



North Central Regional
Planning Commission
Serving Kansans Since 1972

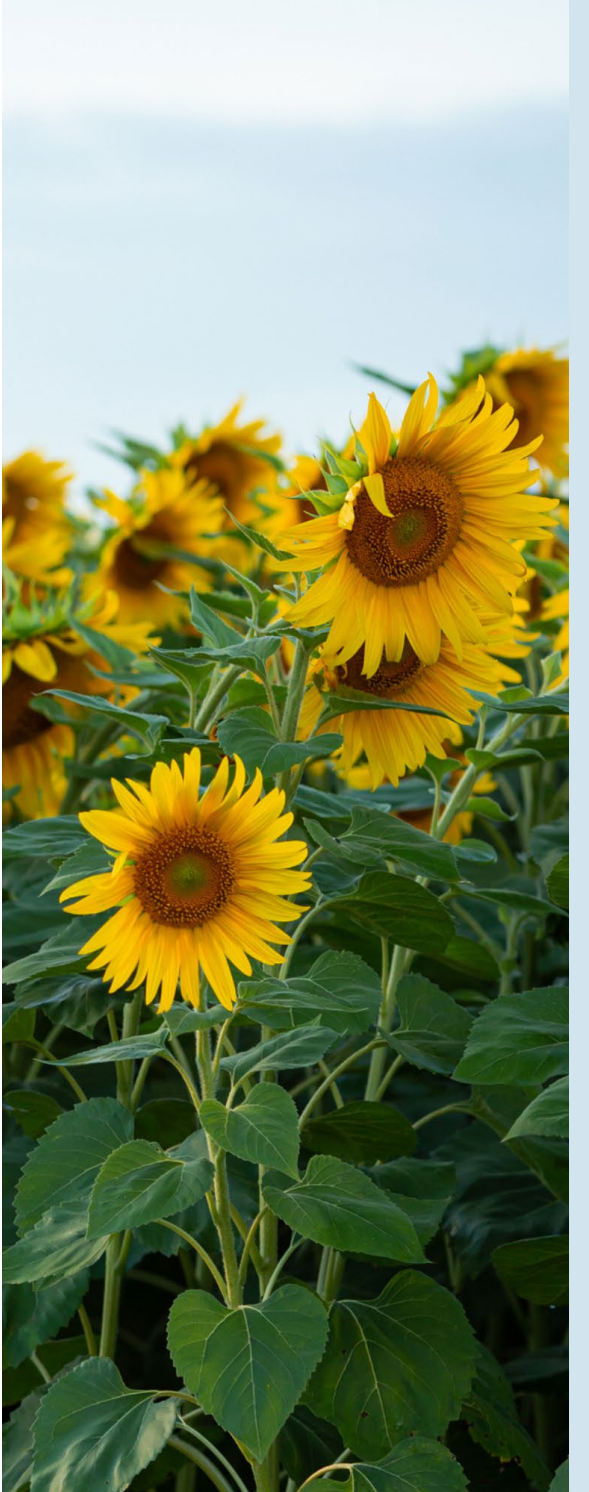
DRAFT

2026-2031

NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

SERVING NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS — INCLUDING CLAY, CLOUD, DICKINSON,
ELLSWORTH, JEWELL, LINCOLN, MARSHALL, MITCHELL, OTTAWA, REPUBLIC,
SALINE AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES



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Executive Summary

Purpose and Process

The North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2026–2031 provides a roadmap for strengthening communities, supporting economic growth, and building resilience across North Central Kansas. As the region’s designated Economic Development District, NCRPC works with cities, counties, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other partners to address challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and create a stronger future for the region.

The CEDS was developed through a public engagement process that included input from regional leaders, community members, businesses, educators, youth, and other stakeholders. More than 100 people contributed through meetings and discussions, 298 individuals responded to a regional survey, and 104 youth shared their perspectives through a pilot youth survey. This input helped identify the issues that matter most to residents and shape the priorities included in this plan.



A North Central Kansas Regional Excellence Initiative event in September 2025, hosted in Clay Center, Kansas, served as a launching point for stakeholder engagement in the CEDS planning process.

Regional Strengths & Challenges

The regional SWOT analysis highlighted many strengths, some of which included strong communities, quality of life, educational opportunities, healthcare access, rural character, and a central location. The analysis also identified challenges, some of which included an aging population and population decline, a need for greater economic diversity, and aging infrastructure.

Strategic Priorities

Based on this feedback, the CEDS Action Plan focuses on five key areas:



Regional Collaboration – Working together to share resources, solve problems, and strengthen the region.



Economic Prosperity through Innovation – Supporting businesses, entrepreneurs, workforce development, and new economic opportunities.



Superior Physical Assets – Improving housing, infrastructure, and essential public spaces that support communities and businesses.



Passionate Leadership from Empowered Citizens – Encouraging leadership development, youth engagement, and stronger local capacity.



Exceptional Quality of Place – Building on the region’s strengths, improving communities, and creating places where people want to live, work, and invest.

Resilience and Workforce

Economic resilience is a central theme throughout this plan. NCRPC and regional partners will continue working to prepare for challenges, adapt to change, and create a stronger future. Workforce development also remains a top priority. The CEDS supports partnerships that help address workforce

shortages due to an aging population and changing workforce needs.

Regional Vision

Ultimately, NCRPC's vision for the region is that communities in rural Kansas will favor choices that embrace innovation, increase prosperity, and demonstrate resilience.



Alcove Spring Historic Park, located north of Blue Rapids in Marshall County, Kansas. *(Photo Courtesy of Tom Parker)*

Introduction

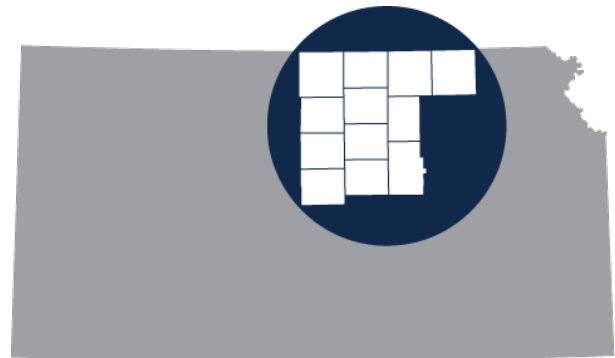
About the North Central Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC) is designated as the Economic Development District (EDD) for a 12-county region of North Central Kansas by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). As the region's designated Economic Development District, NCRPC leads the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy every five years in partnership with local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other regional stakeholders.

Established in 1972 as a multi-county planning organization headquartered in Beloit, Kansas, NCRPC was designated an EDD in 1980. Since that time, NCRPC has supported regional economic and community development through planning, partnerships, project administration, and project implementation.

The North Central Kansas Region

Today, NCRPC serves 12 counties and 83 member cities across North Central Kansas, including Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Marshall, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Washington counties. NCRPC also provides services to nonprofit organizations and businesses throughout the region. Additionally, NCRPC offers services through the Weatherization Assistance Program and acts as a fiscal agent for Homeland Security programs throughout the State.



Key NCRPC Programs and Services

For more than five decades, NCRPC has adapted to meet the changing needs of rural communities. Key services include:

- Assisting member cities, counties, and nonprofit organizations with community initiatives, including strategic planning, project development, identifying and securing funding, and project administration.
- Supporting local housing improvement efforts through housing programs, project administration, and inspection services.
- Providing weatherization assistance to income-eligible households to improve energy efficiency and promote household health and safety.
- Helping business owners and entrepreneurs evaluate business loan feasibility and access specialized financing programs to start, expand, or purchase businesses.
- Serving as the fiscal agent for six Regional Homeland Security Councils across Kansas.

- Connecting rural households and businesses located in underserved areas to reliable internet services through affiliate North Central Kansas Community Network.

Through collaboration and regional partnerships, NCRPC continues to support communities in building capacity, creating opportunities, and preparing for the future.

About the CEDS

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) provides a roadmap for guiding regional economic development and investment across North Central Kansas. The 2026–2031 CEDS builds on the region’s strengths, recognizes challenges, and identifies priorities and actions for the future. As the region’s designated Economic Development District, NCRPC coordinates the CEDS planning process and works with local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and other regional partners to gather feedback and support implementation.

The resulting strategy provides a shared framework for collaboration, investment, and economic development across North Central Kansas.

The sections that follow provide background on the region, summarize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

identified through the planning process, and present the Action Plan for 2026–2031.

Summary Background

This section provides an introduction to the region and the data context needed to understand the challenges and opportunities it faces. Key data points align with what we heard from stakeholders and residents through the regional survey and work sessions, providing a foundation for shaping the region’s response in the Action Plan.

The NCRPC region is largely rural and encompasses 12 counties and more than 9,000 square miles in North Central Kansas. The region is connected by major transportation routes, including I-70 to the south, U.S. Highways 24 and 36 to the north, U.S. Highway 81 running north-south, and numerous arterial roads and highways. The Salina Regional Airport is also an important transportation asset.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of the regional economy, supporting production, processing, and transportation, as well as a wide range of related businesses and industries. Employers continue to face workforce challenges associated with an aging population and declining population.

The following is a snapshot of the region. Additional data are available in Appendix B.



Population — 133,028 - 2024 American Community Survey (ACS)

The region’s population has declined slightly since the 2020 Census, decreasing 0.63% from 133,874 to 133,028. While this decline is modest compared with the 4.1% decrease between the 2010 and 2020 censuses, continued population loss presents challenges for the region’s workforce, economy, and quality of life. Stabilizing and growing the population will be important to the region’s long-term vitality.



Population by Age — Median Age 43.4

The region has an older population than the state as a whole, with a median age of 43.4 compared with 37.4 for Kansas. The region's median age has decreased slightly over time, from 44.9 in 2010 to 44.7 in 2020 and 43.4 in the 2024 ACS. Age distribution can highlight both opportunities and challenges for the region, including workforce availability, retirement trends, housing needs, and demand for community services.



Race/Ethnicity — The region is predominantly White, with 87% of residents identifying as White alone. The Hispanic or Latino population is growing, with 10,232 residents (7.7%) identifying as Hispanic or Latino in 2024, a 33% increase from 7,658 residents in 2010.



Educational Attainment — Approximately 26% of the region's population has completed a bachelor's degree or higher, about 10 percentage points below the rates of both Kansas and the United States. The region is home to six higher education institutions, providing valuable opportunities for partnerships to address regional workforce needs.



