

# Community Needs Assessment 2021



January 2022

## Heartland Early Education

Heartland Early Education, headquartered in Salina, Kansas, is sponsored by USD305 and currently serves Saline, Dickinson, and Ellsworth Counties. Salina is close to the geographic center of the state and is the largest city within a radius of 90 miles. Ellsworth County is immediately west of Salina and Dickinson County is east. Heartland serves an area that embraces 2,286 square miles.

**Table of Contents**

**COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY ..... 5**

Staff Shortage..... 6

Program Options..... 6

Enrollment ..... 6

Community Demographics ..... 7

Performance Standards..... 7

**HEARTLAND EARLY EDUCATION OVERVIEW ..... 8**

Program Option Descriptions ..... 8

    Early Head Start Home-Based ..... 8

    Parents as Teachers (PAT) ..... 8

    Head Start Part Day School Year (PDSY)..... 8

    Head Start School Day School Year (SDSY)..... 8

    Head Start K-Prep ..... 8

    Head Start/Early Head Start Full Day Full Year (FDY) ..... 8

    Head Start/Early Head Start Extended Day Full Year (EDFY) ..... 8

Heartland Early Education Program Options – Funded Enrollment ..... 8

Early Head Start and Head Start Eligibility ..... 9

    Intake and Eligibility Process ..... 9

    Early Head Start ..... 9

    Head Start ..... 9

Race/Ethnicity/Home Language ..... 9

    2020-21 Early Head Start and Head Start Participants ..... 9

Impacts of Heartland Staffing Shortage..... 10

    Closed Classrooms ..... 10

    Child Care Staffing..... 10

    Reduction and Reallocation of Funded Head Start Slots ..... 10

Decrease in Early Head Start Home-Based Enrollment ..... 11

**COUNTY POPULATION INFORMATION..... 11**

Eligible Children Ages 0-4 Served by Head Start/Early Head Start:..... 11

Saline County:..... 11

Dickinson County:..... 12

Ellsworth County: ..... 12

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ..... 12**

Child Find..... 12

Part C Programs:..... 13

    Infant Child Development (ICD) – Saline & Ellsworth Counties ..... 13

    OCCK Infant Toddler Services (ITS) – Dickinson County ..... 13

Part B Program:..... 13

    Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE) ..... 13

**HEALTH ..... 14**

Immunizations ..... 14

Health Insurance ..... 14

Dental Care..... 14

Mental Health ..... 15

    K-Prep..... 16

    Behavior and Social Emotional Needs within Classrooms ..... 16

<b>COMMUNITY CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Licensed Child Care and Preschool .....	16
Head Start and Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships .....	17
Parents as Teachers (PAT) .....	18
Saline County .....	18
Dickinson County .....	18
USD 305 Preschool .....	18
<b>COMMUNITY ISSUES .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Drug Abuse.....	19
Ashby House Sober Living .....	19
CKF Addiction Treatment .....	19
Teen Pregnancy.....	19
Poverty.....	20
Public Assistance.....	20
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):.....	20
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):.....	21
Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP): .....	21
Public Assistance by County.....	22
Saline County .....	22
Dickinson County .....	23
Ellsworth County.....	24
Child Abuse .....	25
Foster Care.....	25
Out of Home Placement (OOH) .....	26
Adoption.....	27
Domestic Violence .....	28
Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK) .....	28
Homelessness.....	28
Ashby House .....	29
Salina Rescue Mission .....	29
Salina Grace .....	30
Housing by County.....	30
Saline County .....	30
Dickinson County .....	31
Ellsworth County.....	31
Transportation.....	32
Saline County .....	32
Dickinson County .....	33
Ellsworth County.....	33
Great Resignation – according to Wikipedia .....	33
<b>COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION.....</b>	<b>34</b>
Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas.....	34
Child Advocacy and Parenting Services, Inc. (CAPS) .....	35
Partners in Early Childhood Education (PIECE) – Saline County .....	36
Quality for Life Coalition (QLC) – Dickinson County .....	36
Thrive of the Heartland .....	37

<b>COMMUNITY ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS/HIGHER EDUCATION</b> .....	<b>37</b>
Salina Adult Education Center (SAEC).....	37
Partners 4 Success.....	37
English as a Second Language (ESL).....	37
Adult Basic Education (ABE)/General Equivalency Diploma (GED) Programs.....	38
Accelerated Opportunities – Kansas (AO-K).....	38
Salina Area Technical College (SAEC).....	38
Early Childhood Education.....	38
<b>2021 – COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>39</b>

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## COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

### Staff Shortage

- Heartland started the 2021-22 school year with 14 unfilled staff positions. Heartland hired 22 staff from July to December 2021. However, during that same time period, 21 people left employment.
- Due to the staffing shortage, two Head Start and two Early Head Start classrooms have not been able to be open this program term. These classrooms represent 68 Head Start children and 16 Early Head Start children not able to receive services.
- Heartland is experiencing a severe staffing crisis. Several factors have contributed to this problem:
  - Inability to pay staff a living wage, especially in the teacher assistant position
  - Low unemployment rate paired with fewer people in the workforce
  - Additional background checks requiring a wait of at least 4 weeks to place staff in positions

### Program Options

- Parents have shown a preference for the School Day School Year (SDSY) model over Part Day School Year (PDSY). Heartland plans to convert one of its four PDSY classrooms to SDSY for the 2022-23 school year. This will lower funded slots by 15 children which will also reduce over-saturation of Head Start slots in Saline County. (See 2021 Kids Count data in the Enrollment section.)
- Heartland made the difficult decision to terminate partnerships with all but two child care centers. This decision was primarily based on the lack of Head Start qualified staff and the partner's inability to successfully adhere to Head Start Performance Standards. Heartland will continue to maintain one partnership in each county.
- The community has additional child care slots available due to the reduction of partnerships with Heartland. Child care centers are able to fill child care slots to capacity with community children.
- Starting in 2016-17 the Kansas Early Head Start slots were formally split between home-based and center-based which limited the flexibility of enrollment. Heartland has struggled to fill slots in its home-based option since children transitioned to Head Start in the fall of 2019. The pandemic only complicated the issue further.
- Early Head Start home-based enrollment has trended down over the last five years by almost 11%. This decline started prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the primary reasons parents enroll in Early Head Start is to have a resource to ask questions in regards to parenting. As technology has evolved, parenting information, although not always accurate, is readily available from a screen. Communication has moved from talking to texting and face-to-face learning is becoming more a thing of the past. Home-based slots in Early Head Start and Parents as Teachers are becoming increasingly difficult to fill. In order to maintain full enrollment in Early Head Start, Heartland will propose a decrease in funded slots.

### Enrollment

- Heartland's average operating capacity between August 2020 and November 2021 was 74%.
- Staff have had to manage escalating behaviors in the School Day School Year (SDSY) and Extended Day Full Year (EDFY) classrooms. Alternative classrooms were temporarily put in place to support mental health and social skill development.

- 2021 Kids Count Data reports Saline County has more than 100 slots per every 100 Head Start eligible children. In addition to this USD 305 has increased the number of at-risk preschool slots from 60 to 96. Heartland is considering a reduction in Salina Head Start slots.
- 2021 Kids Count Data reports Ellsworth County has more than 100 slots per every 100 Head Start eligible children. Since Heartland only operates one single session classroom in Ellsworth a reduction in slots would not be practical. Ellsworth may want to consider applying for KSDE funding for at-risk preschool, especially since three year olds have been added to generate funding.
- USD 435 Abilene has added two preschool classrooms to serve their district. These classrooms are available at no cost for eligible at-risk children. Private pay students are also welcome to enroll. However, the majority of children with diagnosed disabilities ended up enrolling in the Abilene Head Start classroom. At the beginning of the school year at least nine of the 13 children enrolled were on an IEP.

## Community Demographics

- The federal poverty rate for children under age five has dropped from 25.8% in 2011 to 18.2% in 2019. The Kansas rates for the same time period dropped from 24% to 16.6%. It is still unclear how the pandemic has affected these statistics.
- Saline County has had a higher rate of poverty for children under 18 than the state of Kansas for several years.
- The 2019 teen pregnancy rate in Saline County was 12.2 and has been higher than the state for at least five years.

## Performance Standards

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is issuing new standards to outline the masking and COVID-19 vaccination requirements for grant recipient staff, contractors working directly with children, and volunteers. The standards require all Head Start staff, some contractors, and volunteers to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 31, 2022 and universal masking for all individuals two years of age and older (effective November 30, 2021).

UPDATE: As of January 1, 2022, following a decision by a US District Court, 24 states are not required to comply pending future developments in the litigation.

## HEARTLAND EARLY EDUCATION OVERVIEW

### Program Option Descriptions

**Early Head Start Home-Based** is a home-visiting program available in Saline and Dickinson counties. Enrolled families receive weekly 90-minute home visits with a Family Consultant trained in child development and social services.

**Parents as Teachers (PAT)** is a voluntary, home-based program offered to pregnant women and families with children birth to age three in the USD 305 service area. One-hour monthly home visits are provided by certified PAT Family Consultants along with monthly playgroups.

**Head Start Part Day School Year (PDSY)** provides high quality early childhood education to income eligible children/families in Saline county. It is available for children ages three to five who meet income guidelines. Children attend morning or afternoon sessions four days per week. Family Consultants provide monthly home visits. Transportation is available for those that qualify.

**Head Start School Day School Year (SDSY)** provides high quality early childhood education to income eligible children/families in Saline, Dickinson and Ellsworth counties. It is available for children ages

three to five who meet income guidelines. Children attend from 8am to 2:30pm Monday through Friday. Family Consultants provide monthly home visits. Transportation is available for those that qualify.

**Head Start K-Prep** is a specialized therapeutic preschool designed to serve “at risk” four year olds who have been excluded from a regular preschool or child care setting because of emotional or behavioral problems. Services provided include: case management, monthly family nights, and family therapy.

**Head Start/Early Head Start Full Day Full Year (FDFY)** provides high quality early childhood education, along with child care to children ages two weeks to five years. Heartland operates eight classrooms and partners with a child care center in Salina and another in Abilene to provide additional Early Head Start and Head Start slots. Child care services are available for parenting high school students with the goal of keeping students in school until they graduate.

**Head Start/Early Head Start Extended Day Full Year (EDFY)** provides the same services as FDFY with shorter hours of operation.

### Heartland Early Education Program Options – Funded Enrollment

PROGRAM OPTION	PROGRAM	SALINE	DICKINSON	ELLSWORTH	TOTALS
Home-Based	Early Head Start	83	6	--	<b>89</b>
Part Day School Year	Head Start	153	--	16	<b>169</b>
School Day School Year	Head Start	63	30	--	<b>93</b>
Extended Day Full Year	Head Start	17	--	--	<b>17</b>
Full Day Full Year	Early Head Start	71	6	--	<b>99</b>
	Head Start	13	9	--	
	TOTALS	400	51	16	<b>467</b>



## Early Head Start and Head Start Eligibility

### Intake and Eligibility Process

Intake policies and procedures are in place to ensure the most eligible children are selected to fill Head Start and Early Head Start slots. Recruitment is planned and implemented on a regular schedule and applications, brochures, posters, and public service announcements are used throughout the program service area.

The majority of families that qualify for Head Start/Early Head Start are at-risk in a variety of areas, but income is the primary qualifier for eligibility. Most families enrolled are at or below 100% of poverty. In comparison, the school lunch program allows families to earn up to 185% of poverty to qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch.

Children in foster care or homeless (McKinney-Vento) are categorically eligible for Head Start/Early Head Start services. The following charts indicate the percentage of participants that qualified in each of the six income categories during the 2020-21 school year.

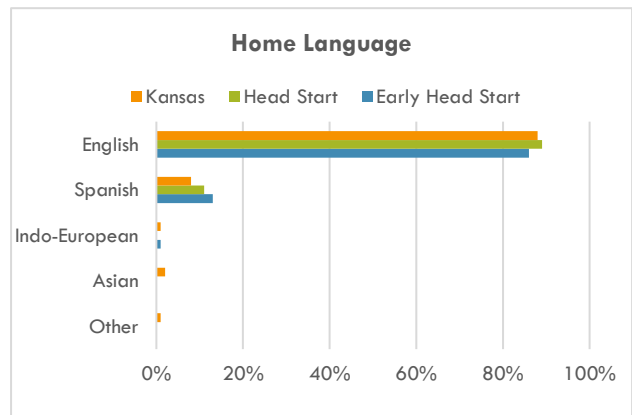
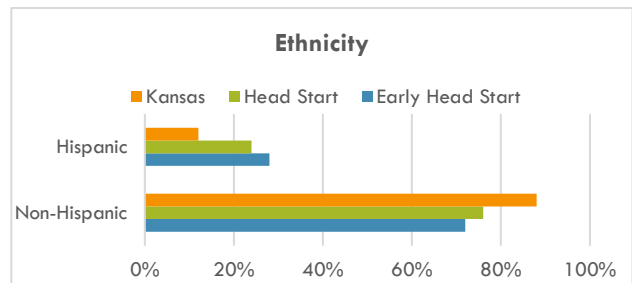
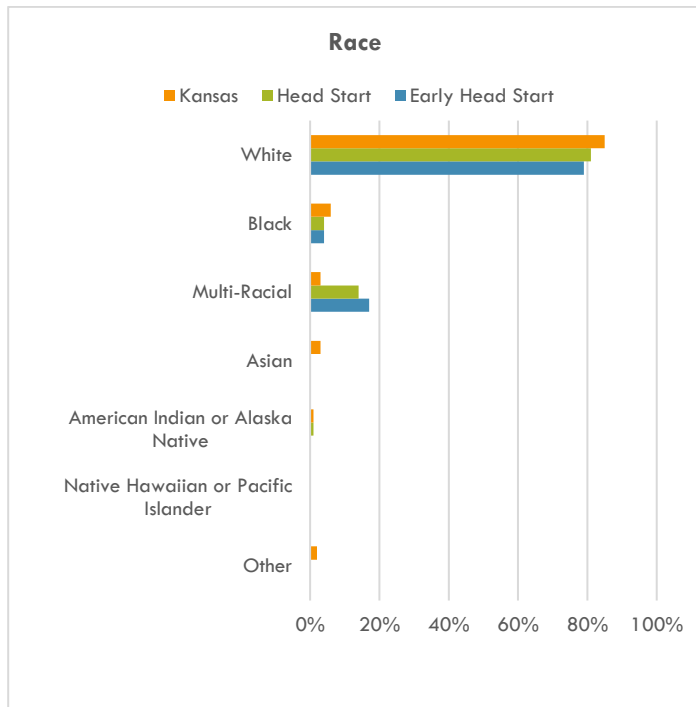
### BREAKDOWN OF 2020-21 PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY STATUS

Early Head Start	
Income (up to 100% of poverty)	63%
Income (101-129.99% of poverty)	6%
Receiving Public Assistance: TANF/SSI	10%
Homeless	11%
Foster Child	9%
Over Income	1%

Head Start	
Income (up to 100% of poverty)	67%
Income (101-129.99% of poverty)	4%
Receiving Public Assistance: TANF/SSI	6%
Homeless	13%
Foster Child	6%
Over Income	4%

## Race/Ethnicity/Home Language

### 2020-21 Early Head Start and Head Start Participants



## Impacts of Heartland Staffing Shortage

Heartland has been experiencing a staffing shortage since the reopening after the start of the pandemic. Heartland started the 2021-22 program term in need of 14 staff. Between July 1 and December 31, 2021 Heartland hired 21 staff but lost 22. Several factors have contributed to this problem:

- Inability to pay staff a living wage, especially in the teacher assistant position
- Low unemployment rate paired with fewer people in the workforce
- Additional background check requirements with a wait of at least 4 weeks to place staff in positions

### Closed Classrooms

Two Head Start and two Early Head Start classrooms have been closed for the 2021-22 school year due to lack of staff. These classrooms represent 68 Head Start and 16 Early Head Start children not able to receive services. Heartland's average operating capacity since August 2020 is 74%.

