

Southeast Kansas Regional Assessment

A Collaborative effort of
SEK-CAP, Inc. and Project 17



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Executive Summary

Southeast Kansans are working to improve our economy and increase our quality of life. These changes will only occur when regional leaders come together, engage unusual voices, and work through transformative changes. The following are, perhaps, the most critical activities to support and encourage those positive changes:

- Becoming and presenting ourselves as an united region, culturally and economically.
- Increasing the effectiveness of regional communication, including:
 - Among local and regional businesses.
 - Across media platforms.
 - Coordination of and cross-promotion of events and attractions.
 - Promoting local and regional expertise.
 - Increasing awareness of local employment opportunities.
- Deepening collaboration between school districts, institutions of higher education, and industry.
- Changing the narrative of the region to one of “innovation and entrepreneurship,” rather than “poverty and loss.”
- Expanding general public transportation options, targeting employment transit.
- Expanding access to safe and affordable housing through increased coordination of resources and non-traditional development strategies.

These findings came from a year-long study conducted by the Southeast Kansas Community Action Program, in partnership with Project 17, wherein both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed. The topics of greatest concern to those who participated in this study include the following:

- **Housing:** The region has a need for the development of adequate, affordable housing, across income spectrums.
- **Employment and Workforce Readiness:** The region needs to produce graduates who are ready and able to enter the workforce, including knowledge of technical and trade skills as well as soft skills. Early Childhood Education and affordable childcare needs to be available to working parents .
- **Regional Communication and Coordination:** The municipalities, businesses, and other organizations within the region need to promote one another as well as coordinate initiatives, events, and goals.
- **Infrastructure:** High speed internet access is critical to the region’s future; immediate regional collaboration and cooperation is necessary to realize this goal.
- **Health:** Access to a living wage should be available to employees in the region. Access to affordable health insurance should be available to all residents. Efforts to increase the availability and affordability of healthy food options as well as active movement opportunities.

Background and Methodology

SEK-CAP is a private non-profit Community Action Agency serving twelve counties in Southeast Kansas. Project 17 is an economic development initiative embracing a network-based approach to

improving outcomes and prosperity in seventeen counties in Southeast Kansas. SEK-CAP and Project 17 have partnered to conduct this community needs assessment, collaborating on survey instruments, focus groups, interviews, and network weaving. The result is an assessment that not only meets the community action mandate, but also reflects the emerging collaborative nature of the region.

Information from and about the following counties is included in this report: Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Crawford, Elk, Franklin, Greenwood, Labette, Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson, and Woodson.

Community Surveys

SEK-CAP's staff worked closely with Dr. Chris Smith, Director of Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Johns Hopkins Kennedy Krieger Institute, to design an online data collection tool, which was distributed throughout the region. Methods of distribution included email, websites, social media, public service announcements, newspapers, radio, television, and word of mouth.

The survey was designed to gauge the level of importance respondents place on topics of interest—topics that have surfaced through the initial Project 17 assessment, regional Health Department assessments, past SEK-CAP Community Assessments, and information gleaned at a variety of strategic planning meetings throughout the region.

County Commission Meetings

After assembling the data from the online surveys, SEK-CAP's staff visited each of the seventeen county commissions, explained the collaborative regional assessment, presented them with summaries of the data findings from the surveys, and solicited their feedback and input. The goal of these meetings was to not only keep the commissioners up to date on SEK-CAP and Project 17 activities, but also to gain their insight into the opportunities and needs they perceive their counties to possess.

County Coalitions

Within ten of the seventeen counties included in this report, coalitions of social and community service organizations gather on a regular basis to share information on programs, coordinate resources, plan activities and initiatives, and engage the community on a broader level. These coalitions are comprised of individuals who are front line service workers, directors, and executives, and possess a rich understanding of the needs within their communities. The table on the following page outlines the meeting schedules for each of these County Coalitions.

Coalition	Meeting Date	Meeting Time	Meeting Location
Allen County	1 st Tuesday	12:00 p.m.	Iola Pizza Hut
Cherokee County	1 st Wednesday	10:00 a.m.	Columbus CLASS LTD Office
Crawford County	1 st Tuesday	10:00 a.m.	Pittsburg District Court Building
Elk/Chautauqua Counties	2 nd Friday (alternates between Howard and Sedan)	12:00 p.m.	Howard: School Board Office Sedan: Buck’s BBQ Restaurant
Labette County	4 th Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Parsons DCF Office
Linn County	2 nd Thursday	1:30 p.m.	Mound City Courthouse Annex
Montgomery County	10:00 a.m. (alternates between Independence and Coffeyville)	10:00 a.m.	Coffeyville: 1601 W. 4th Independence: 410 Peter Pan Road
Neosho County	3 rd Wednesday	12:00 p.m.	Chanute Neosho Community College
Wilson County	3 rd Friday	9:00 a.m.	Fredonia School Board Office
Woodson County	1 st Friday	1:00 p.m.	Yates Center School Board Office

Table 1 - County Coalition Meetings Schedule

SEK-CAP staff secured time on the agenda of each of these coalitions, introduced the purpose of this data gathering, offered introduction of SEK-CAP and Project 17 for those whom had not yet been engaged, and asked the participants to discuss the areas of greatest concern within their communities, as well as what programs and opportunities exist that are realistically addressing these issues.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Based on the feedback from the surveys, County Commission meetings, and county coalition meetings, SEK-CAP staff convened non-formal individual interviews and focus groups within each county.

For example, SEK-CAP staff attended the November meeting of the region’s Health Services Advisory Group, a collection of healthcare professionals convened by the Director of Early Childhood Services to inform the health programming in Head Start and Early Head Start services. Members of this committee include experts from Greenbush, Cherokee, Crawford, and Labette County Health Departments, Kansas State University Extension, Crawford County Mental Health Department, Live Well Crawford County, Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas, and the KU Lifespan Institute. They provided insight and information about what health challenges their communities are facing and what interventions have been most successful.

Data Mining

SEK-CAP’s staff used several credible online data tools to access data related to economic well-being and prosperity. This data mining included all seventeen counties and ranged in topic areas from income, age, housing, transportation, education, nutrition, and healthcare. The data tables are available by request.

Demographics

Southeast Kansas is a rather homogenous region; primarily white and typically on the lower end of the income spectrum. Of course, each county has demographic variations; the following is presented to offer a snapshot of the region.

Total Population

The total population within the report area is 271,774 people, according to 2013 census data. During the thirteen-year period, from 2000-2013, the total population estimates for the report area declined by -1.46% from 275,788¹.

	Total Population, 2013 ACS	Total Population, 2000 Census	Change from 2000-2013 Census/ACS	Percent Change from 2000-2013 Census/ACS
Report Area	271,774	275,788	-4,014	-1.46%
Allen	13,318	14,385	-1,067	-7.42%
Anderson	8,021	8,110	-89	-1.1%
Bourbon	15,004	15,379	-375	-2.44%
Chautauqua	3,614	4,359	-745	-17.09%
Cherokee	21,361	22,605	-1,244	-5.5%
Coffey	8,516	8,865	-349	-3.94%
Crawford	39,182	38,242	940	2.46%
Elk	2,782	3,261	-479	-14.69%
Franklin	25,870	24,784	1,086	4.38%
Greenwood	6,582	7,673	-1,091	-14.22%
Labette	21,369	22,835	-1,466	-6.42%
Linn	9,580	9,570	10	0.1%
Miami	32,682	28,351	4,331	15.28%
Montgomery	34,869	36,252	-1,383	-3.81%
Neosho	16,477	16,997	-520	-3.06%
Wilson	9,269	10,332	-1,063	-10.29%
Woodson	3,278	3,788	-510	-13.46%
Kansas	2,868,107	2,688,418	179,689	6.68%

Table 2 - Total Population

Some counties saw a population loss at a much greater rate than others. For instance, Chautauqua County lost population at a rate of 17.9%, the highest in the region. Only four counties saw an increase in their population, documented in the following table.

	Percent Change from 2000- 2013 Census/ACS
Crawford	2.46%
Franklin	4.38%
Linn	0.1%
Miami	15.28%

Table 3 - Population Growth

¹ Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013

Crawford County is home to Pittsburg Kansas and Pittsburg State University; this micropolitan area draws new residents due to the university as well as the presence of healthcare and other services. Franklin, Linn, and Miami counties have four-lane highway or interstate access to larger metropolitan areas, making them an attractive location for those who work in the city but prefer to live in a rural setting.

Education

In terms of education, Southeast Kansans are similar to other Kansans in the rate in which they do not obtain a high school diploma; however, these rates are lower than the national average.

