

Smith County

Workforce Recruitment Plan

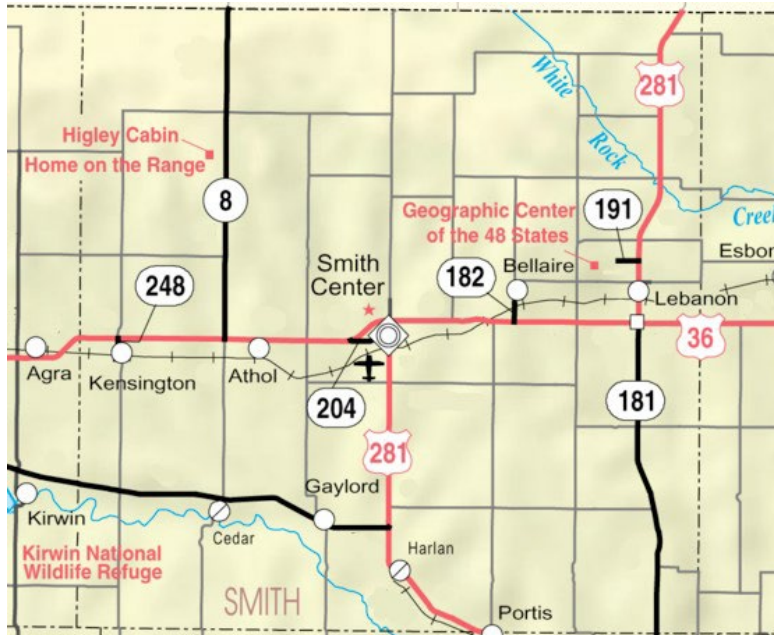


“WHILE THE KANSAS PLAINS AT DUSK DURING HARVEST OFFER ABOUT AS MAJESTIC A TABLEAU AS YOU CAN CONJURE, THE TOWN OF SMITH CENTER DOES NOT TURN ANY HEADS AT FIRST BLUSH. HIGHWAY 36, WHICH SPANS THE COUNTY EAST-WEST, IS THE TOWN’S NORTHERN BORDER. THE SPEED LIMIT DROPS FROM SIXTY-FIVE TO FORTH-FIVE MILES PER HOUR AT THE FIRST SIGHT OF THE JOHN DEERE TRACTORS THAT STAND SENTRY AND READY FOR SALE AT JONES MACHINERY TO THE EAST OF TOWN, AND AT LANDMARK IMPLEMENTS TO ITS WEST.”

pg 16, Our Boys by Joe Drape

About Smith County

Smith County is a county located in the state of Kansas; the county seat is in Smith Center. The geographic center of the contiguous United States is located within the county, north of Lebanon. In 2021, 3,576 people call Smith County home. The county is named in memory of Maj. J. Nelson Smith, who was part of the 2nd Colorado Cavalry during the Civil War and was killed in action at the Battle of Westport on October 21, 1864.



Smith County lies at the crossroads of two major U.S. highways, 36 and 281. It is a land of open spaces with spectacular sunsets, rolling hills with acres of farmland and pasture, numerous wooded creek bottoms, walk-in hunting areas, and fishing ponds. Within an hour's drive, residents can choose from four recreational lakes to enjoy watersports, camping, and fishing.

State-of-the-art fiber optics provide for reliable and strong connectivity which is essential for remote jobs, streaming

entertainment and staying connected with friends and family around the world. The area is home to eight in-home daycare facilities and the newly opened Bright Beginnings Child Development Center in Smith Center.

Smith Center is home to the county's critical access hospital, completed in 2018, which includes a physical therapy facility, 11 medical practitioners, and a rural health clinic. Two chiropractors and two fitness centers allow residents to keep fit and well. Elder care is provided through skilled nursing care facilities that promote independence based on the Green House model with private rooms, all the comforts of home and a philosophy of wellness, rehabilitation, freedom, nurturing, and safety. The county includes numerous community organizations and churches that provide for the social and spiritual needs of individuals and families.

