



The Old Sedgwick County Courthouse

## COUNTY PROFILE

### History

Originally a camping ground of the Osage and Wichita Indian tribes, Sedgwick County, Kansas is thought to be a place of discovery for such explorers as Francisco Coronado and Kit Carson. The earliest European settler to the region was M. DuTissenet, a Frenchman operating under the direction of the governor of Louisiana, in 1719. DuTissenet brought with him soldiers, traders and hunters that soon populated and transformed the region from prairie to land of opportunity.

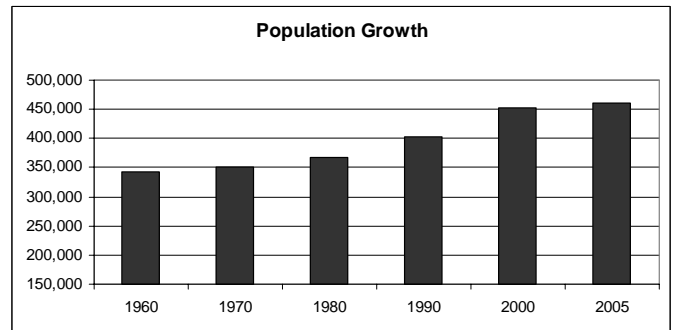
Sedgwick County was officially established nearly 150 years later on February 26, 1867 and bears the name of Civil War hero Major General John Sedgwick of the Union Army who was killed during the battle of Spottsylvania Courthouse in Virginia. After an initial failed attempt at establishing an official county government, the Governor of the State of Kansas appointed three Commissioners to aid in the effort. In April of 1870, the first county officials were elected and the county seat of Wichita was chosen.

### Geography

Occupying 1,009 square miles of land in South Central Kansas, Sedgwick County falls within the borders of the Arkansas River Lowlands. It is noted for its extreme flatness, its highest point only 1,540 feet above sea level. The County's lowest point, approximately 1,220 feet above sea level, occurs along the southern border where the Arkansas River leaves the County.<sup>1</sup> Sedgwick County's largest city is Wichita which is located along Interstate 35 with service areas to Interstate 135, U.S. 54 and various other highway projects.

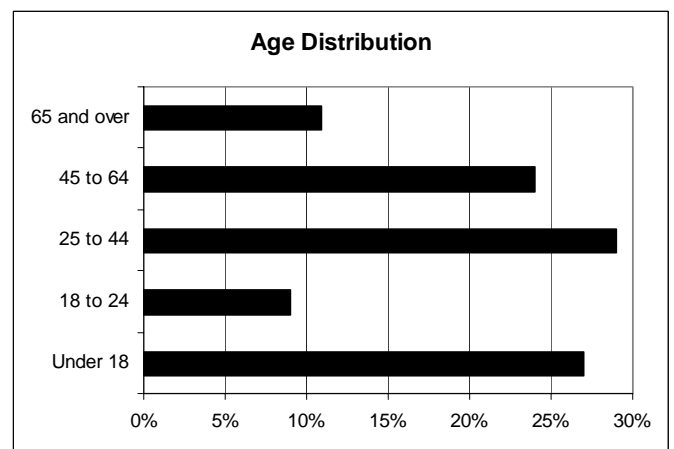
### Population

Sedgwick County is a rapidly growing region, currently home to an estimated 471,739 citizens. Population growth in Sedgwick County has been steady for the past five decades, with the period of strongest growth occurring between 1990 and 2000, when the population increased 12.19 percent.



Source: [www.censusscope.org](http://www.censusscope.org)

In addition to a strong growth trend, the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey reports that Sedgwick County is a relatively young community, with 89 percent of its population under the age of 65.



