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- Comparable Counties (Page B.9)
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County Profile

The County Profile section of the FY 2016 Budget provides basic demographic and trend information about Johnson County, as well as national comparable counties. The first section highlights basic population, employment, housing, ethnicity, crime, business, industry, and some general information to provide a snapshot of the County.

The second section includes nine additional measures, or "community indicators", in an effort to align the FY 2016 Budget with the Board of County Commissioners’ (BOCC) strategic goals: 1) Improving the lives of vulnerable populations by addressing emerging poverty and crime through job creation, 2) Evaluate the sewer financing structure to determine if the cost to provide services in certain locations exceeds the revenue generated by associated growth. Explore other service delivery models or financing strategies to balance return on investment. 3) Continue developing a high performing organization. 4) Finalize improvement strategies for the Johnson County Courthouse. 5) Provide and support planning for and construction that supports multi-modal transportation to provide alternatives for transporting people and 6) Continue Core 4 and initiate discussion and coordination with urban counties.

The comparable counties included in this section should serve as a guide to the County and its departments and agencies as they research and analyze different best practices and benchmarks in the delivery of services to the community.

Section 1 – Johnson County Demographic and Statistical Profile

Area Map:

The map below depicts Johnson County's location within the State of Kansas:
The map below depicts the locations of various cities within Johnson County.

Johnson County was founded August 25, 1855, six years prior to Kansas becoming the 34th state to enter the Union. Johnson County is Kansas City's metropolitan area's growth engine. It lies at the heart of the nation while possessing all the ingredients necessary for economic growth and success. The County boasts nationally ranked schools, low crime rate, high quality neighborhoods, low cost of living, and a variety of cultural and entertainment amenities. Johnson County is known for its beautiful parks, award winning school districts, affordable housing and access to jobs.

Johnson County accounts for more than half of the new businesses and job growth in the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). On average over 9 million people visit Johnson County’s parks every year. Approximately 650,000 participate in the various 4,000 fee-supported sporting activities and recreational programs.

The area is comprised of gently undulating terrain ranging in elevation from 742 feet above sea level near its northern border along the Kansas River to 1,130 feet in the south central part of the County. The County and its 20 incorporated cities and seven townships continue to work together to ensure that the necessary infrastructure improvements are in place to accommodate further growth. Currently, 60% of the 477 square miles of land in the county has been developed, leaving about 40% as rural/unincorporated area.

There are currently 29 four-year colleges and universities and 11 two-year colleges offering classes in the area. The county has 7 school districts (K-12) totaling over 93,000 students during the 2014-2015 school year. Collectively, there are 43 nationally-recognized Blue Ribbon schools.
Chart A

![Chart A: Population of Johnson County 2004-2014 (Total Population 574,272)](chart-a.png)

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014, Pop. Estimates

Chart A demonstrates that Johnson County has experienced sustained population growth over the past ten years. As of September 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates the total County population to be 574,272.

Chart B

### County Population by City 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>2014 Population</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>2014 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overland Park</td>
<td>184,525</td>
<td>Roeland Park</td>
<td>6,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olathe</td>
<td>133,062</td>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>6,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawnee</td>
<td>64,599</td>
<td>Fairway</td>
<td>3,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenexa</td>
<td>51,042</td>
<td>Mission Hills</td>
<td>3,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leawood</td>
<td>34,395</td>
<td>Spring Hill</td>
<td>3,412*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Village</td>
<td>21,877</td>
<td>Edgerton</td>
<td>1,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner</td>
<td>20,667</td>
<td>Westwood</td>
<td>1,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson County</td>
<td>11,372*</td>
<td>Lake Quivira</td>
<td>896*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Westwood Hills</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merriam</td>
<td>11,290</td>
<td>Mission Woods</td>
<td>3597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>9501</td>
<td>Bonner Springs</td>
<td>0*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These Cities have boundaries outside of Johnson County. The number included above represents the Johnson County portion of the population only. Source: County Economic Research Institute

Chart B illustrates that the unincorporated portion of Johnson County – the area for which the County provides municipal services – represents 2.73% of the County’s total population. The remaining Johnson County residents reside in one of the twenty incorporated cities.
Chart C

Resident identified with Racial or Ethnic Minority

Source: MARC Estimates for States, Counties: Population by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin

Chart C illustrates the diversity of Johnson County's population. According to the MARC Estimates for States, Counties: Population by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin for 2014, 18.1% (103,915) of Johnson County residents identify with a racial or ethnic minority, a slight increase of the total County population than in the previous year. The largest minority populations in the county are Hispanics/Latinos (7.42%) and African Americans (5.29%).