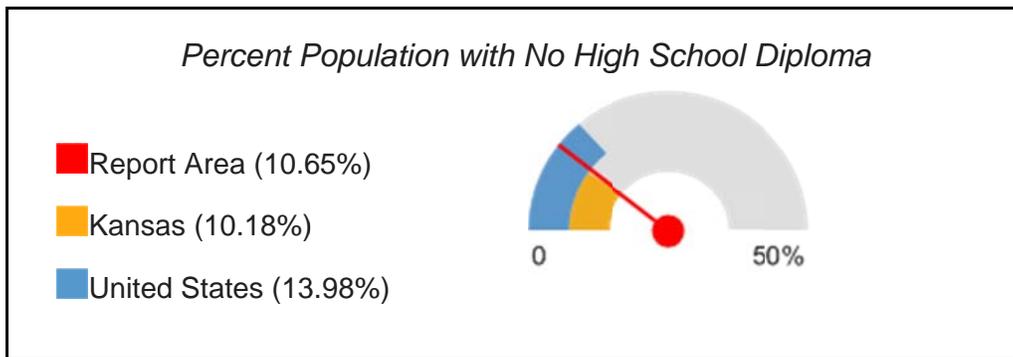


Figure 1 - Percent Population with no High School Diploma

When looking at higher levels of educational attainment, the region is slightly above the Kansas and national average in terms of those who only obtain a high school diploma, obtain some college, and obtain an associate's degree. The education levels drop, however, when looking at bachelor's and graduate degrees. The table on the following page documents the percentage at which the region, the state, and the nation obtain different levels of education.

	Percent No High School Diploma	Percent High School Only	Percent Some College	Percent Associates Degree	Percent Bachelor's Degree	Percent Graduate or Professional Degree
Report Area	10.65	33.63	26.25	9.69	13.27	6.51
Kansas	10.18	27.5	24.5	7.6	19.6	10.6
United States	13.98	28.1	21.3	7.8	18.1	10.8

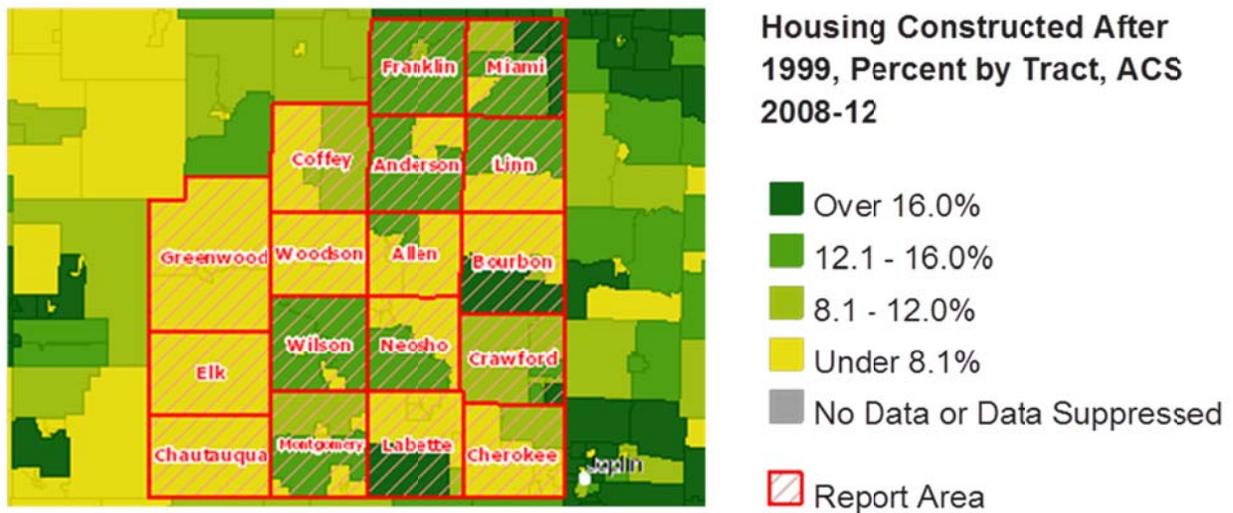
Table 4 - Educational Attainment

Areas of Greatest Need

The following topics, arranged in the order of most prevalent to least, rose to the forefront of surveys, focus groups, and discussions, time and again, and therefore stand out as the areas of greatest need within the region: Housing, Employment and Workforce, Regional Communication and Coordination, Infrastructure, and Health.

Housing

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates 81,264 homeowners lived in the report area in 2000, and 74.03% of the homes in the region were owner occupied during 2008 - 2012. The mean age of the houses in the region is 51.88 years, with the county high being 65 and the county low 34 years². In fact, the concentration of newer housing, built within the past fifteen years, is located primarily in the northernmost counties, near the interstate corridor, where residents have access to metropolitan communities and therefore higher wages. The following map illustrates where the newer housing is concentrated.



Map 1 - Housing Constructed After 1999

Some of the older homes are considered sub-standard, a definition provided by the U.S. Census Bureau for homes that lack hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet, and/or bath or shower

² Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). Source geography: County

facilities. The percentage of occupied housing units without plumbing in the region is greater than the percentage within the remainder of the state. The U.S. Census data shows 716 housing units in the report area were without plumbing in 2000 and 598 housing units in 2012³. The concentration of these sub-standard housing units is in more rural areas.

In addition to older, sub-standard housing, many structures are sitting unoccupied. The U.S. Postal Service provides information quarterly to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on addresses identified as vacant in the previous quarter. During the second quarter of 2014, a total of 6,358 residential addresses were identified as vacant in the report area, a vacancy rate of 4.8%, higher than that of the state and the nation⁴.

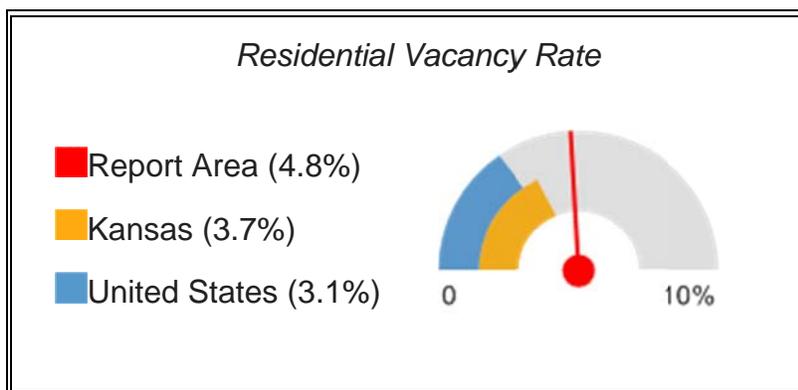
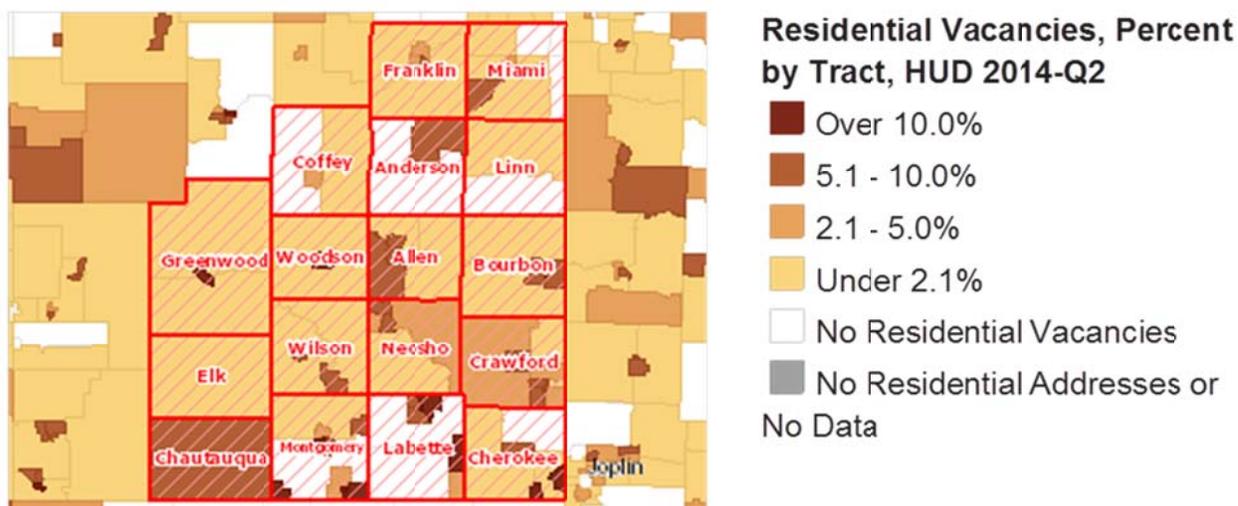


Figure 2 - Residential Vacancy Rate

The highest percentage of vacancy rates appear to be in the lower four counties; the map below illustrates the location of residential vacancies.

