Population and Demographics

Wichita, the largest city in Kansas, population 390,5911 is the county seat of Sedgwick County. Major highways, including the Kansas Turnpike and Interstate I-135, link the city with a large trade area that encompasses a population of more than 1 million2 people within a 100-mile radius. The nearest large cities are Denver to the west, Kansas City to the northeast and Oklahoma City and Tulsa to the south and southeast.

Population Growth

Wichita’s population growth has been steady for the past three decades. The majority of recent growth has occurred along the far west/northwest and east/northeast peripheries of the city, and into the unincorporated portions of the county.

As of May 2019, the city’s total land area was approximately 165.5 square miles.3 The majority of annexation over the past couple of years has been in response to a need for improved utility service in the annexed areas, especially water service.

Population Distribution

The metropolitan statistical area (MSA) includes Butler, Harvey, Kingman, Sedgwick, and Sumner counties. The MSA has a population of 644,888, and Sedgwick County represents the largest portion of the area’s population with an estimated 513,607 residents in 2018.

The city’s population density has decreased by nearly 50 percent in the past few decades. Today there are approximately 2,360 persons per square mile in Wichita compared to 4,625 per square mile in 1960, when growth within the city limits peaked. The trend of perimeter growth and the associated increase in demand for local government services is expected to continue for Wichita.

Demographics

The racial and ethnic composition of Wichita's population is comparable to the national average. The fastest growing group, both in Wichita and nationally, is people of Hispanic origin.

| POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNIC ORIGIN, 2017 (PERCENT OF TOTAL) |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| RACE/ETHNIC          | U.S. | WICHITA |
| Hispanic Origin*     | 18.18% | 17.5% |
| Not Hispanic         | 81.9% | 82.5% |
| TOTAL               | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| White                | 72.3% | 71.6% |
| Black/African American | 12.7% | 11.0% |
| American Indian      | 0.8%  | 0.5%  |
| Asian                | 5.6%  | 5.0%  |
| Other**              | 9.0%  | 12.2% |
| TOTAL               | 100.0% | 100.0% |

* May be of any race, consequently percentages will add to more than 100%.
** Includes other races and persons identifying themselves as multi-racial.


Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area Population Distribution by County, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedgwick</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingman</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumner</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Climate
Wichita is located on the central plains far from any large moderating influences such as mountains, oceans, or lakes. There is a wide range of temperatures, which fall between a humid subtropical climate and a humid continental climate with hot, humid summers and somewhat cold, dry winters.

Despite these extremes, Wichita is known to have more sunny days throughout the year than Miami. Over the course of a year, temperatures range from an average low of about 20° F (−7° C) in January to an average high of nearly 93° F (34° C) in July. The maximum temperature reaches 90° F (32° C) an average of 64 days per year and reaches 100° F (38° C) an average of 14 days per year. Conversely, the minimum temperature falls below 0° F (−17.8° C) an average of 3.6 nights per year. The first fall freeze typically occurs between the second week of October and mid-November, and the last spring freeze occurs between the end of March and the final week of April.

Education
Wichita’s population has achieved relatively high levels of education. In 2017, 88.7 percent of Wichita’s citizens age 25 years and older had at least a high school diploma, 0.7 percent higher than the national average.

The City of Wichita is served by eight unified school districts. The Wichita Public School District (USD 259) is the largest in the City. In fall 2018, Wichita USD 259’s enrollment was 49,953 students, a 0.9 percent decline compared to 2017. The elementary grades experienced enrollment declines, while middle school enrollment increased modestly for the district.

In addition to the public school districts, there are numerous private, public, and technical schools, including 12 colleges and universities providing educational opportunities in many fields of study. Among these are Wichita State University, Newman University, University of Kansas School of Medicine, and Friends University.

Health Care
Wichita is a regional leader in health care with over 1,600 licensed beds at 13 acute care and freestanding specialty hospitals. In addition to these major treatment facilities, there are approximately 85 nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Wichita is also home to the Riordan Clinic, an international bio-medical research and educational organization, specializing in nutritional medicine and preventive care. Several medical research organizations provide clinical research services for the pharmaceutical, nutritional and medical device industries.