Smith County residents highly value educational excellence. Two public school systems provide for pre-Kindergarten to high school education. The region also boasts a Christian preschool. Post-secondary educational opportunities include a community college and a vocational technical school within an hour's drive and Fort Hays State University close by. Graduates are met with an average \$200,000 of scholarship opportunities through USD 237 and \$140,000 through USD 110. This tremendous support for continuing education allows our graduates to dream of a vast array of career pathways following a technical or post-secondary education.

The beautiful Solomon River runs through the southwest corner of the County and provides a flat basin and water for irrigated crops. Smith County is crisscrossed with creeks running into rivers both to the north and to the south.

Rolling hills and wooded bottoms provide for beautiful, walk-in hunting and fishing opportunities (as allowed by the property owners participating in those programs). The landscape includes many majestic Cottonwood trees, the state tree of Kansas. Residents can also enjoy of the rich diversity of wildlife, birds, and plants, including deer, turkey and even the occasional elk.

The northwest part of the County is home to the cabin constructed by Dr. Brewster Higley on the bank of the West Beaver Creek in 1872. There Dr. Higley wrote a poem titled "The Western Home," which was sent to Dan Kelley who set it to music. The song "Home on the Range" is the State Song of Kansas.

Although the buffalo and antelope are no longer here, the poem and the state song continue to describe the amazing beauty and serenity that one might experience today in Smith County, Kansas.

The Western Home

from the Smith County Pioneer, 1872

Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play;
Where never is heard a discouraging word
And the sky is not clouded all day.

Oh, give me the gale of the Solomon vale
Where life streams with buoyancy flow,
On the banks of the Beaver, where seldom if ever
Any poisonous herbage doth grow.

Oh, give me the land where the bright diamond sand
Throws light from the glittering stream;
Where glideth along the graceful white swan,
Like a maid in her heavenly dreams.

I love these wild flowers in this bright land of our;
I love, too, the curlew's wild scream.
The bluffs of white rocks and antelope flocks
That graze on the hillsides so green.

How often at night, when the heavens are bright
By the light of the glittering stars,
Have I stood there amazed and asked as I gazed
If their beauty exceeds this of ours.

The air is so pure, the breezes so light,
The zephyrs so balmy at night,
I would not exchange my home here to range
Forever in azure so bright.

Economic Drivers and Workforce

Smith County’s economy is primarily driven by Agriculture through farmers and ranchers raising crops and livestock on the land. The Kansas Department of Agriculture’s 2021 Economic Contribution Report models the effects of agriculture on the economy. For Smith County’s economy in the year 2021, the model estimates that 18 agriculture and agriculture-related sectors directly contributed \$174 million in output and 621 jobs. Including indirect and induced effects, agriculture operations and agriculture-related sectors have a total economic impact of \$212 million in output, 829 jobs and 39% of the total Gross Regional Product.

As for the secondary sector of the county’s economy, a handful of manufacturers and processors turn raw materials into finished goods. Smith Center has a rich heritage in manufacturing as it was the home to a large recreational vehicle manufacturing plant for many years. That plant was purchased and updated in 2018 into Applequist Manufacturing which manufactures agricultural equipment. Education, healthcare, service, retail, and commercial businesses round out the Smith County economy and include a broad diversity of businesses with a robust offering of products and services to fill our residents’ needs.

