



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 who soon populated and transformed the region from prairie to a 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 Spotsylvania 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 1,008 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, as its highest point is 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

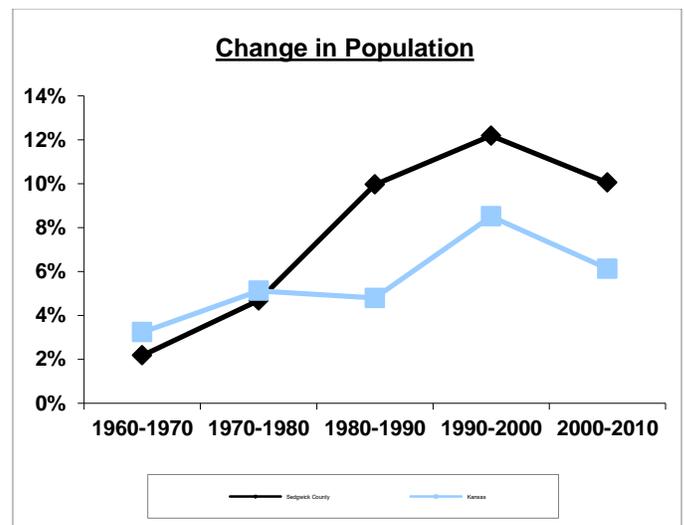
Arkansas River leaves the County.<sup>1</sup> Sedgwick County's largest city is Wichita, which is located along Interstate 35 with service areas to Interstate 135, U.S. 54, and various other highway projects.



Source: Sedgwick County GIS, 2008

### Population

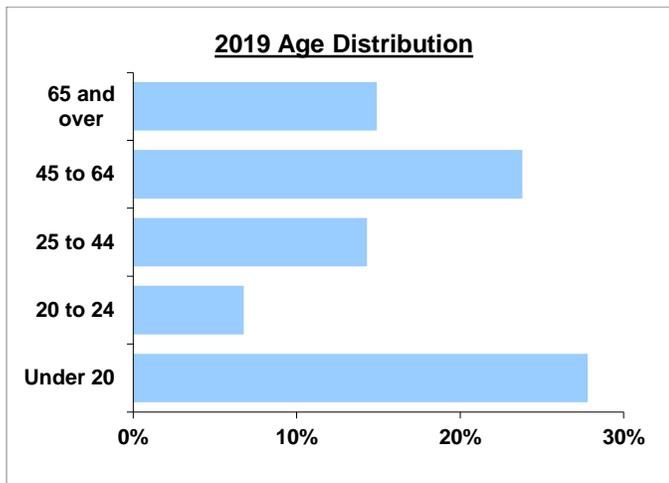
Sedgwick County is a growing region, currently home to approximately 500,000 citizens. The County's population has increased 3.5 percent since 2010 and has increased faster than the population of Kansas as a whole (2.1 percent since 2010). According to 2019 census estimates, Sedgwick County continues to have surpassed the half-million mark with an estimated 516,042 people in 2019.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

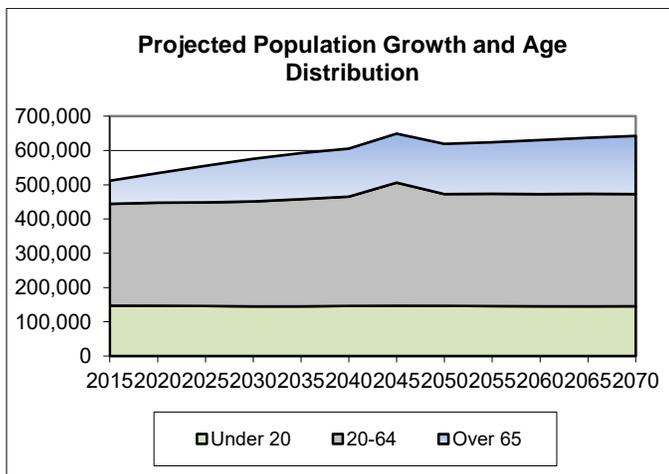
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.kgs.ku.edu/General/Geology/Sedgwick/index.html>

The population of Sedgwick County is expected to grow to approximately 643,186 by 2070.



Source: American Community Survey, 2019

In addition to a strong growth trend, the *U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey*, reports Sedgwick County is a relatively young community, with 85.1 percent of its population younger than the age of 65. By 2070, however, the number of citizens age 65 and older is expected to increase to 170,079, over a 150.0 percent change from 2015 to 2070.