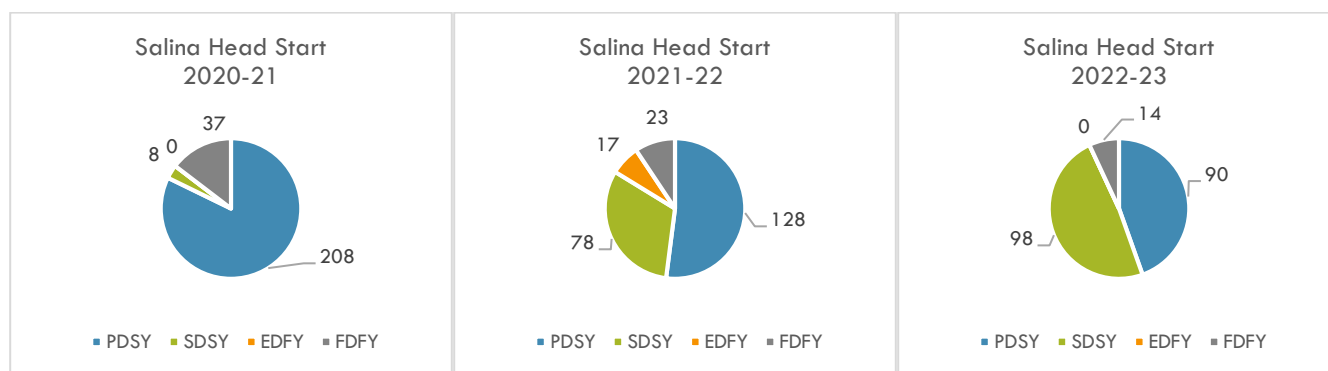
The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued new standards with the potential to affect the recruitment of staff. HHS has outlined masking and COVID-19 vaccination requirements for grant recipient staff, contractors working directly with children, and volunteers. The standards require all Head Start staff, some contractors, and volunteers to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 31, 2022 and universal masking for all individuals two years of age and older (effective November 30, 2021).

### Child Care Staffing

Heartland has always faced additional challenges to staff child care classrooms. Planning for shift changes and needed breaks requires extra staff and shifts with unpopular hours. Even without a staffing shortage, it is difficult to recruit and keep quality staff. In order to provide the best quality child care services possible, Heartland will shorten its hours operation by one hour in Early Head Start classrooms. The Extended Day Full Year Head Start classroom will be converted to School Day School Year for the 2022-23 program term.

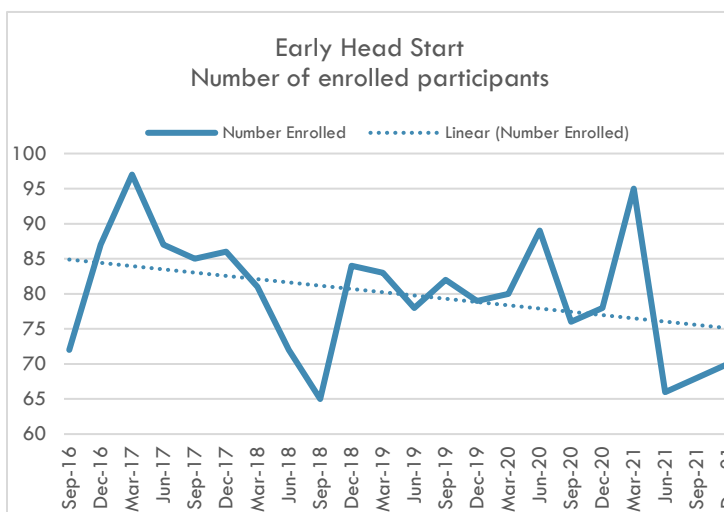
### Reduction and Reallocation of Funded Head Start Slots

Due to transportation constraints, the classrooms in Abilene, Enterprise, and Ellsworth all operate as school day single sessions. In Salina the SDSY classrooms consistently have a longer waiting list than PDSY. However, because of guidelines from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) for the 2020-21 school year, the majority of Head Start slots were converted to PDSY. In order to provide the services most needed by families, Heartland began shifting these slots back to SDSY for the 2021-22 school year. With the reduction of slots in the child care partners from 37 to 14, Heartland plans to increase the number of SDSY slots for the 2022-23 school year. Without the possibility of adding a classroom and recruiting additional staff, this will mean the need to reduce slots.



## Decrease in Early Head Start Home-Based Enrollment

Starting in 2016-17 the Kansas Early Head Start slots were formally split between home-based and center-based which limited the flexibility of enrollment. Heartland has struggled to fill slots in its home-based option since children transitioned to Head Start in the fall of 2019. The pandemic only complicated the issue further. It's difficult to determine the cause for this decline. However, as technology has evolved, parenting information, although not always accurate, is readily available from a screen. Communication has moved from talking to texting and face-to-face learning is becoming more a thing of the past.



## COUNTY POPULATION INFORMATION

### Eligible Children Ages 0-4 Served by Head Start/Early Head Start

COUNTY	ESTIMATED % CHILDREN < 18 IN POVERTY	ESTIMATED # CHILDREN AGES 0-4	ESTIMATED # ELIGIBLE CHILDREN
Saline	16.9%	3418	577
Dickinson	13.7%	1020	140
Ellsworth	12.1%	272	33
		4710	750

### Early Head Start

COUNTY	ESTIMATED # ELIGIBLE CHILDREN	FUNDED SLOTS	% OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED
Saline	346	154	45%
Dickinson	84	12	14%
Ellsworth	20	--	0%
	450	166	37%

### Head Start

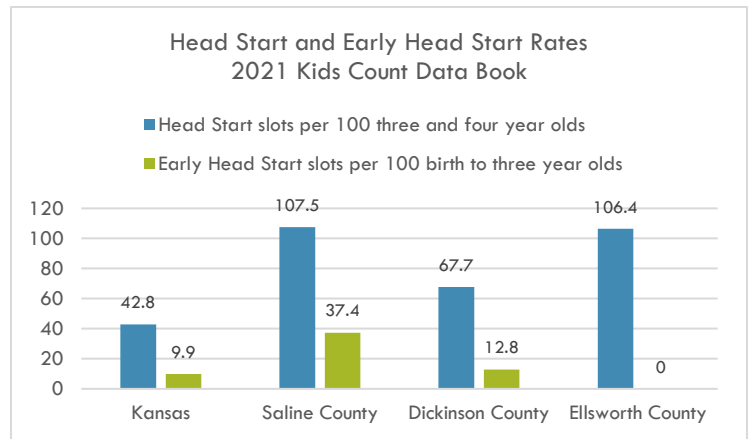
COUNTY	ESTIMATED # ELIGIBLE CHILDREN	FUNDED SLOTS	% OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED
Saline	231	246	106%
Dickinson	56	39	70%
Ellsworth	13	16	123%
	300	301	100%

U.S. Census Annual County and Resident Population Estimates July 2019

### Saline County:

The central office for Heartland Early Education is located in Salina, the county seat. Saline County has an estimated population of 54,303. According to the 2020 Kansas Statistical Abstract, the Saline County median household income was \$56,741 in 2019 and 16.9% of children in Saline County were from families with incomes that meet the federal poverty level. According to the 2021 Kids Count Data Center, Saline County has 107.5 Head Start slots available per 100 children 3-4 years of age living below the U.S. poverty threshold. This correlates with census data and suggests that Saline County is over-saturated with Head Start slots. Kids Count Data also reported that Saline County has 37.4 Early Head Start slots available per 100 children birth to three years

USD 305 Salina school district has expanded its four year old at-risk preschool program from 60 students to a minimum of 96.



### Dickinson County:

Dickinson County has an estimated population of 18,402. According to the 2020 Kansas Statistical Abstract, the Dickinson County median household income was \$58,066 in 2019 and 13.7% of children in Dickinson County were from families with incomes that met the federal poverty level. According to the 2021 Kids Count Data Center, Dickinson County has 67.7 Head Start slots available per 100 children 3-4 years of age and 12.8 slots available per 100 children birth to three years living below the U.S. poverty threshold. USD 435 Abilene opened two preschool classrooms within the Kennedy elementary building.

### Ellsworth County:

Ellsworth County has 6,376 residents and is basically a rural county of farm communities. According to the 2020 Kansas Statistical Abstract, the Ellsworth County median household income was \$56,988 in 2019 and 12.1% of children in Ellsworth County were from families with incomes that met the federal poverty level. According to the 2021 Kids Count Data Center, Ellsworth County has 106.4 Head Start slots available per 100 children 3-4 years and 0 slots available per 100 children birth to three years living below the U.S. poverty threshold. Census data actually indicates a greater surplus of Head Start slots.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### Child Find

Monthly screenings, a part of Child Find, are held monthly on the first Friday of each month, at the Donna Vanier Building, 155 N. Oakdale, Suite 300, Salina. These screenings are open to any parent concerned about their child’s development, ages birth to 5 years. Child Find is also held several times per year in the outlying counties.

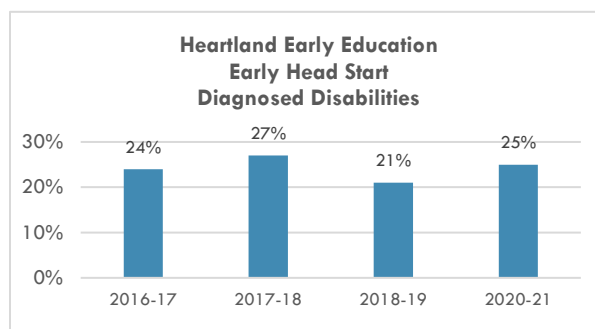
Screenings can also be scheduled by appointment through the Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE) or Infant Child Development (ICD). Children found to be at-risk for developmental delays are referred for further evaluation.

## Part C Programs:

### Infant Child Development (ICD) – Saline & Ellsworth Counties

#### OCCK Infant Toddler Services (ITS) – Dickinson County

The Heartland service area is covered by two Part C agencies. Infant Child Development (ICD) provides disabilities services in Ellsworth and Saline Counties and the OCCK Infant Toddler Services (ITS) serves Dickinson County. These programs provide developmental evaluations and follow-up for children who qualify for ongoing services. Children who are birth to three years with developmental delays or diagnosed disabilities can receive a variety of services which can include family service coordination, early childhood special education, nursing, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social work. Children receive services in their natural environment and/or whatever location works well for the family. The Salina Regional Health Center makes referrals for many children placed in the newborn nursery or NICU, this enables Part C staff to begin services with the family as early as possible.



Children receive services in their natural environment and/or whatever location works well for the family. The Salina Regional Health Center makes referrals for many children placed in the newborn nursery or NICU, this enables Part C staff to begin services with the family as early as possible.

In 2019, ICD reported serving 352 children in Saline County and 18 in Ellsworth County. ITS served 104 children in Dickinson County.

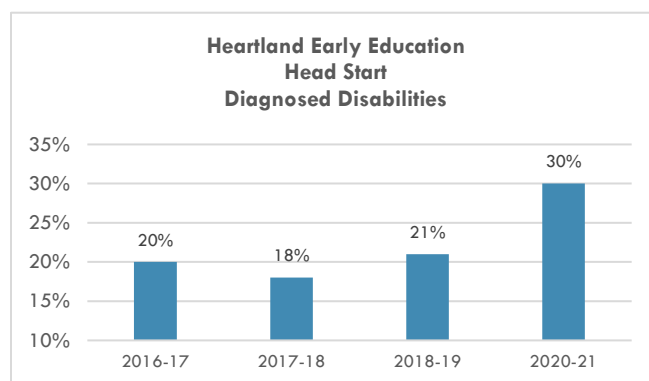
Federal Performance Standards require all Head Start and Early Head Start programs fill at least 10% of enrollment slots with children with a diagnosed disability. Through a strong collaboration with ICD and ITS, Heartland is able to exceed the minimum.

## Part B Program:

### Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE)

Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE) provides special education services for 12 school districts in Central Kansas. Salina is the sponsoring school district for CKCIE. The CKCIE area covers over 4000 square miles and serves a school population of over 14,100 children in preschool through grade 12. Currently special education services are provided to over 2,988 exceptional students (ages 3 to 21) with a staff of 624.

As of December 31, 2020 CKCIE was serving 201 three and four year olds in Saline County. They were also serving 79 in Dickinson County and an additional 20 three and four year olds in Ellsworth County. Generally more children are identified throughout the school year. Children have been determined to be eligible for special education services following an evaluation. Children may have one or more areas of exceptionalities: developmental delay, speech language impairment, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health



impairment, learning disability, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities or sensory impairment (hearing, deafness, visual impairment, blindness, deaf-blindness). Identified children are provided special education services and/or related services by CKCIE’s team of occupational therapists, speech therapists, physical therapists, school psychologists, social workers, early childhood special education teachers and paraprofessionals.

Federal Performance Standards require all Head Start and Early Head Start programs fill at least 10% of enrollment slots with children with a diagnosed disability. Through a strong collaboration with CKCIE, Heartland is able to exceed the minimum.