Industry - The region's largest industries by employment include government, manufacturing, retail trade, health care and social assistance, and farm employment. By GDP, the leading industries are agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; government; durable goods manufacturing; real estate including rental and leasing; and retail trade. Industry diversification was identified as a priority at all CEDS work sessions, reflecting concerns about the region's vulnerability if major industries decline.



Income — Per capita income in the region is \$36,291, while average income per earner is \$48,702. Both figures are below state and national averages. The largest household income group is \$75,000–\$100,000, with 8,076 households in this range; however, there is also a significant number of households that are below \$15,000.



Labor Force and Employment — After a sharp decline in the civilian labor force from 2010 to 2020, the region saw a modest increase to 67,795 in 2024. Unemployment has historically remained low, with a 3.8% unemployment rate in Q4 2025. The region's self-employment rate is higher (13.2%, 2024 American Community Survey) than that of the state and the United States, indicating a strong entrepreneurial landscape. The region has a small but growing percentage of residents who work remotely (6.6%, 2024 American Community Survey). This is significantly lower than the percentage for Kansas and the United States. Broadband access is a strength of the region, so there is strong potential for more.



Agriculture — According to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), the region had 5,817 farms in 2022, down from 6,578 in 2017. Despite challenges including unpredictable weather, rising input costs, and market volatility, agriculture remains an important component of the regional economy.



Geography — The region’s geography and rural character are important assets. Its open landscapes, natural resources, and rural communities provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and contribute to the quality of life that increasingly attracts people seeking recreational opportunities and a rural lifestyle.



Water — Six major rivers flow through the region: the Big Blue, Little Blue, Republican, Solomon, Saline, and Smoky Hill Rivers. Hundreds of smaller creeks further shape the landscape as they feed into these larger waterways. The region encompasses portions of four major river basins: Solomon; Smoky Hill-Saline; Kansas-Lower Republican; and Lower Arkansas, which includes a small portion of southwest Ellsworth County. The 12-county region is also home to seven lakes and reservoirs.



Commuting — In 2020, 57,581 people both lived and worked in the region, while 6,867 residents commuted outside the region and 4,485 workers commuted into the region. This reflects a strong connection between the region’s residents and local employment opportunities.



Housing — Total Housing Units in the region are 63,848 (2024 American Community Survey), reflecting a slight increase from the 63,774 housing units reported in the 2020 Census. The overwhelming majority of housing units in the region are single-family units (76%), a higher share than in Kansas and the United States. This may indicate a need for greater variety in housing choices across the region. Another notable characteristic is the age of the region’s housing stock. Nearly 30% of homes were built prior to 1940, compared to 15.4% in Kansas and 11.7% in the United States. The age of the housing stock, combined with a shortage of contractors in the region, creates challenges for homeowners seeking to maintain or renovate older homes.

SWOT Analysis

Determining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the region to better understand “where we are” and “where we are going” is vital to regional economic development. EDA provides the following context:

- Strengths are a region’s relative competitive advantages, often internal in nature;
- Weaknesses are a region’s relative competitive disadvantages, often internal in nature;
- Opportunities are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress, often external in nature; and
- Threats are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline, often external in nature.

The following summarizes how the region was involved in the SWOT analysis process. After the overview of the process, our SWOT findings are captured at the end of this section and reflect those themes and provide the foundation for the CEDS Action Plan.

Public Engagement

Community and stakeholder input played an important role in shaping the SWOT analysis and identifying the issues and opportunities addressed in the CEDS. Engagement throughout the planning process included 105 participants in seven in-person and virtual meetings, 298 responses to the regional survey, 104 responses to a pilot youth survey, along with guidance from the Executive Board and CEDS Strategy Committee.

Participants represented a broad range of perspectives, including local government, economic development, business and industry, education, community foundations, government agencies, emergency management, utilities, financial institutions, the arts, and regional planning.

The input gathered through these efforts helped identify common themes, provide context for regional data, and validate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats reflected in the SWOT analysis.

Regional Strategy Sessions

Discussions from two regional strategy sessions centered around housing challenges, including limited rental options, high building costs, and a lack of contractors willing to work on older properties, as well as the need for infrastructure improvements, particularly in water and sewer systems. Participants also addressed challenges in leadership recruitment, especially for elected positions and nonprofit boards, and discussed opportunities for business innovation and workforce development. These discussions helped inform development of the Action Plan.

The Executive Board also discussed the CEDS at its January 2025 meeting. Several themes emerged from these discussions:

- Housing interrelates to workforce recruitment, economic growth, and quality of life.
- Regional collaboration could help communities address challenges.
- Planning and capacity building are important for making smart investments.
- Leadership development and youth engagement are critical.
- Technological innovation and partnerships have the potential to offset workforce shortages.

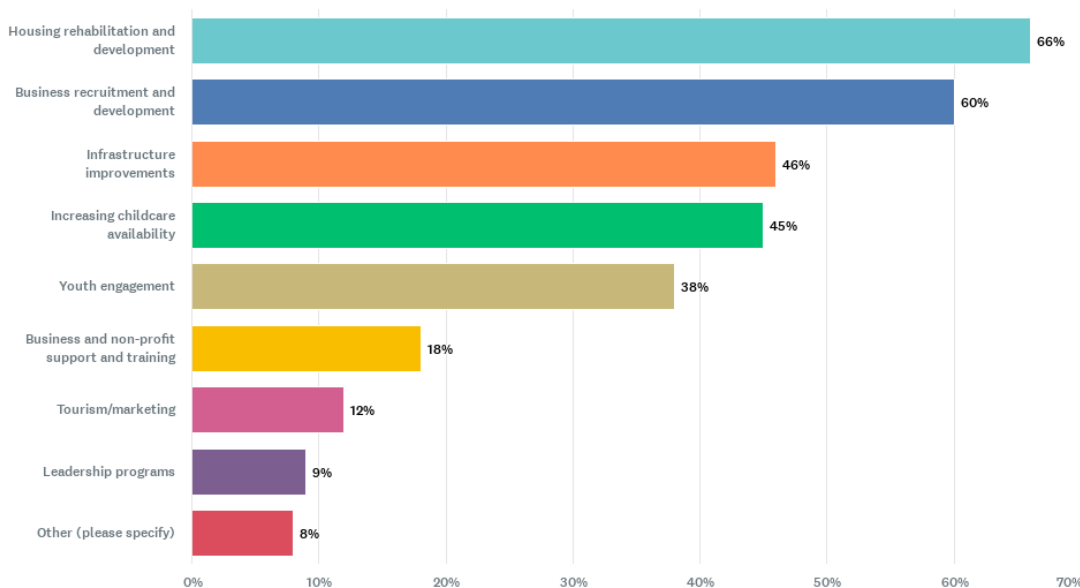
Surveys

Regional Survey

The results helped confirm issues identified through the planning process and provided additional insight into the priorities and opportunities most important to residents and workers. Two survey questions were particularly useful in identifying the priorities and opportunities most important to residents and workers.

As illustrated in the chart below, housing rehabilitation/development and business recruitment/development were among the top priorities identified by respondents. Infrastructure improvements and childcare also emerged as important priorities. Several of these same themes carried into the following question about what residents would like to have in the region.

What do you think should be the top priorities for your community in the next 5 years? (2026 Survey)



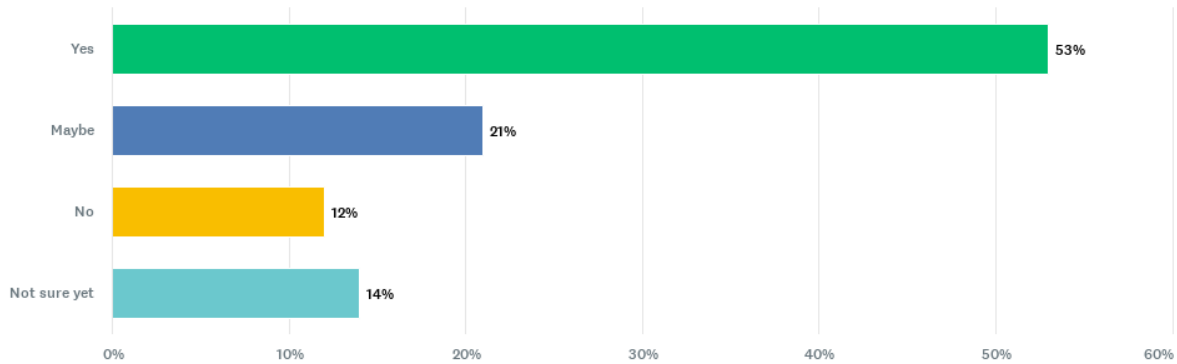
What would you like to have in the region that does not exist now? (2026 Survey)

access remote work Centers programs small cities schools driven local rural families services support
 development Better working business things community industry housing
 people jobs options need existing restaurants way opportunities leadership childcare Affordable housing
 manufacturing small communities places retain

Youth survey

To hear directly from the region's future workforce and leaders, a pilot youth survey was conducted as part of the CEDS process. While many responses reflected current experiences, youth were generally optimistic about their communities and the region's future. Many said they would consider living in their community or elsewhere in the region as adults.

Would you consider living in your community (or another North Central Kansas community) as an adult? (2026 Youth Survey)



Together, the regional and youth surveys provided perspectives from both adults, the current workforce and tax payers and the region’s future workforce and leaders.

Partnerships with Statewide Partners

Conversations with statewide partners provided additional context for the issues identified through the regional planning process. Two opportunities were particularly relevant to the development of the CEDS.

Regional Excellence Initiative

In September 2025, a Regional Excellence Initiative (REI) convening marked the launch of public engagement for the CEDS. At this event nearly 50 people from the region gathered to discuss key areas of economic impact and ways that regional projects could increase job growth, facilitate business start-up and also impact the quality and capacity of the workforce. While particular emphasis was placed on manufacturing, the dialogue and identified projects are important for all businesses.

