



Preparing for a Healthy Recovery

An economic and demographic summary for Wilson County, Kansas

Introduction

The Institute for Policy & Social Research (IPSR) at the University of Kansas prepared this report to assist Wilson County with their effort to allocate their Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) dollars. Economic and demographic analysis helps to understand the impact of the public health disaster on the region's economy and those affected, particularly vulnerable populations. This report provides data on population trends and characteristics, housing, workforce, and broadband as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on employment, families, businesses, and jobs. The following data will help identify the weaknesses and resiliencies in the local economy and help the community prepare for a healthy recovery.

Population Trends

Wilson County had strong population growth in the late 1800s and peaked in 1920 with a population of 21,157 (Figure 1). Since 1920, Wilson County lost 60% of the population. The 2019 population is estimated to be 8,525, a 9.4% decrease since 2010 (Table 1). Current projections show continued decline over the next two decades.

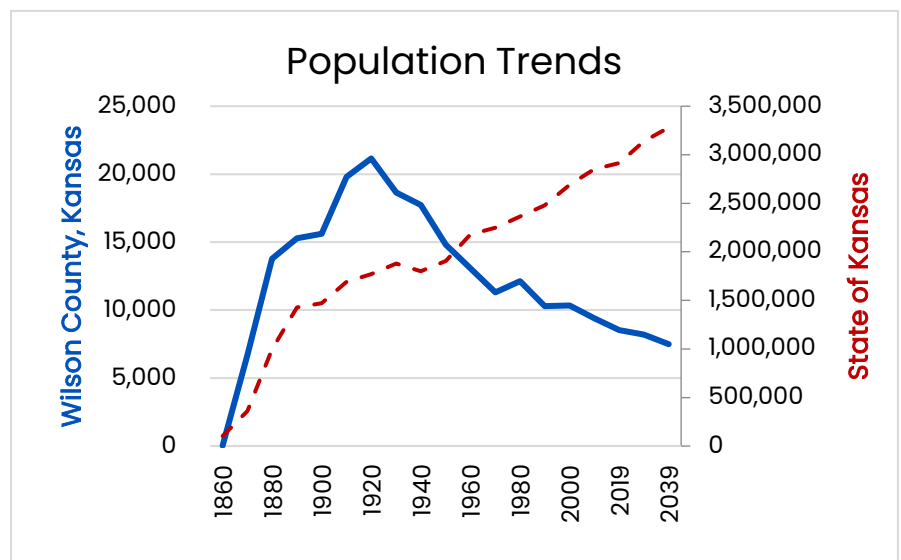


Figure 1. Population in Wilson County and State of Kansas, 1860-2039 (U.S. Census Bureau & Wichita State University).

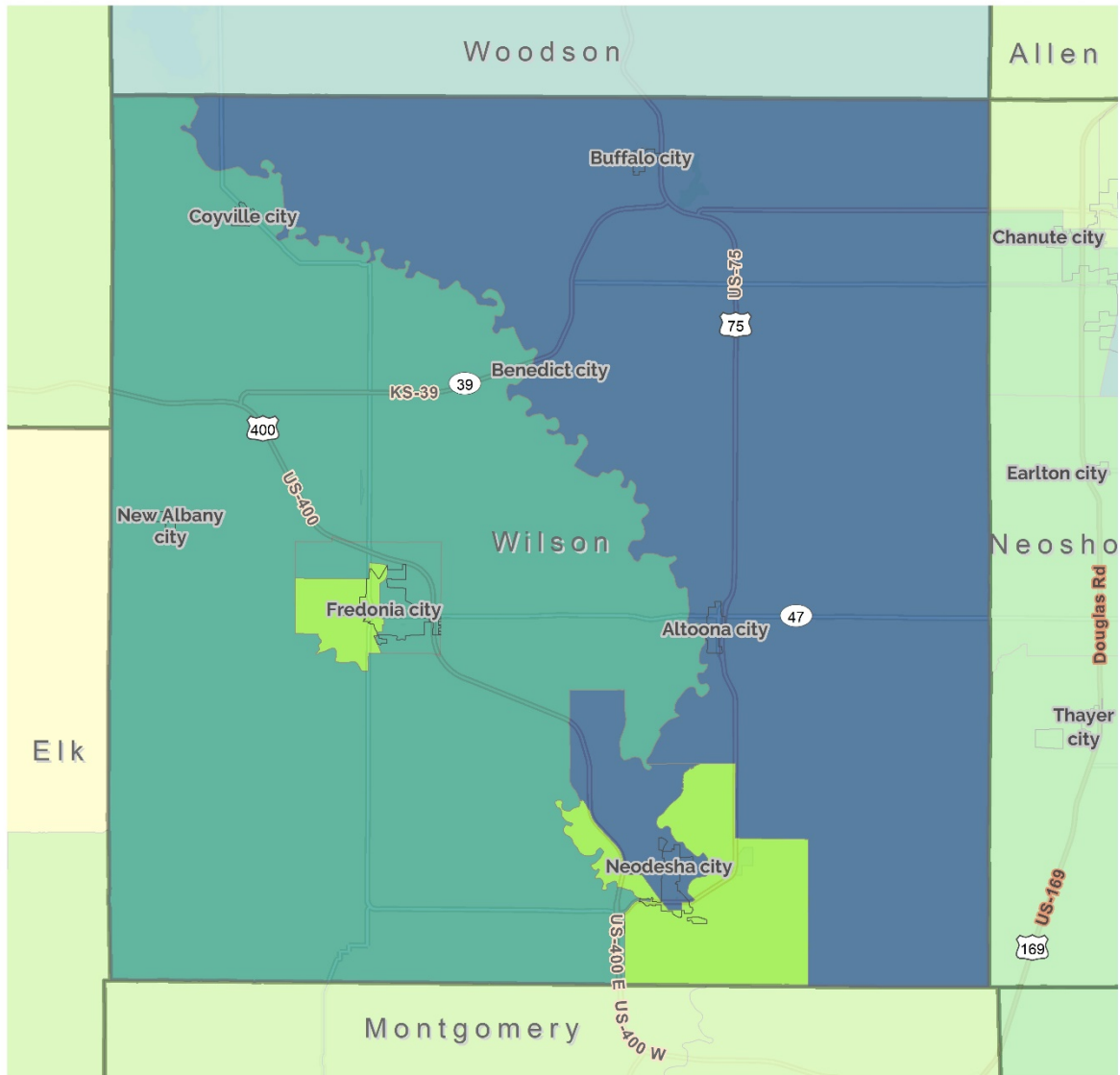
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Table 1 shows the population for the cities in Wilson County from 1990 to 2019 with Neodesha and Fredonia comprising a little more than half (53%) of the county's population. Figure 2 illustrates population by Census block group and shows that the county's population more concentrated in the eastern half of the county.

City	1990	2000	2010	2019
Altoona	456	485	414	379
Benedict	84	103	73	66
Buffalo	293	284	232	209
Coyville	78	71	46	42
Fredonia	2,599	2,600	2,482	2,225
Neodesha	2,837	2,848	2,486	2,262
New Albany	60	73	56	51
Wilson County	10,289	10,332	9,409	8,525

Table 1. Population in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau).

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Population by Block Group (2018)



Figure 2. Population by block group in Wilson County, 2018 (ESRI).

Characteristics of the Population

"White alone, not Hispanic" make up about 93 percent of the county's population (Table 2). The county is a mostly dependent population (Figure 3) with a little more than one-third of the population in the prime working age category (age 25-54).

Population by Race & Ethnicity	Number
White	8,300
Black	49
American Indian and Alaskan Native	57
Asian	2
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0
Some Other Race	14
Two or More Races	358
Hispanic or Latino	267
White alone, not Hispanic	8,094
Percent Diversity	7.81%

Table 2. Population by race and ethnicity in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Figure 3 displays a breakdown of the population in Wilson County by age and gender and shows nearly half the population are either under age 20 or over age 64. The county has fifty children under age 20 and forty-one people over age 64 for every 100 people age 20 to 64. This leads to a high reliance on child and elder care. Wilson County has 17 licensed child care facilities with a combined capacity of 244 children (Table 3). There are 544 children under the age of 5 in the county leaving 300 children without licensed child care.

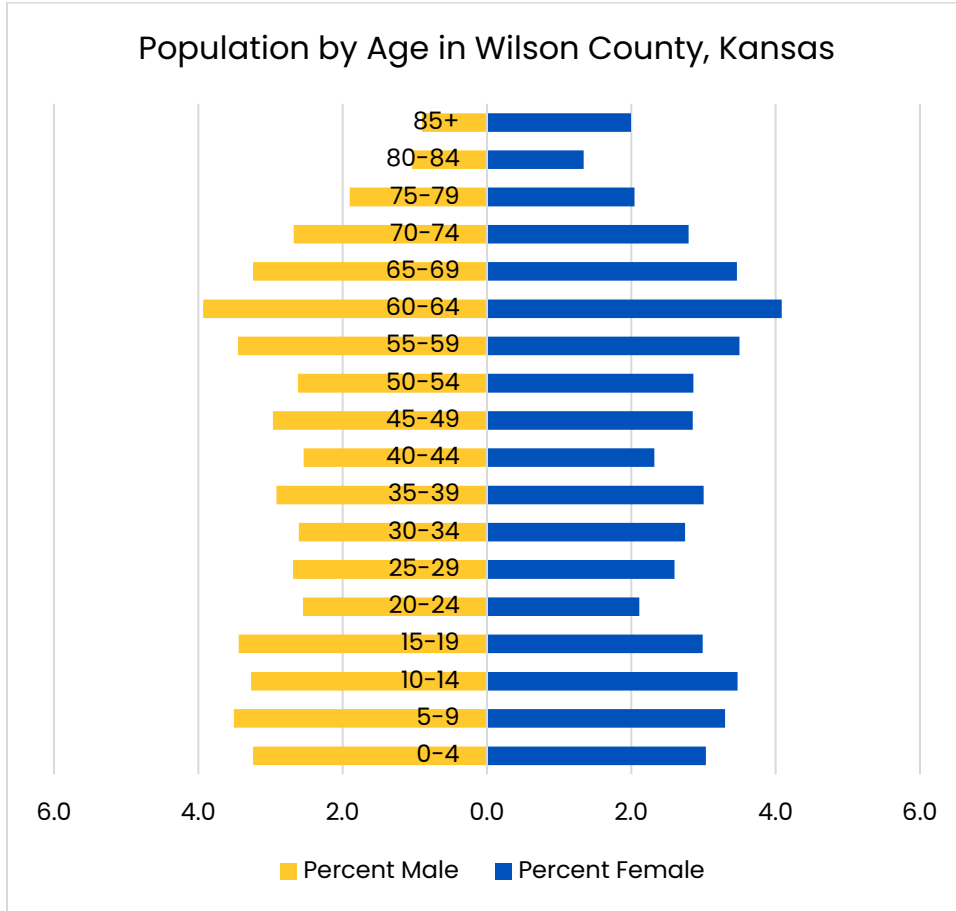


Figure 3. Population by age in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 Population Estimates).

