

Issue Brief

A Changing Kansas: Implications for Health and Communities



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(2018). A Changing Kansas: Implications for Health and Communities, No. KHI/18-13.
Topeka, KS: Kansas Health Institute.

A Changing Kansas: Implications for health and communities

The population of Kansas is changing. And these changes have important implications for the health of the state and for communities as they consider how they will function and provide essential services for their residents.

Kansas is aging, becoming increasingly diverse and more concentrated in urban areas.

The population of Kansas increased from 2,178,611 in 1960 to 2,907,289 in 2016, an overall growth rate of 33.4 percent. However, when considering subgroups—for example, age, race and ethnicity, or geographic area of the state—the patterns look quite different from group to group. Projecting these demographic trends through the year 2066, the total population will increase by 25.1 percent, to 3,637,037. Without considering potential major changes in immigration or economic development policies, technological advances or other factors that could have a significant impact on population patterns, Kansas will likely look very different than it does today.

An aging Kansas

The aging of the state is evident even when examining more recent years. In 2000, the median age of Kansans was 35.2 years. That year, there were 356,229 Kansans age 65 and over, comprising 13.3 percent of the population. By 2016, the estimated median age had increased to 36.5 years and the population of Kansans age 65 and over had increased to 436,993, comprising an estimated 15.0 percent of the population.

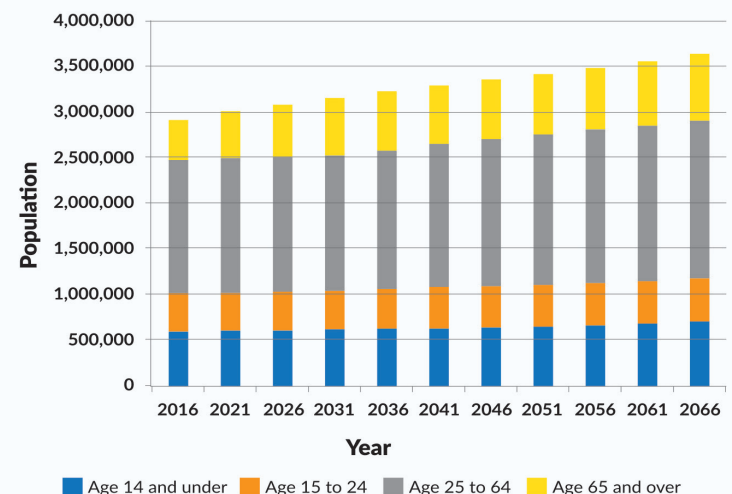
The population of adults age 65 and over in Kansas is projected to increase to 644,778 by the year 2036 and to 740,715 by 2066. This represents an overall growth rate of 69.5 percent, which is four to five times higher than growth rates projected for younger age groups (13.4 to 18.5 percent). By 2066, 20.3 percent of the population is projected to be age 65 and over.

A more diverse Kansas

The population of Kansas increased from approximately 2.7 million in 2000 to an estimated 2.9 million in 2016, representing a growth rate of 8.1 percent. All of this growth was due to increases in minority populations, defined as any racial or ethnic group other than non-Hispanic White. While the collective population of minority groups increased by 52.5 percent, from 428,130 in 2000 to 652,708 in 2016, the non-Hispanic White population decreased by 0.3 percent during this same period, from 2,260,288 in 2000 to 2,254,581 in 2016.

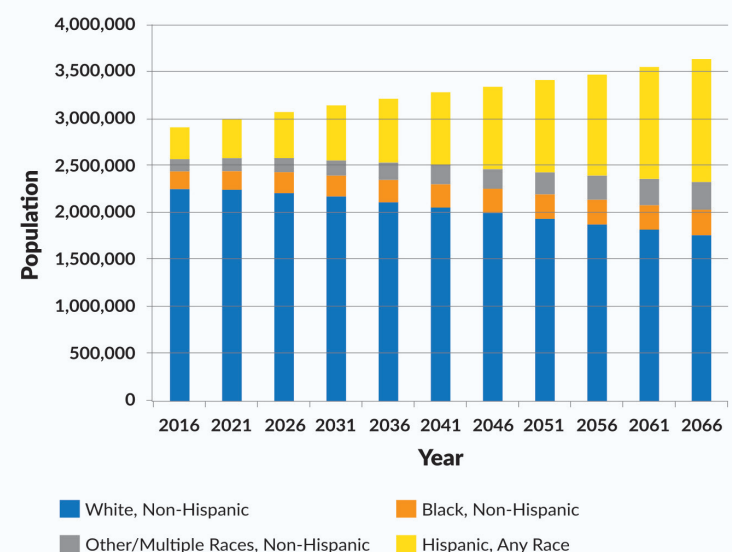
Among minority groups, population growth rates between 2000 and 2016 were 19.1 percent among non-Hispanic Blacks, 8.0 percent among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Natives,

Figure 1. Population Projections by Age Group in Kansas, 2016–2066



Source: Kansas Health Foundation and Kansas Health Institute. (2018). *A Changing Kansas: Implications for Health and Communities*, No. KHI/18-13. Topeka, KS: Kansas Health Institute.