Chart D

Johnson County Crime Index 2010-2014

Source: Kansas Bureau of Investigation

Chart D reflects that Johnson County's crime index for 2014, for crimes reported to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, has shown a significant decrease over the past year. Despite sustained population growth, Johnson County's crime rate decreased again this year, violent crime is down 20.4% compared to 2009 and property crime is down 8.04% in that same period. (Violent crime is defined as Murder, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assaults). The majority of crimes in Johnson County are property related.

1 MARC Estimates for States, Counties: Population by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin
2 Kansas Bureau of Investigation, 2014 Crime Statistics, Johnson County
Chart E documents that Johnson County experienced a slight (3.6%) increase in average home sale prices in 2014. This increase continues the trend started in 2013 of improvement in the real estate market. Historically, the housing market has responded to local trends as strong income growth and a desirable location have driven housing prices up in the County. This increase from $261,700 in 2013 to $271,572 in 2014 marks the continued strength of the housing market.

Chart F documents a slight decrease in sales of new and existing housing in Johnson County in 2014. Total sales decreased from 10,245 in 2013 to 9,982 in 2014. A slowing of supply and rising prices are among reasons younger and first-time buyers have not yet entered the market adding to the decrease in sales seen this last year.

Chart G documents the annual unemployment in Johnson County, Kansas, and U.S. from 2010 to 2014. The unemployment rate in Johnson County and Kansas has remained below the national average.
Chart H shows the trend over the past five years of the annual unemployment rate for Johnson County. The County's unemployment rate rose slightly in 2014 from 4.7% to 5.4%. The County's unemployment rate continues to be lower than the national and state rates for five years running.

Chart H reflects the business patterns of Johnson County shifting away from Retail Trade and Construction and depicts Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Health Care and Finance/Insurance continuing to show strength and capturing a total of 34% of the total business market.

Chart I: Depicts the top ten largest employers in Johnson County. "Largest" is based on the number of employees. The greater Kansas City area consistently ranks among the top U.S. cities for supporting small businesses, according to Entrepreneur magazine. Entrepreneur named Kansas City as the No. 4 place to start a business nationally. Likewise, CBS Money Watch also just named Kansas City Metro as number 2 in its 9 Best U.S. Cities for Jobs and our city of 2.1
million residents was also picked by Google to test Google Fiber, its ultra-high-speed Internet experiment. Kansas City continues to make the "Top list in everything from BBQ to Tech jobs; this is definitely a great place to live and work.\(^4\)

\(^3\) U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns
\(^4\) Grandex Inc., Magazine, \(\text{http://grandex.co/}\)

**Other Information of Interest:**

**Educational Institutions:** Johnson County contains seven distinct school districts which serve over 93,000 students grade K-12. There are 154 public schools, and a student to teacher ratio of 16/1 which exceeds the state average of 12/1.\(^5\) Johnson County is also home to 45 private schools with an enrollment of 12,056 students. It is the home of Johnson County Community College, the Edwards Campus of the University of Kansas and the School for the Deaf.

**Public Safety Institutions:** Johnson County has 20 Law Enforcement agencies and three School District Police Departments. There are a total of 1290 sworn officers and 329 civilian employees in Law Enforcement in Johnson County.\(^6\) Johnson County Emergency Communications Center serves the 11 individual fire departments in the County, as well as Johnson County MedAci, the Countywide ambulance service, Miami County EMS, and Gardner Public Safety.\(^7\)

**Culture and Recreation:** Johnson County Park & Recreation District has provided high-quality parks, park services and recreational programs in more than 6,000 acres of parkland and open green space. Each year, the District records more than 7 million park visitors and nearly 1.5 million recreation participation s in over 4,000 programs.\(^8\)

Johnson County Library got its start in the 1950s in the homes of neighborhood families. Before they had funding, dedicated community members ran volunteer libraries out of their basements, schoolhouses, a barbershop, a plumbing company, a shopping center and a traveling bookmobile. Today, Johnson County Library serves over two million people from 13 library buildings in Northeast Kansas. And one thing hasn’t changed — the Library staff is helped by 900 volunteers who donate over 50,000 hours of their time each year loaning over 6 million items including books, ebooks, audiobooks and DVDs.\(^9\)

Johnson County Museum began as an all-volunteer organization in 1967. The original museum was housed in the former 1927 Greenwood School located in Shawnee, Kansas. The museum’s collections and facility grew over time and now include over 1 million photographs, 15,000 3-D artifacts, and 3,000 cu. ft. of archival material. The museum has also built a significant collection documenting the suburban experience in Johnson County. The museum offers long-term and changing exhibits, a speakers bureau, online resources for research, teacher training, school and public programming, summer camps, and special events. Each year, the museum serves 35,000 visitors onsite and nearly 100,000 people via its online resource materials.\(^10\)

