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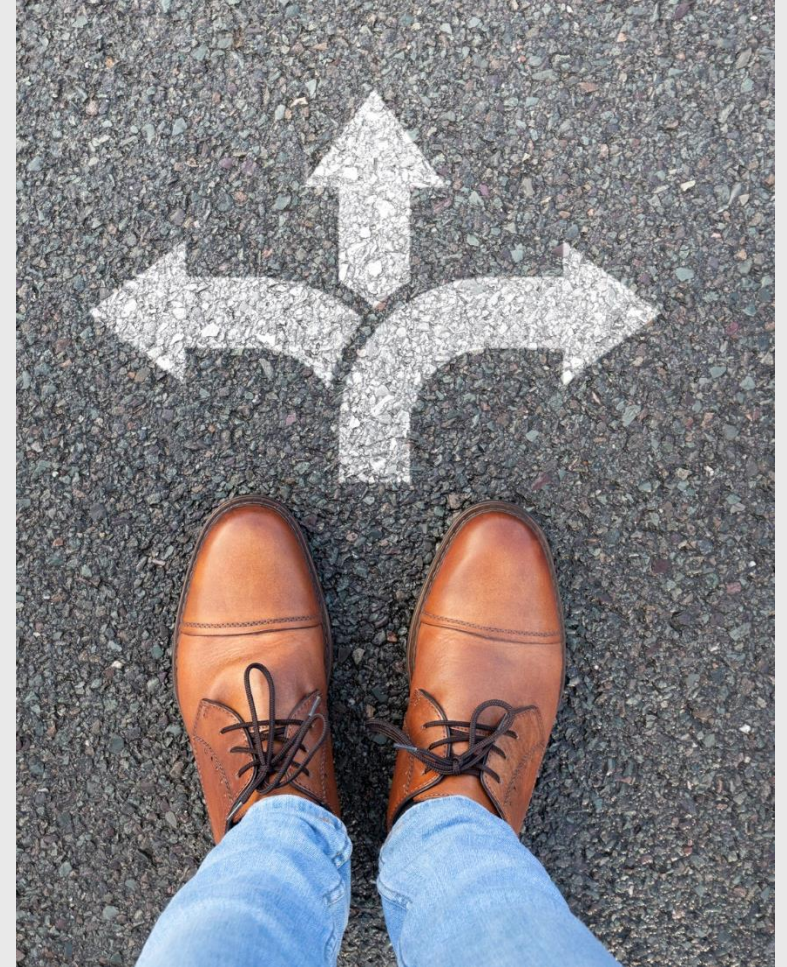
SO YOU WANT TO START A BUSINESS: IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEED

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**Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities 2025,
Kingman, KS**

ON TODAY'S AGENDA

- + In the first three slides I am going to try to scare you away from starting a business.
- + If you are still here by slide #4, I will explain the process of getting started by putting together a plan to research market opportunities and find unmet needs.



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1: THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CHALLENGE

Starting a business can be very rewarding and scary at the same time.

In the US, about 20-25% of new businesses fail within their first year according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and LendingTree. After five years, around 48-50% have closed.



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2: THE MOTIVATION BEHIND STARTING A BUSINESS

- + From the point of view of “the why” of starting a business, entrepreneurs can be initially classified in three broad types:
 - **Opportunity entrepreneurs:** go after a market opportunity or need
 - **Necessity entrepreneurs:** this is the only realistic way to make a living
 - **Reluctant entrepreneurs:** at this stage in life, my choices are limited
- + Opportunity businesses are usually more successful in the long run, because they are driven by a market opportunity.
- + Research and planning can help all entrepreneurs increase their chances for success.

3: THE “MIRAGE” OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- + Social media influence: *“all the cool kids are doing it”*
- + *“It is an easy way to make a living”*
- + *“I need to get out of this 9-5 job”*
- + **Versus THE REALITY:** high level of responsibility, uncertainty, stress, loneliness, long hours
- + First reflection point, ask yourself: Why am I doing this? What are my strengths & weaknesses? What are some blind spots to keep in mind.