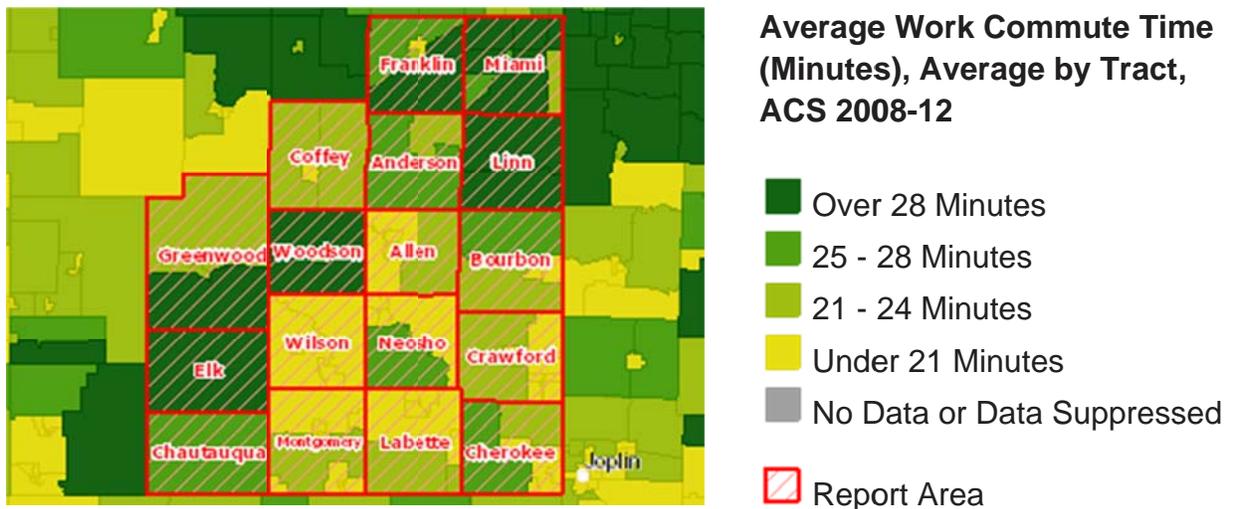


Map 2 - Residential Vacancies

³ Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). Source geography: County

⁴ Data Source: US Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#). Source geography: County

Many respondents in our focus groups and interviews noted that, due to the lack of affordable, adequate housing, many workers drove long distances from work, to reside in locations outside of the report area. The following map illustrates these travel patterns.



Map 3 - Average Work Commute Time

Housing Wage

Yearly, the National Low Income Housing Coalition publishes a report titled *Out Of Reach*, wherein they use standardized Fair Market Rent costs from the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to determine what a renter needs to earn in order to afford housing while not being rent-burdened, which is defined as spending more than 30% of the household income on housing.

According to this report, to rent a three bedroom dwelling that meets the HUD housing quality standards and avoid being rent burdened, a renter in the region would need to earn \$17.42 per hour; the report lists the state average at \$19.76 per hour. However, in reality, the average hourly wage for the region, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is \$16.05. This average includes the anomaly county of Coffey, where the average hourly wage is \$31.35. If we look only at SEK-CAP’s twelve county service area, the average is \$15.11.

Much of the discussion during interviews and focus groups landed on the following topics:

- Respondents identified “housing” as the “primary” issue in Southeast Kansas.
- Respondents were very aware of the overall shortage of appropriate and affordable housing units.

- Respondents expressed a desire to ensure the economic and housing system was not creating dependency, but rather providing living wages that can afford safe, appropriate housing.
- Respondents recognized that housing for every income bracket was needed, including low-income households as well as moderate to moderately-high income households.
- Many respondents expressed concern over the out-migration experienced by border counties; higher level employees choose to commute to more quality housing stock, located out of the report area.

Employment and Workforce Readiness

Overall, the report area experienced an average unemployment rate of 4.6% percent in December 2014, which is slightly higher than the state of Kansas, but still lower than the national rate.

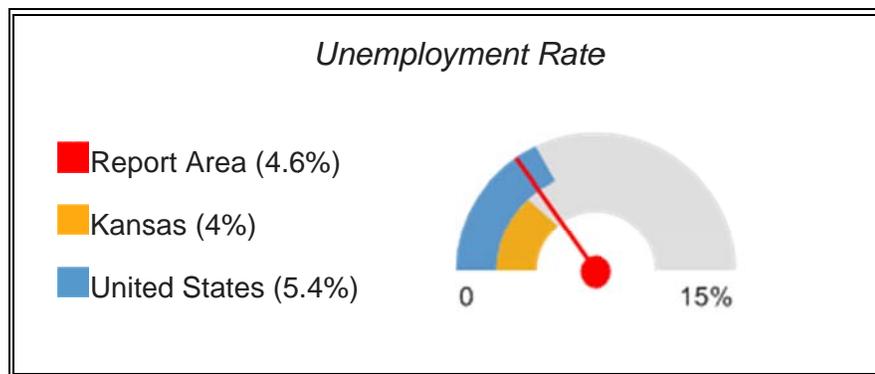


Figure 3 – Unemployment Rate

The highest concentration of unemployment lies in Linn County, where it is between 9.1% and 12.0%. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, unemployment for this five year period fell from 8.18% to 4.6% from December 2010 to December 2014, again remaining above the state average but below the national average. The graph below illustrates how the region follows the

state and national trends, while remaining higher than the state overall.

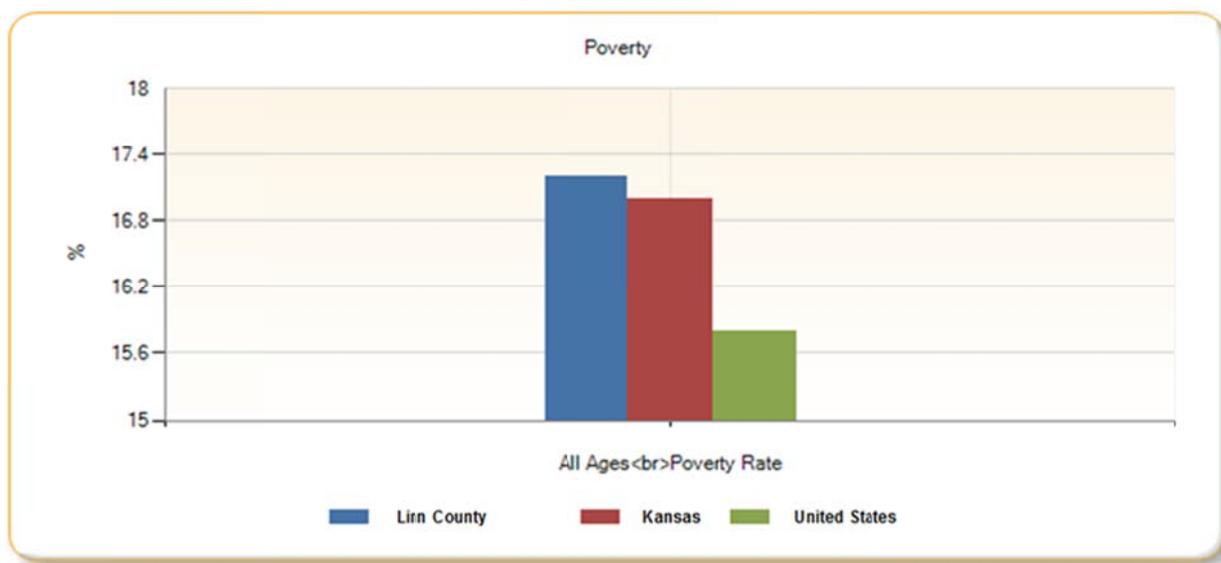


Figure 4 - Thirteen Month Unemployment Rate

Living Wages

For those who are employed, the challenges they face are often related to the low wages available in the region. The US Census Bureau estimates 17.14% of the population, or a total of 45,084 persons are living below the poverty level within the report area, a rate much greater than the state of Kansas (14%) and the United States (15.9%)⁵.