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

The population of Sedgwick County is expected to grow 0.6 percent per year through the year 2030, bringing the population to approximately 538,987 citizens. The population will continue to age, and it is expected that by 2030, twenty out of every 100 people will be 65 years of age or older. This ratio exceeds the 2000 rate of people above the age of 65 (11 out of every 100 people).<sup>2</sup>

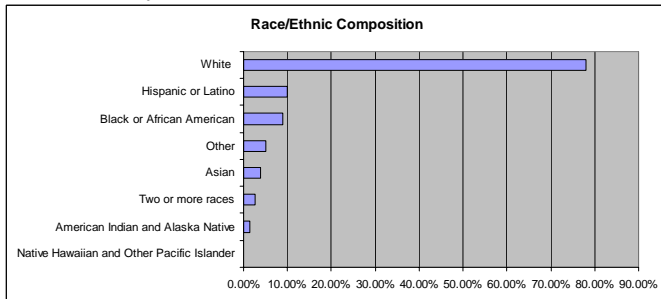
<sup>2</sup> Addendum to Population and Employment Forecast for Sedgwick County Kansas 2000-2030 compiled by the Center for Economic Development and Business Research at Wichita State University

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kgs.ku.edu/General/Geology/Sedgwick/index.html>



## Racial/Ethnic Composition

Although Sedgwick County is home to citizens of many diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, census data reveals that a large portion of the population (78%) is White/Caucasian. The most populous minority groups are Black or African American (8.9%) and Hispanic or Latino of any race (9.9%).<sup>3</sup>

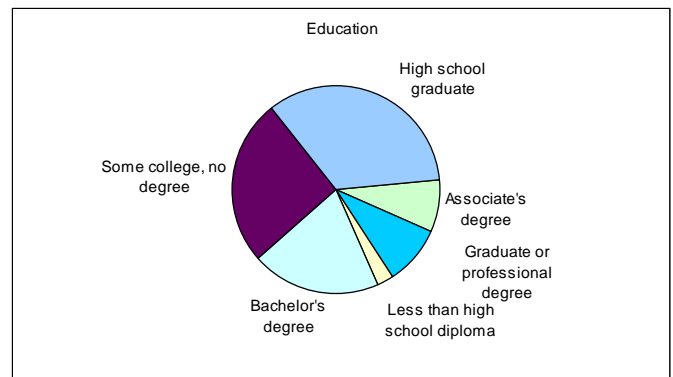


Source: American Community Survey 2005

Sedgwick County also has among its residents those of Asian descent (3.8%), American Indians and Alaska Natives (1.4%), and Native Hawaiian's and other Pacific Islanders (0.01%). Approximately 5% of the population reports being of another race than those listed, and 2.7% consider themselves to be of two or more races.

## Education

Sedgwick County strives to make and maintain education one of the primary focuses of the community. Sedgwick County contains 20 unified school districts within the public school system as well as several private institutions and over 80 schools within the Catholic Diocese. Amongst the population that is age 25 and over, 87.1% have at least a high school diploma, if not some type of experience in higher education. This number exceeds the national average. Approximately 17% of the population has at least a bachelor's degree and 8% of residents report having some type of graduate or professional degree.



Source: American Community Survey 2005

## Transportation

Although under the jurisdiction of the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County is home to Wichita Mid-Continent Airport, the only commercial airport in south-central Kansas. The facility currently services nine major airlines including: Air Tran Airways, Allegiant Air, US Airways/America West, American Airlines, Continental Express, Delta Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Northwest Airlines, and United Airlines. Wichita Mid-Continent Airport also offers non-stop service to 12 different destinations across the United States: Las Vegas, Orlando, Minneapolis, Dallas/Fort Worth, Chicago, Los Angeles, Memphis, Denver, Atlanta, Phoenix, Houston and St. Louis.

## Public Safety

Sedgwick County continues to place high priority on public safety. As a full service government, Sedgwick County has jurisdiction over the Sheriff's Department, Fire District and Emergency Medical Services.



In 2005, Sedgwick County Fire District #1 responded to slightly fewer (5,899) alarms than in 2004 (6,020). In total, the dedicated crews of the eight fire houses managed to save 79.8% of affected property, totaling to nearly \$6.1 million.<sup>4</sup>