Public Safety
According to FBI data, the number of violent crimes committed in Wichita increased 17.9 percent from the first half of 2017 to the first half of 2018.4

Over the years, the Wichita Police Department has received national recognition and has been the recipient of several awards. The Webber Seavey, an international award for quality law enforcement, was presented to the Wichita Police Department in 1996 and 2003. In 2018, a new $10 million, 60,000 square foot Law Enforcement Training Center opened on the Wichita State University campus for training both Wichita Police and Sedgwick County Sheriff recruits.

Transportation
Wichita Eisenhower National Airport, the largest airport in Kansas, is a combination commercial air carrier and general aviation complex, providing accommodations for all aircraft. Passenger service is offered through the following airlines:

- Allegiant Air
- American Airlines
- Southwest Airlines
- Frontier Airlines
- Alaska Airlines
- Delta Air Lines
- United Airlines

Cargo service is provided by four major carriers: DHL, Federal Express, UPS Supply Chain Solutions, and UPS.

The airport replaced its main terminal with a new $160 million terminal which opened on June 3rd, 2015. The two-story, 273,000 square-foot terminal is a state-of-the-art facility capable of accommodating two million passengers annually.

Eisenhower’s total passengers increased 3.3 percent in 2018, with more than 1.6 million passengers in total (inbound and outbound), its fastest growth in air traffic in more than a decade. Airfreight shipments increased 6.7 percent in 2018, totaling 54.2 million pounds (inbound and outbound).
Culture and Leisure
Recreational opportunities abound in Wichita. The city's size allows minimal travel time (average 30 minutes) to outlying areas with open prairie and lakes. Inside the city there are 144 municipal parks and public open spaces covering more than 5,000 acres. Cultural activities include art, natural and historical museums, theater, the Mid-America All-Indian Center, the Wichita Symphony, the Wichita Grand Opera, the Metropolitan Ballet, the Lake Afton Public Observatory, Botanica, and the Sedgwick County Zoo.

Exploration Place, the Sedgwick County science and discovery center, promotes an interest in science in all ages through its permanent and traveling exhibits, summer camps, the Wichita Mini Maker Faire, and the Wichita Regional Science and Engineering Fair. The Wichita Art Museum's permanent collection has over 8,000 objects, with a focus on American and Great Plains art.

The $19 million Mary R Koch Arts Center opened in January 2018. The 40,000 square foot facility is home to a 5,000 square foot art gallery and nine arts studios, including studios for culinary arts and digital arts.

Wichita is home to a number of festivals, sporting events, and holiday celebrations; the largest of which is the nine-day Riverfest in June. This event began as a city-financed centennial celebration in 1970. In 2018, Riverfest’s attendance increased to 460,000, a 12.2 percent increase compared to 2017. The value of Riverfest’s sponsorships also increased 2.6 percent in 2018.

Minor league baseball, hockey, soccer and indoor football are some of the professional sporting attractions available in the Wichita area. Wichita is also the host of the annual National Baseball Congress World Series baseball tournament. In 2018 Wichita hosted first and second round NCAA men’s basketball tournament games. The city will host the men’s first and second round games again in 2021, and will host the women’s first and second round games in 2022. In 2019, construction began on the new $75 million baseball stadium on the former site of Lawrence Dumont Stadium. When completed in 2020, the stadium will be the new home to the New Orleans Baby Cakes, a Triple-A minor league baseball team.

Built in 1969, Century II is the performing arts and convention headquarters downtown. The INTRUST Bank Arena is Wichita’s largest sports and entertainment venue, with an over 15,000 seat capacity. The arena ranked the 57th busiest in the nation in Pollstar's 2018 Year-End Arena Rankings.

Economic Development
Downtown Wichita serves as the region’s commercial, entertainment, artistic, cultural, and government center. The central business district has 4.1 million square feet of rentable office space, 37.7 percent of all rentable office space in Wichita. Old Town, in the heart of the city, is known for its brick-lined streets, historic lampposts and converted warehouses. The late 19th century and early 20th century buildings house more than 100 restaurants, shops, clubs, theaters, galleries, museums and businesses.

