply committed to economic mobility and systems change, particularly through entrepreneurship and education. He believed everyone should have the opportunity to achieve success, regardless of background.

- The nominee advances economic mobility directly or indirectly through systems-level leadership, strategy, and community influence.
- The nominee works to remove structural barriers and address root causes rather than only immediate symptoms.

Please describe how the nominee advances economic mobility through systems-level leadership, strategy, and community influence.

Examples can include how they work to remove structural barriers and address root causes rather than only immediate needs.

Executive Leadership and Legacy

The nominee has built or strengthened an enduring organizational and community legacy through executive leadership.

- The nominee demonstrates visionary leadership that has shaped long-term community outcomes, institutional capacity, or sector influence.
- The nominee leaves behind durable systems, partnerships, talent pipelines, or strategies that will continue to benefit the Kansas City region.

Please describe how the nominee has built or strengthened an enduring organizational and community legacy through executive leadership.

Examples can include visionary leadership, long-term community outcomes, institutional capacity, sector influence, and any durable systems, partnerships, talent pipelines, or strategies that will continue to benefit the Kansas City region.

Equity

Mr. Kauffman aimed to ensure that opportunities were accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status or background.

- The nominee embeds equity in strategy, resource allocation, partnerships, and outcomes.
- The nominee allocates support and resources in ways that recognize differing starting points and help produce more equitable outcomes.

Please describe how the nominee embeds equity in strategy, resource allocation, partnerships, and outcomes.

Examples can include how they recognize differing starting points and allocate support and resources to produce more equitable outcomes.

Collaboration

Mr. Kauffman strongly believed collaboration was essential to sustainable change and community impact.

- The nominee builds strong cross-sector partnerships across nonprofit, civic, philanthropic, and community stakeholders to advance shared goals.

Please describe how the nominee builds strong cross-sector partnerships across nonprofit, civic, philanthropic, and community stakeholders to advance shared goals.

Examples can include collaborations that contributed to sustainable change and community impact.

Innovation

Mr. Kauffman encouraged the Kauffman Foundation to explore new approaches and innovative solutions to tackle complex problems.

- The nominee demonstrates adaptive, forward-looking leadership that inspires others to act and strengthens community outcomes.
- The nominee applies creative approaches to solve entrenched challenges, improve results, or scale impact over time.

Please describe how the nominee demonstrates adaptive, forward-looking leadership that inspires others to act and strengthens community outcomes.

Examples can include creative approaches used to solve entrenched challenges, improve results, or scale impact over time.

Section 4. How did you hear about the award?

The Kauffman Foundation is interested in learning how people hear about our work. Please share how you learned about our KUL Visionary Award. *(choose all that apply)*

- Kauffman-hosted community engagement session
- Kauffman email
- Kauffman website
- Kauffman Facebook
- Kauffman Instagram
- Kauffman LinkedIn
- Dr. DeAngela Burns-Wallace LinkedIn
- Kauffman associate
- News media story
- Previous grantee
- Other community event (please specify)
- Other community sources (Please specify)

Please specify:

Section 5. What to expect

Once you have submitted your nomination, you will receive a confirmation email. Please check your spam folder if you cannot find the email in your inbox.

Once you have completed this nomination form, the individual you nominated will be notified. They will be asked to fill out more information about their work history that aligns with the award criteria. If they do not complete that information by the stated deadline, they will not be considered for the Visionary Award.

I understand the application process for the Kauffman Uncommon Leader Visionary Award.