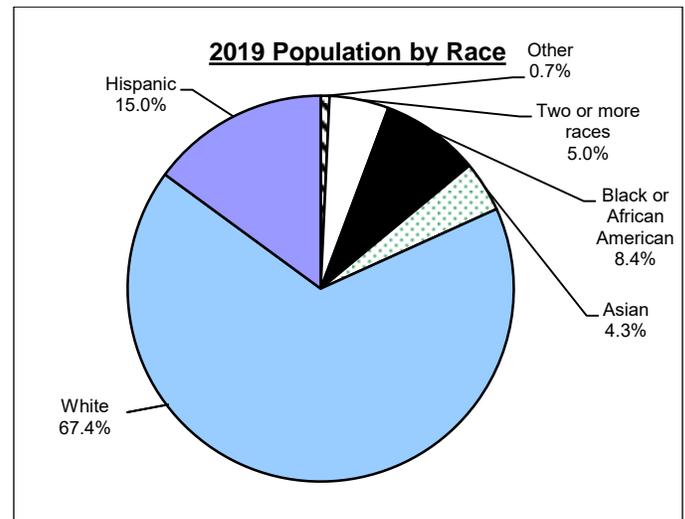


Source: Center for Economic Development and Business Research at Wichita State University

**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 (67.4 percent) is White/Caucasian, non-Hispanic. The most populous minority groups within the Sedgwick County population are Hispanic of any race (15.0 percent),

Black or African American (8.4 percent), and Asian (4.3 percent).<sup>2</sup>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019

Among its residents, Sedgwick County also has citizens who consider themselves to be of two or more races (5.0 percent) or of another race than those listed (0.7 percent).

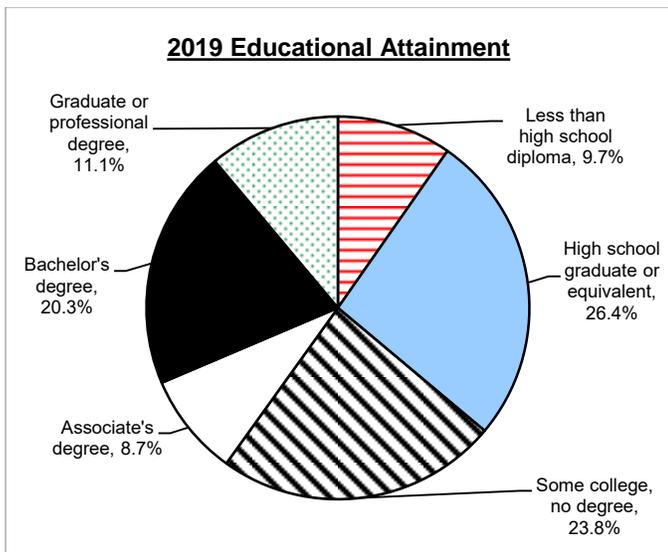
**Education**

With 20 school districts in the public school system, 39 schools within the Catholic Diocese, and several private educational institutions, education is a community priority in Sedgwick County. An educated citizenry generally benefits an entire community because it typically includes a lower unemployment rate and more individuals who get involved, vote, and perform community service.

As of 2019, among residents age 25 and older, 26.4 percent have earned at least a high school diploma. In Sedgwick County, another 23.8 percent of the population had some college but no degree, while 8.7 percent has earned an associate’s degree.

According to the *2019 American Community Survey*, approximately 20.3 percent of residents age 25 and older have at least a bachelor’s degree. Sedgwick County also has 11.1 percent of residents age 25 and older who report having a graduate or professional degree.

<sup>2</sup> American Community Survey, 2019



Source: American Community Survey, 2019

In August 2010, the National Center for Aviation Training (NCAT), a 230,000 square foot state-of-the-art training facility, opened. Facing a future shortage of skilled aviation workers, this world-class aviation training facility is a critical step to keep Kansas' aviation industry globally competitive. Sedgwick County's ability to train workers locally will enhance the community's ability to keep aerospace manufacturing jobs in Kansas.



In addition to NCAT, there are more than 10 institutions of higher education located in Sedgwick County. Wichita State University, Friends University, Newman University, Wichita State University Tech, and the University of Kansas School Of Medicine - Wichita all have main campuses in the County, while six other colleges and universities have chosen to locate branch campuses within the County.

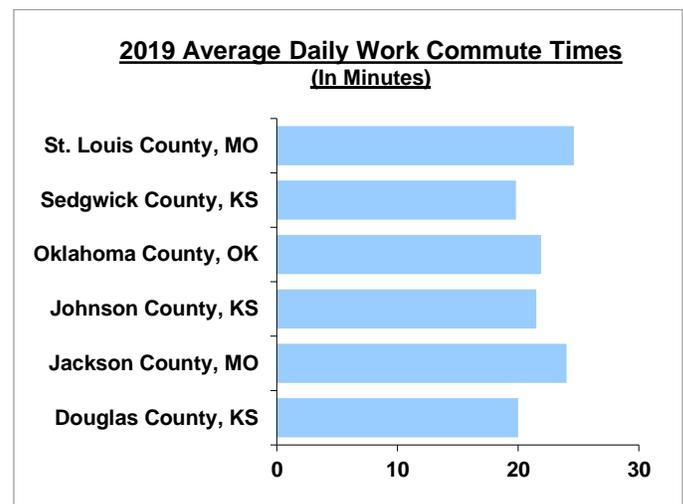
**Transportation**

Sedgwick County has multiple transportation options available to residents, businesses, and travelers. Interstate 35 - the only Midwest interstate highway that connects Canada, the United States, and Mexico - runs

directly through Sedgwick County, providing an optimum north/south route for residents who are traveling and for businesses in the area that wish to import or export goods. For those wishing to travel or ship goods east or west from Sedgwick County, two primary options exist. Interstate 70 lies 90 miles north of Wichita, while Interstate 40 lies approximately 150 miles to the south. As a result, truck transportation companies are prevalent in Sedgwick County.

