



# WSU TECH STRATEGIC PLAN

*October 2024*

**PREPARED BY**  
WSU PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT CENTER



**WICHITA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

**PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT CENTER**





# Mission, Vision, & Values

## Mission Statement

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The mission of WSU Tech is to provide quality higher education and leadership in workforce training that supports economic development for a global economy.

## Vision Statement

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To be one of the nation's most innovative and impactful two-year colleges.

## Guiding Principles

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1. Helping families through access and affordability.
2. Supporting Kansas businesses with a talent pipeline that meets employer needs.
3. Increasing economic prosperity with higher education that benefits the Kansas economy.
4. Asking ourselves as we make decisions, is it in the best interest of our students, employees, and community.



# Strategic Plan

## People & Culture

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Recruit and retain a competitive talent advantage.

### Metric

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1. Increase retention of new hires.
2. Decrease the length of time from recruitment to onboarding of a new employee.

### Goal 1:

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Prioritize focus on inclusive excellence within WSU Tech's Organizational Culture.

### Strategies

1

**Implement comprehensive training programs for faculty and staff.**

**Ownership:** Vice President of People and Culture and Vice President of Instructional and Academic Support

2

**Develop a system to record professional development of faculty and staff.**

**Ownership:** Vice President of People and Culture and Vice President of Instructional and Academic Support

## Goal 2:

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Attract and retain quality employees who advance WSU Tech's mission through innovation and adaptability.

### Strategies

1

**Improve employee diversification by reviewing requirements for positions and opportunities to expand candidate pool.**

***Ownership:*** Vice President of People and Culture

2

**Establish a pipeline for recruiting students and alumni into positions within WSU Tech.**

***Ownership:*** Vice President of People and Culture

3

**Streamline recruitment, hiring, and training processes.**

***Ownership:*** Vice President of People and Culture

## Goal 3:

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Cultivate a culture of care that enhances communication and cross-departmental collaboration.

### Strategies

1

**Amplify focus on the integration of WSU Tech values into the working culture of the institution.**

***Ownership:*** Leadership Team

2

**Expand manager training to cover frontline management, change management, standard decision-making models, and consistent communication and feedback across the college.**

***Ownership:*** Vice President of People and Culture



## Goal 4:

Develop and support professional growth, personal growth, and innovation to position WSU Tech as a leader in higher education.

### Strategies

1

**Expand and implement opportunities to promote and support employee professional development and career advancement.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of People and Culture*

2

**Develop and implement succession plans to ensure organizational sustainability.**

**Ownership:** *Leadership Team*

3

**Continue to provide opportunities for cross-functional collaboration and innovation amongst faculty, staff, and students.**

**Ownership:** *Leadership Team*



# Student Success

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Create access and opportunities to prepare more students for next steps toward economic prosperity.

## Metric

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1. Increase student success rates, persistence, retention, and completion by 12 percent by end of FY27.
2. Grow enrollment to a headcount of 6,500 by Fall of 2027 – adult and high school for credit/non-credit.

## Goal 1:

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Prioritize focus on inclusive excellence within WSU Tech's Organizational Culture.

## Strategies

1

**Grow enrollment to reach a headcount of 6,500 by Fall of 2027 for adult and high school for credit/noncredit.**

**Ownership:** *Leadership Team*

2

**Increase student persistence, retention and completion by 12 percent by end of FY27.**

**Ownership:** *Leadership Team*

3

**Increase focus on Shocker Transfer Accelerator enrollment and retention to become the #1 transfer to WSU.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Student Success*

4

**Increase recruiting efforts toward underrepresented populations, including HSI, low-income, geographical outreach, racially and economically diverse students through focused marketing strategies.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Student Success and Executive Director of Strategic Communications*

## Goal 2:

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Retain more students by ensuring WSU Tech students have a quality academic experience to prepare for a more prosperous future.

### Strategies

1

**Identify and implement solutions mitigating barriers to student success and strategically focus on academic support services to meet student needs and expectations.**

***Ownership:** Vice President of Student Success and Academic Vice Presidents*

2

**Increase program agility to meet changing industry needs.**

***Ownership:** Academic Vice Presidents*

3

**Focus on equalizing student success rates among underserved and non-underserved student populations.**

***Ownership:** Vice President of Student Success and Academic Vice Presidents*

4

**Increase retention of underrepresented populations, including HSI, low income, geographical outreach, and racially and economically diverse students through focused support strategies.**

***Ownership:** Vice President of Student Success and Academic Vice Presidents*

### Goal 3:

Continue to build academic innovation through engaging and relevant learning experiences for all students.

#### Strategies

1

**Enhance student preparedness through rigorous, leading-edge quality programs and industry relevant training.**

*Ownership: Academic Vice Presidents*

2

**Continually develop and implement innovative teaching modalities, competency-based education, ensuring relevancy and engagement.**

*Ownership: Academic Vice Presidents*

3

**Continue to develop student opportunities through additional new program initiatives.**

*Ownership: Academic Vice Presidents*

4

**Address the gap between student perception and employer expectations on the importance of work-ethics, job/soft skills and workforce preparedness.**

*Ownership: Vice President of General Education and Skilled Trades*





# Community Partnerships

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Develop transformational partnerships to meet community workforce needs.

## Metric

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1. Develop a tool to measure the perception of industry satisfaction with services from WSU Tech.
2. Increase philanthropic engagement in support of \$8 million campaign.
3. Increase in applied learning and non-credit training.