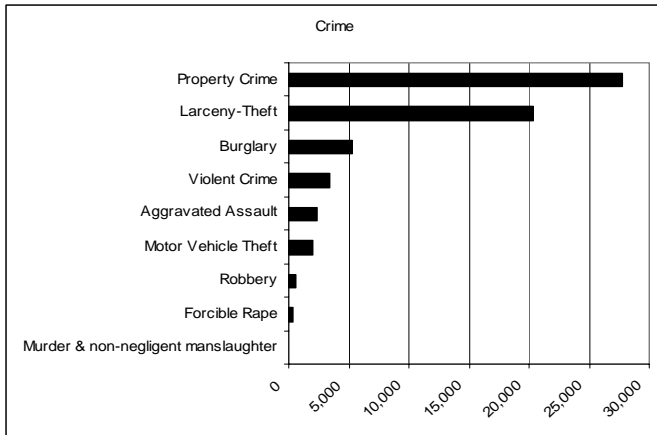
Because Sedgwick County contains 20 cities in addition to County government, there are numerous law enforcement agencies in the area. The Wichita MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area)<sup>5</sup> has a fairly average

<sup>4</sup> Sedgwick County Fire District #1 December 2005 Monthly Report

<sup>5</sup> The current Wichita MSA is comprised of Butler, Harvey, Sedgwick, & Sumner counties

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2005 American Community Survey

crime rate for a region of its size, the most common types of crime reported being property crimes.



Source: FBI Crime in the United States 2004

### Health Care

Home to over 3,000 licensed hospital beds; Sedgwick County is on the cutting edge of healthcare in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The community contains 19 individual hospitals that serve the needs of the community by providing acute, general and specialized care. Additionally, Sedgwick County has 50 nursing homes and assisted living facilities to aid those in need of special care.<sup>6</sup>

Sedgwick County also provides services to those in need of mental health care as well as alcohol and substance abuse treatment through Comprehensive Community Care of Sedgwick County (COMCARE). The department has grown dramatically since its inception as the community continues to see an increased demand for services in this area. Reports estimate that nearly 15,000 citizens in the Sedgwick County area came to COMCARE seeking aid in 2006.

### Arts & Culture

As a rapidly expanding metropolis, Wichita and Sedgwick County work to provide the utmost in community entertainment and recreation.



Throughout the past two decades, Wichita has worked to develop its downtown area, known as Old Town, into an urban entertainment district with more than 100 shops, nightclubs, movie theaters, art galleries, and businesses.

<sup>6</sup> Wichita Chamber of Commerce Website

In addition to this center of culture, Wichita and Sedgwick County has 12 museums and numerous cultural events including the Metropolitan Ballet, Music Theatre of Wichita, Wichita Symphony Orchestra and the Wichita Grand Opera. Wichita also has a broad selection of restaurants, offering every type of cuisine and style of food imaginable.



Wichita is home to a minor league hockey team, The Wichita Thunder Hockey and the Wichita Wild, an indoor arena football team. These teams

provide hundreds of hours of entertainment each year. Sedgwick County's Kansas Coliseum also hosts a wide variety of entertainment events each year including the Shrine Circus, paintball tournaments, horse shows, and major concerts.

Sedgwick County is a proud sponsor of the Sedgwick County Zoo, the number one outdoor family attraction in the State of Kansas. Founded in 1971, the Zoo is ranked among the best zoos in the world, receiving numerous national and international awards. Occupying 247 acres, the Zoo is home to such exhibits as the Downing Gorilla Forest, the Cargill Learning Center, and the new Cessna Penguin Exhibit.

In April 2005, the Kansas Governor authorized Sedgwick County to begin collecting a special 1% sales tax for 30 months to construct a multi-purpose arena in the heart of downtown Wichita. The Arena will host numerous events and spur economic development in the area. Currently in the bid process, the Arena is scheduled to be finished in early 2009.

### Events

Each year Sedgwick County takes part in numerous community activities. Support ranges from event sponsorship to employee participation. Some examples of events that the County has participated in the past include:

- Wichita River Festival
- Wichita Flight Festival
- Wichita Open Golf Tournament
- Sedgwick County Fair
- City and town fairs and festivals
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters Bowling Tournament

**GOVERNMENT**

**Organizational Structure**

The County’s organizational chart in its entirety can be found on the last page of this section.

