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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Action, Inc. moves people from poverty toward prosperity and helps communities thrive. To be effective with the strategies we use, it is important to understand the people and communities we seek to support. This Community Assessment brings together and analyzes data from a variety of social and economic indicators of well-being. Conclusions drawn are our own and will be used by Community Action to evaluate the agency’s current service delivery models and help shape future decisions regarding resource allocations.

Community Action, Inc., is specifically authorized to provide anti-poverty services in 20 counties, primarily located in parts of Northeast and North Central Kansas. The types of services the agency has available differs from county-to-county, based largely on funding available as specified by the agency’s public and private investors. This assessment identifies poverty-related data specific to the agency’s 20-county service area, where such data was obtainable, and relies on certain regional, state, and national data where county-specificity was not an option to the researchers. As such, some conclusions drawn may be more generalized than others.

*The poverty rate in Community Action’s service territory in 2017 was 11.7%, meaning roughly 1 in 8 residents in Community Action’s Service area fall in poverty.* Kansas is currently ranked 21st in the nation for impoverished residents compared to all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

588,239 individuals reside within the Community Action Service Area. The Community Action Service Area population makes up estimated 20.3% of the entire state population. The CAI service territory also holds 19.6% of the state’s impoverished population. 9 counties in CAI service area are projected to see growth through 2029 (Leavenworth, Geary, Riley, Shawnee, Jackson, Clay, Saline, Dickinson, and Ellsworth), but only two of these (Leavenworth & Riley) saw actual population growth since 2010. Shawnee County is the most densely populated county in the service area 177,499 total residents (326.2 ppsm).

The current fastest growing population by age in CAI territory is those 65-84 years (increasing 16.6% since 2010). There is noticeable correlation between rural counties tending to have more individuals 65 and older, and urban/semi-urban counties having lower rates of seniors. There are significantly more older women than older men (especially at 85 and older). In CAI's area, there are 65.3% women and 34.7% men that fall in the age group of 85 years and older.

Similar to the US overall, the Community Action service area continues to, and is expected to continue diversifying in racial and ethnic demographics. Whites still make up the vast majority at 86.6%. Blacks make up 6.5%. (Both these groups saw decreases in population representation since 2010). Hispanics represent the single largest minority group in the US (18.3%) and in CAI's area (8.9%).
It’s estimated that 2,839 households in the CAI service area are limited English speaking proficiency (of which 1,548 are primarily Spanish speaking). Shawnee county has the highest with nearly 800 households speaking primarily Spanish.

7.7% (one in 14) Community Action service area families is in poverty. Counties that saw the greatest increases in family poverty rates since 2010 were Atchison (4.5%), Doniphan (4.1%) and Geary (3.9%).

Estimated per capita income in CAI’s service area is $26,405, while the PCI for the state is $29,600. The average family income in the CAI service area is $77,492, the average family income in Kansas as a whole is $89,979. In Q1 2019, Kansas was ranked 34th in the nation for personal income growth. Personal income grew in all CAI counties from 2016 to 2017. Utilities are the greatest cost to Kansas families at 98.6 on the CLI (cost of living index), food and healthcare follow closely at 97.4 CLI, Transportation is 92.7, and Housing is 72.5 CLI.

Though the pay segregation and inequality among most groups has diminished, it is still having an effect, and the gap between high and low wage earners, continues to widen. The ratio of income going to the top 20% of households in Kansas compared to that going to the bottom 20% of households was 13.4 percent, ranking Kansas 13 out of 51 in income inequality. From 2006 to 2018, economic inequality in the state has gone up 5.06%, putting it at 0.451 on the Gini index.

Economic disparity between different demographics is still recognizable in the United States and the regions we serve. In 2018, women overall earned 85% as much as men, and in some reports, 77 cents for every dollar. Women between the ages of 25 and 34 were the closest to men, earning 89% as much as males in that same age range. Women are far more likely to experience career interruptions, compared to men, to care for a child or family member. 42% of working mothers reported having to reduce working hours (compared to 28% of fathers), 39% reported needing to take extended time off (24% of fathers), 13% of mothers reported turning down a promotion (10% of fathers), and 27% of working mothers reported having to quit their job (10% of fathers). Single-parent households are at a significant disadvantage for remaining in poverty, due to factors of insufficient healthcare and childcare opportunities available to them in these circumstances. Most men and women in the U.S. (over 63%) believe there needs to be more changes towards equity of pay between genders.

Economic disparity and inequality is also evident between races and ethnicities in the U.S., Kansas, and the Community Action service area. Overall, Asians and Whites are the highest income earners classified by race. African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics earned significantly less; around 55% to 65% that of Asians & White Americans. In the Community Action service area, the poverty rates among African American families (27.3%) is about four times that of white and Asian families (7.1%), and the poverty rate for Native American families is three times as much (21.7%). Latino families are 2.5x as likely to be in poverty than non-Latinos in the Community Action service area.
Children are considered the most vulnerable and innocent victims of poverty, and the Community Action Service Area has a child poverty rate of 15.2%, meaning one in seven children in our region is in poverty, facing multiple risks for long-lasting emotional, psychological, social, physical, and financial trauma. 62% of impoverished children come from single-parent households, and 9% (about one in ten) live without a parent at all. On a given night in Kansas in 2018, up to 9,265 children were living in unstable housing or homeless.

Quality early education and childcare is still highly recommended to helping the development of children in poverty and their families in moving out of poverty. Unfortunately, affordability and availability of this resource is low. In 2019, average costs for childcare in the Topeka Metro area were 20% of the income for families above the 185% poverty level, significantly more than the 7% recommended by the US Department of Health and Human Services. What’s worse, childcare assistance for families has been continually decreasing in Kansas since 2007, putting an estimated 6,400 impoverished children out of childcare while their families remain demonstrably stuck in poverty. This has a devastating effect on families, as it reduces opportunities families need to increase income and increases the financial obligations of those families at home.

Healthcare is a heavy concern for impoverished families and communities served by Community Action. Kansas is one of the lowest ranking states for residents having healthcare, with 21.8% of individuals below 138% poverty level reporting not having any type of health insurance. The primary reason cited for Kansas’ disparity of healthcare is the non-expansion of Medicaid and other affordable healthcare services in the state. It is estimated that expanding Medicaid alone will help nearly a quarter of a million residents get quality health coverage.

Kansas ranked 36th out of all U.S. states in food insecurity in 2017. One in 8, or 13.8% of households were reported as being food insecure from 2016-2018, higher than the national average rate of 11.7%. 370,860 people in Kansas do not have regular access or availability to acquire nutritionally safe and adequate food for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Hispanic and African American households had almost double the rates of food insecurity compared to non-Hispanic White Households. Food insecurity was also found to be particularly likely in households with children, especially those with children under six, and those where the head of household is a single parent. 29% of households with incomes falling below the 185% poverty line were also identified as food insecure. The 5 service area counties with the highest rates of food insecurity were Riley (17.5%), Geary (17.4%), Atchison (16.1%), Doniphan (13.5%), and Shawnee (13.3%).

47.8% of families and single individuals earning less than $50,000 annually are in cost-burden housing in the Community Action service area. The same is true for 58.5% of families and individuals earning between $20,000 and $35,000 per year, and 83.6% of those in more extreme poverty, earning less than $10,000 per year. The cost of rent has been going up steadily in Kansas by an average of $67 per month since 2012. It’s estimated that residents would need to earn $15.92/hr. or work 88-hour weeks at the state’s current minimum wage to...
afford a 2-bedroom rental. About 79,800 low-income households pay more than half their income for rent in Kansas, but of those only about 35,000 (43.8%) receive any federal financial assistance.

Overcrowding is a problem for families in poverty. 23,645 households in the state are considered overcrowded, of which 61% are renter occupied. Racial and ethnic minorities in the state are disproportionately subject to overcrowding with Hispanics being 7 times more likely to live in overcrowded housing than non-Hispanics; Asian households are five times more likely than White households, and African American households are three times more likely than White households. 3,465 households in Kansas were reported not utilizing a fuel source for heating in 2017. Overall homelessness in Kansas has increased by 4.2% since 2015, with 2,216 Kansans experiencing homelessness on any given night of the year.

Public transportation is a substantial resource to workers earning less than $25,000 annually. While less than 1% of overall workers in our area utilized public transport, 39% of workers in poverty relied on public transport to maintain accessibility to employment, food, and other local resources. In the Community Action service area, 51.5% of workers earn less than $25,000 per year.

**Data Collection, Credits and Use Permissions:**
Data was compiled from a variety of local, statewide, and national sources. Much of the statistical information comes from the latest U.S. Census conducted in 2010. However, estimated data beyond that date was also obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people. Information from this survey generates data that helps determine how more than $400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year between each decennial census count. Since the data is based on sample surveys the data may reflect a certain margin of error. Every attempt to find local data was made whenever possible. Citations are noted at the end of each page. Excepting data and analysis obtained by outside and fully credited sources, the contents of this publication, as they appear in part or whole, are the intellectual property of Community Action, Inc., and may not be used or replicated without express, written permission from and credit to Community Action, Inc. Authors of this report include Peter Vopata, Melissa Ginavan, Evan Hahn, and Tawny Stottlemire.
GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION

Service Area

Community Action, Inc. is one of the many federally designated anti-poverty advocates for people and communities nationwide and represents one of eight such agencies within the state of Kansas. Our direct service area is comprised of 20 counties in Northeast and North Central Kansas which encompasses: Atchison, Brown, Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Doniphan, Ellsworth, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Leavenworth, Lincoln, McPherson, Nemaha, Ottawa, Riley, Russell, Saline, Shawnee, Wabaunsee.

Community Action, Inc.'s service area covers 12,981 square miles in Central and Northeast Kansas which is 15.9% of the state's total land mass 81,758 square miles and includes four of the state's top ten most populated counties: Saline, Riley, Leavenworth, and Shawnee.¹

Community Action, Inc.
12.981 Square Miles
(15.9% of Kansas Land Mass)
Source: US Census Bureau

Community Action Programs

DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES
Head Start – is a comprehensive child development service for pre-kindergarten children ages 3 to 5. It serves families at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level and below. There are two Head Start providers in our community. Community Action’s program serves Shawnee County and the eastern part of the USD 501 school district. USD 501 is the other Head Start provider, serving the remainder of that school district. We offer full-day and part-day program options where children can experience quality pre-school learning and socialization and receive important health and nutritional services. Families benefit from no-cost, quality care, more confident parenting, and, attention to meeting the needs of both the child and overall family. Head Start is Federally funded. We operate the program from a former elementary school located at 2400 SE Highland Avenue, where there are six Head Start classrooms.