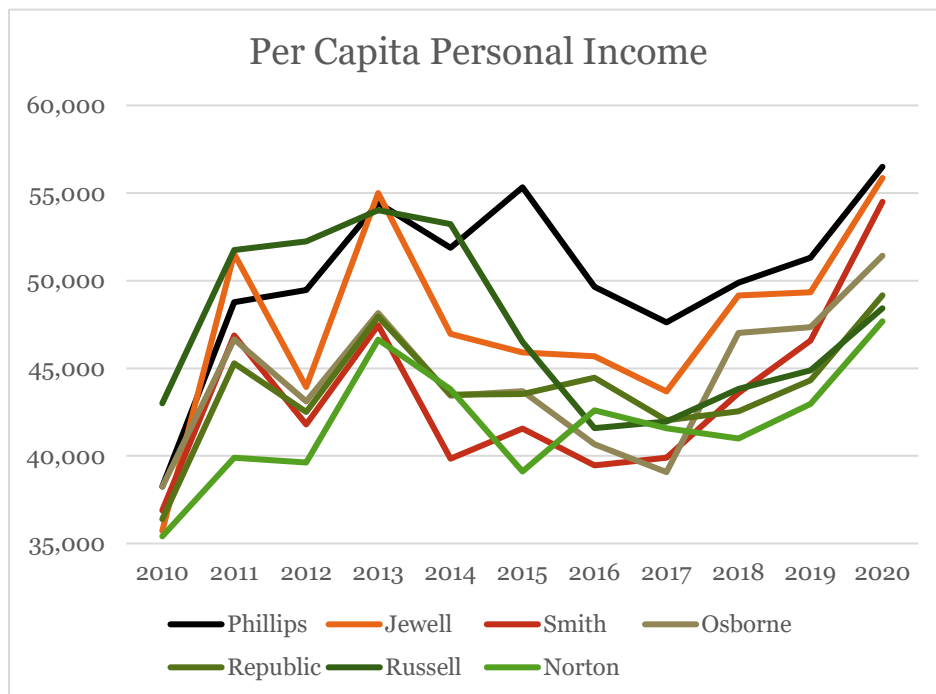
Population is a helpful measurement for economic growth as the county population is the primary market for the goods and services of the tertiary sector as well as the primary pool of workers to fill jobs in all sectors. According to the Kansas Secretary of State Division of the Budget, these are the certified population numbers for Smith County (as of July 1, 2022).

		Pop. 2019 7/1/2020	Pop. 2020 7/1/2021	Pop. 2021 7/1/2022	% Chg 2020-2021	% Chg 2021-2022
Smith County		3,583	3,544	3,576	(1.1)	0.9
Smith Center	city	1,570	1,553	1,572	(1.1)	1.2
Bal. of Smith County		1,219	1,206	1,284	(1.1)	6.5
Kensington	city	437	433	401	(0.9)	(7.4)
Lebanon	city	198	195	182	(1.5)	(6.7)
Gaylord	city	105	104	83	(1.0)	(20.2)
Athol	city	41	40	42	(2.4)	5.0
Cedar	city	13	13	12	--	(7.7)
<i>Source: Kansas Secretary of State Division of the Budget</i>						

Although agricultural producers and other independent private businesses may not be represented accurately, the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), reports employment establishments in Smith County and surrounding counties (Appendix A). Those numbers reflect that of 149 establishments in the county, 149 are categorized private, twenty-six are government, and nineteen are agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

If we look at the economy from the perspective of the worker, the employees are distributed as such: 941 in Private establishments; 315 in Government establishments such as schools, state, and federal agencies; 235 in Wholesale trade; and 230 in Healthcare and social assistance. Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; Construction; and Finance and insurance are other important employers for the region.

Those jobs in the diverse Smith County economy offer opportunity for a moderate standard of living for most families. The 2020 Per Capita Personal Income for residents of Smith County is \$54,497, which is comparable to surrounding counties in north central Kansas as seen in this graph. Counties with higher income include Mitchell, Phillips, and Jewell.



Source: Federal Reserve Economic Data, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org>

As we look to recruit workers, it is essential to have suitable and affordable housing for those individuals and their families. The Census Bureau administers the American Community Survey (ACS) to help community leaders understand the changes taking place in communities. This data set estimates the occupied housing units in Smith County for years 2010, 2015, and 2020.

	2010	2015	2020
Occupied housing units	1,830	1,667	1,664
Owner-occupied housing units	1,484	1,338	1,289
Renter-occupied housing units	346	329	375

Source: American Communities Survey
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

The ACS also estimates the percent of occupied housing units by age of the householder. The next table shows the increases and declines in the percent of occupied housing units in Smith County age categories. As of 2020, there is an increase in percent of householders under 44 years old and between 55 to 74 years old, which indicates the influx of working age families and retirees are moving to the county.