Discussion at the REI gathering identified several vital steps to strengthen the region’s economy:

- Creating a workforce pipeline with emphasis on trade/technical education, policy issues that limit scholarship support for technical education and connecting graduates with businesses ready to transition to the next generation of owners.
- Prioritizing housing availability and affordability through innovative models, coupled with reliable infrastructure and childcare to create a strong sense of place. This also includes leveraging broadband to attract remote workers.
- Regional asset mapping to maximize the use of scarce resources to best provide business technical assistance while filling known gaps in support services. This work can be paired with real time data collection to identify true labor needs in the manufacturing sector as well as opportunities for utilizing technology and automation to grow business while driving investment in existing business.

Kansas Infrastructure Hub Summit

In April 2026, Deb Ohlde, Executive Director, facilitated a session at the Kansas Infrastructure Hub Summit. At this year's Summit, the participants were divided into smaller, regional subsets to discuss infrastructure needs that were shared across the state. Electronic, real-time polling was also used to make certain all participants offered feedback in each session.

One key takeaway from the polling was that the following four issues and opportunities were found to be shared across Kansas.

- There is a shortage of funding for infrastructure projects;
- Regional development organizations have limited staff capacity that creates a barrier to serving all communities;
- Communities are eager to explore ways to bundle projects for efficiency and success; and
- Drinking water and roads/streets are the top issues of concern.

These commonalities illustrate the possibility of regional collaboration being well received and even necessary for success. In addition, they pave the way for movement toward a statewide CEDS being developed in Kansas. Despite the differences, the shared issues and interest in bundling open the door for more robust interaction between the Economic Development Districts and state agencies across individual projects. In the case of NCRPC in particular, the need for funding for early-stage engineering was a top priority, along with identifying the best approaches to project bundling.

Additional SWOT References

Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations (KARDO) Regional Excellence Initiative (REI) Final Report, 2026.

[Kansas Statewide Housing Needs Assessment](#), a project of the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation and the Office of Rural Prosperity, 2021.

Top Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats in North Central Kansas (2026) *

The following themes emerged across the surveys, stakeholder discussions, strategy sessions, and conversations with statewide partners, and provide the foundation for the CEDS Action Plan.

STRENGTHS

- Quality of life/low crime rates
- Sense of community/people helping people
- Rural landscape
- Educational systems and opportunities
- Central location/highway systems/airport access
- Access to quality healthcare institutions
- Engaged community foundations
- Strong work ethic
- Willingness to collaborate (e.g. economic developers, partnerships between counties)
- Support for businesses (e.g. access to regional loan pools, strength of financial institutions, etc.)

WEAKNESSES

- Aging infrastructure/vacant buildings
- Limited housing options/quality affordable housing
- Limited childcare availability
- Loss of population
- Aging workforce without replacements
- Limited availability of everyday essentials locally
- Lack of business succession planning
- Limited housing/amenities for the aging population
- Transfer/loss of wealth between generations
- Lack of access to reliable broadband services
- Low unemployment

OPPORTUNITIES

- Housing rehabilitation/development
- Youth engagement and retention
- Business development and support
- Remote working
- Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial growth
- Build up community foundations/increase wealth transfer
- Workforce skills development
- Collaboration with educational institutions
- Tourism/agritourism
- Innovative application and utilization of technology
- Leadership development

THREATS

- Declining rural population
- Lack of industry/job diversity
- Aging population
- Competition from online retail for local businesses
- Aging and/or "low skilled" workforce
- Competition from urban areas for graduates
- Government unpredictability (including related impacts on funding)
- Competition with outside regions for business development
- Substance abuse
- Lack of tax diversity
- Lack of preparedness for disasters or economic disruptions

*2026 Regional Survey Results



Strategic Direction, Action Plan & Evaluation Framework

The strategic planning process was guided by the SWOT analysis and stakeholder engagement, as described in the previous section. NCRPC is proud of its long history and its ability to adapt to the changing needs of the region. While many of its programs and services have remained consistent over the past several decades, staff and board members also continue to explore new opportunities and find innovative ways to support the region. The resulting action plan includes a combination of longstanding programs and services, along with new ideas and expanded efforts to address emerging needs and opportunities.

Action Plan

The NCRPC identified five vision areas that are critical to the long-term success of North Central Kansas:

1. Regional Collaboration
2. Economic Prosperity through Innovation
3. Superior Physical Assets
4. Passionate Leadership from Empowered Citizens
5. Exceptional Quality of Place

These five priority areas build on the previous CEDS and continue to reflect the region's priorities. They also align with the NCRPC's mission and vision. While progress has been made, many of the region's challenges take time to address and require ongoing effort. The goals and objectives have been updated based on feedback received through stakeholder outreach and public engagement conducted in 2025 and 2026.

The action plan includes the following:

- **Goals** that support each vision area.
- **Objectives** that outline action needed to achieve the goals, and that provide benchmarks to help NCRPC measure performance.
- **Partners** representing potential key organizations and institutions that can help in implementing each objective. Partners may provide expertise, support implementation, or serve as potential funding resources.
- **Performance measures** that help track progress and adjust priorities as needed throughout the 5-year plan.
- **Time frame** that outlines a proposed implementation schedule, including short term (years 1 and 2), long term (years 3-5), or ongoing for sustained objectives and work.
- **Resource commitments** that help NCRPC prioritize staff time, funding, and other resources and may be a signal to seek external funding partners.

Vision 1: Regional Collaboration



Working together is the foundation of what we do at the NCRPC. Regional collaboration helps communities address shared challenges, leverage resources, and pursue opportunities that would be difficult to achieve alone. Collaboration creates shared learning and efficient use of resources.

NCRPC will continue its efforts to connect communities, agencies, businesses, and other partners to leverage resources and opportunities to make the region more resilient and competitive.

Vision 1: Regional Collaboration				
Goal 1: Connect Stakeholders to Strengthen Regional Resiliency				
Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time frame	Resource Commitment
Host round table discussion with Regional LEDD twice per year	LEDD; CCD	Number of participants and sessions	Ongoing	\$
Serve as the fiscal agent for six of the Regional Homeland Security Councils in Kansas: which includes all but three Kansas counties.	KHP; Regional Homeland Security Councils; DHS	Continued participation by each of the six Regional Homeland Security Councils	Ongoing	\$\$
Oversee project investments which address the planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs that help build local, regional and state response capabilities and encourage regional resilience, safety and preparedness.	KHP; Regional Homeland Security Councils; DHS	Number of annual Homeland Security projects; dollars invested	Ongoing	\$\$\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time frame	Resource Commitment
Deliver regional (bundled) approaches to solve collective problems or efficiently manage opportunities such as Solid Waste Planning; Wildfire Preparedness; Rural Business Assessment; Corrections	County Solid Waste Managers; County Commissioners; RFD;	Number of participants and regional projects	Ongoing	\$\$
Convene work sessions with focused stakeholders to explore regional collaboration in new areas.	LEDD; CCD; Partners will vary based on discussion topics	Number of participants and sessions	Long-Term	\$
Continue our relationship with CTC in providing High Speed Fixed Wireless Internet.	NCKCN; CTC	Continued collaboration with CTC	Short-Term	\$
Utilize non-traditional partners to market and raise awareness about programs (i.e., health departments to promote weatherization program).	Regional partners in the city, county and non-profit sectors	Communication touchpoints with nontraditional outlets	Ongoing	\$
Utilize non-traditional funding to assist partners expanding internet services to underserved areas.	NCKCN; CTC; private sector providers	Expanded areas with fiber and high-speed access	Ongoing	\$
Time Frame Definitions	Resource commitment			
Short term: Years 1–2 Long term: Years 3–5 Ongoing: Entire 5-year period	\$ - Less expensive, covered by existing revenue \$\$ - Moderately expensive, needs some new revenue \$\$\$ - Expensive and requires at least 50% new revenue \$\$\$\$ - New revenue stream needed			
CCD: Chamber of Commerce Directors CTC: Cunningham Fiber DHS: Department of Homeland Security KHP: Kansas Highway Patrol		LEDD: Local Economic Development Directors NCKCN: North Central Kansas Community Network RFD: Rural Fire Districts		



NCRPC co-hosted the CDBG Road Show at Fort Hays Tech North Central in February 2026, followed by a Regional Strategy Session that helped shape the CEDS Action Plan.



One example of the way that NCRPC collaborates is serving as a fiscal agent for homeland security initiatives, providing administrative, financial, and procurement services for projects that strengthen emergency preparedness and public safety capacities across Kansas. This includes working with six of the Regional Homeland Security Councils in Kansas, covering all but three Kansas counties. Pictured above is just one Homeland Security project example.

Vision 2: Economic Prosperity through Innovation



The region's economy must continue to adapt to changing conditions and opportunities. By supporting businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, building partnerships, and leveraging new ideas and technology, North Central Kansas can strengthen its economic future.

NCRPC will support economic prosperity through partnerships, technical assistance, workforce initiatives, and innovative programs.