**Transportation:** Johnson County offers air/bus transportation to the region. Two airports are maintained through the Johnson County Airport Commission, New Century Air Center and the Executive Airport. The Executive Airport is the 3rd busiest general aviation airport in the state of Kansas, with approximately 90,000 annual operations, while the New Century Air Center has approximately 50,000 annual operations.\(^11\) Johnson County Transit, which merged with the Kansas City Area Transit Authority in December 2014, provides public transportation services to much of Johnson County, downtown Kansas City, Mo., Kansas City, Kan., and other outlying areas. The JO, operates weekday commuter services with most routes running during peak morning and afternoon times. Special Edition provides paratransit services to Johnson County seniors and disabled residents. The JO provided 613,638 rides in 2014.\(^12\)

**Utilities:** Johnson County Wastewater (JCW) is responsible for the collection, transportation, and treatment of wastewater generated by residential, industrial, and commercial customers. Johnson County Wastewater provides sanitary sewer service to more than 400,000 people throughout the County. The wastewater system covers a service area of more than 172 square miles and 16 cities. Johnson County Wastewater operates a total treatment capacity of 63.9 million gallons per day. Johnson County Wastewater processed an average of 16.3 billion gallons of wastewater in 2014, equivalent to filling Kansas City’s Sprint Center more than 78 times.\(^13\)

\(^5\) Kansas Public School Review. Johnson County
\(^6\) Kansas Bureau of Investigation – Law Enforcement Statistics
\(^7\) Johnson County Emergency Communications Center. Jocogov.org
\(^8\) Johnson County Park & Recreation District – jocogov.org
\(^9\) Johnson County Library, jocogov.org Library/home
Section II – Comparable Counties

A group of eight counties – Jefferson, Colorado; Dakota, Minnesota; St. Charles, Missouri; Chester, Pennsylvania; Collin, Texas; Denton, Texas; Dane, Wisconsin; and Waukesha, Wisconsin - are located throughout the country and have been deemed comparable to Johnson County in a number of categories:

- Total population;
- Constituent education level;
- Rate of employment;
- Household and personal income;
- Proximity to a large metropolitan statistical area.

While none of these counties mirror Johnson County in every category, when viewed as a whole, each provides its citizens with a lifestyle and overall environment similar to that of Johnson County.

The following charts provide statistical comparisons between Johnson County and comparable counties, including a number of social demographics and economic indicators.

Chart J & K – Population

Chart J shows the total estimated population for Johnson County from 2010 to 2014. Chart K shows the estimated 2014 population for Johnson County in relation to the comparison counties.

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014 Pop. Estimates

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014 Pop. Estimates
Chart L & M – Median Age

**Chart L** shows the median age of Johnson County from 2010-2014. **Chart M** shows the 2014 median age for Johnson County in relation to the comparison counties.

![Johnson County 2010-2014](Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014)

![Johnson County & Comparison Counties 2014](Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014)

Chart N & O – Race and Language

**Chart N** shows the percent of the population in Johnson County that does not speak English as their primary language and the percent of the population that is white from 2010 to 2014. **Chart O** shows the 2014 race and language numbers for Johnson County in relation to the comparison counties.

![Johnson County 2010-2014](Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014)

![Johnson County & Comparison Counties 2014](Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014)

Chart P & Q – Educational Achievement

**Chart P** shows the percent of the Johnson County population from 2010 to 2014 that completed a high school diploma and the percent that has a college degree. **Chart Q** shows the 2014 Johnson County educational achievement numbers in relation to the comparison counties.

![Johnson County 2010-2014](Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014)

![Johnson County & Comparison Counties 2014](Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014)
Chart R & S – Poverty and Disabilities

Chart R shows the percent of the Johnson County population from 2010 to 2014 that is below the poverty line, and the percent that has a disability. Chart S shows the Johnson County 2013 poverty and disability percentages in relation to the comparison counties.

[Graphs showing poverty and disability rates over time for Johnson County and comparison counties.]

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014

Chart T & U – Median Home Value

Chart T shows the median home value for Johnson County from 2010 to 2014. Chart U shows the 2014 median home value of Johnson County in relation to the comparison counties.

[Graphs showing median home values for Johnson County and comparison counties.]  

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014

Chart V & W – Average Work Commute Time

Chart V shows the average commute time for Johnson County citizens from 2010 to 2014. Chart W shows the 2014 Johnson County average commute time in relation to the comparison counties.

[Graphs showing average commute times for Johnson County and comparison counties.]

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014
Chart X & Y – Unemployment & Labor

Chart X shows the percentage of the Johnson County population that is in the labor force and the percentage of the labor force that is unemployed from 2010 to 2014. Chart Y shows the 2014 Johnson County labor force and unemployment percentages in relation to the comparison counties.

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014

Chart Z & AA – Median Household and Per Capita Income

Chart Z shows the median household and per capita income in Johnson County from 2010 to 2014. Chart AA shows the 2014 Johnson County income numbers in relation to the comparison counties.