Age Category	2010	2015	2020	% Chg 2010 - 2015	% Chg 2015 - 2020
Under 35 years	11.9	10.8	16.6	-9%	54%
35 to 44 years	13.9	11.2	12.6	-19%	13%
45 to 54 years	21.2	17.9	11.8	-16%	-34%
55 to 64 years	15.2	21	21.2	38%	1%
65 to 74 years	13.8	15.9	18	15%	13%
75 to 84 years	16.6	14.3	12.6	-14%	-12%
85 years and over	7.4	9	7.2	22%	-20%

Source: American Communities Survey <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html>

Leaders in the area recognized in 2019 the need to examine the housing situation more closely. The City of Smith Center commissioned a Housing Study published in 2020 that recognized the low unemployment rate and a shortage of quality housing stock appropriate for our workers. That study reported most houses in the area are 50 years old or older with older homes serving the rental market and a high proportion of them are vacant as they are no longer serving their intended purpose.

It reported the housing cost in Smith Center is lower than the state average and comparison cities of Hill City, Oberlin, Sedgwick, and St. Francis. In 2017, the median household income in Smith Center was \$37,070, and the median value of owner-occupied housing units was \$63,900, yielding a value/income ratio of 1.72. The median monthly housing cost in Smith Center was \$521, which was the lowest among all the study cities. The study also shows that 12.7% of households in Smith Center paid \$1,000 or more per month for housing, which was the second lowest among all study cities, with Oberlin being the lowest (12.5%). These results suggest that Smith Center residents have relatively low housing costs.

Population forecasts show small declines are expected but it is expected there will be a continuing demand for houses for households earning \$75,000 or more. This shortage of suitable housing is likely to increase economic instability and discourage migrants to join the labor force in Smith Center. That fact galvanized the resolve of local leaders to create solutions and invest resources to revitalize older homes and build new houses.

Because the housing situation is comparable across north central and northwest Kansas, many Smith County residents work in the county as well as neighboring counties of Phillips, Osborne, Jewell in Kansas and Franklin County, Nebraska.

The ACS estimates where Smith County residents work and where Smith County workers reside. That data from 2011 - 2015 shows that most Smith County residents work in the county (1,543 workers) but there are some who commute to neighboring counties of Phillips (117 workers) and Osborne (34 workers) for work. If we compare that with where Smith County workers reside, there are 76 workers commuting from Phillips County and 58 workers from Osborne County.

This data is confirmed by 2010 data from the Kansas Department of Labor, confirming commuting connectedness between Smith, Phillips, Jewell, Franklin, and Osborne counties. There are regional opportunities for family members to live in the area and work in Smith County or to live in Smith County and work in neighboring counties.

Partnerships and Collaborations

This culture of interconnectedness across the area becomes reality through partnerships and collaborations between area organizations to support a vibrant quality of life in Smith County and surrounding counties. These include rural electric cooperatives and rural telephone cooperatives who bring state of the art fiberoptics, electricity and broadband connectivity to Smith County residents. The cooperative spirit is core to several agricultural supply and commodity distribution cooperatives throughout the area that serve the productive agricultural industry of the county.

Special Education Partnership

USD 237 Smith Center and USD 110 Thunder Ridge both have a partnership with the North Central Kansas Special Education Cooperative (NCKSEC) in Phillipsburg, KS. NCKSEC serves eleven rural school districts across five Kansas counties and portions of three other Kansas counties. The partnership with NCKSEC allows USD 237 and USD 110 to serve the educational needs of students with disabilities in our districts.

This partnership our schools have access to high quality specialized services and staff from NCKSEC including occupational therapists, physical therapists, autism consultants, speech therapists, positive behavior support consultants, and school psychologists. NCKSEC also employs qualified special education teachers and paraeducators that

RECRUITING SUCCESS STORY

“My family and I chose to make the move to Smith Center for many reasons. My husband, Scott, and I both come from smaller communities, and we wanted to raise our daughter in one as well. Smith Center provides us with that small town atmosphere, but also offers plenty of amenities such as the local grocery store, a newer hospital, swimming pool, movie theater, and a variety of restaurants. High-speed fiber internet is available, which meant that my husband could continue working from home without missing a beat.