Vision 2: Economic Prosperity through Innovation				
Goal 2a: Strengthen Existing Businesses and Entrepreneurs				
Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Partner with and promote regional service providers such as SBDC and the Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center Inc. to enhance small business support services in our region.	SBDC; LEED; CCD, NWKEICI	Number of clients in our region accessing support services	Ongoing	\$
Facilitate an annual business training opportunity in the region (virtually or in-person). Topics will vary based on needs expressed by RLF clients. Examples include workforce management; business plan writing, social media, e-commerce, etc.	SBDC; Center for Rural Enterprise Engagement; EDD; CCD; Network Kansas; Colleges and Universities; Regional Private Business Consultants	Number of participants and number of trainings offered	Long-Term	\$\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Assist in the start-up of new business and existing business succession by providing technical assistance to review the viability of projects for financing.	LEDD; CCD; Local Banks; Patterson Family Foundation; Regional Small Business Development Offices; NWKEICI; Network Kansas; KDC; SCORE; SBA; USDA	Number of loan feasibility reviews conducted	Ongoing	\$\$
Assist viable business start ups, purchases or expansions in obtaining financing by providing loan technical assistance and loan packaging assistance.	LEDD; CCD; Local Banks; Regional Small Business Development Offices; NWKEICI, Network Kansas; KDC, SCORE, SBA; USDA	Number of business loan approvals and related impacts, such as amount loaned and jobs created/ retained	Ongoing	\$\$
Support workforce pipelines to fill critical vacancies in the region.	LEDD; CCD; Private Industry; Foundations; KDC; secondary and post-secondary education	Businesses impacted through successful hiring	Long-Term	\$\$\$\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Research and implement potential local/regional/state/federal programs available to fund business development projects.	LEDD; CCD; Local Banks; Regional Small Business Development Offices; Foundations; NWKEICI, Network Kansas; KDC, SCORE, SBA; USDA	Annual review of at least two funding programs	Ongoing	\$\$
Vision 2: Economic Prosperity through Innovation				
Goal 2b: Promote Regional Economic Opportunity				
Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Research and partner with existing organizations to propel new industry in our region	TDI; LEDD; KU Institute for Policy and Social Research; NWKEICI; Kansas State University Extension	Number of new industries identified; Support provided to increase those newly identified industries	Ongoing	\$
Provide business development and related services which assist in the creation and retention of jobs in NCK; creating or retaining at least 25 jobs annually.	Local Banks, LEDD, Local Realtors, SBDC, NWKEICI, Network Kansas, KDC, SCORE, SBA, USDA, and Foundations	Number of jobs created and retained	Ongoing	\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Explore the feasibility of a matching program between Fort Hays Tech North Central students and regional business. Focus on specific gaps in the trades including contractors needed for infrastructure and housing program implementation.	FHTNC; SBDC; NWKEICI; LEDD; Foundations	Successful matches between businesses and students	Long-Term	\$\$\$
Leverage the three affiliate non-profits co-staffed by NCRPC and managed by NCRPC to bring additional resources to the region with new funding partners	State and Federal programs; Private Foundations; Business and Industry Partnerships; Post Secondary Education Entities	Number of new programs launched	Short-term	\$
Expand the pilot business façade improvements program to include commercial rehabilitation and additional counties.	Local Banks, CDD, LEDD, Dane Hansen Foundation, Patterson Family Foundation and NCK Area Foundations	Number of buildings improved	Long-term	\$

Time Frame Definitions	Resource commitment
Short term: Years 1–2 Long term: Years 3–5 Ongoing: Entire 5-year period	\$ - Less expensive, covered by existing revenue \$\$ - Moderately expensive, needs some new revenue \$\$\$ - Expensive and requires at least 50% new revenue \$\$\$\$ - New revenue stream needed
CCD: Chamber of Commerce Directors FHTNC: Fort Hays Tech North Central KDC: Kansas Department of Commerce LEDD: Local Economic Development Directors NCK: North Central Kansas NWKEICI: Northwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Inc.	SBA: Small Business Administration SBDC: Small Business Development Center SCORE: Service Corps of Retired Executives (volunteer business mentors) TDI: Technology Development Institute (at Kansas State University) USDA: United States Department of Agriculture



Overlooking Courtland, Kansas, in Republic County. *(Photo courtesy of Tom Parker)*



The NCRPC Business Finance Program assists in obtaining funding to start, improve, expand, or buy a business, including this project in Clifton, Kansas.

Vision 3: Superior Physical Assets



Quality physical assets, including housing, reliable infrastructure, and essential services, help residents, businesses, and communities thrive.

NCRPC will continue helping communities identify needs, connect with partners, and access resources to improve physical assets across the region. Through housing programs, infrastructure planning, funding assistance, and innovative solutions, communities in the region will have the tools they need for a strong and resilient future.

Vision 3: Superior Physical Assets

Goal 3a: Increase Access to Quality, Affordable Housing

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Offer a moderate-income Home Improvement Loan & Grant Program.	Contractors; Local Banks; Realtors; Cities; Area Housing Organizations; Dane G. Hansen Foundation; FHLB; Local Community Foundations	Number of homes improved by the Program	Long term	\$\$\$
Ensure that annually a minimum of 10 houses participating in a city home rehabilitation program are improved sufficiently to meet current housing quality standards, adding a minimum of 20 years of useful life	KDC; Local Contractors; Municipal Governments	Number of homes improved by a City Housing Home Rehabilitation Program	Ongoing	\$\$\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Assess housing needs in the region and document the priorities for housing creation and rehabilitation	KHRC; LEDD; Developers; Lenders; Dane G Hansen Foundation	Annual data gathering	Ongoing	\$
Deliver the weatherization program to eligible homes in order to improve their energy efficiency and useful life within our 41-county region.	LIEAP; KHRC; Local Contractors; DOE	Number of homes weatherized	Ongoing	\$\$\$
Explore and implement new housing construction options/models in the region	KHRC; DOE; FHLB; USDA; Foundations	Number of homes built with a new model; number of unique rental options developed	Long term	\$\$\$\$
Serve as the fiscal agent for the Kansas Housing Cooperative Loan Program	NWKEICI; DGH; State of Kansas	Number of new homes constructed	Ongoing	\$
Secure funding for housing improvements for middle income home owners or renters	State of Kansas; Foundation; KHRC	Number of programs available and number of households assisted	Ongoing	\$\$\$

Vision 3: Superior Physical Assets

Goal 3b: Secure and Maintain Basic Infrastructure

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Assist at least one City biennially in completing a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	Municipal Governments; Local Engineering Firms; State Partners who provide Technical Assistance to Cities for this purpose	Number of Cities assisted with CIP	Ongoing	\$
Maintain a regional infrastructure project pipeline through the NCRPC intake form to identify needs, support project development, and guide future funding opportunities.	Municipal Governments; County Governments	Number of city or county officials submitting projects; inventory of regional infrastructure created	Ongoing	\$
Support Wi-Fi hot spots in the region to facilitate communication at gathering spaces otherwise unserved.	NCKCN; CTC	Number of active hot spots	Short term	\$\$
Sustainably deliver quality internet access via fixed wireless services.	NCKCN; CTC	Number of internet customers; measurement of internet quality and speed	Short term	\$\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Research shared and PRN staffing models to address city staff shortages.	League of Kansas Municipalities; Retired Employees	Number of Cities adopting a new staff model	Long-Term	\$
Work with member cities and counties in helping them access financing to address their infrastructure and development needs. This includes administering at least 8 loan or grant funded infrastructure projects annually.	KDC; KDHE; KWO, USDA Rural Development; Municipal Governments; County Governments	Number of successful grant and loan applications; number of communities served	Ongoing	\$\$\$
Time Frame Definitions	Resource commitment			
Short term: Years 1–2 Long term: Years 3–5 Ongoing: Entire 5-year period	\$ - Less expensive, covered by existing revenue \$\$ - Moderately expensive, needs some new revenue \$\$\$ - Expensive and requires at least 50% new revenue \$\$\$\$ - New revenue stream needed			
CCD: Chamber of Commerce Directors CTC: Cunningham Fiber DOE: Department of Energy FHLB: First Home Loan Bank KDC: Kansas Department of Commerce KHRC: Kansas Housing Resource Corporation KWO: Kansas Water Office LEDD: Local Economic Development Directors		LIEAP: Low Income Energy Assistance Program NCK: North Central Kansas NCKCN: North Central Kansas Community Network RHOP: Regional Home Ownership Program USDA: United States Department of Agriculture		



The City of Delphos was one of several communities in the region represented at the March 2026 Kansas Department of Commerce Community Development Block Grant Awards banquet.



While housing rehabilitation is a primary focus of NCRPC's housing efforts in the region, housing demolition is also part of those efforts, helping remove dilapidated residential structures, keep neighborhoods safe and clean, and clear the way for future infill.

Vision 4: Passionate Leadership from Empowered Citizens



This vision focuses on developing strong leaders and engaged citizens across the region. Leadership development, civic engagement, and local staff and volunteer capacity building help communities adapt to change and create opportunities for future generations.

By supporting youth, local officials, community organizations, and its own staff, NCRPC will help build the leadership needed for a strong and resilient region.

Vision 4: Passionate Leadership from Empowered Citizens				
Goal 4a: Encourage a Culture of Learning, Leading and Teaching				
Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Sponsor the Rural Voices Youth Contest for high school seniors in NCK to share their unique perspectives on rural Kansas.	Regional School Districts	Number of student entries into the Rural Voices Youth Contest	Ongoing	\$
Introduce a biennial opportunity among high school students to lead a community project and support the projects with a cash award; Invite youth from the region to attend the "Spirit of the Region" event	Regional School Districts; LEDD; NCK Area Foundations	Number of youth attending event and participating in the project; 4 projects funded in the region for \$4,000 each	Long-Term	\$\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Promote successful models to integrate youth into community decision making	CEO Program Dickinson County; Youth Council City of Marysville; YEC programs in the region	Information shared in newsletter and on social media	Long-Term	\$
Participate as a Core Committee Member of the Heartland Rural Innovators Network leadership team for Cloud County	CORI; CD County; Cloud County Community College; Private Industry	Success metrics established by the leadership team; Established partnership with CORI	Short term	\$
Launch a “Spirit of the Region” award program to recognize and learn from unique and highly impactful projects in the region	Member Counties and Cities	Number of nominations for the awards	Short term	\$
Market leadership learning opportunities as they relate to local government and non-profits to encourage strong leaders at the local level.	Municipal Governments; County Governments; LEDD; Kansas Extension; Colleges and Universities; Kansas Leadership Center	Number of candidates running for local government; number of learning opportunities; numbers of participants	Short term	\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Partner to deliver training to encourage individuals running for elected office and supporting them once elected.	Kansas State Extension; League of Kansas Municipalities; Kansas Farm Bureau	Number of trainings delivered	Long-Term	\$\$
Award the Doug McKinney Leadership Stipend annually to encourage the professional development and leadership experiences among citizens of the region.	Emerging leaders in the region	Making one award per year	Ongoing	\$
Work with the post-secondary educational entities in the region helping them initiate and structure academic and technical training offerings to meet specific regional workforce needs.	Colleges and Universities; Regional School Districts; Local Employers; LEDD; CCD; Foundations	Number of workforce trainings in the region; number of workers in specific industries; educational attainment	Ongoing	\$\$\$

Vision 4: Passionate Leadership from Empowered Citizens

Goal 4b: Maintain a Highly Skilled and Adaptive Staff

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Support the Multi-State RDO professional development conference.	KARDO; MINK Conference committee	Number of regional development organizations participating in conference meeting	Short-Term	\$
Develop staff capacity in relevant program areas such as environmental reviews, planning, meeting facilitation, et al. through professional development workshops and conferences.	Vary Annually by Program Areas	Number of trainings attended by staff	Ongoing	\$\$
Explore and secure non-traditional funding sources to fill program gaps as needed; assess gaps through an asset mapping process.	Private Funding Programs and Foundations	Research conducted to find non-traditional funding sources; number of new programs administered by NCRPC staff	Ongoing	\$\$



NCRPC staff spent a day in Abilene, Kansas, at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in July 2026. The retreat provided an opportunity for staff to learn, collaborate, and strengthen the skills and relationships needed to remain a highly skilled and adaptive team serving the region.

