

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV



## IMPORTANT UPDATE

For mailers and U.S. Postal communications, please use the following address:

PO Box 40, Struthers, Ohio 44471

Stay updated on our new location by visiting our website or checking your email!

## ANNOUNCEMENT

**WE HAVE  
MOVED!**



**We are transitioning to a  
new location. We will keep  
you updated!**

## The Necessity of Sharing Envisioned Goals



Submitted by **Niko Mastorides, Consultant KO Consulting, LLC**

Generally, goal setting resides as more than just a mere business strategy for any organization- it sits as the cornerstone foundation for long-term success and attainment. Although "S.M.A.R.T." (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) goals lay out a decent formula for organizations to set both long-term and short-term objectives, there is a clear aspect missing that is vastly crucial for driving success: Articulation. Simply put, if your employees or other members are 1) unaware of these goals; 2) do not align with these goals; or 3) do not fully understand these goals, organizational growth and innovation are bound to stall.

A Project Management Institute report reiterated that 37% of strategic goals and initiatives fail due to the lack of clearly defined organizational objectives (2017). Likewise, this has a clear impact on employee morale, turnover, and ultimate success. If employees lack a sense of purpose or vision, what value can they expect to feel working within your organization? A Slingshot Digital Work Trends Report finds that only 23% of employees feel informed about their company's goals and objectives. This seems counterintuitive considering 84% of business leadership feels these goals have been communicated (2024). This affirms the sentiments of Ceridian's Pulse of Talent Report which reveals that 44% of employees are unsure or unaware of their impact on business goals (2020).

As a consultant within this field, not only have I learned the necessity of setting goals that are S.M.A.R.T. to formulate a vision, but also the importance of articulation and involving organizational members throughout the process. Do not send your members and employees down the river in a boat with no paddles- make it a habit to routinely share your vision to ensure success.

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV



## Kelsey Takes On State Operating Budget

Submitted by Kelsey Fischer, Senior Consultant at KO Consulting, LLC

Many nonprofits have heard about the State Operating Budget and Appropriations -- and may have been encouraged to apply -- but aren't sure how to put together a competitive application. This year, major shifts and cuts at the federal level add an additional layer of uncertainty. KO is here to help you navigate these processes.

March and April are some of our busiest months, as state and federal funding cycles open, with quick turnarounds. Our team has been busy strategizing, completing funding applications, and advocating for our clients' projects at home and in D.C. and Columbus.

Earlier this month, several of us traveled to Washington, D.C., to visit with Members of Congress on Capitol Hill. We also met with policy experts to learn more about tax credits and other federal programs that can be utilized to advance our clients' initiatives. We have several trips planned to Columbus in the coming weeks.

Whether or not you are ready to pursue state or federal funding, we encourage all nonprofits to build relationships with their local, state and federal legislators. Reach out to our office any time to discuss your government relations strategy.

## Cara Assists the YWCA's

Submitted by Cara Annando, Consultant at KO Consulting, LLC



In Q1, KO's nonprofit team secured \$64,000 for YWCA Alliance for security upgrades to their headquarters through the Ohio Security Grant. With these funds, YWCA Alliance will upgrade and secure their headquarters' entrances with steel doors that autolock with a key code entry system to prevent unwanted key duplication. They will also add additional cameras across the headquarters to minimize dead zones. These updates will provide heightened security for clients that visit the headquarters for services and those that reside on site through YWCA Alliance's transitional housing program.

YWCA Van Wert plans to break ground on a new facility in Spring 2026 and fundraising efforts are in full swing. YWCA Van Wert launched a Capital Campaign for the new facility last year, and so far, has raised nearly \$3M in private funds. KO's nonprofit team is assisting YWCA Van Wert explore and apply for a variety of public funds to complement the private funds raised. KO's nonprofit team is also diving into the realm of New Market Tax Credits and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits as a way to leverage additional funds for YWCA Van Wert's new facility.