Air transportation is another viable option. Although under the jurisdiction of the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County is home to Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport, the only commercial airport in south-central Kansas. The facility currently services five major cargo carriers and seven major passenger airlines, including Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Delta Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines. These airlines offer non-stop service to 12 different destinations across the United States, including Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Phoenix, Phoenix-Mesa, Saint Louis, and Seattle. Flights to Destin/Fort Worth, Orlando, and Los Angeles are seasonal while all other non-stops are available year round.

Due in part to Sedgwick County's comprehensive network of highways and local roads, the average daily work commute time is less than in many similar counties. In 2019, the average commute time for a Sedgwick County resident was 19.8 minutes, which is less than comparable times in St. Louis County, Missouri (24.6 minutes) and Johnson County, Kansas (21.5 minutes).



Source: American Community Survey, 2019

## Public Safety

Sedgwick County continues to place a high priority on public safety, with more than one-third of all County expenditures being spent on public safety. As a full service government, Sedgwick County has jurisdiction over Sedgwick County Fire District 1, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and the Sheriff's Office.



In 2020, Sedgwick County Fire District 1 responded to 8,450 alarms. In total, the dedicated crews of the nine fire houses saved 96.5 percent of affected property, totaling \$96.52 million in property saved.



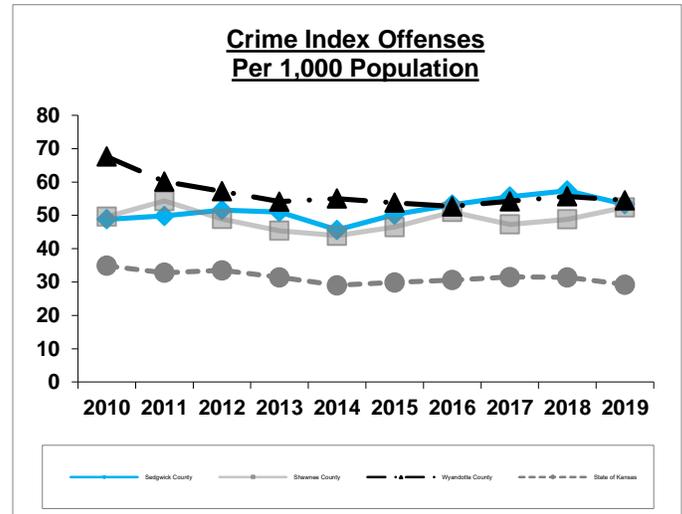
Sedgwick County EMS provides emergency response and scheduled transfers for the citizens of the County. Through the use of Advance Life Support ambulances, EMS service is provided 24-hours a day, 365-days a year. In 2020, EMS responded to 65,708 calls and transported 43,370 patients to hospitals and other destinations. EMS responded to 90.0 percent of emergent calls in 12 minutes and five seconds



Because Sedgwick County has 20 cities, there are numerous law enforcement agencies in the area in addition to the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office patrols the unincorporated portions of Sedgwick County and operates the 1,206-bed adult detention facility and the 180-bed jail annex facility, which is one of the largest jail systems in the State of Kansas. From 2019 to 2020, the total daily average inmate population decreased from 1,529 to 1,503, or 1.7 percent.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the Sedgwick County crime index offenses per 1,000 populations has decreased slightly after years of increasing crime rates, from 2018 to 2019 (57.4 percent to 53.3 percent). Comparatively, in 2019, Sedgwick County still had greater crime index offenses per 1,000 populations when compared with Shawnee County, Kansas (52.4 percent), and was higher than the 2019 State of Kansas average (29.3).

<sup>3</sup> Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office



Source: Kansas Bureau of Investigation Crime Statistics, 2010-2019

## Health Care

Home to approximately 2,850 licensed hospital beds, Sedgwick County continues to lead the region in healthcare options. Within the community, there are 17 acute care and free-standing hospitals, each serving the needs of the community by providing acute, general, and specialized care. Additionally, Sedgwick County has over 50 nursing homes and assisted living facilities for those in need of special care.<sup>4</sup>

Sedgwick County also provides services to those in need of mental health care as well as addiction services and substance use disorders through Comprehensive Community Care of Sedgwick County (COMCARE). The Department collaborates with other agencies in the community to provide services. Since 2002, the number of consumers in the COMCARE system increased for 17 years as evidenced by the unduplicated count for 2019 increasing to 15,605 compared to 15,144 unduplicated clients seen in 2018. Due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), however, the number of clients seen decreased in 2020 to 11,467.

## Arts, Culture & Entertainment

As an expanding metropolitan area, Wichita and Sedgwick County work to provide quality community



entertainment and recreation. After two years of

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.greaterwichtapartnership.org/>

planning and community input, Sedgwick County broke ground in December 2007 for the INTRUST Bank Arena, a 15,000 seat multi-purpose arena in the heart of downtown Wichita. The Arena was funded through a 30-month, one-cent, County-wide sales tax, which generated receipts of \$206.5 million. The Arena opened in January 2010 and has successfully hosted numerous types of events, including family shows, sporting events, and concerts. One of the goals of building a world-class arena was to assist in the revitalization of downtown Wichita. In 2018, the Arena hosted first and second round games of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) basketball tournament.