Licensed Child Care Facilities and Capacity in Wilson County		
Type of Facility	Facilities	Capacity
Child Care Center	1	66
Group Day Care Home	3	36
Head Start Child Care Center	0	0
Licensed Day Care Home	11	110
Preschool	2	32
Total	17	244

Table 3. Licensed child care facilities and capacity in Wilson County (Kansas Department of Health & Environment, 2018).

Wilson County has one nursing home with a capacity for 45 people and two assisted living facilities with a combined capacity of 59 (Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services). As Table 4 details, there are 596 people with an independent living difficulty in Wilson County.

Disability by Type and Age	Under 18	Age 18 - 64	Age 65 and over	Total	Percent
People with a disability	171	1,014	753	1,938	22.4
With a hearing difficulty	20	288	371	679	7.9
With a vision difficulty	53	190	146	389	4.5
With a cognitive difficulty	116	333	218	667	7.7
With an ambulatory difficulty	13	564	510	1,087	12.6
With a self-care difficulty	32	139	163	334	3.9
With an independent living difficulty	-	365	231	596	6.9

Table 4. Disability by type and age in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Figure 4 compares educational attainment in Wilson County to all Kansas counties. It shows that most of the county's residents (87.3%) have a high school degree or higher. It also shows that 14.4% of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher, putting the county in the bottom quartile of the counties in Kansas.

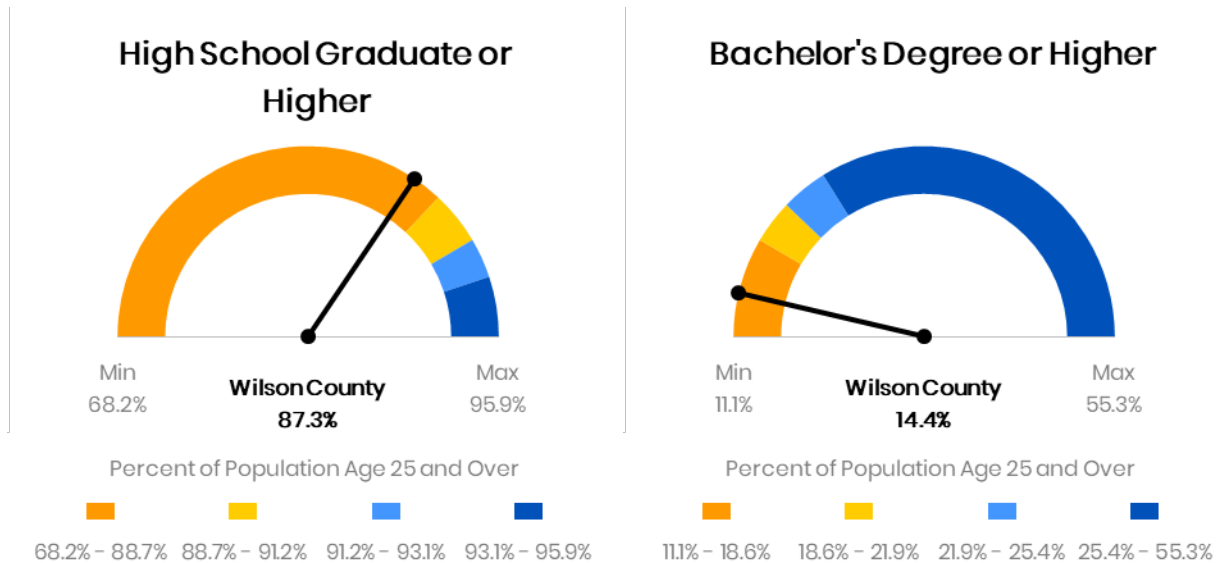


Figure 4. Educational attainment in Wilson County compared to all Kansas counties (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Housing Characteristics

Wilson County has 4,664 total housing units with the majority (89%) single family (Table 5).



Housing Units by Type of Unit	Number
Single family home, detached	3,619
Single family home, attached	62
Duplex units	95
Tri- or Quadplex units	113
Apartments, 5-19 units	40
Apartments, 20 or more units	79
Mobile home	652
Boat, RV, van, etc.	4
Total Housing Units	4,664

Table 5. Housing units by type in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Housing Units by Tenure	Number	Percent
Occupied housing units	3,795	81.4%
Owner-occupied	2,732	58.6%
Renter-occupied	1,063	22.8%
Vacant units	869	18.6%

Table 6. Housing units by tenure in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

About 81% of the housing units in Wilson County are occupied (Table 6). Wilson County has a low vacancy rate at 2.8% for homeowners though a high rate of 14.0% for rentals (U.S. Census, ACS).

Like most of southeast Kansas, Wilson County has low housing costs. Figure 5 illustrates housing costs in Wilson County compared to all Kansas counties and shows moderate gross rents and a median value of owner-occupied housing in the lowest quartile for the state. Median gross rent for the county is \$678 and median value of a home is \$67,400 (Table 7). Median household income for Wilson County is \$46,208 compared to \$57,422 for Kansas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

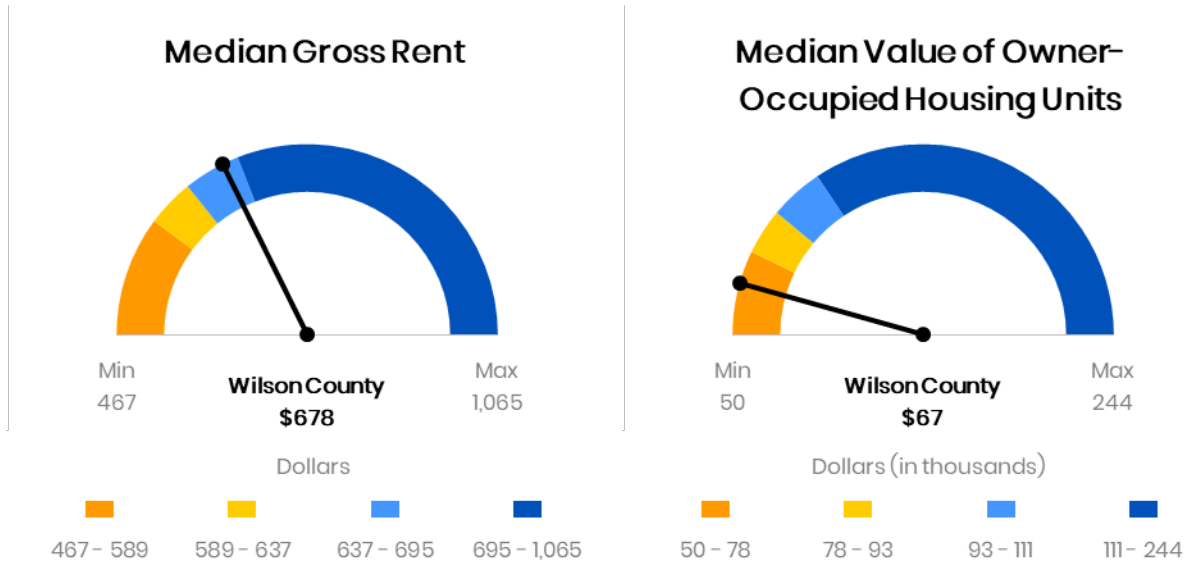


Figure 5. Housing costs in Wilson County as compared to all Kansas Counties (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Housing Costs and Income	Amount
Median Gross Rent	\$ 678
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units	\$ 67,400
Median Household Income	\$ 46,208

Table 7. Housing costs and income in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Wilson County has a homeownership rate of 72.0; this is higher than the Kansas rate of 66.3 (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS). With an average renter wage of \$12.01 per hour and a median gross rent of \$678 per month, over half of all rental households have housing costs that are 30 percent or more of their income (Figure 6). In comparison, only 15.7% of owner-occupied units have the same level of financial burden.