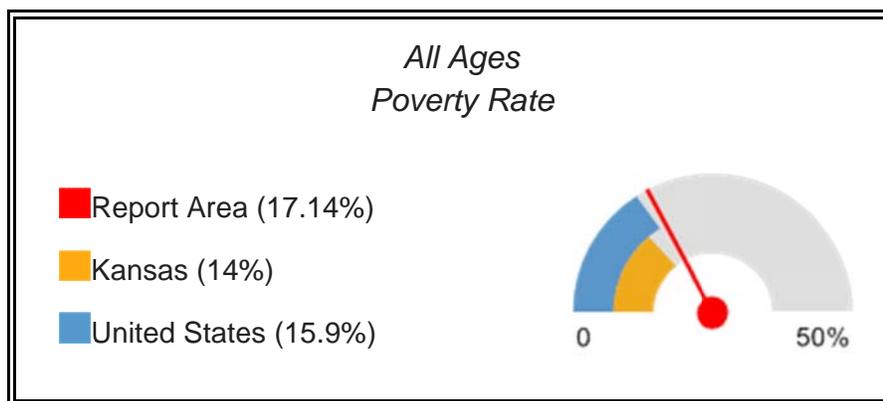


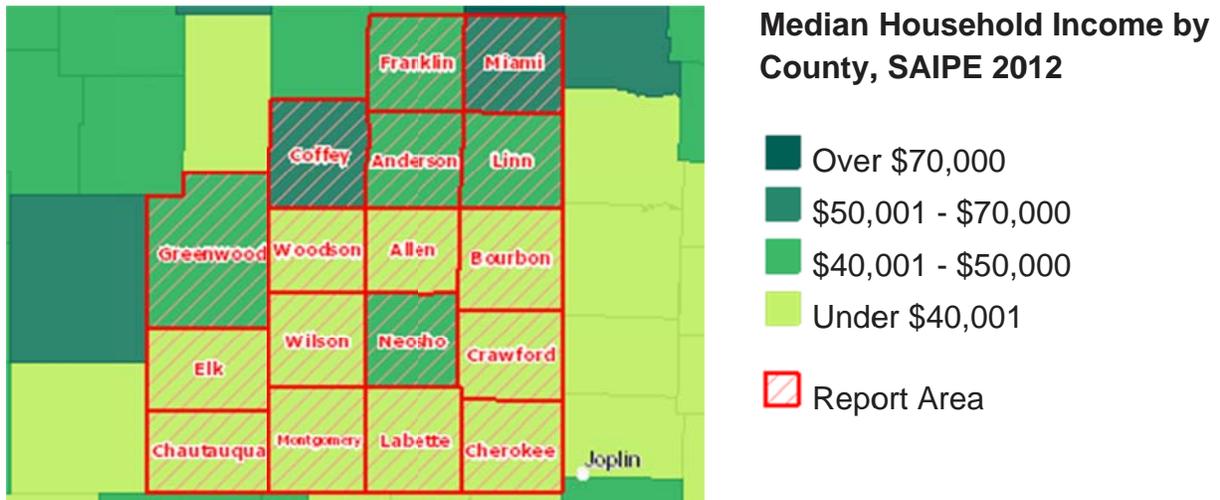
Figure 5 - All Ages Poverty Rate

Some counties in the report area have a higher concentration of poverty than others. Crawford County for instance, which is home to the fastest growing population center in the region, has a poverty rate of 22.3%, compared to Miami County on the far north end of the report area, which has a poverty rate of 9.7%.

⁵ Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013

Only three counties in the report area have a poverty rate lower than the state average, Coffey, Franklin, and Miami; all three of these counties have interstate access to larger metropolitan areas such as Kansas City, Topeka, and Emporia making it possible for residents to commute to more lucrative employment.

The Median Household income in the region is \$41,126; the median is \$37,582 in SEK-CAP’s twelve county service area. The map on the following page illustrates which counties have the higher median income⁶.



Map 4 - Median Household Income by County

The Department of Urban Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology collected, processed, and aggregated data to determine what a living wage would be in every county in America. According to their calculations, two Kansas adults supporting two children should, on average, earn at least \$18.21 per hour. They factor in the following expenses: food, childcare, medical, housing, transportation, and others.

Throughout most of the region, a living wage is \$17.40. The following table outlines the counties where the living wage was calculated to be higher:

	Living Wage
Crawford	\$17.82
Franklin	\$18.10
Linn	\$19.44
Miami	\$19.44

⁶ Data Source: US Census Bureau, [Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates](#).

These four counties appear to be anomalies throughout this report. Again, Crawford County is home to Pittsburg State University, and is a hub for services, healthcare, and shopping. Franklin, Linn, and Miami counties all are transected with four lane divided highways providing them easy access to larger metropolitan areas, and therefore access to higher wage employment.

Transportation

Access to safe, reliable transportation was regularly identified as a need throughout the region, particularly among the more rural communities. These discussions included not only transportation for individuals, to access education, employment, healthcare, goods, and services, but also for industry.

General Public

Within the seventeen county report area, many entities provide general public transportation through Kansas Department of Transportation grants and local funding. The following tables document the entities that are providing KDOT transportation by each county.

Multi-County KDOT Transportation Providers	
SEK-CAP	Bourbon, Crawford, Montgomery, Neosho
Tri-Valley	Allen, Bourbon
Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center	Allen, Anderson, Linn, Neosho, Woodson
Four County Mental health	Chautauqua, Elk, Montgomery, Wilson
Senior Services of Southeast Kansas	Allen, Labette, Montgomery
CLASS Ltd	Crawford, Labette, Montgomery
Tri-Ko	Anderson, Linn, Miami
Via Christi Hospital – Pittsburg	Bourbon, Crawford, Labette

Table 5 - Multi County Transit Providers

Single-County KDOT Transportation Providers	
Allen	Allen County Services to the Elderly
Anderson	Anderson County Council on Aging
Chautauqua	Cowley County Council on Aging
Cherokee	No services available
Coffey	No services available
Crawford	Elm Acres
Elk	Elk County Council on Aging
Franklin	COF Training Services Elizabeth Layton Center Foster Grandparent Program Franklin County Services for the Elderly
Greenwood	Greenwood County Council on Aging
Linn	Foster Grandparents Program Linn County Transportation
Miami	City of Paola/Lakemary Center Community Senior Service Center Elizabeth Layton Center

	Foster Grandparents Program Louisburg Area Senior Citizens Center Paola Association for Church Action Paola Senior Citizens Center
Wilson	Thanks Program

Table 6 - Single County Transit Providers

Workforce and Industry

Southeast Kansas is underserved by four-lane highways, limiting the number and types of industry that would be interested in locating in the region. U.S. Highway 69 from Fort Scott to Pittsburg has always been a two lane highway; however, just this year the state of Kansas announced plans to fund the construction of a four lane system sometime in the foreseeable future. The remainder of Highway 69, from Pittsburg to the border with Oklahoma and connecting to Interstate 44, remain two-lane. The other US highways that transect the region, 54 on the north end of the report area, 169, the north/south connector through the center of the report area, 400, the east/west connector to Wichita, 160 and 166, both of which travel east/west across the bottom of the report area, all remain two lane.

The rail system in Southeast Kansas is fairly robust, and appears to have adequate capacity for the industries located here. The only downfall is the two-lane road system when a four-lane is needed to move freight from rail yards to other locations, which may limit interest in outside entities relocating in the region.

There are a total of fifteen airports in the region, home to over 230 based aircrafts. The airports with the most use are located in Chanute, Coffey County, and Pittsburg.

Early Childhood Education/Childcare

One of the barriers to gaining employment in the region is a family’s inability to access reliable, safe, early childhood education and childcare. Quality, private care can be expensive, and low-income families often find themselves with limited options. Therefore, they turn to subsidized childcare or early childhood education, such as Head Start and Early Head Start or unlicensed care. Even Head Start and Early Head Start, however, still have their limitations in terms of providing childcare to the workforce. Most of the center-based programs are closed during summer, spring break, and winter break; some of the center-based programs are only part day. If a low-income family qualified for these services, it is likely that they would still need additional childcare options in order to work full time.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5 year data, an average of 26.8% of children ages 0-4 lived in a state of poverty throughout the report area; this rate is greater than the national average of 24.7% and the state average of 22.8%. The average poverty rate of children ages 0-4 is 28.5% in SEK-CAP’s twelve county service area.