Not far from the INTRUST Bank Arena, the City of Wichita continues its work to develop the downtown area known as Old Town. This urban entertainment district has more than 100 shops, nightclubs, movie theaters, art galleries, and businesses. With continued growth of entertainment activity in downtown Wichita, Old Town has become a hot spot for dining, shopping, and nightlife as well as a place to live and stay.



Sedgwick County is also 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 Slawson Family Tiger Trek, the Downing Gorilla Forest, the Koch Orangutan & Chimpanzee Habitat, the Cessna Penguin Cove, and the Elephants of the Zambezi River Valley. Sedgwick County Zoo will celebrated its 50 year anniversary in 2021 with events such as displays of giant glowing animal-shaped lanterns, the unveiling of a new entrance, and the opening of the new Asian Cat Track.

Wichita is home to the Wichita Thunder, a minor league hockey team; the Wichita Force, a professional indoor football team; FC Wichita, a minor league outdoor soccer team; and the Wichita Wind Surge, a minor league baseball team. These teams provide hundreds of hours of entertainment each year for the citizens of Sedgwick County and from surrounding areas.

In addition to these centers of culture and entertainment, Wichita and Sedgwick County have 33 museums and numerous cultural events including Ballet Wichita, 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.

**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 include:

- Wichita Riverfest
- Sedgwick County Fair
- City and town fairs and festivals

**GOVERNMENT**

**Organizational Structure**

The County was reorganized in 2018. An updated 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 (BOCC) that meets in regular weekly sessions with the exception of the last Wednesday of every month. Commissioners are elected according to geographical area (districts) and serve four-year terms with those terms overlapping. The Commissioners are full-time 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 through December. The BOCC is comprised of the following individuals:

Commissioner	District	Term Expires
Pete Meitzner, Chairman	1st District	January 2024
Sarah Lopez	2nd District	January 2025
David Dennis	3rd District	January 2025
Lacey Cruse	4th District	January 2024
Jim How ell	5th District	January 2024

In addition to the BOCC, citizens of Sedgwick County elect the following 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 approximately 3,000 employees.

The BOCC also appoints the:

- County Counselor
- County Appraiser
- County Engineer

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

In addition to the County government, Sedgwick County contains 26 townships, 20 cities, 20 unified school districts, 12 improvement districts (eight improvement districts levy taxes), 11 recreation commissions, 11 tax increment districts, 11 active tax increment financing districts, seven cemetery districts, five drainage districts, four watershed districts, two library districts, one redevelopment district, one fire district, and one groundwater district. Ten of the unified school districts, two of the cities, two of the cemetery districts, three of the drainage districts, one of the improvement districts, one of the library districts, and nine of the recreation commission districts cross the border into at least one other county.

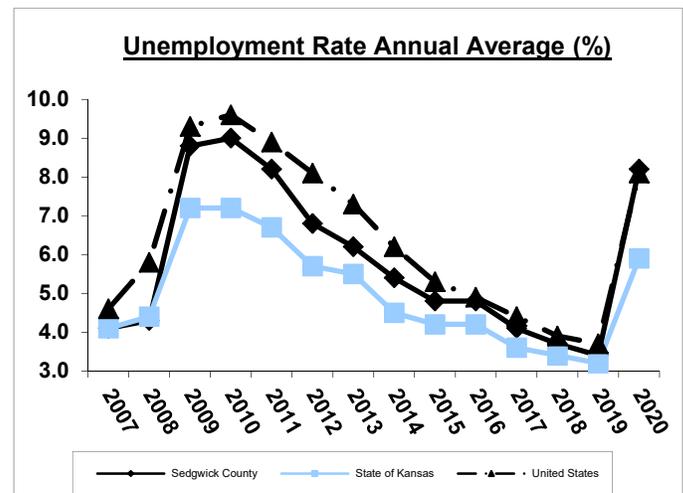
## County Services

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 technology, operations, and public safety.

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

### Employment

The United States Department of Labor reported that the average 2020 Labor Force for the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was 321,039 residents, an increase of 1.2 percent from 2019. Of those who are eligible for employment, approximately 91.7 percent (294,496) were employed in 2020. Wichita MSA’s unemployment rate as of March 2021 was 5.3 percent, less than the U.S. unemployment rate of 6.5 percent.

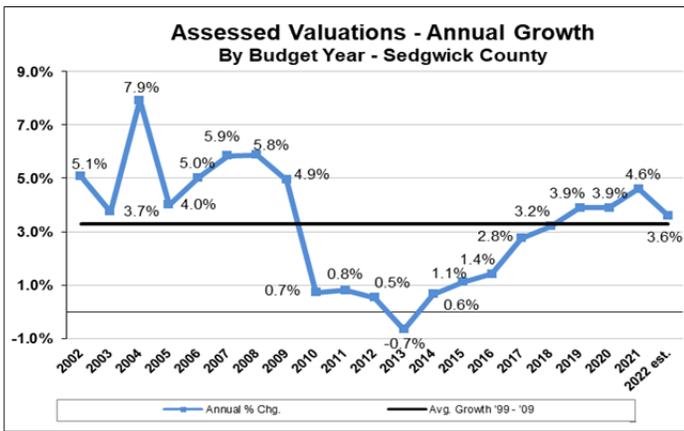


Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Sedgwick County’s unemployment rate has varied since 2002, but was consistently around 4.0 percent in 2006, 2007, and 2008. In 2009, the rate increased to 8.8 percent, peaked at 9.0 percent in 2010, and steadily declined for 9 years. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unemployment rates as high as 8.2 percent.