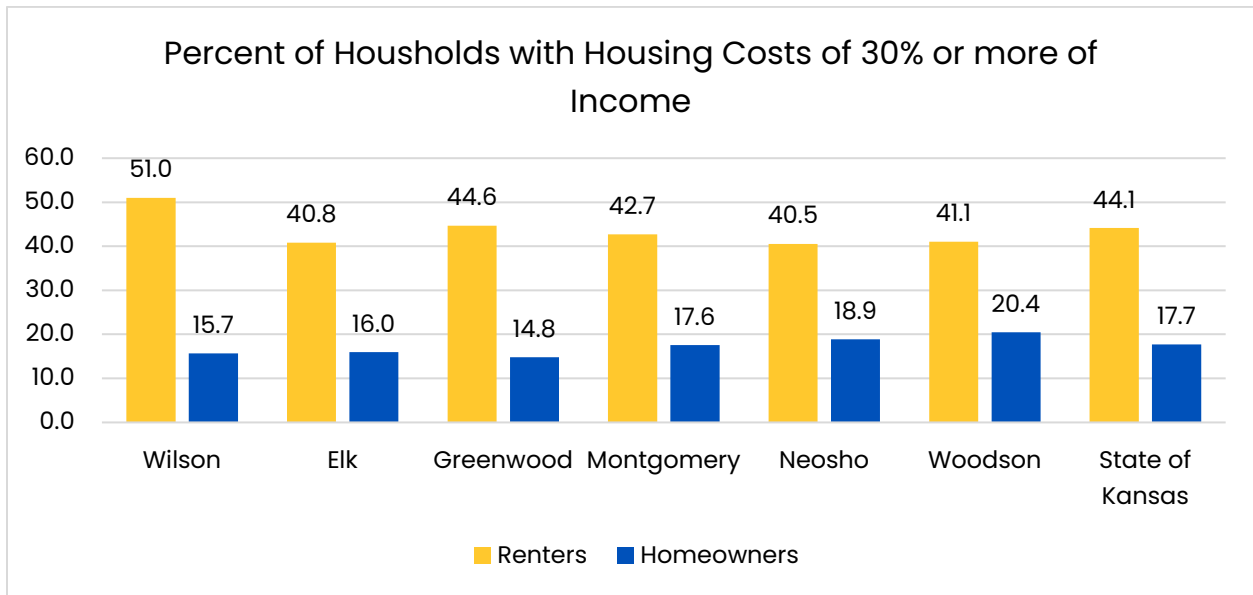


Figure 6. Percent of households with excessive housing costs in Wilson County, neighboring counties, and the State of Kansas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Workforce Characteristics

Of the workers in Wilson County, 2,096 live and work in the county; 2,471 live in the county and work outside the county; and 1,615 live outside the county and work in the county (Figure 7). Workers that are leaving the county are commuting most frequently to Chanute, Wichita, and Independence.

Job Counts by Distance/Direction in 2017
All Workers

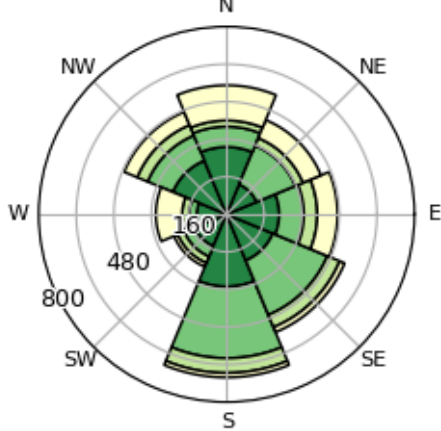
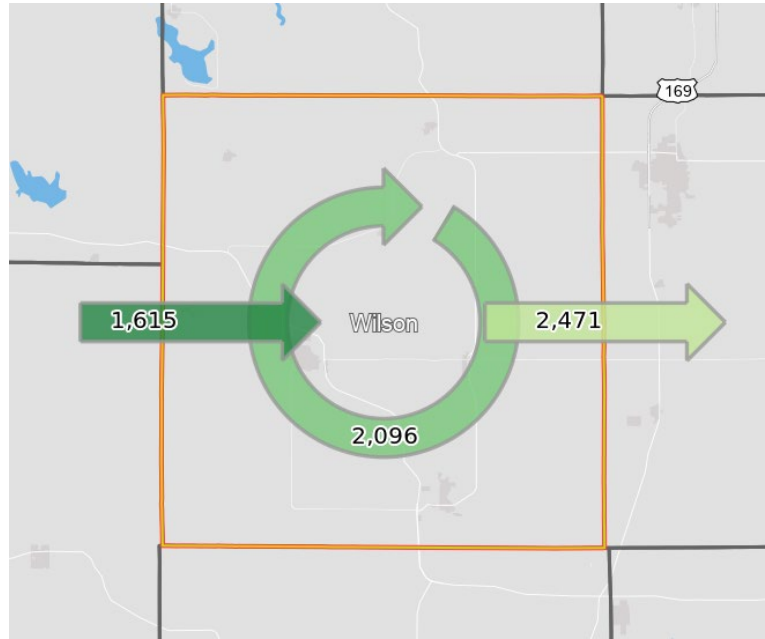
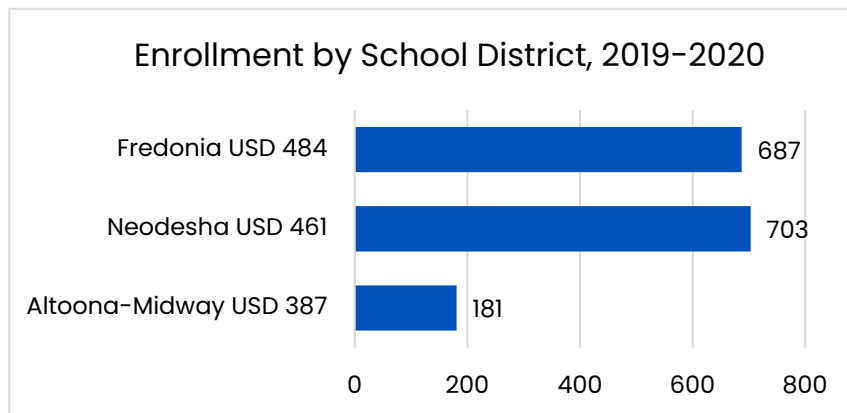


Figure 7. The direction and scale of the commuters in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau).



Broadband & Schools

Enrollment data for school districts are not available by county of students enrolled. While the three main school districts in Wilson County are included in Figure 8, it is important to consider all children in Wilson County. Nearly one in four households in Wilson County are family households with one or more children under 18.



24% of the 3,795 households in Wilson County are family households with one or more children under 18.

Figure 8. Enrollment in selected school districts in Wilson County (Kansas State Department of Education) and households with children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

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Broadband access is not readily available to all residents of Wilson County, most notably rural areas of the county (Figure 9). This has implications for the delivery of online education as well as remote working. Areas without broadband access rely on cell phone coverage and devices.

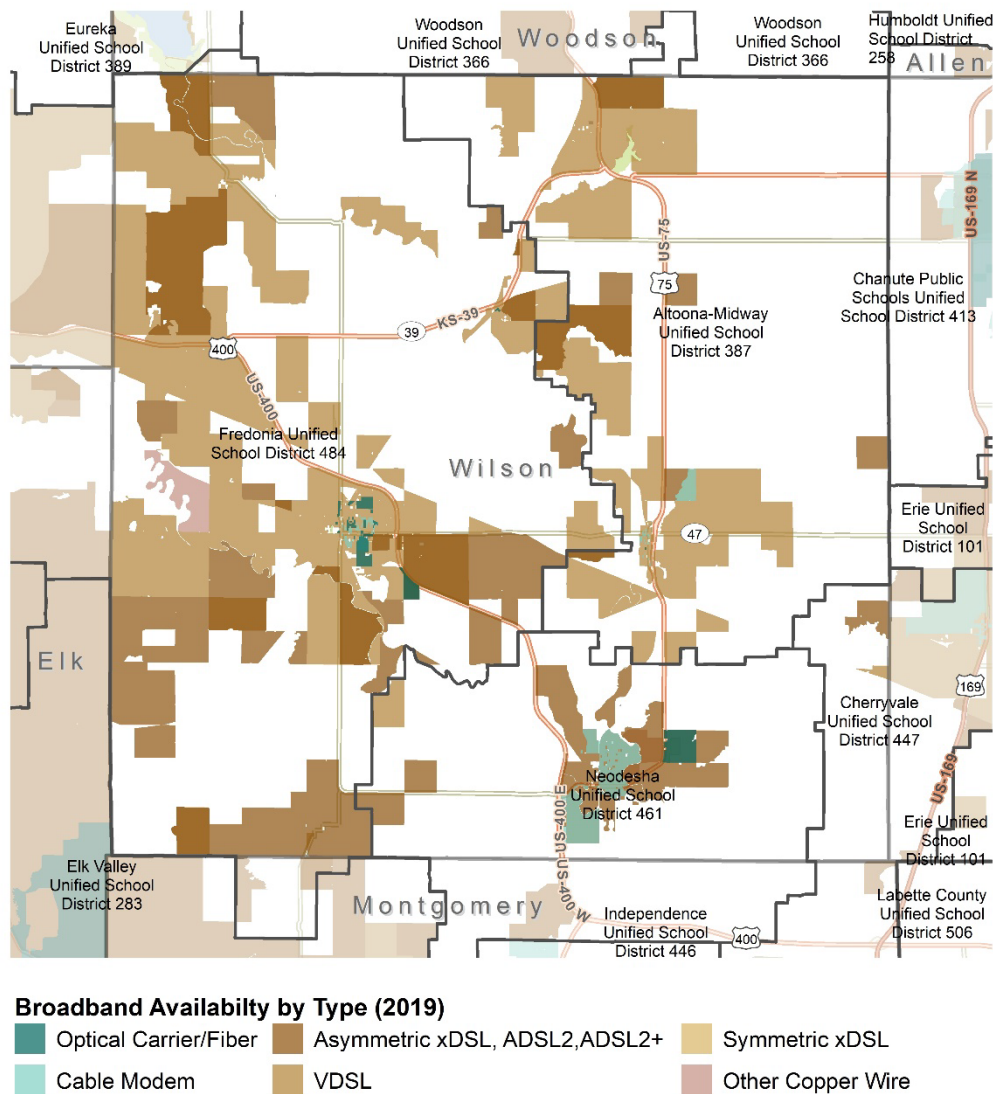


Figure 9. Gaps in broadband coverage in Wilson County with school district boundaries (Federal Communications Commission, June 2019 and State of Kansas GIS Data Access & Support Center, 2019).

Figure 10 also shows a breakdown by county and school district for internet access and devices in households. More than one in five households in the county have no computer or smart phone and 36 percent are without an internet subscription. The breakdown by school district shows that 37% of Fredonia households without an internet subscription and 23% without a device to access the remote learning.