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4: STARTING A BUSINESS CAN ALSO BE VERY REWARDING

- + You are still here!
- + Can allow you to work on what you enjoy
- + Can be of great value to your community
- + Can turn a skill, interest, hobby into a money –making venture
- + Can create generational wealth



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IDENTIFYING UNMET NEEDS: WHERE TO START



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- + Ask a lot of questions
- + Research the market: is there an opportunity or unmet need?
- + What is your geographic market focus?
 - Local? Regional? National? Worldwide?
- + Does your customer need to be close to your production/retail location?
 - Do you rely on foot traffic for sales?
 - Can your sales be generated by phone, online?

HOW WILL YOU DO THE MARKET RESEARCH?

- + Put a plan together
- + What resources do you have to start:
 - time, money, expertise, a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem?
- + Can you do the initial research yourself?
 - Is there an entrepreneur or business support organization that can help?
 - Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) are a great resource
 - Will you hire a consultant or advisor?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- + Potential customers: define early who your ideal customer is, talk to them, and build a product for them
- + Local Libraries are a great resource
- + SBDC, Main Street, Chamber of Commerce, other Business Support organizations
- + Local Government: economic development
- + Existing business owners: in your community or in a similar community
- + Online: research, AI chatbots (ChatGPT, Gemini, etc.)

RESEARCH TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

- + Observation: foot traffic, vehicle counts, popular products, sales estimates
 - What product or service is missing, or the needs are not met?
- + Listening: conversations, interviews, focus groups
 - Surveys



Credit: anyaberkut, iStock

LIBRARIES AS BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTERS

- + Have several things to offer!
- + Books on business in our library and can use Interlibrary Loan for books we don't have upon patron request
- + Can set people up with a state library card, which will give them access to many different databases including **Business Source Premier** and **Small Business Source**.
- + Computers, Wi-Fi, and the meeting room is also available for use at the library.

Kingman Carnegie Library


Explore your Library: there's more than you know



A CHATGPT EXERCISE

What's on the agenda today?

I want to start a new business so I am looking for an unmet local need in Kingman, Kansas. Can you do a market analysis of Kingman, Kansas to see what products or services are missing and could be a good opportunity to start with a limited budget

+  Tools

Summary Table of Opportunities

Opportunity	Low Startup Cost?	Demand Likely?	Scalable?
Café/Kiosk (grab-and-go)	✓	High	✓ Yes
Mobile auto services	✓	Moderate-High	✓ Yes
Errand & delivery service	✓	High	✓ Yes
Lawn/house-care services	✓	Moderate-High	✓ Yes
Senior transport/companionship	✓	Moderate	✓ Yes
Educational workshops/tutoring	✓	Moderate	✓ Yes

CHATGPT: UNMET MARKET NEEDS REPORT

Unmet Market needs Report for Kingman, KS

Here's a refined approach to identifying low-budget business ideas tailored to Kingman, Kansas—a small rural city (just under 3,000 residents, Kingman County seat) where typical unmet needs often emerge due to limited local services:

1. Current Situation & Constraints

- **Small population (~3,000)** with surrounding rural communities.
- Most shopping and specialized services are centralized in Wichita (~60 mi away), making local convenience valuable.
- With a limited budget, offering simple, high-demand services that require low overhead is key.

2. Likely Unmet Needs

a) Quick & Convenient Food Options

- Options like healthy grab-and-go meals, specialty coffee, or locally prepared bakery goods might be missing.
- A **small café/deli kiosk** near downtown or a gas station could cater to both locals and commuters.

b) Automotive & Light Services

- Many residents travel for basic auto maintenance and repairs.
- A **mobile tire-change or oil-change service**, or a **pop-up detailing business**, could serve farmers and commuters.

c) Rural Delivery & Errand Service

- Pick-up/drop-off services for groceries or prescriptions from Wichita could fill a niche, especially for seniors.
- Start with a local errand-running service—minimal setup, can scale later.

d) Home & Yard Care

- Lawn mowing, house cleaning, gutter cleaning: reliable by-hour services are often informal or inconsistent.

