



Artist: Kamela Eaton, City of Wichita Public Art Collection

## **Environmental Scan: Illustrating the Changing Demographics of Kansas**

### **ABSTRACT**

An analysis of seven key issues related to Black and Hispanic Kansans

Garcia Group, LLC & Dimas Gonzalez

## **Environmental Scan: Illustrating the Changing Demographics of Kansas**

### **Background:**

In the Fall of 2023, nearly a dozen Kansas Black and Kansas Hispanic community members from across the state convened virtually to discuss the possibility of conducting an environmental scan that analyzed several issues affecting Kansas Black and Hispanic communities. Kansas Latino Community Network Executive Director Aude Negrete initiated the group of Kansas Black and Hispanic leaders coming together to first determine if an environmental scan had ever been previously conducted analyzing a variety of issues. Once we collectively determined that an environmental scan analyzing these issues related to Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics had not previously been attempted before, the creation of a survey soon followed. Led by Wichita State University Hispanic Serving Initiatives Executive Director Sara Mata, Ph.D, and Wichita State University Edil Torres, Ph.D., Latinx Studies and Counseling Professor, the intent of the survey was to seek input from the Kansas Black and Kansas Hispanic community members including Kansas African American Affairs Commission (KAAAC) Executive Director Stacey Knoell, Kerry Gooch, Aude Negrete, Sara Mata, Edil Torres, and Monique Garcia. The survey identified a total of seven issue areas to explore in this first-time ever environmental scan effort.

## Table of Contents

Background .....	1
Overview .....	3
Race Definition .....	7
Health.....	12
Education .....	24
Economic Impacts and Data.....	28
Housing .....	30
Civic Engagement.....	34
Conclusion.....	40
References .....	42

## Survey Generated Seven Issues Explored in the Environmental Scan

The seven issues identified through the survey process include the following along with additional descriptions in quotations below from the Kansas Black and Hispanic community members:

1. **Race Definitions** – “Problematic way that race and ethnicity is defined. Complex race and ethnicity definitions on the U.S. Census questionnaire. As an example, over 10.2% of Census 2020 respondents in Kansas marked ‘Two or more races’ in the Census 2020, which has often been confused with ethnicity self-identification.”
2. **Health** – “Access to affordable health care, language access.”
3. **Business** – “Distribution of state and federal contracts for minority business owners, removing barriers on access to capital for entrepreneurs.”
4. **Education** – “School funding.”
5. **Economic Impacts & Development** – “Related to employment/unemployment data and workforce needs as well as economic development in communities from businesses owned by Black and Latino owners.”
6. **Housing** – “Access to capital for home ownership, informing on tenant rights (Wyandotte County for instance, with high rental vacancies due to lack of enforcement on tenant rights, language barriers and citizenship).”
7. **Civic Engagement** – “Voting data for Black and Latino communities and how do we mobilize the Kansas Black and Latino communities to shape and advocate for recommendations to create change?.”

After a thorough review of available data, research and information related to all seven topics that we collectively identified, it became quite clear that there is a tremendous amount of information related to each topic. Furthermore, we found that there is an opportunity to have more research studies specifically related to each topic – as it relates to Kansas Hispanics and Kansas Blacks. We found significant amounts of news articles on some of these seven issues, but there still lacks a fair amount of academic research focused on these issues. In addition, the education and business topics were very narrowly identified by the Kansas Black and Kansas Hispanic community members to analyze school funding and distribution of state/federal contracts for minority business owners.

## Limited Reliability and Sample Size Concerns for Some of the Data

An issue that we also encountered in conducting the environmental scan is some limited reliability of data. An example to share is reviewing the [Kansas LMI Housing Trends and Challenges](#) presentation that Senior Researcher of Community Development Steven Rowland, Ph.D. of the Federal Reserve Bank - Kansas City delivered on December 20, 2024 at the annual conference of the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation. After having reviewed the Kansas Low to Moderate Housing Trends and Challenges presentation, I contacted Dr. Rowland to inquire about demographic data related to race and ethnicity for the purposes of our environmental scan. Dr. Rowland responded by email correspondence stating that, “The charts where we cite Census/American Community Survey data have the possibility to be broken out by race/ethnicity. And note that there are sample size concerns for our analysis for Black households since they’re just over 5% of the population. I haven’t run reliability tests on that, but it’s something to pay attention to for groups with relatively small shares of the population. I wouldn’t be as concerned with the analysis around Hispanic populations as they make up nearly 14% of the population. You can mitigate sample size concerns by using the 5-year sample, rather than the 1-year sample, but we wanted to maintain consistency in the data we used for this presentation and use data as close to representative of today’s economic situation as possible.” We are very grateful to Dr. Rowland of the Federal Reserve

Bank of Kansas City for his efforts to explain sample size concerns and ways to mitigate by using a 5-year sample as opposed to a 1-year sample.

Throughout the course of conducting this environmental scan, Senior Research Data Engineer Xan Wedel of the KU Institute for Policy and Social Research (IPSR) provided remarkable insight to us regarding challenges related to limited reliability of data, especially when the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data is the only entity of data available. One particular question that we posed to Xan to seek more clarity on the data is related to Seward County. Per the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2023, Seward County's population is 66% Hispanic or Latino. Another perspective to consider is the fact that Seward County is still relatively small with only 21,000 people. Xan cautioned us to consider, "This is why the ACS gets sketchy quick when you look at characteristics for this and other sub-groups of people. There is no hard and fast number of people for the sample to be reliable. Since the ACS publishes a 90% margin of error, we calculate the coefficient of variation (CV) to determine the reliability. The formula for this along with our guidance in interpreting the results can be found in the tips section of the Kansas Statistical Abstract. That said I often see CV's greater than 40 in the 5-year ACS, especially outside our core metropolitan areas. Sometimes the ACS is the only source so we still use the data but note the limited reliability." (Referenced below is a direct link to note the limitations: <https://ksdata.ku.edu/ksdata/ksah/front/Tips.pdf>).

### **School Graduation Rate Data for Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics**

Data regarding high school graduation rates and college graduation rates for Kansas Black and Kansas Hispanic students were not identified in the education topic of this environmental scan. However, Wichita State University student Dimas Gonzalez has provided data in this environmental scan related to graduation rates for Kansas Black and Kansas Hispanic students.

### **Special Recognition – Xan Wedel, KU Institute for Policy & Social Research (IPSR)**

Regarding data and research, we would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank Xan Wedel for her exceptional support on this project. Xan serves as a Senior Research Data Engineer for the KU Institute for Policy and Social Research (IPSR) department. As noted in Xan's list of responsibilities at IPSR, she is the primary liaison for data requests received by the Institute from the public or members of the university community. Xan leads the Kansas State Data Center (SDC), a partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau. She also serves as web application developer and GIS analyst for the Institute. Xan also advises students and researchers on data visualization techniques including GIS and coordinates the data compilation and visualization, programming, and production of the Kansas Statistical Abstract. The Kansas Statistical Abstract 2023 has been a critically important resource that has been utilized for this environmental scan and we are most appreciative of this publicly-available resource for Kansans to access. In conducting this environmental scan, there were massive amounts of data sets and information that Xan helped us discern and interpret. By virtue of serving as a state of Kansas Data Center, the KU Institute for Policy and Social Research (IPSR) has access to numerous data licensing platforms that we would have been unable to access without the support of KU IPSR. This environmental scan has enabled us to share with other individuals and organizations across the state on the remarkable data support that KU IPSR, a state of Kansas Data Center, can provide for research efforts similar to this and beyond. In fact, this can be considered a civic engagement opportunity for Kansans to be encouraged to contact these public institutions that provide free public access to critically important data.

### **History of Environmental Scanning as a Viable Public Health Tool**

Over the years, the practice of conducting an environmental scan as a primary public health tool has grown in popularity. Thanks to a combination of practices undertaken by business, quality improvement programs and strategic planning efforts, environmental scans is occurring more due to its ability to serve as an assessment and data collection tool by many stakeholders, including health-related organizations.

As noted in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Public Health Research, Practice and Policy issue brief ([Volume 13, E109](#) published in August 2016), environmental scans are applicable to a range of current and emerging health topics. In this particular environmental scan, we have included a total of seven issues to analyze through a survey identified by a committee of Black and Hispanic Kansans: race definitions, health, business, education (school funding), economic impacts and development, housing and civic engagement.

Also noted in the CDC Volume 13, E109 issue brief, environmental scans – through various methods – assess multiple facets of an issue by engaging stakeholders who can ask or answer research-related questions. The environmental scans also include opportunities related to exploring policy, collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data and sharing the findings to both internal and external stakeholders. Through this exercise, we have learned that there are significant opportunities to inform future planning and decision making as it relates to these seven issue areas that are critically important to Black and Hispanic Kansans.

### **Environmental Scan: Viable Tool to Inform on Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics**

The purpose of an environmental scan is to understand the context of information. As we began the environmental scan, we began by collecting information, identifying resources and links. Another critical step in an environmental scan project is to identify and engage stakeholders. Also noted in the CDC issue brief (Volume 13, E109) was that, “stakeholders, and their willingness to participate in the environmental scan -are the key to success.” By creating a diverse, iterative list of people or organizations that can provide information on each topic has been essential for us as we conducted the environmental scan. Every stakeholder that we had the pleasure of speaking with, expressed support for the environmental scan, especially as it related to Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics and the seven issue areas that were identified. All stakeholders who we contacted to seek their input on the environmental scan indicated the importance of focusing on these issues that to our collective knowledge has not been attempted ever before. Furthermore, the consensus among the stakeholders who we contacted to seek input on the environmental scan also noted the timely importance of conducting the scan due to the continued changing demographics of Kansas. Some stakeholders also expressed concern about implications of planned mass deportations and how it could affect Hispanic Kansans’ citizenship status. Concerns were also expressed on the devastating economic effects that could happen to communities where immigrant populations form the economic backbone of the communities.

Additional concerns that some stakeholders shared were related to the importance of pandemic-era support programs and the positive impacts that these particular supports had on nearly all seven of the issues that we identified for the environmental scan. While most of these pandemic- related programs have since ended, these same targeted investments have also affected some of the positive outcomes that happened.

### **Strong Desire to Continue Cultivating Relationships on all Seven Issues identified in the Scan**

As summarized in the CDC issue brief, perhaps the most important step of an environmental scan is to determine how to use the results. This was also a consistent statement made by the stakeholders who we contacted regarding each of the seven issues we explored. Many stakeholders expressed a desire to

receive some sort of information or presentation, as they all indicated a strong support for the importance of why we were conducting this environmental scan. As is known with environmental scans, delivering the final product typically generates research priorities and potential funding opportunities for effective interventions. Most importantly, the stakeholders who we contacted expressed desires for new partnerships to cultivate based upon the seven issues that we identified. There is a significant interest among stakeholders to continue cultivating the relationships and seek the support from Kansas Blacks and Hispanics, especially as continued changing demographics continue to occur statewide.

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## Race Definitions

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Several of the Kansas Black and Kansas Hispanic community members asked for race definitions to be explored for this environmental scan. This was a specific response in the survey as to why race definitions should be further explored: *“Problematic way that race and ethnicity is defined. Complex race and ethnicity definitions on the U.S. Census questionnaire.”* Based upon searching on how race and ethnicity is defined, we found that the complexity goes beyond a U.S. Census questionnaire, which as we know is administered once every 10 years. For Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics, we believe there is an important opportunity to seek more clarity on how race and ethnicity is defined.

### **Recommendation: Take the Opportunity to Conduct Civic Engagement Efforts to Explain Why Race and Ethnicity Is Important - Ahead of the Census 2030**

To provide more context and a historical perspective on race in the U.S., the U.S. Census Bureau started collecting data on race since the first census in 1790. Fast forward over 235 years, the Census Bureau continues to try and improve how it collects data on race and ethnicity.

With the Census 2030 to occur in five years, and in speaking with many community stakeholders across Kansas, the consensus is that now is the time to engage and urge people to become familiar with the ever-evolving race and ethnicity definitions.

Several of the Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanic community members who provided feedback for the survey to inform what issues to explore for this environmental scan, had actively engaged in 2020 Census efforts across Kansas. Even as the pandemic raged on in 2020, Kansas Black and Kansas Latino community members creatively engaged with people to complete the 2020 Census in safe spaces outside (in Kansas City, Kan., Wyandotte County, Liberal, Garden City, Dodge City, Wichita, Topeka) and using tablets for respondents to complete the 2020 Census. Undocumented people were informed that they could complete the 2020 Census, regardless of citizenship status.

It is also important to note that during 2020, there was a reluctance to get undocumented persons to complete the 10-questionnaire for the 2020 Census despite the fact when we informed the undocumented persons that they could still fill out the census. The fear and lack of trust made it a challenge for us to get the Census completed, and adding another element of the complex definitions and race and ethnicity added to the problematic and complex ways that people self-identify.

Quite frequently during the 2020 Census, the race and ethnicity definitions and questions were discussed among respondents. Considering the importance of cultural identity, there were conversations about people wanting to self-identify their detailed racial/ethnic backgrounds. Fortunately over the years, the U.S. Census Bureau has been conducting research to improve the questions and data on race and ethnicity. Since the 1980 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau has collected race and ethnicity data following the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines - that are based upon self-identification.

**For the first time in ever in a U.S. Census, in 2020, There were detailed responses for the White population and for the Black or African American population**



Prior to the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau touted improvements that were made to seek detailed responses on the race and ethnicity questions on the Census. However, there have been comments made that due to the pandemic, much of the self-identification and definition improvements were overshadowed.

The Census Bureau has shared the [improvements](#) on race and ethnicity data collection for the Census 2020 for all major categories (Hispanic, White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race).

This applies to what state agencies ask for Kansans to self-identify. As an example, we found a Department of Children and Families (DCF) Prevention and Protection Services document that provides instructions for reporting race, ethnicity and language preferences. The DCF document described that the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defined the values that all states must use for federal reports. The new race and ethnicity codes include a total of eight choices, including ‘O’ for Unknown. As stated in the DCF document, “‘O’ is to be selected only if race is unknown or if the person declines to indicate a race code.” When filling out forms such as a DCF form, often times people are focused on completing the required materials and do not have the time to think more about the race and ethnicity data because they are so focused on answering the question to receive services needed. Or there are other instances when the person(s) may just not know what exactly to answer for the race and ethnicity definitions, even for self-identification purposes. As is commonly known and discussed, federal government forms and the complex language can be a barrier and misunderstood by many.

With five years before the next 2030 Census takes place, many stakeholders have expressed an interest to begin educating people now, especially with the advent of a new presidential administration that is actively dismantling diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs and refusals to allow pronouns to be used in the name signature of federal employees. These are all chilling effects that can translate into a challenging way that people self-identify.

### **Improvements to the 2020 Census Hispanic Origin Question and Design Improvements to the 2020 Census Race Question**

It is important to highlight improvements that were made to the 2020 Census regarding the Hispanic origin question. It also must be noted that thanks to the Kansas Complete Count Committee (CCC) that was convened among a vast number of Kansas stakeholders in 2019, called ‘[Kansas Counts](#)’, was instrumental in clearly sharing ahead of time, questions #6 “Is this person of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?” and #7 “What is this person’s race?” on the Census 2020 sample questionnaire. In fact, various forms of the Census 2020 sample questionnaire were made available in printed format, in Spanish and other languages. In addition, the Census 2020 questionnaire was also shared electronically and across various platforms in rural and urban Kansas communities. Xan Wedel of the KU Institute for Policy and Social Research (IPSR), served as co-chair of the Kansas Complete Count Committee.

Stakeholders from the Kansas African American Affairs Commission (KAAAC) and the Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission (KHLAAC) also served on the Kansas Complete Count Committee, as well as numerous other organizations and community members. Thanks to the input from a diverse group of Kansas Complete Count Committee members, it was intentional to emphasize the word ‘residents’ when promoting the Census 2020 information, Census Response Information for Kansas Residents. This inclusive language was effective since the term ‘citizens’ can often be exclusionary. In

speaking with undocumented Kansans during the 2020 Census, this was not uncommon to hear this remark that when they see ‘citizen’, it does not apply to undocumented persons.