Early Head Start – is like Head Start, but serves children ages birth to 3, and all sessions are full-day. The program is also located at 2400 SE Highland and also has six EHS classrooms.

DIVISION OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OUTCOMES
Community Action Partner Services Team – Our CA Partners are the first people most of our customers meet. Partners complete customer intakes and applications for all Community Action programming, conduct status assessments on customer well-being, and help customers access the support systems most likely to be of significant benefit. CA Partners are knowledgeable about each of our agency’s customer support programs as well as about programs within the community. CA Partners build relationships with our customers and follow-up throughout the year to help families continue their journeys out of poverty and to gather data about agency outcomes. CA Partners can directly deliver any of the agency’s “transactional services”.

Weatherization Assistance Program - improves the safety and energy efficiency of homes occupied by low-income families. Many people think of weatherization as simply adding weather-stripping or caulking to windows and doors to stop drafts. While it does consist of those measures, the WAP also uses the latest, advanced technologies and proven approaches to address the entire home, including the interior and exterior structure, heating and cooling systems, the electrical system, and electricity consuming appliances. Measures that may be installed in a home include attic and wall insulation, foundation insulation, air-sealing around windows, doors and any other areas that leak air, and furnace repair or replacement. Our inspectors perform a safety check on each home to ensure occupants are free of harmful situations such as carbon monoxide build-up, damp crawlspaces, or leaky plumbing or appliances.
Affordable Housing - Community Action owns and operates 45 units of rental housing in four locations. We have five single-family homes in east Topeka, 12 apartments in a building in Clay Center, seven duplexes in Meriden, and, 14 apartments in Topeka in a three-building complex known as “Tanglewood”. Tanglewood is a permanent, supportive housing project open only to individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses who have experienced chronic homelessness. We operate the Meriden properties under a Limited Liability Corporation.

English Language Classes – Community Action helps non-English speaking, low-income adults, learn basic and intermediate English. Classes are free and generally serve up to 50 people each year.

Transactional Supports – Community Action offers a variety of established and flexible supports based on the needs of families. They include:

- Emergency Rent or Utility Assistance – one-time payments to help prevent eviction and homelessness.
- Diaper Depot – 50 free diapers per month to low-income parents with newborn to 3-year-old children.
- Bus Pass Identification Cards – a mobile camera and printer that produces the identification badge necessary to purchase reduced pass fares from Topeka Metro.
- Commodity Delivery – provided to qualified, homebound seniors in Shawnee County.
- Mobile Food Pantries – operated once per month in Auburn and Rossville.
- Back-To-School Supports – helps families already engaged in our organization cover expense related to returning to school and keeping their children engaged in school.

Population Growth & Change

Kansas’ latest population data estimates there are over 2.9 million residents in the state, and 588,239 of those individuals reside within the Community Action service area. According to 2010-2018 Population Estimates, 15 of Kansas’ 105 counties experienced population growth at a rate of 2.05% overall. Two of these 15 counties (13.3%) fall within Community Action’s service territory, including two counties in the top ten areas of population growth throughout the state. Leavenworth County – assigned to Community Action through the Community Services Block Grant – saw the state’s largest percentage of population growth at 6.7%. On Average, Kansas counties saw a 3.7% decline in population, while Community Action, Inc’s service counties saw a 2.6% average decline in population from 2010 to 2018.²

The percent of change in county population between 2010 and 2018 is reflected in the graphic below on the right.

As of the 2010 Census, Community Action’s service area included a total population of 589,717 residents. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP) showed that this number decreased to 588,239 in 2018, representing 20.3% of the approximate 2.9 million residents living in the state of Kansas. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that this trend in population growth will continue on into the next decade in the state of Kansas. Growth estimates for 2019-2029 from the Center for Economic Development and Business Research (CEDBR) show that Kansas could see an increase in population by as much as 2.99% during this time frame.

Projections from CEDBR show that 9 counties in the Community Action Service area should see growth through 2029 from 0.17% in Ellsworth County to as high as 9.94% in Leavenworth County as reflected in the chart above. Jackson (3.24%), Dickinson (0.44%), and Ellsworth counties (0.17%) are the only predominantly rural counties anticipated to see population growth in the next 10 years.

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Population Density
In 2010, The US Census Bureau classified areas with a population of 50,000 or more as “Urban Areas”, areas with population of more than 2,500 but less than 50,000 as “Urban Clusters”, and areas with less population, housing, and territory as “Rural”. 2010 Urban-Rural rates of counties within the Community Action Service Area can be viewed in the following graph.  

Source: The Center for Economic Development and Business Research

Source: US Census Bureau

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In 2018, The University of Kansas Institute for Policy and Social Research Classified all Kansas counties into five distinct levels based on person population per square mile (ppsm) with up-to-date data from the US Census Bureau. From lowest to highest population densities, these classifications include Frontier ( <6 ppsm), Rural (6-19.9 ppsm), Densely-settled Rural (20-39.9 ppsm), Semi-Urban (40-149.9 ppsm), and Urban (150 or more ppsm).

As seen in the following chart, nine Counties within the Community Action Service Area fall within the Rural classification for population density: Russell, Ottawa, Ellsworth, Wabaunsee, Cloud, Clay, Nemaha, Brown, and Doniphan. 5 Community Action counties are classified as Densely-settled Rural, including Jackson, Dickinson, McPherson, Jefferson, and Atchison. Saline, Geary, and Riley are all classified as Semi-Urban, and Lincoln is the single county classified as Frontier with only 4.2 ppsm.

Source: KU Institute for Policy & Social Research

Population and population density data shows that Shawnee continues to be the largest urban area with a total population of 177,499. Its population density is 326.3 residents per square mile. Leavenworth is the second highest urban population density with 173.3 persons per square mile.\(^6\)

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Age and Sex

The median age of a population is the midpoint where half of the people are younger than the given age and half are older. When life expectancy increases and/or fertility rates decline the median age will rise, indicating that the population of a community is aging. Understanding the median age and the age structure of a population gives policymakers and other stakeholders a better ability to create programs that address the needs of the populations they serve.

Age distribution affects the socioeconomic conditions of every community. In communities with younger populations an emphasis needs to be made on creating more educational opportunities, whereas communities with an older population may need to focus on the health needs of their citizens. Communities with a growing number of unemployed youth may need to focus on programs that help these individuals get training and find jobs.

In the United States, the 2010 Census showed that the median age was 37.2 years while 2018 estimates rose to 38.2 years. In Kansas, the median age increased from 36 years in 2010 to 36.6 years in 2019. The counties in the Community Action Service Area that had median ages lower than the Kansas median age in 2018 were Riley (25.5 years) and Geary (26.4 years). The highest median ages in our service area greater than 44 were found in Lincoln and Russell counties with ages of 47.7 and 46.2 years respectively.

The population rate under 18 years old declined by 3% in Kansas and by 5.4% in the Community Action Service Area. This along with the rise seen in the median age of residents, indicating these are “aging communities”. In 2018, Kansas Youth still make up 24.2% of the total state population (approx. 705,961 individuals) and 23% of the Community Service Area (approx. 135,285). Of those under 18 years, 26.8% in the state, and 27.7% in the service area were under 5 years old.7

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All counties in the Community Action Service Area had population youth rates of at least 20% with the exception of Riley and Ellsworth county. Geary county had the highest rates of youth under five (11.9%) and under 18 overall (31%).

Source: US Census Bureau

2018 Census Bureau population estimates show that persons between the ages of 25 and 44 made up the largest percentage of the population by age group in the state (25.4%) and our service area (25%). Within this group, Individuals between the ages of 25 and 29 had the highest rate of representation at 27.3% within the group. Since 2010, the service area population of individuals 65 and older inflated 20%, being the fastest growing age group, while Individuals 45 to 64 years old saw the greatest decline in representation at -7% rate of change from 2010 to 2018.8

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As of 2010, the United States had an older population aged 65 and over of 13%. In Kansas the percentage was also 13% or 376,116 residents. In the Community Action Service Area, the population of 65 and over was about 14%. 2018 Population Estimates showed that this age group increased to 16% of the population in the United States and Kansas and escalated to 16.6% in the Community Action Service Area.

Counties in our service area with an estimated 65 and over population that is greater than 15% included all counties with the exception of Leavenworth, Riley, and Geary. All counties had less than 4% population 85 and older, a group referred by gerontologists as the “old old,” except for Lincoln (5.1%), Russell (4.6%), Nemaha (4.6%), and Clay county (4%). It’s worth noting that these are all predominantly rural counties, while Geary, Riley, and Leavenworth (more urban...
counties) all have the lowest rates of individuals over 85, as well as the broader 65 and older population.  

Forecasting estimates from the Center for Economic Development and Business Research (CEDBR) for the period 2019-2024 show that residents over 65 years of age are predicted to see the greatest population growth in Kansas at a rate of 18.3% over this period. In the Community Action Service Area, residents in this age group are projected to increase in population at a rate of 16% from an estimated 104,488 to 121,217 for this time period.