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV



## Matthew's Learning Experience

Submitted by Matthew Ellis, Associate Consultant at KO Consulting, LLC

Something I learned over the first quarter was the fact that relationship management is just as important as grant writing. In order to submit complicated applications like McDonald's Recreational Trail Program Application, it required significant coordination between the Village, myself, and numerous government agencies. The flexibility of the Village and their willingness to be an active partner created the groundwork to submit a very complicated application. Additionally, the Village of McDonald mentioned us in their State of the Village event and discussed that grant writing and our services create the bandwidth to solve tightening budget constraints, while continuing to pursue development projects.

## Gina Cleans Up Trumbull County

Submitted by Gina Magazine, Consultant at KO Consulting, LLC



On the government side of KO, Gina handles the majority of our Trumbull County portfolio. All three of her accounts, City of Girard, John F. Kennedy Catholic School, and Weathersfield Local Schools received money from the Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste Management District. This funding allowed all three entities to receive picnic tables, made up of 100% recycled materials. This is a huge step forward in keeping our communities and schools clean and green!



Image from David Tod Memorial Park in Girard with their five new tables, located in the Small Pavillon.

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV



## The State of Ohio's Birthday Celebration in Washington, DC Trip

**Submitted by Gina Magazine, Consultant at KO Consulting, LLC.**

While in Washington D.C., KO Consulting, LLC and Prest Public Strategies set up meetings with Superintendent Damon Dohar from Weathersfield Local Schools and local legislative offices. Congressman Dave Joyce and Congressman Michael Rulli's offices took the time to sit down and hear about Mr. Dohar's visions and projects for the school district. KO Consulting, LLC and Prest Public Strategies are convinced of the need to put as many of our clients as we can in the same room with the elected leaders who are making funding decisions that impact people across the country.



## KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV



## ARC READY Exclusive

Submitted by Lisa Vuscusi , Consultant at KO Consulting, LLC

*We must learn to listen to the lessons of Appalachia, to the voices, which is to say the heart, of the great people who have chosen Appalachia as our home."*

– Nikki Giovanni

Last week I submitted an extensive grant application for one of KO's clients to the Appalachian Regional Commission, or ARC, as it is known among community and economic development enthusiasts (like those of us at KO). Some grant applications are straightforward, simply asking for an overview of an organization and its programs. Others require extensive planning, true teamwork, and active collaboration—principles on which the Appalachian Regional Commission is built. ARC invites us all to do the same by participating in a grant application process that encourages—and often requires—communities, businesses, and service providers to bring their best to the table, working together to increase opportunity and improve the quality of life for all.

The Appalachian Regional Commission is a government agency that supports business growth, workforce development, and infrastructure improvements to meet the needs of Appalachian residents and communities. While the Mahoning Valley sits on the edge of the Appalachian region, we share in the rich heritage, economic landscape, and natural beauty of all 13 Appalachian states.

In 1963, the governors of 13 Appalachian states turned to President John F. Kennedy for help, asking him to create a commission that could bring federal, state, and local leaders together to tackle the region's deep economic struggles. In response, President Kennedy established PARC, the President's Appalachian Regional Commission. Their work led to the Appalachian Regional Development Act (ARDA), which Congress passed with strong bipartisan support. After Kennedy's passing, President Lyndon B. Johnson carried the mission forward, signing ARDA into law on March 9, 1965. This officially created the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a unique partnership dedicated to strengthening local economies and ensuring the 13-state region had the same opportunities to thrive as the rest of the nation. (ARC's History and Work in Appalachia. <https://www.arc.gov/>. Accessed March 2025.)

"In 423 counties across 13 states, spanning 206,000 square miles from Southern New York to Northern Mississippi," the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is addressing the region's needs by supporting business growth, workforce development, and infrastructure improvements. In places like the Mahoning Valley, ARC is offering opportunities for real growth and partnership by investing in education, workplaces, and gathering spaces to enhance economic opportunities and quality of life.