An important element of conducting this environmental scan is the fact that it was not uncommon for each of the seven issues to intersect with the other issues identified. An article titled, “[Fear of landlord retaliation leaves low-income Kansas renters living in peril.](#)” was published on December 27, 2024 by Dylan Lysen of the Kansas News Service. As we explored the housing issue, the intersection of race and ethnicity emerged in the [Douglas County Tenant Experiences](#) survey that was published in 2024 by the University of Kansas Center for Community Health and Development-Life Span Institute. As noted in the survey, in February 2023, the City of Lawrence passed an ordinance prohibiting source of income discrimination. The intent of that policy was to prevent landlords in Douglas County from denying someone tenancy based on how they pay their rent, making housing easier to access and keep for renters and improving processes for legal recourse for tenants. In reviewing the survey data, we contacted the person who created the survey, KU Center for Community Health and Development Assistant Director Christina Holt. The question we posed was to confirm an increase in survey respondents choosing ‘Other’ for the race and ethnicity data. Christina’s response indicated that quite a few of the survey respondents did indeed select ‘Other’, to identify as mixed race. Christina concluded that this is fairly consistent with the Census Bureau data on how people self-identify, with a significant increase in “Two or More Races,” or “Other.”

### **Black Population Data at the National Level**

According to the Pew Research Center, an estimated 48.3 million people in the U.S. identified as Black in 2023. The Black population has grown by more than 12 million since 2000, up from 36.2 million – a 33% increase over roughly two decades. On January 23, 2025, the Pew Research Center released new data related to [key facts about the Black population in the U.S.](#)

The Pew Research Center stated that the **Black population in the U.S. has grown by a third since 2000, from 36.2 million then to 48.3 million in 2023.** While this is Black population data at the national level, this data essentially affirms the complexity in how race and ethnicity data is defined, collected and interpreted – or often misinterpreted. **Pew Research Data reveals the number of people who identify as another race in addition to Black has increased 269%, and the number who say they are Hispanic has risen by 210%.**

It is not surprising to see that an increase in racial diversity among Black Americans reflects a broader [national shift in the number of Americans identifying as multiracial](#). Arrivals of immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean and elsewhere has been an important contributor to Black population growth. Examples of this affecting rural southwest Kansas, for instance, is important to consider as the changing demographics of Kansas continues to shift significantly.

### **Black Population Data at the State Level**

According to the 2020 U.S. Census data, the [Race and Ethnicity](#) population for Whites alone in Kansas was 61.6%, Blacks alone in Kansas was 12.4% and for Hispanics in Kansas was 18.7%.

Combined together, Black Kansans statewide population of 12.4% and Hispanic Kansans population at 18.7% equals more than 31.1% of both Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics. With the Kansas population nearing three million people in 2020, the diversity index grew significantly in Kansas to 61.1%, up from 54.9%.

### **Top Five Counties in Kansas with Residents that Identify as Black or African-American**

We also found through the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (PEP) data that the top five Kansas counties with the largest Black or African-American population are the following:

- Wyandotte (23%)
- Geary (18.5%)
- Sedgwick (9.3%)
- Leavenworth (9.2%)
- Shawnee (8.5%)

### **Kansas Population: By Race and Ethnicity (2021-2071)**

A report conducted by the Center for Economic Development and Business Research (CEDBR) with funding from the Patterson Family Foundation, forecasted population growth for Kansas regions categorized by race, ethnicity, age, and gender from 2021 to 2071. As stated by CEDBR, the projections utilized comprehensive data on statewide and regional population, birth, mortality, and migration rates for each demographic category. The total population of Kansas is projected to grow by more than 468,000 residents, representing an increase of nearly 16% compared to the population in 2021. The growth is expected to average 0.3% annually until 2071, a slight decline from the higher growth rate of 0.54% experienced between 1960 and 2010.

When considering the overall rate of population growth for Kansas, it is projected to be 0.32% through 2071. However, this rate differs dramatically when examining specific racial and ethnic groups. In 2021, there were 2.5 million people identifying as white alone. In contrast, persons identifying as black alone are expected to experience a much higher annualized growth rate of 0.72%, increasing from 181,676 in 2021 to 246,768 in 2071, representing a 35.8% increase. Additionally, the Hispanic population, as a separate category independent of racial identity, is another segment expected to experience dramatic growth with an estimated annual rate of 1.5%, resulting in a 74.9% increase from 374,093 in 2021 to 630,134 in 2071.

### **CEDBR: Rapid, Projected Growth in Minority Populations**

The CEDBR report concludes that overall, the rapid projected growth in minority populations will lead to a substantially more diverse population in Kansas. In 2021, persons identifying as white represented 86.0% of the state's total population, a share that is projected to decline to 79.6% in 2071. This decline is offset by a 1.1 percentage point increase among black persons and a 5.3 percentage point increase among other races. Furthermore, Hispanic persons, who represented 12.7% of the population in 2021, are projected to grow by 6.5 percentage points to comprise 19.2% of the state's population in 2071. CEDBR's summarization on projected demographic changes truly underscores the importance of understanding and preparing for a more diverse future population in Kansas. We fully support CEDBR's statement that policymakers and businesses should consider these trends to effectively address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the demographic shifts.

It is too soon to determine to what extent the population projections will change in Kansas if we have sizable population loss due to mass deportations and refugee resettlement program suspensions, especially among African refugees and immigrant Latinos.

### **Hispanic Population at the State Level**

According to the U.S. Census 2020 and American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2022 and 2023, the Hispanic population in Kansas is the fastest growing segment of the state's population. Between

2010 and 2022, the Hispanic population in Kansas grew by 80,861, increasing from 302,174 to 383,035. This growth contributed to Kansas becoming more diverse overall, with the Hispanic population increasing from 10.5% to 13% of the state's population. In some southwest Kansas counties, Hispanics make up nearly 70% of the population (Liberal, Kan.).

### **Top Five Counties in Kansas with Residents that Identify as Hispanic or Latino**

- Seward (62%)
- Ford (55.6%)
- Finney (50.5%)
- Grant (47.9%)
- Stanton (37.7%)
- Stevens (36.8%)\* (Hugoton is located in Stevens County and is featured in this scan regarding the Kansas School Funding and impacts related to growth).

### **Thinking Beyond Standardized Race/Ethnicity Definitions**

Yet another stakeholder urged us to consider beyond the traditional race definitions. Shannon Dick, Director of Analytics for the Finney County Economic Development Corporation asked us to keep in mind the sizable numbers of Afro-Latinos and Black migrants who live in Finney County. In September 2024, Shannon stated that in Garden City, they have a fairly significant sized population of Black migrants. The Black migrants are from Haiti, Cuba, Somalia and Sudan, who have a completely different set of issues to consider, let alone consideration of race definitions. To further illustrate the complexity of race definitions, there are sizable numbers of Afro-Latinos who live and work in Garden City, Haitian-Cubans, for instance.

Shannon stated that Catholic Charities in Garden City is a secondary resettlement agency for refugees and migrants. He added that there has been an uptick in refugees in Garden City and the two-year lag in data correlates to how school enrollment numbers increase for refugee students in USD 457 Garden City Public Schools. A majority of the employees who work in the meatpacking plants, dairies, feedlots and other agribusiness related industries in southwest Kansas are migrants and refugees. National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate KCUR published a news story by Frank Morris on January 6, 2025 titled, "[Mass deportations could endanger Kansas' meat economy](#)": 'It would be a ghost town' explained how mass deportations could lead to record high beef prices, meat shortages and dramatically lower tax bases.

As is known, on January 21, 2025, the Trump Administration signed an executive order suspending refugee resettlement to the U.S.

### **Hispanic Kansans' Access to Health:**

Arguably, the most significant and timely research conducted by the [Kansas Health Institute \(KHI\)](#) reveals that in Kansas, 20.1% of Hispanic Kansans are uninsured, which is more than three times the rate for non-Hispanic White Kansans. This major health disparity issue was the focus of a June 27, 2024 panel discussion event hosted by KHI which introduced interactive maps to highlight the obstacles Hispanic Kansans face in getting health insurance. In addition, the panel discussion explored efforts to try and reduce these disparities and improve coverage. Panel discussion members shared factors that contribute to the disparity including literacy challenges, lack of English language abilities, immigration status and cost-benefit analysis considerations. According to the January 2024 KHI report titled, [“Expanding the Care Team: Leveraging a Broader Workforce to Improve Health Care in Kansas”](#) by Valentina Blanchard, MPH, LMSW, Wyatt J. Beckman, MPH, Linda J. Sheppard, J.D., some regions and counties — southwest Kansas and the most-rural counties — also face higher rates of uninsurance. Based upon U.S. Census Bureau demographics, a large Hispanic population lives in southwest Kansas, comprising nearly 70% of the population in Seward County (ACS 2022).

The second Trump administration has signaled that its first action will be to begin mass deportations of undocumented persons, which will lead to increased instances of undocumented immigrants living in environments where they fear deportation. As a result, there will be less access health services and much less compliance with health providers' recommendations due to fear of being deported. From a mental health aspect, there will be higher levels of depressive symptoms and anxiety. Combined with the fact that such a large percentage, 20%, 1 in 5, of Hispanic Kansans lack insurance, accessing mental health services could fall even lower down the list in terms of health.

As one of the Biden administrations final acts on immigration, the [Department of Homeland Security](#) announced on January 10, 2025 that it was extending four grants of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) that covers nearly 1 million immigrants from Venezuela, El Salvador, Ukraine and Sudan through the Fall of 2026.

### **JUNTOS Center for Advancing Latino Health**

The word ‘juntos’ in Spanish means together, and it is very fitting that the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kan. established the JUNTOS Center to advance Latino health in rural and urban areas across the state of Kansas through community-based participatory research and service. Serving as the JUNTOS executive director Mariana Ramirez describes JUNTOS’ efforts is achieved through conducting research, providing education, community engagement and service. As with so many programs, Mariana and her team strive to create a sustainable program to be fully integrated with Latino communities across Kansas. The goal for JUNTOS is to improve the health of the Latino communities as well as advance the field of health services research which has historically been lacking within the Latino community for various reasons, chief among them – language barriers and lack of citizenship status.

Mariana shared that most of JUNTOS' work is focused in Wyandotte County and where many of the great partners are located for collaboration. The JUNTOS office is located within Population Health at the KU Medical School, School of Nursing and works also with the University of Kansas Health System. Citing a fair amount of overlap, Mariana noted that the One KU campaign seeks to unify all KU campuses throughout Kansas. An important distinction that Mariana shared is that JUNTOS focuses on increasing

access to health, but not through a clinical platform. Instead, JUNTOS focuses on research, education and service as previously described. Thanks to Mariana and the JUNTOS staff, they work with research investigators who are devoted to advancing Latino health through science. These critical projects can also be supported with bilingual staff of JUNTOS.

Another significant element of JUNTOS' work is their ability to do cultural adaptations to behavioral interventions. Mariana explained that instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, they tailor to values, needs. Examples of their work include promoting sleep health, addressing dementia, smoking cessation efforts, detection of diabetes and strategies to manage this chronic disease that affects many Latinos.

### **Collaboration with KDHE and MARC for Reimbursement by CMS on First-Ever Curriculum in Spanish**

A pivotal milestone was achieved in 2024 with Mariana and her team having created an education curriculum in collaboration with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) to adapt a Spanish language version of the state curriculum for Community Health Workers (CHWs). According to Mariana, it took over 10 years to complete this due to the time required in working with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to get reimbursement. This program was designed to enable employers to fund CHWs through CMS funding dollars. Mariana explained that obtaining certification was the first major step to get CMS to reimburse for CHW work. However, the major sticking point was that the curriculum only existed in English. From a language access standpoint, the Spanish-speaking promotoras in southwest Kansas or Wichita for instance, preferred to speak in Spanish. Mariana aptly added, "If you learn in our native language, the process is different than when you communicate with someone. If you have someone who speaks both languages, more often than not, they would typically prefer to speak in their native language. JUNTOS developed a Spanish language curriculum so that Community Health Workers, promotoras, will become eligible to obtain a certificate from the state of Kansas. This is important because it enables career advancement. Promotoras are also so pivotal in helping our Latino communities access the services they need."

### **JUNTOS as a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Recognized Center for Diabetes Education**

Yet another remarkable achievement is that JUNTOS was recently identified as one of the CDC recognized centers for diabetes education in Kansas. Mariana said that in order to become a CDC-recognized diabetes center for education, the process was very difficult due to the required fulfillment of meeting many milestones. Mariana shared that there is a tremendous amount of effort involved. With the CMS approval, it enabled JUNTOS to work with its partners including churches, public libraries, clinics and delivering the program information in Spanish. Since the prevalence of diabetes in the Latino community is very high, it was even more significant.

### **Protecting Farmworkers Against Avian Flu**

Recognizing that farmworkers are at higher risk of being exposed to avian flu outbreaks due to their increased exposure in working at dairy farms, among cattle and other agribusiness sectors, especially in southwest Kansas, JUNTOS is working with KDHE and the CDC and national farmworker program to provide seasonal flu vaccine in selected Kansas counties. Kansas is one of 16 states that have had avian flu outbreaks in cattle. Since farmworkers are at higher risk of potentially contracting avian flu due to exposure, there is also increased testing capabilities and education efforts for farmworkers, many of

whom are immigrants and Spanish-speaking. Mariana concluded that it is critically important to make sure the information is available in their native languages.

### **Barriers to Accessing Care**

According to a [report](#) published in November 2019 by Randy Capps and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto of the Migration Policy Institute, immigrants and their U.S.-born children are vital components of future workforce growth, ensuring their health by providing access to care is a critical economic development for the Kansas City metro area. Jackson, Johnson and Wyandotte counties are home to overwhelming majority of both immigrants and Latinos in the Kansas City metro area. Mariana shared the often largely known barrier among Latinos is lack of carrying health insurance. Furthermore, Mariana added that Latinos often do not take medications due to the high costs. To add another barrier for accessing care is that legal permanent residents must wait five years to become eligible for Medicaid. If the person is undocumented, it is even more problematic to pay for commercial health insurance.

### **Language Access Considerations & Lack of Bilingual, Bicultural Providers**

Mariana shared yet another barrier that affects Latinos' access to health is a lack of standards for language interpretation. Oftentimes, language barriers result in increased communication errors, miscommunication and perceived poor quality of care. Mariana added that, "Since there are not standards, it's up to the health systems to develop their own standards. Many times, they hire an agency and it's up to the agency to do this. If there is no one overseeing this process, there is a fundamental challenge. In addition, there is a lack of bilingual and bicultural providers. We need more bilingual and bicultural providers that are part of the community, who know the needs of the community. For instance, going to the pharmacy and being able to understand instructions to take medications is so important. Plus, if the patient needs to call the phone number to ask questions about the medication, there is a huge gap. It is very fragmented and navigating the healthcare system can be very complex. Mariana shared that it is very important to work with the community to identify common needs. JUNTOS has involved medical students in community outreach efforts. These are the future doctors who will be at the clinics and hospitals. Mariana concluded that "The closer the medical students get to people, the more cultural competency and humility they will have which will be extremely helpful down the road. Our agreement with a medical school in Mexico brings their students to Kansas City. This has been a very strong partnership because the medical students from Mexico come to Kansas City with the language and culture already. They already understand the culture and can quickly build a rapport with patients and immediately build trust. The patients are then able to get their blood pressures and blood sugars checked and can understand what their numbers mean. The patients are empowered to learn about what changes they can make to become healthier."

### **Rural Access to Health in Southwest Kansas**

Speaking with Liberal City Commissioner and Southwest Medical Center Director of Marketing and Business Development Janeth Vazquez, she shared several dimensions related to access to health care and the impact of civic engagement on health equity. Constantly wearing two hats (access to care and civic engagement) and often many more hats, Janeth stated that the City of Liberal has the largest number of uninsured people in the state at 26%. (Ford County 18-19% uninsured, Finney County 17-18% uninsured). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020 Census), Seward County has a nearly 66% Hispanic population.

Janeth added that there is a direct correlation between civic engagement and health equity. She noted that increasing evidence points to civic engagement, whether it be voting or volunteering, is a social driver of health. Among Garden City, Dodge City and Liberal, it was Liberal that had the lowest percentage of

voter turnout in the 2022 general election. In 2022, in Garden City, 26.4% of the total population voted, in Dodge City, 22.2% of the total population voted and in Liberal, just 15.5% of the total population voted.