### Property Values/Tax Payers

Similar to other jurisdictions, Sedgwick County has continued to address modest growth in property valuations by making operational changes. Prior to the national recession, assessed property valuations grew by an average of 5.5 percent annually between 1999 and 2009. Since that time, assessed valuations were below 1.0 percent for three years (2010 to 2012), and fell in value for the 2013 budget by 0.7 percent. Assessed values in 2017, 2018, and 2019 increased by 3.2 percent, 3.9 percent, and 4.5 percent respectively. Assessed valuation in 2020 was 4.6 percent, and estimated assessed valuation for 2021 is 3.6 percent.



2020 Top Five Taxpayers		
Name	Assessed Value	Percent of Total County Taxable Assessed Value
Evergy Kansas South Inc	\$ 145,969,250	2.75%
Spirit Aerosystems Inc	105,081,718	1.98%
Textron: Beechcraft/Cessna	95,089,918	1.79%
Kansas Gas Service	33,815,712	0.64%
Wal Mart Real Estate	30,215,962	0.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$410,172,560</b>	<b>7.72%</b>

Source: Sedgwick County Clerk, 2020

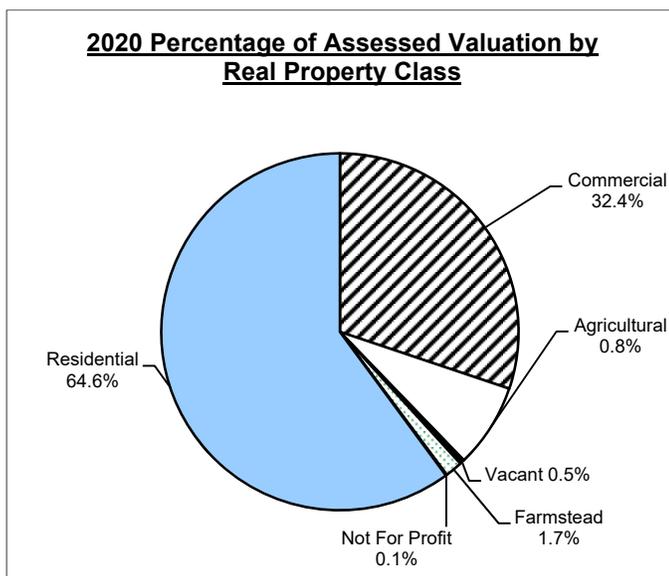
### Retail Trade

The Wichita MSA has numerous retail centers, including New Market Square, the Waterfront, Greenwich Place, and Bradley Fair, which had encouraged industry growth until the economic decline occurred. Retail trade employment increased, specifically by 3.1 percent from 2012 to 2013 and 1.4 percent from 2013 to 2016, year-over-year.<sup>5</sup> Retail trade employment in the Wichita MSA declined in both 2018 and 2019 losing 1.1 percent and 2.2 percent respectively.<sup>5</sup>

### Industry

Sedgwick County is home to more than 12,600 business establishments. Between 2006 and 2011, employer establishments in Sedgwick County increased annually by 1.1 percent, which was higher than the average annual percentage change in Shawnee County, Kansas (0.6 percent), but lower than Johnson County, Kansas (2.1 percent). Also, the percentage change in the State of Kansas' employer establishments between 2006 and 2011 was 0.9 percent, with a decrease of 4.0 percent from 2011 to 2012 and a decrease of 0.6 percent from 2012 to 2013.<sup>6</sup> The number of employer establishments in Sedgwick County went down slightly in 2020 with an estimated average of 12,672.

In Sedgwick County, residential property accounts for the largest percentage (64.6 percent) of the total assessed value of real property. The second largest is commercial property, comprising 32.4 percent of the County's total assessed value of real property. The large percentage of residential property shows that individuals and families recognize the County as a growing community where they can purchase a home and establish roots, while the large portion of commercial property shows that the County's business environment is also favorable.

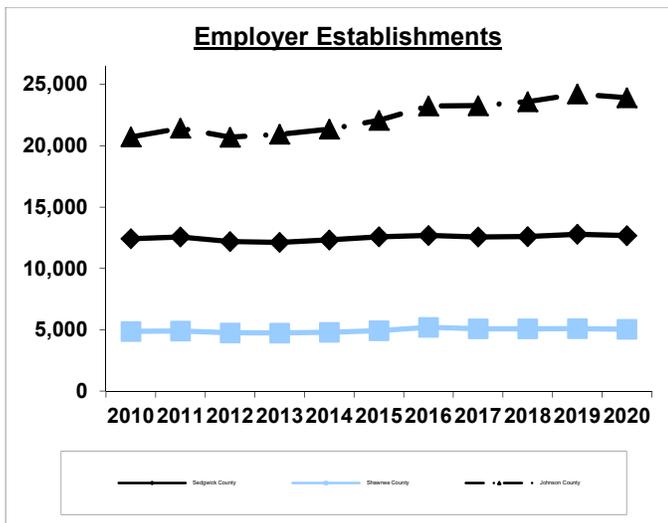


Source: Sedgwick County Appraiser, 2019

Another economic indicator is the total assessed value of the five largest taxpayers compared to the total assessed valuation of the County. A concentrated property tax base can be detrimental to a community in times of economic downturn, especially if a jurisdiction's largest taxpayers are in the same industry. Sedgwick County's largest five taxpayers comprised 7.72 percent of the County's total assessed value in 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Center for Economic Development and Business Research at Wichita State University, Retail Trade Annual Employment and Wages