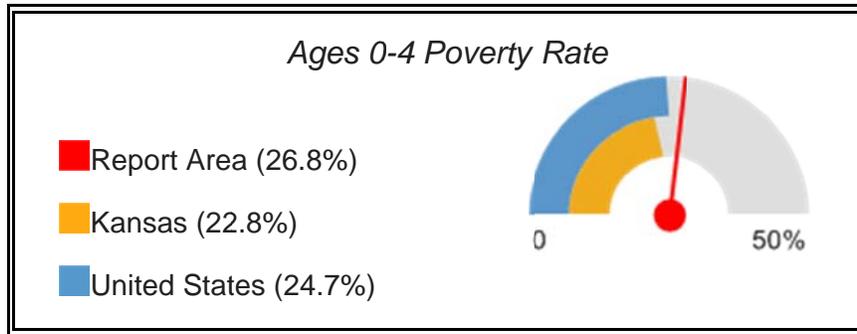


Figure 6 - Ages 0-4 Poverty Rate

The rate of poverty for this age varies based on geography. For example, the highest rate of childhood poverty is in Neosho County, where it reaches 40.8%, and the lowest is in Miami County, where it sits at 11%. Within SEK-CAP’s twelve county service area, Allen County has the lowest child poverty rate at 19.5%.

This means that there are approximately 4,502 children in the report area who are eligible for Early Head Start/Head Start services based on poverty status alone. Within SEK-CAP’s twelve county service area, that equates to 3,525 children. The majority of these children are located in Crawford (639 children) and Neosho (471 children) Counties. The table on the following page documents the number of children, number of children in poverty, and the poverty rate for the entire report area.

	Ages 0-4 Total Population	Ages 0-4 In Poverty	Ages 0-4 Poverty Rate
Report Area	16,776	4,502	26.8
Allen	733	143	19.5
Anderson	640	229	35.8
Bourbon	1,038	334	32.2
Chautauqua	208	55	26.4
Cherokee	1,270	367	28.9
Coffey	471	113	24
Crawford	2,364	639	27
Elk	125	26	20.8
Franklin	1,618	325	20.1
Greenwood	350	91	26
Labette	1,314	374	28.5
Linn	496	134	27
Miami	1,986	219	11
Montgomery	2,242	759	33.9
Neosho	1,155	471	40.8
Wilson	595	176	29.6
Woodson	171	47	27.5
Kansas	199,739	45,533	22.8
United States	19,743,544	4,881,767	24.7

Table 7 - Ages 0-4 Poverty

Racial and Ethnic Composition: The racial and ethnic composition of children ages 0-4 within the service area is predominantly non-Hispanic/Latino and white. The counties with the highest Hispanic/Latino population are documented in the table on the following page.

	Ages 0-4 In Poverty	% reporting Hispanic or Latino	Number reporting Hispanic or Latino
Crawford	639	4.7%	30
Franklin	325	3.7%	12
Labette	374	4.2%	16
Montgomery	759	5.5%	42
Neosho	471	4.4%	21

Table 8 - Counties with Highest Hispanic/Latino Population

The most racially diverse county is Montgomery, where 5.7% of the children ages 0-4 reported their race to be Black, 1.6% reported American Indian, and 1.3% reported some other race. Labette County reported 3.7% of children ages 0-4 to be Black and 1.2% American Indian, Cherokee County reported 5.4% (3 children) to be American Indian, and Bourbon County reported 3% (10 children) to be Black.

Children with Disabilities: US Census Bureau documents how many children under the age of five are reported to have hearing and vision disabilities. According to their data, the counties with the highest incidents of these disabilities are Bourbon, Crawford, Labette, Miami,

Montgomery, and Wilson⁷. SEK-CAP’s Early Head Start and Head Start serves all of these counties except for Miami, which is served by the East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation (ECKAN). The following table documents the total number of children ages 0-4 per county, and the number of children in that age group with hearing and vision disabilities.

	Ages 0-4 Total Population	With Hearing Disability	With Vision Disability
Bourbon	1,038	0	30
Cherokee	1,270	5	0
Coffey	471	0	6
Crawford	2,364	0	22
Elk	125	4	0
Franklin	1,618	5	0
Greenwood	350	0	3
Labette	1,314	18	12
Miami	1,986	32	30
Montgomery	2,242	34	20
Neosho	1,155	8	0
Wilson	595	7	11
Woodson	171	3	2
Totals	14,699	116	136

Table 9 - Ages 0-4: Hearing and Vision Disability

In addition to Hearing and Vision disabilities, our region is experiencing an increase in the number of children who are autistic. Although county level data is not available, Easter Seals reports on the growth of children with autism on a state level. The following table documents the rapid increase of the number of children with autism in the entire state of Kansas from 1999-2000 through 2012-2013⁸:

	1999-2000	2012-2013
Age 3-5	87	344
Age 6-11	424	1,452
Age 12-17	169	1,258
Age 18-21	30	224

Table 10 - Youth with Autism: 1999-2013

⁷ Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey

⁸ Source: Reported by the State of Kansas in accordance with Section 618 of IDEA to U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Program

The following table, provided by the same source, documents the increase in the number of children with disabilities as a whole:

	1999-2000	2012-2013
Age 3-5	7,728	10,850
Age 6-11	25,892	28,490
Age 12-17	24,910	25,146
Age 18-21	2,737	2,883

Table 11 - Youth with Disabilities: 1999-2013

SEK-CAP's Early Childhood Education program also tracks the number of children with disabilities served. The following table outlines the number of children in Early Head Start and Head Start with a disability; however, this data includes all disabilities, not just vision and hearing disabilities⁹.

	Early Head Start	Head Start	Total
Allen	0	8	8
Bourbon	3	12	15
Chautauqua	2	4	6
Cherokee	2	11	13
Crawford	4	21	25
Elk	0	1	1
Labette	12	11	23
Linn	2	1	3
Montgomery	2	16	18
Neosho	2	0	2
Wilson	0	8	8
Woodson	0	2	2
Total	29	95	124

Table 12 - Children with Disabilities Served by Head Start/Early Head Start

⁹ Source: SEK-CAP's enterprise data system; March 4, 2015.

Resources Available: The following table documents the providers within the service area:

Mental Health Providers	Special Education Providers
Crawford County Mental Health	Greenbush Tiny-K (0-3 only)
Four County Mental Health	ANW Special Education Co-op
Labette Mental Health	East Central KS Special Education Co-op
Dr. Charles Krall	Ft. Scott USD 234
Spring River Mental Health	SEK-Special Education Co-op
Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center	Tri-County Special Education Co-op
Mental Health Center of East Central Kansas	Cowley County Special Education Co-op
Elizabeth Layton Center	Lakemary Tiny-K
	East Central Kansas Special Education Co-op
	Anderson County Special Education Co-op
	Flint Hills Special Education Co-op
	Coffey County Special Education Co-op
	Franklin County Early Intervention Tiny-K
	Three Lakes Special Education Co-op
	USD 290

Table 13 - Mental Health and Special Education Providers

Other Childcare Facilities: According to Child Care Centers US, the “foremost destination online for qualified, family-friendly childcare centers across the United States...the largest directory for childcare services in the nation, with over 250,000 childcare centers, home daycare providers, nannies, and babysitters,” there are 52 child care centers in the region, and 315 child care homes¹⁰. On the same website, the following counties are listed as not having any child care options available: Anderson, Chautauqua, Elk, Greenwood, and Woodson. The following table documents the locations of the known child care centers and homes.

	Child Care Centers	Child Care Homes
Allen		22
Bourbon		12
Cherokee	8	22
Crawford	13	59
Coffey		12
Franklin	10	
Labette		35
Linn		14
Miami	11	52
Montgomery	10	43
Neosho		32
Wilson		12

Table 14 - Number of Child Care Providers

¹⁰ Source: Childcarecenter.us/Kansas

Other topics that were discussed in our interviews and focus groups included the following:

Soft Skills that are lacking include:

- Work ethic – showing up on time, working the entire work day, showing initiative
- Addiction free and able to pass drug testing
- Presenting self in a clean and appropriate manner

Hard Skills that are lacking include:

- Hands on-technical training
- Construction trades (plumbing, electrical, finish carpentry)
 - Technology
 - Early childhood
 - Cattle/agriculture industry

Intervention Activity - ACT Certified Work Ready

Entities within Cherokee County are working to embrace the ACT Certified Work Ready program, in cooperation with the Joplin Regional Prosperity Initiative. The goal is to link employers and educators to ensure that graduates have the skills necessary to gain employment locally, regionally, and nationally.

Intervention Activity - Circles Program

Within some of the communities, participants at these coalitions were aware of a new initiative referred to as the Circles Program, or simply Circles. This is a national campaign to end poverty which is largely community based and grassroots focused. In this model, a person or family who is trying to improve their condition acts as the “Circle Leader”; the circle is made up of volunteer community members who are referred to as “Allies,” and provide support and mentorship for the leader. More details can be found at www.circlesusa.org.

Presently, the following communities have a local Circles Chapter:

- Chanute
- Iola
- Pittsburg
- Fort Scott

Regional Communication and Coordination

Many respondents were concerned with the number of local and regional economic development initiatives and organizations; the concern appears to be a lack of information about how the various entities are working together and a lack of information about progress.