Figure 2. Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity in Kansas, 2016–2066



Source: Kansas Health Foundation and Kansas Health Institute. (2018). *A Changing Kansas: Implications for Health and Communities*, No. KHI/18-13. Topeka, KS: Kansas Health Institute.

80.4 percent among non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islanders and 79.8 percent among Hispanics of any race.

Between 2016 and 2066, the non-Hispanic White population is projected to decrease by 21.1 percent, from 2,254,581 to 1,765,981. The non-Hispanic Black population is projected to increase by 41.1 percent during this period, from 192,710 to 271,921. The Hispanic, Any Race population is projected to nearly quadruple, from 338,481 to 1,309,513, an increase of 286.9 percent. At some point between 2061 and 2066, Kansas is projected to become a majority, minority state, meaning that less than half of the population will be non-Hispanic White.

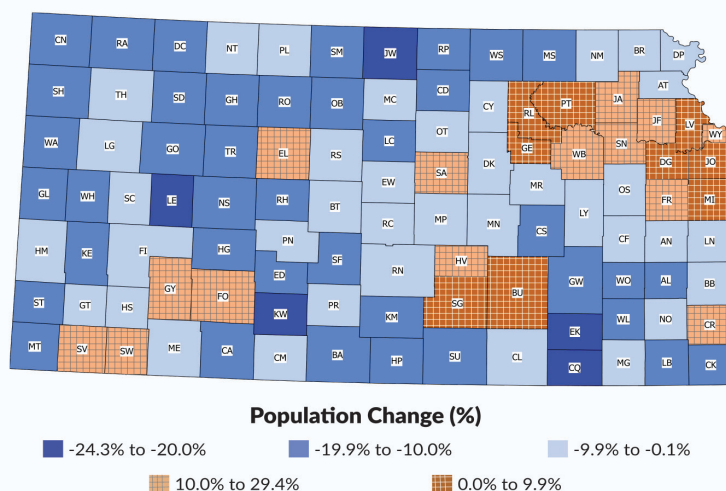
A more urban Kansas

Between 2000 and 2016, Urban counties (those with a population density of at least 150 residents per square mile according to the 2010 census) experienced a population growth of 17.0 percent (237,706). During the same period, Semi-Urban counties (40 to 140.9 residents per square mile) grew by 7.1 percent (30,506). These population gains were offset by population declines in less populated areas of the state. Densely Settled Rural counties (20 to 39.9 residents per square mile) decreased by 2.5 percent (12,125). In Rural counties (six to 19.9 residents per square mile), there was a decrease of 7.2 percent (18,021). In Frontier counties (less than six residents per square mile), there was a decrease of 15.0 percent (19,195). Between 2000 and 2016, 82 of the 105 counties in Kansas experienced a loss of population.

Projected population growth rates in urban areas of the state through the year 2066 vary substantially. While the Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area is projected to grow by just 7.4 percent between 2016 and 2066, the Lawrence Metropolitan Statistical Area is projected to grow by 125.9 percent. Substantial population growth is also projected for the Manhattan-Junction City Combined Statistical Area through 2066, at 92.4 percent. The Kansas City, Kansas Metropolitan Region, which for this report includes only the Kansas counties in the Kansas City, MO-KS Metropolitan Statistical Area plus Franklin County, is projected to increase by 44.5 percent, much of which will be driven by growth in Johnson County, the most populous county in the region and in the state. The Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area is projected to grow by 28.4 percent between 2016 and 2066.

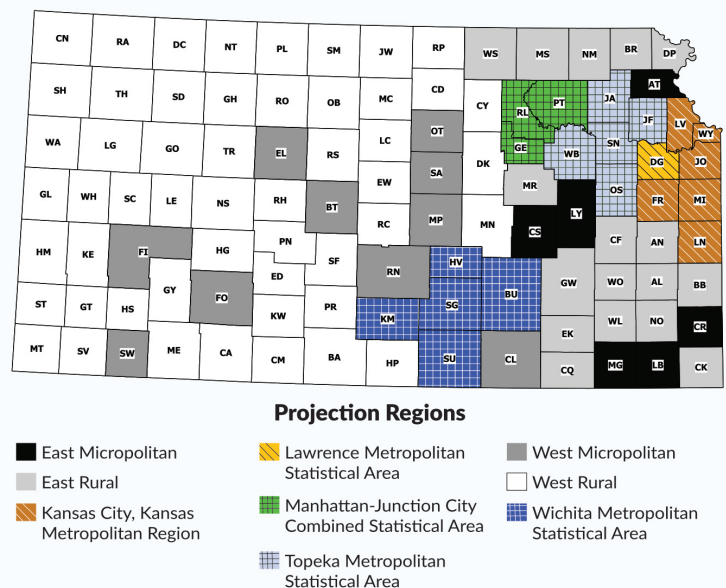
By contrast, rural counties in the western part of the state are projected to decrease in population by 19.9 percent by the year 2066, while rural counties in the eastern part of the state are projected to experience a population decrease of 32.1 percent. Micropolitan areas, which are more densely populated counties in rural parts of the state, are also projected to experience population decreases. In the