Due to the fact that Seward County has the highest uninsured rate in Kansas, various partners in Liberal came together, including Southwest Medical Center leading the efforts to host a free Community Health Fair on October 7, 2024 in Liberal. According to a November 1, 2024 news release issued by Southwest Medical Center, the October 2024 health fair was the largest ever in the region, attracting over 1,700 attendees and performing an astounding number of 3,035 free exams. The October 7, 2024 health fair doubled the number of lab screenings to over 1,430 compared to 2023. Southwest Medical Center partnered with over 50 community organizations and county agencies, as well as numerous local businesses. Janeth added that the City of Liberal's 1-cent sales tax contributed \$30,000.00 to the 2024 Community Health Fair. Janeth referred to the record-breaking number of people who participated in the 2024 Community Health Fair as an overwhelming success because they removed many barriers to care, including lack of insurance, language and transportation challenges. She summarized that events such as the health fair are crucial for helping those who do not have regular access to healthcare.

### **Guadalupe Clinic**

Established in 1985 and located in Wichita, the mission of the [Guadalupe Clinic](#) is to provide access to quality healthcare for all people in need. The Guadalupe Clinic operates two clinics in Wichita and is not a federally-qualified health clinic (FQHC). The Guadalupe Clinic has a [Proactive Patient Care](#) model of serving people with over nine phases of delivered care, regardless of citizenship status. Incorporating the social determinants of health is a cornerstone of how the clinic operates. The Guadalupe Clinic is a non-profit, faith-driven clinic guided by principles of the Catholic church. It should also be noted that the Guadalupe Clinic exists through donations of the community, through grants and fund raisers. There are no federal or Church funds given to the Clinic.

### **Collaborating With Several Dozen Partners to Provide Access to Care for All**

Dating back to 2005, Guadalupe Clinic recognized the critical need to establish strategic partnerships across hospital systems, schools and health organizations. The University of Kansas (KU) School of Medicine in Wichita's medical students (also known as "Jaydocs"), have been essential in volunteering and being trained at both Guadalupe Clinics in order to get the hands-on learning opportunities. Plus, KU medical students are able to provide care for the patients and learn about the importance of ensuring language access and cultural competency as future doctors and providers. There are at least several dozen partners such as the KU School of Pharmacy students and faculty; Wichita State University's (WSU) College of Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program; the WSU College of Classical and Professional Languages for interpreters; Newman University School of Nursing; Ascension Via Christi Health System; and Wesley Family Medicine Residency Programs.

Equally as important to the medical practice are lab testing capabilities donated by LabCorp (formerly Affiliated Medical Services). The Wichita Radiological Group, through Kansas Mobile Solutions, donates imaging on a weekly basis, and additional specialty services are provided through other partnerships. Patients outside of Wichita are served as well. It is not uncommon for Guatemalan indigenous families to travel from Coffeyville to access health care service from the Guadalupe Clinic.

Joining a Guatemalan indigenous family from Coffeyville on their experience in accessing healthcare at the Guadalupe Clinic in 2023 was very eye opening in terms of how the Guadalupe Clinic's bilingual staff were able to communicate with the family who spoke a Guatemalan indigenous language called 'Akateko' in addition to Spanish. Since the mother needed additional lab testing done while they were in Wichita, the family drove to a lab testing facility near Wesley Hospital to get labs completed. Subsequent



admission to the hospital was necessary and it illustrated how challenging and time-consuming it can be to navigate a complex health care system, especially for undocumented people who work full time in Caney, Kan., a manufacturing facility about 15 miles from Coffeyville.

### **Uncertainty on Future State Grants**

Guadalupe Clinic Executive Director J.V. Johnston shared that the Guadalupe Clinic receives a grant through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Community Care Network of Kansas (CCNK). However, with the new Trump Administration, J.V. expressed uncertainty about the grant getting decreased or possibly eliminated. J.V. added that the Guadalupe Clinic will be planning to try and replace the grant funds if necessary.

### **Providing Language Access and Removing Barriers to Access Quality Care**

From a patient demographic perspective, J.V. said that 60% of Guadalupe Clinic's patients speak Spanish. Due to the tremendous increase in Spanish-speaking patients in the last several years, J.V. said that the KU Medical School in Wichita now hires Spanish language interpreters for the two Guadalupe Clinics; there are 2-3 Spanish language interpreters per clinic. Recognizing the overwhelming need to help Guadalupe Clinic patients address health issues related to vision, the Guadalupe Clinic started its very first vision clinic. In addition, there has also been a huge need to address behavioral health. Since 2024, the Guadalupe Clinic has been providing mental health services for patients. Demonstrating yet another strategic partnership in action, the Guadalupe Clinic has forged a partnership with Friends University's Family Therapy program to pay staff to provide counseling services for patients. A unique aspect of this strategic partnership between the Guadalupe Clinic and Friends University, is that the therapists will need to speak Spanish.

After conducting various surveys and seeking feedback from the Guadalupe Clinic patients, there were a large number of missed appointments that were due to access to transportation to the clinic. Other barriers were the inability of patients to take time off work from their hourly positions. Fortunately, the Guadalupe Clinic has been able to provide Lyft vouchers for patients who have either none or limited transportation capabilities. There is a Saturday clinic that is staffed by the KU Jaydocs, so as to accommodate patients' work schedules.

Yet another goal identified in the Guadalupe Clinic's strategic plan is the establishment of a dental clinic. J.V. shared that the clinic hopes to begin fundraising for a dental clinic in the next year or two, however much will depend if previous grants that came down from KDHE and CCNK could be impacted with the new administration. In addition to serving as Guadalupe Clinic Executive Director, J.V. also serves as a City of Wichita City Council person for District 5 in west Wichita. J.V. also has earned a significant amount of housing expertise and has joined City Council person Mike Hoheisel in advocating for more access to housing, and efforts to shield tenants from retaliatory landlord actions and provide wrap-around supports for the unhoused.

Now more than ever, the mission of the Community Care Network of Kansas (CCNK) is essential because CCNK seeks to strengthen, support and represent their network of members in transforming the communities they serve through equitable access to high-quality, whole person care.

### **Community Care Network of Kansas – Achieving Equitable Access to High-Quality Healthcare for all Kansans**

In speaking with Community Care Network of Kansas (CCNK) Chief Strategy Office Alice Weingartner on the important roles that navigators play for access to health for Black Kansans, Hispanic Kansans and all Kansans - the trained navigators are essential. Alice stated that the project called [Cover Kansas](#) has been extremely helpful in that certified navigators help people access the various marketplace plans for

free. What has previously been considered a complex and arduous process has been simplified and certified navigators can offer unbiased expertise to help Kansans compare plans and answer questions. Alice explained that if a person is not eligible, they are referred to access local resources and community health centers, stand-alone clinics. We also know that many of the health centers also have trained navigators on staff, who are monitoring the patients. The navigators can have functions that are different and may play dual roles. Another consideration that is worth sharing related to Black Kansans and Hispanic Kansans' access to care is that health centers operate very independently. The insight that Alice shared was that Genesis Family Health clinics in southwest Kansas focus primarily on the Hispanic population, since Hispanics comprise a majority of the population in the southwest Kansas region. Alice also spoke to the fact that Cowley County for instance in central Kansas has a dramatically increasing Latino population there. Furthermore, community health centers are required to ensure they provide services that are culturally thoughtful, and employ bilingual staff or other language interpretation services. It is not a surprise that Spanish is the highest non-English language that is used among the community health centers.

With regards to technology and utilizing language access services, Alice shared about the rising demand of [Propio](#) Language Services across Kansas. Propio is a vendor that provides interpreting and language services such as video remote interpreting, over the phone interpreting, on site interpretation and translation and localization services. It is fascinating to watch the Propio service be used at the Cowley County Health Department where visual cues are important for both the person(s) and health department staff. Since COVID-19, Kansas has made efforts to increase language access in healthcare due to its ability to enable effective communication between patients and providers – which leads to improved health outcomes, accurate diagnoses, the appropriate treatment plans and just overall satisfaction among patients. This empowerment for patients to actively participate in their healthcare needs has been tremendously helpful. Clinic staff from the Guadalupe Clinic mentioned that years ago, due to a lack of language access, it was not uncommon for children of the Spanish-speaking parents or guardians to translate highly technical medical terminology and diagnoses.

### **Supporting Language Access: Alce Su Voz “Speak Out”**

One particular nonprofit language access organization that began during covid is [Alce Su Voz “Speak Out.”](#) Alce Su Voz is a coalition of Spanish-speaking Latinx families, interpreters, healthcare providers, community leaders and university faculty and students whose mission is to improve health equity for Spanish speakers and speakers of indigenous languages in Kansas.

### **Black Kansans’ Access to Health:**

According to September 12, 2024 KHI report titled, [“Kansas Uninsured Rate Holds Steady, but Remains Higher Than the U.S. Rate,”](#) among Black or African American Kansans, the uninsured rate (10.9 percent) was nearly two times higher than that of non-Hispanic White Kansans, and higher than the national rate (8.5 percent) for the Black or African American population. In addition, Black Kansans are more likely to be uninsured than non-Hispanic White Kansans. The uninsured rate for Black Kansans is higher than the national rate for Black or African American people.

### **Addressing the Inequity of Environmental Injustice**

It must also be noted that there are environmental justice and environmental health effects that Black Wichitans in northeast Wichita (29<sup>th</sup> and Grove neighborhood) have disproportionately been affected by adverse human health and environmental effects. Community meetings in 2022 revealed the toxic groundwater contamination, and a study the following year (May 2023) found higher rates of liver cancer and lower birth weights. The community was unaware for years, and most learned about it from the study.

In May 2023, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) released a [health study](#) that cautioned neighborhood members to avoid using well water due to the decades-long adverse effects of the groundwater contamination.

The residential neighborhood of 29th and Grove Site is located along the northern part of a Union Pacific (UP) Railroad rail yard south of the K-96 Highway, between Highway I-135 and Grove Street. Nearly 40 years ago, Union Pacific Railroad caused a contamination spill that affected both the groundwater and soil near the 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove residential neighborhood, which is a low-income Black neighborhood in northeast Wichita. Over the years, increased liver cancer rates persisted among residents of the 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove community without acknowledgement by UP or other local and state agencies and municipalities on the cause of contamination. The contamination was addressed during efforts to redevelop the 21st Street corridor between I-135 and Grove Street in 1994. Some community stakeholders, including City of [Wichita Council member Brandon Johnson](#), whose district 1 includes the 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove neighborhood, have indicated that contamination may have happened back in the 1970s. Since 2023, various public meetings with KDHE, the EPA Region 7 office and the U.S. Department of Justice have convened to seek resources for trichloroethylene (TCE) free testing. The TCE chemical is a carcinogen, leading to liver cancers and other cancer-related health issues.

Three federally-qualified health clinics in Wichita, [Hunter Health](#), HealthCore and GraceMed are all providing free TCE testing for residents who live in the 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove neighborhood or others who would like to be tested from possible exposure. In addition, the Wichita Black Nurses Association has been collaborating with the federally-qualified health clinics, Hunter Health, HealthCore and GraceMed to provide TCE testing. However, there has been much confusion over the past two years on which entities would pay for the health testing for residents living near 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Grove. Fortunately, as of January 21, 2025, efforts are underway for \$1 million to be made available for cancer screenings and other medical tests for the affected residents. KDHE will allocate \$2.5 million into testing and the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County will allocate \$125,000 each to meet the match to access the \$1 million.

The strategy has been evolving in terms of how to provide short-term and long-term testing of residents who live at the 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove Street neighborhood and parts of northeast Wichita. As of January 27, 2025, there is still \$875,000.00 to raise to meet the \$2.5 million that the State allocated. Former City of Wichita Council woman (District 1) and community volunteer LaVonta Williams shared that for her, this environmental injustice was personal for her and her family. LaVonta stated that the chemical spill affected her family and as the eldest of nine siblings, today there are only four siblings left. While LaVonta said she cannot say for certain that her siblings' deaths were attributed to the chemical spill, she just wants to make sure that all voices are heard. LaVonta stated that as a former City Council person, she wants her fellow community members to be heard.

Yet another issue to consider is housing and its effect on Black Wichitans who live near 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove. Nearly 80% of residents are renters in these homes. As such, the process has been very complicated for KDHE, the EPA and other community stakeholders to contact the homeowner of these rental units to get permission to conduct TCE testing and other health education. Per the KDHE study conducted in April 2023, there are [2,793 addresses](#) in the 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove neighborhood.

### **Opportunities to Improve Black Kansans' Health Outcomes**

From a health outcome perspective, Black Kansans are more likely to go without care due to cost. Black Kansans have worse reported health status and research shows that Kansas' health care system doesn't work as well for Black people. The April 29, 2024 KCUR news article that is included in the environmental scan provides additional information about this.

## **Center for African American Health**

Fortunately, concerted efforts are currently happening to improve Black Kansans' access to health. The Kansas Black Leadership Council is working to improve access to care for all Kansans. The University of Kansas Medical Center has established a Center for African American Health that focuses on improving health outcomes for African Americans and other marginalized populations.

In speaking with the Center for African American Health (CAAH) executive director Nicole Garner, she said that on July 1, 2025, they will be celebrating their second anniversary in existence. Nicole described the Center's approach to address the health risk factors that affect Blacks, including cardio vascular disease, mental health, diabetes, black/maternal health and cancer. Nicole aptly described taking an incremental approach by focusing on cardiovascular disease and mental health. As year three unfolds, the plan will be to address diabetes and maternal health. In addition, the policy pillar led by KU Associate Professor of Population Health Sharla Smith, Ph.D., MPH aims to enhance and improve the health and wellness of Black and African Americans through education, research and policy.

In year five, the Center plans to focus on addressing cancer through programming, partnerships and policy. It will be essential for the Center to strategically improve health outcomes of Black Kansans. Nicole added that hopefully with this work, it will lift all tides and positively impact refugees, Hispanics, etc.

A critical element that is important to highlight is how Nicole described how the Center has been very intentional on participating in research projects. She shared the questions the Center asks before consideration of a research project including if it is a good fit for the Center, and asking what are the plans after the research project? What is the compensation? In addition, it is important to ask what does protecting the community's intellectual property look like? Nicole concluded that the Center works with intentionality, so the community feels comfortable – because once the trust is broken, it's hard to get back.

## **Black Kansas in Review: Health Report**

Most recently, thanks to the leadership and investment support of the REACH Healthcare Foundation, the REACH Healthcare Foundation partnered with the Urban Institute to collaboratively develop the “Black Kansans’ in Review: Health Report Community Report Out. On December 12, 2024, the REACH Healthcare Foundation hosted a [webinar](#) to discuss the report findings and illustrated the shared commitment to advance health equity and highlight systemic challenges to identify opportunities for positive change.

As noted in the Black Kansas in Review: Health Report Executive Summary by Kristen Brown, Faith Mitchell and Mykelle Richburg, in 2024, the Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy (CNP) conducted an assessment of the health status of Black Kansans, shedding light on critical health disparities across the state. The following health metrics were analyzed for several key reasons as noted in the Executive Summary: promoting health equity, shaping policy and empowering communities. Also noted in the report, utilizing data from 2022, CNP revealed the most common causes of death for all Kansans are heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries, cerebrovascular events (strokes), lower respiratory illnesses, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, suicide and kidney disease. Another critical emphasis is the disparities that exist between the rate of death for Black Kansans compared to all races in Kansas and nationally. There is a clear recognition for more targeted and culturally appropriate interventions as well as more comprehensive health data collection efforts.

## **Wichita Black Nurses Association – Serving as the voice for Black nurses and diverse populations**

The [Wichita Black Nurses Association chapter](#) was founded in 2013. As a chapter of the National Black Nurses Association, Inc., the Wichita Black Nurses Association (WBNA) has made an incredible impact

for all. With its founding in 2013, just seven years later, the WBNA immediately began serving on the front lines of COVID-19 to partner with federally-qualified health clinics (HealthCore, GraceMed, Hunter Health), community health clinics including Guadalupe Clinic and the Sedgwick County Health Department. Thanks to the steadfast servant heart leadership and efforts of the WBNA, the Wichita Black Nurses were extremely essential in providing equitable access for COVID-19 testing and administering the COVID-19 vaccines. The WBNA has evolved to an exceptional model of what it is today, as a chapter of the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA).