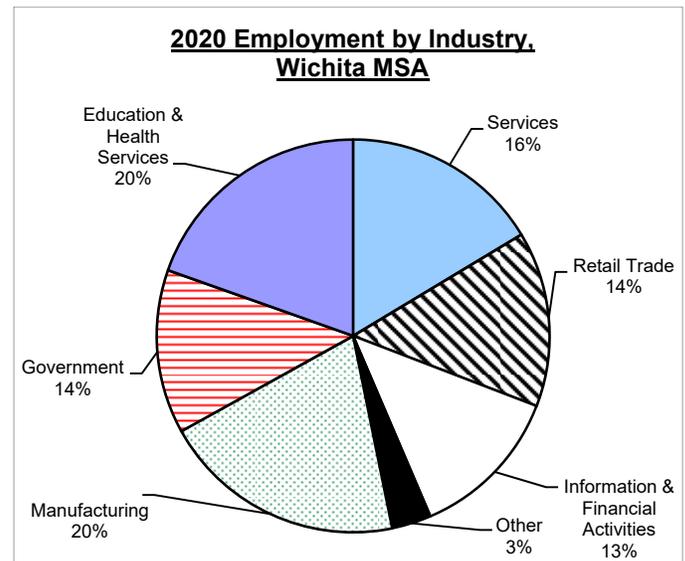
<sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Among the largest employers in Sedgwick County are aircraft manufacturers, health care, and education. According to a Milken Institute Study, Wichita has the highest concentration of aerospace manufacturing employment and skills in the nation.<sup>7</sup> Wichita, known as the “Air Capital of the World,” is home to facilities for Spirit AeroSystems and Textron Aviation which produces aircraft under the brand names Cessna, Beechcraft, and Hawker Aircraft. All of these large aircraft manufacturing plants heavily impact the overall economy of Sedgwick County.

opportunities, the service industry is the largest industry in the County.



Source: Kansas Department of Labor, not seasonally adjusted

### Education & Health Services

A rapidly growing industry across the entire nation, education and health services also continue to grow in Sedgwick County. In the Wichita MSA, 18.0 percent of positions are in various areas of educational and health services. Wichita is currently home to several specialist hospitals which provide specific care as well as numerous doctors’ offices and medical complexes. The Center for Economic Development and Business Research noted Ascension Via Christi Hospital St. Joseph underwent a \$50.0 million renovation, mainly focusing on psychiatric needs, completed in 2019.

Several buildings opened or began construction in 2017 on the Wichita State University Innovation Campus, including the Airbus Wichita Engineering Center and the Experiential Engineering Building. The Airbus Wichita Engineering Center will bring approximately 400 employees and applied learning opportunities for students. The Experiential Engineering Building will house 25 laboratories, including design studios and manufacturing capabilities, to foster creativity and entrepreneurship.<sup>8</sup>

### Cost of Living/Housing

The current overall cost of living in Wichita is below the national average of 100.0 on the Overall Cost of Living Index. Compared to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (85.7),

Greater Wichita's 10 Largest Employers		
Company	Product/Service	Local FT Employees
Spirit AeroSystems	Aircraft Assemblies	13,000
Textron Aviation	Aircraft Manufacturer	9,350
McConnell Air Force Base	Air Force Base	5,679
Unified School District 259 Wichita	Public School District	5,614
Ascension Via Christi	Health Care	4,413
Koch Industries	Global HQ - Diversified	3,100
City of Wichita	Municipal Government	2,886
U.S. Government	Federal Government	2,830
Sedgwick County	County Government	2,521
State of Kansas	Higher Ed and Government	2,157
<b>Total</b>		<b>51,550</b>

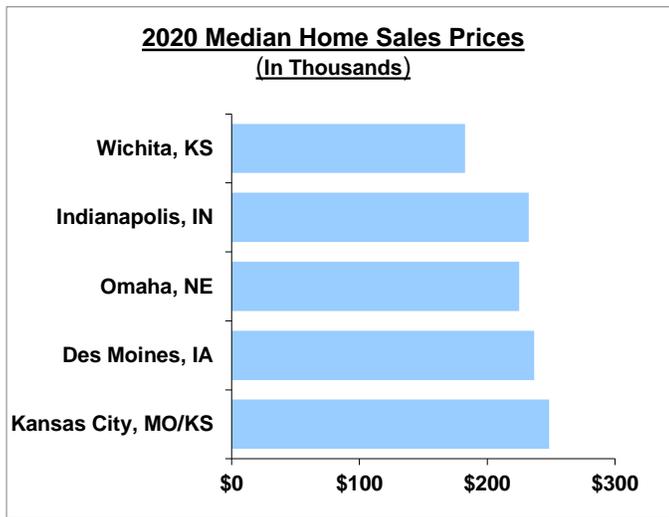
Source: Greater Wichita Partnership

In addition to the manufacturing industry, Sedgwick County is engaged in a variety of additional industry sectors, including retail, arts and entertainment, and food services. Comprising 21.0 percent of all employment

