

# **Wichita, Kansas**

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## **Geography/Demographics**

Wichita, Kansas is located at the junction of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas Rivers in south-central Kansas. The confluence of these rivers was the reason for the chosen location of Wichita. The Arkansas River runs on to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where it becomes navigable by large boats.

Wichita is the largest city in Kansas, as well as a major manufacturing hub and cultural center. As of the 2000 census, the city has a total population of approximately 350,000 people. The racial makeup of the city is 75.2% White, 11.42% African American, 1.16% Native American, 3.96% Asian, .06% Pacific Islander, and 8.2% Other. The Hispanic / Latino population is 9.62%.

## **History**

Wichita, Kansas was officially incorporated in 1870. Shortly thereafter it became a railhead destination for cattle drives from Texas and other southwestern points, from whence it has derived its nickname of "Cowtown". In 1914-1915, oil was discovered nearby and Wichita became a major oil center. The oil money, in turn, allowed local entrepreneurs to invest in a promising airplane industry in the 1920's. The Swallow airplanes were built in Wichita between 1920 and 1923. This was the first airplane made specifically for production. Lloyd Stearman, Clyde Cessna, and Walter Beech were all employees of the Swallow Company. The city experienced a population explosion during World War II when it became a major manufacturing center for airplanes needed in the war effort. By 1945, bombers were being produced daily in Wichita and major aircraft companies were founded such as: Stearman Aircraft (predecessor of Boeing Co.), Beech Aircraft (now part of Raytheon), Cessna and Lear Jet (now Bombardier). Wichita remains a major manufacturing center for the aircraft industry today, hence its nickname "The Air Capitol". It has also been a significant entrepreneurial business center during the postwar period, with Coleman, Mentholatum, Pizza Hut, White Castle, and Koch Industries having all been founded in Wichita. In 1951, McConnell Air Force Base was activated and resulted in another population explosion attracting thousands more.

Construction plays another major role in Wichita's more recent economic profile. Despite job losses in 2002, construction employment still increased. A \$284 million bond issue for the Wichita Public Schools, USD 259, was passed on April 4, 2000. The bond money was designated for construction of seven schools, classroom additions to existing schools, refurbishing older buildings, and adding/refurbishing heating and cooling systems in most of the existing buildings. Several large privately funded commercial projects are also underway providing further job stability in the commercial construction sector. The overall outlook for employment in the Wichita construction industry is only expected to increase.

Wichita's beef packing industries have had some twists and turns in their effect on the economy also. Early on, Wichita had several meat processing plants such as: MBPXL, Cargill, ConAgra, Tyson/IBP, Farmland, and Excel. In the early 1990's, MBPXL (Missouri Beef Packing – Wichita branch) began layoffs. Excel bought MBPXL and eventually closed it. Excel then relocated its meat processing headquarters to Wichita. The other meat packing plants also began to downsize. The more recent events of 9-11, "Mad Cow" disease, and the tight supply of cattle available for slaughter, have resulted in the beef packing industries to downsize and not hire, run shorter shifts, slower lines and simply shortened the work week. When families come to Wichita expecting to find work in the meat processing plants, they find there are no jobs readily available and will most likely end up in construction work.

## **Wichita Public Schools Migrant Education Program**

Each Migrant Education Program has the responsibility for identifying (recruiting) as many migrant students as live within its project area. In the early stages of the Migrant Education Program in Wichita, students were recruited by the Catholic Charities organization. For the past several years, the responsibility of recruiting has been a part of the Wichita Public Schools Migrant Education Program office.

The district's Migrant Education Program employs three recruiters who speak English, Spanish and Vietnamese. These bilingual recruiters are a necessary asset to the program. The process for recruiting begins with the Migrant Education Program survey and the Home Language survey. These surveys have become a part of the district's enrollment packet that all students pre-K thru 12<sup>th</sup> grades and the Migrant Even Start Program complete during enrollment. Once these are completed, they are sent to the Migrant office to be used in the "recruiting" process for our district. For those families that may qualify, based on the survey's information, the recruiter initiates a phone call to the family to determine if the family qualifies or not. If the family does qualify, a home visit is made by the recruiter to make a personal connection with the family, obtain further information and parent signature on the Certificate of Eligibility (COE), and share information about the program, resources and services available.

In the past, little emphasis had been placed on the district's Migrant Education Program (MEP). Currently, our program is in the process of implementing changes and new initiatives. We are moving forward to improve this program through a better recruitment process, increased communication with schools regarding their migrant students and their status, better monitoring of the services students receive, and greater parent involvement through enhanced activities.

## **Migrant Program Services**

The following lists some of the services / resources that our Migrant Education Program offers:

### **Educational Services**

- Head Start / Pre-K
- Summer Programs
- After School Programs/Tutoring
- Interpreters for Conferences

- Parents As Teachers (PAT) - An early childhood program for children ages birth to 3 years old
- Adult English Classes
- Parent Involvement
- Parent Involvement Workshops
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Translation Team (District)
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) K-12 program for ESOL students to learn English in the schools
- ESOL Newcomer program
- GED Preparation Classes - Classes in English & Spanish
- PASS program (Portable Assisted Study Sequence) - An alternative High School completion program
- The Learning Center (High School courses)
- HEP (High School Equivalency Program) - Provides discretionary grants to institutions of high education
- CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program) - Provides discretionary grants to institutions of high education

#### **Additional Educational Resources**

- Instructional support to the English Language Learners
- Teachers
- Paraeducators
- Teaching Specialist to provide assistance in the educational needs of students
- Computers, printers and software
- ESOL Curriculum

#### **Programs and Other Support in District 259**

- Title I
- Pre Kindergarten
- Homeless
- Migrant Even Start
- Community In Schools (CIS)
- Gear Up program
- Health and Social Services Referrals (food, clothing, etc.)