The Wichita Black Nurses Association (WBNA) has the same mission of the National Black Nurses Association which is “to serve as the voice for Black nurses and diverse populations ensuring equal access to professional development, promoting educational opportunities and improving health.”

Maryon Habtamariam is a retired nursing instructor for the Wichita State University College of Health Professions and is an active member of the WBNA and Board member for the Guadalupe Clinic. In speaking with Maryon, she shared that the WBNA played a pivotal role in supporting the Wichita community during the COVID-19 pandemic through various initiatives focused on delivering vaccination and testing for underserved Wichitans.

Maryon stated, “The WBNA collaborated with the Sedgwick County Health Department and local churches to organize vaccination clinics to serve historically underserved neighborhoods. We also did mobile vaccinations to increase our reach, by using a medical van from GraceMed. This enabled us to set up [mobile vaccination clinics](#) at various locations such as churches [Holy Savior Catholic Church, St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, Progressive Missionary Baptist Church and with the Guadalupe Clinic] to increase accessibility to vaccines and testing.”

Maryon also added that beyond vaccination efforts, the WBNA has kept on addressing public health issues such as the partnership with GraceMed and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to provide free lab screening tests for Wichita residents who live in the 29<sup>th</sup> and Grove neighborhood that has been tremendously impacted by elevated liver cancer rates due to the groundwater contamination from the Union Pacific Railroad spill that happened over 40 years ago.

## **1. Business**

The environmental scan was charged with exploring data on the “*Distribution of state and federal contracts for minority business owners, removing barriers on access to capital for entrepreneurs.*” Repeated attempts over several months were made in contacting the Kansas Department of Commerce’s [Office of Minority and Women-Owned Business](#), and to no avail. As stated on the website for Minority- and Woman-owned Business Certification on the Kansas Department of Commerce, “Certification from the Kansas Statewide Certification Program increases opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses to gain contracts and subcontracts from government and private entities committed to the inclusion of minority- and women-owned businesses. Certifications administered are Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Woman Business Enterprise (WBE).

*At this time, the State of Kansas Division of Purchases does not have contract goals for DBEs, MBEs or WBEs.*” It is recommended to further explore why the Kansas Division of Purchases does not have contract goals for DBEs, MBEs or WBEs and continue to seek engagement with the Office of Minority and Women-Owned Business division at Kansas Commerce.

## **Create Campaign, Inc. - Wichita**

We made efforts to further explore and affirm the substantial rise in Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics entrepreneurship. In particular, we connected with the Create Campaign, Inc. Located in Wichita and established in 2015, the Create Campaign is a minority business development nonprofit that is advancing inclusion in entrepreneurship. Create Campaign’s mission of activating urban entrepreneurs in the Midwest to launch, innovate and grow was started by founder Christina Long. Christina is an entrepreneur as well as journalist who worked for the Wichita Eagle newspaper for nearly 20 years.

As stated by Create Campaign, Inc., African-American and Hispanic/Latino entrepreneurs do not have the same business start and growth experience as their peers in the Kansas entrepreneurship community. The impact of historic and systemic factors have created barriers that have delayed the full development of robust minority-owned firms. Create Campaign commits to developing sustainable pathways and solutions to help minority entrepreneurs gain access to information, capital and resources that can lead to generational wealth-building. Create Campaign’s Spark Program provides, both in English and Spanish, a hands-on business training in planning, financials, and management with curriculum and coaching tailored to minority entrepreneurs. The 12-week program is designed for new and growing for-profit businesses. In speaking with Create Campaign -Spark Program Director Alejo Cabral, he said, “Kansas Black and Kansas Latino entrepreneurs focus more on making a sale than turning a profit. They (Kansas Black and Kansas Latino entrepreneurs) will give their customers a discount – but they (customers) didn’t ask for a discount! And I’ll tell our entrepreneurs, ‘No, please don’t do that! Do you ask for a discount when you buy clothes or food? No, you don’t ask for a discount, so why do we as business owners give discounts? You can offer your customers specials, but you first need to know how much you can offer. Alejo also shared that when Black and Hispanic businesses are started, it’s not uncommon for these entrepreneurs to have about \$5,000 cash on hand - while White entrepreneurs can have upwards of about \$120,000.00 cash on hand. This is an astronomically larger amount than entrepreneurs of color have. Alejo shared that if the entrepreneurs that he’s working with who have not done a fundraising round before or know what angel investing is, it is a bad strategy for communities of color.

### **Small Business Resource Center for Minority Communities**

The Executive Director of a small business resource nonprofit in northeast Kansas mentioned that the organization continues to be focused on offered free support with planning, registering, funding, operating, and growing a person’s business. Prior to launching this innovative small business resource center, the organization went out and surveyed small business owners in the community. The intent of the survey was to identify barriers that entrepreneurs face in the community. These four major barriers were:

- Trust issues amongst entrepreneurs toward service providers being able to meet their specific needs.
- Cultural competency challenges on the side of entrepreneurial support organizations.
- Lack of multilingual programs.
- Entrepreneurs’ lack of awareness of existing resources.

The small business resource nonprofit continues to offer various programs and services and will continue to live out its vision of empowering the community to own their economic future:

- **Business Operations:** Obtaining Permits, Renewals, Inspections, obtaining an EIN Number, Business Registration, Locating Business Space
- **Financial Management:** Financial Projections, Grant/Loan Searching, Understanding Tax Obligations
- **Professional Development:** Minority Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Certifications, Coaching
- Strategy and Planning, Building a Business Strategy, Business Expansion, Business Plan Development
- **Marketing & Promotion:** Business Marketing, Social Media, Networking Events, Business Outreach, Quickbooks and excel training and more

## **Black Business**

Thanks to the efforts of Create Campaign president and founder Christina Long, the [State of Black Business](#) in Wichita presentation was developed in 2016 for the Create Campaign by Dell Gines, Ph.D. , CEcD. Dr. Gines served as the then Senior Community Development Advisor for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. The presentation evaluated the significant increase in Black Business growth in Wichita from 2007 to 2012.

Efforts to reach Dr. Gines were unsuccessful and while he has since departed the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Dr. Gines' guide to "*Building Entrepreneurship Ecosystems in Communities of Color*" that he and Rodney Sampson created is an exceptional guide. "Building Entrepreneurship Ecosystems in Community of Color" provides details on how to develop thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems specifically tailored to communities of color. The guide emphasizes inclusive practices to address historical disparities and empower diverse entrepreneurs by providing tailored support, access to capital, mentorship networks and culturally relevant resources, all which actively promote diversity within the ecosystem itself as Dr. Gines argues. The guide aims to create equitable economic opportunities for communities of color through entrepreneurship.

According to a fact sheet published on February 1, 2024, the [U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#), Office of Advocacy shared that nationwide, Black business owners own 3.5 million businesses and employ more than 1.2 million people. This represents an annual increase of over 7 percent in people employed by Black entrepreneurs.

Describing itself as "Entrepreneurs helping entrepreneurs" and founded in 2021 by Sheila Ellis-Glasper and Jermain Glasper, the Black Entrepreneurs of the Flint Hills serves over 100 business members in Riley, Geary, and Pottawatomie counties in the Flint Hills region. The Black Entrepreneurs of the Flint Hills' purpose is to empower, equip and engage black, [socially](#) and economically disadvantaged business owners in the Flint Hills with resources to build stronger and more effective businesses to positively impact our community.

## **Blackprint ICT – Promoting Black Businesses in Wichita**

In taking yet another innovative and engaging approach to supporting Black-owned businesses, in November 2024, over eight Black-owned businesses in downtown Wichita were showcased to kick off Small Business Saturday. What made this such an important event is that a shuttle bus tour was the featured approach to enable Wichitans to be in community as they visited and shopped at the Black-owned businesses. Wichita Community leader, entrepreneur and founder of [The Blackprint ICT](#), Tasha Hayes, said that "What we find is that 96% of Black-owned businesses don't make it to their 50th anniversary due to the lack of visibility and resources. While we know there is an increase in Black entrepreneurship, it's hard to sustain a brick and mortar model. We came together to intentionally support partners, build community and develop a supportive ecosystem for Black brands to thrive in Wichita." The Blackprint ICT is unique in that the retail store, nestled in downtown Wichita is located next to other Black-owned businesses so as to uplift and connect Black creators and foster a supportive ecosystem for Black brands.

## **Intersecting Racial Identity, Education, Business, Economic Development and Civic Engagement: Dr. Tasha Kelly**

The last several years of Dr. Tasha Kelly's journey have been anything but linear, but she would not have it any other way! Originally from Newport News, VA, Dr. Tasha moved to Kansas 3 years ago, joining her husband Corinthian and family members Veronica, Daryl, and Judge Jacqueline Kelly, who had

already built strong roots in Wichita. Dr. Tasha recalls that in early 2022, she attended a program that was transformative and helped her tap deeper into the Wichita Black community.

Known as [The Gathering](#), the event offers a chance for Black professionals to network with each other and with the business community. The purpose of The Gathering is to serve as a “welcome mat” for Black professionals to the business community and offer them a way to mingle with other like-minded contacts who might rarely find themselves in the same room together if not for the networking event. The Gathering describes its three primary aims to be a landing space for Black professionals, intentionally connect Black professionals to cultivated opportunities, and to determine how members can best benefit and support each other's diverse talents.

As Dr. Tasha's journey unfolded in 2022, she met [Create Campaign, Inc.](#) Spark Community Business Academy Program Director, Alejo Cabral. Create Campaign, Inc. is a minority business development nonprofit that is advancing inclusion in entrepreneurship. With more than 10 years under her belt working in federal student aid and higher education leadership roles, Dr. Tasha shifted gears to pursue entrepreneurship full-time in the Fall of 2023. Thanks to the leadership of Create Campaign founder, President and CEO Christina Long and Alejo Cabral, Dr. Tasha received the knowledge and tools to launch and activate her entrepreneurial dream.

Dr. Latasha N. Eley Kelly, or “Dr. Tasha” as she is fondly called, launched a new project of [The Millennial Black Professor](#) called [TMBP Media](#) in June 2024. Dr Tasha founded TMBP Media after receiving one of three Wichita Foundation [Info Challenge Grants](#) awarded in 2023.

Dr. Tasha explained that TMBP Media is a digital platform designed to amplify marginalized voices through storytelling, ethical journalism and community engagement. Dr. Tasha says the goal of her new platform is to give people a chance to share their stories and insights with the community, help listeners understand that there is a wide range of Black experiences, and affirm that your story has value even if your experience is different. It was very fitting that Dr. Tasha's first podcast episode dropped on June 19, 2024: Juneteenth.

Fast forward nearly six months later, Dr. Tasha embraced her entrepreneurial talents and opened [Left on Read](#), a Black-owned bookstore in downtown Wichita on November 30, 2024. Dr. Tasha explains her store name as representing the many authors of color who are left on read, like an ignored text or email. What makes Dr. Tasha's store so transformative is that it's much more than a bookstore. Left on Read is intentionally established as a welcoming space where Dr. Tasha can amplify representation and empower the community by unapologetically promoting and supporting Black voices.

As 2025 unfolds, look for Lead on Read to continue serving as an umbrella for all of Dr. Tasha's work - including her riveting [Black in One Piece™](#) podcast, workshops, author-focused events, and relatable community programming. Located in the heart of Wichita's downtown on Douglas Avenue (612 E. Douglas, Suite 200), take the alley and follow the rainbow-brick road to discover Left on Read and support a Black-owned business that is making meaningful change.



School funding was identified in the survey and to explore if there was any correlation related to race and ethnicity in how the Kansas school funding formula is devised and allocated to Kansas school districts. There is substantial data on the KSDE website on the Legal Maximum Budget, also known as “Legal Max,” which includes the general fund (funding formula) and supplemental general fund. Essentially, the school funding formula is derived from a. the higher of the first preceding year’s enrollment (excluding pre-school aged, at-risk and virtual), b. second preceding year’s enrollment (excluding pre-school aged, at-risk and virtual), plus the current year’s weightings (includes pre-school, at-risk, plus virtual state aid. Regarding weightings, there are at least 10 various weightings that are considered in the funding formula that include bilingual (contact hours or headcount), at-risk (free meal eligibility), high density, at-risk, transportation, cost of living, special education and more. More information is provided in a “[What is Legal Max](#)” presentation provided by Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) Director of School Finance Dale Brungardt and KSDE Assistant Director of School Finance Sara McCulla.

In addition, we had an opportunity to meet with Dale to further delve into the Legal Max information on school districts such as USD 259 Wichita Public Schools, the largest school district in Kansas, and other school districts, including USD 210 Hugoton Public Schools in southwest Kansas.

### **Race and Ethnicity are Not Impacted by Kansas’ School Funding Formula**

After reviewing massive amounts of school funding formula data, it was extremely helpful to meet with KSDE Director of School Finance Dale Brungardt. As a former superintendent of USD 327 Ellsworth Public Schools in Ellsworth, Kan., Dale’s perspective was especially insightful because he shared helpful context when he served as a superintendent for a rural school district. Dale indicated that school funding formulas are not impacted on race and ethnicity.

### **Kansas Student School Funding Formula**

The base state aid per student for the 2024-2025 school year is \$5,378.00. As explained in the KSDE Legal Max document and other information, the formula is based on various factors, such as number of students enrolled, cost of living, and other costs associated for certain student populations. Dale explained that with the \$5,378.00 as the base and you take 969 students and multiply that by \$5,378.00 per student, it equals to \$5,211,282.00, for the sole counting of students.

Dale explained that essentially the school formula is based on counting students, regardless of race or ethnicity. Student numbers can change and auditors will actually go out and physically conduct a count of students. Dale added that where it may start mattering is the ‘weighted enrollment’ of students, which are basically population segments, including bilingual populations. In this instance, there can be seen the race and ethnicity elements being impacted. We truly appreciated the insight that Dale shared with us because he explained how the weighted enrollment of students are essentially population piece. For instance, higher bilingual counts can eventually see how ethnicity is being impacted. Dale explained that if a school district needs more ESL programs and services, a school district can receive more funding because they are trying to target the services that the students need. Dale described that Kansas’ English Language Learner school funding formula is based upon the greater of two weightings, headcount or full-time equivalent (FTE). As such, the formula is used to calculate the amount of state funding that a school district receives to help pay for ESOL services.

### **Weightings Correlation**

As noted in the Kansas School Finance system information, weightings are added to each school district’s regular FTE enrollment in order to reflect additional costs associated with serving certain student

populations, including at-risk, bilingual, and special education. Additional weightings address other district characteristics, such as a high-density at-risk population, transportation, and new facilities. For context, Dale calculated how USD 210 Hugoton Public Schools receives \$8.7 million in school funding, while USD 259 Wichita Public Schools receives \$377 million by comparison and by weighting factors.

### **Advocating for Rural Public School Education: Adrian Howie, Superintendent of USD 210 Hugoton Public Schools**

In addition to serving as USD 210 Hugoton Public Schools superintendent, Adrian Howie serves another critical role as advocate for rural public school education. Adrian also serves as a school funding equalization advocate. As a member of the Kansas School Superintendent Association (KSSA) and a board member of the national School Superintendent Association (AASA), Adrian makes frequent trips to Topeka during the Kansas Legislative session. He estimated being in Topeka between three to four times a month during the legislative session.

### **Hugoton's Dramatic Demographic Shifts**

Situated in the far southwest corner of southwest Kansas, Hugoton has a population of 3,747 people, per the 2020 U.S. Census. For nearly 100 years, Hugoton has been known as a natural gas hub when it was discovered there in 1927. Shortly after 1927, Hugoton quickly became known as a major center of natural gas extraction. For decades, Hugoton enjoyed the financial benefits from natural gas. However, within the last 10-15 years, community leaders have mentioned the depletion of the natural gas fields have essentially obliterated their community's financial benefits. Combined with the dramatically changing demographics, has led to growing pains in this rural town.