**Elected Officials**

Sedgwick County is governed by a five-member Board of County Commissioners that meets in regular weekly sessions. Commissioners are elected according to geographical area (districts) and serve four-year terms with those terms overlapping. The Commissioners are fulltime County officials and perform all executive, legislative and policy-related functions. The Board also governs Sedgwick County Fire District #1, a separate special-purpose local government. The Chairman of the Board is elected by the Commissioners and serves a one-year term, January thru December. The Board of County Commissioners is currently comprised of the following individuals:

Commissioner	District	Current Term Expires
Dave Unruh, Chairman	1st District	January 2011
Tim Norton	2nd District	January 2009
Tom Winters	3rd District	January 2009
Kelly Parks	4th District	January 2011
Gwen Welshimer	5th District	January 2011

In addition to the Board of County Commissioners, citizens of Sedgwick County elect six other positions:

- County Clerk
- Register of Deeds
- County Treasurer
- Sheriff
- District Attorney
- 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Judges

**Appointed Officials**

Sedgwick County was recognized by the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) in 1981 as a Council-Manager form of government. Therefore, the Board appoints a professional County Manager to administer most County functions and to implement policy decisions. Tasks of the County Manager range from the management of special projects to the daily functions of the County’s nearly 3,000 employees.

The Board of County Commissioners also appoints:

- County Counselor
- County Appraiser
- Director of Public Works

The Governor of Kansas is responsible for appointing an Election Commissioner for Sedgwick County.

In addition to County government, Sedgwick County contains 27 townships, 20 cities, 20 unified school districts, 1 fire district, 1 soil conservation district, 4 rural water districts, 6 watershed districts, 8 sewer districts, 12 improvement districts, 4 industrial districts, and 1 rural library district.

**County Services**

Sedgwick County prides itself on being a full service government for all of its citizens. Community residents are familiar with the concept that Sedgwick County provides services from A – Z: everything from Animal Control to the Sedgwick County Zoo. In addition to the aforementioned services provided by the elected and appointed officials, Sedgwick County provides services pertaining to: community development, culture and recreation, finance, health, human services, information and operations, fire, and Emergency Medical Services.

**ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**

**Employment**

The Kansas Department of Labor reported that as of December 2005, the Civilian Labor Force for Sedgwick County was 243,284 residents. Of those who are eligible for employment, approximately 95% (231,766) of individuals were employed. The Department also reported a 4.7% unemployment rate.

**Manufacturing**

Sedgwick County is home to nearly 12,000 business establishments, a number of which are in the manufacturing industry.<sup>7</sup> In fact, Sedgwick County has the second-highest concentration of manufacturing jobs in the country.<sup>8</sup> Known as the “Air Capital of the World”, Wichita is home to four large aircraft manufacturing plants, each of which heavily impacts the overall economy of Sedgwick County.

<sup>7</sup> Wichita Chamber of Commerce Website

<sup>8</sup> Greater Wichita Economic Development Coalition



Company	Product/Services	FT Employees
Cessna Aircraft Co.	Aircraft Manufacturing	9,393
Spirit AeroSystems, Inc	Aircraft Manufacturing	9,300
Hawker Beechcraft	Aircraft Manufacturing	6,259
United States Government	Government	5,435
Unified School District #259	Education	5,033
Via Christi Health System	Health Care	4,810
State of Kansas	Government	3,977
Boeing Integrated Defense Systems Wichita	Aircraft Modification/Development	3,700
City of Wichita	Government	3,070
Sedgwick County	Government	2,722
Bombardier Aerospace Learjet	Aircraft Manufacturing	2,577
Koch Industries, Inc	Oil/Chemical Equip. Manufacturing	2,000
Wesley Medical Center	Health Care	1,659
York International	HVAC Equip. Manufacturing	1,100
Wichita Clinic PA	Health Care	1,043
<b>Totals</b>		<b>62,078</b>

Source: Greater Wichita Economic Development Coalition

In addition to the manufacturing industry, Sedgwick County is engaged in a variety of other employment areas including retail trade, education, health and social services, the arts, entertainment and food service industries.