“I love teaching in school districts like Smith Center because it allows me the opportunity to get to know students on a more individual basis. We have felt safe and comfortable with letting our daughter ride her bike around the community with the new friends she's made.”

Amy Roth,
elementary music

work daily inside our schools, alongside our regular education teachers, to meet the needs of students. The partnership brings value to both of our Smith County schools.

Healthcare Partnerships

With regards to healthcare partnerships, Smith County Memorial Hospital (SCMH) brings specialty providers in Cardiology (3 provider practices), Nephrology, Pulmonology, Dermatology, Podiatry, General Surgery (2 surgeons), Vascular Surgery, Interventional Radiology, Urology, and Orthopedic Surgery to Smith Center to provide services to patients without the need for travel. In addition to these specialty providers, SCMH partners with contracted providers to perform MRI Imaging, Nuclear imaging, and Sleep Studies in Smith Center.

In addition, a contracted partnership brings a Wound Care Clinic and Pain Management services to SCMH weekly. Radiologists from a practice in Hastings, Nebraska provide interpretation of images via teleradiology 24 hours per day. SCMH also has the benefit of telehealth services 24 hours per day in the Emergency Department for assistance with diagnosis and treatment of patients presenting there. Behavioral Health screening is also available 24 hours per day via telehealth in the Emergency Department. A Behavioral Health counselor sees clients at SCMH one day per week, and counseling services and Psychiatry are available from the University of Kansas via telehealth. Pharmacy services are also available via remote access to our electronic health record 24 hours per day to assist with prescribing and appropriate dosing of medications.

SCMH is also an active participant in the Kansas Clinical Improvement Collaborative, centered at The University of Kansas. This network helps provide clinical best practices and treatment protocols in Acute Coronary Care, Acute Stroke Care, Trauma, Sepsis identification and treatment, and cognitive care (care for patients with early onset of dementia). SCMH is also part of two regional networks consisting of groups of Critical Access Hospitals and a larger network hub hospital. These affiliations allow sharing of best practices in patient care, finance, infection prevention, environmental services, emergency preparedness, and other aspects of fulfilling their mission.

RECRUITING SUCCESS STORY

USD 237 participated in the Fort Hays State University Tiger Teacher Summit with high hopes of recruiting several teachers. Following a couple of failed attempts at recruiting an art teacher, one candidate who was impressed with USD 237, shared the opportunity with a former FHSU Art major finishing a master's degree and ready to return home to Kansas. Ms. Smith will be entering the Transition to Teaching program through FHSU and moved to Smith Center in August 2022.

"I took the job at the Smith Center Jr. Sr. High School because I love watching students discover their creative passion. I am most excited to teach the next generation of artists that may come out of Smith Center, and I can't wait to bring new and exciting projects to the classroom."

Ashley Smith

In support of the core value to be a place where people come and continue growing, SCMH has clinical affiliation agreements to provide preceptorship opportunities with students enrolled in programs at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, The University of Kansas College of Nursing, The University of Nebraska College of Nursing, Wichita State University, North Central Technical Community College, Cloud County Community College, Barton County Community College, Geary County Community College, and Fort Hays State University.

Charitable Partnerships

With regards to community development, the Smith County Community Foundation organized in 2008 to meet charitable community needs and build permanent endowment funds. It is an affiliate of the Greater Salina Community Foundation and a volunteer director and volunteer board of 7 to 9 members from throughout the county manage foundation funds.

This foundation works closely with nonprofit organizations to fulfill their mission and increase their capacity to do good throughout Smith County. At the end of the 2021 fiscal year, the Smith County Community Foundation had assets of \$3.7 million and that year awarded grants and scholarships of \$242 thousand to non-profits and 501c3 organizations in Smith County. Recent grants from the community foundation supported area playgrounds, community centers, free fair facilities, ball fields, swimming pools, childcare centers, youth organizations and eldercare facilities.