- A team-based lawn-and-home-maintenance business with dependable scheduling could stand out.

e) Community & Senior Services

- Transport and companionship services for seniors (e.g., rides to appointments, grocery shopping, yard help).
- Could be run part-time with minimal capital.

f) Low-Cost Educational or Social Activities

- After-school homework help, tutoring, or weekend workshops in crafts or computer basics.
- Use existing community spaces (library, school) to keep costs low.

3. Why These Work in Kingman

- **Local convenience** sells: residents currently travel long distances for daily needs.
- **Low startup costs**: minimal inventory or physical space required; many can start from home or mobile setups.
- **Scalable and flexible**: services can begin part-time and expand based on demand.

4. Next Steps

1. **Talk to locals**: ask 10–20 residents what they wish existed locally or what frustrations they have with accessing services.
2. **Survey existing services**: map current businesses and check for real gaps—e.g., is there a downtown café already? Who does auto service?
3. **Pilot small**: run a weekend popup (e.g., coffee stand, lawn mowing pilot) to test demand.
4. **Build partnerships**: collaborate with the public library, senior center, or hardware stores for visibility and referrals.

5. Potential Starting Idea: Mobile Errand & Pickup Service

- **Low cost**: needs only a vehicle and smartphone.
- **High demand**: seniors and busy families regularly need groceries, prescriptions, etc.
- **Scalable**: start solo, hire help as it grows, add yard care or small deliveries later.

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✓ Recommendation:

Launch a low-cost service based on local feedback—start with errand/delivery or mobile service, test it, then expand from there.

If you'd like help designing a business plan, customer survey, or cost estimates, just let me know—I'm happy to help you get started!

CHATGPT: DRAFT A MARKET RESEARCH PLAN

ChatGPT Q3: Create a plan to do market research in Kingman, Kansas without spending too much money

Low-Cost Market Research Plan for Kingman, Kansas

1. Define Your Research Objectives

- **Clarify Goals:** What do you need to know? (e.g., customer needs, competitive landscape, price sensitivity)
- **Set Priorities:** Focus on 2–3 critical questions to keep scope narrow and costs down.

2. Leverage Secondary (Desk) Research

- **Local Government & Economic Development**
 - Download free reports from the Kingman County Economic Development website.
 - Review Kansas Commerce data on demographics, industry, and incentives.
- **U.S. Census & ACS Data**
 - Use the Census Bureau's American [FactFinder](#) or QuickFacts to pull population, income, housing, and business-counts for Kingman.
- **Trade Associations & Industry Reports**
 - Check free executive summaries from associations (e.g., Kansas Retail Association, Kansas Chamber of Commerce).
- **Online Reviews & Social Media**
 - Scan Yelp, Google Maps, Facebook groups (e.g., "Kingman Kansas Community") for customer feedback on existing businesses.

Cost: \$0 **Time:** 1–2 days

3. Conduct Observational ("Mystery Shopper") Research

- **Foot-Traffic Counts**
 - Pick 2–3 key commercial corridors (Main St., Hwy 54). Count passerby and in-store visitors during peak hours.
- **Competitive Inventory**
 - Note what products/services competitors carry, with rough price estimates and quality observations.
- **Photographic Audit**

- Photograph storefronts, signage, parking availability to assess visibility and curb appeal.

Cost: Mileage + smartphone (on-hand) **Time:** 1 day

4. Deploy Rapid, Low-Cost Surveys

- **Online Surveys**
 - Build a 5-question survey in Google Forms or SurveyMonkey (free tier).
 - Distribute via:
 - Facebook community pages (Kingman, Cunningham, Norwich groups)
 - Email blast (if you have any existing lists)
- **In-Person "Intercept" Surveys**
 - Create a two-question printed survey (e.g., "What's your biggest frustration around X?"; "What would you pay for Y?").
 - Hand out 50–100 at high-traffic spots: grocery store, post office, clinic.

Cost: <\$50 (printing) **Time:** 1 week for design, distribution, and initial responses

5. One-on-One Interviews & Focus Groups

- **Stakeholder Interviews**
 - Talk to 5–10 key informants:
 - City economic development director
 - Chamber of Commerce members
 - Small-business owners
 - Aim for 15–20 minutes each, free-form, in exchange for coffee.
- **Mini Focus Group**
 - Invite 6–8 [local residents](#) to a free community space (library meeting room). Offer light refreshments (~\$30) and ask guided questions on needs and price points.