USD 210 Hugoton Public Schools Superintendent Adrian Howie moved to Hugoton over 10 years ago with his family to serve as Superintendent. Keenly cognizant of the changing demographics of Hugoton and the overall southwest Kansas region, Adrian shared that when he arrived in Hugoton in 2014, there was a 47-49% Hispanic student population in USD 210. Over the last five years however, the Hispanic student population has increased to over 60%. At the elementary school level for USD 210, the Hispanic student population rises even higher, to 70-75%. From a historical perspective, Adrian compared that in the early 1950s, there was a less than 5% non-White student population in USD 210.

Adrian reflected on how he and his family have embraced the diversity of Hugoton, especially for his girls to experience. In that same vein, Adrian also shared his thoughts that the Hugoton community has struggled somewhat regarding its own identity due to the significantly changing demographics. As the years have unfolded, Adrian noted that the Hispanic population in Hugoton is mostly second and third generation Hispanic Kansans. USD 210 does receive more students without English speaking skills, known as English Language Learners. Most of the immigrant population has come from Mexico and Central America to fulfill the critical workforce needs for the local and regional agribusiness, construction and other food service sectors.

Adrian shared how the school system has an opportunity to adjust to the changing demographics from the K-12 aspect. An example that Adrian shared is how USD 457 Garden City Public Schools has implemented an all Spanish-speaking curriculum for PreK to 2nd grade. The intent of the USD 457 approach is to transition to the English language by the second semester. By doing this, there is a strategic approach to build English language skills and comprehension. Adrian shared that he would like to replicate this model for USD 210 Hugoton Public Schools. In addition, he has been making meaningful efforts to get more teachers of color. Adrian noted that most of the USD 210 school support staff are Hispanic, which is significant because of the critically important language and cultural access and relevancy that Hispanic support staff bring for students and families. An effort that Adrian has been continuing to focus on is to urge more Hispanic males to serve as teachers. He emphasized how important it is for Hispanic males to see themselves as teachers. Adrian recalled a sixth-grade Hispanic male teacher

who is from Hugoton and is a beloved school staff person due to how well he connects with students and from an aspirational aspect, the students can see themselves in the Hispanic male teacher.

### **Growing Technical Education Opportunities for Students**

When speaking about higher education, Adrian shared that perhaps some of it is cultural in that a significant amount of the Hispanic student population does not go onto higher education. Hispanic families are close knit and for a Hispanic student to attend Fort Hays State University, which is the closest four-year college from Hugoton, that is still three hours away. Adrian also noted that Wichita State University is over four hours away from Hugoton. Adrian was clear to share this was anecdotal, but that Hispanic students from Hugoton who move to a four-year university in Kansas - rarely if ever, return back home to Hugoton. Equally important to share, Adrian stated that there are struggles as well with White student success. Adrian shared how he appreciates the Kansas Department of Education Director Dr. Watson's efforts on identifying metrics, reviewing standard deviation data and compare access to higher education.

Ever aware of the importance of strengthening partnerships, Adrian shared how USD 210 and Seward County Community College (SCCC) have established a partnership to continue growing technical education opportunities for USD 210 Hugoton Public School students. Adrian shared his vision of how he would like to bus Hugoton high school juniors and seniors to SCCC for the bulk of the school day so the students can see themselves as a college student. Adrian added that if a USD 210 student decides to study natural gas compression technology at SCCC, that is a critical skill set that a student can earn. (For context, Liberal is approximately 37 miles away from Hugoton). Furthermore, a USD 210 student can work in the oil fields in the Hugoton area and earn a six-figure income. Alternately, Adrian shared that oil and gas has been Hugoton's identity for nearly 100 years. He stated that it's understandably been a hard cultural shift for the Hugoton community now that the robust oil and gas supplies have been depleted over the years in Hugoton. From a school board and municipal perspective, Adrian stated that it is also important to seek younger people, both Whites and Hispanics, to get civically-engaged, be it serving on the Hugoton school board or Hugoton city council.

### **Southwest Kansas Does Not Start at Wanamaker Road in Topeka**

Adrian recalls how there is a perception that southwest Kansas starts at Wanamaker Road in Topeka. While this is a facetious statement, he believes it is important to advocate for western/southwest Kansas rural school districts. When speaking about the school funding formula, Adrian mentioned that it is quite complicated. There is an 'equalization' mindset in that previous years, Hugoton would send checks to the state that were larger due to the robust oil and gas revenues. Hugoton Public Schools has taken more state aid in the last nine years. Without equalization, Hugoton Public Schools would be in a very precarious financial position. Every rural community, when it shifted to local property taxes, drives the funding formula. In essence, property poor districts have had a very challenging time staying afloat. From a policy aspect, some legislators do not believe in equalization aid. Further, the general public can tend to think that small rural school districts receive a large pot of money and many earmarks. It can be challenging for a community to understand the granular and complex details of a school funding formula design.

Looking ahead, there will be a new funding formula in 2027, and likely to cause angst. Adrian shared that Iowa and Arizona have pushed toward "vouchers" for lack of a better term, for school choice. What is important to remember for Kansas, especially in rural western/southwest Kansas, is that there are no private schools here. Adrian cautioned that the unintended consequences of creating a school funding formula will dramatically impact the demographics, students and families- that are served in USD 210 Hugoton Public Schools.

The challenge that Adrian noted is that it will be difficult to provide K-12 services. Another element to consider is the extreme volatility of valuations. Consider that \$375 million, 80% taxes paid on oil and gas

for the better part of approximately 100 years. For many years, the Hugoton community benefited tremendously, but the recent property taxes have skyrocketed. The numbers have flipped in that 20-25% oil and gas property tax payments are paid and 70-75% of residential property tax payments are paid.

### Graduation Rates for Kansas Colleges and Universities

Below provides a table featuring Kansas colleges and universities graduation rates in percentages by gender and race/ethnicity breakdown. In addition, the chart features transfer out-rates as well. This data is significant in better understanding the differences and needs for area of improvement related to persistence and completion of degree obtainment.

**Graduation rates of full-time, first-time, degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates within 150% of normal time to program completion, by gender and race/ethnicity and transfer out-rate: 2017 cohort**

Overall Graduation Rates	Wichita State University	WSU Tech	Newman University	Friends	K- State	University of Kansas	Emporia	Washburn	Pitt State
Total	51	36	54	62	71	69	54	53	58
Gender									
Men	48	41	44	58	67	66	50	47	57
Women	55	25	59	64	74	71	57	57	58
Race/Ethnicity									
American Indian/Alaska Native	67	0	67	0	64	28	33	29	20
Asian	63	46	67	33	75	74	0	80	50
Black of African American	32	27	39	33	46	45	50	28	44
Hispanic or Latino	43	33	48	50	57	59	48	50	52
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	N/A	0	67	0	0	67
White	57	37	57	66	73	72	58	56	61
Two or More Races	32	27	50	67	61	58	30	46	46
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	42	50	0	63	64	50	71	58	33
U.S. Nonresident	50	83	40	N/A	56	74	67	70	100
Transfer Out-Rate	28	14	N/A	16	18	23	N/A	27	26

*Date Release Date: December 5, 2024*

*SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, Winter 2023-24, Graduation Rates (provisional data)*

As is known, unemployment data for Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics vary depending on the quarter of each year, according to age group(s), educational attainment and other factors. According to labor department data at the federal level, Black and Hispanic unemployment are consistently higher than white unemployment rates, data. Per the [Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\) Report 1105](#) published in November 2023, labor force characteristics varied by race and ethnicity in 2022. As noted in report 1105, among the race groups, jobless rates were higher than the national rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives (6.2 percent), Blacks or African Americans (6.1 percent), and people categorized as being of Two or More Races (5.5 percent). The unemployment rate for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (4.0 percent) was little different from the overall unemployment rate in 2022. The jobless rates for Asians (2.8 percent) and Whites (3.2 percent) were lower than the national rate. The rate for people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity was 4.3 percent, compared with the rate of 3.5 percent for non-Hispanics.

Also noted in the BLS report is that there are long-standing labor market differences among race and ethnicity groups. These differences are associated with many factors, not all of which are measurable. As we have seen before, these factors include variations in age; educational attainment across the groups; the occupations and industries in which the groups work; the geographic areas of the country in which the groups are concentrated, including whether they tend to reside in urban or rural settings; and the degree of discrimination encountered in the workplace.

### **Economic Impact: National Data Related to Black and Hispanic-Owned Firms**

According to the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), in 2021, Black-owned firms generated \$293.1 billion in revenue and generated 1.4 million jobs. There were 4.3 million Black-owned firms in the U.S and make up about 13% of all firms. From a gender aspect, 42.1% of Black-owned firms were owned by women and 56.3% of firms were owned by men.

According to the MBDA, in 2021, Hispanic-owned firms generated \$766.8 billion in revenue and generated 3.0 million jobs. There were 5.1 million Hispanic-owned firms in the U.S. and make up about 15% of all firms. From a gender aspect, 42.1% of Hispanic-owned firms were owned by women and 56.3% of firms were owned by men.

As noted in the latest version of Kansas Statistical Abstract 2023 which was released in the Fall 2024, the highest number of employees work in the top five industries in Kansas: healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, retail trade, accommodation and food services and administrative and support and waste management and remediation services.

#### **Kansas Black-Owned Firms**

Also reflected in the Kansas Statistical Abstract are the top five industries represented by Kansas Black-owned firms in employing the largest numbers of people are administrative and support and waste management and remediation services, health care and social assistance, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing and manufacturing.

#### **Kansas Hispanic-Owned Firms**

The top five industries represented by Kansas Hispanic-owned firms in employing the largest numbers of people are accommodation and food services, construction, administrative and support and waste management and remediation services, manufacturing and retail trade.

More than 57 years ago, the federal Fair Housing Act (FHA) of 1968 was passed. As part of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the FHA was instituted with the goal of ending racial discrimination in the housing market. While progress has been made, there are still persistent issues related to federal enforcement not being fully implemented. Even more evident is that funding for programs to help people of color buy homes and begin to build generational wealth have been underfunded. As a result, race still plays a role in home ownership in Kansas. Unfortunately, Wichita and Kansas City, Kan. have shameful histories in redlining. In 1937, 64% of Wichita was redlined, making it the third most redlined city in the country. These redlined areas in Wichita currently comprise the downtown and south Wichita areas.

In Kansas City, JC Nichols, real estate magnate who developed some of Kansas City's most desirable neighborhoods, also redlined areas to keep marginalized people out. As is also known, the federal Fair Housing Act is not always fully enforced and an example of housing discrimination was reported in Wichita in 2024. With a supermajority conservative Kansas Legislature currently at the helm, it is uncertain if statewide fair housing legislation to enforce stricter anti-housing discrimination laws will be enacted. Kansas legislators can also fund programs to guide first-time homebuyers through the process.

### **Kansans Deserving Safe, Affordable Housing**

The [Kansas Housing Resources Corporation's \(KHRC\) 2024 Annual Report](#) provides an overview of efforts to enhance affordable housing across Kansas. While the report highlights various initiatives and successes, it does not provide specific data or analysis regarding affordable housing access for Black and Hispanic populations in Kansas. In contacting the KHRC Communications Director Emily Sharp to learn more on where to find data related to affordable housing access for Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics, we learned that the [Kansas 2024-2028 Consolidated Plan and 2024 Annual Action Plan](#) was a consolidated submission for community planning and development programs for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Kansas Consolidated Plan outlines priorities and guidelines for federally funded housing programs. This plan offers more insights into demographic impacts and strategies, but still seems to lack the specific demographic data on housing access disparities affecting Kansas Blacks and Hispanics. In October 2024, the [Kansas Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing](#) report examines barriers to fair housing and provides some information on housing access disparities affecting Black and Hispanic residents in Kansas. While the analysis document identifies plenty of impediments (limited English proficiency, resistance to minority rentals, biased lending practices, difficulty finding accessible housing) and potential fair housing activities, it lacks specific data related to Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics access to affordable housing.

### **Intersection of Housing and Economic Development**

Another intersection between housing and economic development is important to note, especially in southwest Kansas. Not having enough affordable housing stock to accommodate the needs in southwest Kansas is a tremendous challenge for economic development practitioners. We spoke with Dodge City-Ford County Development Corporation Director Joann Knight and Seward County Development Corporation Executive Director Eli Svaty regarding affordable housing needs in Dodge City and Liberal.

### **Rural Housing Incentive Districts are Key for Economic Development, Business in SW KS**

Meeting Joann Knight in downtown Dodge City in November 2024 was eye-opening to see the dramatic growth that has happened in just the last several years. Joann shared that Dodge City, like most of rural Kansas, is in desperate need of additional housing units. Joann shared that Dodge City recognized the need to conduct their first housing study in April of 2008. In addition to the 2008 housing study, Joann explained Dodge City conducted three additional housing studies since then. Joann referred to Dodge City's latest study which predicted they would need approximately 862 units from 2018-2024. Unlike urban housing needs, Joann explained how Dodge City uses several incentives such as the Neighborhood Revitalization Programs (NRP), Rural Housing Incentive Districts (RHID) and fee waivers based on income, rent price ranges and accessibility. When asked which incentive seemed the most effective, Joann immediately responded that the RHID has been the most important incentive. She noted that RHID enabled them to successfully build more than 600 units and have an additional 250 slated in development agreements that are anticipated to get finished by 2026. Leaving no stone unturned, Joann mentioned how they have addressed housing from single-family high market values to low income values. Plus, they focused on multifamily market values to low-income rentals. Further illustrating how critical it is for their housing programs to thrive, Joann explained why it's so important for Dodge City to meet their workforce demand. She added that doing this only encourages business development in Dodge City and Ford County to keep investing in southwest Kansas.

### **Immigrant Population Housing Challenges in SW KS**

Eli Svaty shared that he thinks housing is a much bigger challenge in southwest Kansas because of the high immigrant population. Eli stated that there are a fair number of landlords who own numerous homes, apartments and single family dwellings. Eli added that the challenge is they do not have a way to know how many of the homes are owner-occupied versus rentals. Eli said, "The challenge is – when you have people living in suboptimal dwellings where the home is run down and there are roof leaks for instance. If the landlord is not responsive, the renters – including children and families are in a dangerous situation. If the City of Liberal's code enforcement goes into the dwelling and informs the landlord that they cannot house people in the unlivable conditions they're in, then the option is for families to be kicked out into the streets and we can't have that. Also, during covid when the CARES Act funds were helping people pay their rent, we had issues when landlords, property owners did not give their W-9s because they didn't want the rent on the books. If the renters would pay cash, the landlords did not want to participate in the CARES act program because now the income is recordable and taxable." Eli concluded by saying that with the immigrant population as making up the majority of the workforce in Seward County, he and his staff are trying to protect renters. The challenge has been to constantly update records of rental properties and tenants, especially in a migrant community. Eli shared that his wife is from Nicaragua, so he is bilingual and understands the critically important cultural elements.

According to a report published on February 8, 2023 by the [Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University](#), in every state across the U.S., Black, Hispanic, and Native American households have lower homeownership rates than white households. The study also revealed that while homeownership rate gaps are pervasive, they tend to be largest in states in the Northeast and Midwest. In addition, the racial homeownership gap is most striking for Black households. At just 41.7 percent, Black households have the lowest homeownership rate nationally—30.0 percentage points lower than white households.

As a 13-year old immigrant who moved to Garden City from Chihuahua Mexico in 1989, Angelica Castillo Chappel shared how she arrived in Garden City with her family to seek a better life. Angelica earned her education from Garden City Community College and Friends University. As the organizer of the Garden City Community Mexican Fiesta for nearly 20 years and finance specialist for Security State Bank in Garden City for many years, Angelica has the pulse on the housing challenges and opportunities in Garden City. Angelica and her husband are housing developers in Garden City and manage Chappel Heights, a new residential area on the east side of Garden City, as well as Labrador Apartments and other real estate investments. Angelica mentioned how much of a tremendous need there is for low to moderate



(LMI) housing in Garden. LMI is a household income that is at or below 80% of the area median income. Low income is considered to be 50% or less of the area median income. An interesting observation that Angelica shared is that over the last 10-12 years, the adult children of immigrants in Garden City have become much more open and willing to try and secure traditional home mortgages than their parents. Angelica says that she always helps adult children with the tools and information needed to pursue the dream of homeownership. As the fastest-growing demographic group in the U.S., Angelica noted that homeownership rates are rising among Hispanics, at 49.5%, the largest increase of any racial or ethnic group. However, Angelica also noted the barriers to Hispanic homeownership, such as lower incomes, lack of access for safe and affordable credit and the ever-rising of home prices. Angelica also shared there still exists discrimination for both Blacks and Hispanics in the mortgage lending process that often coincides with higher interest rates.