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Implementation Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Maintain NCRPC's online funding resource for both public or private funding opportunities applicable to the region.	NCRPC Staff Only	Research conducted to maintain an up-to-date funding resource; number of new programs administered by NCRPC staff	Ongoing	\$
Invest staff time engaging with KARDO to collaborate on comprehensive, statewide projects and strengthen the RDO capacity in Kansas.	KARDO Members	KARDO meetings attended; NCRPC Executive Director serves as KARDO Treasurer; Number of statewide initiatives developed out of KARDO	Ongoing	\$\$
Invest staff time engaging with KACDC to collaborate on business finance opportunities, programs and strengthen the KACDC capacity in Kansas.	KACDC Members	KACDC meetings attended; NCRPC Business Finance Director serves as KACDC Treasurer	Ongoing	\$
Time Frame Definitions	Resource commitment			
Short term: Years 1–2 Long term: Years 3–5 Ongoing: Entire 5-year period	\$ - Less expensive, covered by existing revenue \$\$ - Moderately expensive, needs some new revenue \$\$\$ - Expensive and requires at least 50% new revenue \$\$\$\$ - New revenue stream needed			
CEO: Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities CCD: Chamber of Commerce Directors CD: Cloud County CORI: Center on Rural Innovation KACDC: Kansas Association of Certified Development Companies KARDO: Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations LEDD: Economic Development Directors		MINK: Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas Planning District Conference NCK: North Central Kansas NCRPC: North Central Regional Planning Commission RDO: Regional Development Organization YEC: Youth Entrepreneurial Challenge		



NCRPC Assistant Director Keegan Bailey serves on the Housing Transdisciplinary Team, which is focused on housing across the state.



NCRPC regularly works with communities to address water and wastewater needs by helping identify funding opportunities. In March 2026, NCRPC Executive Director Deb Ohlde presented a preconference session on funding source compliance at the Kansas Rural Water Association Annual Conference and Exhibition.



NCRPC partnered to expand learning opportunities for students in the Cloud County Community College Renewable Energy Department. *(Photo courtesy of Cloud County Community College.)*

Vision 5: Exceptional Quality of Place



A strong sense of place helps make communities attractive to current and future residents. By building on the region's rural assets, investing in community improvements, and promoting local successes, North Central Kansas can remain a place where people choose to live, work, and invest.

NCRPC will continue promoting the region's assets, sharing success stories, and connecting communities with resources and opportunities to enhance quality of place.

Vision 5: Exceptional Quality of Place				
Goal 5a: Attract and Retain Residents				
Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Promote and provide staff support for housing programs, planning efforts that aim to attract and retain residents and maintain housing stock.	Regional Employers; LEDD; communities; developers	Population growth/retention, projects assisted and/or program results	Ongoing	\$\$\$
Promote regional incentives for bringing business and residents to the region (i.e., "Rural by Choice" and "Love Kansas")	LEDD; CCD; Kansas Sampler Foundation; Municipal Governments; County Governments; KDC	Population growth and retention; number of businesses created or retained; job retention and growth	Long-Term	\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Support community clean-up efforts through the demolition of a minimum of 5 dilapidated houses annually in cities participating in a housing initiative.	KDC; Local Contractors; Municipal Governments; Foundations	Number of dilapidated homes demolished annually	Ongoing	\$\$
Encourage the development of young professional networking groups in the region.	Business and Industry Organizations; CCD; LEDD; NCK Foundations	Population Growth age 19 to 39	Ongoing	\$
Support community beautification through a for-profit business façade improvement program to include commercial rehabilitation.	Local Banks, CDD, LEDD; Foundations.	Number of buildings improved	Long-Term	\$\$

Vision 5: Exceptional Quality of Place

Goal 5b: Leverage Rural Assets

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Elevate the NCRPC as a hub of information, services, connections and resources.	LEDD; CCD; Local Governments; Businesses; Convention and Visitors Bureaus; Arts Councils; SBDC; NWKEICI; Grant and Loan providers; Technical Assistance providers; Post Secondary Education Entities	Requests for information and referrals; Staff knowledge development	Ongoing	\$

Objective	Partners	Performance Measures	Time Frame	Resource Commitment
Use the NCRPC newsletter, website and blog as resources for sharing “spotlight projects”, success stories, and other case studies to showcase the region’s accomplishments.	Municipal Governments; County Governments; Clients and Partners of NCRPC	Number of spotlight projects, success stories and other case studies by NCRPC	Ongoing	\$\$
Emphasize a "work together" culture across the region.	NCRPC staff	Number of cross cutting problem solving or joint projects	Long-Term	\$\$
Promote incentives for remote working in NCK, co-working spaces, and remote working best practices.	LEDD: CORI; Local Businesses; CCD	Increase in remote workers moving to NCK, as well as remote work options from local businesses to promote population growth	Long-Term	\$\$
Time Frame Definitions		Resource commitment		
Short term: Years 1–2 Long term: Years 3–5 Ongoing: Entire 5-year period		\$ - Less expensive, covered by existing revenue \$\$ - Moderately expensive, needs some new revenue \$\$\$ - Expensive and requires at least 50% new revenue \$\$\$\$ - New revenue stream needed		
CCD: Chamber of Commerce Directors CORI: Center on Rural Innovation LEDD: Local Economic Development Directors KDC: Kansas Department of Commerce		NCK: North Central Kansas NCRPC: North Central Regional Planning Commission NWKEIC: North West Kansas Economic Innovation Center, Inc. SBDC: Small Business Development Center		

Special events in communities throughout the region provide fun and unique experiences for residents and visitors alike. This photo from a Marshall County parade is one example of the many traditions that contribute to the region’s strong sense of place.
(Photo courtesy of Tom Parker)





Economic Resilience

According to the U.S. Economic Development Administration, economic resilience is the ability of regions to anticipate, withstand, and recover from shocks, disruptions, and other economic stresses.

The NCRPC vision is that communities in rural Kansas will favor choices that embrace *innovation*, increase *prosperity* and demonstrate *resilience*. In support of that vision, economic resilience is woven throughout this CEDS. The SWOT Analysis identified several potential threats to economic resilience. The top two threats identified in the regional survey were declining rural population and lack of industry diversity. Many of the goals and objectives outlined in the Action Plan are designed to strengthen the region's ability to adapt, grow, and remain resilient in the face of future challenges.

NCRPC routinely partners with a broad range of emergency responders, community and economic development professionals, government leaders, and other key regional stakeholders. These strong networks help establish and build capacity for economic resilience in the region.

Steady-State Initiatives

Steady-state initiatives include planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region. Examples of steady-state initiatives for economic resilience taken from the Action Plan include the following:

- Research shared staffing models to address city staff shortages.
- Market leadership learning opportunities as they relate to local government and non-profits to encourage strong leaders at the local level.
- Engage in planning efforts that will lead to stronger communities including capital improvement planning.
- Lead the effort to focus on evaluating the potential for new industry in the region.
- Work with the post-secondary educational entities in the region helping them initiate and structure academic and technical training offerings to meet specific regional workforce needs.

Responsive Initiatives

Responsive initiatives include establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges. Examples of responsive initiatives for economic resilience taken from the Action Plan include the following:

- Continue to collaborate with stakeholder groups, including those identified in Vision 1, to monitor existing and future challenges and work toward solutions.
- Continue to serve as fiscal agent for six Regional Homeland Security Councils, including that of the North Central region. These project investments address the planning, organization, equipment, training and exercise needs that help build local and regional response capabilities.



Workforce Development

A strong workforce is essential to the region's long-term economic success, making workforce development a priority throughout the CEDS planning process. Workforce needs were identified as a key issue in the SWOT analysis and are reflected throughout the Action Plan.

North Central Kansas continues to face challenges from an aging population and workforce shortages. Expanding education, training, and career pathways will be critical to meeting current and future employer needs. K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions, employers, and workforce partners are strengthening career and technical education opportunities while building stronger workforce pipelines.

The CEDS Action Plan supports these efforts through objectives focused on aligning academic and technical training with regional workforce needs and strengthening workforce pipelines to fill critical occupations across the region. Housing initiatives focused on recruitment of new residents and support for relocation support expansion of the workforce.

Appendix A: Acknowledgements

The North Central Regional Planning Commission's (NCRPC) 2026–2031 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was developed with input from partners and residents throughout the region.

The NCRPC thanks the CEDS Strategy Committee, Executive Board, local economic development partners, stakeholders who participated in work sessions and other information-gathering activities, and residents who completed the regional survey. Their participation and feedback helped shape the priorities and recommendations included in this plan.