Male and female population are fairly evenly distributed across the nation. Based on the 2018 American Community Survey 166 million residents in the U.S. were identified as female (50.8 percent) while 161 million were male (49.2 percent). In Kansas and the Community Action service area, the percentage of male to female residents is similar to the state and national level as seen in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>Total Males</th>
<th>Total Females</th>
<th>% Male</th>
<th>% Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td></td>
<td>161,128,679</td>
<td>166,038,755</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>1,450,406</td>
<td>1,461,099</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Service Area</td>
<td>253,440</td>
<td>253,440</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

2018 ACS estimates show 4.2 million women age 85 and older living in the United States, compared to 2.3 million men in the same age range. This age group consisted of the greatest

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population disparity based on sex, with the number of women being almost double that of men.\textsuperscript{11}

As shown in the following chart, women over 85 in Kansas and the Community Action Service outnumbered men as well. Not only are people living longer, but there is a particular concern to meet the needs of women in this age range.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\hline
 & Males & Females \\
\hline
CAI & 34.7\% & 65.3\% \\
KS & 35.1\% & 64.9\% \\
US & 35.5\% & 64.5\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Males vs Females % 85 & Older, 2018}
\end{table}

Source: \textit{US Census Bureau.}

**Race & Ethnicity**

There are currently six racial categories recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau: White American, Black or African American, Native American and Alaska Native, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and People of two or more races. The 2010 U.S. Census also includes the category "Other Races" which is not included in the six main races. \textsuperscript{1} The following chart demonstrates 2018 Population rates per these six categories.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\hline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
According to population estimates by the American Community Survey, The United States and Kansas populations have continued diversifying since 2010. Individuals identifying as two or more races have seen the greatest increases in population rates (28.1%) in the United States, while Asians have seen the greatest increase as a single racial group in the United States and Kansas, largely due to migration. In the Community Action Service Area, the Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander population rate increased the most at 35%, however just like the U.S. and the state as a whole individuals identifying as 2 or More Races and Asian have seen the highest uptakes in population counts (increasing by 2,477 and 2,066 residents respectively). The White and African American populations both estimate decreasing populations in the Community Action Service Area from 2010 to 2018. Caucasian residents saw an estimated population decrease of approximately -1.2% of the prior population rate, and African Americans saw a population decline of -0.8%.
Standards established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in October 1997 specify that race and origin (also known as ethnicity) are two separate and distinct concepts. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, "Origin" is defined "as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s ancestors before their arrival in the United States". Although there are several places of origin there are currently only two distinct ethnic groups officially recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino." Hispanic or Latino are those groups whose place of origin are Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Spain, or any Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic. "Hispanic," "Latino," and "Spanish" are terms that are used interchangeably. Ethnic groups can be of any race.12

Just like the United States, with an estimated 39.1% of the population classified as either Hispanic and/or a race other than white, Kansas is a state that is rich in racial and ethnic diversity. According to 2018 Population Estimates, 12.06% of the state's population was classified as either Hispanic or Latino, and 13.6% were identified as a race other than white alone. In the Community Action Service Area, 8.9% of the population classified as either

Hispanic or Latino, and 13.4% identified as a racial minority, slightly lower than the state’s figure.

The number of Hispanics in our nation continues to grow. As of July 1, 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that approximately 59.8 million residents in our nation were Hispanic, representing over 18% of the total U.S. population, an increase of 2% since the 2010 Census. Hispanic and Latino populations have grown similarly in Kansas and the Community Action Service Area since 2010, increasing by 1.7% and 1.5% respectively. Hispanics currently represent the largest minority group in our nation and state.

![Population Rates by Ethnicity, 2018](image)

Source: [US Census Bureau](https://www.census.gov)

Although currently Hispanics represent the largest minority group in our nation and state, a rapidly growing population group, the Asian population, is the fastest growing single racial group in the United States, primarily due to migration. From 2010 to 2018, Community Action Service Area saw They had the highest percentage of growth from 2010 to 2018, not only nationally, but also in Kansas and the CAI Service area at growth rates of 18.5%, 26.3% and 7.2% respectively. Overall, counts of multi-racial families are increasing in the U.S. By 2043 the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that our nation will become a majority-minority nation, meaning that no single group of people will make up the majority.

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Language & English Proficiency

Although the majority of people living in the United States speak English, as the United States becomes increasingly diverse, we have also become a nation with an array of languages. According to research conducted by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank in Washington, D.C. dedicated to analysis of global migration and policy, 61.6 million individuals, foreign and U.S. born, spoke a language other than English at home. The majority of people, approximately 16.2 million people, spoke Spanish which represented 64% of the population who spoke a language other than English, followed by Chinese (1.6 million, or 6 percent), Vietnamese (847,000, 3 percent), Korean (599,000, 2 percent), and Tagalog (509,000, 2 percent).15

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) according to the U.S. Census Bureau is anyone over the age of 5 who reported speaking English less than "very well." An estimated 39.9% of US Residents with LEP spoke a primary language other than English in 2017, 39.4% of Kansans fit in this category, and 24.2% in the Community Action Service Area.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau on the English-speaking ability and languages spoken in our nation is currently collected in the American Community Survey not only for Voting Rights determination, and bilingual election requirements under the Voting Rights Act, but it is also used in allocating educational funds to help teach students who have Limited English Proficiency.16

Programs such as English as a Second Language, High Intensity Language Training, and bilingual education help improve educational outcomes by ensuring that English Language Learners (ELL) attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same academic achievement standards that all students are expected to meet.17

In 2017, 2.5% of all households in the state of Kansas had limited English language proficiency based on data collected through the American Community Survey. Within the Community Action service area, Geary county had the highest population rate of limited English households at 2.9%, followed by Riley county (2.2%), Lincoln (1.6%), Saline (1.5%), and Shawnee (1.4%). Overall, 2,839 households in the community action service area were identified as having limited English speaking proficiency.\(^\text{18}\)

As seen in the following chart, Shawnee county has the highest population of limited English speaking households with just over a thousand households reporting limited English proficiency. Within that area, over 75%, or 765 households were primarily Spanish speaking. Riley County reported the second highest population of limited English speaking households with Asian & Pacific language speakers making up the greatest population of those households at 61%, or 351 households. The only counties that did not report any limited English speaking households were Doniphan, Nemaha, Ottawa, and Wabaunsee.

Spanish speaking households composed 54.5% all limited English-Speaking households reporting in our service area, and 65.9% of all limited English-speaking households in the state were primarily Spanish speaking. Asian or Pacific speaking households made up 20.8% of all limited English-speaking households in the state, and 30.9% of those same households in the Community Action service area.\(^19\)

![Rates of Languages Spoken by Limited English Speaking Households, 2017](image)

Source: [US Census Bureau](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_5YR_S1602&prodType=table)
Poverty continues to be a hardship for families and communities across Kansas and the U.S. overall. According to the latest US Census Bureau data, nearly 350,000 individuals in Kansas live in Poverty, and it’s estimated that 68,588 (19.6%) of those individuals reside within the Community Action Service Area. The chart below shows rates of poverty for each county in our service area (11.7% overall), as well as the reported rate of children (ages 0-17) in poverty within our service area (15.2% overall).

Source: USDA Economic Research Service

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Families in Poverty

The latest population estimates show 1 in 10 Kansans, or 11.9% of the total population, are surviving on incomes below the federal poverty line, ranking the state 21st in the nation for impoverished residents. 10.5% or about 62,500 families in the state are considered living in poverty. Within the community action service area, approximately 1 family out of 14, 7.7%, are in poverty.21

From 2010 to 2017, 1,085 more families became impoverished in Kansas (an increase of 1.2%). Similarly, across the US the population of families in poverty rose by almost 519,700 families, an increase of 3.9%.

Within the Community Action Service Area, the rate of impoverished families decreased by 3.8% (or 471 less families). However, of these regions, the CAI service area did see an overall decrease in family populations by -0.21% or 1,550 residents.

<p>| Rate of Change for Families in Poverty and Overall Family Population, 2010 - 2017 |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate of Poverty Change</th>
<th>Rate of Population Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Area</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Action service counties with the greatest increase in rates of impoverished families were Atchison (4.5%), Doniphan (4.1%), and Geary (3.9%). The counties with the greatest decrease in rates of impoverished families from 2010 to 2017 were Cloud County (-7.5%), Russell County (-7.1%), and Brown (-5.6%).

Source: US Census Bureau

Source: US Census Bureau

Income, Sources & Employment

Personal income is the total income received by all persons from all sources and includes wages, investments, property income and other sources. Per capita personal income is the annual personal income divided by the population. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the data is reported quarterly and seasonally adjusted at annual rates. In Q1 of 2019, the total Personal Income reported for the state of Kansas was over $148 billion. The following figure illustrates how Kansas counties compared to others across the US in 2017 on Personal Income rate of change.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis determined in their state by state comparison of personal income growth, Kansas ranked 34th in the nation in the first quarter of 2019 with a 3.0 rate of increase from the prior year. According to 2017 estimates, the Kansas’ personal income grew in 82 counties, and fell in 23. The overall Kansas growth rate for personal income was 2.2%, while the US as a whole saw a growth rate of 4.4%. All 20 counties in the Community Action Service Area, had growth in personal income from 2016-2017. The counties with the weakest growth in personal income were Ottawa (0.1%), Nemaha (0.4%), and McPherson (0.5%). The counties with the highest rates of growth included Ellsworth (11.8%), Lincoln (8.3%), and Cloud (5.6%).

Median earnings among households in Kansas was $55,477 in 2017 and of the 1.1 million families, 20.5% of them earned less than $25,000 per year. Per capita income- that is average income earned per person in a select region- rose by 16% in the state of Kansas from 2010 to 2017, and the per capita income of the Community Action service area increased by 13.8% in that same period. As of 2017 the estimated per capita income for Kansas is $29,600 and the community action service area is $26,405.

The average income for families in Kansas (ACS 2017) is $89,979, 17.4% increased from $77,722 in 2010; while the average income for families in our service area is $77,942, an increase of 14.8% from $66,413 in 2010. Below are charts detailing the latest Mean family Income and Per Capita income by service area county and the state.24

The Cost of Living is the income amount a family or individual needs to be able to afford to live in a select area. It is often utilized as an index to compare expenses between locations over time. In 2018, Kansas was ranked 8th compared to other states on cost-of-living, meaning it is one of the more affordable states to live in. Compared to the US average, Kansas had lower costs on food, housing, utilities, transportation, and health care. Utilities were considered the greatest cost at 98.6 on the Cost of Living Index (CLI) in Kansas, followed closely by food and healthcare at 97.4 CLI, transportation at 92.7 CLI, and Housing at 72.5 CLI.
Determining cost of living for any area is also based on the expected income and job availability to individuals within, so while a state or city may be considered a more affordable place to reside, this limits the economic mobility of residents and can make it harder for individuals or families to seek greater employment or other opportunities.  

The Kansas Department of Labor reports employment counts and rates provided by employers across the state through the Kansas Labor Information Center. From July 2018 – July 2019, The Kansas labor force employed an average of 1,434,218 individuals per month. The average unemployment during that span was 3.37% each month.  

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistic’s latest county data on employment, the four largest counties for employment in Kansas accounted for 56.7% of the state’s total labor force these are Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee, and Wyandotte county. The chart below details the average weekly wage by area in 2018.

![Average Weekly Wages, 2018](chart.png)

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Income Inequality

Income inequality is the extent to which income is unevenly distributed between groups of people. Although the gaps have been narrowing over the years in regards to race, ethnicity, and gender, wage inequality still exists between these groups in the US, and the income gap between high and low-income workers has continuously increased since the 1970s. According to the State Science & Technology Institute (SSTI), a national nonprofit that utilizes information and technology-centered services to address community issues, in 2018, Kansas fell at 0.451 on the Gini index for measuring inequality- where 0.0 is total equality amount individuals, and 1 is the highest level of inequality. Since 2006, Kansas has seen an overall increase in economic inequality for its residents by 5.06%.