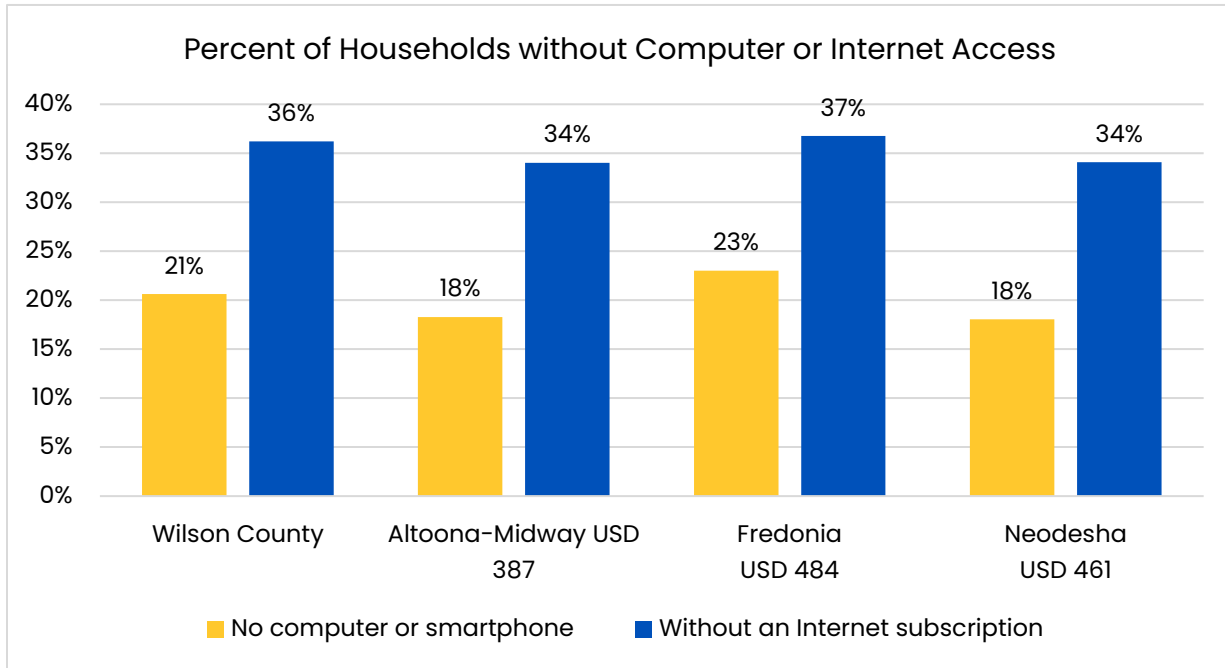


Figure 10. Households without a computer or internet access in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

57.2% of K-12 students in Wilson County were enrolled in the free- or reduced price lunch (FRL) program during the 2019-20 school year.

Fifty-seven percent of students in Wilson County were enrolled in free- and reduced-lunch program during the 2019-2020 school year (Kansas State Department of Education). The free- or reduced-price lunch program is an indicator for vulnerability and can be used to identify households where broadband affordability and remote learning access needs to be addressed by the school districts. At 57%, nearly 900 children in the county could have affordability and access issues for remote learning.

Table 8 provides more detail about computer and internet access for households and is most helpful in understanding the number and kinds of devices as well as internet subscriptions needed to give all students access.

Computer and Internet Access	Wilson County	Altoona- Midway USD 387	Fredonia USD 484	Neodesha USD 461
Total Households	3,795	667	1,964	1,385
<i>Computer Access:</i>				
Has desktop or laptop computer	2,222	413	1,173	797
No computer or smartphone	783	122	452	250
<i>Internet Access:</i>				
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	323	21	204	118
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	1,620	271	803	628
Satellite Internet service	474	154	262	105
Without an Internet subscription	1,374	227	722	472

Table 8. Computer and Internet access for households in Wilson County (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

Impacts of COVID-19

As of July 27, 2020, there were 3.35 newly reported COVID-19 cases in Wilson County per 100,000 people. Figure 11 illustrates the timeline of cases for the county and charts the various policy decisions (school closings, stimulus payments, stay-at-home orders, and re-openings).

In **Wilson County**, on July 27 2020, there were **3.35** newly reported COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people.

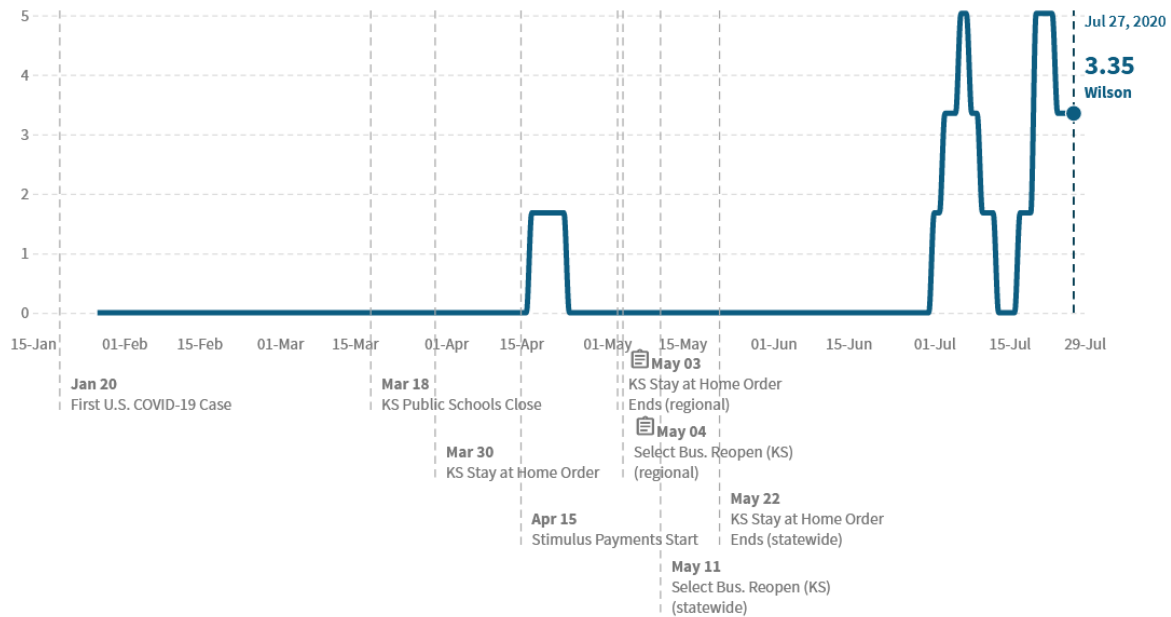


Figure 11. Newly reported COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people in Wilson County (Opportunity Insights, Economic Tracker).

Unemployment

In late 2019, Wilson County had an unemployment rate below 4% (Figure 12). The unemployment rate spiked to 18.7 in April 2020. From March 21st through July 18th, 1,496 Wilson County residents filed initial unemployment claims (Figure 13). The June 2020 unemployment rate was 8.0%; slightly higher than neighboring counties though reflective of the resumption of work (Figure 14).



Figure 12. Monthly unemployment rate in Wilson County (BLS).

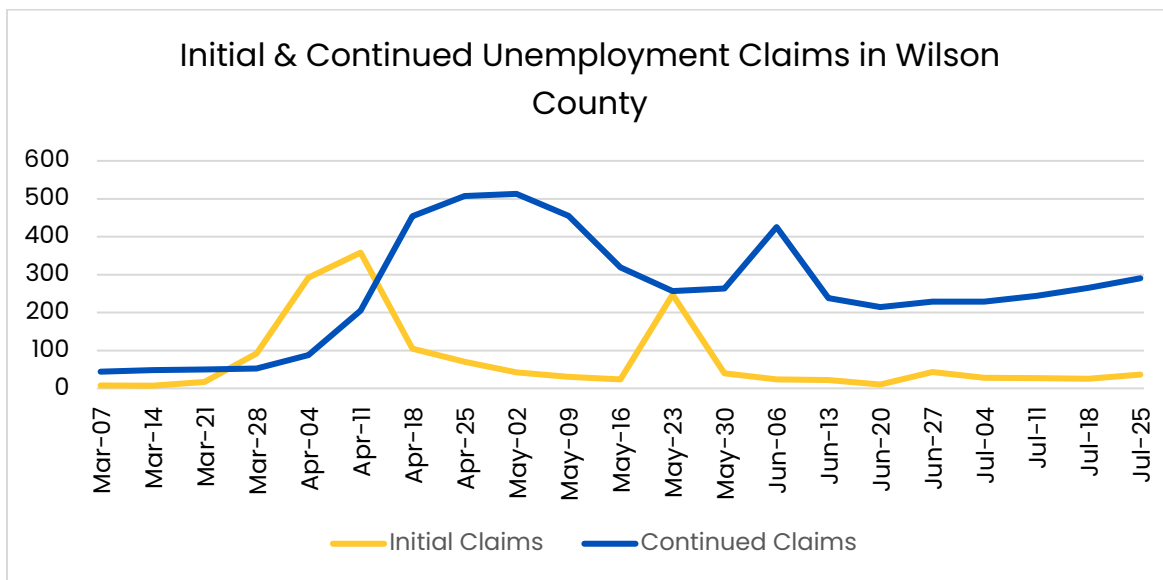
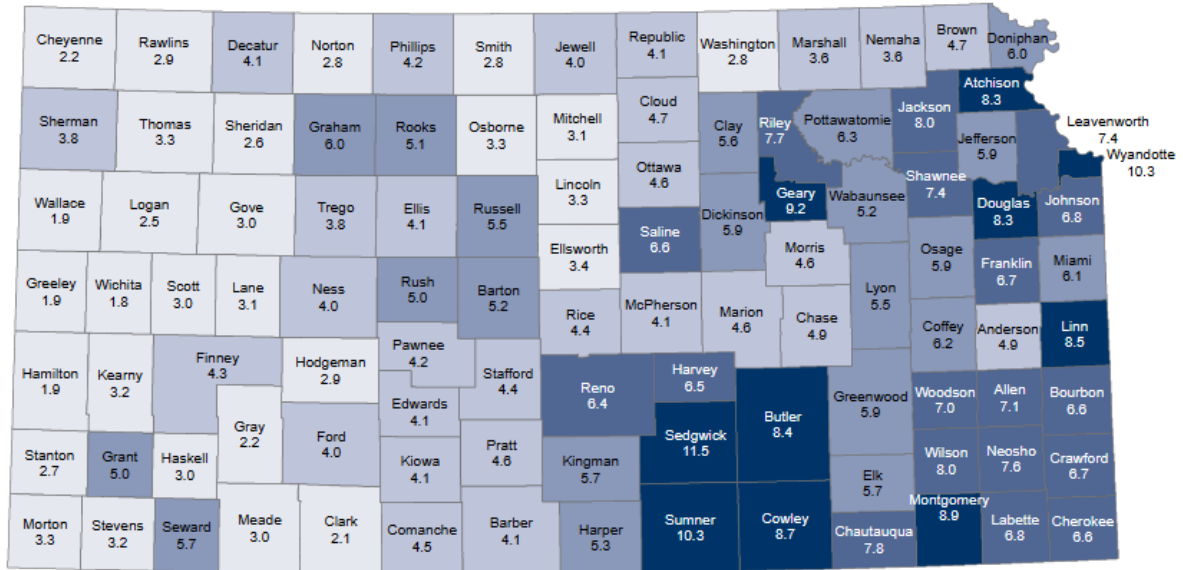


Figure 13. Initial and continued unemployment claims in Wilson County (Kansas Department of Labor).