The NCRPC acknowledges the following individuals and organizations for their contributions:

CEDS Strategy Committee

- Mandy Fincham, Discover Mitchell County, Business Support Director
- Nikki Flinn, USD 298, Superintendent
- Austin Gillard, Clay County Medical Center, Chief Executive Officer, and Rural Development Group, Co-Owner
- Kelly Gourley, NCRPC Executive Board Member; Lincoln County Economic Development Foundation; Business Owner
- Doug Jackson, NCRPC Executive Board Member; Retired Utility Cooperative Executive
- Samantha Johnson, Fort Hays Tech North Central, Director of Apprenticeships and Workforce Development
- Larry McLemore, Cloud County Community College, Dean for Technical Programs
- Mike Miller, NCRPC Executive Board Member; Marshall County Partnership for Growth
- Duane Morris, NCRPC Executive Board Member
- Natalie Muruato, Driving Dickinson County, Chief Executive Officer
- Monte Poersch, Cloud County Community College, Instructor in Renewable Energy
- Kenny Roelofsen, NCRPC Executive Board Member; Abilene Machine, LLC
- Katie Sawyer, U.S. Senator Roger Marshall, State Director
- Brandi Zimmer, Guaranty State Bank & Trust Co., Chief Operating Officer

NCRPC Executive Board of Directors, as of July 2026

Board Leadership:

- Ron Copple, Cloud County, Chair
- Kelly Gourley, Lincoln County, Vice Chair
- Emily Benedick, Mitchell County, Secretary/Treasurer

Members:

- Greg Bender, Ellsworth County
- Hannah Bett, Saline County

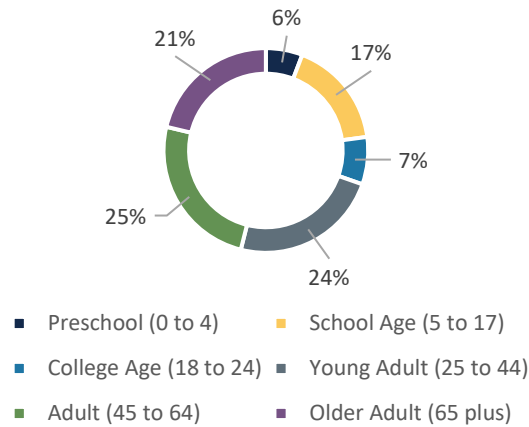
- Tom Claussen, Mitchell County
- Ed Duskie, Jewell County
- Doug Jackson, Republic County
- Greg Lenkiewicz, City of Salina
- Mike Miller, Marshall County
- Duane Morris, Ottawa County
- Raleigh Ordoyne, Washington County
- Kenny Roelofsen, Dickinson County
- David Thurlow, Clay County
- Kari Zook, City of Abilene
- Vacant, City of Ellsworth
- Vacant, Saline County

Other Partners

The NCRPC appreciates the engagement of local and state partners in the development of the CEDS and the implementation of work in the region. The NCRPC has convened regular Regional Economic Development Staff Round Table discussions, bringing together economic development organizations from across the region, and co-hosts events with the Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas State Extension, foundations, and non-profits that serve the region. These activities create a strong regional network of partners and collaborators.

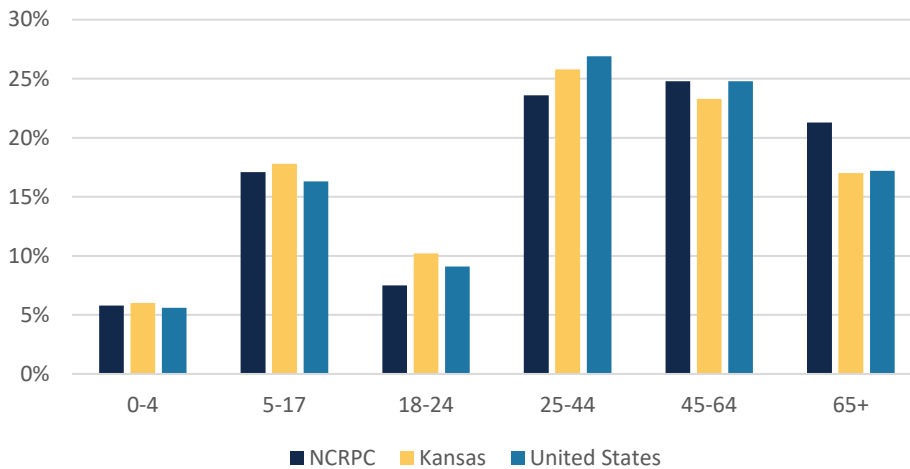
Appendix B: Regional Economic Data Overview

Population Percent by Age, 2024
(NCRPC Region)

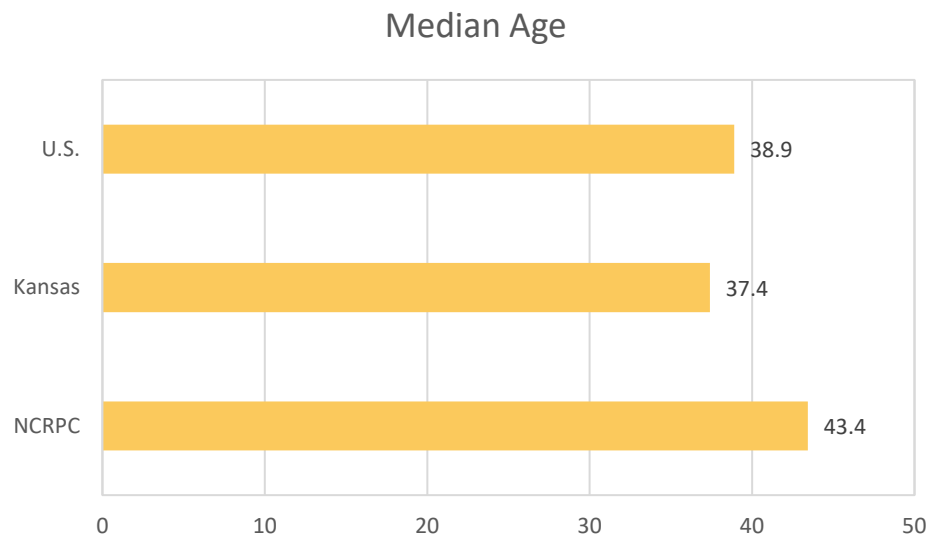


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

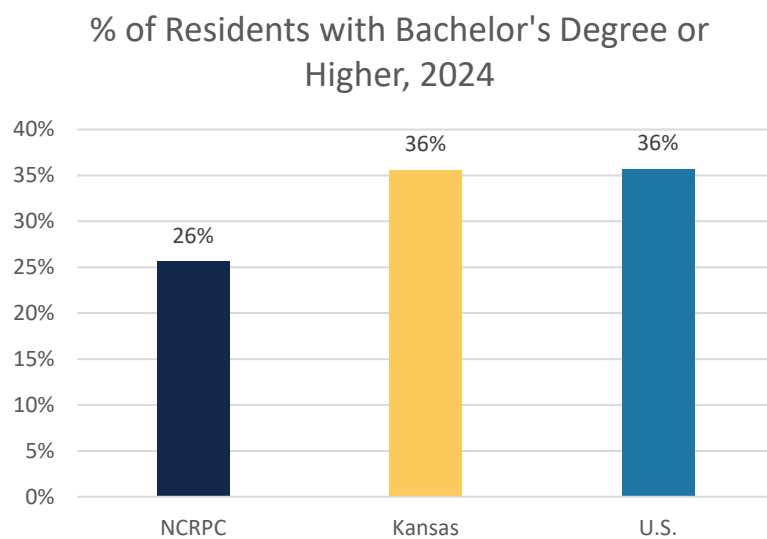
Population by Age, 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates



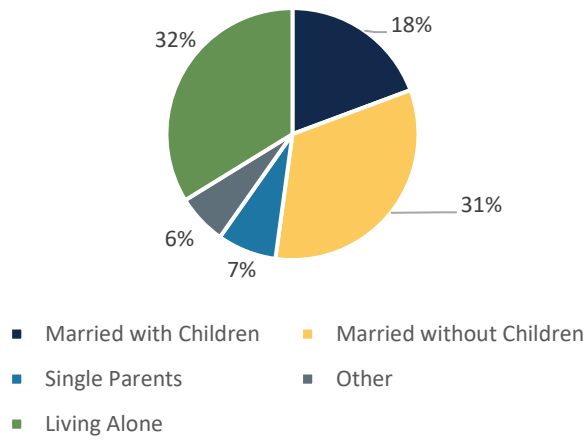
Source: 2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

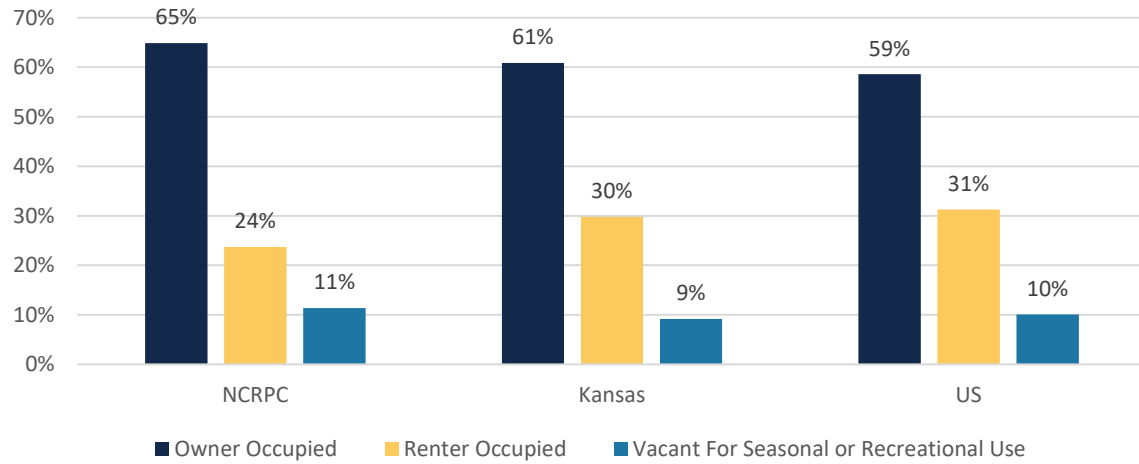
Higher Education Institutions	Location
Cloud County Community College	Concordia
Fort Hays Tech North Central	Beloit
Kansas State University Salina Aerospace and Technology Campus	Salina
Kansas Wesleyan University	Salina
Salina Area Technical College	Salina
University of Kansas School of Medicine and School of Nursing	Salina

Households, 2024



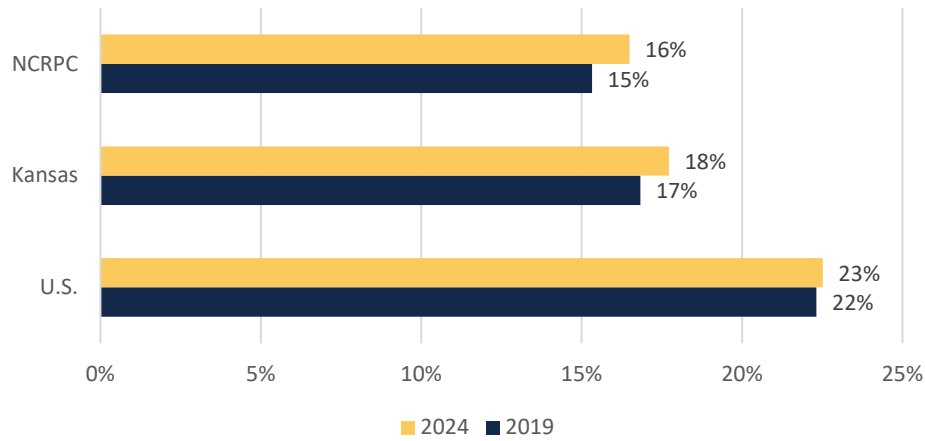
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