## HEALTH

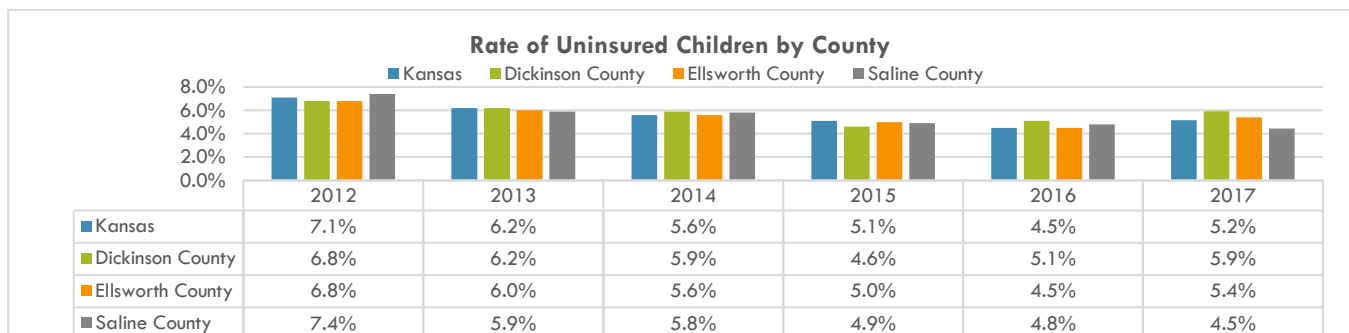
### Immunizations

The 2021 Kansas KIDS COUNT report indicates that 71% of Kansas kindergarteners were fully immunized at 35 months of age (2017-18 school year). All three counties in our service area had significantly higher rates. Saline County at 82%, Dickinson County at 85%, and Ellsworth County increased from 73% to 87%.

Most Head Start and all Early Head Start classrooms are licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and are required to ensure all children are up to date on immunizations or have an acceptable exemption. Of the 280 children served in Head Start during the 2020-21 school year, 100% were up to date on their immunizations. Of the 237 Early Head Start students served during the 2020-21 school year, 97% were up to date on their immunizations.

### Health Insurance

The Kansas 2020 KIDS COUNT report shows an increase in the percentage of children without health insurance, with the exception of Saline County, which decreased marginally.

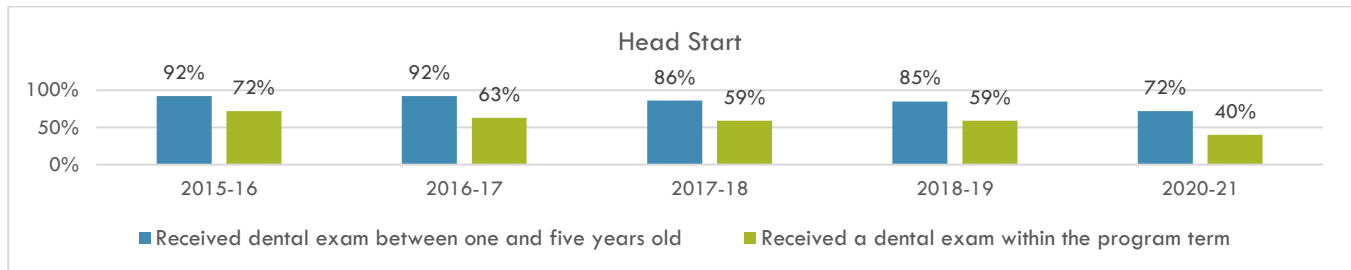
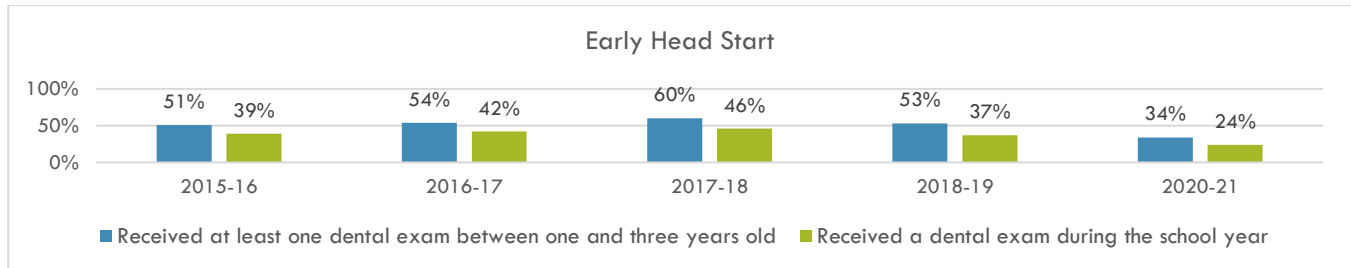


### Dental Care

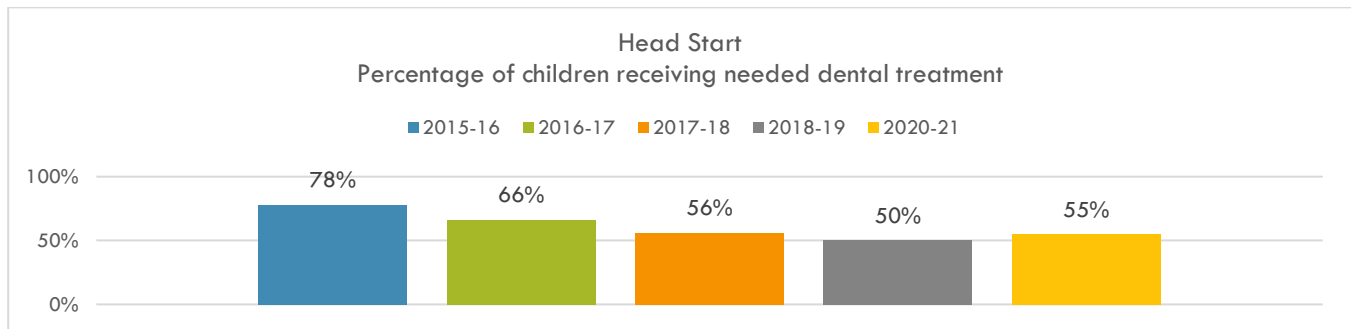
The American Dental Association Find-a-Dentist® search engine can confirm there are at least 21 dentists within 30 miles of Salina, KS. However, if you filter those dentists by those that will take Medicaid, the message “No matching dentists found. Please adjust your search criteria” will flash on the screen. The majority of Early Head Start and Head Start children needing dental treatment must be seen by a pediatric dentist. The closest pediatric dentists to Salina are over 50 miles away.

It is the responsibility of Early Head Start and Head Start programs to ensure all children have a dental home and have a dental exam by age one and follow-up exams every six months thereafter. It is very difficult to successfully meet this federal requirement without providers that will accept Medicaid as payment.

The charts below indicates the percentage of Head Start and Early Head Start children who have received dental exams. Reliable information for the 2019-20 school year is not available. The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the number of children receiving dental services.



Another aspect of the dental issue to consider is the percentage of children able to receive treatment for issues diagnosed during a dental exam. During the 2020-21 school year 22 Head Start children were diagnosed as needing treatment with only 12 of them successfully receiving treatment. (Please see table below.)



The Salina Family Healthcare (SFHC) Dental Center (federally-qualified health center) serves as the dental home for the majority of children enrolled in Heartland Early Education. The clinic serves uninsured, Medicaid, and KanCare patients onsite and does outreach work with USD305, Heartland Early Education, and the Saline County Health Department. SFHC does not have a pediatric dentist and many Heartland Head Start students who require dental work are being referred to out of county pediatric dentists in Newton, KS and Wichita, KS.

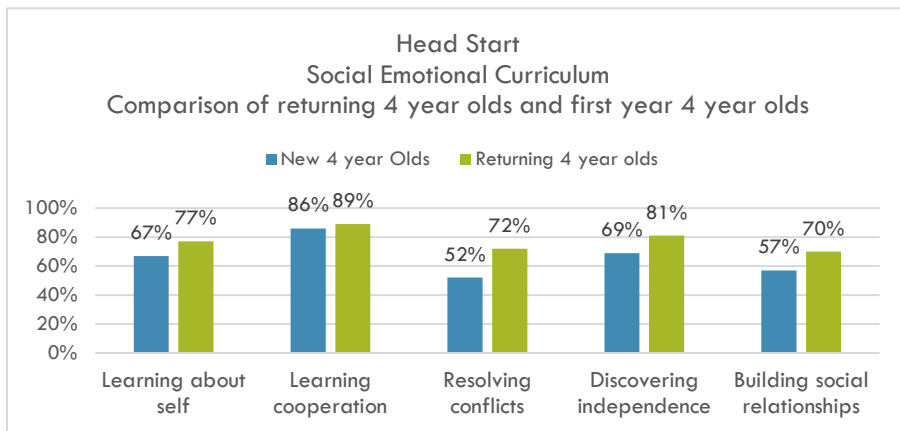
## Mental Health

Heartland has seen a noticeable increase in the number of children with behavior issues in the classroom. This was a growing concern even before COVID-19. A locally designed social-emotional curriculum is implemented throughout

the school year as a strategy to build stronger skills in this area. The focus on social-emotional development has been very helpful but it is far from being a cure for the problem. This chart illustrates the social emotional advantages children have when starting their second year of Head Start with the skills they learned during their first year of Head Start.

### K-Prep

Through a collaboration between Heartland, USD305, Central Kansas Mental Health Center (CKMHC), and Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE) a therapeutic preschool classroom was implemented for the 2018-19 school year. The classroom is located in the Heartland building and follows the same hours and operating days as the School Day School Year classrooms. The classroom model was



designed to serve up to eight qualifying children and targets four year olds. Placement is decided on an individual basis by a review team composed of Heartland, USD 305, CKMHC, and CKCIE staff.

### Behavior and Social Emotional Needs within Classrooms

Parents have consistently shown a preference for School Day School Year (SDSY) over Part Day School Year (PDSY) programming. The longer day allows for fewer transitions and allows some parents the opportunity to work while their child is in school. For these reasons, Heartland is planning to convert one of its three PDSY classrooms to SDSY.

This year the classroom staff have had to manage escalating behaviors in the School Day and Extended Day classrooms and alternative classrooms were temporarily put in place to support mental health and social skill development. Upon further analysis, it was determined that the placement of children within the classrooms needs to be more purposeful. For instance, ensuring classrooms have a balance of in children by age group and disability status.

## COMMUNITY CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

### Licensed Child Care and Preschool

In Kansas, child care subsidies are available through the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to families earning up to 185% of poverty. Many low income families also work split shifts, weekends, and evening hours that make it difficult to find quality child care.

Affordable, full-day, quality care has been a problem and one of the most persistent barriers to low-income parents who want to work or go to school. Reliable infant care is an even more serious problem for mothers who are forced into the workplace. Because the infant to adult ratio must remain low to meet licensing standards, infant care is expensive and providers often elect not to provide this service; thus infant slots are few.

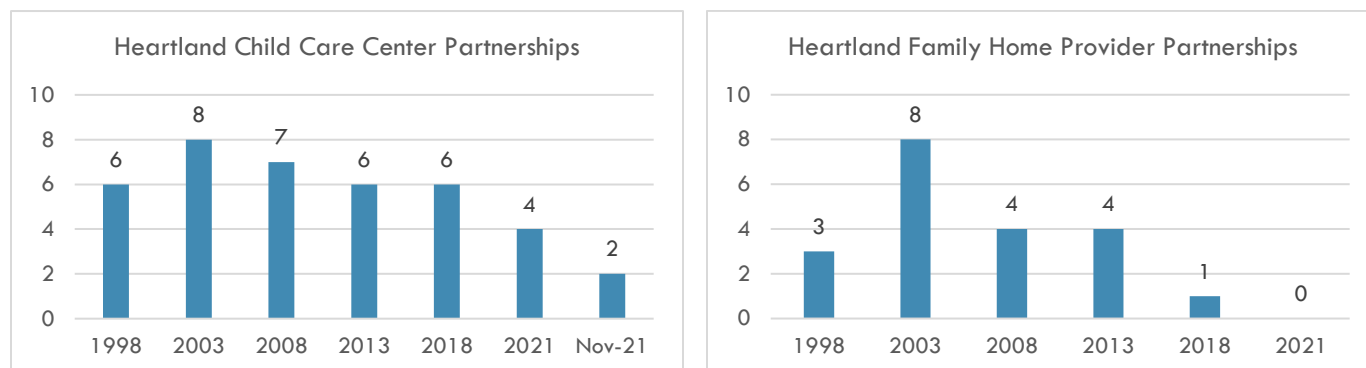


## Head Start and Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships

In December 1997 Heartland Early Education became one of the first Head Start programs in Kansas to establish partnerships with community child care centers and family home providers. The rationale for the partnerships was two-fold, to provide full-day, full-year child care services for Head Start families working or going to school and to increase the quality of child care for all children enrolled, both Head Start and non-Head Start.

Eventually the monetary benefits to the partners began to decrease. Head Start funding was not available to provide many quality enhancements and even if centers were able to hire Head Start qualified teachers, they were still not able to pay them a living wage. To try and make more efficient use of funding, the number of partners was reduced and the concentration of Head Start children within the partners increased. However, this also decreased the number of non-Head Start children benefitting from the partnership program.

As Head Start Performance Standards and Kansas licensing regulations have been revised, they have also added the need for more oversight and training of child care staff which has resulted in staff burnout and turnover. Child care directors find it difficult balancing Head Start requirements with the needs of running a community child care program. Some centers and home providers found it was no longer in their best interest to have to follow such tight guidelines. See the chart below to see the progression of partners from December 1997 to February 2021.



Heartland made the difficult decision to terminate partnerships with all but two child care centers in the fall of 2021. This decision was primarily based on the lack of Head Start qualified staff and the partner's inability to successfully adhere to Head Start Performance Standards. Heartland will continue to maintain one partnership in each county. As a result, the community has additional child care slots available due to the termination of most of the partnerships with Heartland. Child care centers are able to fill child care slots to capacity with community children.