When an organization seeks federal funding through ARC, it collaborates with a Local Development District (LDD), a multi-county planning organization that facilitates community-based, regionally-driven economic development. In Mahoning and Trumbull counties, the LDD is the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments. After meeting with Eastgate and receiving the feedback and guidance needed to move forward with a strong proposal, we put all the pieces into place. Assembling a strong application requires a dedicated team working together to gather data, numbers, and stories. A grant application can be a creative endeavor, allowing us to paint a full picture of how to foster resilience through the work of community members.

ARC As ever, the strength of Appalachia is showing—in its people, its natural resources, and in ARC's commitment to rebuilding by giving back.



# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV

## KO's Corner

Submitted by Kristen Olmi, CEO of KO Consulting, LLC



The most pertinent question I have continuously received over the first Quarter of fiscal year 2025 is how will the actions of the Trump Presidency affect grants? The truth is a lot.

Trump's first few weeks in office have been challenging for anyone in the grant writing profession mostly because there are so many budget uncertainties. I think the public may not always understand agency spending cuts also mean cutting programs folks actually like, even if the mention of the program or direct cut isn't obvious. Any cuts will affect funding in general, drastic cuts to Federal employees or programs will greatly change how much grant funding agencies will have, thus the smaller the pie, the more competitive the funds.

So back to the question originally asked. Yes, these administration actions will affect grant funding. Firstly, the funding will become more competitive and more difficult to get at the federal and state levels, just by the simple concept of math. While our system of government is complex, ultimately budgets are not. If you want to spend more on say border security, for example, you have two ways to do that, raise taxes or cut somewhere else. President Trump's Day 1 Executive Order eliminated some programs, one in particular- the Inflation Reduction Act, which had substantial amounts of grant and loan programs, thus those funds are likely eliminated or re-allocated- so it changes the grant scope for that program. Additionally, departments should make drastic cuts, or in the case of The Department of Education, face elimination, which will cut or eliminate grant funding.

So how does KO Consulting, LLC, or our clients for that matter pivot to account for these potential cuts? First, we encourage our clients to have a plan. What do you think will be cut? Are you prepared for that? What can you do to anticipate less funding in terms of strategy or services? Second, where can additional funding come from? Specifically for our non-profit clients, there will need to be a lean towards foundation and private giving. We hope that local and national foundations will anticipate an increased need and act accordingly. Next, our team assists in making sure our clients put together very good applications, as we know competition is going to get fierce. This means more strategic asks, project planning, increased in-kind match dollars, and anything else we can do to make the application stronger. Lastly, we ensure our clients have a strong government relations strategy, so any federal or state dollars we are pursuing, we are not doing in a vacuum, our state and federal officials are well versed on the project and are willing to assist when they can.

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV



## Hello, Goodbye

As Q1 has come to an end, we have had the opportunity to add one new team members to KO Consulting. With this addition, we have said our goodbyes to Flavio. Please enjoy this *Hello, Goodbye* section to learn about our new team member!

**Ty Beaty:** Ty is a Senior Consultant in KO's Government Division is title is Senior Consultant, Director of Land Use Planning & Strategy. He grew up in Mineral Ridge and studied on the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill at Youngstown State while cutting his teeth in local organizing and politics with SEIU and the Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative, focusing on Land Bank legislation and the housing and foreclosure crises of the late-2000s and early 2010s. In 2012 he moved to New York City to attend the CUNY Grad Center and City College, where he obtained a Masters of Public Administration from the Colin Powell School of Civic & Global Leadership.



With more than a dozen years of experience in NYC local government and politics, Ty worked on management teams for multiple Community Boards, specializing in NYC's Uniform Land Use Review Process and negotiating broad public benefits agreements, helping to secure more than a quarter-billion dollars for essential infrastructure improvements to Grand Central Terminal as part of the East Midtown Rezoning and more than three thousand affordable housing units and two-hundred million dollars in NYCHA capital repairs as part of the Gowanus Neighborhood Rezoning. Additionally, Ty worked on the brownfield clean-up of the Gowanus Canal and put forward annual NYC Capital & Expense Budget proposals, fighting for municipal funding of library programs, parks, and schools, among others. He also volunteered on numerous local political campaigns, including races for U.S. Congress, City Comptroller, City Council, and District Attorney.