Data analysis from Pew Research shows that women in the US earned 85% as much as men in 2018. The wage gap between women and men is narrowest for women between 25 to 34 years old, earning 89% as much as men in the same age group. Pew research attributes the ongoing pay gap between genders to be likely based on factors of educational attainment, occupational segregation, work experience, as well as gender discrimination. In a 2017 Pew survey, 42% of working women claimed experiencing discrimination at work. In addition, women are more likely to experience career interruptions, primarily as a result of having to care for a child or family member. 42% of working mothers reported having to reduce their hours at work in order to care for a child or family member, compared to 28% of working fathers, while 39% of mothers reported needing to take significant time off compared to 24% of fathers. 13% of mothers reported having to turn down a promotion at work to take care of a child or family member, compared to 10% of fathers, and 27% of mothers reported having to quit their job while only 10% of men reported the same. The latest data also shows that the majority of both women (77%) and men (63%) believe the United States needs to make more changes towards equality of pay between genders in the workplace.

In Kansas, Talk Poverty reported that the gender wage gap showed women earning 77 cents for every dollar of men’s median earnings in the year 2018 ranking Kansas 42nd across the nation, considerably worse than most states in gender equality. The ratio of income going to the top 20% of households in Kansas compared to that going to the bottom 20% of households was 13.4 percent, ranking Kansas 13 out of 51 in income inequality.

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As of 2016, the greatest income disparity within any racial group was among Asians, earning 10.7 times more at the 90th percentile (those near the top of the income distribution) than those in the 10th percentile (near the bottom of the income distribution). The Median percentile income for Asian Americans was highest at an average of $51,288, second was White Americans earning $47,958, followed by African Americans at $31,082, and Hispanic/Latinos at $30,400. For those in the 10th percentile of income earners, Whites were the highest average earners at $15,094, Asians earned 82% of white individual earnings ($12,478), Hispanics earned 65% ($9,900), and African Americans were the lowest earners at 54% of whites ($8,201). The largest disparities in income between races is often attributed to changes in immigration populations, historical access to quality education, and the impact of historical and cultural discrimination towards these groups.30

Race and Ethnicity of Families in Poverty

The US Census Bureau divides race into 7 distinct classifications for families: White, Black or African American, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian, Other race, and two or more races. Differences in racial diversity between the Community Action Service and the state of Kansas are miniscule. The Tables below breaks down family population and rates within the state and the Community Action Service Area by Race and Ethnicity according to 2017 Estimates from the American Community Survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Pacific</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>2 or More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Families</td>
<td>647,560</td>
<td>36,257</td>
<td>5,567</td>
<td>17,841</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>14,177</td>
<td>13,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS %</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>&lt;0.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Area Families</td>
<td>132,661</td>
<td>7,707</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>1,915</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2,099</td>
<td>3,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA %</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Latino or Hispanic</th>
<th>Non-Latino or Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Families</td>
<td>68,070</td>
<td>596,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KS %</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Area Families</td>
<td>10,055</td>
<td>125,419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA %</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Families in racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be in poverty than those in predominately white and Non-Latino families, according to the latest data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

In 2017, 7.1% of white households composed were families in poverty in the Community Action Service Area, and 7.4% were impoverished statewide. African American households were almost 4x more likely to be susceptible to poverty at 27.3% in the Service Area and 20.1% across the state. Native American Households in our service area were 3x more likely to be in poverty compared to whites (at 21.7%), and twice as likely at the state level (16.3%). However, families identifying as Asian and Pacific Islander were reported having lower rates of poverty than others based on race at 5% and 5.3% respectively.

Overall population counts and demographics should be taken into consideration when comparing distinctions in this data across varying regions. The chart below illustrates these disparities between households in poverty by race within the U.S., Kansas, and our service area.

![Family Poverty Rates by Race, 2017](chart)

Source: US Census Bureau

Similar to the economic disparity of families based on race, census data points to Latino and Hispanic families having higher rates of poverty than Non-Latinos. In the CAI Service Area in 2017, the ACS reported 15% of Latino Families, or just over one in six, faced poverty, compared to only 6.7% of Non-Latino families. This disparity is even worse statewide, with 20% of Latino families being in poverty, compared to 6.3% of Non-Latino families. \(^{31}\) The following chart illustrates rates of families in poverty by ethnicity for the nation, the state, and our service area.

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Infants in Poverty

In 2017, KDHE reported 36,464 live births in the state, a rate of 12.5% per 1,000 population. Of those 21 per 1,000 births were to teenage mothers, decreasing by 46% from 39 out of 1,000 Kansas births since 2010. 4,321 of all births in the state were to mothers who hadn’t yet received a high school diploma or GED, putting them at greater risk for being low-income. 2,697 infants born were classified as low-birth weight being less than 2500 grams), and of those 460 weighed less than 1500 grams, classified as very low-birth weight.32 The chart below illustrates 2017 birth rates by identified population groups in the state.

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In Kansas in 2017 7.4% of infants, or an estimated 2,685 total were low birth-weight. This number has increased since 2010 when the rate was 7.4%. 21 per 1,000 births in Kansas in 2017 are Teen births, this number has decreased by 46% (from 39 out of 1,000 births in Kansas in 2010. (see Section 4: Health – Prenatal Indicators for more information).\(^{33}\)

**Children in Poverty**

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, there are more than five and a half million infants and toddlers in low-income families, and approximately one half of them fall under the poverty guidelines. These children and their families face multiple demographic and familial risks that have long-lasting emotional, psychological, social, physical, and financial effects. As of 2016, 17% of children in Kansas (119,557) live in poverty (just slightly less than the national rate of 19%), the rate of children in poverty under 6 years old is higher at 19% (46,017). Most Kansas children in poverty (62%) live in single parent households, and 9% (11,158) live in households without a parent present.\(^{34}\)

According to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, there were 9,265 students reported homeless in the state of Kansas in 2018. Of those 1,009 were Unaccompanied, meaning they are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Of Kansas’ Homeless Youth Population, 7,646 doubled up, or shared a domicile with another household for nighttime residence. 851 took nighttime residence in Homeless Shelters, 635 in hotels and motels, and 133 were unsheltered.\(^{35}\)

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EDUCATION NEEDS

Early Intervention and Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is a United States federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. Part C of this legislation is an early intervention program serving infants and toddlers through age two with developmental delays or who have been diagnosed with physical or mental conditions that have high probabilities of resulting in developmental delays. The main focus of the programs is to help these high needs children learn the basic skills that develop during the first three years of life to help them make a successful transition to preschool and kindergarten. 36

Under Part C, each State provides services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays under the management of a lead agency with State supervision. In Kansas the Infant Toddler Services (also known as Tiny-K programs) are administered by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). They provide grants to local networks that assist in maintaining and implementing early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities through age 2 and their families. 37

There are currently 38 Tiny-K programs across the state, according to the Tiny-K Alliance, a statewide advocacy group for young children with disabilities. 38 Part C early intervention programs for the Community Action Service can be found at the following links: http://www.tiny-k.org/find-your-local-tiny-k-program.html & http://www.ksits.org/download/network_brochure.pdf TARC Tiny-K is the Part C early intervention program for Shawnee County, the largest county in our service area.39

In FY2017, over 10,000 children in Kansas received early intervention services through Part C Early Intervention Services (EIS), and over 1,750 intervention providers and administrators in the state received technical training and support through KDHE’s Infant Toddler Services. In the same year, 5,295 infants and toddlers were assessed and required an initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting through Kansas Infant-Toddler Services. 40

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Childcare and Early Education

High quality childcare has been shown to directly influence a child’s future success in life. Those that receive high-quality care demonstrate better academic achievements in later years, improved outcomes in socio-economic and health indicators as adults, and increased adulthood earnings by up to 3.5%. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data center, only 47% of children between the ages of 3 and 4 were enrolled in some type of school or licensed early childhood education program in 2017. While 50% of children at or above the 200% poverty line were enrolled in pre-k early education programs, 51% of children below the 200% poverty line were not, indicating children in poverty are less likely to be engaged in these programs than those not in poverty.

Affordability & Availability of Childcare

Finding safe, affordable, quality childcare is a challenge that every working parent of young children faces. In their 2019 report on Early Childhood Education, Kansas Action for Children point out that the current costs for childcare in the Topeka Metro area is $8,442 per year or about 20% of what a family above the 185% poverty level could afford. Unfortunately, this is nearly triple the 7% affordable cost of childcare recommended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The next chart details the affordability of Kansas childcare programs in 2019 based on families reporting the percent of income costs.

Source: Child Care Aware Kansas Fact Sheet 2019

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Child Care assistance for low-income families is decreasing at an alarming rate in Kansas compared to the rate of children in poverty. From 2007 to 2017, more than 10,400 children fell off childcare assistance, while the poverty rate decreased by an estimate of only 4,000, leaving 6,400 children in poverty without assistance for education.  

For more information on how changes and cuts in the state budget have impacted funding for Early Childhood Education, check out this 2017 policy brief by Kansas Action for Children: Lost Opportunities for Kansas Kids.

When affordable childcare is not available or when the arrangement is changed to impact affordability, families already struggling to meet financial obligations face the additional risk of losing work hours or losing their jobs which not only affects the economy but has a devastating effect on the families themselves.

Child Care Aware, a national nonprofit organization that provides resources to families across America who are seeking childcare with special emphasis on serving vulnerable populations. According to their 2019 State Fact Sheet on Kansas there were an estimated 154,871 children under the age of 6 potentially needing childcare in 2019.

In their 2019 Report, Checking In on the Child Care Landscape, it’s estimated that 12.5 million children under the age of six attend some type of child care setting in the US, and the number of child care programs available to families have been in decline across the country in the past year, primarily Family Child Care Homes, which are a predominant source of childcare to families in rural areas.

Based on the latest available data from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, are 627 childcare centers statewide and 127 (representing 20.2%) in our service area. There are 3,697 Family childcare homes statewide, and 865 (23.4%) in our service area. Currently, there are 167,889 childcare slots available in the state. The table below details the count and percentage of these slots by program type and children served.