2020 CHILD CARE SUPPLY DEMAND REPORT – CHILD CARE AWARE			
COUNTY STATISTICS	Saline	Dickinson	Ellsworth
<b>Number of children under age 6 potentially needing child care</b>	2,811	751	296
<b>Number of child care slots available for children under age 6</b>	1650	365	202
<b>Number of children under age 6 receiving DCF child care subsidy</b>	362	30	<10
TYPES OF LICENSED CHILD CARE	Saline	Dickinson	Ellsworth
<b>Licensed Family and Group Day Care Homes</b>	122	30	11
<b>Child Care Center</b>	10	3	1
CAPACITY OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS	Saline	Dickinson	Ellsworth
<b>Extent Desired Capacity Meets Potential Demand</b>	59%	49%	68%

## Parents as Teachers (PAT)

PAT is a voluntary, home-based program offered to pregnant women and families with children birth to age three. Monthly home visits are provided by certified PAT Parent Educators and last approximately one hour. The Parent Educator shares age-appropriate child development and parenting information, helps the parent learn to observe their child and answers parent's questions.

Although there is no fee charged to the parents, they are required to be active participants in the program. They must have regular attendance for home visits and are strongly encouraged to attend monthly playgroups. Playgroups give parents the opportunity to interact with one another and create bonds with their children through organized, developmentally appropriate activities. Playgroups also give families the chance to meet other families and build support systems.

Screening and assessment are essential to help detect potential areas of concern early in the child's life so that appropriate referrals may be made for further evaluation. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE) developmental screens are completed on all children within the first 90 days of enrollment. In addition, the child also receives an OAE hearing screen (Otoacoustic Emissions) and a vision screen. Parents as Teachers has a strong presence in two of our three service counties.

### Saline County

USD 305 Salina  
USD 306 Southeast of Saline

### Dickinson County

USD 435 Abilene  
USD 473 Chapman/Enterprise  
USD 487 Herington/Solomon/Rural Vista

## USD 305 Preschool

USD 305 Preschool is funded through two grants from the Kansas Department of Education. Effective this school year (2021-22), all eight USD 305 elementary schools contain at least one preschool classroom. At-Risk funding provides 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) funding for every eligible child enrolled on September 20<sup>th</sup>. USD 305 Preschool is designed to serve 96 at-risk preschoolers. To be eligible, the child must be at least four years old on August 31<sup>st</sup> and meet at least one of the following criteria: qualify for free lunch, parent lacks high school diploma or GED, teen parent at the time of the child's birth, limited English, single parent, or a written referral from DCF. Many of the Head Start four year olds also generate At-Risk funding to help sustain the program.

Kansas Preschool Pilot (KPP) is the other funding source for USD 305 Preschool. The purpose of the KPP funding is to augment and/or expand enrollment of existing preschool programs. USD 305 has dedicated KPP funding to provide disability services within the USD 305 Preschool classrooms. All eight USD 305 Preschool teachers are funded through the Central Kansas Cooperative in Education (CKCIE) and are licensed to provide special education services. As with the at-risk funding, the goal is to fill at least 96 slots with children receiving special education.

## COMMUNITY ISSUES

### Drug Abuse

#### Ashby House Sober Living

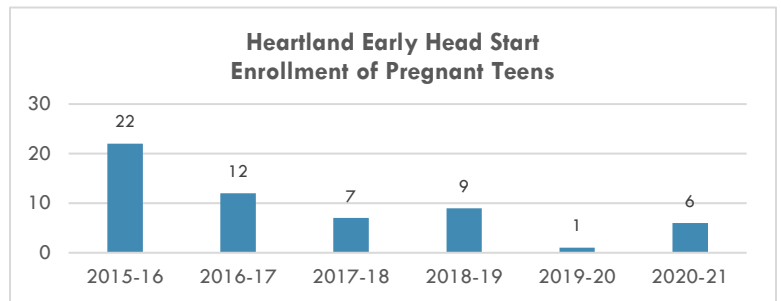
Ashby House Sober Living program is designed to provide a safe and structured living environment for women who are in drug and alcohol treatment through Central Kansas Foundation (CKF) Addiction Treatment. Family apartments are available for women with children. Their goal is holistic recovery focusing on the overall well-being of each resident. No program fees are required from the residents during their time at the sober living facility, which at minimum is nine weeks.

#### CKF Addiction Treatment

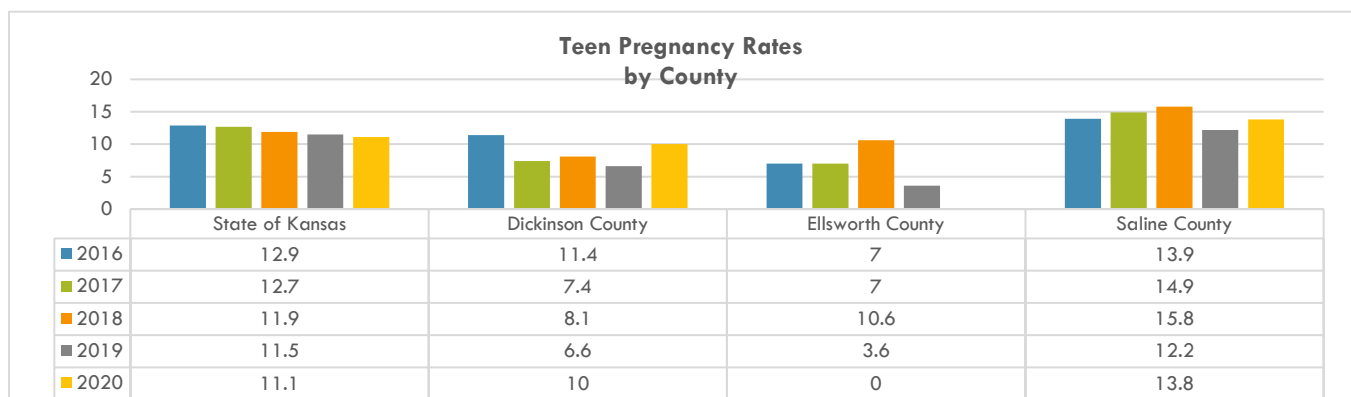
CKF collaborates with healthcare providers as a key component of early detection, intervention, and support for those with substance use disorders. They have successfully integrated recovery services into acute and primary care settings by collaborating with Salina Regional Health Center and the Sunflower Health Network.

### Teen Pregnancy

According to the 2020 KDHE Vital Statistics Report, the pregnancy rate for mothers under 20 years of age in 2020 was 11.1 pregnancies per 1,000 female age-group population. This was the lowest pregnancy rate for this age group in the past twenty years (2001-2020), down from a peak of 28.8 pregnancies per 1,000 female age-group population in 2001. Unfortunately, Saline County continued to have a higher rate than the state and increased from 12.2 to 13.8 between 2019 and 2020. Dickinson County also showed a significant increase in their teen pregnancy rate.

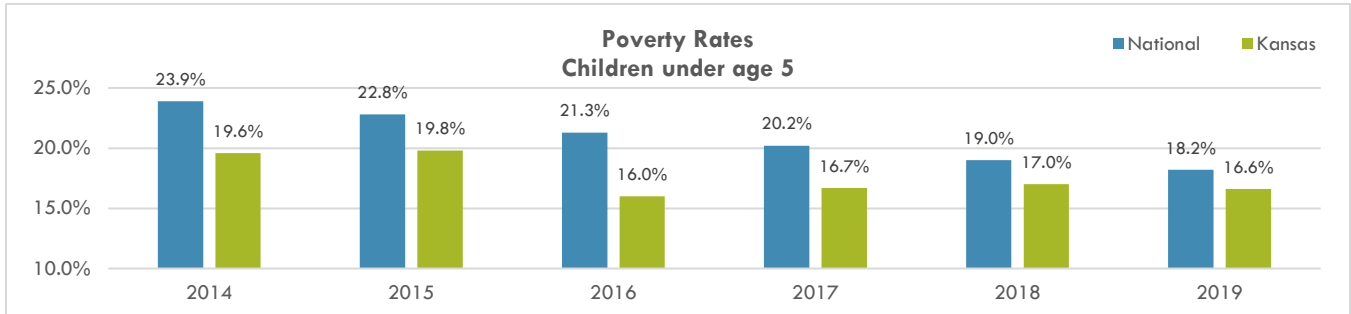


Heartland Early Head Start had seen a steady downward trend of enrollments of pregnant teens. However, Heartland began to see a rebound in numbers during the 2020-21 school year and the trend has continued into 2021-22. By January 2022 Heartland had already enrolled eight pregnant teens with six months remaining in the program term.



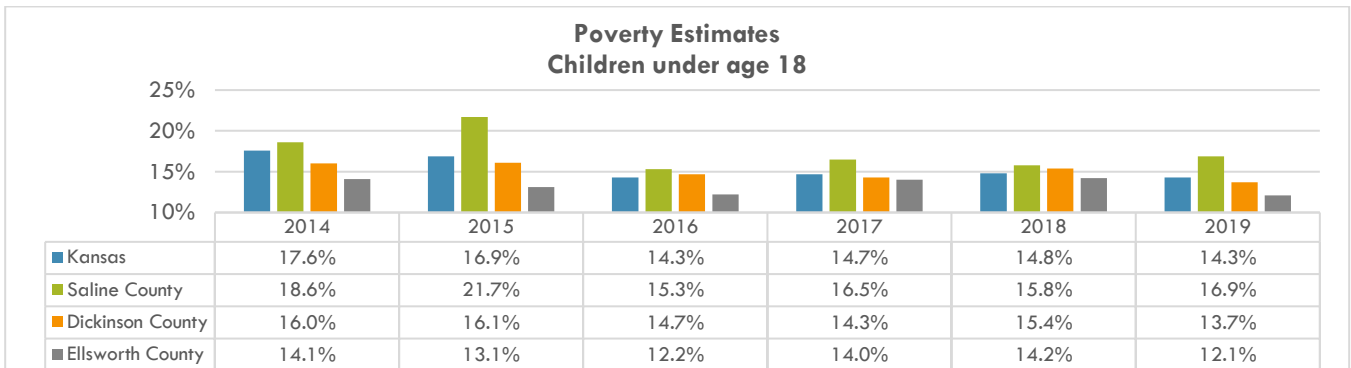
## Poverty

The national child poverty rate has continued to drop over the last several years and the Kansas rate has stayed just below the national average.



Source: US Census Bureau, SAIPE Datasets, State and County Estimates

The state of Kansas has seen a steady decrease in child poverty rates and Dickinson and Ellsworth County have also shared in this trend. However, Saline County not only saw an increase in child poverty rates for children under 18, it also exceeds the state numbers in all six years depicted in this chart.



Source: US Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

## Public Assistance

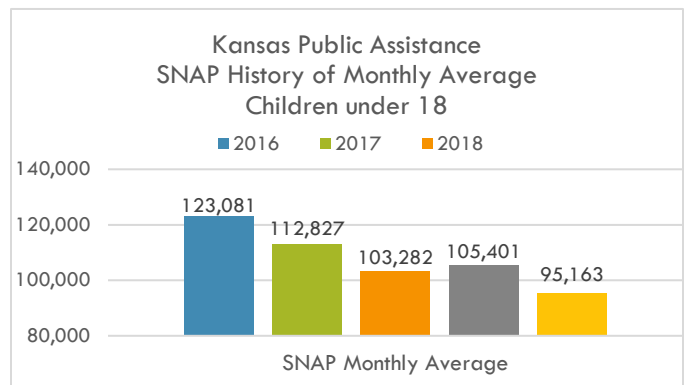
Kansas has seen a tremendous decrease in the number of households receiving public assistance. Although this trend mirrors national rates, Kansas has also made many changes in its welfare system. The HOPE Act increased work requirements for beneficiaries as a means of moving people out of poverty and back to work.

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):

SNAP helps low-income people buy the food they need for good health. Those who qualify typically fall into one or more of these categories.

- Working for low wages or working part-time
- Unemployed
- Receiving welfare or other public assistance payments
- Elderly or disabled and are low-income
- Homeless

Kansas has seen a dramatic decrease in the number of families receiving SNAP benefits.

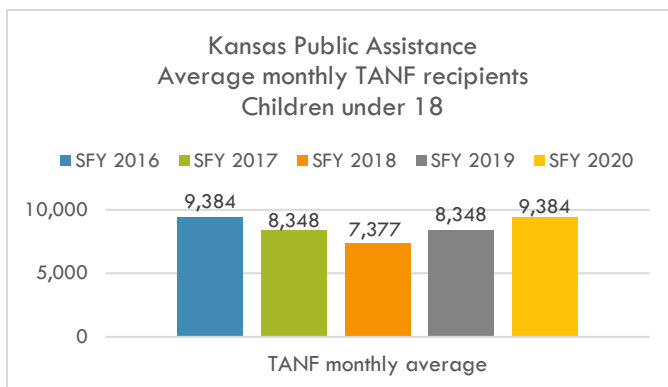


**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):**

The TANF program is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. States receive block grants to design and operate programs that accomplish one of the purposes of the TANF program.

The four purposes of the TANF program are to:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes
- Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage
- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

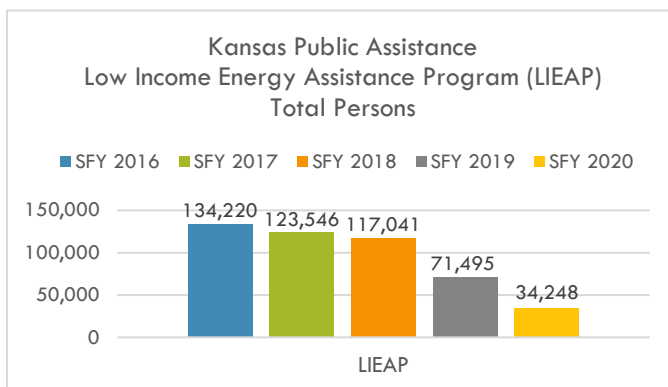


As with SNAP, the chart below indicates the declining number of TANF beneficiaries in Kansas. However, there was a slight rebound in numbers served in the last fiscal year.

**Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP):**

LIEAP is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit. Benefit levels vary according to the following factors:

1. Household income,
2. Number of persons living at the address,
3. Type of dwelling,
4. Type of heating fuel, and
5. Utility rates.