Unemployment Rate in Kansas, by County June 2020



Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas;
data from Kansas Department of Labor.

Unemployment Rate

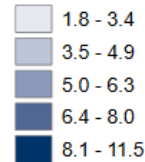
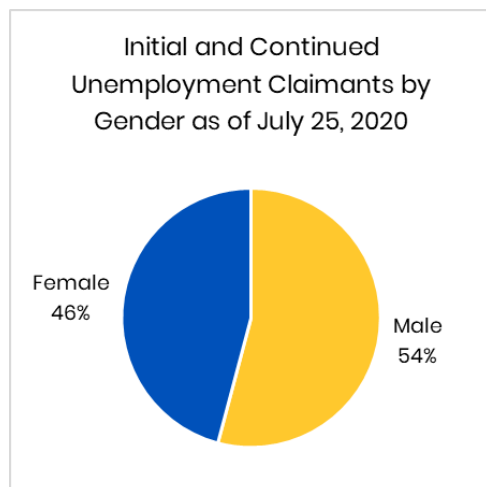


Figure 14. Map of unemployment rates by county in Kansas (Kansas Department of Labor).

Characteristics of the Unemployed



As of July 25, 2020, Wilson County had more male than female claimants for unemployment, 54% compared to 46% (Figure 15). Nearly half of the claimants are age 35-54 (Figure 16). More males with a high school diploma/GED have filed than females with the same education while more females with some college have filed compared to males (Figure 17).

Figure 15. Unemployment claimants by gender in Wilson County (Kansas Department of Labor).

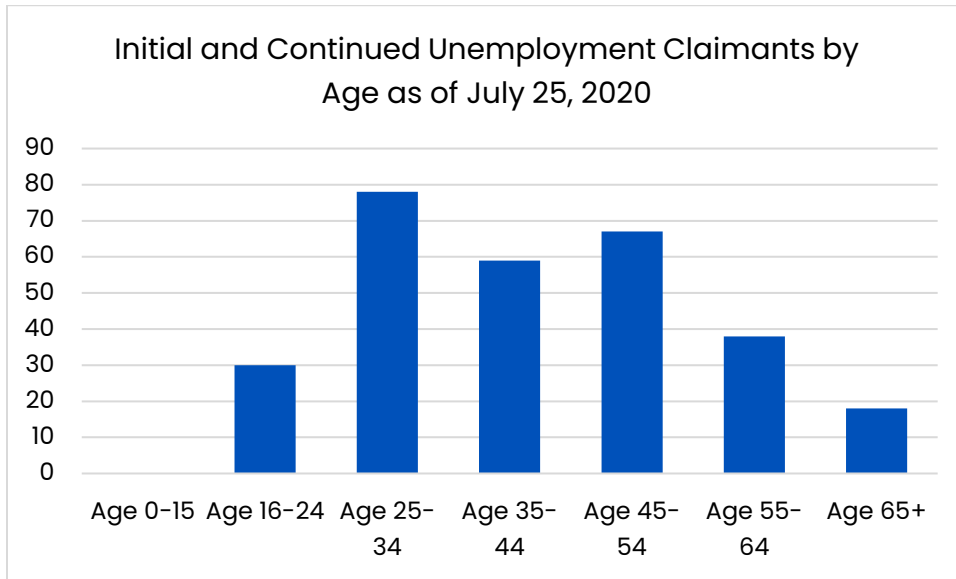


Figure 16. Unemployment claimants by age in Wilson County (Kansas Department of Labor).

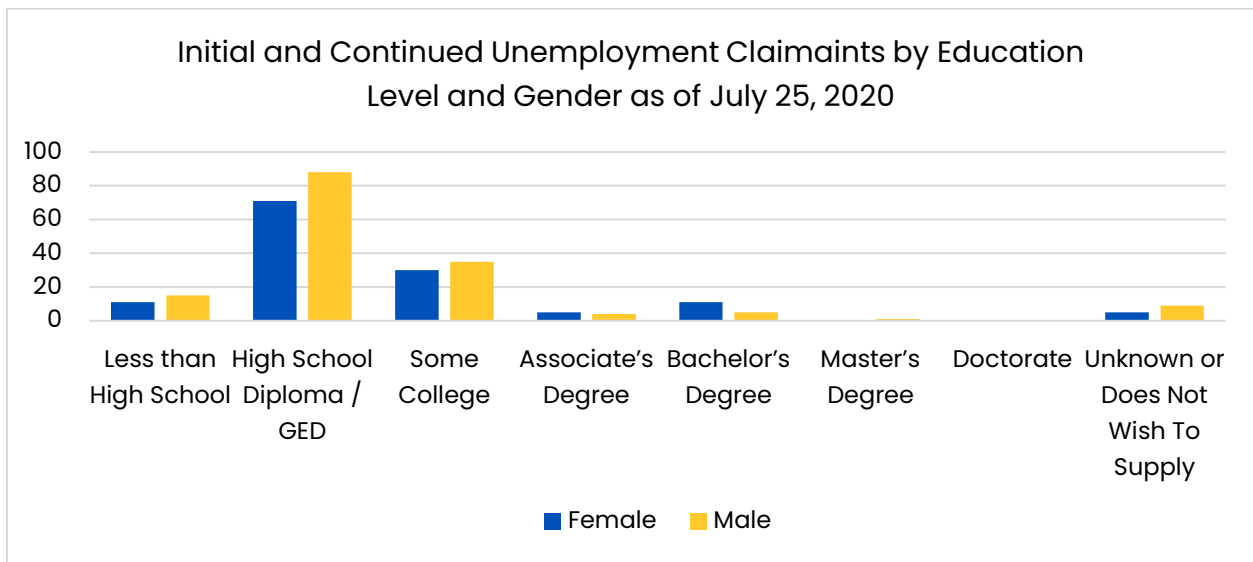


Figure 17. Unemployment claimants by education and gender in Wilson County (Kansas Department of Labor).

Figure 18 shows initial and continued unemployment claimants by industry for Wilson County. Industries considered most vulnerable to the pandemic are health care & social assistance, manufacturing, accommodation & food services, retail trade, and other services. For Wilson County, manufacturing has been the hardest hit with 40% of the female and 60% of the male unemployment claimants from that industry (Figure 18).

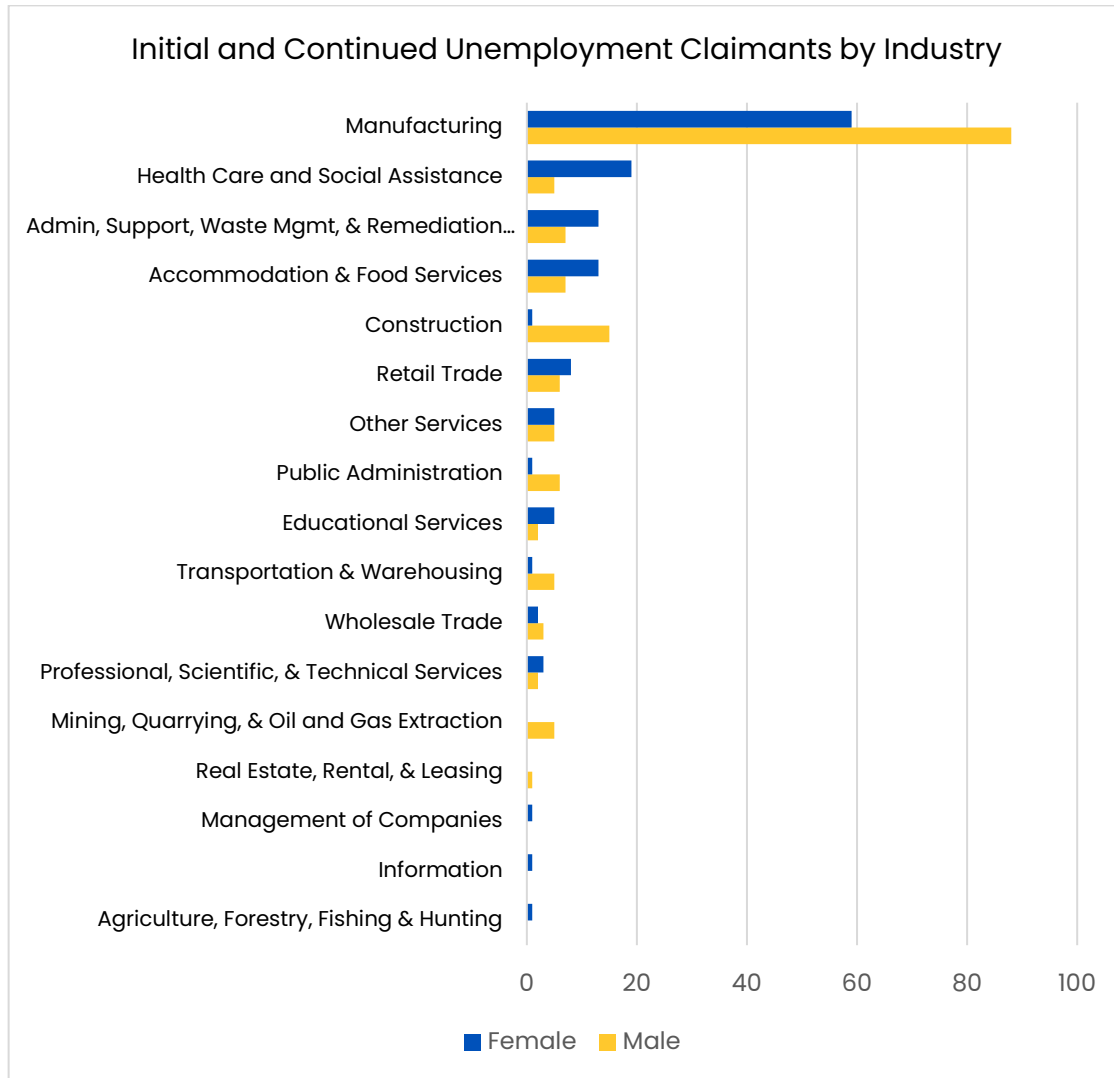


Figure 18. Unemployment claimants by industry and gender in Wilson County (Kansas Department of Labor).