Source: U.S. Census, Fact Finder 2014

Summary

The preceding community indicators and statistical comparisons reflect some of the demographic, economic and social characteristics of Johnson County, and evaluate the County's progress in relation to the benchmark communities across the country against which Johnson County measures itself. The information included in this section is an important tool for Johnson County and its municipal partners for future planning of Government services.
**Organizational Structure**

The organizational chart for Johnson County Government is presented on page B.15.

**Elected Officials**

Johnson County is governed by a seven-member Board of County Commissioners, which meets in regular business session once each week. The Chairman of the Board is elected on a county-wide basis and serves as a full-time County official. District commissioners are elected by residents in specific geographical areas, or districts of the County and serve as part-time County officials. The Chairman and the district commissioners serve four-year terms with no term limitations.

Currently, the Board of County Commissioners is comprised of the following individuals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commissioner</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Initial Year as Commissioner</th>
<th>Term Expires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed Eilert, Chairman</td>
<td>At-Large</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Shaffer</td>
<td>District 1</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Allen</td>
<td>District 2</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven C. Klika</td>
<td>District 3</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Osterhaus</td>
<td>District 4</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Ashcraft</td>
<td>District 5</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Toplikar</td>
<td>District 6</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the Board of County Commissioners, residents of Johnson County elect the following positions:

- District Attorney
- Sheriff

These positions are elected at large and serve four-year terms with no term limitations.

**Appointed Officials**

In 1984, Johnson County government was designated by the International City-County Management Association (ICMA) as a Council-Manager form of government. As a result, the Board appoints a professional County Manager to administer a variety of County functions. The County Manager is responsible for policy implementation, budget development and implementation, and the appointment and direction of certain department directors.

In addition to the County Manager, the Board also appoints members for four (4) governing boards:

- Airport Commission
- Developmental Supports
- Library
- Park & Recreation

The governing boards for these four (4) agencies are responsible for a number of items, including the appointment and direction of an Executive Director and the submission of an annual budget request to the Board of County Commissioners.

In 2013, The Board of County Commissioners dissolved the Mental Health Board and assumed responsibility for that area. A Mental Health Advisory Board was appointed following this action, in accordance with state statute.
Home Rule Charter

In January of 1996, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appointed a Citizens' Visioning Committee (JCCVC) to develop a 20-year vision for Johnson County and to recommend a future role for County government. The JCCVC completed and submitted its report to the Board in July of 1997. One of the recommended actions in the JCCVC report was the following:

"Restructure the BOCC to enhance the opportunities for county leadership that will be necessary to achieve this vision for the future. Among the changes that must be considered are the at-large selection of at least one county commissioner; selection of the chairperson (possibly by direct election of the voters) who will serve a full term as chair; and the abandonment of the annual rotation of the chair among the members of the BOCC."

In response to the JCCVC recommendation, the Board appointed a Charter Commission in May of 1999 to develop a proposed Home Rule Charter for Johnson County. The Charter Commission, which was composed of 25 citizens, met more than 30 times over a 12-month period and held six (6) public hearings. In May of 2000, the Charter Commission submitted its report and a proposed Home Rule Charter to the Board.

In November of 2000, voters approved the Home Rule Charter. Overall, no major changes in the County's operations occurred until after the election in November of 2002, which added an additional district commissioner and a commission chairman elected on a countywide basis. The next major change occurred in January of 2005 when the elected positions of County Clerk and Register of Deeds were combined into one appointed office titled the Director of Records and Tax Administration. In addition, the position of County Treasurer became an appointed office in October of 2005.

The Home Rule Charter became effective on January 11, 2001 and includes the following timeline and action items:

1. The Board of County Commissioners appointed a County Manager by December 31, 2001 (this was completed in December of 2001, when the existing County Administrator was appointed County Manager).
2. The four (4) governing boards conformed to the general administrative policies of the County by December 31, 2001.
3. Redistricting for the six (6) commissioner districts was completed by April 1, 2002.
4. Reorganization of the Board of County Commissioners with six (6) district commissioners and the elected chairman occurred on January 16, 2003.

The Home Rule Charter contains seven (7) separate articles. In addition to the items discussed above, the Charter:

1. Establishes four-year terms for all commissioners, including the chairman, with no term limitations.
2. Makes each election non-partisan. Primary elections will be held if there are more than two (2) candidates for the position. The two candidates who receive the most votes in the primary election are placed on the ballot for the November election. If there are two or less candidates who file for a position, then no primary election will be held.
3. Requires the Board of County Commissioners to appoint a Charter Review Commission. The Review Commission meets at least once per year for five (5) years, and is composed of seven (7) members who served on the Charter Commission.

Under the Home Rule Charter, the Board of County Commissioners will continue to appoint members for four (4) governing boards.