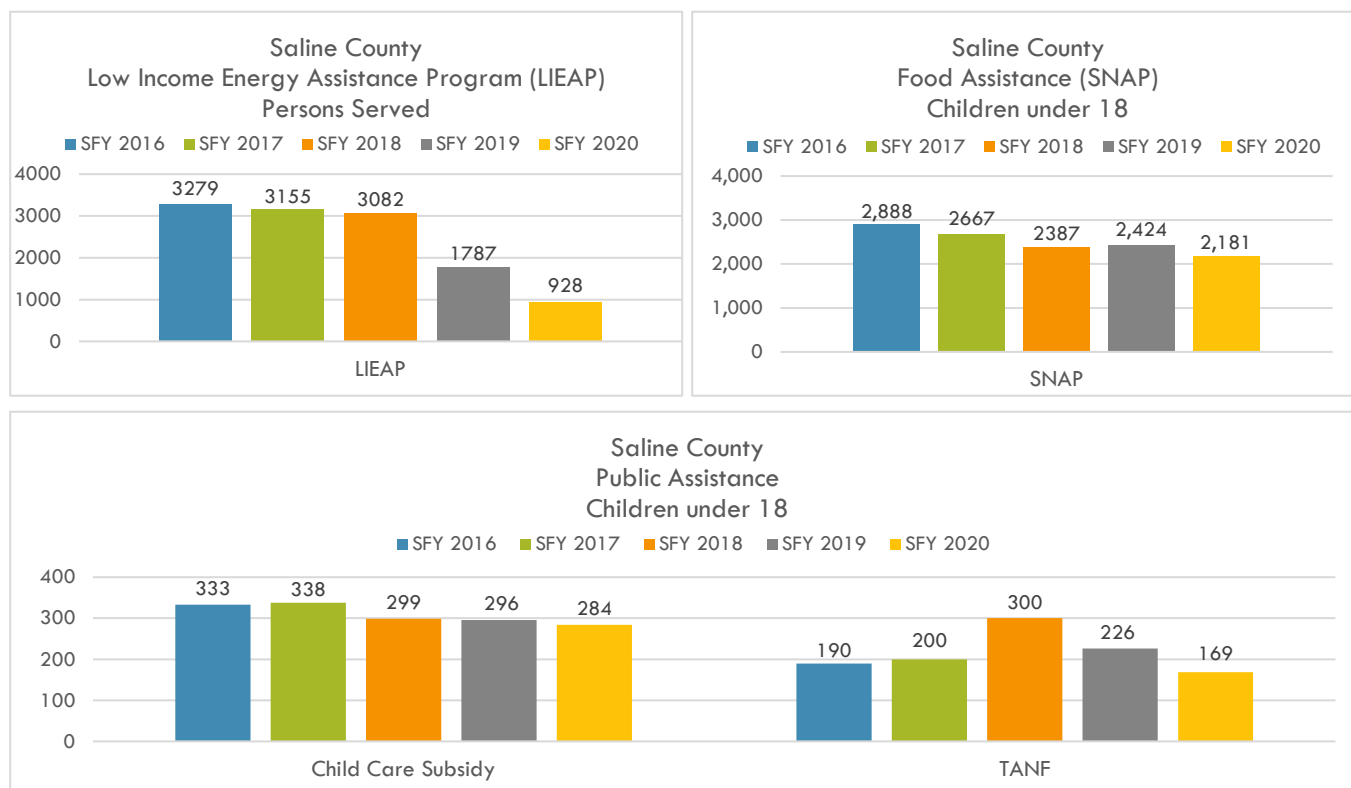
## Public Assistance by County

### Saline County

These charts indicate the monthly average of beneficiaries receiving public assistance in Saline County. Although both SNAP and LIEAP show a decrease in numbers enrolled over the last three years, the number of TANF recipients has increased.

In Saline County, DCF reported that an average of 2,146 children per month received SNAP benefits in 2019. This monthly average has been steadily decreasing.

In 2017, DCF reported 3,155 persons received LIEAP benefits, showing a slight downward trend for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row. Without this program, many families would not be able to heat their homes during the winter months.



### FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH

According to the Kansas Department of Education, during the 2020-21 school year, 57.5% of K-12 students in USD 305 Salina were approved to receive free or reduced school lunches. USD305 reported a total enrollment of 6,941 students. Of those, 3,131 qualified for free lunch (45.1%) and 863 qualified for reduced lunch (12.4%).

### FOOD INSECURITY

During the 2020-21 school-year, the Saline County Food4Kids program provided 6,032 meal packets to students (K-12 students only). The food packets provide food for the child during the weekend when they are not receiving school lunches. The packets went home anonymously to chronically hungry or food insecure children.

Heartland developed a referral system to identify children needing weekend food support. Families who agree to the Heartland food support program sign an authorization form and provide information regarding any allergies. Food

support is sent home with children on the last attendance day of the week. On weeks that are shortened due to holidays or program closures, families are provided an additional bag of food.

Total bags sent home with students for the 2019-2020 year was 1408. Over the course of the year the program served a total of 64 children, comprising 45 separate families.

#### SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM

When schools were closed in March 2020, one of the most immediate concerns staff had for families was food insecurity. Families were able to rely on their children receiving at least one meal at school during the week. A majority of these students also receive breakfast. Head Start and Early Head Start children are fed three times per day if they are in class longer than 6 hours.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) oversees all public nutrition programs and they acted quickly to waive regulations and provide guidance for schools to use a “Grab and Go” process of offering meals to all children. The Heartland kitchen provided “Grab and Go” breakfast and lunch to all children who came through the parking lot during the allotted time. Between April 1<sup>st</sup> and mid-July Heartland provided 5,791 meals and averaged approximately 80 meals per day.

For the other six locations, USD 305 served a total of 56,380 lunches and 56,320 breakfasts for a total of 112,700 “Grab and Go” meals during the same time period.

#### SALINA EMERGENCY AID/FOOD BANK

In 2020, 424,000 total food items were dispersed serving 5,974 households. Distributions were up 35% from 2019. Of those served, 31% were children. They also distributed 350+ holiday bags. Due to the pandemic, our in-kind donations has dropped and our service delivery method has been modified. The lobby has been closed since late summer and now require an appointment for financial assistance requests and food distribution through the warehouse. Cooking classes have been temporarily suspended, but they are on the lookout for creative individuals who want to film cooking classes at their facility, as opposed to in-house instruction. They have really dug into their garden renovation project in 2020 and hope to have the entire garden open this Spring. There will be community garden plots available for rent, special raised beds for low-mobility gardeners, and a renovated area for the Cottonwood Elementary Children’s garden.

#### SALINA FREE MEALS

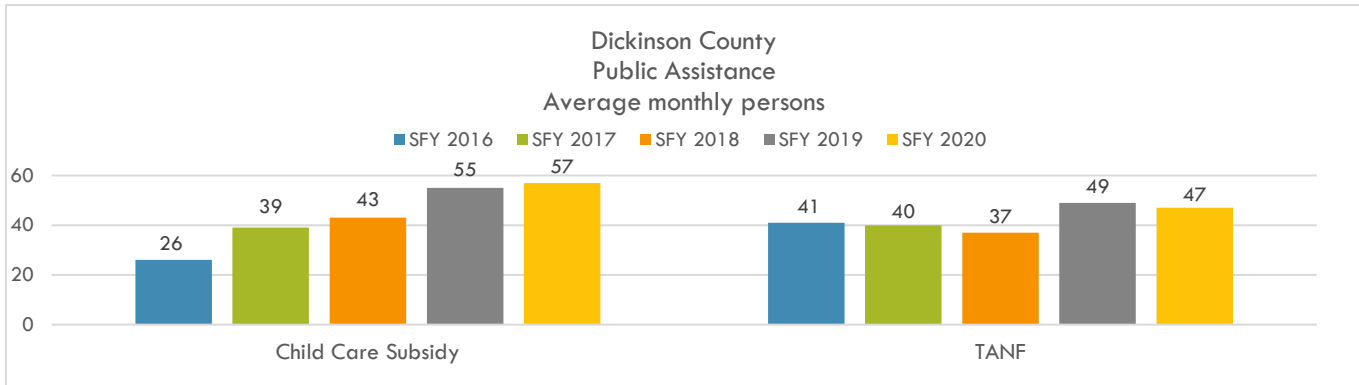
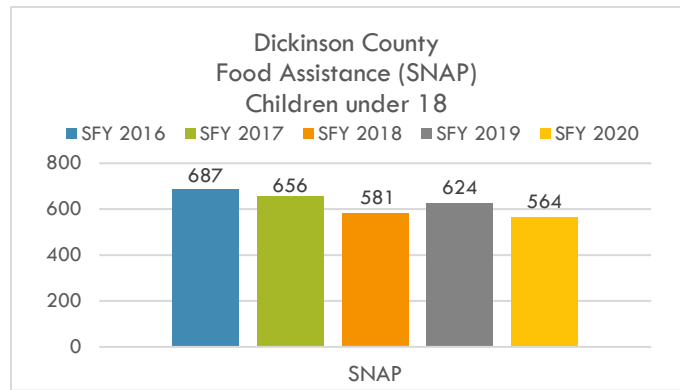
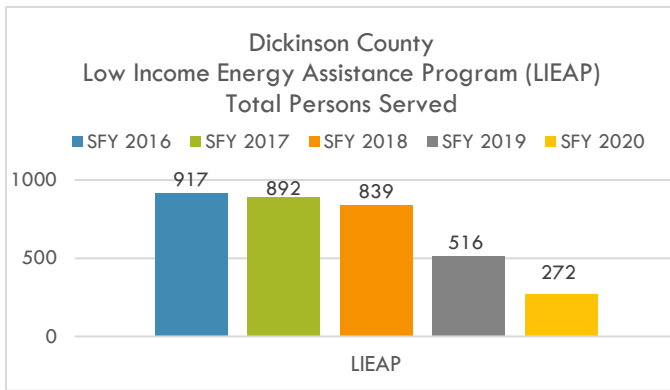
The Salina Salvation Army provides a free meal for 60-80 people every weekday. Those who attend range from the elderly who are alone, young families in need of a meal, and often times homeless people from Salina will show up for a meal. The Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK) reported serving over 10,000 meals last year. The Salina Rescue Mission served 52,000 meals last year.

### **Dickinson County**

This chart indicates the monthly average of beneficiaries receiving public assistance in Dickinson County. Although both SNAP and LIEAP show a decrease over the last three years, TANF has remained level.

In Dickinson County, DCF reported that an average of 502 children per month received SNAP benefits in 2019. As can be seen in this chart, this monthly average has been steadily decreasing.

In 2017, DCF LIEAP program reported 872 persons were served. Without this program, many families would not be able to heat their homes during the winter months.



**FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH**

According to the Kansas Department of Education, during the 2020-21 school year, 47.1% of K-12 students in USD 435 Abilene were approved to receive free or reduced school lunches. Abilene reported a total enrollment of 1,508 students. Of those, 531 qualified for free lunch (35.2%) and 179 qualified for reduced lunch (11.9%).

USD 473 Enterprise reported 64.8% of students were approved to receive free or reduced school lunches.

**ABILENE AREA FOOD AND CLOTHING CENTER**

The Abilene Area Food and Clothing Center, located at 311 North Cedar Street provides food for families in need. The organization is sponsored by local churches and businesses. The center is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00am – 12:00pm. Families can receive food once per month for up to three months. After receiving three monthly distributions, families must wait three months to participate in the program again.

**Ellsworth County**

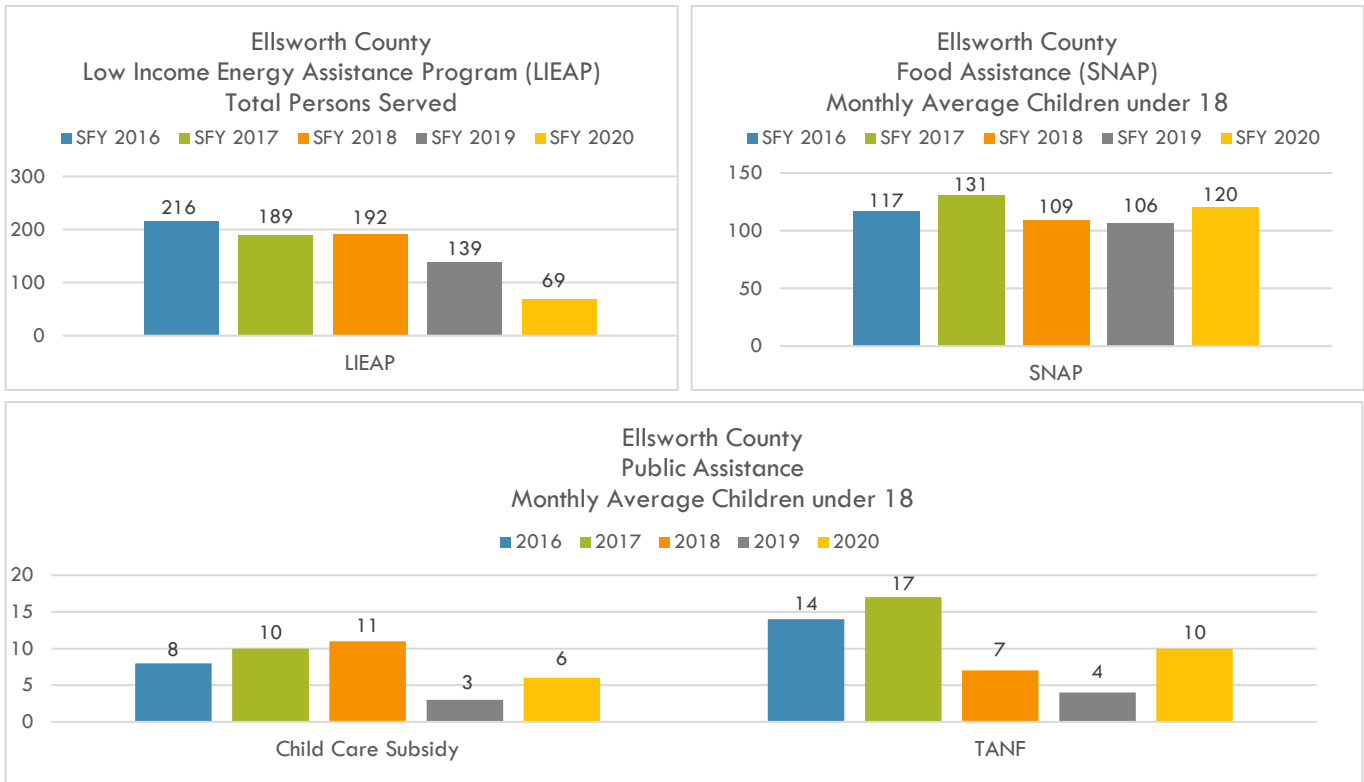
This chart indicates the monthly average of beneficiaries receiving public assistance in Ellsworth County. In Ellsworth County, DCF reported that an average of 114 children per month received SNAP benefits in 2019. In 2017 the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) assisted 189 households, down from 280 households served in 2013.

**FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH**

According to the Kansas Department of Education, during the 2020-21 school year, 30.1% of K-12 students in USD 327 Ellsworth were approved to receive free or reduced school lunches. Ellsworth reported a total enrollment of 575



students. Of those, 106 qualified for free lunch (18.4%) and 67 qualified for reduced lunch (11.7%). The Ellsworth County Food Bank distributes food to families by appointment.