Family and Social Assistance

The pandemic has resulted in an increased reliance on social programs. Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Child Care Assistance programs have increased. Wilson County had a 14.1% increase in people benefiting from the SNAP program and a 550% increase in people

receiving TANF benefits from June 2019 to June 2020 (Figure 19). Child care assistance served 21.4% more children over the same time period.

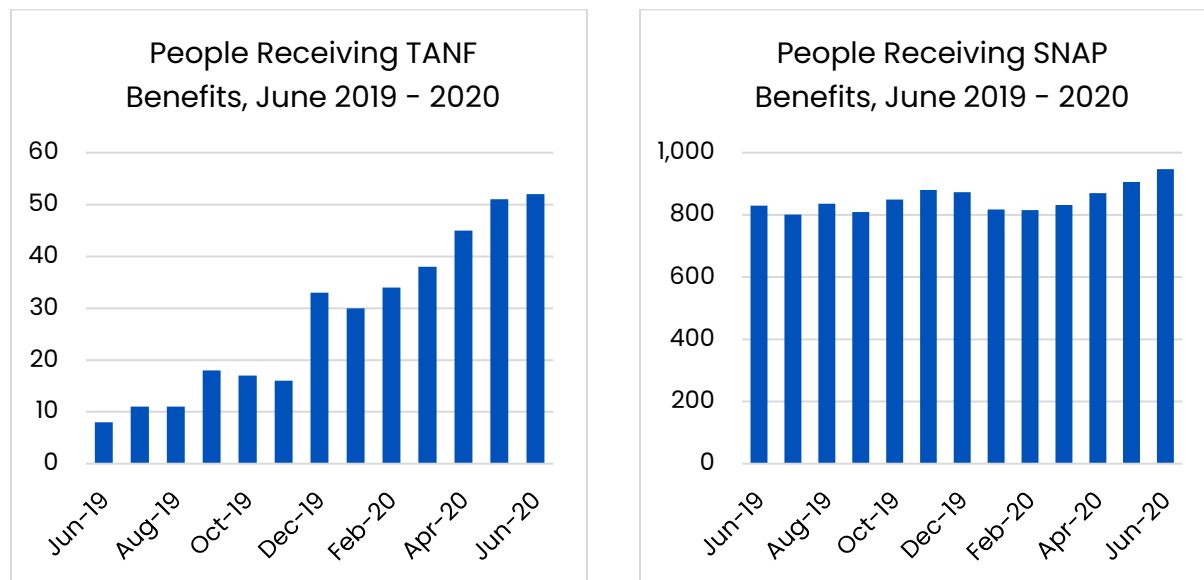


Figure 19. Wilson County participants in TANF and SNAP (Kansas Department for Children and Families).

About 14% of the people in Wilson County live in poverty and 19% of it children, putting the county among the top half of counties for percent of people and children in poverty (Figure 20).

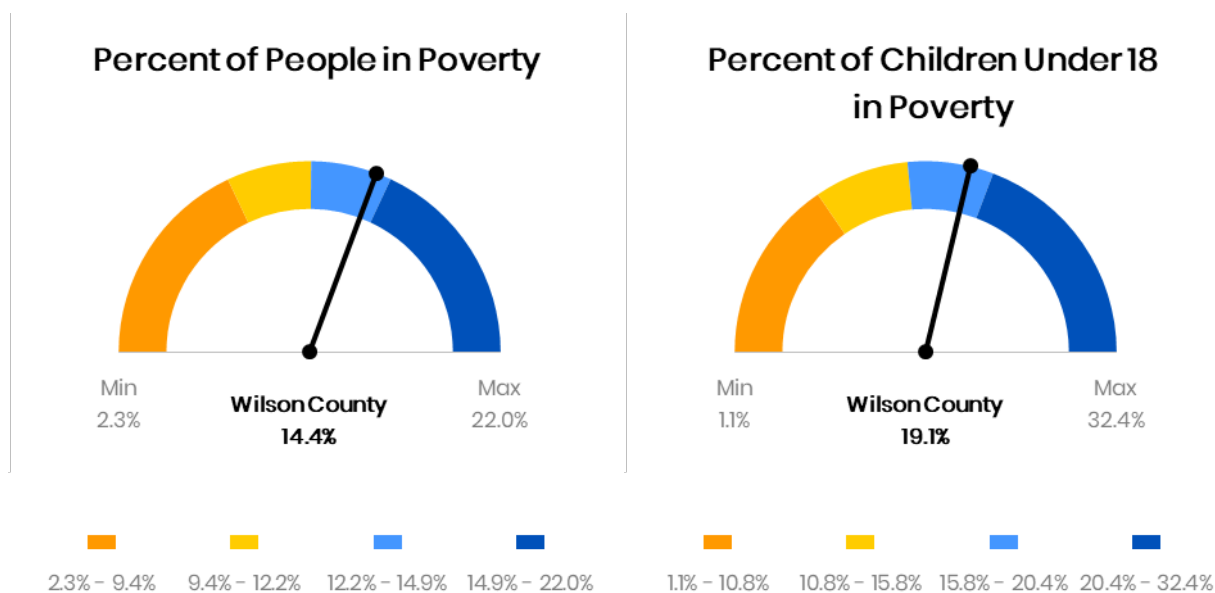


Figure 20. Poverty rates in Wilson County compared to all Kansas counties (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-18 ACS).

The Economic Policy Institute estimates the cost of a family of four to live in Wilson County is \$69,927 (Figure 21). With a median household income of \$46,208, family households have a shortfall over \$23,000 each year just to make ends meet. Transportation, health care, and child care account for over half of a family's budget.

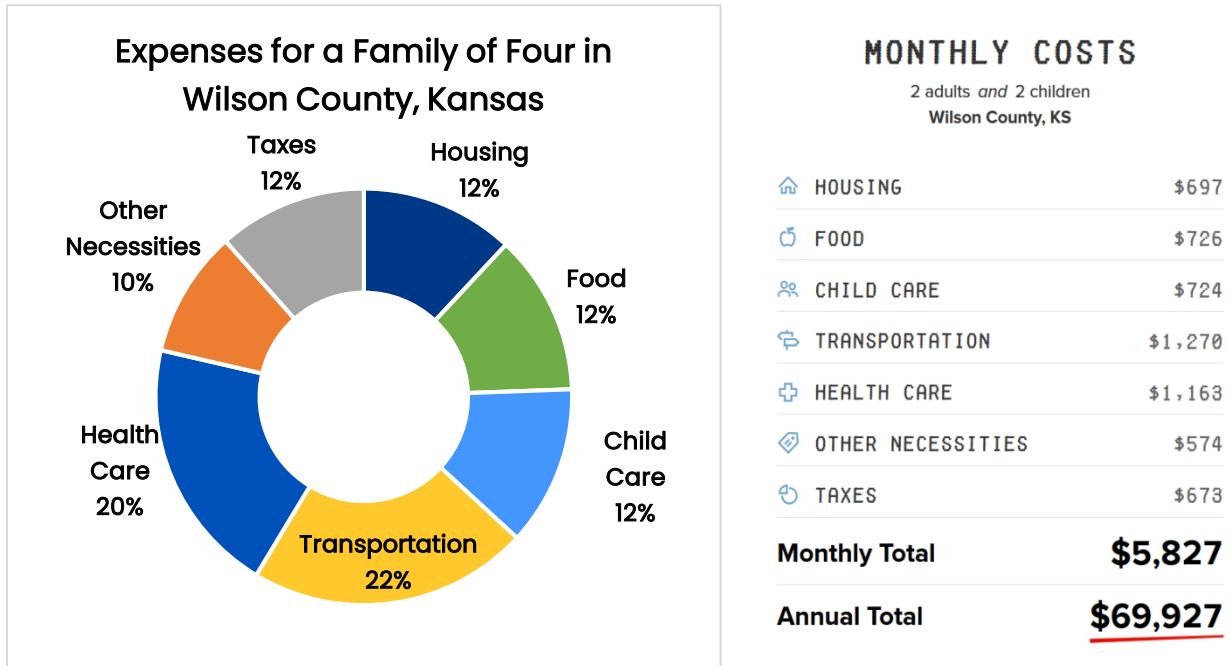


Figure 21. Household expenses for a family of four in Wilson County (Economic Policy Institute).

Impacts on Businesses

Figure 22 plots the industry share of Gross County Product (GCP) along the x-axis and unemployment claimants divided by employment on the y-axis (IPSR's proxy for the current unemployment in the county as of July 18th). The size of each bubble on the graph indicates the share of employment. In Wilson County, the manufacturing sector has the highest share of employment and GCP. The blue color indicates sectors that have below average unemployment. The gold sectors indicate higher levels of unemployment (as in wholesale); however, these sectors contribute less than 5% each to GCP. The sector experiencing the most difficulty is manufacturing; this sector contributes around 35% to GCP and has an unemployment rate that is above the county's June unemployment rate of 8.0%. Although the government sector contributes about 15% to overall GCP, its unemployment rate is low.