Housing Occupancy, 2024



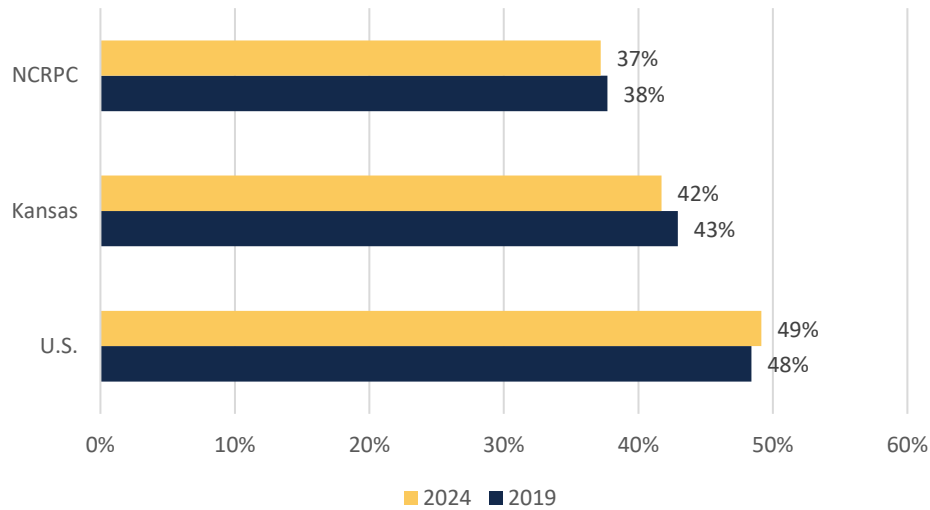
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates

Cost-burdened owners, *Percent of owner households paying more than 30% of their income for housing*



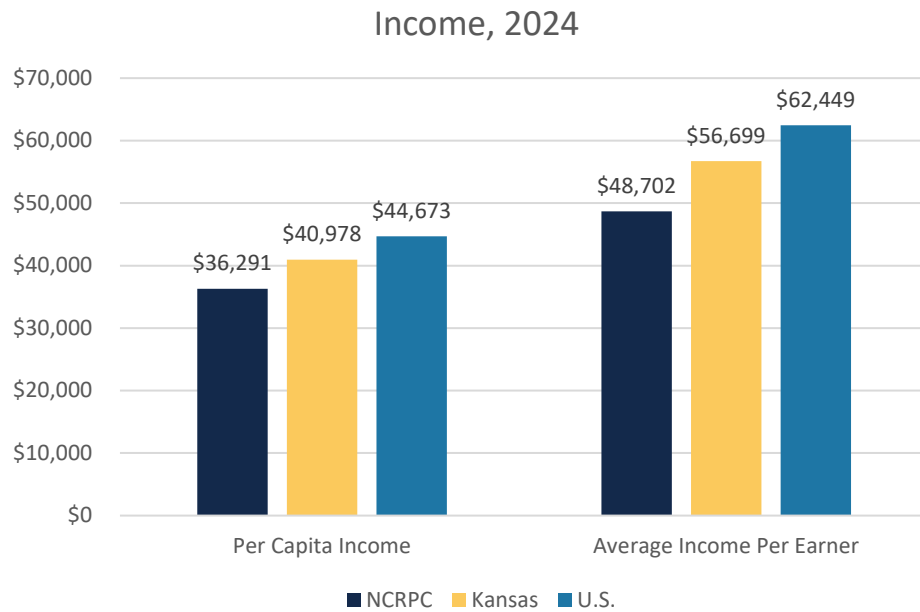
Source: 2019 and 2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Cost-burdened renters, *Percent of renter households paying more than 30% of their income for housing*

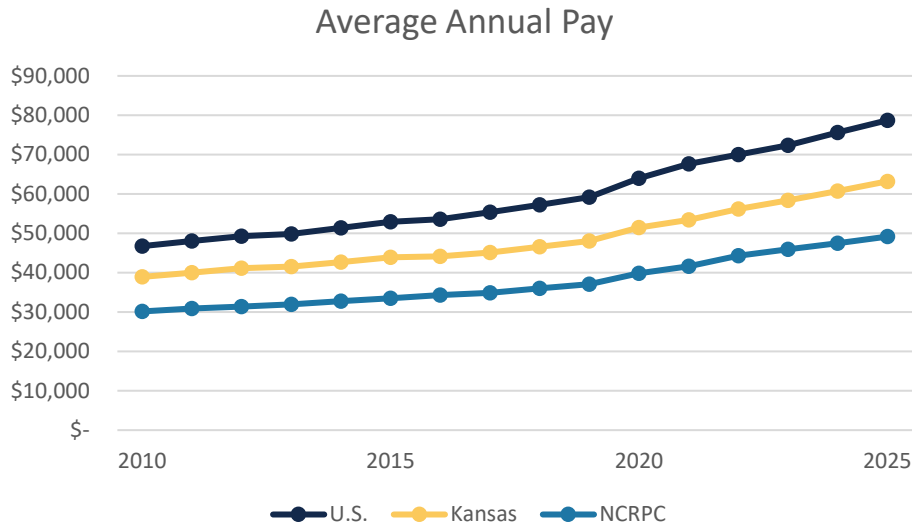


Source: 2019 and 2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

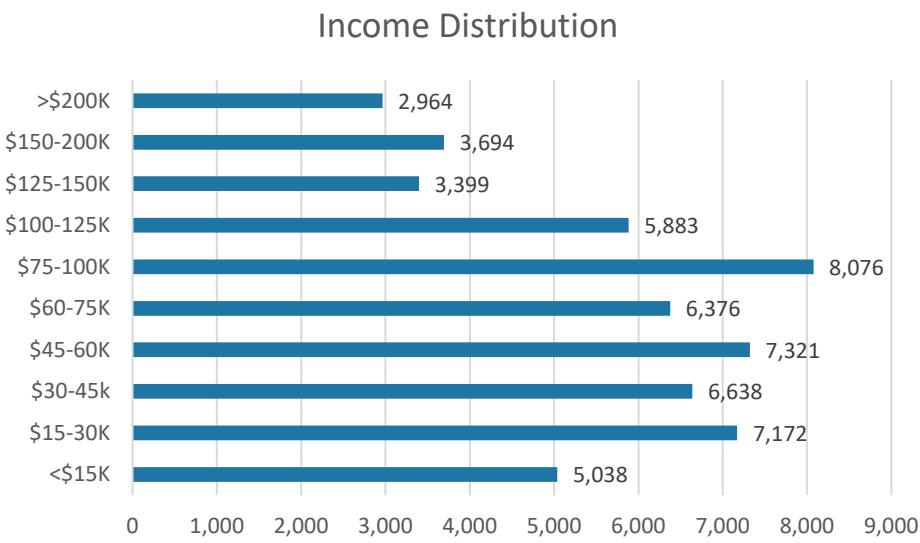
Housing units, 2024	NCRPC	% of Total	U.S.	% of Total	Kansas Units	% of Total
Total Housing Units	63,848	100%	143,775,355	100%	1,293,635	100%
Owner Occupied	41,433	64.90%	84,210,142	58.60%	788,409	60.90%
Renter Occupied	15,128	23.70%	45,017,354	31.30%	385,651	29.80%
Vacant For Seasonal or Recreational Use	7,287	11.40%	14,547,859	10.10%	119,575	9.20%
1-Unit (Attached or Detached)	48,821	76.50%	88,845,345	61.80%	917,294	70.90%
2 - 9 Units	3,928	6.20%	15,354,755	10.70%	110,469	8.50%
10 - 19 Units	760	1.20%	5,368,125	3.70%	43,448	3.40%
20 or more Units	1,524	2.40%	12,898,416	9.00%	60,111	4.60%
Built prior to 1940	19,023	29.80%	16,880,456	11.70%	198,683	15.40%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, latest 5-Year Estimates						



Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2020-24.

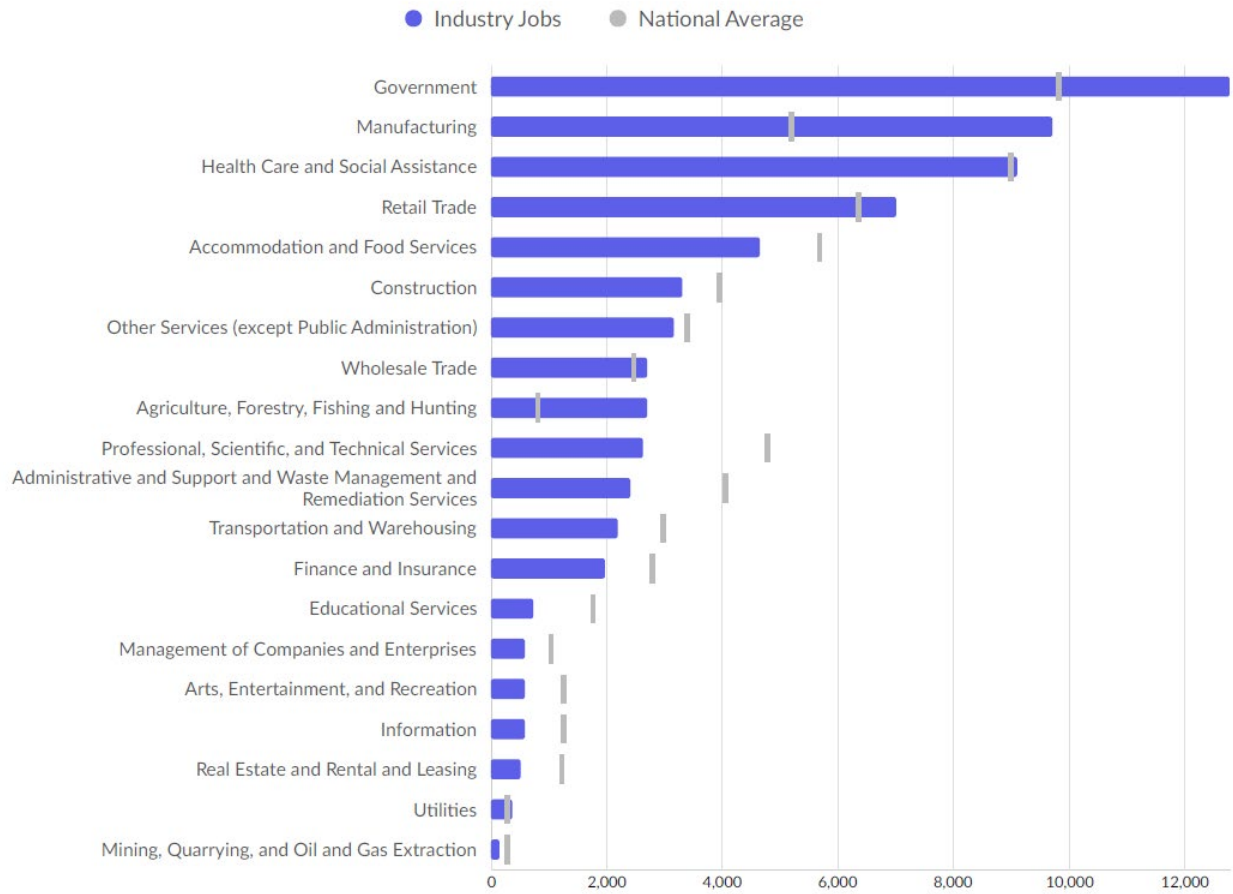


Source: 2010-2025 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



Source: 2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Largest Industries in NCRPC Region