### **Ensuring Safe and Affordable Housing Communities for Black Immigrants, Refugees**

Always focused on being an inclusive community in Garden City, Angelica works hard to continue building trust with the Black and Muslim immigrant and refugee populations in Garden City. Angelica works with the local Somali, Sudanese and other Muslim cultures to ensure that the housing (namely apartments) are together so that they feel a sense of community. The local mosque in Garden City is in a small apartment, but efforts are underway to raise funds to build a stand-alone mosque in the next handful of years. Angelica also added that for many years, the Muslim community would be required to travel to Denver or Kansas City to buy halal products. Angelica shared that in the spirit of collaboration, community members in Garden City came together to work with Walmart and other national retailers to create a system where halal meat and other products for the Muslim community could exist. Angelica shared that they made an economic development argument for this due to the fact that large sums of money were being spent to travel out of state to purchase the necessary items for Muslims to observe their Islamic faith and preserve their traditions and flourish.

### **Continued Challenges for Affordable Housing**

There are systemic hurdles that people of color have encountered in trying to buy homes for generations, be it through the practice of redlining, lending discrimination, or simply being shown fewer houses by real estate agents. An example of how a person of color's name appeared ethnic to a realtor in Wichita led to an alleged eventual housing discrimination as described in a March 16, 2023 news article that was published by [KMUW](#) National Public Radio affiliate in Wichita by Celia Hack.

According to a Kansas Action for Children (KAC) blog post titled, "[Access to home ownership can reduce barriers to opportunity for Kansans of color](#)" published on May 18, 2018, in Kansas, 70 percent of white Kansans own their homes, while only one-third (33 percent) of Black Kansans and only 53 percent of Hispanic Kansans own their homes. Also noted in the KAC blog, for Kansans of color who do own their homes, [the monthly costs](#) of home ownership make up a huge part of their budget. While standard recommendations are for people to spend a maximum of 30 percent of their gross monthly income on housing. Black and Hispanic Kansans are nearly twice as likely to spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing. While 20 percent of white Kansans spend at least 30 percent of their income on housing costs, 37 percent of Black Kansans and 31 percent of Hispanic Kansans spend at least 30 percent of their income on housing costs.

### **Enacting Ordinances Against Landlord Retaliation**

In speaking with City of Wichita – City Council person Mike Hoheisel (District 3), he is very focused on helping his constituents and other underserved community members who have been disproportionately retaliated against by landlord who get angry when tenants have expressed concerns about their housing conditions. Representing south Wichita, Mike mentions how his district is the most ethnically diverse

with sizable Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American populations. On November 20, 2024, Council Member Hoheisel testified before the [Special Committee on Available and Affordable Housing](#) meeting in Topeka on expanding safe and secure housing opportunities for Wichitans.

With a large portion of District 3 residents as being low-income, this is what led Mike to lead efforts for a landlord retaliation ordinance. On January 2, 2024, Wichita's City Council passed an [ordinance](#) aimed at preventing landlords from retaliating against tenants who express concerns about their housing conditions.

At the same Special Committee on Available and Affordable Housing, it was announced that rural Kansas needs around 4,000 new homes per year to meet a growing population's housing needs and address the state's housing crisis. Erin Beckerman with Kansas Housing Resources Corporation, shared with state Legislators at the November 2024 meeting that an estimated 3,800-4,800 homes need to be built each year in rural Kansas to meet the housing demand. This data was based upon the KHRC's 2021 statewide housing needs analysis. Erin added that this need of 4,000 homes in rural Kansas does not include metro areas. It is important to note that significant numbers of Hispanic populations live in rural Kansas and getting access to safe and affordable housing is a major challenge. As noted by Seward County Development Corporation Executive Director Eli Svaty, the housing challenge affects economic development and business expansion efforts, especially in a community like Liberal.

### **Proposed Legislative Efforts to Eliminate the Kansas Affordable Housing Tax Credit (KAHTC)**

KHRC's Emily Sharp recently shared that the 2025 Kansas Legislative session is slated to be extremely busy, especially with the federal administration change. As such, Ms. Sharp indicated that some legislators have expressed concerns about the fiscal cost of the Kansas Affordable Housing Tax Credit (KAHTC), a KHRC-administered state tax credit established in 2022 to address housing needs. [House Bill No. 2119](#) proposes to end the program on July 1, 2025. Ms. Sharp continued that as program administrators, KHRC's role is to *educate*, not *advocate*. They work to make stakeholders and policymakers aware of the potential impacts of policy decisions, but do not advocate or lobby for specific policy positions. As of the time of this environmental scan report, there is still a possibility that the Legislature could eliminate the credit. The KHRC believes that if this happens, it would significantly impact the state's housing development activity.

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## *Civic Engagement*

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As is known, civic engagement is multi-dimensional and just does not include voting. Numerous definitions of civic engagement describe it as the act of working through individual and collective actions to improve a community's quality of life such as volunteering, advocacy, joining civic and cultural groups, donating to charitable causes and voting among others. As previously noted, civic engagement can improve public health and health disparities, address societal issues and contribute to the overall public good. For the purposes of this environmental scan, voting was overwhelmingly identified as the civic engagement action to explore.

According to data from the [Pew Research Center](#), in 2020, 158.4 million citizens, almost two-thirds of estimated eligible voters, voted in the presidential elections.

According to the Kansas Statistical Abstract 2023 (as of November 1, 2023) data regarding voter registration and party affiliation by county, Wyandotte County and Douglas County are the only two largest populated counties statewide with a majority democrat party affiliation. While the environmental scan is not focusing specifically on political parties, it is important to consider the relevance of U.S. Census Bureau Citizens Voting Age Population (CVAP) [2018-2022] data.

### **Kansas Black Leadership Council - #BuildBlackKansas**

In 2015, the [Kansas Black Leadership Council \(KBLC\)](#) was launched by Wichitan and Publisher of The [Community Voice](#) Bonita Gooch, to seek change and identify KBLC legislative priorities. The KBLC mission is to advance meaningful change for Black or African Americans living in Kansas today, while also changing historical systems that have traditionally harmed Black Health, Wealth and Prosperity, allowing Kansans to achieve an equitable future.

Over the years, the KBLC platform is shared with state legislators and individual KBLC members are encouraged to advocate for issues as well. KBLC collaborates with the Kansas African American Affairs Commission and the Kansas African American Legislative Caucus to host a Black Legislative Day at the Capitol.

Stacey Knoell serves as Executive Director of the Kansas African American Affairs Commission (KAAAC) and also serves as the President of the Board of Directors for KBLC. Stacey shared the primary areas of activity that KBLC champions, including research, resources and civic engagement. In addition, the KBLC programs entail the Black Agenda, Kansas Black Leadership Day at the Capital and the Black Leadership Brunch that is held in Topeka, Lawrence, Manhattan Wichita and Kansas City, Kan.

Notably in 2021, KBLC's mission evolved to collaborate with Kansas communities to remove barriers to health, wealth, and social outcomes. KBLC's description of these efforts are accomplished through research, education, voter engagement, and advocacy. In 2023, another significant milestone for KBLC was the launching of the Kansas Black Health Initiative to promote equity and wellness for Black communities in Kansas. This joint collaboration between the Kansas African American Affairs Commission and the Community Voice enabled KBLC to secure an Increase the Reach grant to address racial disparities in healthcare. As written by Kerry Gooch in December 2023, the [Kansas Black Health Initiative](#) utilizes a multi-faceted approach that encompasses awareness and advocacy, support and data.

In 2024, Mark McCormick assumed the leadership role of the KBLC as Executive Director and has already made a tremendous impact so far. As a *New York Times* best-selling author and journalist for two decades serving as a reporter, editor and columnist, Mark provides insightful blog posts and other communications expertise for the KBLC. Using the hashtag **#BuildBlackKansas**, Mark and the KBLC are adamant in expressing how the KBLC will indeed rise to the challenge in the 2025 Kansas Legislature session. As noted in a January 31, 2025 communications outreach to KBLC supporters, Mark was upfront in sharing the challenges that KBLC is facing in the current political climate. Mark wrote in the January 31 email to supporters that, “The current composition of the Kansas Legislature, with its ideological shifts, makes it difficult to advance issues we care about deeply. However, I want to assure you that we are not stepping back, but adapting. While we will continue to push for change at the state level, our strategy will pivot to a greater focus on municipal-level policy changes across the state. This will allow us to engage more directly with communities and tailor our efforts to address their specific needs. With DEI currently under ferocious attack, advocating and educating about the current need for such programs will be two of the civil rights fronts on which we will be fighting. Also, the CROWN Act, a holdover issue from last session, will be an issue we will fight for in the legislature and locally. This Act seeks to protect individuals from race-based hair discrimination, ensuring that no one is denied educational or employment opportunities because of their natural hair texture or protective hairstyles.

### **Rooting the Power – To Participate in the Annual Black Legislative Day at the Capital (Feb. 17, 2025)**

#### **Jondalyn Marshall, Director/Program Manager of Root the Power**

Located in Wichita, [Root the Power](#) describes itself as a group of civically-engaged young people who motivate others to take part in registering to vote, hitting the voting polls, being active members in elections and taking part in conversations with the public and people in office.

Jondalyn Marshall, Director and Program Manager of Root the Power shared that she has served for Root the Power since 2018. Jondalyn said that her experience as an entrepreneur has enabled her to be a skilled mentor and facilitator with the young people involved in Root the Power and a connector with other community partners.

Jondalyn added that in 2024, Root the Power was able to expand to Kansas City, Colorado and Ohio. Jondalyn stated that Root the Power expanded to other states because of the organization's ability to energize and activate the voting process among youth, primarily high school and college students of color. By bringing students together to get out and knock on doors to urge people to register to vote has been a powerful exercise in civic engagement.

#### **Root the Power Achieved Success Due to Youth Voter Engagement Efforts**

Jondalyn reflected on Root the Power's success by sharing that neighbors are more apt to show up when you personally invited them to get out and vote. Jondalyn added that Root the Power achieved much success in the general election in 2024 because the youth personally invited voters of all ages to come out and vote. She wanted to make special emphasis that it is a powerful achievement when you see youth who are engaging their peers to get out and vote. If the students are not yet 18 years old yet, then the students are asking others who are close to them, family and friends, who are of voting age, to get out and vote.

#### **Youth Civic Engagement in USD 259 Wichita Public Schools**

Another success is that Root the Power started a civic engagement club at USD 259 Wichita Public Schools' Wichita Heights High School. By starting a brand ambassador pilot program at Heights High

School, the students' first meeting had well over 120 students who showed up. The average meetings during the academic school year hover between 20-25 students. In addition to civic engagement efforts, students also take part in organizing food drives for community members in need.

Another Root the Power success that Jondalyn describes is their ability to provide resources for young people and neighbors. Jondalyn said, "We are working together to remove barriers, increase access for voters and share information. You'd be surprised that a lot of folks don't know where their voting site is located. When some people learn that their voting site is down their street, they're surprised and excited. We are all about meeting neighbors where they're at. And we are inviting them. You know, a lot of people don't feel welcomed in the voting process and we tell them, yes - we want you to show up!"

Each year, 10 youth interns (high school students and college students) work with Root the Power and in 2025, a new high school location will be added. Since a majority of Root the Power youth are students of color, Jondalyn said, "It's very powerful to see the students bring their culture and language, to see them talk about voting issues and why it's important to them. They have so much to say! Often times, I like to sit back and listen. It's important for us to create safe spaces for young people to connect with like-minded young people. It's a beautiful thing to witness."

Look more for Root the Power as they participate in the Kansas Black Leadership Council's annual Black Legislative Day at the Capital on February 17, 2025 in Topeka.

### **KBLC: Safeguarding Voting Rights in Kansas**

Also included in the KBLC January 31 communication is the critical goal of safeguarding voting rights in Kansas. Mark continued by stating, "Every year, we see attempts to undermine access to the ballot box through restrictive measures, and we expect no less this year. We are preparing to fight back, alongside our allies, against any proposals that may limit or dilute voter access. Our commitment to defending this fundamental right is unwavering. Moreover, we will continue to stand with our allies on a range of critical issues, including LGBTQ+ rights, education policy, immigration reform, and the defense of essential social safety nets. In a time when so many basic rights are under attack, our work is often focused on defense and harm reduction—ensuring that policies are not passed that would further disenfranchise vulnerable communities. Issues like school vouchers, for example, aim to divert resources away from public education, weakening the system for everyone.

Efforts are underway for the Kansas Latino Community Network to continue collaboration with KBLC on these issues that have major implications on both Black Kansans and Hispanic Kansans.

### **Kansas Hispanic Civic Engagement**

Similar to statewide organizations such as the Kansas African American Affairs Commission (KAAAC) and the Kansas Black Leadership Council (KBLC), statewide civic engagement organizations such as the [Kansas Latino Community Network](#) and the [Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission](#) (KHLAAC), have actively engaged Hispanics from across the state to address issues affecting the communities. Both KLCN and KHLAAC host various types of civic engagement events throughout the year and across Kansas. Each spring, KHLAAC convenes a "[Latin@ Leadership Summit](#)," and KLCN hosts non-partisan civic engagement and leadership development activities in Wichita, southwest Kansas and Kansas City, Kan. Dating back to the 1970s during Kansas Governor John Carlin's tenure in office, the Kansas Hispanic Advisory Affairs Committee was created and for the first time provided a voice for Hispanics/Latinos in Topeka.

As noted in the accompanying CVAP data, there is an astounding number of eligible Kansas Hispanic voters over age 18 in southwest, southcentral and northeast Kansas. The numbers of eligible Hispanic voters is so profound that Hispanics could clearly determine the outcome of political races regardless of political party affiliation.

### **Kansas Latino Community Network (KLCN) Empowering Latinos Through Nonpartisan Civic Engagement, Leadership Development and Coalition Building**

Established just two years ago, the Kansas Latino Community Network (KLCN) is a critical nonpartisan organization that has grown dramatically in a relatively short amount of time.

The mission of KLCN is improving health equity by empowering Latinos through nonpartisan civic engagement, leadership development and coalition building. KLCN's founder and Executive Director Aude Negrete has amassed a deep experience and expertise in community organizing and civic engagement efforts. Aude has assembled a team and civic engagement toolbox based upon her previous career opportunities working in presidential campaigns and serving as the Executive Director of the Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission (KHLAAC).

The Kansas Latino Community Network is unique in how the organization utilizes data to inform, identify and target communities with the highest Latino population growth. The KLCN is intentionally designed to be data-driven and deliverable-driven. In addition to utilizing data, the KLCN recognizes the critical importance of continually engaging with Latino communities in order to get the pulse of what is happening in each community and then activate community driven initiatives.

Since the general election from last year, Aude indicated that the KLCN has received a tremendous amount of feedback that people are scared, there is a lot of uncertainty among Latino in both rural and urban communities in Kansas. Based upon receiving the feedback, Aude and her staff made it possible to convene and provide several sessions with a Latina art therapist. Aude stated, "While we were unable to provide immediate answers to unknown policy questions or uncertainty and fear, we were able to provide community members with support from a Latina art therapist. We were able to work through our feelings, be in community - regardless of a person's citizenship status or party affiliation. This was an important for KLCN because we actively sought direct feedback from community members and it was a community-driven 'ask' for what we can do to help relieve this anxiety. This is yet another unique program that has set us apart from other organizations. This also demonstrates how we (KLCN) are community-driven and we exhaust efforts to do our due diligence on what we can do to be most helpful for our communities. Another critical function that Aude described about KLCN is the vast stakeholder and leadership engagement efforts that they conduct across Kansas. Aude continued by stating, "We are able to engage the communities at different levels and intentionally place community members through the ladder of engagement. By doing this, it enables us to identify a bench of Latino community leaders. Through our data-driven and deliverable-driven approach, we are also able to provide communities with critical access to information that they may not otherwise receive. For instance, at the Kansas Legislature, it can be challenging to get updates to policymaking information if a person does not know how to access or ability to track the bills. This is a specialized knowledge skillset to track bills in a nonpartisan manner. We are then able to share this information with numerous stakeholders. It has been amazing to receive feedback from schools and news media for example. What is even more important is that the information gets published through news articles or disseminated by school districts. Because KLCN is nonpartisan, we are unbiased and provide reliable information for people in communities across Kansas to access and become informed. The additional feedback that we have received is how important it has been for KLCN to be an organization that was not only founded by Latinos, but is lead by Latinos and for Latinos statewide, both in rural and urban areas."