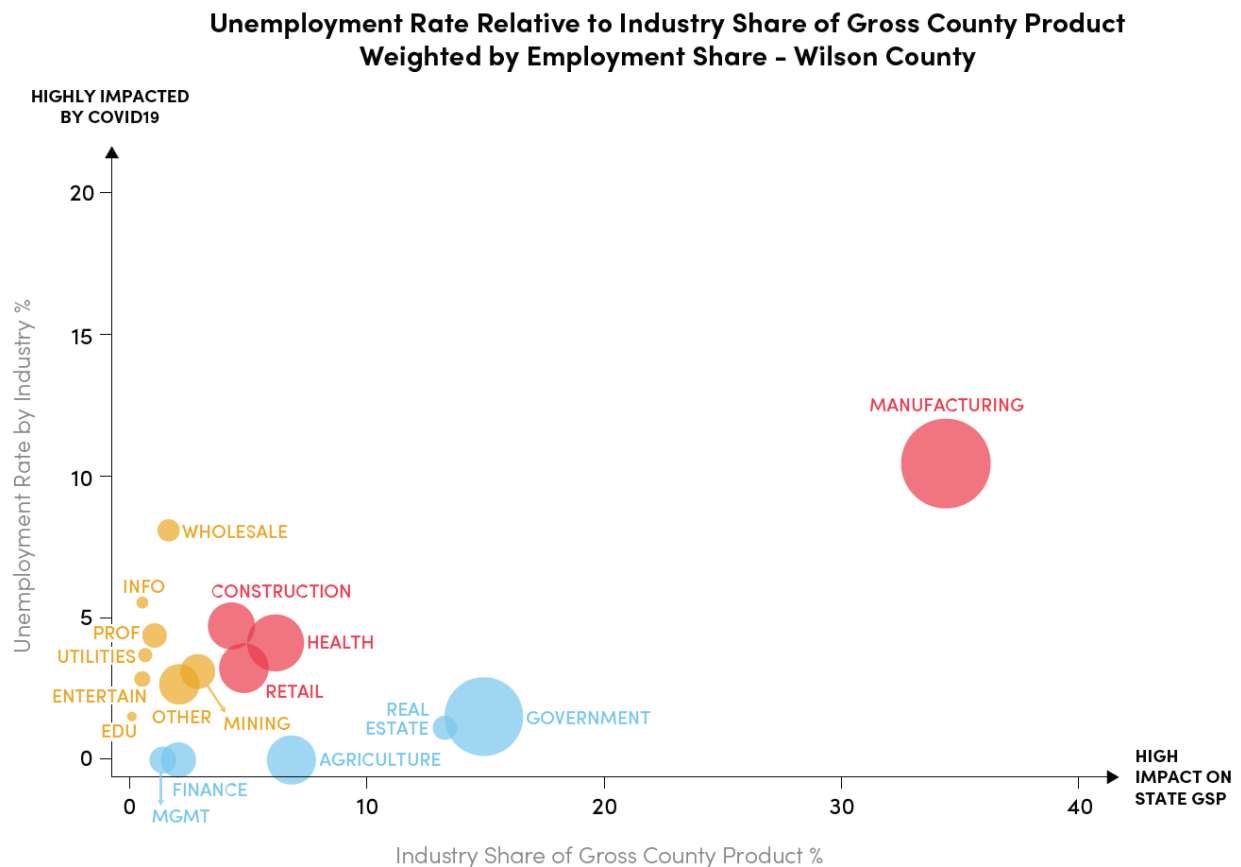


Figure 22. Unemployment rate relative to industry share of Gross County Product for Wilson County (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and Kansas Department of Labor)

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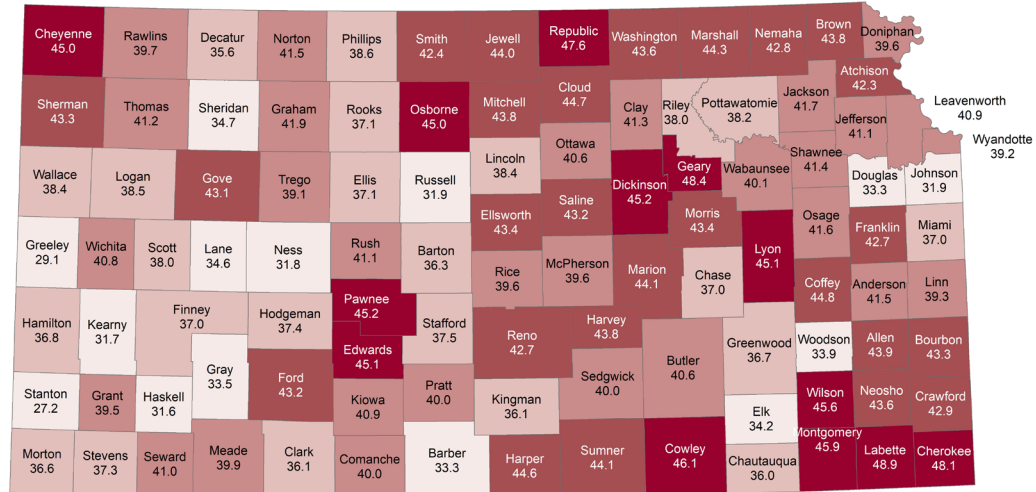
Forty-five percent of the small businesses in Wilson County are considered **vulnerable** to the impact of COVID-19 (Figure 23). These industries are highlighted in blue in Table 9.

Industry	Total Establishments with Employees	Small Businesses		
		Establishments with fewer than 500 Employees	Nonemployer Establishments	Total Small Businesses
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2	2	17	19
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	8	8	23	31
Utilities	1	1	0	1
Construction	17	16	97	113
Manufacturing	17	16	14	30
Wholesale Trade	7	7	9	16
Retail Trade	32	32	69	101
Transportation and Warehousing	6	6	40	46
Information	2	2	0	2
Finance & Insurance	15	15	22	37
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4	4	29	33
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	13	13	40	53
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	1	-	-
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	7	7	51	58
Educational Services	2	2	12	14
Health Care and Social Assistance	34	34	41	75
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2	2	18	20
Accommodation and Food Services	15	15	10	25
Other Services (except Public Administration)	30	30	115	145
Total	215	213	607	819

Table 9. Small businesses in Wilson County by industry (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 County Business Patterns & 2017 Nonemployer Statistics).

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**Small Businesses Vulnerable to COVID-19 as a Percent of
Total Businesses in Kansas, by County, 2016-17**



Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas;
data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 County Business Patterns and 2017 Nonemployer Statistics.

Small business defined as those establishments with less than 500 employees, including nonemployers.

Impacted industries include health care & social assistance, manufacturing, accommodation & food services, retail trade, and other services.

**Percent of
Total
Businesses**

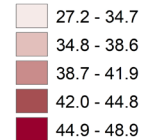


Figure 23. Percent of small businesses vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 by county (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 County Business Patterns & 2017 Nonemployer Statistics).

Wilson County does not impose a county sales tax. Figure 24 shows the per capita taxable retail sales for Wilson County and the state of Kansas from January 2019 through April 2020. Three cities in Wilson County impose local sales taxes: Altoona (1.0%), Fredonia (2.5%), and Neodesha (2.0%). Local sales tax distributions are available through July 2020. Table 10 details the local sales and use tax distributions from January-July 2019 and January-July 2020 to illustrate the local impact of spending changes due to COVID-19. Despite having a 0.5% sales tax increase, Neodesha had a 31% decline in sales and use tax revenue.

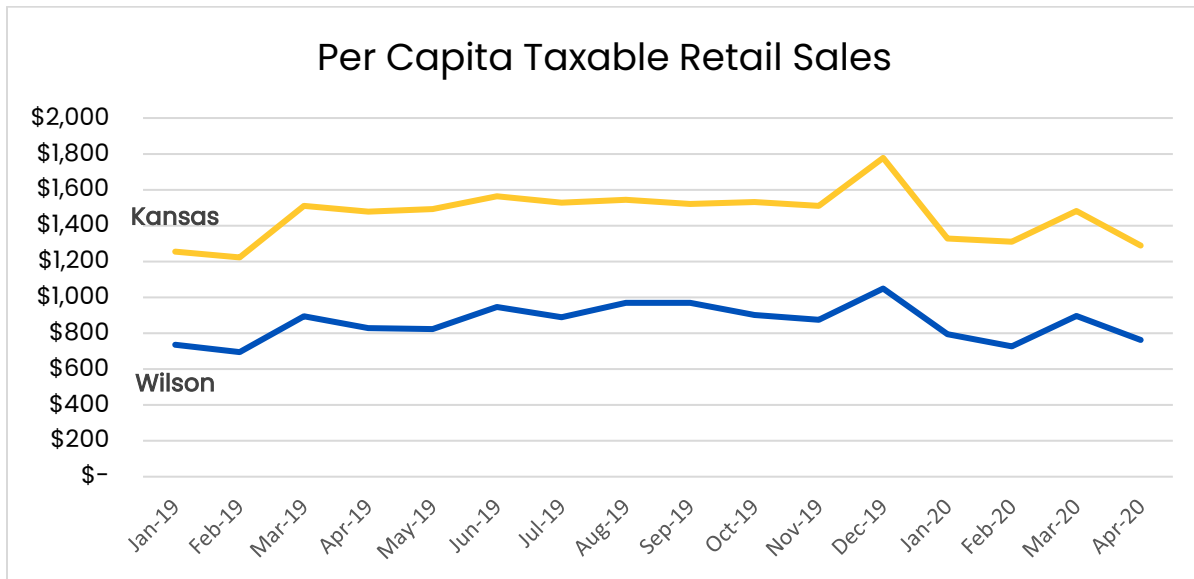


Figure 24. Per capita taxable retail sales in Wilson County and the State of Kansas (Kansas Department of Revenue).