An Air Force veteran, Ty served as an electrical & environmental systems specialist on the KC-135 Stratotanker with U.S. Central Command at MacDill AFB, deploying for a combined two-and-a-half years to Afghanistan, Diego Garcia, Guam, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Spain, and Qatar. In late 2024 he moved back to the Mahoning Valley to take over and renovate his grandparents' property in Poland Village, where he enjoys lifting weights in the barn, watching the Cavaliers and listening to the Guardians, reading about global affairs and political theory, and walking along Yellow Creek with his goldendoodle, Amos.

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

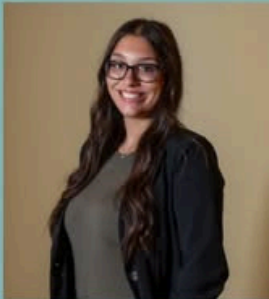
VOL.IV



## Employee Appreciation!

KO has some of the best and brightest minds around! We couldn't do this work everyday without every member of our team!

### EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY





# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV

## Q1 Highlights

### Birthdays



Happy Birthday, **Niko!**  
January 2nd



Happy Birthday, **Cara!**  
March 15th

### KO Around The Yo



Kristen was the January featured speaker at Lehner Shope Wealth Group's Power Lunch!



Lindsay interviews Pat Lowry of KO Consulting on the Federal Funding Freeze and a judge blocking the freeze.



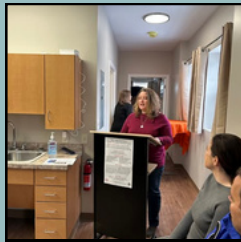
We are featured in the 2025 Business Journal's Growth Report for our 2024 successes!

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV

## Q1 Photos & Media

### January.



— ” —  
We attended their ribbon cutting for YWCA Mahoning Valley housing project on Illinois Ave.



— ” —  
Kristen spoke at Amy Shope's Power Lunch. She did a wonderful job, and there was an amazing turnout of women who wanted to hear her story.

### February.



— ” —  
Team KO had a wonderful time at the Rotary Club of Youngstown's Groundhog Beerfest!



— ” —  
Josh nominated Pat as a great community member. Our team loves supporting one another we are so proud of Pat!



— ” —  
Kristen spoke on a panel for the Mahoning Valley Parks and Green Spaces Summit.



— ” —  
Kelsey and Carolyn attended Moab House's Ribbon Cutting. This was to celebrate their first anniversary.

# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV

## Q1 Photos & Media

### March



— ” —  
Cara and Carolyn joined MV  
Sojourn to the Past for the **60th**  
**Anniversary of Bloody Sunday.**



— ” —  
Some members of team KO  
headed down to DC to celebrate  
the **Ohio Birthday Party!**

### Featured Testimonial

“That was the best money we have ever spent. KO Consulting has helped us get grants for the Wellman Theater, pump station, radios for the fire department, and cemetery..”

-Mayor Zuppo Mayor of Girard, City of Girard



click the Logo


# KEEPING UP WITH KO

VOL.IV

## Thank You for Reading!

KOCONSULTLLC.COM

### Share Your Testimonial



Check out our website for our new "Testimonials" webpage. Share a testimonial and we'll share it for everyone to see.

★★★★★

KOCONSULTLLC.COM

## Get Featured in Our Next Quarterly Newsletter

[Click Here to submit!](#)

Keep Clicking! We love seeing your engagement—check out our latest web analytics and see how our community is growing!



**Stay Connected!** Tap the icons to follow us on social media and join the conversation. Scan the QR code for a free 30-minute consultation!



## 2024 WEB ANALYTICS ACHIEVEMENTS



Here's to more success in 2025! Let's grow together!