Another critical element that KLCN is addressing is that while some people are well-intentioned in developing programs for the Latino communities, oftentimes they do not have the lived experience or

cultural and language foundations to help the people they're trying to serve. Aude shared that what makes KLCN so unique is, "We are the community. This is why we have been able to grow so quickly and achieve success. We have been able to increase leadership development and become more engaged. We also were able to increase the amount of voter turnout in communities. Our goal will continue to be increasing the amount of people who vote with the largest number of Latino voters." In terms of the most important asset among all communities, people - Aude mentioned how powerful it is to hire a person to work for KLCN who can grow in leadership and coalition building. In reflecting on the success that KLCN has achieved, Aude concluded by saying, "It is important to hire someone from within the community. This is so important. Even if that person that we hire and develop doesn't stay forever with us, that is just one more leader that we were able to grow in Kansas who is Latino. What we see in our surveys are people who are engaged, who are volunteering and they have great experiences because they truly feel like they belong. We've created a space where Latinos are at the heart of everything we do. We grow the skills of people and we'll do everything we can to make them feel comfortable in an environment where they can thrive."

### **Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) Data and Effects on Eligibility to Vote**

Thanks to data sets prepared by Xan Wedel at KU IPSR, for the Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity – special tabulation from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the information is astounding. As examples, Finney County has 19,515 Hispanics who reside in Garden City and Holcomb. Among those 19,515 Hispanics, 8,595 people are eligible to vote. In Sedgwick County (Wichita), there are 80,925 Hispanics and 35,675 are eligible to vote. In Johnson County (Olathe), there are 49,730 Hispanics and 23,400 are eligible to vote. In Wyandotte County (Kansas City, Kan.), there are 50,740 Hispanics and 16,800 are eligible to vote. Since race and ethnicity are not collected as data in elections, the

Despite being the largest and fastest-growing segment of the population in Kansas, Hispanics largely lack political power even when they are the majority. Data reveal that Hispanics are underrepresented in local governments and have low to average rates of voter registration and voter turnout. Some of the low voter registration/voter turnout is due to lack of citizenship status among Hispanics as well as fear of interacting with government agencies. It must be noted that civic engagement is broadly defined and means more than just voting at the polls. Civic engagement describes various actions that people can take to improve their communities and society. Civic engagement can include volunteering, voting, participating in group functions, partaking in surveys, providing verbal or written testimony at city council/commission or legislative hearings, etc.

Civic engagement can also be a function that undocumented people have the opportunity to partake in. As is known, the U.S. Census Bureau collects data from everyone who participates in the census, regardless of legal status.

From an anecdotal standpoint, during the 2020 Census, there was a coalition of Kansas Hispanics who traveled across Kansas, including Liberal, Dodge City and Garden City to encourage everyone to fill out the census, including undocumented persons. Even after we explained to undocumented persons that they did not have to be a U.S. citizen to fill out the 2020 Census, there was still a strong reluctance and fear to complete the questionnaire because it was during the first Trump administration.

Regarding a voting standpoint related to Hispanics, one need only to refer to the July 2024 decision where a federal judge ruled Dodge City's five-decade-old election system does not unfairly suppress Latino voter choices and can remain in place, rejecting arguments from the American Civil Liberties Union and others. A [Kansas Reflector](#) article published on July 11, 2024 by Rachel Mipro stated that the ACLU, ACLU of Kansas, UCLA Voting Rights Project and the Cleary Gottlieb law firm filed the lawsuit against

the city of Dodge City and the city commission in 2022, seeking to implement district-based elections for city commission. As noted in the lawsuit, the data showed that Dodge City had 6,468 white citizens of voting age in 2022, accounting for 44% of the total voting population. For the same year, 7,176 Latino citizens were of voting age, an estimated 49% of the voting population. But only 30% of voters in the 2022 general election were Latino, according to data in the lawsuit. The voting rights groups, including ACLU Kansas indicated they would continue to examine voting rights in Dodge City.

### **Eligible Latino Voters**

As noted in the Pew Research Center's article titled, "[Key facts about Hispanic eligible voters in 2024](#)," published on January 10, 2024, Latinos have grown at the second-fastest rate of any major racial and ethnic group in the U.S. electorate since the last presidential election. An estimated 36.2 million were eligible to vote in 2024 up from 32.3 million in 2020. This represents 50% of the total growth in eligible voters during this time. However, Latinos are considerably less likely than Americans overall to be eligible to vote (53% vs. 72%). This is partly because the nation's Latino population includes a large number of people who are too young to vote or who are not U.S. citizens:

- 29% of Latinos are under 18, compared with 22% of the U.S. overall.
- 19% of Latinos are not U.S. citizens, compared with 6% of the total U.S. population.

Latino immigrants who are not eligible to vote include permanent residents (green card holders) and those in the process of becoming permanent residents; those in the U.S. on temporary visas; and unauthorized immigrants.

There are significant numbers of eligible Latino voters who reside in the urban communities of Kansas City, Kan., Topeka, Wichita and southwest Kansas (Dodge City, Garden City, Liberal, Ulysses, etc.).

### **Civic Engagement Goes Beyond Voting**

In speaking with the Director of the [Kansas Office of Appointments](#), Melissa King, she emphasized the importance of getting more Kansans to civically serve their state. The Office of Appointments assists the Governor with the appointment of over 1,000 people to serve on Kansas' boards and commissions. As noted on the Office of Appointments website, all qualified and service-minded Kansans are encouraged to apply or recommend qualified candidates. The Office of Appointments is virtually always seeking Kansans to serve, especially those who have a specialization or professional knowledge and experience that adds value to the state by serving on a board or commission. It should also be noted that community members who may not have a specialty are also urged to submit their application to serve. Lived experience is significant and with the changing demographics of Kansas, it is even more important to ensure that there is a diverse group of people to serve on Kansas boards and commissions. In having more diversity on these boards/commissions, it enables for much deeper and richer perspectives, a deeper understanding of the communities being served and why. The Kansas Office of Appointments has an easily accessible [form](#) for Kansans to review and complete if they are interested.

### **Unidos US**

Gary Sang works closely with Latino voters and the voter hub info where they collect data and share with a team of Latino voter initiatives. They focus on compiling data on Latino voter trends nationwide, looking at gaps and also demographics. Gary indicated that now more than ever, due to the political climate, Unidos US will increase its efforts related to its voter hub operations, evolving Know Your Rights information for undocumented persons and immediate dissemination of the information.



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## *Conclusion*

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Conducting this environmental scan was a remarkable opportunity to further explore seven issues that were collaboratively identified by Black Kansans and Hispanic Kansans through a survey approach. This was a powerful exercise to engage virtually together to discuss each of the seven issues and why they deserved to be further investigated from an available data and research perspective. We quickly surmised that just one issue could have easily become an entire environmental scan project completely by itself. Other researchers who we worked that provided clarity on data inquiries we made also expressed that the seven issues were too much to effectively explore at once. Nevertheless, researchers and stakeholders alike who we engaged on this scan – all indicated that this environmental scan was not only critically important, but the timeliness of conducting this scan was even more important because of the political climate.

### **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – Funding Opportunity for Local Data for Equitable Communities**

An extremely timely and relevant RFP has just been issued by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation \(RWJF\)](#). According to the RFP, the RWJF states that everyone should be able to live in a place where good health is within reach. But communities have long been harmed by policies and laws that make it harder for some to get basic necessities such as housing they can afford, reliable transportation and clean water. These barriers can reinforce and deepen health inequities. Data can help uncover the insights that community organizations and residents need to make their neighborhoods healthier, turning them into places where everyone has equal opportunities.

It is encouraging to know and rather timely that the RWJF and the Urban Institute are teaming up to launch a new program that offers up to \$50,000 in funding to 30 community-based organizations. These projects will use data to address pressing local needs—from housing to transportation to environmental pollution—making strides toward building healthier communities.

A recommendation for the Kansas Black and Kansas Hispanic community members to consider is that the foundational work of this environmental scan could perhaps be extended to pursue the RWJF and Urban Institute RFP. Most importantly, data can truly help uncover insights that community organizations and residents can take to impact their neighborhoods, especially now.

As we enter the third week of a new presidential administration, the implementation of mass deportation efforts, active dismantling of DEI initiatives at the federal level and attempts to halt federal grant funding have instilled huge amounts of fear. It is too soon yet to determine how this will impact the progress that has been made on civic engagement for Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics for instance.

The stakeholder interviews that we conducted also have shed much light on the challenges and opportunities inherent in each of the seven issues that we explored. The stakeholders who we met with have asked us to thank the REACH Healthcare Foundation for their investment and support of this environmental scan effort. There was so much goodwill gained as a result of this environmental scan and meeting with community stakeholders. Additionally, it was not uncommon when we met with stakeholders to hear them suggest to us that there were yet other stakeholders that we could benefit from meeting with. Unfortunately, there was limited time to meet with additional stakeholders, but a clear desire to continue engaging, cultivating these current and new relationships and building trust. Now more

than ever, critically important relationship building will be key to advance and protect the interests and well-being of Kansas Blacks and Kansas Hispanics.

*Environmental Scan research activities were supported by a grant from the REACH Healthcare Foundation*

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### **Kansas Black and Latino Research Recommendations**

Based upon the feedback form that the WSU Research Team created in late 2023, the following research areas were identified for further research data collection and analysis:

- **Race Definitions** – Problematic way that race and ethnicity is defined. Complex race and ethnicity definitions on the U.S. Census questionnaire. As an example, over 10.2% of Census 2020 respondents in Kansas marked ‘Two or more races’ in the Census 2020, which has often been confused with ethnicity self-identification.
- **Health** – Access to affordable health care, language access
- **Business** – Distribution of state and federal contracts for minority business owners, removing barriers on access to capital for entrepreneurs
- **Education** – School funding
- **Economic Impacts & Development** – related to employment/unemployment data and workforce needs as well as economic development in communities from businesses owned by Black and Latino owners
- **Housing** – access to capital for home ownership, informing on tenant rights (Wyandotte County for instance, with high rental vacancies due to lack of enforcement on tenant rights, language barriers and citizenship)
- **Civic Engagement** – voting data for Black and Latino communities and how do we mobilize the Kansas Black and Latino communities to shape and advocate for recommendations to create change?

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## Health

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## Health:

### Access to Healthcare:

- Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, County Fact Sheets (Each fact sheet shows the impact of KanCare expansion in that county). (2024). <https://www.expandkancare.com/county-fact-sheets/> As noted in each Kansas County Fact Sheet, “Hispanic and Black Kansans are more likely to live in the coverage gap. Kansans who live in frontier counties and in the southwest part of the state are also more likely to live in the coverage gap. Expanding Medicaid allows all low-wage Kansans access to affordable health care, regardless of their race, how much money they make, or what their ZIP code is.”
- 2024 Community Care Voter Engagement Guide. In 2022, the American Medical Association adopted a resolution declaring that voting is a social determinant of health. Studies have consistently shown a correlation between voting and a growing range of health indicators. <https://www.communitycareks.org/2024-voter-engagement-guide/>
- *Kansas Health Matters*, to empower Kansas communities to improve health by providing data, information and resources, supporting assessment, and identifying best practices through partnerships and collaboration. <https://www.kansashealthmatters.org/>

DACA health care ruling leaves few options but emergency care for some immigrants in Kansas, National Public Radio (NPR) – KCUR by Zane Irwin, (December 18, 2024). <https://www.kcur.org/politics-elections-and-government/2024-12-18/daca-health-care-ruling-leaves-few-options-but-emergency-care-for-some-immigrants-in-kansas> (Update: An appeals court has now temporarily put on hold the ruling that blocks DACA recipients from enrolling in health care marketplace plans. Coverage is set to start next month, so whether DACA recipients will ultimately be able to receive the health insurance coverage is unclear).

## Housing:

- University of Kansas: Study shows evictions happen most in predominantly Black neighborhoods, homes with children, by Hye-Sung Han (May 31, 2023), Hye-Sung Han, [Study shows evictions happen most in predominantly Black neighborhoods, homes with children | KU News](https://www.ku.edu/news/study-shows-evictions-happen-most-in-predominantly-black-neighborhoods-homes-with-children)
- Han, H. S. (2023). What explains variation in neighborhood evictions? Investigation of neighborhood characteristics and federal rental assistance: Case study of Kansas City, Missouri. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2023.2198131>
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- National Public Radio, KCUR, How a Kansas City nonprofit is tackling the racial homeownership gap through tiny homes (April 18, 2024), by Steve Kraske, Gabby Martinez, Halle Jackson [How a Kansas City nonprofit is tackling the racial homeownership gap through tiny homes | KCUR - Kansas City news and NPR](#)
- Lawrence Yun, Ph.D., Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, Jessica Lautz, Director of Real Estate, Deputy Chief Economist and Vice President of Research Brandi Snowden (2024), National Association of Realtors Research Group: Snapshot of Race and Home Buying in America [By Race](#).
- Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Report: In Nearly Every State, People of Color are Less Likely to Own Homes Compared to White Households, by Alexander Hermann, Senior Research Associate (February 8, 2023). [In Nearly Every State, People of Color Are Less Likely to Own Homes Compared to White Households | Joint Center for Housing Studies](#).
- Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Report: *Recognizing Racial Diversity Within Households: Implications for Housing Research*, by Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, Alexander Hermann, Daniel McCue, Samara Scheckler (December 12, 2024), [Recognizing Racial Diversity within Households: Implications for Housing Research](#)
- National Association of Realtors, 2022 Obstacles to Home Buying, by Morning Consult (April 2022), [PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) – Kansas Statewide Housing Assessment (2021), <https://kshousingcorp.org/kansas-statewide-housing-needs-assessment-2021/>
- KHRC Annual Reporting Requirements: Kansas Affordable Housing Tax Credit Act: Kansas Affordable Housing Tax Credit Act (December 29, 2023)
- National Public Radio, KMUW, Housing discrimination was outlawed in 1968 - But Wichita's Black-white homeownership gap persists. By Celia Hack, published March 16, 2023 [Housing discrimination was outlawed in 1968. But Wichita's Black-white homeownership gap persists. | KMUW](#)
- Mid America Regional Council (MARC), The History of Racial Discrimination in Housing Still Impacts the Kansas City Region Today (March 2, 2023), [MARC News](#)
- 2022 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice - Executive Summary: Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan. – Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice <https://www.wycokck.org/files/assets/public/v/1/community-development/documents/kansas-city-ai-executive-summary.pdf>
- 2022 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for Program Years 2022-2026 -Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan. Housing and Community Development Department <https://www.wycokck.org/files/assets/public/v/1/community-development/documents/kck-ai-final.pdf> (Chapter 3: Socioeconomic Profile, p. 28)
- Kansas Department of Commerce, Housing Assessment Tool (HAT), <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/housing/hat/>
- Kansas Department of Commerce, Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Guide, [https://www.kansascommerce.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/HAT\\_Guide3.23.pdf](https://www.kansascommerce.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/HAT_Guide3.23.pdf)
- Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City: Kansas Low to Moderate Housing (LMI) Trends and Challenges presentation provided by Steven Howland and Elior Cohen for the 2024 Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) Conference. Steven Howland, Senior Researcher, Community Development – Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Elior Cohen, Economist – Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

[https://www.kansascityfed.org/documents/10635/Kansas\\_HousingTrends\\_Challenges\\_Howard-Cohen.pdf](https://www.kansascityfed.org/documents/10635/Kansas_HousingTrends_Challenges_Howard-Cohen.pdf)