Cost: <\$75 (coffee, [refreshments](#)) **Time:** 1 week scheduling + 1–2 hours of sessions

6. Tap Existing Networks & Partnerships

- **Local Library & Extension Office**
 - Use meeting rooms (often free) and ask [librarian](#) for community study insights.

- **High School/College Interns**
 - Recruit a marketing student for a résumé-building project: help with data entry or survey administration. Offer a small stipend or letter of recommendation.
- **Co-op Advertising**
 - Partner with related local businesses to share the cost of a joint survey or flyer distribution.

Cost: Variable, potentially \$0–\$100 **Time:** Ongoing

7. Analyze & Synthesize Findings

- **Compile Data**
 - Use free tools (Google Sheets) to tabulate survey results and observational notes.
- **Simple Visualization**
 - Create basic charts: bar graphs of preferences, heat maps of foot traffic clusters.
- **SWOT Summary**
 - List Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats based on all collected inputs.

Cost: \$0 **Time:** 2–3 days

8. Present Insights & Next Steps

- **One-Page Report**
 - Summarize key findings and recommended actions.
- **Stakeholder Review**
 - Share with local partners (ED Director, Chamber) for feedback and validation.
- **Action Plan**
 - Decide on pilot offerings, pricing, and marketing tactics based on validated demand.

Cost: \$0 **Time:** 1 day

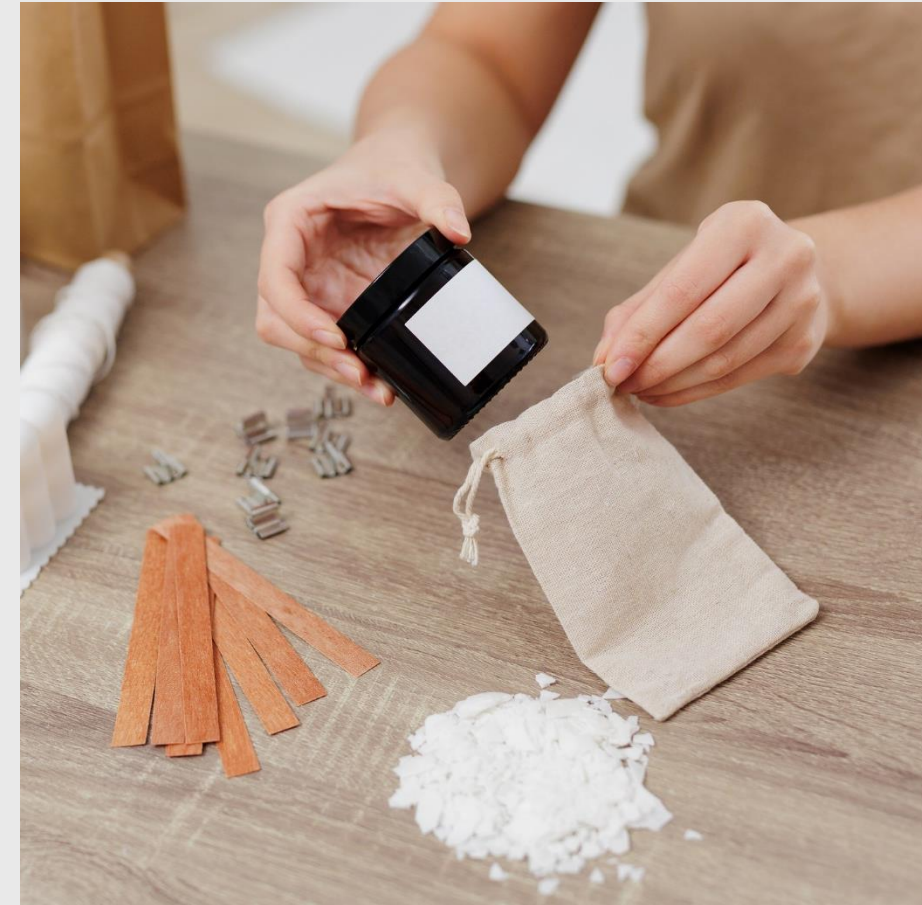
Estimated Total Budget: \$125 – \$200

Estimated Timeline: 3 – 4 weeks

By combining free public data, low-cost fieldwork, and community partnerships, you can gain robust market insights in Kingman without a hefty spend—empowering you to make informed, cost-effective business decisions.