Infrastructure

During our data gathering, many respondents were concerned with infrastructure, including the following:

Water: Water supply and quality issues are both regional concerns. Action needs to begin now to preserve water supply for the future to ensure enough water will exist for the region in the future at an affordable price. Aging water infrastructure and other quality issues exist today and must be addressed to insure the health and safety of the region's citizens in the future.

Roads: Maintaining high quality roads is critical to the economic well-being of the region. Additionally, road improvements need to be made across the region, which will provide the ability to move commerce quickly and safely. Safe and high quality roads are important for both businesses and the region's citizens who commute to and from work daily. Finally, all road infrastructure needs to be maintained to allow safe travel and avoid more costly repairs that may be needed later should maintenance not be conducted regularly.

Broadband: Over half of the counties in the region do not have access to high-speed internet, without data caps, at a reliable price. Additionally, many rural citizens have few cost effective options to connect to the internet in their homes. Businesses report they are receiving internet speeds which are not adequately supporting their businesses, and they are paying prices which are considerably higher than what they pay in other areas. The ability for businesses and citizens to obtain fast, reliable, and affordable internet service without data caps is essential to the region's economic success.

Health

The health outcomes of Southeast Kansas residents are some of the lowest in the state. The supply and accessibility of facilities and physicians, the rate of uninsured, financial hardship, transportation barriers, cultural competency, and coverage limitations make it difficult to access preventative care. Rates of morbidity, mortality, and emergency hospitalizations can be reduced if community residents access preventative services such as health screenings, routine tests, and vaccinations.

The American Medical Association classifies "primary care physicians" as any of the following: General Family Medicine MDs and DOs, General Practice MDs and DOs, General Internal Medicine MDs and General Pediatrics MDs. Access to care is measured by the number of primary care physicians per 100,000 population; physicians age 75 and over and physicians practicing sub-specialties within the listed specialties are excluded. This indicator is relevant because a shortage of health professionals contributes to access and health status issues.

The report area has an access rate of 50.65, significantly lower than the state of Kansas at 73.91 and the United States at 74.5, as demonstrated in the illustration below¹¹.

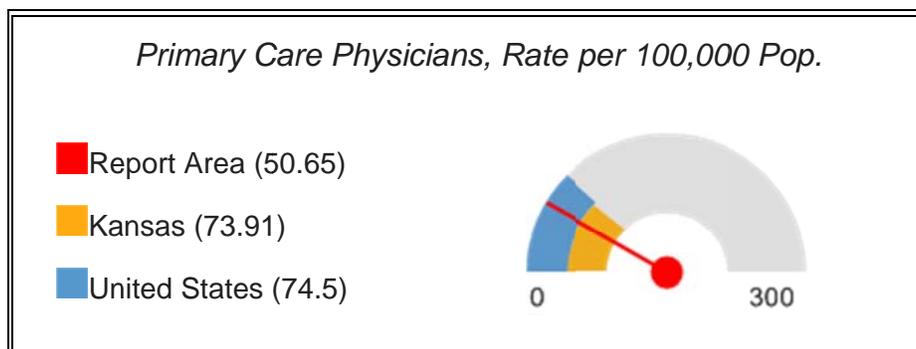
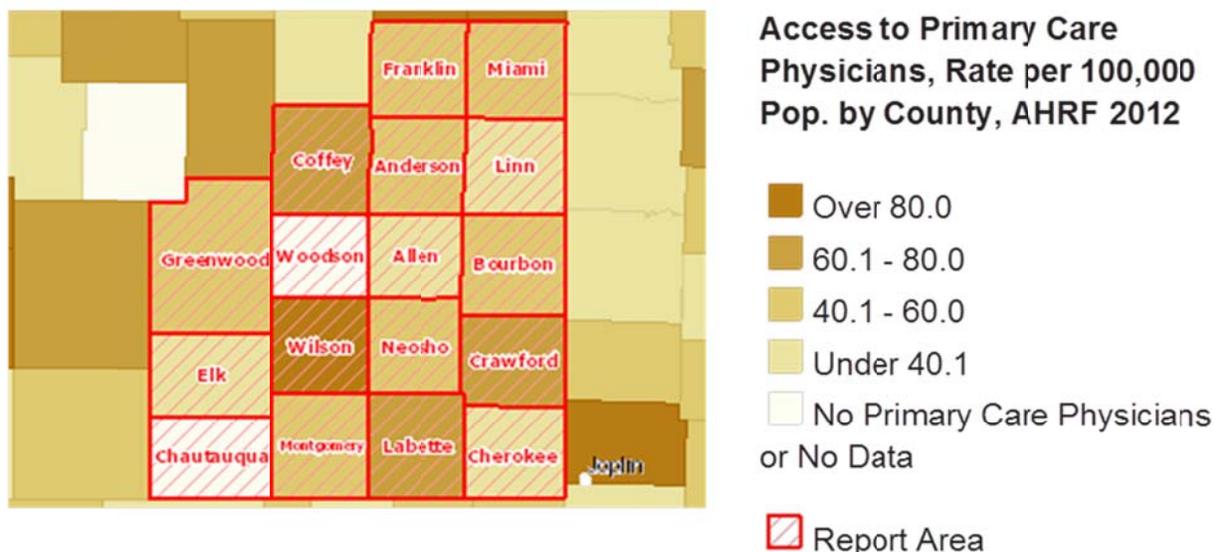


Figure 7 - Primary Care Physicians

Crawford, Coffey, Labette, and Wilson counties have a higher rate of access than others. The following map illustrates how this access plays out across the report area.



Map 5 - Access to Primary Care Physicians

From 2002-2012 the state of Kansas has seen an increase in their healthcare access rates; however, Southeast Kansas has maintained a consistently low rate. The graph on the following page illustrates how this access to primary care physicians has changed over the past ten years (2002-2012).

¹¹ Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, [Area Health Resource File](#).

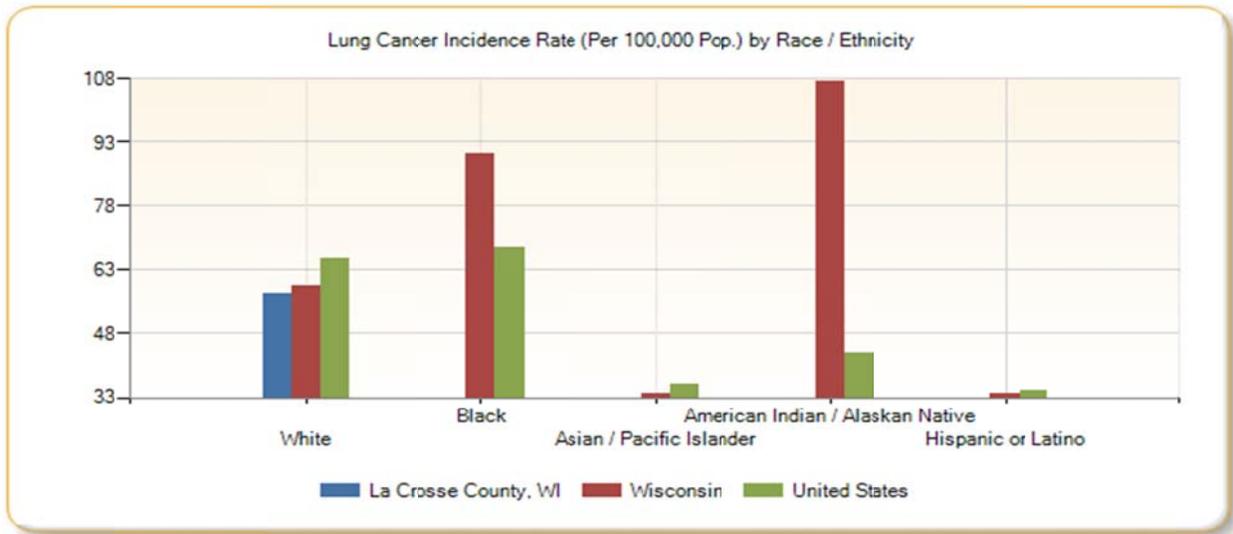
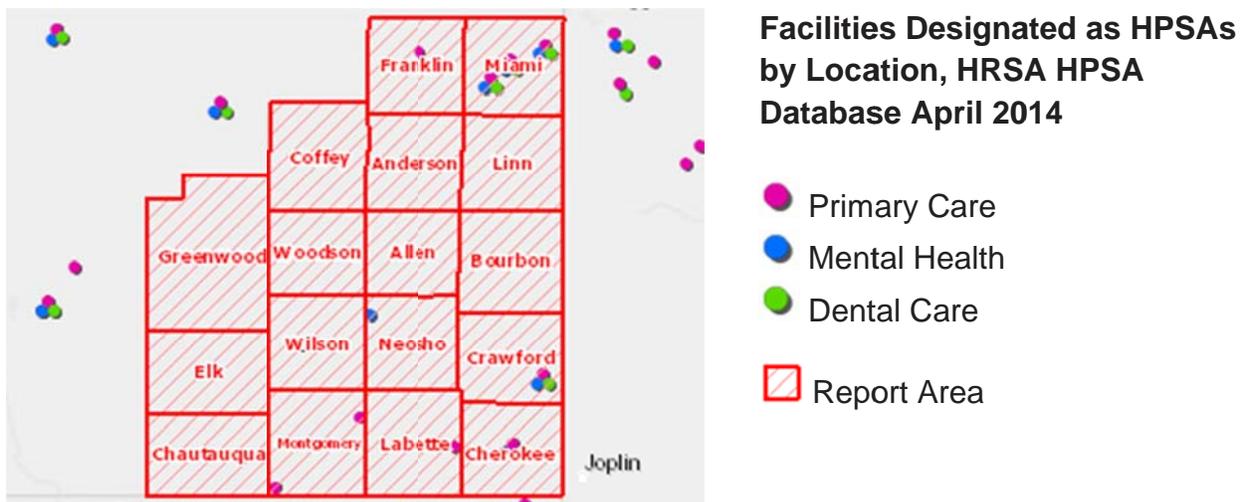