Source: Lightcast Q1 2025 Data Set

Labor Force in June 2026:

69,479

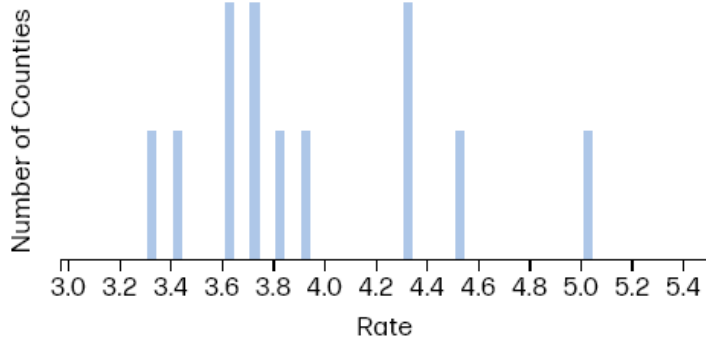
Employment:

66,849

Unemployment Rate:

3.8

Unemployment Rate Distribution by County



Total Covered Employment in Qtr 4 2025:

60,112

Avg Earnings per Job (annualized):

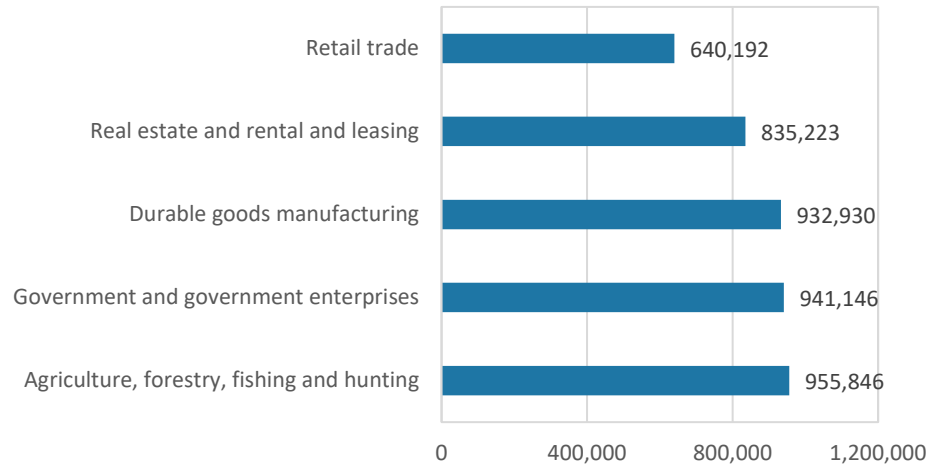
\$52,108

Largest 2-digit NAICS Industries by Employment in Qtr 4 2025

2-Digit NAICS	Employment	% of Total	Annualized Earnings per Job	Relative to Total
00 Total	60,112	100.0%	\$52,108	100.0%
31-33 Manufacturing	9,003	15.0%	\$64,865	124.5%
62 Health Care and Social Services	7,252	12.1%	\$65,841	126.4%
44-45 Retail Trade	6,643	11.1%	\$33,477	64.2%
61 Educational Services	6,443	10.7%	\$39,192	75.2%
92 Public Administration	4,589	7.6%	\$47,331	90.8%
72 Accommodation and Food Services	3,525	5.9%	\$20,743	39.8%
23 Construction	2,815	4.7%	\$67,199	129.0%
54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,178	3.6%	\$72,317	138.8%
48-49 Transportation & Warehousing	2,166	3.6%	\$56,439	108.3%
56 Admin. & Support & Waste Mgt. & Rem. Services	2,042	3.4%	\$38,398	73.7%

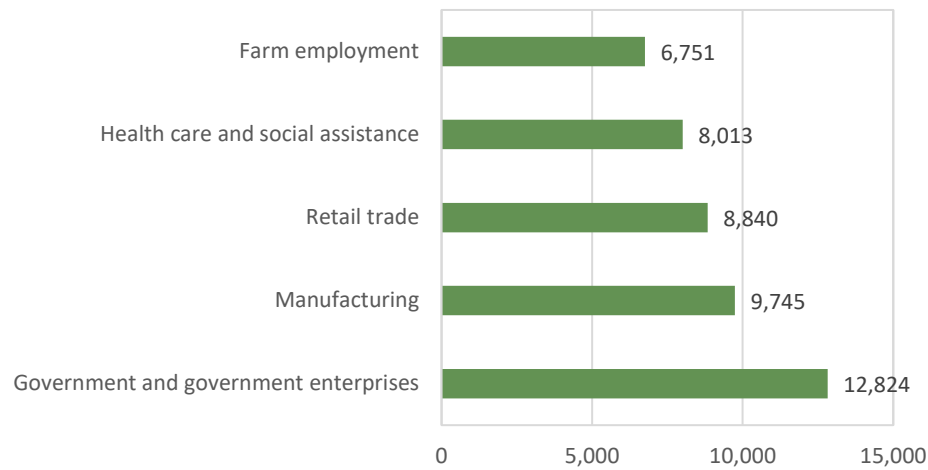
Source: <https://www.statsamerica.org/radius/big.aspx>

Top 5 Industries by GDP

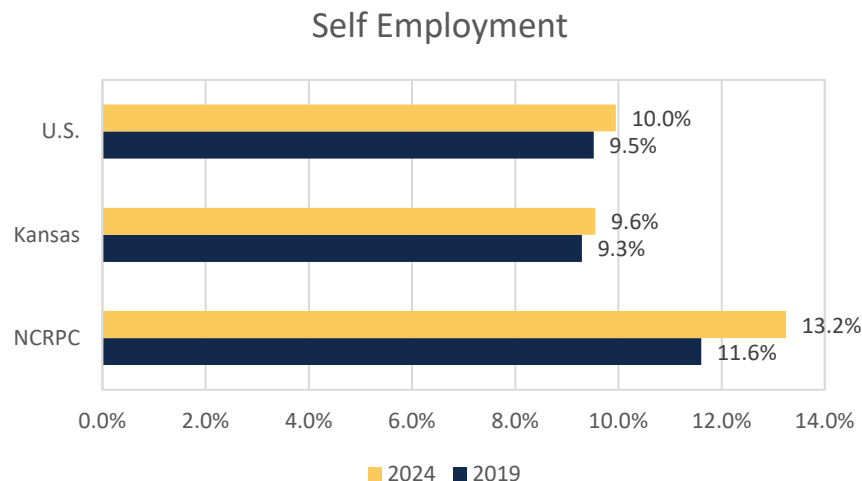


Source: Data taken from regional compilation from National Economic Resilience Data Explorer

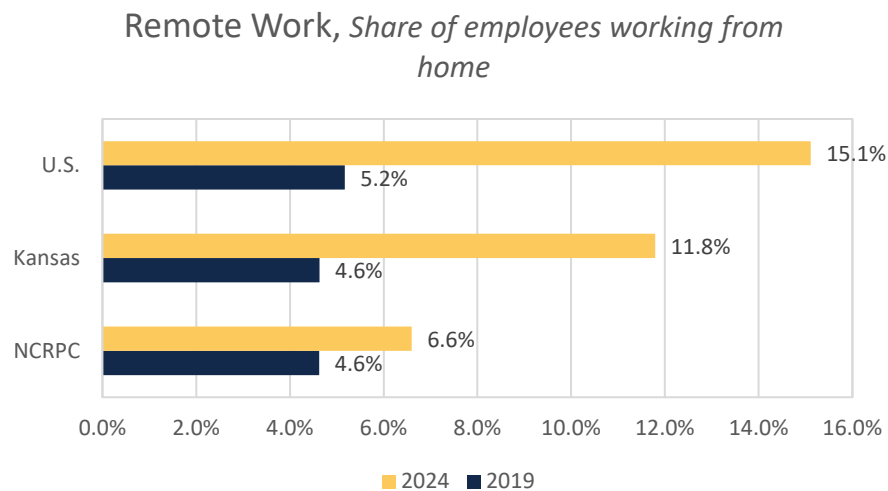
Top 5 Industries by Number of Jobs



Source: Data taken from regional compilation from National Economic Resilience Data Explorer



Source: 2019 and 2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates



Source: 2019 and 2024 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Center on Rural Innovation's (CORI) Rural Economic Development Tool

The Center on Rural Innovation's (CORI) Rural Economic Development Tool displays data for a county or region across 25 critical indicators for increasing economic growth through technology-driven businesses. To view the full report for the North Central Regional Planning Commission's primary 12-county service area, visit: <https://bit.ly/nckdatadashboard>

Kansas State Data Center

The Kansas State Data Center also provides a wide variety of regional data. To view the full report for the North Central Regional Planning Commission's primary 12-county service area, visit: <https://ksdata.ku.edu/sdc/region.php?tab=0&area=NCKRPC&Get+Regional+Data=Get+Regional+Data>