## Child Abuse

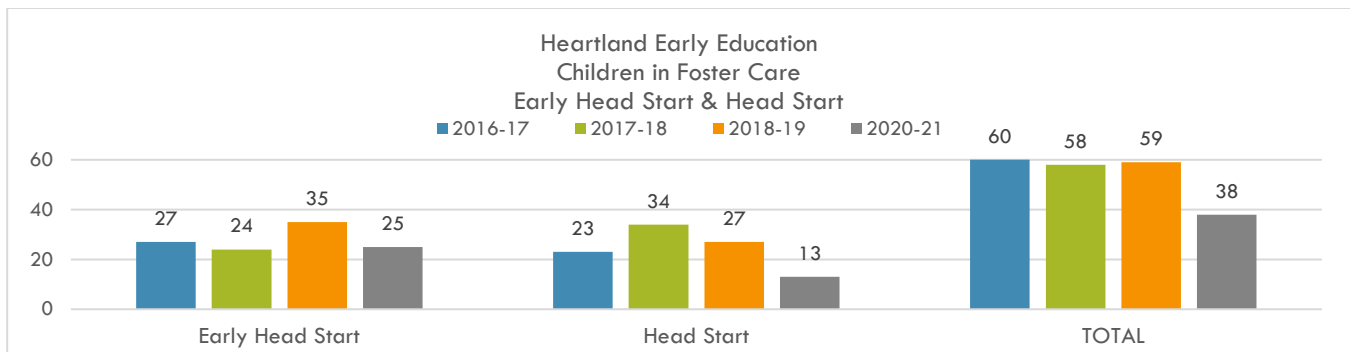
The Salina DCF office is part of the West Region and covers Saline, Ottawa, Ellsworth, and Dickinson (specifically Abilene) counties.

- Kansas Department for Child and Families reported that between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, Child Protective Services received 67,378 child abuse reports. Of the 38,263 reports assigned, 1,151 were substantiated and 1,169 were affirmed.
- Statewide, the top three types of maltreatment are physical abuse (27.9%), lack of supervision (21.4%), and emotional abuse 23.1%).

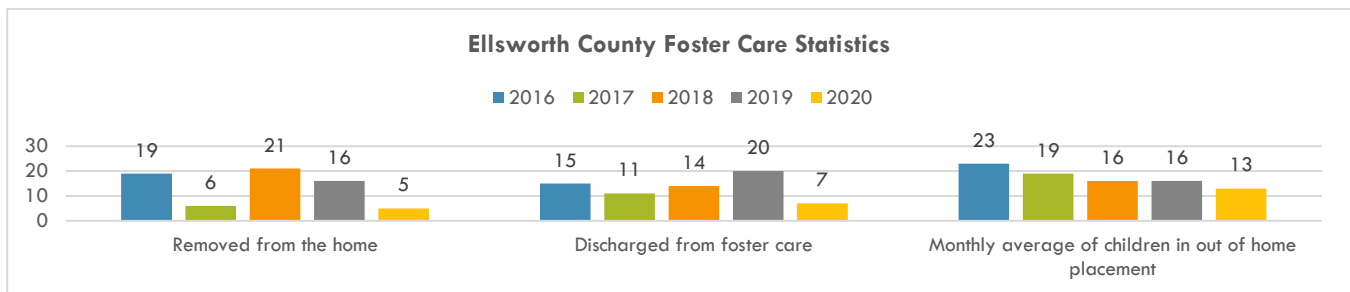
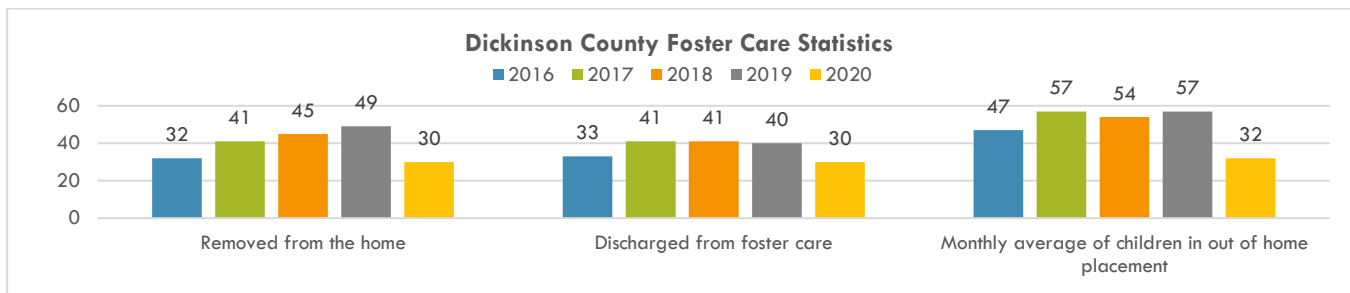
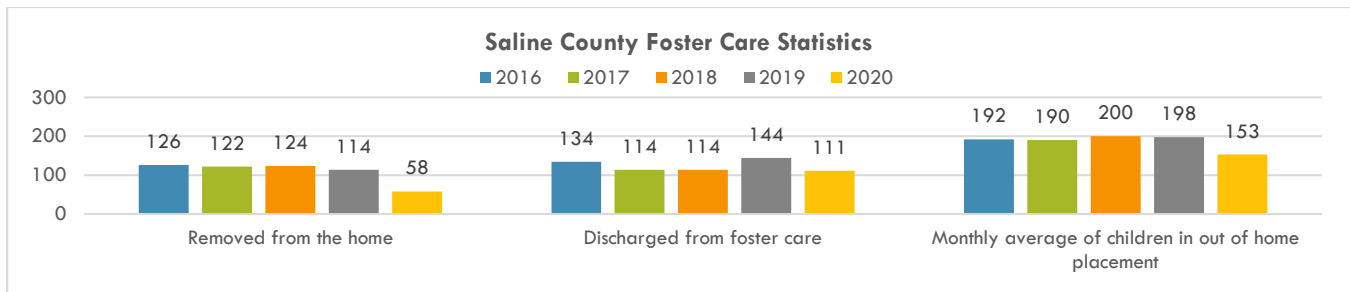
## Foster Care

Children in foster care are more likely to move in and out of our service area due to reunification or difficulty in finding a foster care placement located where the child can remain enrolled in the program. This can make the logistics of program intake difficult and the duration of the child’s enrollment unpredictable.

The following chart reports the number of Heartland Head Start and Early Head Start children who were in foster care over the last five years. (Data for the 2019-20 school year was incomplete due to program disruption from COVID-19.)

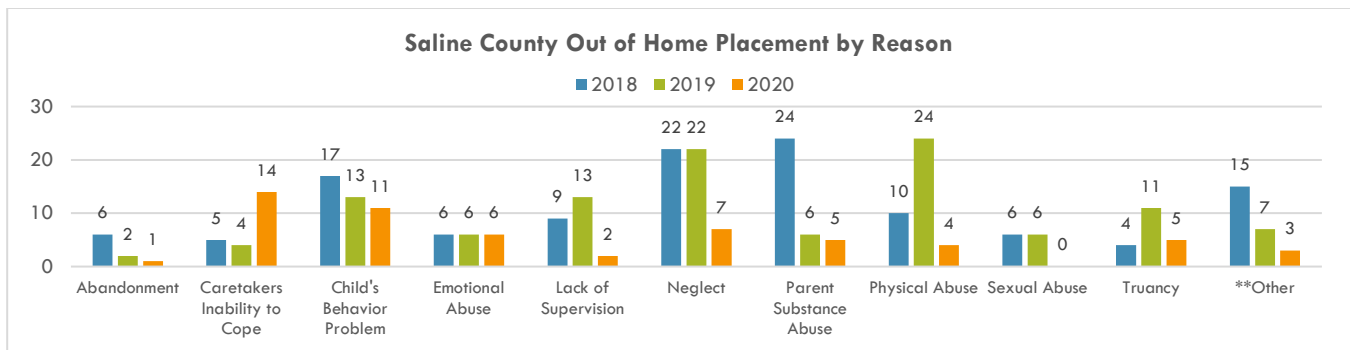


The following charts for Saline, Dickinson and Ellsworth counties indicate the number of children involved in the different phases of foster care. Both Saline and Ellsworth counties saw a decrease in the number of children going in foster care and an increase in the number of children leaving foster care. Dickinson County has continued to increase and retain children in foster care.

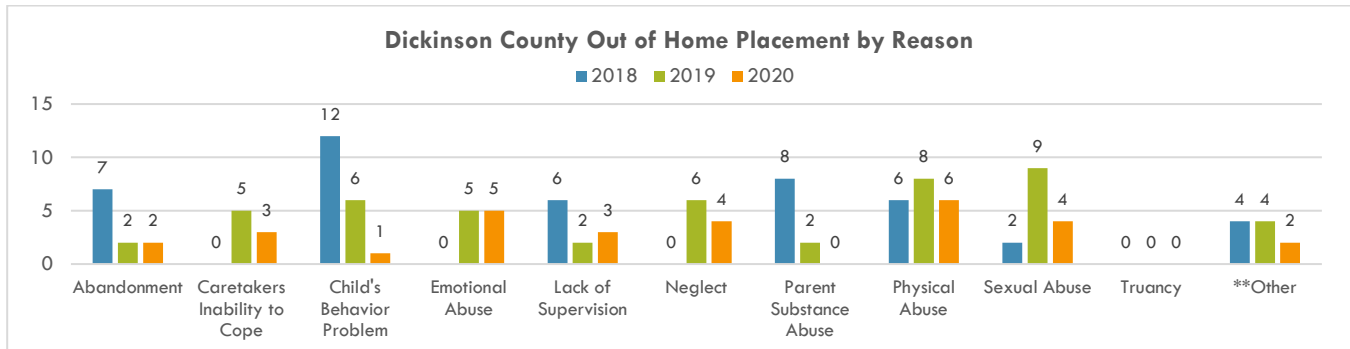


### Out of Home Placement (OOH)

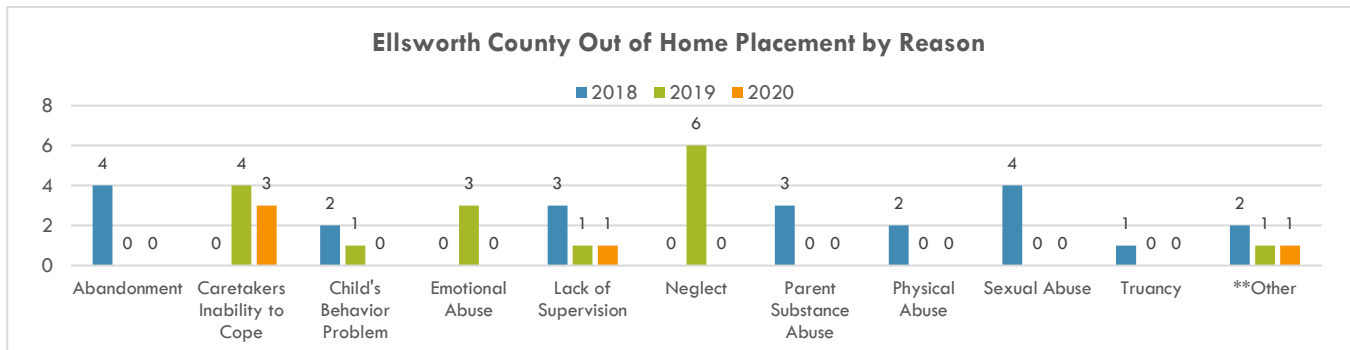
The following charts indicate the number of children placed in OOH settings as per the cause. Children in OOH due to parent substance abuse has increased in all three counties and children with behavior problems has remained a large factor in OOH.



\*\*Includes: alcohol and drug abuse by child, child's disability, death of parent, failure to thrive, inadequate housing, incarceration of parents, parent-child conflict, relinquishment, and runaway



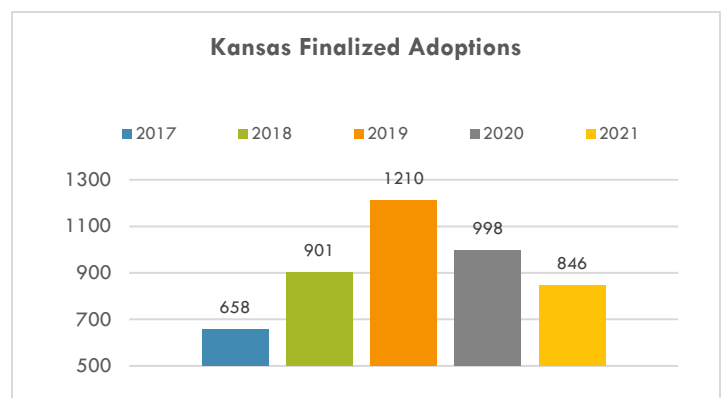
\*\*Includes: alcohol and drug abuse by child, child's disability, death of parent, failure to thrive, inadequate housing, incarceration of parents, parent-child conflict, relinquishment, and runaway



\*\*Includes: alcohol and drug abuse by child, child's disability, death of parent, failure to thrive, inadequate housing, incarceration of parents, parent-child conflict, relinquishment, and runaway

## Adoption

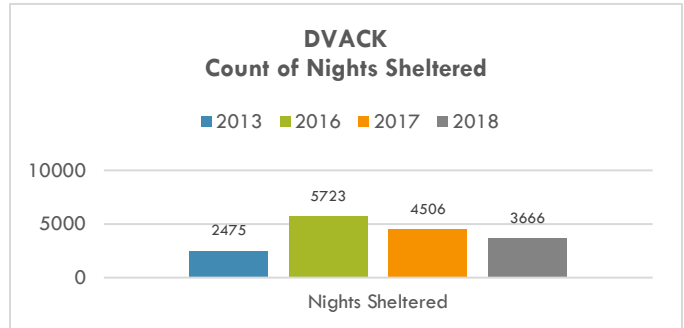
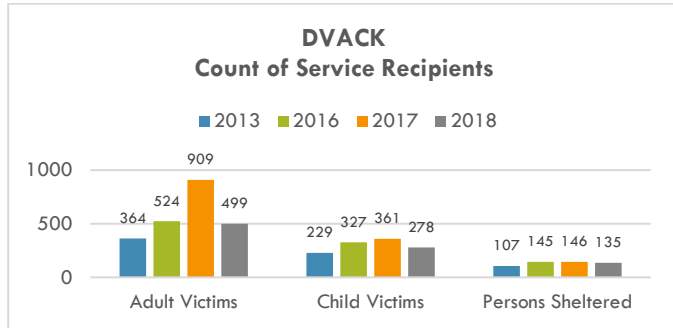
When a child comes into DCF custody, child welfare case management providers, who are private contractors with the state, work with the child and family to resolve issues so the child can return home. When it is not possible for a child to go back to the family, parental rights may be taken away by the court or voluntarily surrendered. At that point, the child is available for adoption. The number of adoptions in Kansas has fluctuated over the last five years.