Employment by Industry, 2005	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting, & mining	0.99%
Construction	6.24%
Manufacturing	21.73%
Wholesale trade	2.99%
Retail trade	10.35%
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	4.74%
Information	2.03%
Financial activities	5.18%
Professional & business services	8.22%
Educational & health services	20.17%
Leisure & hospitality	9.08%
Other services	4.77%
Public Administration	3.50%

Source: Kansas Department of Labor

### Educational & Health Services

A rapidly growing industry across the entire nation, education and health services also continue to grow in Sedgwick County. Wichita is currently home to several specialty hospitals that provide specific care as well as numerous doctors' offices and medical complexes. The Center for Economic Development and Business Research notes many expansions in the health industry

in its First Quarter 2007 E-Connection, some of which are listed below:

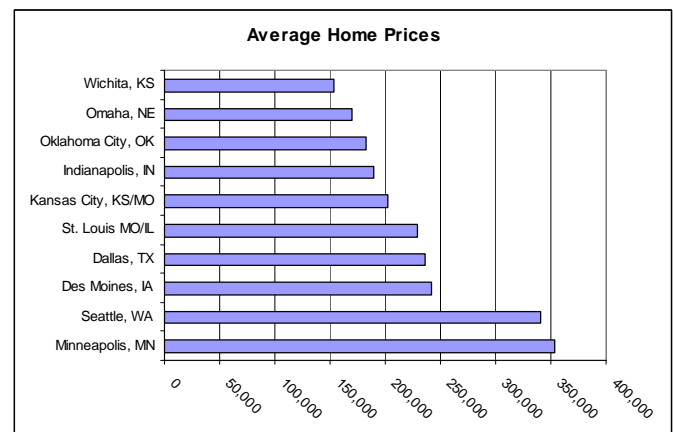
- In March 2007, the Catholic Diocese of Wichita and Via Christi Senior Services announced the completion of a \$1.2 million Catholic Care Center expansion.
- Developers announced the construction of a \$47 million Lillie Medical Park in West Wichita.
- Via Christi-St. Francis completed the expansion of its cardiothoracic intensive-care unit.

### Retail Trade

Retail trade is expected to experience growth in 2007, continuing to rebound after the economic downturn associated with the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The Wichita MSA has numerous retail centers, including New Market Square, the Waterfront, Bradley Fair, and the Waterwalk in downtown Wichita that encourage the growth of the industry. Additionally, taxable retail sales are expected to continue their 2006 growth into 2007.<sup>9</sup>

### Cost of Living

The current overall cost of living in the Wichita MSA is just slightly below the national average at 94.1.<sup>10</sup> As of 2004, the median price for an existing home was \$103,900, over \$80,000 less than the national average. New housing units are also very competitively priced at an average of \$148,575.



Source: Wichita Chamber of Commerce

<sup>9</sup> Center for Economic Development and Business Research at Wichita State University 2006 Review and 2007 Forecast

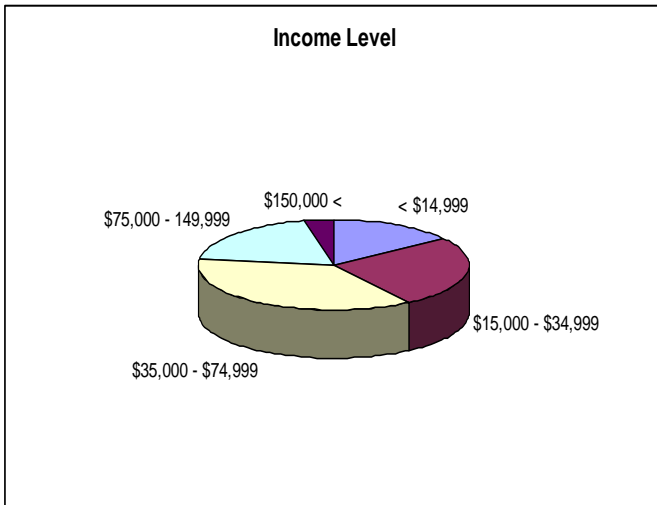
<sup>10</sup> Wichita Chamber of Commerce Website





**Income**

As of 2005, the median household income for Sedgwick County was \$42,785, slightly lower than both the median for the State of Kansas at \$42,920 and lower than the median reported for the United States at \$46,326. Per capita, County residents average \$22,785 per year. The largest majority of households earned somewhere between \$35,000 and \$74,999, while the smallest concentration of residents earned \$150,000 or more.