Downtown Wichita’s residential offerings continued to expand in recent years, with almost 900 residential units added since 2010, both newly constructed apartment buildings and repurposed commercial buildings. A number of new projects are currently under construction in the downtown area, which will add almost 700 new residential units when completed, including a new 180 unit apartment building located in the Delano district next to the new Advanced Learning Library.

Economic Indices
WSU Current Conditions Index
The WSU Leading Economic Indicators Index is designed to foreshadow the Wichita economy approximately six months into the future. In 2018, the annual average indexed value increased 1.2 percent relative to 2017, reaching its highest level since 2008. The index continued to improve in the first two months of 2019, reaching an index value of 97 for February 2019. The improvement was led by strong growth in the National Industrial Production Index, while the other three components of the index remained relatively flat in 2018. The continued increase and strength in the Leading Economic Indicators Index is a signal for continued robust economic growth for the Wichita economy in 2019.

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Employment
Wichita’s employment includes a broad mix of business types, with a sizable base of relatively high paying manufacturing jobs. A list of Wichita’s major private employers includes Spirit AeroSystems Inc.,
Ascension Via Christi, Textron Inc., Bombardier Learjet, Koch Industries Inc., Wesley Medical Center, Dillons Food Stores, Cargill Protein Headquarters, Johnson Controls, and Cox Communications. Beyond these major private employers, Wichita’s numerous small and mid-sized companies supply a wide variety of goods and services both to local and global markets. According to the 2016 County Business Patterns, the total number of business establishments grew 1.8 percent in the metropolitan area in 2016, to 14,955 establishments. Approximately 97 percent of all business establishments in the metropolitan area employed fewer than 100 workers.

Total wage and salary employment in the Wichita metro area increased 1.2 percent in 2018, creating 3,500 new jobs, in the fastest employment expansion in the area since 2008. The manufacturing sector led growth in 2018, and growth was broad-based throughout the service, production, and government sectors, though the trade sector experienced some job losses.

The industries with employment growth were manufacturing (1,800 jobs), mining, logging and construction (400 jobs), transportation and utilities (200 jobs), education and health services (700 jobs), professional and business services (600 jobs), leisure and hospitality (300 jobs), other services (100 jobs), and government (800 jobs). The following industries experienced employment declines: wholesale trade (300 jobs), retail trade (600 jobs), financial activities (300 jobs) and information (100 jobs).

In 2018, the largest employment sectors were manufacturing (17.9 percent), education and health services (14.9 percent), government (13.9 percent), and professional and business services (11.1 percent). Overall, private sector services comprised 45.7 percent of Wichita employment, while the goods producing sectors comprised 23.5 percent and the trade and transportation sectors comprised 16.9 percent.

The national economy is in the midst of one of the longest economic expansions in American history, and Wichita largely followed the expansion with moderate employment growth. From 2012 to 2016, the Wichita MSA’s total nonfarm employment grew approximately 1 percent per year. Following modest job losses in 2017, Wichita’s employment growth in 2018 of 1.2 percent was the area’s fastest growth in a decade.

Wichita’s unemployment rate consistently declined since 2011, while remaining lower than the national average. In 2018, Wichita’s unemployment rate declined by 0.5 percent to an average of 3.7 percent, which was 0.2 percent below the national 2017 average. The employment-population ratio in Wichita consistently exceeded the national employment-population, another indication of labor force engagement in the metropolitan area.

Since 2010, both new hires and turnover in the Wichita labor market continued to increase, which are both signs of a tightening local labor market. In the first quarter of 2018, the number of newly hired employees into stable employment increased 6.2 percent compared to one year earlier, the fastest growth in new hires since 2014. In 2019, Wichita’s total employment is forecast to grow 0.9 percent, with broad-based growth in the service, production, and government sectors, while a modest employment contraction is expected in the trade sector.

Cost of Living
Even with all of these amenities, Wichita continues to maintain a moderate cost-of-living rate of 90.5, almost 10 percent below the average among 270 urban areas in the United States and lower than 70 percent of U.S. urban areas.7 The 2018 fourth quarter median sales price of existing single-family homes in the Wichita MSA was $142,900 compared to the national median price of $257,600,8 according to the National Association of Realtors. Wichita’s home prices ranked the 25th least expensive in among metro areas in the U.S., even after a 7.4 percent increase in 2018. The average sale price of a newly built single-family home in 2018 in the Wichita metro area was $244,357, considerably lower than the national average price of $347,825.9

Personal Income
The Wichita MSA’s total nominal personal income increased 2.3 percent in 2017 following a decline of 0.6 percent in 2016. In 2018, personal income growth is projected to be an estimated 3.1 percent before adjusting for inflation.