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In 2018, Kansas was ranked 48th out of the 50 US states by the Bipartisan Policy Center when it came to having an integrated and efficient Early Childcare and Education System. It was recommended that Kansas was behind most states when it came to facilitating seamless coordination and transition of children in Early Childcare and development programs from 0-5 years of age, and effective utilization of the Child Care and Development Fund with state Pre-K and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

**Education Literacy Levels**

While literacy includes a child or adult’s ability to read and write, it also encompasses the ability of an individual to communicate and understand language and comprehend meaning from what they read, write, and hear. Children that are considered “literate”, understand and can utilize sounds, pictures, letters, and gestures together to comprehend and communicate ideas. Through this broader perspective of literacy, it’s clear that children can develop and demonstrate literacy skills very early in life.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet & Trust Fund is a fund under state statute focused on the evaluation of children’s programming with the goal of improving the health and well-being of children across Kansas. This fund is designated in part as the Children’s Initiatives Fund to program grantees across the state. In partnership with the University of Kansas’ Center for Public Partnerships & Research (CPPR) the Cabinet monitors and evaluates results of these programs through their Annual Investment Impact Report (AIIR). According to the 2018 AIIR, 78% of 1,519 total children (ages 3-5) engaged in PreK programs were designated school ready in language comprehension by the spring of 2018. This is a minor drop from the 2017 report of

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81% being school ready in Spring 2017. More details on these results are included in the chart below.

The 2018 AIIR also provided screening data of 6,487 children (ages 1 month to 6 years old), and identified that of Kansas children in that range 82% (5,320 total) met age-appropriate benchmarks for communication competency, while 9% (approximately 583) were still developing appropriate communication skills, and another 9%, or about one in ten children, were at-risk for delayed development in Communication. 48

Low Adult Literacy

According to Concordia University and the National Bureau of Economic Research, children whose parents who have poor literacy levels are significantly more likely to suffer from poor grades, have high absentee rates in school, repeat school grades, drop out, and display

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behavioral problems when it comes to their educational involvement.49

Here are some key statistics on the effects of Adult low literacy in the US:

- It’s estimated that over 36 million adults in the US have are performing at a low literacy level, not being able to read, write, or do basic math beyond the third grade level.
- There is a strong correlation between literacy and a person’s earnings and independency: 70% of adults who depend on welfare have low literacy levels. 43% of adults with low literacy levels live in poverty. Adults with poor literacy skills are less likely to earn livable wages and are more likely to drop out of school and end up unemployed.
- Low literacy impacts health costs. It’s estimated that $232 Billion a year are linked to low adult literacy, as the inability to understand and utilize resources for health information impedes these individuals’ abilities to make health-conscious decisions.
- 75% of prison inmates are classified as have poor literacy skills, and inmates with higher literacy levels are 43% less likely to return to prison.
- Immigrants coming to the US each year are at a higher risk of having poor literacy skills along with proficient English language skills. It’s estimated that 50% of immigrants lack education to enhance these skills and are consequentially more likely to stay in poverty.50

Disconnected Youth

Disconnected Youth are young people that are neither enrolled in school or in the labor force. Though the U.S. Department of Education defines this group as those between the ages of 14 to 24 years old, national calculations of this group are most often reported on the 16-24 age range through Measure of America and the US Census Bureau.

The corresponding chart shows the change in percent of disconnected youth in the Community Action Service area (6.3%) compared to the overall Kansas rate (9%) and National rate of disconnected youth from 2010 to 2017. Clay county had the highest percentage of disconnected youth in the Community Action service area at 16.7% in 2017, or approximately one in six teenagers. According to the most recent survey data available the rate of Disconnected Youth nationally is 11.5% (one in 9 teenagers). While rates of disconnected youth have decreased slightly at the state and national level, service area rates have remained stagnant over time.

According to Measure of America, in 2017 16.6% of Disconnected youth reported having a disability of some kind, compared to only 5% of non-disconnected youth. This correlation seems even greater for disconnected white male youths who report disability at the highest rate of 23%. These individuals do, however, face fewer structural barriers to education and employment than other racial or gender groups.

Though disconnected youth have a slightly higher tendency to be male (11.9%) compared to female (11.1%), except for populations of Native American, Asian, and Latino youth who tend to have slightly higher rates of female disconnected youth compared to males. When considering race, Asian American youth have the lowest rates of youth disconnection (6.3%), followed by white youth (9.4%), then Latino (13.2%) and black youth (17.9%). From 2016 to 2017, the rate of disconnected black youth increased while the rates of all other racial groups of disconnected youth decreased.

Research on disconnected youth also suggests a correlation with population density, as rural counties tend to have a much higher percentage of disconnected youth (20.3%) compared to more populated urban counties. For all youth in the US, the likelihood of disconnection rises as household income decreases.  

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Graduation & Dropout Rates

Data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics show that high school dropouts faced a much higher unemployment rate than those students who graduated. Dropping out of high school contributes to lower annual earnings, less access to employee benefits, including health insurance and pension coverage, and a much higher incidence of poverty and lower wealth.

A person’s likelihood of graduating high school may be influenced by their early education, as studies have demonstrated correlation between the quality of early childhood education and academic success as a young adult.52

The average graduation rate for secondary education in Kansas schools is approximately 80% as of the 2018-2019 school year.

For the 2015-2018 Cohort, the graduation rate in the Community Action service area was 88.5%, slightly above the state rate of 87.5% and above the 2017 National rate of 84.6%. There was a higher rate of females graduating compared to males in both the CAI service area and in the state as a whole. Asian Americans had the highest rate of graduation compared to other races, while students identifying as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander had the lowest graduation rates (76.7% in the service area, and 76.4% statewide).

Students from lower income families had significantly lower graduation rates compared to the overall population. Those qualifying for free lunches were at 80.4% graduation rate in the service area and 78.1% in the state, while 80.2% of homeless students graduated, while only

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68.5% achieved the same outcome. Based on these rates, it’s safe to say that one in five low-income youth in the Community Action service area are at-risk for failing to graduate, while almost 1 in 3 low-income youth in the state share a similar outcome. See Chart for more information on graduation rates.

Research from the Center for Social Organization of Schools and Johns Hopkins University identified four primary reasons for students dropping out of school. This included life events such as becoming a parent, incarceration, or work responsibilities to help support a family; fade outs due to not seeing the benefit of a high school education; push outs included those students that were withdrawn due to truancy, course failures or behavioral issues, and failing to succeed due to the educational system failing to provide the support that they need to succeed.53

Dropout rates are based on the percentage of youths (16-24 years old) that have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent and are not enrolled in school. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the national rate of high school dropouts in 2017 was 5.4%, or one in twenty youth.54

For the 2017-2018 academic year, the State Department of Education reported that the overall state dropout rate was 1.4%, while counties in the Community Action service area had a slightly lower rate of 1.22%.

As shown in the graph to the right, males had a slightly higher dropout rate than females at both the state and service area level. Native Americans had the highest dropout rate in the service area at 5.89% (more than the national rate), and African Americans had the highest dropout rate of any single race at the state level (2.2%). The lowest dropout rate of any racial group was among white youth at both the state (1.2%) and service area level (1.1%).

Youth participating in special education programs are at higher risk for dropout than their peers. In 2018, 1.6% of these youth in the Community Action service area and state overall were reported as dropouts, slightly more than the overall state and service area rates. Similarly, individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), are more likely to dropout of school. In 2018, 2.3% of youth with LEP were dropouts. Youth in low-income households (qualifying for free or reduced lunches) were also considerably more likely to dropout from school, particularly in the community action service area. Compared to other identifiable groups, these individuals had a dropout rate of about 2.9% in 2018.

Source: Kansas State Department of Education
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE NEEDS OF FAMILIES IN POVERTY

Health and Health Insurance

The rising cost of health care in the United States can have disastrous effects on the economy. Not only does it put an extreme burden on the budgets of Federal, state and local governments which cover almost half of current health care spending, but it also has an impact on job security, unemployment, small business and affects the lives of millions of Americans without health insurance.

The Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), an agency commissioned to advise the President on economic developments and trends, completed a comprehensive analysis of the economic impacts of health care reform to get a better understanding of where our country was headed if changes were not made. In their 2009 report, “The Economic Case for Health Care Reform,” they estimated that health care expenditures were 18% of the GDP and if they continued to rise they would reach 34% by 2040.

Health care reform focused on two key areas: (1) containment of the growth rate of health care costs, and (2) expansion of insurance coverage. Slowing health care costs would raise the standard of living of millions of Americans by freeing up resources that could be used to produce other desired goods and services. It would reduce the national deficit which would contribute to the formation of additional capital. It would also reduce the unemployment rates, reducing the potential for increases in inflation. The expansion of health insurance coverage was implemented to improve the lives of uninsured individuals by improving health and life expectancy. It would increase the labor supply by reducing loss of work due to absenteeism and chronic illness. It would also help improve job opportunity by leveling the playing field for insurance benefits among business who otherwise would have to compete for talent in the job market.55

In 2010 President Obama made sweeping changes in the health care industry when he enacted the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The purpose of this legislation was to make health insurance more affordable, lower the uninsured rate, and reduce the costs of healthcare through innovative changes in health care delivery.56

In 2014 the ACA gave states the option to expand the Medicaid program to cover all adults with income below 138% of the federal poverty level, but not all states chose to do so. Kansas was one of the states who elected not to expand the Medicaid program. As a result, U.S. Census data showed that in 2013 and 2014 the uninsured rate was higher in non-expansion states at all levels of poverty.57 It’s estimated that expanding Medicaid in Kansas would add 145,000 new beneficiaries, giving over a quarter of a million individuals greater access to quality healthcare and healthcare services.58

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TalkPoverty reported that in 2017 about 21.8% of people under 65 and living below 138 percent of the poverty line did not have health insurance coverage in Kansas. This placed Kansas 43rd among all the states for individuals not having health insurance in this population.\(^{59}\)

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**Health Insurance Coverage**

**21.8%**

**RANKED: 43RD**

Percentage of people in Kansas under age 65 and below 138 percent of the poverty line who did not have health insurance at any time in 2017.

Source: [TalkPoverty.org](https://talkpoverty.org)

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**Perinatal Indicators**

Perinatal Indicators are indicators of maternal infant health. It includes the number of preterm births and low birth weight babies, infant mortality, and maternal morbidity and mortality.\(^{60}\) The outcomes of these indicators provide perspective on the health of a community and its children. The following charts provide a brief overview of perinatal indicators in Kansas from 2013-2017.