## Domestic Violence

### Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK)

In 2018, the Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas (DVACK) provided support services to 777 victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, teen dating violence, elder abuse and/or stalking, including 278 children. The majority of victims served came from Salina and Saline County, however, their service area also includes Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Ottawa, Republic, and Washington counties. Shelter services were provided to 135 women, children, and men for a total number of 3,666 nights of stay.



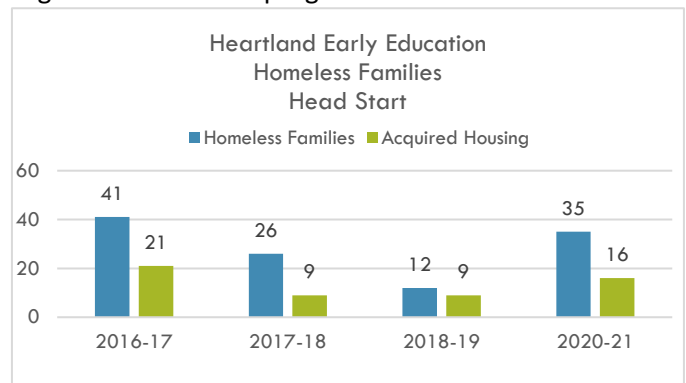
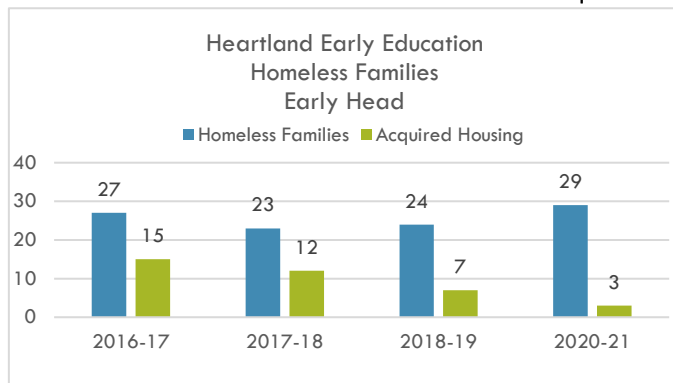
DVACK staff provided a total of 12,564 units of service including access to emergency shelter, 24-hour hotline, assistance in obtaining protection orders, supportive counseling, personal, court, medical, hospital and economic advocacy, compensation claim filing, 911 phones, emergency transportation, referral services, support groups, and safety planning.

DVACK assists victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking toward becoming self-sufficient by obtaining permanent housing, child care, legal assistance and job placement. Prevention and educational services are provided to general members of the community including educational institutions, health care professionals, law enforcement professionals, community agencies, clubs, organizations, youth-serving organizations and other allied professionals.

All DVACK services are free, confidential and accessible to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, age, education level, economic status, sexual orientation, immigration status, geographic location, spiritual beliefs and physical or mental ability.

## Homelessness

Homeless children, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, are categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start. The following chart reports the number of Heartland Head Start and Early Head Start families who experienced homelessness and the number of those who acquired housing over the last five program terms.



## **Ashby House**

Ashby House is the only full-time shelter for families and single women in the Salina area.

- Emergency Women and Family Homeless Shelter for families (including men with children and couples) and individual women in Salina. The shelter is staffed 24 hours a day, accepts people looking for safe housing all day and all night. Interested residents can reside at the shelter as long as it takes for them to get back on their feet and as they agree to abide by the rules.
- The Bridge House is a reintegration program. It is a State licensed residential and outpatient treatment facility serving women, as well as women with children. Children can reside in the treatment facility with their mothers. There are 12 apartments, designed to build the skills of independent, sober, family life.
- The Legacy House specializes in services for pregnant and early postpartum women that are homeless and/or substance abusing. Light House is a transitional house for women who have graduated from treatment but still need support. Residents pay a program fee and follow all campus rules and regulations.
- Ashby House Resource Exchange and the Ashby House Free Store serve over 150 residents of Saline County every day, providing clothing, food, and household items.
- Ashby House operates ten transitional housing units specifically for families with children. There are ten apartments provided with the goal in mind that children should not have to suffer academically, physically, or emotionally via constant changes in their living environment. As such, families who reside in one of Ashby House's transitional housing units can reside at the property until the family achieves financial stability. This program specifically targets Salina families who are ineligible for traditional housing assistance programs with preferences given to Ashby House clients. Residents also meet regularly with Ashby House's Transitional Housing Manager who offers case management and referral services as needed. All clients have access to their educational opportunities, and other programs available at Ashby House. Clients must be working towards self-sufficiency through educational and or job training. These families pay a monthly program fee and utilities and must follow residency rules and policies.

All Ashby House residences provide life skills, case management, spiritual growth encouragement, educational opportunities, employment skills, and love and guidance from round-the-clock staff.

In 2019, Ashby House reported 13 participants successfully graduated from their programs, 117 began employment, 19 children were reunited with mom either through visitation or full custody, 61 found and maintained permanent housing, 15 adults and 10 children received transitional housing assistance, and 142 individuals were assisted with medical, mental health, dental, vision and prescription assistance.

## **Salina Rescue Mission**

The Salina Rescue Mission provides sleeping accommodations, meals and counseling for homeless men. Life skills training and coaching for re-entering the job market is also provided, mostly by members of the Mission's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers. The mission is funded entirely by donations. The residential capacity of the mission is 85. Many men are alienated from their families and/or community and are former residents from the ten counties surrounding Saline County. They are experiencing a higher number of men that are suffering from medical/mental health issues and they have no resources or support. In addition, the average age of the men is younger than in the past. Lunch and supper meals are open to anyone in the community who needs a meal, free of charge.

## **Salina Grace**

Salina Rescue Mission and Ashby House partnered with Grand Avenue Methodist Church in the fall of 2017 to create Salina Grace. Salina Grace provides shelter for homeless individuals who do not meet check-in requirements at other Salina shelters. Between November 15, 2018 and March 22, 2019, the shelter served 167 individuals with 2103 nights of shelter. The shelter is only open through the winter. The emergency shelter is set up in the 3,000 square-foot gymnasium at Grand Avenue Methodist Church and can house up to 30 people a night. According to a March 19th article in the Salina Journal, Individuals must check in between 6:30 and 9:30 p.m. every night and referrals must come from law enforcement. Background checks and breathalyzer checks are completed at check-in. Once through the process, each individual receives a snack and bottle of water. They are provided a cot, pillow and blanket to sleep on. The shelter works with individuals to help them find resources. Many of the individuals utilizing the shelter are dealing with mental health issues and/or substance abuse and have nowhere else to go.

## **Housing by County**

### **Saline County**

#### **SALINA HOUSING AUTHORITY**

The Salina Housing Authority manages over 530 Housing contracts within Salina: 162 Public Housing units; 317 Section 8 rental vouchers; 30 Veteran Assisted Supportive Housing Vouchers, 22 Mainstream Vouchers for Non-elderly disabled, and 15 Shelter Plus rental vouchers for homeless individuals. As of December 2018, 95 families were on a Public Housing waiting list. The Housing Authority offers Section 8 vouchers to income qualified families and consistently has over 300 families enrolled. There are an additional 273 families waiting for Section 8 housing. Assistance dollars are limited, occupancy rate is high and the Section 8 waiting list has remained open since 2017. The Salina Housing Authority offers a Family Self Sufficiency program to Public Housing and Voucher tenants. The programs provide monthly social services assistance to help the tenant try to move to self-sufficiency. The Housing Authority is actively pursuing the development of new units in order to meet the overwhelming housing needs in Salina.

#### **OCCK, INC.**

OCCK, Inc. offers 24 public housing units for developmentally delayed adults, which are almost 100% occupied with very little turnover.

#### **SALVATION ARMY**

A number of private agencies, including the Salvation Army, offer minimal financial aid for residents needing help paying rent during emergencies. On average, the Salvation Army assists between 80-100 households each month with emergency funds. They are currently receiving 90-120 applications per month.

#### **SALINA EMERGENCY AID/FOOD BANK**

The Salina Emergency Aid/Food Bank is available for homeless prevention by providing emergency funds for rent and utilities.

#### **CATHOLIC CHARITIES**

Catholic Charities helps with food, diapers, toilet paper, laundry detergent, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, lotion, razors, soap, formula, and non-narcotic prescriptions. In addition, help with bus vouchers, eviction notices, shut-off or disconnect notices from utility companies is offered.

**Dickinson County****NORTH CENTRAL-FLINT HILLS AREA AGENCY ON AGING**

In October 2019, the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging reported they are currently serving 25 residents in Dickinson County. There is no shelter for the homeless, although the Salvation Army offers transients temporary lodging assistance and helps Dickinson County residents with their rent in emergencies.

**HOPE CENTER**

The Hope Center in Abilene is a single, family dwelling for families in crisis who must apply and be approved by the board. If approved, the family can stay in the home for up to three months free, based upon the need. They provide funds for individuals to purchase prescriptions, pay rent and utilities. In 2020, they served 79 households; provided \$22,454 in assistance funds, 37 with housing assistance, 33 utility assists, one gasoline assist, three medical prescription assists, five miscellaneous needs and three families in the HOPE House. The HOPE House is a transitional house available to a homeless family for up to 90 days with all expenses paid. The Hope Center services all of Dickinson County.

**SALVATION ARMY**

In 2020, the Dickinson County Salvation Army served 31 households, provided \$5,275 in assistance funds, seven utility assists, 16 housing assists, three gasoline assists, two miscellaneous assists, and two medical/prescription assists. They used excess Salvation Army funds to purchase supplemental masks for every school district in Dickinson County and contribute food to the Neighbor to Neighbor food distribution.

**CHAPMAN HOUSING AUTHORITY**

The Chapman Housing Authority provides housing to low income families, the elderly and disabled applicants in Butterfield Trail Housing Complex and Cedar Drive Housing Complex.

**SOLOMON HOUSING AUTHORITY**

The Solomon Housing Authority provides housing assistance to low income residents through the management of low rent public housing.

**FAMILY RESOURCE EXCHANGE**

The Family Resource Exchange is a free service that helps families in Herington, KS obtain assistance for temporary support for utilities, supplementary food and supplies, clothing and living necessities.

**ABILENE AREA FOOD AND CLOTHING CENTER**

The Abilene Area Food and Clothing Center of Abilene provides families with emergency funds to pay utilities. This service can be used by a family once per year. In 2020, they served four households in the amount of \$356 and provided four utility assists.

**Ellsworth County****ELLSWORTH HOUSING AUTHORITY (THE PINES APARTMENTS)**

The Ellsworth Housing Authority, doing business as The Pines Apartments, manages 24 Section 8 apartments. These units are earmarked for elderly and disabled individuals who are capable of independent living. All apartments are one bedroom, 588 sq. feet of living space. Some of the advantages of "Pines" living are: free washers and dryers located in the building, and all utilities paid (less phone and internet). The cable TV rate is greatly discounted, appliances are furnished, and all units have central heat and air with individual thermostats. Rent is based on income minus medical expenses. This usually works out at 30% of adjusted income. Ellsworth Housing Authority provides another 12 units in other locations.

## Transportation

### Saline County

#### CITYGO

Salina's fixed-route bus system, CityGo, serves more than 80 percent of the city with safe, reliable, and cost-effective transportation service. CityGo spans the city from North to South and East to West with five routes, noted by colors on route maps and bus stops: red, blue, purple, green and yellow. There are six transfer points to make crossing from one line to the next fast and efficient. Each bus is wheelchair accessible.

Fares for the CityGo buses are \$1 per trip, \$2 per one-day pass, \$5 for a six-trip pass, and \$35 for a monthly pass. Children 10 and under ride for free, but must be accompanied by someone 16 or older. Personal Care Attendants can ride without charge. Each bus is wheelchair accessible.

#### 81 CONNECTION

81 Connection is a fixed route bus service that serves north-central Kansas with three bi-directional trips each day, Monday through Friday. Passengers come from many age groups and different socio-economic levels and use the bus service for employment, medical appointments, social services, shopping, recreation, and other needs.

Fares for 81 Connection vary based on pick-up and drop-off locations. Six Trip Ticket Strips can be purchased for \$5.00. They also offer a 24 punch card (24 punches worth \$1.00 each) for \$20 and a 48 punch card (48 punches worth \$1 each) for \$40.

#### MOBILITY MANAGERS

Mobility Managers (available in Saline, Ellsworth and Dickinson Counties) cover a wide range of topics in public transit, including outreach, coordination and expansion of multimodal transportation services, travel training, and more. Saline and Ellsworth Counties are served by the Mobility Manager of north central Kansas. Dickinson County is served by the Mobility Manager of the Flint Hills Region. More information about Mobility Managers can be found on Kansas Rides - the statewide resource for finding transportation options. [www.ksrides.org](http://www.ksrides.org)

#### REGIONAL PARA-TRANSIT DEMAND RESPONSE SERVICES

(ALSO AVAILABLE IN DICKINSON AND ELLSWORTH COUNTIES)

OCCK offers Regional Para-transit, curb-to-curb, on-demand service for the general public throughout North Central Kansas including passengers with disabilities and seniors. Passengers seeking Para-transit services in Salina are required to meet medical eligibility due to fixed route regulations. The Regional Para-transit service has been a successful and popular program. Riders will be picked up at their address and dropped off at their destination. Fares are \$2 per person each way in Saline County and 10-cents per mile outside Saline County.

#### MED-A-VAN (ALSO AVAILABLE IN DICKINSON AND ELLSWORTH COUNTIES)

Non-emergency medical transportation to and from the Salina Regional Health Center and its affiliates – Salina Medical Arts Building, Santa Fe Medical Plaza, Tammy Walker Cancer Center, Comcare locations, Veridian, and Central Kansas Foundation – is available at no cost for persons in the following counties: Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Mitchell, Lincoln, Marion, McPherson, Osborne, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Smith. Non-emergency medical transportation to and from other area medical facilities, doctor's offices, and clinics is available for \$2 per ride in Saline County and 10-cents per mile outside Saline County.