County Workforce Recruitment Collaboration

Given the difficulty county businesses have in recruiting workers, the Smith Center Economic Development department organized a Smith County Recruitment Team to develop an action plan to recruit critical workers and their families to Smith County through a new workforce recruitment program.

The Smith Center Economic Development Department's purpose is to further the economic development of Smith Center and the surrounding area. As Smith Center is the economic hub of Smith County, serving as the location of several key employers, and is interconnected with neighboring counties in many ways, the department's interests include the development of the economy across the entire area. Our key measures of success include employment, payroll, business volume, local tax base, school enrollment and quality of life.

The Smith County Recruitment Team includes:

Allen VanDriel, Smith County Memorial
Hospital
Brigid Hall, Applequist Family Corporate
Office
Dana J. Peterson, Smith Center Economic
Development
Dustin McEwen, USD 237
Todd Churchill, Trinity Ag LLC

Galen Lambert, Retired Business Owner,
SCORE Mentor, One Page Business
Plan-Certified Mentor
Joan Nech, Smith County Community
Foundation
Lujeana Peters, Midwest Family Health
Matt Lyon, Landmark Implement

Once organized, the team identified the great potential of the collaboration and specified these goals for the collaboration:

1. Recruit Future Workforce through coordinating a county recruitment program and investing targeted incentives.
2. Build a collaboration of area employers on workforce recruitment and management training.
3. Help young people stay in Smith County following high school graduation or return to Smith County after continuing education.
4. Recruit employees to fill jobs in the county to the point that our employers turn away applicants – Become a destination for talent.
5. Create or more fully utilize one primary job board for the area, such as NWK Connect.

Jobs Available

Turning to the first goal of recruiting future workforce, it is helpful to know which jobs are in highest demand in our region. The Kansas Department of Labor reports the high demand jobs regionally. Smith County is in the North Central region and the top 25 high demand jobs include nurses, truck drivers, and laborers.

SOC Title	Rank	Work Experience	Median Annual Wage ⁴
Registered Nurses	1	None	\$57,733
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2	None	\$43,275
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	3	None	\$32,921
Customer Service Representatives	4	None	\$32,228
Retail Salespersons	5	None	\$27,500
Nursing Assistants	6	None	\$27,200
Stockers and Order Fillers	7	None	\$27,088
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	8	None	\$24,351
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	9	None	\$24,216
Cooks, Restaurant	10	Less than 5 years	\$22,867
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	11	None	\$22,674
Cashiers	12	None	\$21,699
Fast Food and Counter Workers	13	None	\$18,862
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	14	None	\$47,482
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	15	None	\$36,888
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	16	Less than 5 years	\$35,852
Construction Laborers	17	None	\$32,153
Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	18	None	\$26,342
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	19	None	\$22,358
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	20	None	\$42,038
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	21	None	\$40,409

Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	22	None	\$34,951
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	23	None	\$32,780
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	24	None	\$25,537
General and Operations Managers	25	5 years or more	\$79,158
<i>Source: Kansas Department of Labor, Kansas High Demand Occupations.</i>			
https://klic.dol.ks.gov/vosnet/gsipub/documentView.aspx?enc=XR1MJE2Q7Rmn9KjAm0oNxA==			

This regional list lines up very closely with positions that are available in Smith County. By analyzing this regional data, Smith County employers can compare their job openings and cost of living to determine if their wages, benefits, and requirements are similar or competitive with other area job opportunities. Although these employment opportunities are fluid, as of September 2022, the jobs currently available in Smith County, by employer are:

Jobs Available in Smith County, Kansas	
Applequist Manufacturing Inc	Fabrication Operator
Applequist Manufacturing Inc	Route Driver
Applequist Manufacturing Inc	Welder
Gene's Heartland Foods	Full-time and Part-time positions
Heartland Business Development LLC	Construction foreman
Midwest Family Health	Pharmacist
Midwest Family Health	Home Care Specialist
Smith Center Dental Clinic (coming soon)	Hygienist
Smith County Memorial Hospital	Perioperative Registered Nurse
Smith County Memorial Hospital	Surgical Scrub Technician
Smith County Memorial Hospital	Registered Nurse
Smith County Memorial Hospital	Environmental Services
Smith County Memorial Hospital	Respiratory Therapist
Smith County Memorial Hospital	Food & Beverage – Cooks
Smith County Memorial Hospital	Food & Beverage Sous Chef
SunPorch of Smith County	CNA/Shahbaz (1 day shift, 1 2-10 pm shift)
Unified School District 110	Bus Driver
Unified School District 237	Food Service Director
Unified School District 237	Transportation Director
Unified School District 237	Bus Driver
Unified School District 237	Custodian
Unified School District 237	Part-time Sports Complex
Unified School District 237	Paraprofessionals
USDA Farm Service Agency	County Program Technician
Various private farms	Farm laborers and managers

Incentives & Programs

As Smith County employers seek workers to fill workforce positions, there are some existing incentives and programs that help recruit workers to the area. Additionally, employers offer business specific recruitment incentives to individuals accepting their jobs. For example, Smith County Memorial Hospital offers signing bonus, relocation support, continuing education support and SunPorch of Smith County offers employee referral bonus, shift differential and incentive pay.

Rural Opportunity Zone Incentives

Smith County is one of 95 counties in the Kansas that are designated Rural Opportunity Zones and moving here comes with two added benefits. To recruit new residents who lived outside Kansas for five or more years prior to moving to Smith County, there may be up to five years of 100 % State Income Tax Credit available.

Additionally, ROZ Student Loan Reimbursement Assistance is available for individuals with a newly established residence in Smith County and active student loan debt. Fourteen individuals have completed this program with 12 currently participating in it. Local employers, Smith County and the Smith Center Economic Development Department sponsor the local match for this program. Previous and current participants include workers in healthcare, government, finance, legal, agriculture, accounting, education, and other sectors.

Homegrown Recruitment

Several area businesses are building “Grow Our Own” recruitment programs to develop pipelines of prospective employees while students are in high school and college. These formal and informal opportunities for young workers provide job shadowing, apprenticeship, and mentoring. Many employers are offering to train or provide reimbursement for education and training for future employees.

The regional NexGeneration Round Up for Youth Program allows for high school and college students to be matched with businesses throughout northwest and north central Kansas for both work study opportunities during the school year and paid, summer internships. Students gain professional skills and

RECRUITING SUCCESS STORY

Meg Huey joined Smith County Memorial Hospital as a physician’s assistant in the emergency department about a year after she graduated from Wichita State University. Meg’s clinical rotation in rural health brought her to SCMH and she liked the clinic, hospital, and the community. The SCMH team was impressed with Meg’s work ethic, constant curiosity, and interest in learning so subsequently recruited her for a full-time position.

"Ultimately, the decision to come work in Smith Center for SCMH was an easy one! I knew coming to SCMH meant an opportunity to work and learn amongst great providers and staff while working in a new facility in a wonderful community!"

Meg Huey, PA-C

broaden their perspectives on career options. Local businesses benefit by networking with youth, bringing fresh ideas to the workplace, and “interviewing” students for potential future jobs – all of which contribute to youth retention for Smith County and other counties in the area.

The region’s state university, Fort Hays State University, administers the FHSU/Dane G. Hansen Internship Program. This program provides the opportunity for area employers in the Hansen Foundation’s 26-county service area to partner with FHSU to create part-time internship experiences for students. The employer pays \$500 toward the student’s wages, and the remaining funding is through the Hansen Foundation grant. Both employers and students are selected through a competitive application process and Smith County businesses have participated in this program with some success.

Smith County Workforce Recruitment Incentive Program (SCWRIP)

The Smith County Recruitment Team is proposing a new program for the Smith Center Economic Development Department to create workforce recruitment incentives for jobs that are key to economic and community growth for Smith County.

The Smith County Workforce Recruitment Incentive Program (SCWRIP) will provide businesses with incentive funds to entice workers to accept Smith County jobs. The business will apply to the program for the incentive funds for their open jobs that require licensure and designated essential by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Recruitment Team will evaluate applications monthly, making recommendations for funding.