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.greaterwichtapartnership.org/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.wichita.edu/>

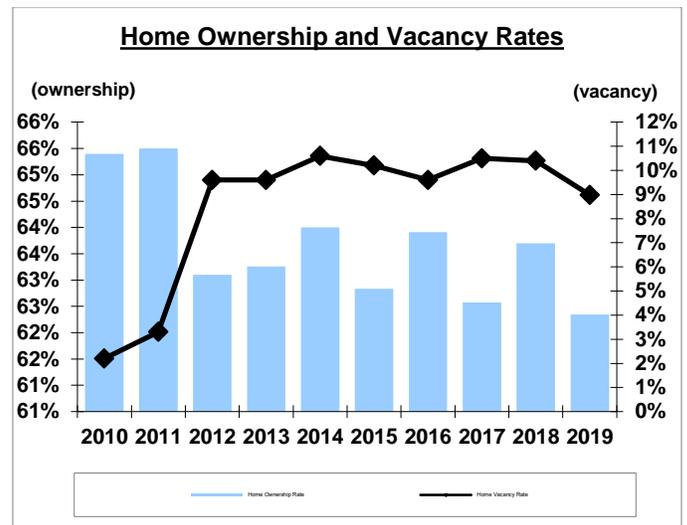
Omaha, Nebraska (91.9), Dallas, Texas (107.7), and Kansas City, Missouri-Kansas (95.5), the overall cost of living for area residents (90.8) is comparable to other area communities.<sup>9</sup>



Source: National Association of Realtors, 2020

As of the first quarter of 2021, the median home sales price in Wichita was \$182,800 for an existing home, approximately \$136,400 less than the national average.<sup>10</sup> New housing units are also very competitively priced at an average of \$257,033 30.0 percent below the corresponding national figure.<sup>11</sup>

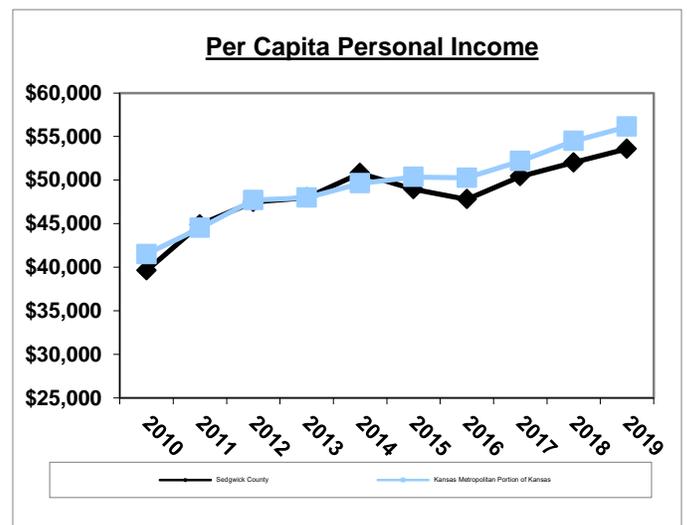
The home-ownership rate in Sedgwick County for 2019 was 62.3 percent, which was a slight decrease from 2018 at 63.7 percent. Home vacancy rates have been mixed. In 2002, vacancy rates in Sedgwick County were low at 1.2 percent, but increased to 3.4 percent in 2005. In 2009, vacancy rates decreased back to 1.4 percent. In 2011 and 2012, the vacancy rates sharply increased to 3.3 percent and 9.6 percent, respectively, and the rate held at 9.6 percent for 2013 before increasing to 10.6 percent in 2014 then slightly dropping to 10.2 percent in 2015, 9.6 percent in 2016, and increased again in 2017 to 10.5 percent, with a slight drop in 2018 to 10.4 percent. Vacancy rates fell again in 2019 to 10.3 percent. The number of households owning homes in reporting years has hovered around 63.0 percent while vacancy rates have gone down slightly.



Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2019

### Income

According to the American Community Survey, the 2019 median income was \$59,716 for households in Sedgwick County, up from \$55,882 in 2018. In 2018, the per capita personal income for Sedgwick County was \$55,882 compared to the Metropolitan Portion of Kansas per capita personal income of \$53,125. In 2019, the per capita personal income for Sedgwick County was \$53,557, just below the Metropolitan Portion of Kansas per capita personal income of \$56,126.



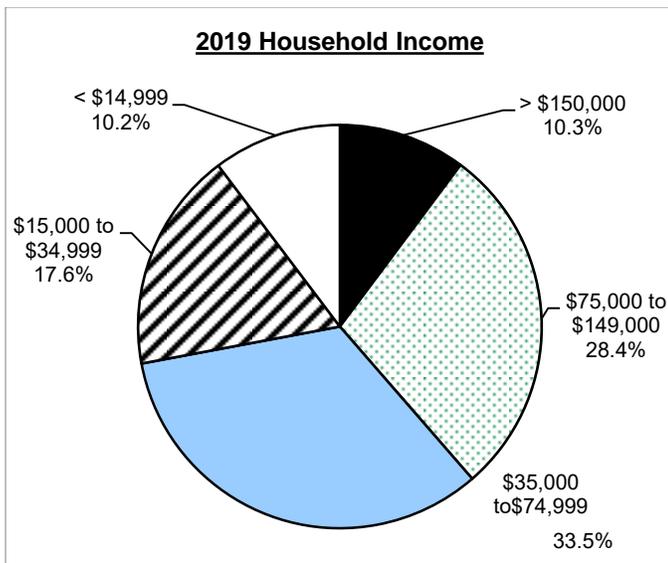
Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020

In 2019, 33.5 percent of households in Sedgwick County annually earned \$35,000-\$74,999, while 17.6 percent earned \$15,000-\$34,999. Approximately 10.2 percent of households earned less than \$14,999.