Figure 8 - Access to Primary Care: 2002-2011

There are a total of twenty one Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSAs) facilities within the report area¹². HPSA's are defined as having shortages of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers. This indicator is relevant because a shortage of health professionals contributes to access and health status issues.

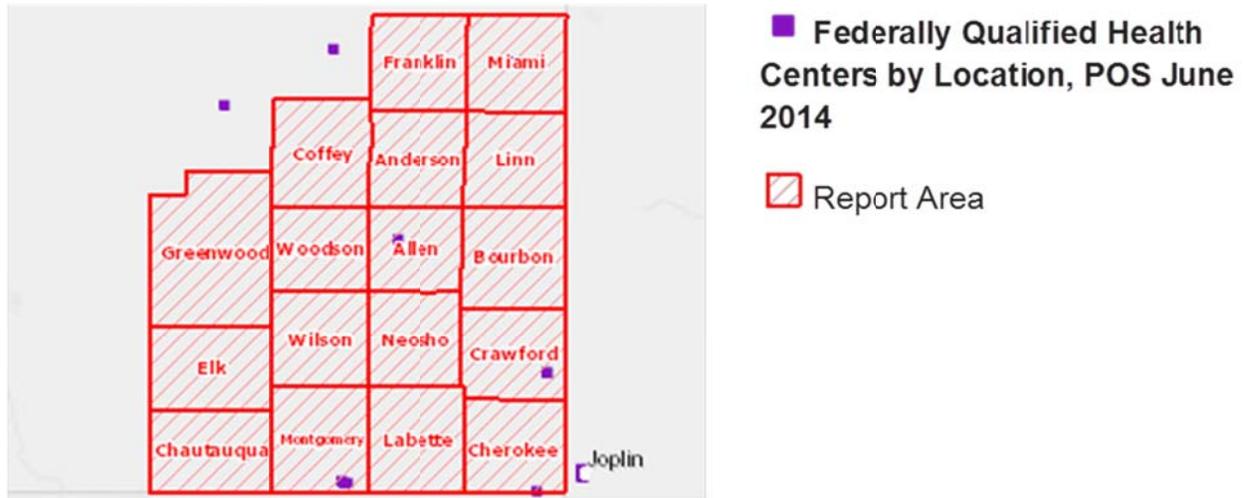
The following map illustrates how these HPSA's are clustered in Crawford and Miami counties, with HPSA shortages clearly scattered across the southernmost counties.



Map 6 - Health Professional Shortage Areas

¹² Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, [Health Professional Shortage Areas](#)

The region is home to eight Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)¹³. This indicator is relevant because FQHC's are community assets that provide health care to vulnerable populations; they receive extra funding from the federal government to promote access to ambulatory care in areas designated as medically underserved. The following map illustrates the location of these facilities throughout the region.



Map 7 - Federally Qualified Health Centers

Dental Care is also central to preventative health care, as oral health impacts overall health and wellness. In the report area, 31.3% of adults aged 18 and older self-report that they have not visited a dentist, dental hygienist, or dental clinic within the past year, a rate higher than the rest of the state. This indicator can also highlight a lack of access to preventive care, a lack of health knowledge, insufficient provider outreach, and/or social and economic barriers preventing utilization of services¹⁴.

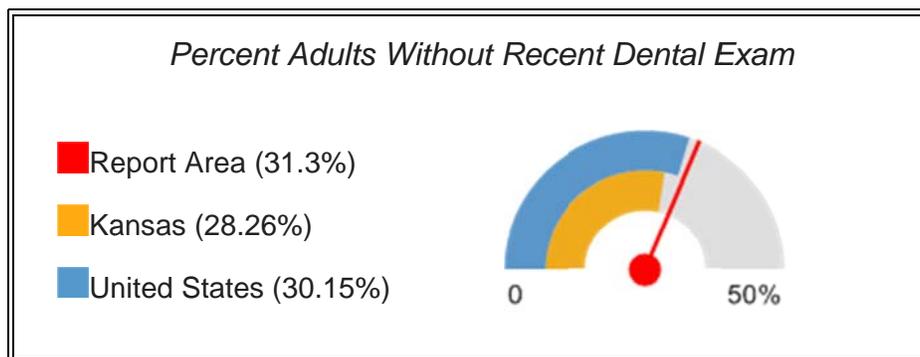
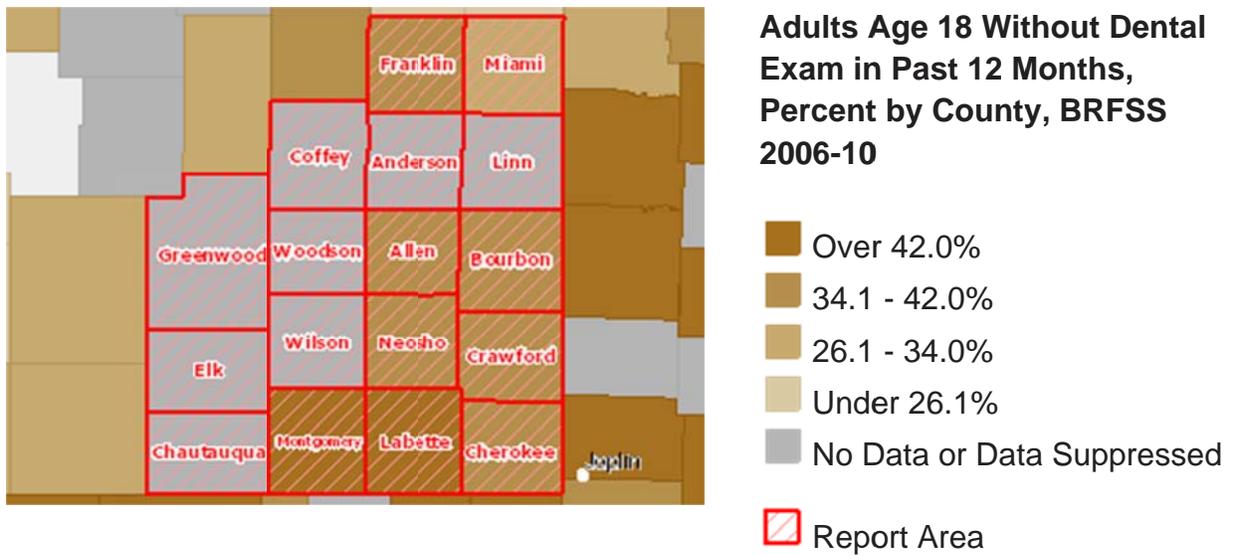


Figure 9 - Percent of Adults Without Recent Dental Exams

¹³ Data Source: US Department of Health & Human Services, Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, [Provider of Services File](#).

¹⁴ Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#).

Moreover, we can look at the following map to determine which counties within the region have a higher rate of adults not accessing care.



Map 8 - Percent of Adults without Dental Exam: 2006-2010

In addition to preventative health and dental care, substance abuse was a major concern of many respondents throughout the report area. The *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, compile data from a wide range of sources and rank counties from best to worst. The southeast corner of the state is always at the bottom of the lists in their research.