Prior to or at the time of posting the job announcement, area employers will fill out a SCWRIP application for jobs available in Smith County that may be difficult to fill (Appendix B). The SCED department will use the information on the application to enter data into a spreadsheet matrix that ranks the position based on compensation, education requirements, years of experience required and other qualifications. The points-based system will rank higher positions with supervisory and revenue responsibilities; this ranking matrix will be public so that the process is transparent and clear to employers and the public.

Upon reviewing the applications and the ranking matrix, the County Workforce Recruitment Team will recommend whether to incent jobs that meet the requirements and make recommendations to the Smith Center Economic Development Supervisory Board and City Council.

Distribution of any awarded incentive to the Employer will require proof of commitment by the recruited employee, such as a tie of service agreement, that clearly outlines the requirements to receive the incentive, and requirements for repayment if that employee leaves that Employer within a specified timeframe. Once the Employers receive the incentive from SCED, they will be responsible for providing the incentive to the employee, following all local, state, and federal laws.

Call to Action

The labor market across the United States is undergoing structural, worker-driven change. Macro labor market data shows months of people quitting their jobs at near-record highs, and businesses are continuing to complain that they just cannot find workers to fill open roles. The macro situation is a complex mix of economic factors including wages, resignations, lifestyle reevaluations, slowing immigration, flexible work environments, childcare needs, and healthcare needs and others. However, trends in the microenvironment in Smith County, Kansas, shows evidence of working age households moving into the area, which strengthens our hope for revitalization of our communities and our economy.

Now is the time to make investments through county businesses to create incentives to recruit the workforce of today and the families who will call Smith County home for many years into the future. Utilizing the powerful tools of collaboration and teamwork, we can more fully utilize current incentives and create and implement new incentive programs and strategies to strengthen our businesses and grow together a thriving regional economy.

Appendix A. Area Establishments

Establishments from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages				
3rd Quarter 2021				
Sector	Smith County	Jewell County	Osborne County	Phillips County
Total	149	108	177	226
Total Private	123	76	141	190
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING AND HUNTING	19	10	5	17
MINING	*	0	7	6
UTILITIES	0	0	0	*
CONSTRUCTION	12	*	8	12
MANUFACTURING	4	0	4	13
WHOLESALE TRADE	14	13	14	6
RETAIL TRADE	17	15	25	26
TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING	5	10	6	15
INFORMATION	3	0	5	8
FINANCE AND INSURANCE	10	6	13	13
REAL ESTATE AND RENTAL AND LEASING	0	0	0	*
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES	8	4	10	19
MANAGEMENT OF COMPANIES AND ENTERPRISES	*	0	*	0
ADMINISTRATIVE AND WASTE SERVICES	5	*	7	*
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	*
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	7	3	14	12
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATION	0	*	*	*
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES	5	5	9	16
OTHER SERVICES, EXCEPT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	11	5	11	18
Total Government	26	32	36	36
Local Government	13	17	23	20
State Government	5	4	4	7
Federal Government	8	11	9	9
<i>*Data is confidential</i>				
<i>Source: Kansas Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Services and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)</i>				

Appendix B. Draft Application

Smith County Workforce Recruitment Incentive Program (SCWRIP)

Business Name: _____

Contact Person: _____ **Title:** _____

Business address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Description of Business: _____

Annual Business Revenue/Output: _____

Annual Payroll: _____

Number of full-time employees: _____

Number of part-time employees: _____

We/I are applying for a recruitment incentive for this position: _____

Does the U.S. Department of Labor designate this position essential? Yes No

Position details:

Certifications or Licensure Required	
Certifications or Licensure Preferred	
Minimum Education Required	
Minimum Work Experience Required	
Starting Wage & Benefits	
Supervision Responsibilities	
Revenue/Output Responsibilities	
Number of Positions Open in Smith County	

Describe why this position should receive a recruitment incentive: _____

All Smith Center Economic Development Programs are subject to the availability of funds. SCED reserves the rights to alter or discontinue any program at any time without written notice.