<sup>9</sup> Greater Wichita Partnership

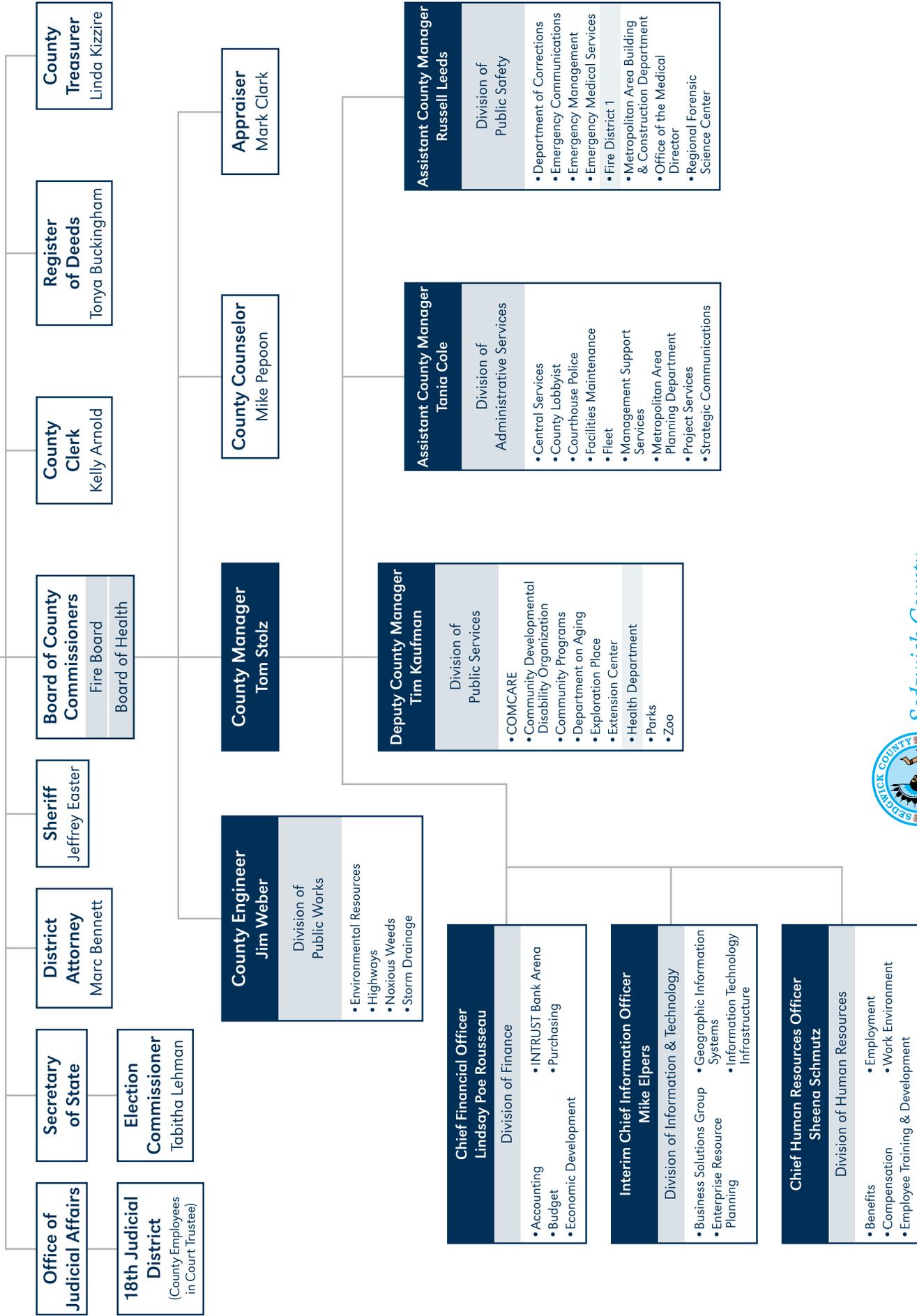
<sup>10</sup> National Association of Realtors, 2019

<sup>11</sup> Greater Wichita Economic Development Coalition Website



Source: American Community Survey, 2019

A final economic indicator for Sedgwick County is the percentage of families whose income had been below the poverty level throughout the past 12 months. According to the *U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey*, Sedgwick County’s percentage of impoverished families during 2019 was 12.4 percent. Families with children younger than 18 years of age experienced higher poverty rates at 17.1 percent and families with children younger than five years of age experienced poverty at a rate of 18.1 percent during 2019.



*Sedgwick County...  
working for you*