IF YOU ARE CREATING A NEW PRODUCT

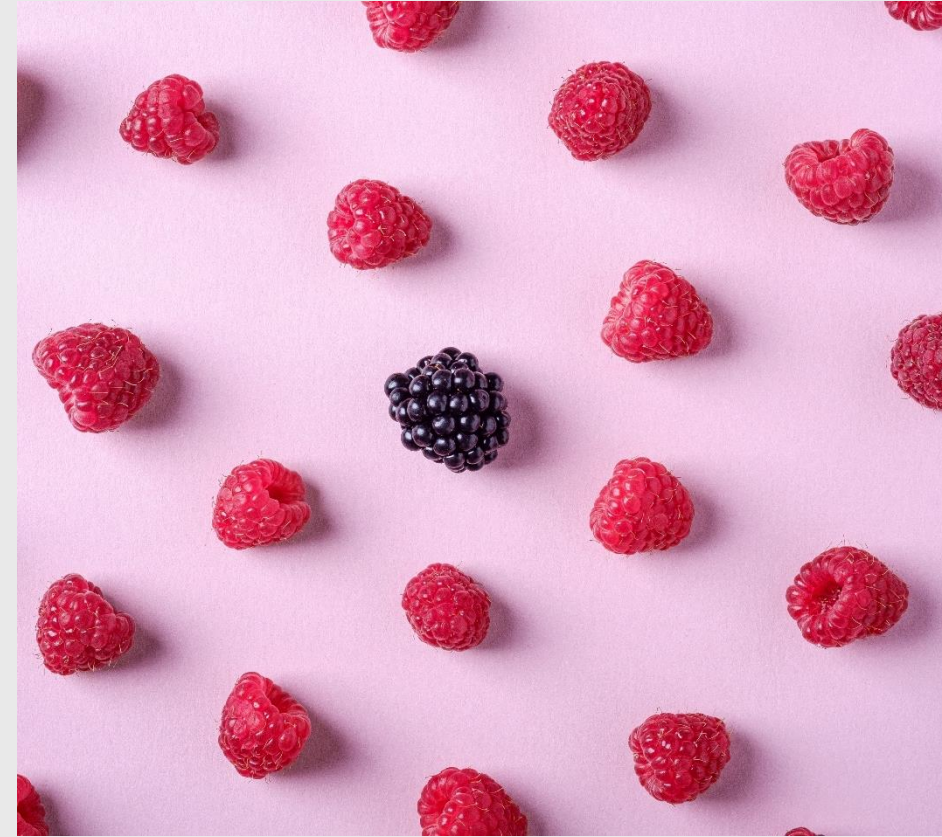
- + Test early with real people, potential customers
 - Farmer's markets, Popup shops and other events
- + See if there is a product fit, if people are interested
 - Test product and market fit. What is the potential market size
- + Cost pricing analysis: can I make this and sell it at a price to make a profit?



Credit: Di_Studio, iStock

ASK YOURSELF: HOW IS MY PRODUCT DIFFERENT? OFFERING, PRODUCT OR SERVICE

- + What is the current competition?
 - What is already offered in the same (or similar) product/service category
- + How is my product or service different (or better) than other existing products or services?
- + What value does your product/service provide, what need does it meet?



Source: Unsplash

START THINKING ABOUT A TEAM

- + *“Nobody in the world can succeed alone”*
Ernesto Sirolli
- + *“We have never met a single human being in the world who can make it, sell it, and look after the money”* Ernesto Sirolli



Source: Artis777, iStock

YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING, SO PLAN AHEAD FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

- + So many hats to wear!!!!
 - Making the product or service
 - Maintaining quality
 - Customer experience & service
 - Sales and Marketing
 - Financial management



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Thank You!



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