Local Sales and Use Tax Distributions in Wilson County			
City	January - July 2019	January - July 2020	Percent Change
Altoona	\$ 12,282.19	\$ 12,571.00	2.4%
Fredonia	\$ 609,774.18	\$ 592,197.54	-2.9%
Neodesha ¹	\$ 459,425.56	\$ 315,372.09	-31.4%

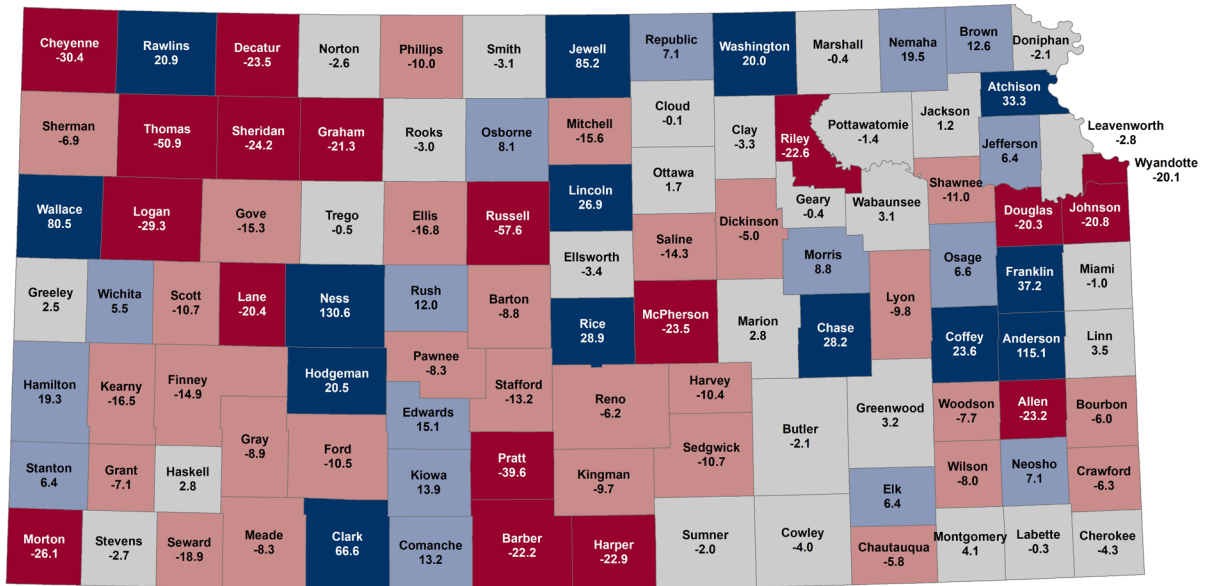
¹ The sales tax rate in Neodesha increased from 9.5% to 10.0% in October 2019.

Table 10. Local sales and use tax distributions in Wilson County (Kansas Department of Revenue).

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Figure 25 illustrates the percent change in state sales and use tax collections from April 2019 to April 2020. With stay-at-home orders in effect in April 2020, some communities saw local sales increase. The state sales and use tax collections in Wilson County decreased by 8.0% from April 2019 to April 2020. By comparison, the overall state sales and use tax collection declined by 12.7% during the same period.

**Percent Change in State Sales Tax Collections in Kansas, by County
April 2019 - April 2020**



Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas; data from Kansas Department of Revenue.

Percent Change **State: -12.7%**

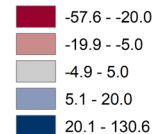


Figure 25. Percent change in state sales and use tax collections (Kansas Department of Revenue).

Payroll Protection Program (PPP)

One-hundred-forty-six business in Wilson County received PPP loans that are expected to retain 1,301 jobs (Table 11). Table 11 further details these loans by size of loan and industry.

Industry Description	Loan Range				Total Loans	Jobs Retained
	\$1-2 million	\$350,000- 1 million	\$150,000- 350,000	less than \$150,000		
Health Care and Social Assistance	2	1	1	14	18	500
Construction		2	1	15	18	227
Manufacturing		3		5	8	169
Accommodation and Food Services				9	9	97
Retail Trade				9	9	56
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting				24	24	43
Wholesale Trade				5	5	34
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction				3	3	30
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing				3	3	30
Other Services (except Public Administration)				17	17	27
Administrative, Support and Waste Mgmt				9	9	24
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services				4	4	22
Transportation and Warehousing				11	11	19
Finance and Insurance				4	4	10
Information				2	2	7
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation				2	2	6
Total	2	6	2	136	146	1,301

Table 11. PPP loans in Wilson County by industry and size (U.S. Small Business Administration).

Figure 26 illustrates jobs retained by industry and shows that the most loans were made in ambulatory health care services (13 loans) and retained 197 jobs. Two hospitals received PPP loans and retained the highest number of jobs at 244.

Jobs Retained by Industry

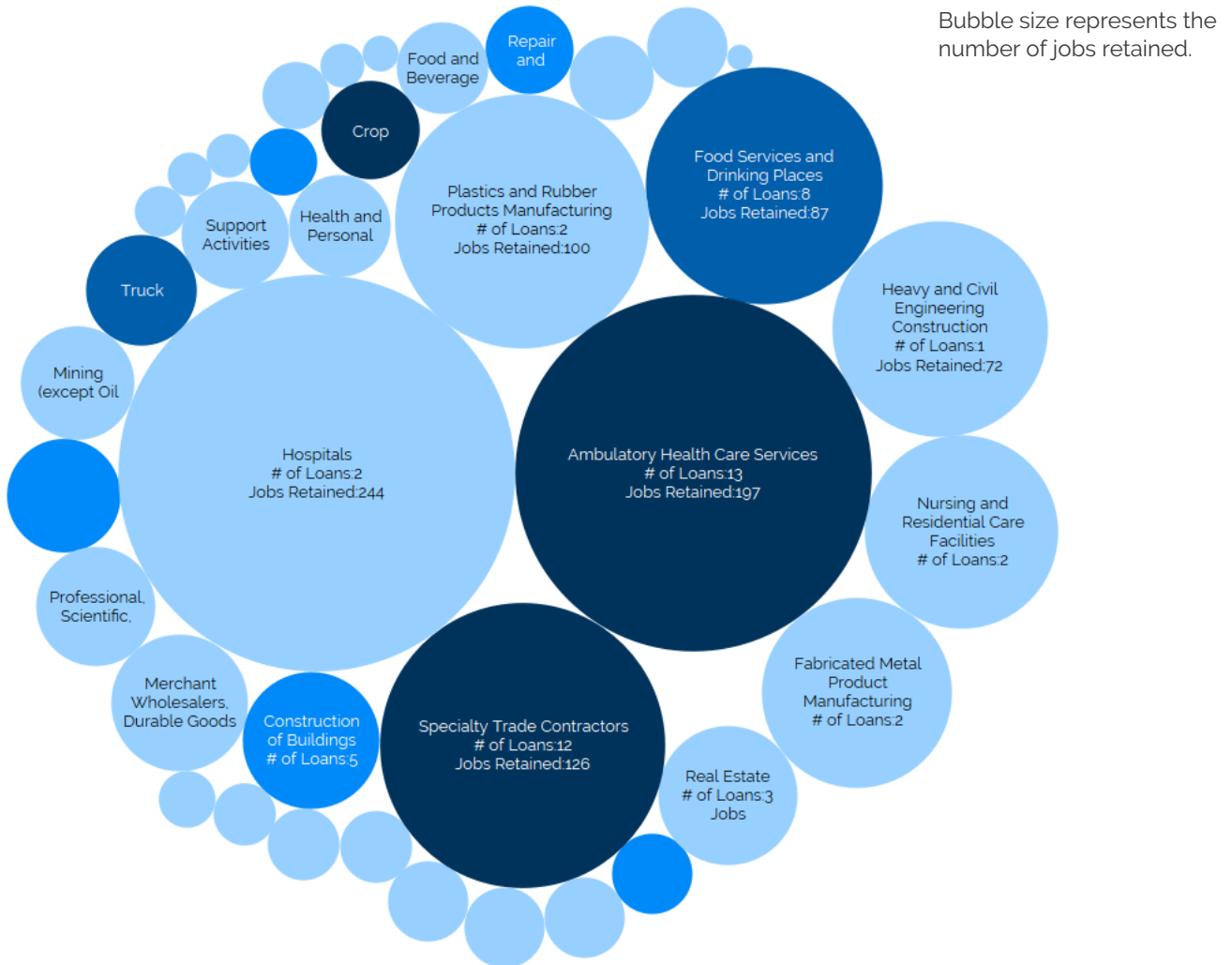


Figure 26. Jobs retained by PPP loans by industry in Wilson County (U.S. Small Business Administration).

Job Postings

Commuting patterns show a strong reliance on jobs in the Southeast Kansas area. Table 12 shows the advertised educational requirement in job openings in Southeast Kansas in June 2020 along with the education level of unemployed people in Wilson County as of July 18th.

Education Level	Job Openings in Southeast Area	Unemployed Persons in Wilson County
No Minimum Education Requirement	2	-
High School Diploma or Equivalent	684	162
Vocational School Certificate	35	-
Some College/Technical or Vocational School	10	59
Associates Degree	23	10
Bachelor's Degree	122	18
Master's Degree	19	2
Doctorate Degree	2	0
Specialized Degree (e.g. MD, DDS)	5	0
Total*	902	290*

Table 12. Job postings and unemployed people by education (Kansas Department of Labor).

*Total includes people with less than high school education and those with unknown educational level. Single dash (-) indicates not applicable.

Conclusion

The majority of workers leave Wilson County to work in the Southeast Kansas area. The health of the Wichita and Southeast Kansas areas will directly impact the economic health of Wilson County. A lack of access to broadband affects both workers and students in the response to COVID-19 closures. With one in five children in poverty and nearly three in five enrolled in the FRL program, many families in Wilson County face challenges as the county moves towards recovery. Housing costs as a share of income are relatively high which puts unemployed or underemployed residents at risk for foreclosure or eviction. PPP Loans preserved 1,301 small business jobs. Manufacturing and health care jobs remain at risk moving toward a healthy recovery.