Figure 3. Population Change (Percent) by County in Kansas, Between 2000 and 2016



Source: KHI analysis of data from the National Center for Health Statistics' (NCHS) April 1, 2000 bridged-race population estimates and the NCHS's June 2017 Vintage July 1, 2016 bridged-race population estimates.

Figure 4. Population Projection Regions in Kansas



Source: Kansas Health Foundation and Kansas Health Institute. (2018). *A Changing Kansas: Implications for Health and Communities*, No. KHI/18-13. Topeka, KS: Kansas Health Institute.

eastern part of the state, these counties are projected to decrease by 14.0 percent by 2066, while western micropolitan counties are projected to decrease by 7.2 percent.

Figure 5. Population Projections by Geographic Region in Kansas, 2016–2066

Area	2016	2036	2016–2036 % Change	2066	2016–2066 % Change
Kansas	2,907,289	3,220,161	10.8%	3,637,037	25.1%
Kansas City, KS Metropolitan Region	896,568	1,078,067	20.2%	1,295,724	44.5%
Lawrence Metropolitan Statistical Area	119,440	168,041	40.7%	269,802	125.9%
Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area	233,068	241,587	3.7%	250,224	7.4%
Manhattan-Junction City Combined Statistical Area	132,590	172,476	30.1%	255,060	92.4%
Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area	644,672	727,234	12.8%	827,832	28.4%
Eastern Micropolitan Region	144,913	139,888	-3.5%	124,556	-14.0%
Western Micropolitan Region	337,909	331,172	-2.0%	313,488	-7.2%
Eastern Rural Area	152,487	136,166	-10.7%	103,539	-32.1%
Western Rural Area	245,642	225,530	-8.2%	196,814	-19.9%

Source: Kansas Health Foundation and Kansas Health Institute. (2018). *A Changing Kansas: Implications for Health and Communities*, No. KHI/18-13. Topeka, KS: Kansas Health Institute.

Conclusion

How will Kansas look over the next 20 to 50 years? Based on recent trends, Kansas will look very different than it does today. While the overall population of the state is projected to increase by approximately 25 percent by the year 2066, that growth will be concentrated in urban areas. And, nearly every part of the state will be much more racially and ethnically diverse than it is today.

These trends and projections will have substantial impacts on every aspect of our society. As the population ages, rates of chronic disease such as heart disease and diabetes will likely increase and put additional strain on the public health and health care systems. Local governments in rural communities will find it increasingly difficult to fund and provide essential services as their tax bases continue to shrink. Small, local school districts will struggle to recruit and retain qualified teachers and staff to educate their students.

Further complicating matters, Kansas must grapple with the considerable disparities that exist in social and environmental determinants of health such as poverty and education. Minority populations experience higher poverty rates, lower high school graduation rates and educational attainment, have lower access to health care in Kansas, and are projected to experience substantial population growth. State and local leaders must engage with communities on how to address these challenges.

Key Points

- Between 2000 and 2016, the proportion of the population age 65 and older in Kansas increased from 13.3 percent to 15.0 percent. By 2066, 20.3 percent of the population is projected to be age 65 and over.
- All of the population growth in Kansas between 2000 and 2016 was due to growth in minority populations, which increased by 52.5 percent. By contrast, the non-Hispanic White population decreased by 0.3 percent during this period.
- Kansas is projected to become a majority, minority state at some point between 2061 and 2066, meaning that less than half of the population will be non-Hispanic White.
- The Hispanic, Any Race population in Kansas grew by 79.8 percent between 2000 and 2016, and is projected to nearly quadruple by 2066, increasing by more than 970,000 residents.
- While the population in Urban and Semi-Urban counties in Kansas increased substantially between 2000 and 2016, the population decreased in 82 of the 105 counties. Between 2016 and 2066, rural counties are projected to experience a continued population decrease of 19.9 percent in the western part of the state and 32.1 percent in the eastern part of the state.