**Percentage of live births to mothers who received adequate or adequate-plus prenatal care.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>82.96%</td>
<td>83.65%</td>
<td>83.38%</td>
<td>83.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [Kids Count Data Center](https://talkpoverty.org)

---


Percentage of live births that are low birth-weight (under 2,500 grams, or 5.5 pounds).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>7.03%</td>
<td>7.06%</td>
<td>6.86%</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kids Count Data Center

Percentage of live births weighing less than 1,500 grams (3.4 pounds).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Data Type</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kids Count Data Center

Child Abuse and Neglect

The Kansas Department for Children and Families helps improve the well-being of children. According to their data on performance across the state, there were two indicators that demonstrated child well-being that exceeded performance standards:
6.4% of children experience recurrent maltreatment in SFY 2019—less than the performance standard of <= 9.1%.
91.4% of children in out-of-home placements were placed in a family-like setting with a relative, foster family, pre-adoptive family or independent living, which is greater than the performance standard of 90%.

However, three indicators suggested less than the performance standard for SFY 2019:
Placement stability (the rate of moves per 1,000 days spent in care for children in Out of Home Care for 12 months or less) was higher than expected at 9.6% versus the performance standard of <= 4.12.
36.5% percentage of children who entered foster care were discharged to a permanent home within 12 months of their date of entry into foster care and before turning 18—lower than preferred according to the performance standard of 40.5%
9.1% of children who entered foster care and were discharged to a permanent home within 12 months re-entered foster care in the following 12 months, which is greater than the performance standard of <= 8.3%.

---

## Kansas Child Well-Being Indicators 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention and Protection Services</th>
<th>SFY 2019</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>+/−</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recurrence of Maltreatment</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>≤ 9.1%</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement in Family Like Setting</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Stability for Children Entering Care</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>≤ 4.12</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanency in 12 Months for Children Entering Care</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Entry into Foster Care in 12 Months</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>≤ 8.3%</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [Kansas Department for Children and Families](http://example.com)
Prevalence of Food Insecurity

According to the USDA, food insecurity is defined as a limited or uncertain availability or ability to acquire nutritionally adequate and safe foods to maintain an active healthy lifestyle without resorting to such measures as emergency food supplies or to socially unacceptable ways of accumulation such as scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies. 62

In September 2019, USDA's Economic Research Service reported that out of all U.S. households, approximately 11.1 percent (14.3 million households) were food insecure at some point in 2018 and 4.3 percent of U.S. households (5.6 million households) had very low food security, meaning their nutritional intake was significantly reduced due to a serious lack of resources in 2018. These figures are down from 2015 when approximately 12.7 percent (15.8 million households) were food insecure at some point in 2015 and 5.0 percent of U.S. households (6.3 million households) had very low food security. 63

In 2017, Kansas ranked 36th out of all states in food insecurity. 64 An average of 13.8% of households in Kansas were food insecure over the two-year period from 2016-2018. This figure was slightly higher than the average U.S. rate of 11.7% over this same period. 65

It is also important to note that discrimination and structural racism contribute to the gap of food insecurity rates between white households and non-Hispanic black and Hispanic households. A study of food insecurity in the U.S. from 2001 to 2016 found that non-Hispanic black and Hispanic households had at least double the food insecurity rates as white households.  

**2018 United States Food Insecurity Rates**

**Prevalence of food insecurity, 2018**

- All households
- Household composition:
  - With children < 18
  - With children < 6
  - Married-couples with children
  - Single women with children
  - Single men with children
  - Other households with child
  - No children
  - More than one adult, no children
  - Women living alone
  - Men living alone
  - Households with elderly
  - Elderly living alone
- Race/ethnicity of head:
  - White non-Hispanic
  - Black non-Hispanic
  - Hispanic
  - Other
- Income-to-poverty ratio:
  - Under 1.00
  - Under 1.30
  - Under 1.85
  - 1.85 and over
  - Income unknown
- Area of residence:
  - Inside metropolitan area
  - In principal cities
  - Not in principal cities
  - Outside metropolitan area
- Census region:
  - Northeast
  - Midwest
  - South
  - West


Source: [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov)

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Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, reported that the United States, as of 2017, had a food insecurity rate of 12.5% overall representing approximately 40 million people, as seen in the figure below. In Kansas, the rate was slightly higher at 12.7% representing about 370,860 people. 68

### 2017 Food Insecurity Rates

**United States**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES</th>
<th>FOOD INSECURITY RATE IN THE UNITED STATES</th>
<th>ESTIMATED PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AMONG FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,044,000</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>29% Above Other Nutrition Program threshold of 185% poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19% Between 130%-185% poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51% Below SNAP threshold 130% poverty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Meal Cost: $3.02

Annual Food Budget Shortfall: $20,637,209,000

**Kansas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE IN KANSAS</th>
<th>FOOD INSECURITY RATE IN KANSAS</th>
<th>ESTIMATED PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AMONG FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE IN KANSAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>370,860</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>40% Above Other Nutrition Program threshold of 185% poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15% Between 130%-185% poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45% Below SNAP threshold 130% poverty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Meal Cost: $2.86

Annual Food Budget Shortfall: $181,199,000

*Source: Feeding America*

In 2017, many counties in Kansas had food insecurity rates that equaled or exceeded the national rate (12.5%) and specifically in the Community Action Service area,\(^69\) as noted below (*Saline is included as well due to being ranked just below the national rate):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Action 2017 Food Insecurity Rates</th>
<th>Counties over 12% Food Insecurity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saline*</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leavenworth</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickinson</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloud</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawnee</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doniphan</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atchison</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geary</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Feeding America

### Food Insecurity Among Children

Children are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Healthy nutrition is essential for proper growth and development. Malnutrition, due to food insecurity, has been proven to adversely affect children by putting them at a greater risk for falling behind in school, stunting their physical and mental growth, and exhibiting behavioral problems. Food insecurity rates are also linked to an increased risk for birth complications and low infant birthweight among food-insecure women.\(^70\)

Source: Feeding America

In the United States over 12.5 million children under 18 were suffering with a food insecurity in 2017. This calculates to a food insecurity rate of 17.0% for this age group. In Kansas, approximately 130,210 or over 18% of our state’s children are challenged with food insecurity,\(^71\) ranking our state 21\(^{st}\) out of all states for food insecurity among children.\(^72\)

Kansas Appleseed, one of many national nonprofit, nonpartisan justice centers within the Appleseed Network, serves as a voice for vulnerable Kansans by advocating for better laws and

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policies to improve communities. One particular goal of their organization is to help reduce childhood hunger in Kansas by working closely with community partners across the state to help improve access to nutritious meals for Kansas children across the state.

In their Executive Summary, "Reducing Childhood Hunger in Kansas," Kansas Appleseed identified three primary causes for the childhood hunger crisis in our state: 73

A high 6.5% sales tax on food, the second highest in the country, makes it difficult to purchase healthy and nutritious food.

State Administrative Barriers:
- Policy changes in the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) which has made it difficult for individuals to access much needed services for food assistance.
- A DCF decision to decline federal grant money which would have allowed agencies to perform food assistance outreach to educate potential food assistance recipients about program benefits, eligibility, and how to apply for benefits.
- An overreliance on food banks and food pantries which have insufficient resources and funding in comparison with federally funded anti-hunger programs.

Food Assistance Programs

In situations where low-income individuals and families find themselves without adequate access to low-cost nutrition, they are often forced to sacrifice other basic needs such as their mobility, health, housing, education, and more.74 This raises the importance of low-cost food that is available through both Federal and Local food assistance programs for food-insecure individuals and families.

The United States Department of Agriculture oversees over $100 billion in Federal nutrition benefits which helps fund the following programs:

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) -**
SNAP benefits provide monthly food assistance (formerly food stamps) to households with income at or below 130% of the national poverty level to help provide groceries to families in need.

**Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**
Serves the needs of young children, pregnant women, postpartum women up to 6 months following delivery and nursing mothers by providing much needed funds for the purchase of specific foods to keep them healthy.

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School Meal Programs
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
School Breakfast Program (SBP)
Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
These programs have ensured that eligible students received adequate nutrition throughout the school day by providing free or reduced breakfast and lunches to high needs children.

Summer Food Service Programs (SFSP)
Summer food programs have helped to meet the critical nutritional needs of children when school is not in session by providing free meals to children. School districts, local governments, churches and other nonprofits may sponsor the program.

Child and Adult Care Food Program. (CACFP)
The Child and Adult Care Food Program provides funding to provide meals served to children in child care homes, child care centers, afterschool programs, adults in adult day care centers. Schools, local government entities, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit day care centers may all participate.

According to the Kansas Appleseed report, many of these services are under-utilized, primarily due to eligible recipients either not being aware of the programs or their eligibility, or confronting application barriers which can make it difficult to access benefits. As seen in the following tables Kansas has a real need to improve on outreach programs to help families access these services.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kansas Food Assistance Statistics:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranked 39th for children’s participation in the Summer Food Service Program for 2017-2018, serving only 9.6 summer lunches for every 100 free and reduced-price lunches served to children during the school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of the 190 eligible schools (39.5%) participated in the Community Eligibility Provision for the school year 2018-2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74% of those eligible for SNAP in 2016 participated in benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49% of eligible women participated in WIC in 2015.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Kansas Appleseed data showed that federal nutrition programs provided approximately $102.5 billion in nutrition benefits through local food banks and food pantries, playing an important role in providing food assistance to needy individuals.

Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap 2018 report stated that federal nutrition assistance programs are the first line of defense against hunger; however, although an individual or family may be food-insecure, they do not necessarily fall below the threshold to qualify for assistance. Oftentimes, these individuals and families must rely on charitable food assistance as their only means of support.  

The Hunger in America 2014 Report for the Kansas Food Bank service area include:

**WIDESPREAD USE OF FOOD ASSISTANCE**
Kansas Food Bank serves 215,300 people annually, including 68,900 children and 19,900 seniors.
Among all clients, 14% are black, 37% are Latino, and 42% are white.
11% of adult clients are students.
14% of households include someone who is a veteran or who has ever served in the military.

**CLIENTS STRUGGLING WITH HEALTH ISSUES**
82% of households report purchasing inexpensive, unhealthy food because they could not afford healthier options.
66% of households report having to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.
27% of households include a member with diabetes.
48% of households have a member with high blood pressure.