The table on the following page reflects some of the data indicators that speak to substance abuse in the region.

	County Health Ranking (out of 98)	Number of drug poisoning deaths 2004-2010	% of driving deaths related to alcohol
Allen	79		42%
Anderson	57		50%
Bourbon	85	15	35%
Chautauqua	95		38%
Cherokee	92	17	35%
Coffey	39		40%
Crawford	77	36	57%
Elk	97		67%
Franklin	47	20	39%
Greenwood	87		14%
Labette	90	18	17%
Linn	82		22%
Miami	24	17	23%
Montgomery	91	35	23%
Neosho	86	10	42%
Wilson	84		25%
Woodson	98		13%

Table 15 – Substance Abuse Indicators

Within the report area, residents have access to the following Substance Abuse Treatment Providers:

- Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center
- Spring River Mental Health and Wellness
- Elizabeth Layton Center
- Labette Center for Mental Health Services
- Community Mental Health Center of Crawford County
- Road to Recovery
- Eagle recovery Services
- Countryside Counseling Center
- Four County Mental Health Center
- Choices Psychological Services
- Therapy Services
- Preferred Family Healthcare

These treatment centers have various levels of care and treatment options; however, only two offer detoxification support and only one has a detoxification in-patient program.

Chronic disease and poor health is another area of major concern among the respondents. On average, 34% of the adults in the report area are obese and 29% report having no leisure time physical activity.

All of these factors combined can lead to a workforce without the physical abilities to gain and maintain quality employment.

Conclusion

As Southeast Kansans work to improve the region's economy and create a more desirable quality of life, they will need to work collaboratively.

These changes will only occur when regional leaders come together, engage unusual voices, and work through transformative changes. The following are, perhaps, the most critical activities to support and encourage those changes:

Uniting as a region, culturally and economically, and presenting ourselves as such.

Southeast Kansas leaders and residents need to work collaboratively to change. Rather than competing for resources, they need to unite to better use the resources available within our own community.

Increase regional communication.

- Among local and regional businesses: Rather than looking outside of Southeast Kansas for resources, business leaders should first seek to engage in commerce locally. Sharing information about business needs and entrepreneurial endeavors can boost the overall economy and create home-grown business opportunities.
- Across media platforms: Communication should occur not only through area newspapers and television stations, but also through radio and online communities. Social media and other online communication methods are inexpensive and reach a broad spectrum of people and industry, not only within the region, but throughout the world.

Coordinate and cross-promote events and attractions.

Southeast Kansas is rich in cultural attractions and events. Better coordination and promotion of these events, coupled with increased communication capacities, can draw more attendees, not only from within the region, but also from without. This will not only increase commerce, but will also create a regional cohesion and pride.

Promote local and regional expertise.

Within regional, state, and national networks, promoting other Southeast Kansans and Southeast Kansas businesses who are excelling in their field, will not only drive outside interest to the region, but will also elevate the local and regional narrative.

Increase awareness of local and regional employment opportunities.

Through increased communication and diversified communication media, local employment opportunities will be better marketed. Introducing local and regional employment opportunities to the regions youth will provide them opportunity to establish goals for local long term employment.

Deepen collaboration between school districts, institutions of higher education, and industry.

Through collaboration and training, education systems and industry can create systems wherein students are better prepared to enter the local and regional workforce upon graduation.

Change the narrative of the region to one of “innovation and entrepreneurship,” rather than “poverty and loss.”

Southeast Kansas is known throughout the state for the poor economic and social outcomes we have experienced in the past. Moving forward, through these collaborations and communications, residents and regional leaders can focus on the positive initiatives and progress currently underway, as well as entrepreneurial plans for the future; this change in the story we tell about ourselves will increase regional pride and ultimately change the story those outside the region tell about Southeast Kansas.

Expand General Public Transportation options, targeting employment transit.

Businesses, educational institutions, and municipalities can collaborate to generate the local match funding that KDOT requires its transportation providers to secure. Through this collaboration, transit service can be not only targeted to the specific needs of local communities, but also designed to serve the region.

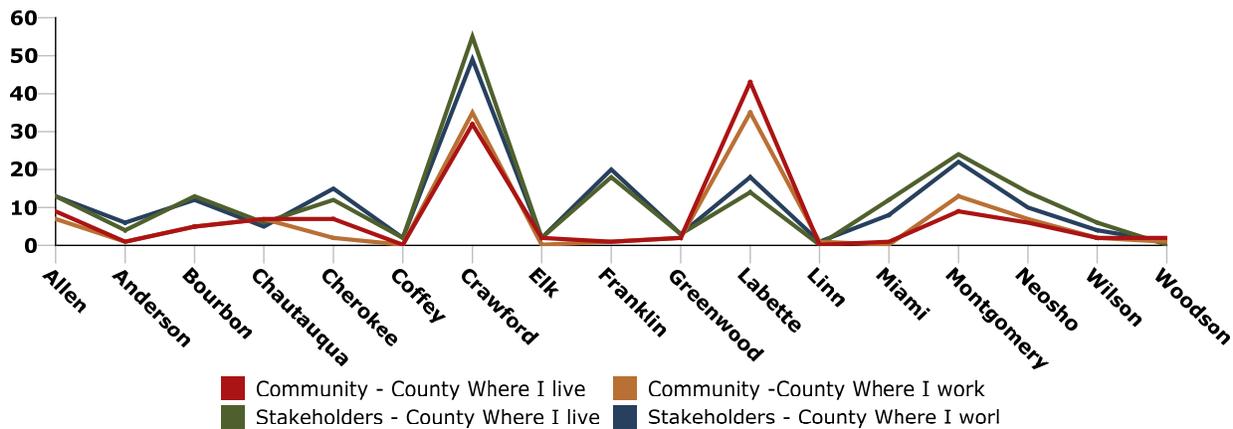
Expand access to safe and affordable housing through increased coordination of resources and non-traditional development strategies.

Public Housing Authorities, non-profits, for-profit developers, and municipalities can collaborate to ensure every available option for housing development is being used.

Survey Data results

Throughout seventeen counties, 197 community members responded to the survey. There were no respondents from Coffey or Linn counties. The respondents reported an age range from 19 and under to 74, all ages being relatively equally represented, with the exception of the age range 45 to 49, where the number responding was significantly higher. The respondents predominantly reported to be white, with only two reporting African American/Black, and only one reporting to be two or more races. Twice as many females responded than did males.

Where Respondents Live and Work



Respondents ranked the following as areas of greatest concern (Using the mode of all responses, ranking 1 – 10 with 1 being of the utmost importance and 10 being the least):

Ranked as a “1”:

- The economy (growth is too slow, cannot keep pace with cost of living).
- Leadership (working together to make things better; city, county, school district, chamber of commerce, college, hospital, etc.).
- Access to living wage jobs.
- Cost of primary health care.
- Affordable housing.
- Substance Abuse (drugs, alcohol).
- Job growth (access to high speed internet, skills training).
- Lack of employment opportunities.
- Access to education.

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Contributions and Data Requests

SEK-CAP and Project 17 value input from everyone in the region. If you would like to see an addition to or modification of this document to more accurately reflect what you know within your community, please contact Dick Horton, SEK-CAP's Director of Community Engagement. Additionally, if you would like to see more detailed data tables on any of the data elements listed below, or county specific data, please contact Dick Horton, SEK-CAP's Director of Community Engagement, at dickhorton@sek-cap.com.

Population Profile

Population Change	Age and Gender Demographics
Race Demographics	Veterans, Age and Gender Demographics
Poverty	Poverty Rate Change
Households in Poverty	Poverty Rate (ACS)
Households in Poverty by Family Type	Household Poverty Rate by Family Type
Poverty Rate Change (Age 0-17)	Poverty Rate Change (Age 0-4)
Poverty Rate Change (Age 5-17)	Child Poverty Rate (ACS) Ages 0-17
Child Poverty Rate (ACS) Ages 0-4	Child Poverty Rate (ACS) Ages 5-17
Seniors in Poverty	

Employment

Commuter Travel Patterns	Current Unemployment
Five Year Unemployment Rate	Household Income
Thirteen Month Unemployment Rates	Travel Time to Work
Unemployment Change	

Education

Adult Literacy	Educational Attainment
Veterans – Educational Attainment	

Housing

Homeowners	Vacancy Rates
Number of Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes	

Income

Household Income	Income Levels
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Nutrition

Free and Reduced Lunch Program	Households Receiving SNAP by Poverty Status (ACS)
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Healthcare

Federally Qualified Health Centers	Medicare and Medicaid Providers
Persons Receiving Medicare	Uninsured Population