**MEDICAID TRANSPORTATION**

OCCK contracts with KanCare Providers to provide non-emergency medical transportation throughout Kansas. However, only Medicaid-recipient passengers are eligible for this service. Advance notice of at least 48 hours is required. Transportation is arranged by calling the KanCare Provider listed on the back of the Medicaid card.

**Dickinson County****CITY OF ABILENE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The City of Abilene provides general public transportation. They provide demand-response transportation as well as curb to curb service. A one-way trip is \$2 and a round-trip is \$3.00. Each additional stop is \$1.00. A \$15 punch card is available for purchase. Hours are Monday – Friday 8am – 5:00pm.

**MED-A-VAN (ALSO AVAILABLE IN SALINE AND ELLSWORTH COUNTIES)**

Non-emergency medical transportation to and from the Salina Regional Health Center and its affiliates – Salina Medical Arts Building, Santa Fe Medical Plaza, Tammy Walker Cancer Center, Salina Surgical Center, Comcare locations, Veridian, and Central Kansas Foundation – is available at no cost for persons in the following counties: Clay, Cloud, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Jewell, Mitchell, Lincoln, Marion, McPherson, Osborne, Ottawa, Republic, Saline, and Smith. Non-emergency medical transportation to and from other area medical facilities, doctor’s offices, and clinics is available for \$2 per ride in Saline County and 10-cents per mile outside Saline County.

**ABILENE SENIOR CENTER**

The Abilene Senior Center provides free transportation for seniors to a nutrition site for meals.

**Ellsworth County**

Ellsworth County has buses available for general public transportation with low fares in Holyrood, Wilson and Ellsworth. The Ellsworth Council on Aging charges \$1 and up for general public riders and covers the entire county. They also help with ‘Medical Miles’ which is a program to help find rides to medical visits within the state from volunteers. There is no taxicab service that originates in the county; taxicabs from Salina will travel at a premium rate. Fares are \$3.50 in county.

**Great Resignation – according to Wikipedia**

Wikipedia describes the “Great Resignation”, also known as the “Big Quit”, as an economic trend in which employees voluntarily resigned from their jobs en masse, beginning in early 2021, primarily in the United States. The COVID-19 pandemic has allowed workers to rethink their careers, work conditions, and long-term goals. As many workplaces attempted to bring their employees in-person, workers desired the freedom to work from home due to the pandemic. With telecommuting also came schedule flexibility, which was the primary reason to look for a new job of the majority of those studied by Bankrate in August 2021. Additionally, many workers, particularly in younger cohorts, are seeking to gain a better work–life balance.

Restaurants and hotels, industries that require in-person interactions, have been hit the hardest by waves of resignations. COVID-19 stimulus payments and rises in unemployment benefits allow those who rely on low-wage jobs for survival to stay home, although places where unemployment benefits were rolled back did not see significant job creation as a result.

According to a study conducted by Adobe, the exodus is being driven by Millennials and Generation Z, who are more likely to be dissatisfied with their work. More than half of Gen Z reported planning to seek a new job within the next

year. Additionally, millions of people are also suffering disabilities from Long COVID, altering their ability or desire to work.

In April 2021, as COVID-19 vaccination rates increased, evidence began emerging that the Great Resignation was beginning in the United States. That month, a record 4.0 million Americans quit their jobs.

In June 2021, approximately 3.9 million American workers quit their jobs. Resignations are consistently the most prevalent in the South, where 2.9% of the workforce voluntarily left their jobs in June, followed by the Midwest (2.8%) and the West (2.6%). The Northeast is the most stable region, with 2.0% of workers quitting in June.

According to Microsoft's 2021 Work Trend Index, more than 40% of the global workforce are considering quitting their job in 2021. According to a PricewaterhouseCoopers survey conducted in early August 2021, 65% of employees said they are looking for a new job and 88% of executives said their company is experiencing higher turnover than normal.

A Deloitte study published in Fortune magazine in October 2021 found that among Fortune 1000 companies, 73% of CEOs anticipate the work shortage will disrupt their businesses over the next 12 months; 57% believe attracting talent is among their company's biggest challenges; and 35% have already expanded benefits to bolster employee retention.

Amidst the Great Resignation, a strike wave known as Striketober began, with over 100,000 American workers participating in or preparing for strike action. While discussing Striketober, The Guardian wrote that some economists described the Great Resignation as workers participating in a general strike against poor working conditions and low wages. From the start of the pandemic to November 2021, approximately one in five healthcare workers quit their jobs.

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

### Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas

Catholic Charities of Northern Kansas provides services in Hays, Salina and Manhattan. The ministry provides a safety net for individuals and families in dire situations due to things like job loss, unexpected home or auto repairs, medical expenses, or unplanned pregnancies. They can provide:

- Financial Assistance:
  - Rent/Utilities (up to \$150 per year rent and \$100 per year utilities).
  - Prescriptions/Medical Supplies (up to \$100 per year).
  - Predatory Debt Relief: Catholic Charities created a program to help individuals trapped in high-interest payday and title loan debt by offering a way for individuals to pay off their predatory loans called *The Kansas Loan Pool Project*.
  - REACH Fund assists individuals with mental disabilities to fund special projects they cannot obtain from other sources. A committee decides monthly if applicants are approved. Will assist individuals with up to \$500 every 12 months to help with items not covered by SSI or other sources. Applications are reviewed monthly.
  - Kelly Mead Fund assists individuals and their families with expenses ancillary to a catastrophic illness. A committee decides monthly if applicants are approved and will assist individuals with up to \$500 every 12 months to help with items not covered by insurance or other sources. Applications

are reviewed monthly. Special preference is given to those undergoing heart or other organ transplants who demonstrate financial need.

- Adopt-a-Family for Christmas assistance is provided to families each year through an application process. Applications are usually made available starting the end of October. Heartland families are always part of the recipient list for this program.
- Community Re-Entry Program provides housing assistance and employment support services to individuals transitioning out of the Saline County Jail.
- Street and Mobile Outreach programs provide clothing, food, hygiene items and blankets as well as information and applications for other services to people in need. Services are provided in Salina every Monday at three different locations. Mobile Outreach brings food & items to underserved rural towns, including Abilene, Ellsworth and Herington.
- Thrift Store is open Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.
- Free and Reduced Services: Counseling, Money Management Classes, Pregnancy Maintenance, Immigration, Adoption, Spanish Interpreting and Translation
- Necessities: Food, Clothing, Bus Passes, Hygiene Items, Diapers, Formula and Baby Items, Showers

## Child Advocacy and Parenting Services, Inc. (CAPS)

CAPS provides the following services for families in Saline County

- Family Mentoring: Comprehensive, professional support for over-burdened families. Services include social work case management, weekly in-home visitation, crisis counseling, one-on-one parent training, parent/child relationship assistance and emotional support for English and Spanish-speaking families.
- Parenting Education: Child development and positive discipline instruction which helps parents develop skills needed to effectively raise their children. Enabling parents to develop a strong, close-knit family is the goal.
- Respite Care: Quality, once-a-week child care for parents needing a break from the daily stress of parenting.
- Saline County School Readiness Project: A community collaboration helping families and early childhood educators better prepare children ages 0-5 years with the cognitive and social emotional skills they need to enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Bully Prevention: Classroom instruction for elementary and middle school students to reduce peer abuse. The goal of the program is to empower students to use empathy and reconciliatory justice with their peers.
- Happy Bear: A personal safety program empowering young children to protect themselves from sexual abuse. The program is utilized with Saline County students enrolled preschool through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- Chris's Place: Chris's Place coordinates an investigative multi-disciplinary team response for children involved in allegations of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse. Children receive a forensic interview in a child-focused environment by a specially trained interviewer, where coordinated and specialized services for advocacy, mental health, and medical services are offered.
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA): The CASA program recruits, trains, and supports community volunteers who advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children involved in the local court system. CASA volunteers work to ensure the children's needs are met and to assist the court in obtaining a safe, permanent placement as quickly as possible.

## Partners in Early Childhood Education (PIECE) – Saline County

Partners in Early Childhood Education (PIECE) is the local community collaboration achieving the mission “Children in Saline County entering kindergarten will have the necessary skills to be successful.” The diverse membership works across agency and program lines, sharing information at meetings every other month and pooling resources to drive early childhood investments in our community. The PIECE partnership integrates the strengths of 20 organizations to develop a greater depth of services, such as expanding Ages and Stages Social Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ-SE2) screening sites, referrals to social services, creating a child care needs survey, building business partnerships and supplying parenting education materials. PIECE secured a United Way Grant that funds an Early Childhood Social Emotional Consultant and initiated programs that help new childcare providers stay in business. PIECE evaluates community needs and develops services to accomplish the mission that children will have the skills they need to be successful in kindergarten.

PIECE reported several strengths identified within the community:

- *Social service network*
- *Community prenatal services such as “Becoming a Mom” and “Incredible Years”*
- *Success of public investment in the community, such as school bond projects, new facility for the KU Medical School, and downtown revitalization*
- *School district’s recognition of the importance of early childhood programming*
- *Accessibility to public transportation*

## Quality for Life Coalition (QLC) – Dickinson County

The mission of the QLC is to provide a catalyst to promote social, physical and mental well-being for residents of Dickinson County by fostering a thriving environment in which to live, work, play and learn. The QLC began in 1991 through a collaboration of local agencies and concerned citizens who shared a common vision of working together to provide needed programs and ensuring non-duplication of services. The QLC consists of over 60 different agencies including schools, local governments, health providers, law enforcement, recreational and youth organizations, social services, and many volunteers and concerned citizens.

In October 2018 Heartland attended a QLC meeting to gather information regarding the current concerns and/or strengths within Dickinson County. When asked what three things they would change in their community, they responded with: 1) More accessibility through sidewalks, mass transit, and adherence to ADA (Americans with Disability Act); 2) More low-income housing; 3) Addition of an emergency shelter.

QLC strives to use their community agencies to address the needs they identify. QLC was able to procure a *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* grant funded by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Kansas. They received \$400,000 to make changes across seven focus areas: Community Policy, Resident/Community Well-Being, Food Retail, Health Care, Restaurants, Schools, Worksites. The goal is to collectively make living healthy an easy, familiar, and expected part of routines and traditions.

Teen suicide and substance abuse concerns were also identified by QLC. The group shared their concerns about the suicide rate within their county and the lack of mental health care available. They noted the Abilene School District no longer offers the DARE program and have begun the implementation of “It Matters”. This program is sponsored by the Behavioral Health Services Commission and works to help communities understand the extent and cause of multiple behavioral health concerns including substance abuse, depression, and suicide.

## Thrive of the Heartland

*Thrive of the Heartland* is dedicated to reducing poverty by building the skills, knowledge and relationship that strengthen families. With the help and friendship of their support group, each family sets and achieves goals unique to their own needs.

## COMMUNITY ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS/HIGHER EDUCATION

### Salina Adult Education Center (SAEC)

#### Partners 4 Success

Partners 4 Success (P4S) is six weeks in length, gradually increasing from four hours to eight hours per day. The six week program consists of over 200 hours of basic life skills instruction. There MAY be a potential two week work experienced depending on individual cases. P4S enables participants to become self-sufficient by better managing their lives, which allows them to better manage and retain their employment.

Initial Focus of Class:

Participants assess past employment, training, life experiences and development of personal goals with focus on topics such as:

- Growth Mindset
- Goal Setting
- Child Management
- Coping with Crisis
- Money Management
- Responsibility

Nuts & Bolts of Class:

- Employability Skills such as work ethic, team work and problem solving
- Workplace Math
- Communication
- Employment topics such as resume writing, interviewing skills and required mock interviews

P4S is not a typical workshop that covers surface level material. The program is designed to meet individuals where they are in their lives in terms of challenges to employment. Students must be open to exploring choices made in their lives, consequences, how to market themselves to quality employers and improving their life and the lives of their family.

#### English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL curriculum is designed to help students progress through appropriate levels of lessons to meet their needs and allow them to "graduate" to higher levels of learning. Prescreening at the time of registration will allow staff to fit students into appropriate class times and sites based on their educational needs. The ESL program provides students with the opportunity to develop skills in the following areas:

- Reading
- Speaking
- Citizenship Skills
- Transitioning from ESL to ABE/GED
- Writing
- Listening
- Technology Skills

The center is located on the south side of the Salina Area Technical College campus. Here morning and evening classes are held at two different levels. New in 2020 classes will also be offered remotely so students can work with their

teacher from their home. Classes are scheduled so that students with similar needs may receive the most benefit from small group instruction.

### **Adult Basic Education (ABE)/General Equivalency Diploma (GED) Programs**

The ABE/GED program offers classes designed to help students strengthen their educational, technological and workplace skills. Class topics include:

- Math
- Grammar
- Writing
- Reading
- Skill Building for College Preparation
- Pre-Employment Skills
- Technology Skills

SAEC students attend classes morning or evening two days a week. Opportunity for on-site or remotely with a live teacher is offered. Pre- and post-class assignments will be critical to helping students reach their educational goals. Each student will meet with an instructor at the end of orientation week to design a class schedule that meets that student's academic needs and meets the attendance requirement per week.

### **Accelerated Opportunities – Kansas (AO-K)**

Salina Adult Education Center along with Salina Area Technical College have partnered to bring Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas (AO-K) to the Salina area. This means that people in the Salina area can train for a new career and earn their high school credential through GED testing at the same time. The current pathway that SAEC and SATC provide services for is the medical pathway. The best part is the State of Kansas will pay most of the costs. The important thing about AO-K is that students have an entire support network to help with every aspect of their success.

- At the Salina Adult Education Center, students will learn to improve adult basic skills in reading, math and writing to prepare for the GED® tests and so they have the needed skills to succeed in Salina Tech's college classes. Lessons are created specifically to be relevant to the classes students are taking at SATC.
- At Salina Tech, those same adult education instructors will be part of the team. They will be in class with the students making sure they get any additional help needed to succeed! SATC provides advising and career counseling from the AO-K Coordinator. Students who qualify for the Accelerated Opportunity program will spend more time in technical and basic skills classes each week.

## **Salina Area Technical College (SAEC)**

### **Early Childhood Education**

Through a combination of classroom learning and practice in local child care facilities, students have an opportunity to learn about infant and toddler care, how to interact with young children, childhood nutrition, preschool language and literacy, and teaching children with special needs.

The program includes a variety of options, including a focus in Infant and Toddler Education, a focus on Preschool Education, or combining the two for a certification in Early Childhood Education. Building on that foundation, students can also earn an Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education.

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