## Civic Engagement

- Kansas Black Leadership Council (KBLC) <https://www.kansasblc.org/> KBLC Programs:
  - Black Agenda
  - Black Votes Matter KS
  - KBLC Brunch
  - Preemption
  - Kansas Black Health Initiative
- ACLU Kansas, New Report: 85,000 Kansans with Past Felonies Currently Eligible to Vote. *Unheard Voices: Restoring Voting Rights to Returning Citizens to Build an Inclusive, Accountable Democracy in Kansas*. (October 31, 2024). <https://www.aclukansas.org/en/publications/unheard-voices-restoring-voting-rights-returning-citizens-build-inclusive-accountable>.
- ACLU Kansas, Restore My Vote: Voting After a Felony in Kansas, Resources include links to Register to Vote, Check Your Voter Registration, Know Your Rights, Get Involved. (Information in English: <https://www.aclukansas.org/en/restore-my-vote-voting-after-felony-kansas>)
- Humanities Kansas, The Art of Voting: a pop-up exhibition based on an exhibition created by the University of Kansas' Watkins Museum of History. The display was held in six Kansas communities (Abilene, Lyons, McPherson, Dodge City, Sharon Springs and Kansas City, Kan.) in February 2021, in observance of national Black History month. <https://www.humanitieskansas.org/grants-programs/the-art-of-voting>
- The Center for American Progress, *Key Facts to Know About Communities of Color in Kansas Before the 2014 Midterm Elections*, Fact Sheet highlighting the economic and electoral impact of communities of color as they become a growing share of the population in Kansas. November 3, 2024, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/key-facts-to-know-about-communities-of-color-in-kansas-before-the-2014-midterm-elections/>
- *Big Idea: It's Time to Understand the History of Black Voting Rights*, by Kim Warren, Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, School of Social Welfare and Associate Professor of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas. February 8, 2021. <https://www.humanitieskansas.org/get-involved/kansas-stories/the-big-idea/big-idea-its-time-to-understand-the-history-of-black-voting-rights>
- The Center for Public Integrity, *Who Counts? In Kansas, inequality in voting widens with new limits*, published October 6, 2022. <https://publicintegrity.org/politics/elections/who-counts/in-kansas-inequality-in-voting-widens-with-new-limits/>
- NAACP: A Vote for Democracy (2024), Important Issues Affecting Black Communities in America (Economy, Project 2025, Crime and Security, Racism and Discrimination Protecting Rights and



Freedoms). Black Battleground States Voting Guides (CA, GA, MD, MI, NV, NY, NC, OH, PA, TX, WI). <https://naacp.org/campaigns/power-your-vote>

- Kaiser Family Foundation, Voting and Voter Registration as a Share of the Voter Population, by Race/Ethnicity. Voting and Voter Registration rates apply to the November 2014, November 2016, November 2018, November 2020, and November 2022 elections. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022; <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/voting-and-voter-registration-as-a-share-of-the-voter-population-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D> (Definitions **NSD**: Not sufficient data. **White** represents individuals who are White alone, not in combination with any other race. **Black** represents individuals who are Black alone, not in combination with any other race. **Asian** represents individuals who are Asian alone, not in combination with any other race. **Hispanic** represents individuals who are Hispanic of any race. **Voter Population** includes US citizens who are of voting age (18 years of age or older). This population may include individuals who are ineligible to vote for reasons other than lack of citizenship or who are under 18 years of age.)
- Kansas Secretary of State website, Register to Vote online: <https://sos.ks.gov/elections/voter-information.html>
- Kansas Secretary of State website, File a Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Administrative Complaint, <https://sos.ks.gov/elections/HAVA/HAVA-Title-III.pdf>

### **Latino Kansans:**

Race Definitions (Population Growth Rates and Race Identity):

- U.S. Census Bureau -Quick Facts: Kansas <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/KS>
- U.S. Census Bureau Tables: Kansas Race and Ethnicity <https://data.census.gov/table?q=Kansas%20Race%20and%20Ethnicity&g=040XX00US20>
- KU Institute for Policy & Social Research (IPSR), Kansas State Data Center, Population in Kansas and the U.S., by Race and Hispanic Origin 2010 and 2020. U.S. Census Bureau,, 2010 and 2020 Census. <https://ksdata.ku.edu/ksdata/ksah/population/2pop7.pdf>
- KU Institute for Policy & Social Research (IPSR), Kansas State Data Center, Urban Areas in Kansas (2020), <https://ksdata.ku.edu/ksdata/ksah/population/urbanareas.pdf>
- Pew Research Center, Who Is Hispanic? by Mark Hugo Lopez, Ph.D., Jens Manuel Krogstad, Jeffrey S. Passel [Who is Hispanic? | Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/2017/05/02/who-is-hispanic/)
- Pew Research Center, About 6 million U.S. adults identify as Afro-Latino, (May 2, 2022), [About 6 million U.S. adults identify as Afro-Latino | Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/2022/05/02/about-6-million-u-s-adults-identify-as-afro-latino/) (In 2020, there were about 6 million Afro-Latino adults in the United States, and they made up about 2% of the U.S. adult population and 12% of the adult Latino population. About one-in-seven Afro-Latinos – or an estimated 800,000 adults – do not identify as Hispanic. The multiple dimensions of Latino identity reflect the long colonial history of Latin America, during which mixing occurred among indigenous Americans).
- Pew Research Center, Key Facts About U.S. Latinos During Hispanic Heritage Month, by Jens Manuel Krogstad, Jeffrey S. Passel, Mohamad Moslimani and Luis Noe-Bustamante [Facts about U.S. Latinos for Hispanic Heritage Month | Pew Research Center](https://www.pewresearch.org/2023/09/22/key-facts-about-u-s-latinos-during-hispanic-heritage-month/) (September 22, 2023).

- Wichita State University – Center for Economic Development and Business Research (CEDBR), Kansas Population Race & Ethnicity Report (Population Growth Rates, 2021-2071). The total population of Kansas is projected to grow by more than 468,000 residents, representing an increase of nearly 16% compared to the population in 2021. The projections also indicate substantial growth among other minority races, with an expected annual growth rate of 1.9%. This group is projected to grow from 230,208 in 2021 to 448,837 in 2071, a significant 95% increase. Much of this growth is observed in persons identifying as more than one race. **Additionally, the Hispanic population, as a separate category independent of racial identity, is another segment expected to experience dramatic growth with an estimated annual rate of 1.5%, resulting in a 74.9% increase from 374,093 in 2021 to 630,134 in 2071.** [Kansas Population Race and Ethnicity Report](#)
- Wichita State University – Center for Economic Development and Business Research (CEDBR), Kansas Population Race & Ethnicity Report (Population Growth Rates, 2021-2071). [Kansas Population Race&Ethnicity Report.pdf](#)
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- Kansas Health Institute – *Understanding Access: Health Coverage for Kansas’ Hispanic Communities* (Interactive Overview of the Data and Panel Discussion held June 27, 2024), [Event Recap – Understanding Access: Health Coverage for Kansas’ Hispanic Communities - Kansas Health Institute](#)
- America’s Health Rankings – UnitedHealth Foundation. 2024 Health of Women and Children Report – State Summaries (Kansas, p. 35-36), [ahr\\_2024hwc\\_statesummaries-all.pdf](#)
- America’s Health Rankings – UnitedHealth Foundation. 2024 Health of Women and Children Report – Concentrated Disadvantage by County (Kansas, p. 17), [cd2024-combined.pdf](#)
- University of Kansas, JUNTOS (Together) Center for Advancing Latino Health, *Allianza Latina* is a study focused on Hispanics and Latinos, offering support to people with Alzheimer's and other dementias and their families. *All of Us* Scientific Program, an unprecedented effort to achieve one goal: accelerating advances in health research. [JUNTOS Center for Advancing Latino Health](#)
- Community Care Network of Kansas (CCNK), Strategic Plan 2023-2026 [https://www.communitycareks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CommunityCareStrategicPlan2023-2026\\_V2-4.pdf](https://www.communitycareks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/CommunityCareStrategicPlan2023-2026_V2-4.pdf)
- LiveWell Finney County Health Coalition, 2024 Community Resource Guide, <https://livewellfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-Finney-County-Community-Resource-Guide-FinalC-3.11.2024.pdf>
- Sedgwick County Health Department: Access to Healthcare, Groups in Sedgwick County Who Experience Inequities (September 2022). Supplement to the Community Health Assessment Disparities Report 2022 <https://www.sedgwickcounty.org/media/62459/cha-disparities-report-supplement-access-to-healthcare.pdf>
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- Wyandotte County Community Health Assessment Report (2022 Full Report), <https://www.wycokck.org/files/content/public/v/18/departments/health/community-health/community-health-assessment/cha-full-report.pdf>

- The Commonwealth Fund 2024 State Health Disparities Report: Advancing Racial Equity in U.S. Healthcare <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2024/apr/advancing-racial-equity-us-health-care>

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- U.S. Census Bureau- Census Bureau releases new data on Minority-owned, veteran-owned and women-owned businesses (October 26, 2023) <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/annual-business-survey-employer-business-characteristics.html>
- *The Journal – A Civic Issues Magazine*, (May 30, 2024), How Gabe Muñoz nails the needs of KCK entrepreneurs <https://klcjourn.com/how-gabe-munoz-nails-the-needs-of-kck-entrepreneurs/>
- Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Can America Turn its Back on Immigrants? [Can America turn its back on immigrants? – Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation | Kauffman.org](https://www.ewingkauffman.org/can-america-turn-its-back-on-immigrants/)
- 2023 Research Report: State of Latino Entrepreneurship, a publication of the Stanford Graduate School of Business, in collaboration with the Latino Business Action Network. Principal Investigator, Barbara Gomez-Aguinaga, Ph.D., <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/state-latino-entrepreneurship-2023.pdf> As stated in the Executive Summary of the 2023 State of Latino Entrepreneurship Report conducted by the Stanford Graduate School of Business, the U.S. is home to more than 63 million Latino/as, making up 19% of the country’s population. With a collective economic contribution of \$3.2 trillion and ownership of nearly 5 million businesses generating more than \$800 billion in annual revenue, the Latino/a community serves as a prominent consumer base and a growing force in economic development. Section VI- Immigrant Entrepreneurs (p. 39) of the 2023 State of Latino Entrepreneurship Report reveals that **when it** comes to entrepreneurship, Latino/a immigrants stand out: Latino/a immigrants overindex in business ownership, representing 52% of all Latino/a-owned firms, compared to just 7% of White-owned businesses that are immigrant owned, as illustrated in Figure 6.1 on page 39 of the report.
- McKinsey & Company, The economic state of Latinos in America: Building up small businesses, by Alberto Chaia, Lucy Pérez, and Marukel Nunez Maxwell with Maria Arellano (December 2024).
- National Women’s Business Council (NWBC) – Advisors to the President, Congress and the Small Business Administration (SBA), 2024 Annual Report. Selected Statistics by Race and Ethnicity, Top 5 Industries by Race and Ethnicity: Employer Businesses (Table 5), p. 16 of the NWBC 2024 Annual Report. <https://www.nwbc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/NWBC-2024-Annual-Report.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Commerce: Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), 2024 Year in Review: Letter from Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Minority Business Development Eric Morrisette, <https://www.mbda.gov/about/year-in-review> (the Heartland Black Chamber of Commerce in Kansas City, Kan. and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Greater Kansas City were among the organizations that MBDA established MOUs with).
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), 2021 Hispanic-Owned Firms including national share of Hispanic-owned firms by state. <https://www.mbda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/2021-hispanic-american-owned-employer-firms.pdf>

## Education:

- Garden City Community College, *Garden City Community College and Kansas State University Announce New Partnership to Expand Bachelor's Degree Access in Southwest*, (December 11, 2024) Kansas, <https://www.gcccks.edu/events/garden-city-community-college-and-kansas-state-university-announce-new-partnership-to-expand-bachelors-degree-access.aspx>

## Economic Impact & Development

- March 2024: The Economic Benefits to Missouri and Kansas of Immigration <https://healthforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/PerrymanReport-Immigration-EconomicImpact-MO-KS.pdf>
- March 2024: Infographic on the Economic Benefits of Immigration <https://healthforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Economic-Immigration-Infographic-HealthForward.pdf>
- Building Entrepreneurship Ecosystems in Communities of Color, a Report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, by Dell Gines, Ph.D. <https://www.kansascityfed.org/documents/7298/ecosystembuildingincommunitiesofcolor062019.pdf>
- Kansas Department of Commerce, Housing Assessment Tool (HAT), <https://www.kansascommerce.gov/housing/hat/>
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- National Association of Realtors, 2022 Obstacles to Home Buying, by Morning Consult (April 2022), [PowerPoint Presentation](#)
- Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) – Kansas Statewide Housing Assessment (2021)
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<https://www.wycokck.org/files/assets/public/v/1/community-development/documents/kansas-city-ai-executive-summary.pdf>
- 2022 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for Program Years 2022-2026 -Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kan. Housing and Community Development Department  
<https://www.wycokck.org/files/assets/public/v/1/community-development/documents/kck-ai-final.pdf> (Chapter 3: Socioeconomic Profile, p. 28)
- Kansas Department of Commerce, Housing Assessment Tool (HAT),  
<https://www.kansascommerce.gov/housing/hat/>
- Kansas Department of Commerce, Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Guide,  
[https://www.kansascommerce.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/HAT\\_Guide3.23.pdf](https://www.kansascommerce.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/HAT_Guide3.23.pdf)
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[https://www.kansascityfed.org/documents/10635/Kansas\\_HousingTrends\\_Challenges\\_Howard-Cohen.pdf](https://www.kansascityfed.org/documents/10635/Kansas_HousingTrends_Challenges_Howard-Cohen.pdf)
- National Association of Realtors: More Americans Own But Black-White Homeownership Gap is Biggest in a Decade (March 2, 2023), 2023 Snapshot of Race and Home Buying in America [More Americans Own Their Homes, but Black-White Homeownership Rate Gap is Biggest in a Decade, NAR Report Finds](#)

#### **Civic Engagement:**

- Kansas Latino Community Network <https://www.kslatinotable.org/>
- Unidos US, December 18, 2024, Understanding Hispanic Voters' Immigration Priorities for the 2024 Election. [https://unidosus.org/blog/2024/12/18/understanding-hispanic-voters-immigration-priorities-in-the-2024-election/?utm\\_source=ActiveCampaign&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=This%20week%3A%20Understanding%20Hispanic%20voters&utm\\_campaign=AN%20Weekly%20Newsletter%20-%2012%2F19%2F2024%20%28Copy%29](https://unidosus.org/blog/2024/12/18/understanding-hispanic-voters-immigration-priorities-in-the-2024-election/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=This%20week%3A%20Understanding%20Hispanic%20voters&utm_campaign=AN%20Weekly%20Newsletter%20-%2012%2F19%2F2024%20%28Copy%29) UnidosUS's polling has consistently shown the most potent driver for voters in the election was economic discontent, expressed in Trump's gains with most demographics. These surveys include three of the most robust polls of Hispanic voters this cycle, two conducted prior to the election and the last one — the 2024 American Electorate Poll of Hispanic Voters — surveying 3,750 Latino voters who cast a ballot in the 2024 election.<sup>1</sup>

If there is a mandate, it's on addressing these concerns from Latinos and the broader electorate: raise wages and bring down the cost of food, housing and health care. When it comes to immigration, our newest poll again confirms what Latino voters have consistently said in previous polls: they want relief for the long-residing undocumented, not mass deportations of their families and neighbors.

- Loudlight, New Frontiers Project – *La Voz Del Pueblo* (The Voice of the Community), a report on at-large districts in Southwest Kansas.  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/566df9b0c647adfee387550/t/617731a73fa6173ef91b76e2/1635201449245/La+Voz+Del+Pueblo+Report.pdf>

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- Kansas Secretary of State website, Register to Vote online: <https://sos.ks.gov/elections/voter-information.html> (**Register to vote by paper in Spanish, but not the register to vote online: <https://sos.ks.gov/forms/elections/Spanish/SpanishVoterReg.pdf>**)
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