**MAKING TOUGH CHOICES AND TRADE-OFFS TO KEEP FOOD ON THE TABLE**
Following are the choices client households reported making in the past 12 months:
71% report choosing between paying for food and paying for utilities.
35% of these households are making the choice every month.
73% report making choices between paying for food and paying for transportation.
35% of these households are making the choice every month.
66% report choosing between paying for food and paying for medicine/medical care.
30% of these households are making the choice every month.
60% report choosing between paying for food and paying for housing.
28% of these households are making the choice every month.
31% report choosing between paying for food and paying for education expenses.
15% are making the choice every month.
More than half of households reported using three or more coping strategies for getting enough food in the past 12 months. The frequency of these strategies among all households include:
52% report eating food past the expiration date;
14% report growing food in a garden;
37% report pawnning or selling personal property;
82% report purchasing inexpensive, unhealthy food;
33% report watering down food or drinks;
55% report receiving help from friends or family.

**LOW WAGES, UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT DRIVING NEED**
12% of respondents have faced foreclosure or eviction in the past five years.
Among all households served by Kansas Food Bank agencies and programs, 60% have at least one member who has been employed in the past year.

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In Kansas, there are three major food assistance programs who are members of Feeding America, a nationwide network of food banks and the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity. The largest hunger-relief agency in our state is The Kansas Food Bank. Their service area covers 85-counties across the state of Kansas as indicated in blue on the map below. They have several programs that include Stocking Pantries, food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, after-school programs and senior delivery programs; as well as Food-4-Kids, a program that delivers food packages to food insecure school children; Rural Delivery, a program that delivers food to underserved rural communities; Food Recovery, a program that picks up donated food items from over 38 Wichita area retailers to help supply their program’s needs; and Bob Box, a new program sponsored by Senator Robert Dole to help address the needs of food insecure seniors in our state.

The other two primary agencies in our state are the Harvesters Community Food Network (in red on the map) and Second Harvest Community Food Bank (in green on the map). The Community Action Service area is served primarily by the Kansas Food Bank and Harvesters.

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The state of Kansas has a program entitled the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) that distributes free USDA commodity food to low-income households throughout Kansas five to six times per year through participating organizations.

A list of these organizations can be found at the following link: http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/USDA-Commodity-Programs/Emergency-Food-Assistance-Program-(TEFAP).aspx

Additional Resources for both Federal and Local Food Assistance Programs are:
Food Resource and Action Center  frac.org  
Kansas Action for Children  kac.org  
Feeding America  feedingamerica.org

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Housing Density

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the housing industry represents more than a quarter of our nation’s total investment dollars and about 5% of our total economy. Housing starts, or the construction of new homes or apartment buildings is a critical measure of how our economy is doing. It is tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau as part of the Departments of Commerce and Housing and Urban Development.

Their monthly report entitled “The New Residential Construction Report” provides national and regional data on the number of new housing units authorized by building permits; authorized, but not started; started; under construction; and completed. If housing starts are up, it is a leading indicator that the economy is growing as people moving into new homes and apartments tend to purchase more durable goods.

Shelter is not only one of the three most basic human needs, but finding safe and affordable housing is a fundamental right that every human must have.

A lack of stable housing can have a devastating effect on the economy and research has shown that it can create a cascade of adverse outcomes that can have lasting effects on those impacted by it.

Each square mile in Community Action’s 20-county direct service area has an estimated average of just 20 homes, while Kansas has an average of 16 homes per square mile. This figure represents the area’s “housing density.” The following table shows the U.S. Census Bureau’s estimates of 2018 housing density per county and the percentage of change in density between 2010 and 2018.

Source: [US Census Bureau](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2018_PEPANNU&prodType=table)

Since 2010, Kansas saw an overall increase in residential housing density of about 3.9%, while the Community Action Service Area housing density increased by 3.1%.

The service area counties with the highest rate of increase for housing density were Riley (11%), Geary (6%), Leavenworth & McPherson (each 5%). The services area counties that saw decline in the housing density rate since 2010 were Lincoln, Russell, Cloud, Brown, and Atchison, each decreasing at a rate of about -1%.85

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Cost & Affordability

According to the American Community Survey, Kansas had an estimated total of 376,502 renter households in 2017, meaning 33.6% of households are renter households. HUD defines a cost-burdened renter household as one that pays 30% or more on gross rent. In 2017, 49.6% of renter households in Kansas were cost-burdened housing. The following chart details the 2017 rate of cost-burdened households in the Community Action Service Area by HH Income in dollars.86

![Cost Burden Housing Rates by HH Income](chart.png)

Source: US Census Bureau

87,835 renter households in the Community Action Service Area earn less than $50,000 in annual wages (slightly under 200% of the Federal Poverty Line for a family of four). Of those households, nearly half (47.8%) were in cost-burdened housing. The chart below details the percentage of households in the Community Action service area under $50,000 annual income in cost-burdened housing by county.

In Kansas the median rent paid among all renter households and housing types and sizes in Kansas was $801 (an increase of $67 per month or $804 per year since 2012).\(^7\) After paying their rent many low-income families are unable to pay for such necessities as food, childcare, healthcare, or transportation. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, Kansans would need to earn $15.92/hr or work 88-hour weeks at minimum wage to afford a 2-bedroom rental.\(^8\)

**Overcrowding & Availability**

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines overcrowding as most often measured by persons per room.\(^9\) Families that live in crowded conditions are at risk for increases in stress, poorer hygiene, higher rates of transmitted diseases, and home safety issues. Children are frequently linked to the effects of overcrowding, as numerous studies indicate a correlation between household overcrowding and physical and mental development of children.\(^{10}\)

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Per the latest population estimates, 23,645 households in Kansas are considered overcrowded, and of those 61% are renter occupied, while in our service area, 71% are renter occupied. Racial minority households in the state are disproportionately subject to overcrowding, with the highest rates of overcrowding being seen in Hispanic households (7 times more likely to be overcrowded than non-Hispanic whites), Asian households (5 times more likely), and African Americans (3 times more likely).

Of the estimated 1,259,647 housing units in Kansas in 2017, 89.1% were occupied.91

Conditions & Utilities

In 2017, 66% of households in Kansas depended on utility gas for heating fuel, 23.8% depended on electricity, 7.6% relied on bottled, tank, or liquified petroleum gas, 1.7% utilized wood, 0.1% utilized fuel from oil or kerosene, less than 0.1% utilized solar energy, 0.4% used an alternative fuel source, and 0.3% or about 3,465 households were without a fuel source. Additionally 4,487 homes were reported lacking complete plumbing facilities. 11,219 homes were reported lacking complete kitchen facilities, and 30,292 homes reported being without access to phone service.92

Homelessness

According to The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 3.5 million Americans find themselves homeless, either sleeping in shelters, transitional housing or public places that are not intended for human habitation.93 In order to track the number of people who are homeless, HUD conducts an annual Point-in-Time count to determine how many Americans are sheltered in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night.94 Every other year, another count is conducted to determine the number of unsheltered individuals.

The US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) is an independent federal agency of the US government, whose mission is to lead implementing strategies on preventing homelessness. The USICH reports that current 2,216 Kansans experience homelessness on any given day, and of that population, roughly 10%, 217, were family households, 8.7% (195) are veterans, and 13.5% (300) are individuals who experience ongoing chronic homelessness. Trend data of the homeless population in Kansas shows that although overall counts of homelessness in Kansas

has decreased in more recent years, the state’s approach to addressing homelessness have been minor over time.\textsuperscript{95}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Kansas_Homeless_Population_2010-2018.png}
\caption{Kansas Homeless Population 2010-2018}
\end{figure}

Source: \textit{US Interagency Council on Homelessness}

Kansas and the US as a whole have seen total rates of homeless decreased since 2015, but the number of unsheltered homeless individuals (those without access to Transitional housing or Emergency shelter) has risen. In the US overall, unsheltered homelessness has gone up 12.2\% since 2015, and in Kansas it’s increased by 4.2\%.\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{table}[h]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & State & Total Homeless & Sheltered Homeless & Unsheltered Homeless & \% Change \\
\hline
2015 & Kansas & 2,588 & 2,283 & 305 & \\
2018 & Kansas & 2,067 & 1,749 & 318 & -20.1\% \\
2015 & United States & 564,708 & 391,440 & 173,268 & \\
2018 & United States & 552,830 & 358,363 & 194,467 & -2.1\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Kansas Homeless Population 2010-2018}
\end{table}

Source: \textit{HUD Exchange}

Studies have shown that there are two primary reasons for homelessness. Increases in the number people living in poverty and a growing shortage of affordable housing. The National Low-income Housing Coalition estimates that 40 percent of families facing eviction due to foreclosure are renters and 7 million households living on very low-incomes (31 – 50 percent of Area Median Income) are at-risk of foreclosure placing these individuals at increased risk of finding themselves homeless. The shortage in the number of affordable rental solutions have continued to rise and according to the National Low-income Housing Coalition, rent on the units that are available has continued to rise despite the fact that incomes are not keeping up. Federal support for low-income housing has fallen 49\% from 1980 to 2003 and as needs increase the demand is


exceeding the supply. Housing assistance is limited and when it is available, people must often wait for lengthy periods of time before housing becomes available.  

Federal Assistance Programs

| NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING MAJOR TYPES OF FEDERAL RENTAL ASSISTANCE IN KANSAS, 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Housing Choice Vouchers | Public Housing | Section 8 | Supportive Elderly + Disabled | USDA Rural Rent Assistance |
| 11,300 | 8,000 | 10,100 | 1,000 | 3,600 |

Source: Center on Budget & Policy Priorities

In 2018, 74% of federal rental assistance went to help seniors, children, or people with disabilities to afford modest housing.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that 79,800 low-income households pay more than half their income for rent in Kansas and although 35,000 low-income households in Kansas used federal rental assistance to rent affordable housing, the Federal rental assistance programs have not kept pace with growing need. In addition, more federal dollars are applied to homeowner subsidies, which primarily benefits higher-income households, instead of struggling families that cannot afford the median rent for an apartment at $840/month (increased 6% since 2001). It’s estimated that 67 veterans, 510 disabled persons, and 288 seniors were homeless on a given night in Kansas in 2018. That same year, 9,720 children were reported living in unstable housing conditions.

Federal Rental Assistance come from Housing Choice Vouchers, Public housing, Section 8 project-based, elderly and disabled programs and USDA. Subsidized housing, such as Section 8 housing is a tenant based housing program subsidized by the federal government to help low-income households. It is one solution to address the needs of struggling families and those that face homelessness, but data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development

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consistently shows that the number of available subsidized housing is still limited compared to the number of needy Kansans.  