In 2017 (latest data available as of this printing), the Wichita MSA had a total personal income (TPI) of $30.8 billion. This TPI ranked 86th largest among 383 metro areas in the United States. From 2007 to 2017, the average annual growth rate of TPI for the Wichita MSA was 2.8 percent, modestly lower than the national 3.4 percent growth rate, due in large part to the slower population growth in the Wichita area.
In 2017, Wichita had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of $47,708. This PCPI ranked 117th highest among 383 metro areas in the United States and was slightly below the national average, $51,722. Wichita’s 2007-2017 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 2.2 percent, which was 0.4 percent lower than the national PCPI growth rate.

Between 2018 and 2023, total personal income is forecast to grow at an average annual rate of approximately 2.5 percent.

**Manufacturing Sector**

Manufacturing accounted for 17.9 percent of total nonfarm employment in the Wichita MSA in 2018. About 83.6 percent of manufacturing jobs are in the durable goods sub-sector, primarily in aviation manufacturing along with a sizable machinery manufacturing subsector. About 16.4 percent of manufacturing jobs are in the non-durable goods sub-sector, dominated by jobs in food processing and printing.

Durable goods manufacturing gained 1,500 new jobs in 2018, its fastest growth since 2008. Spirit Aerosystems began a $1 billion capital investment and renovation program for their Wichita facilities in 2018 and added more than 1,000 jobs in Wichita, primarily in skilled hourly manufacturing production positions. In December of 2018, Spirit announced plans to hire an additional 1,400 new workers in 2019 with an expected payroll of more than $75 million annually. Bombardier relocated interior work for their Global 5000 business jets to their Wichita facilities in 2018, adding approximately 100 new jobs locally.

Wichita is also home to sizable general aviation manufacturing production, led by Textron Aviation. Overall, the general aviation sector saw positive signs in 2018, with increases in worldwide shipments and total billings of 5.1 and 1.8 percent, respectively, according to the General Aviation Manufacturing Association. Textron Aviation announced plans in May 2019 to hire 1,000 new workers following a 35 percent increase in jet and turboprop deliveries from the company in the first quarter of 2019 compared to a year earlier.

In the non-durable manufacturing sector, Cargill completed their new protein headquarters in the Old Town district in later 2018, with a final cost of more than $70 million. The 190,000 square foot facility is home to approximately 800 workers with space to accommodate up to 950 workers. Cargill’s $90 million biodiesel plant expansion of their Wichita soybean processing plant is expected to open in mid-2019.

Wichita’s manufacturing sector rebounded strongly in 2018 after a number of years of modest employment contractions in the sector following the 2008 recession. In 2019, the outlook is positive with large employment commitments from major employers in the sector. Manufacturing sector employment is projected to grow by more than 1,000 workers, with 1.9 percent growth.

**Service Sector**

The service sectors increased 0.8 percent in 2018 for a total increase of 1,100 jobs:

- The information sector contracted by 100 jobs, a decline of 2.3 percent.
- Financial activities employment declined by 2.7 percent, decreasing by 300 jobs.
- The professional and business services sector increased by 400 jobs for growth of 1.2 percent.
- The education and health care services sector grew 1.6 percent, adding 700 jobs.
- The leisure and hospitality sector gained 300 jobs for an increase of 0.9 percent.
- The other services sector grew by 0.9 percent, adding 100 jobs.

In 2019, service sector employment projected to grow by 1,300 workers, expanding employment in the sector by 1 percent. Growth in the service sector is forecast to be broad based, with every service sector except the information sector projected to grow its total employment. The professional and business services sector and the leisure and hospitality sector are expected to produce the most new jobs.
The service sector was Wichita’s most consistent source of job growth, growing faster than overall growth in the area in eight of the last nine years. Service employment increased by 9,600 workers since 2010, accounting for 74.4 percent of all employment growth in the Wichita area. Though service employment declined slightly in 2017, it rebounded in 2018 and is expected to continue to be a major contributor to job growth in the area over the next several years.