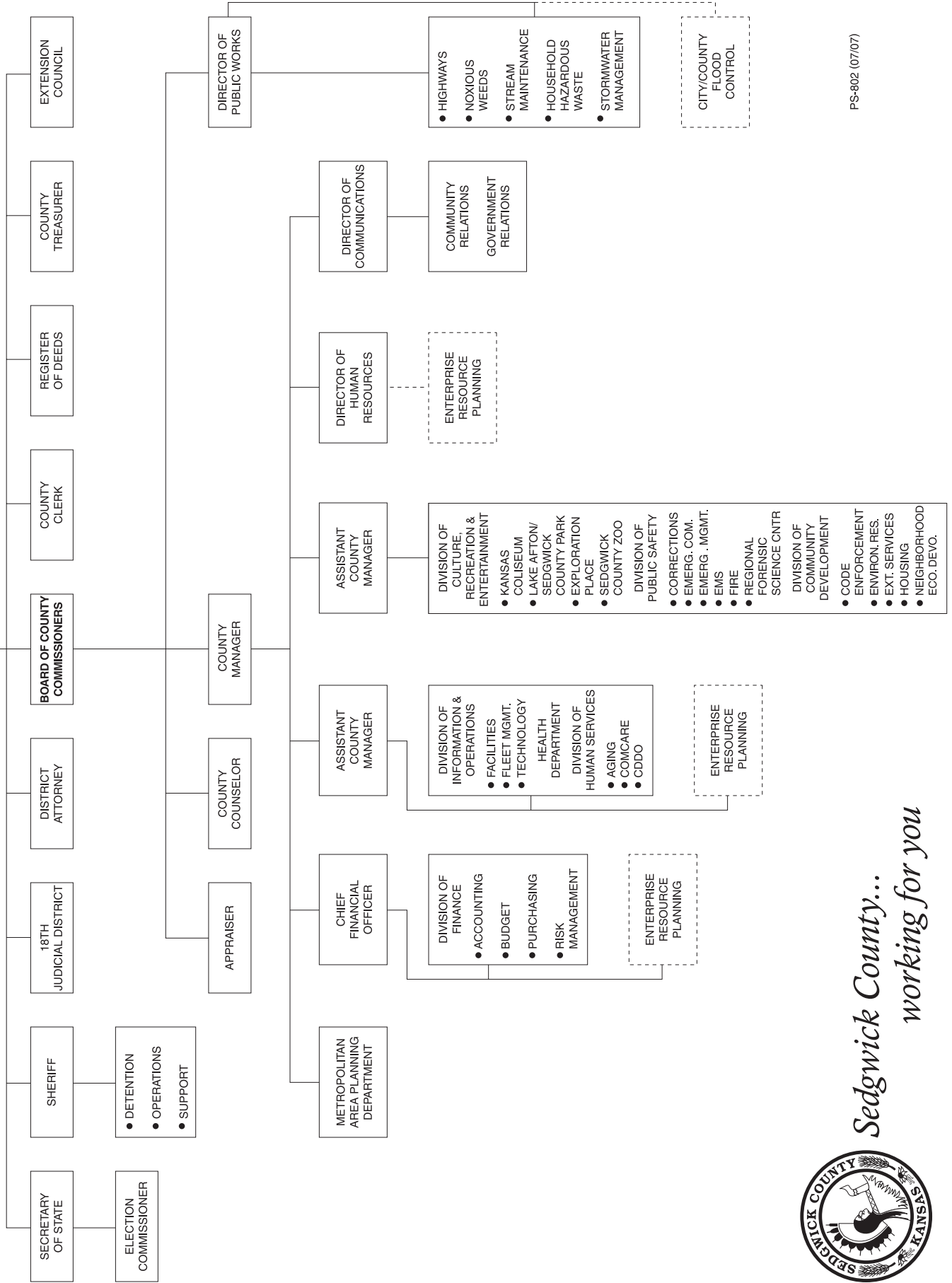


Source: American Community Survey 2005

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

# VOTERS

# SEDGWICK COUNTY, KS



PS-802 (07/07)



*Sedgwick County...  
working for you*