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATION

Climate & Road Conditions

The Kansas climate is intimately tied to agricultural production, energy supply and demand, and travel patterns of Kansas families seeking to access work, education, goods and services. According to the Kansas Department of Agriculture’s 2018 Economic Impact report, over 248,000 jobs in agriculture, food, and food processing represent 12.9% of the state’s workforce and contribute $65.7 billion, or approximately 40.4%, to the Kansas economy. However, if the retail sale of food products is included, then the agriculture sector represents 21.4% of jobs and $78.9 billion.

The High Plains Regional Climate Center describes the Kansas climate as continental and humid, with high variability that produces extreme weather such as severe storms and tornadoes, snow and ice, and even periods of droughts and flooding. Extreme weather causes variability in crop yields and farm income by altering the start or end of the growing season and impacts on pests and crop diseases. In 2017, the USDA declared agricultural disasters due to drought and excessive rainfall in 43 counties. Kansas Department of Transportation reported in 2017 that costs for repair and reconstruction of existing roads totaled $2.3 billion, and the cost maintaining roads in the winter was over $14.5 million.

The windy climate in Kansas has led to an increase in wind energy production over the last two decades. Currently, Kansas leads the nation with having the highest percentage, 36.4%, of statewide energy production come from wind energy according to the 2018 Wind Technologies Market Report. The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy reports that conditions in western Kansas are suited for wind turbine use and four post-secondary education centers (University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Colby Community College and Cloud County Community College) currently have training programs for wind energy technologies. Additionally, Kansas has a total of two wind manufacturing facilities in Wichita and Hutchinson, with wind farms located throughout the western area of the state.

100 S.D. Attri et al. (eds.), Challenges and Opportunities in Agrometeorology, DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-19360-6_30,
102 Kansas Department of Transportation, Quick Facts compiled December 2018, retrieved from https://www.ksdot.org/Assets/wwwksdotorg/pdf/QuickFacts.pdf
Transportation

Transportation is critical to helping people gain access to jobs, nutritious food, affordable goods and services, healthcare, and education. Upward mobility and economic progress are directly linked to the ability of people to get around and to do it affordably. In a 2015 Harvard study, professors Raj Chetty and Nathaniel Hendren, found that long commute times was the single most important barrier to moving up the ladder and escaping poverty. Hendren stated that the impact of transportation on social mobility is stronger than that between mobility and several other factors, like crime, elementary-school test scores or the percentage of two-parent families in a community. Improvements in the nation’s infrastructure and public transportation are two important means of helping people escape poverty and improve their opportunities. 105

In the United States, getting to work usually means driving a vehicle, carpooling, using public transportation or using some other means of transportation such as a taxi, bicycling, or walking. Data from the 2010-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates showed that 86% of the estimated 148 million workers over age 16 drove to work in a car, truck, or van and of these only 11% were carpooling. Public transportation was used by 5 percent of the working population and 9 percent of workers used another means to get to work or worked from home. These numbers have changed very little from 2010 estimates.

In Kansas the percentages were similar. The 2010-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates showed that of the 1,414,719 workers, 91% drove to work in a car, truck or van, and approximately 10% of these workers were carpooling. Public transportation was used by less than 1% of the population in our state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means of Transportation to Work for Workers 16 and Over 2017</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Kansas</th>
<th>Community Action Service Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Workers</strong></td>
<td>148,410,033</td>
<td>1,414,719</td>
<td>287,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Car, truck, or van -- drove alone</strong></td>
<td>76.45%</td>
<td>82.37%</td>
<td>81.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Car, truck, or van -- carpooled</strong></td>
<td>9.15%</td>
<td>9.04%</td>
<td>9.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public transportation (excluding taxicab)</strong></td>
<td>5.13%</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Census 2010-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

The Community Action Service Area showed percentages similar to the state. Approximately 90% of those working used a car, truck or van and 10% of these were carpooling.

Public Transportation

Public transportation was used by less than 1% of our total population. However, for those workers living in poverty and earning less than $25,000 per year, the percentages are much different due to the great need for public transportation among low-income wage earners. In the United States in 2017, approximately 39% of worker’s 16 and older earning less than $25,000 per year depended on public transportation to get to work. In Kansas, this figure is much greater with an estimated 65% using public transportation.


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transportation services. In Community Action’s service area, the percentage of workers 16 and older earning less than $25,000 per year is 51.5%.

In 2015, the USDA published a survey of how American’s acquire food for their homes and found that food-insecure households were less likely than other households to drive their own car to the grocery store and were more likely to rely on others or on public transportation to acquire food. Across the United States, 21% of families receiving SNAP benefits were the most likely to depend on others or on public transportation when shopping for food. According to the 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, there were approximately 86,000 households in Kansas receiving SNAP, or 7.7% of Kansas households.

Internet & Communication Technology Access

As communication and smart technologies advance, the ways people conduct business, seek employment, shop, trade, educate, socialize, and share information evolves.

In 2017, the Federal Communication Commissions estimated 68.9% of the residents in the Community Action service area had access to reliable broadband internet service (Fixed High-Speed Connection over 200 kbps). Service area counties with the highest rates of internet accessibility included Riley (89%) and Geary Counties (82%), while the lowest rates of accessibility were reported in Ellsworth (54%) and Doniphan (56%). Overall accessibility and utilization of internet has continued to escalate over the years with 2019 Pew research identifying 73% of Adults in the US having access to internet at home.

Source: Pew Research Center.

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While the majority of Americans do have access to the internet today, the lowest rates of internet adoption are amongst citizens in rural areas, the elderly, individuals with less than a high school degree, and low-income households.

According to 2019 Pew Research, 63% of households in rural areas have access to broadband internet, while 79% of Urban households in the US report the same. While the technology gap between Rural and Urban individuals has diminished in regards to devices such as televisions, computers, and tablets, rural residents are far less likely to own or have access to devices or services that enable online functionality. Only 31% of Rural residents report owning multiple internet-compatible devices, while 43% of Urban residents report owning four or more. According to research by the Brookings Institution, the problem of connecting rural communities to fixed broadband services has a negative impact on local economies, as businesses tend to seek out mass-market broadband service opportunities that are more likely to already exist in Urban areas. Unfortunately, the costs for installing and maintaining fixed broadband connections in rural areas is still an affordability issue that private and public funders are working to address and overcome.

Affordability is also a prevalent problem for individuals in low-income households lacking access to reliable internet and modern technologies. In 2018, 82% of adults with wages below $30,000 reported using the internet, while 93% of individuals above the $30,000 threshold reported such utilization. Low-income adults also report being less likely to own a smart phone (71% compared to 85% of those above $30,0000 wages), owning a computer (54% compared to 83%), having broadband internet at home (56% compared to 81%), or owning a tablet or other smart device (36% compared to 55%).

Despite this disparity, lower-income Americans are still dependent on technology for key functions of modern living, such as seeking employment, and engaging in professional and educational activities. Because of this, more lower-income persons are dependent on smartphones for online tasks that are traditionally designed for larger screens, such as applying for a job, and completing homework, this puts lower-income families at a significant disadvantage when it comes to meeting immediate educational and professional needs.109

Adults 65 years and older are also less likely to utilize internet services according to recent reports, with 73% reporting use of the technology, having the lowest user rate compared to adults age 50-64 with 88% utilization and adults 49 and younger with over 97% utilization of the internet. 27% of adults 65 years and older report never using the internet in their daily life, compared to less than 10% of adults under the age of 65.

Individuals over 65 are less likely to also own a cell phone or smart device. According to Pew data, 91% of individuals 65 and older own a cellphone (compared to an average 98% of younger age groups) and 53% report owning a smart phone or other smart device (89% average reported in younger age groups).\(^{110}\)

LOCAL STRENGTHS & SUPPORTS

Topeka and Shawnee County residents, businesses, and government entities are committed to growing, improving, and sustaining the many strengths offered in our community. Highlights of the area’s strengths, as noted by the Greater Topeka Partnership, include:

AFFORDABILITY
Topeka’s overall cost of living index is 91.7, more than 10 percent below the national urban area average, particularly in the housing market which is 83.8.

INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL
There are 60,000 university students within a 60-mile radius of Topeka. With Topeka’s own Washburn University flanked by Kansas University to the east and Kansas State University to the west Topeka draws young talent to make up a diverse and highly skilled workforce. Washburn Institute of Technology provides specialized training for the manufacturers and businesses in the area. Additionally, Washburn Institute of Technology has just opened an east-Topeka campus, bringing affordable and needed training opportunities close to Community Action’s Early Head Start and Head Start center.

HEALTH CARE
As the center for health care in northeast Kansas, our two general hospitals and five specialized hospitals provide highly ranked and innovative medical care and services.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT
Entrepreneurs find acceptance and encouragement through programs sponsored by GO Topeka’s Entrepreneurial and Minority Women Business Development program and Washburn University’s School of Business. Specialized programs offer training and consultation for new and existing entrepreneurs.

CULTURAL LIFE
The arts are alive and well in Topeka with over 20 galleries, a myriad of performing and visual artists showcasing their work during First Friday Art Walk events, and the NOTO Arts District that offers studio space and display opportunities in a collaborative environment.

YOUNG TALENT
Bright and energetic young professionals find a community ready to welcome their talents and involvement. The Forge program through the Topeka Chamber is designed just for young professionals and offers educational, social, networking and philanthropic activities.

RESEARCH
Topeka is right in the middle of a bioscience corridor second to none in the nation. With life and animal science research happening right here in Topeka, coupled with assets from our neighboring communities we visualize ever-growing research opportunities for individuals and companies alike.
The Capital District Project to revitalize downtown is more than just a fresh face on buildings and infrastructure. It’s an attitude that downtown is the place to be for events, parades, gatherings, meals and living. With over 30,000 people working in the downtown area daily, there’s opportunity for new businesses, retail, restaurants, events and much more.

BUSINESS INCENTIVES
GO Topeka, the City of Topeka and Shawnee County partner with the State of Kansas to offer robust incentives for businesses locating or expanding in Topeka and Shawnee County.

LIVABILITY
Just last year, Kiplinger Finance Magazine designated Topeka one of the top ten cities for the next decade. Neighborhoods, schools, civic and cultural activities, economic incentives and a WE CAN DO THAT attitude combine to make Topeka one of the best small metros in the United States. 111