The education and health care services sector was the single largest service sector in the Wichita economy. Wichita State University, the largest university in the metro area, is currently undergoing a major expansion as part of their Innovation Campus initiative, adding over a dozen new buildings on their main campus. Construction is currently underway on the YMCA, Wesley Urgent Care Clinic, and NIAR crash lab buildings, while construction on the new $50 million Woolsey Hall is expected to begin in 2020. The initiative will also expand partnerships between the university and major local businesses, enabling more students to gain valuable internship experience. In addition, in July 2018, the Wichita Area Technical College became the WSU Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology as the result of a formalized affiliation agreement with Wichita State.

A $62 million renovation of Ascension Via Christi St. Joseph campus is expected to be completed in 2019, while the Wesley Medical Center is currently planning $100 million in upgrades to their equipment and facilities. With growth in both the education and health care fields, the education and health care sector is forecast to grow 0.6 percent, adding more than 250 new jobs in 2019.

The professional and business services sector was one of the fastest growing sectors since 2009 in the Wichita area, growing 15.6 percent and adding 4,500 new jobs in the past decade. Professional and business services firms tend to be smaller than the average firm in terms of employment, with 59.4 percent of business establishments employing fewer than 5 workers. The sector added 400 new jobs in 2018, growing 1.2 percent. Growth is projected to increase slightly in 2019 to 1.3 percent, as broad-based growth across the services and production sectors is expected to increase demand for business services. More than 400 jobs are forecast to be added to the sector in 2019.

In 2018, the leisure and hospitality sector continued to grow, adding 300 new jobs. The sector added the most new jobs of any industrial sector in Wichita since 2010, with 5,500 new jobs added. In the Wichita area, 74.9 percent of leisure and hospitality employment is at food service and drinking establishments. Employment in the leisure and hospitality sector is projected to increase by almost 600 workers in 2019 for 1.8 percent growth.

**Construction and Natural Resources Sector**

Natural resources, mining and construction employment comprised 23.7 percent of all goods-producing industry employment in Wichita in 2018. The industry returned to employment growth in 2018 with 400 new jobs after relatively flat employment in the industry in 2016 and 2017. The sector is projected to grow by 1.6 percent in 2019, adding more than 200 new jobs.

Increases in activity in both the residential and nonresidential sectors in 2018 provide reasons for optimism in the forecast. Home prices appreciated in each of the last four years in Wichita, and home sales increased 11.5 percent since 2014. Stanley Longhofer, director of the Wichita State University Center for Real Estate, forecasts both of these trends to continue in 2019, with predicted home price growth of 4.6 percent and predicted sales growth of 2.1 percent. Longhofer also forecasts home construction in the Wichita area will increase by 1.5 percent in 2019. The overall value of construction permits in Wichita increased 6.1 percent in 2018, with nonresidential permits increasing 7.1 percent and residential permits increasing 2.5 percent.

**Sources:**

This report was prepared by the Center for Economic Development and Business Research at Wichita State University at the request of the City of Wichita Department of Finance.

1. 2017 Census population estimates.
2. U.S. 2010 Census. The Wichita MSA is comprised of Butler, Harvey, Kingman, Sedgwick and Sumner counties. This metropolitan statistical area delineation was issued by The Office of Management and Budget in February 2013. Population represents only the Kansas portion of the 100-mile radius, not the Oklahoma portion.
3. Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department.
5. City of Wichita Park and Recreation Administration.
8. 2017 County Business Patterns data was not yet available as this printing.
9. C2ER, ACCRA Cost of Living Index, 2018 Annual Average.
10. City of Wichita, Office of Building Inspection.
Map of Wichita

The following maps provide insight into the past and future of the boundaries of the City of Wichita. The Wichita City Limit: Growth by Decade map illustrates decades of fast growth, such as the 1910s, 1950s, and 1960s, with periods of...
Map of Wichita

“The 2035 Urban Growth Areas Map” looks into the future of growth in Sedgwick County.