## Goal 1:

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Continue to build academic innovation through engaging and relevant learning experiences for all students.

## Strategies

1

**Support design and construction of WSU Tech campus expansions.**

*Ownership: Vice President of Finance and Administration*

2

**Provide and increase all types of applied learning opportunities that match employer and student needs and continue the development of paid applied learning opportunities for students.**

*Ownership: Vice President of General Education and Skilled Trades*

3

**Amplify the platform to share transformational student and community success stories locally, regionally, and nationally.**

*Ownership: Executive Director of Strategic Communications and Executive Director of Public Affairs and Executive Communications*

4

Enhance and sustain the quality of dual enrollment partnerships through NACEP accreditation, aiming to be a benchmark program across the state and on a national level.

*Ownership: Vice President of Student Success*

5

Become nationally recognized as a leader in, SMART manufacturing, IT, aviation, culinary and healthcare.

*Ownership: Academic Vice Presidents*

## Goal 2:

Establish a comprehensive approach to workforce development with industry and other community partners.

### Strategies

1

Continue the development of working auxiliary and non-credit opportunities.

*Ownership: Academic Vice Presidents*

2

Partner with industry and community organizations to develop innovative business and education partnerships for expanded work-based learning, education, and employment.

*Ownership: Academic Vice Presidents*

3

Partner with K-12, including micro-schools and home schools, to expand the talent pipeline recruitment reach.

*Ownership: Vice President of Student Success*

# Continuous Improvement

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Improve internal consistency to assist student learning and customer experiences.

## Metric

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1. **Net Impact Score:** Measure the impact and effectiveness of student support services.
2. **Net Transformation Score:** Measure the net economic gain for an individual student after completing their education.

## Goal 1:

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Continue to build academic innovation through engaging and relevant learning experiences for all students.

## Strategies

1

**Implement and enhance a review system for both academic and non-academic units to evaluate their impact on enrollment and retention.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Instructional and Academic Support*

2

**Expand data analysis systems to identify and implement early intervention measures for student success.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Student Success*

3

**Create and expand support services and target populations for student success. (i.e., First generation, Hispanic, underserved, active duty/veterans, etc.)**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Student Success*

4

**Implement professional development for staff, faculty, and students regarding artificial intelligence.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of General Education and Skilled Trades*



## Goal 2:

Create efficiencies in work processes that improve quality of overall services to students, employees, and industry partners.

### Strategies

1

**Develop and implement a system for reporting process improvement needs, prioritizing projects, and communicating on updates.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Finance and Administration*

2

**Continue to integrate into the culture the IT and data governance system to optimize resource usage and maximize capacity.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Finance and Administration*

3

**Develop tools to evaluate maximum usage of campus facilities.**

**Ownership:** *Vice President of Instructional and Academic Support*



# Financial Stability

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Ensure financial sustainability.

## Metric

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Monitor financial dashboard.

## Goal 1:

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Implement a financial sustainability model to provide visibility into key sustainability drivers.

## Strategies

1

**Fund existing reserves.**

*Ownership: Vice President of Finance and Administration*

2

**Explore Wichita State University affiliation efficiencies that leverage resources and improve funding at both organizations.**

*Ownership: President*

3

**Align financial resources with strategic priorities.**

*Ownership: Vice President of Finance and Administration*

## Goal 2:

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Identify and implement new financial resources.

### Strategies

1

**Develop and expand revenue streams through non-credit and continuing education, NICHE business operations, and industry demanded upskilling/re-skilling, and projects.**

*Ownership: President and Academic Vice Presidents*

2

**Identify new sources of funding through grants, innovative programs, and partnerships.**

*Ownership: Academic Vice Presidents*

3

**Expand the WSU Tech Foundation's funding sources, with a focus on need-based student funding and the funding campaign.**

*Ownership: Executive Director of WSU Tech Foundation*

## Goal 3:

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Develop strategic plans to ensure community affordability while aligning with financial and operational needs.

### Strategies

1

**Prepare alternative plans to support wrap around services and scholarship opportunities that are externally funded.**

*Ownership: Vice President of Student Success*

2

**Advocate at the Federal and State level to ensure a voice in how current and future funding would impact WSU Tech student opportunities.**

*Ownership: President*

3

**Align financial resources with strategic priorities.**

*Ownership: Vice President of Finance and Administration*





# Influencing Factors

## Background & Purpose

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WSU Tech is an industry leader in creating access and opportunities for student success to meet community workforce needs. This is demonstrated by record-breaking Fall 2023 enrollment figures, with the highest headcount and credit hours in the college's history. Key Fall 2023 enrollment highlights include:

- 5,655 total students enrolled
- 48,379 credit hours
- A 14.1 percent increase in recent high school graduate enrollment

These numbers reflect WSU Tech's commitment to meeting the evolving needs of students and the wider community workforce demand. This report examines the potential risks and opportunities to continue to advance its mission through the strategic planning process.

# Population and Demographics

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## **Population**

From 2018 to 2023:

- The United States population increased by 2.7 percent, growing by 8,690,044.
- The Kansas population increased by 1.5 percent, growing by 43,938.
- The Sedgwick County population increased by 3.1 percent, growing by 15,884.

From 2023 to 2028

- The U.S. population is expected to increase by 2.8 percent between 2023 and 2028, adding 9,513,666.
- The Kansas population is expected to increase by 2.5 percent between 2023 and 2028, adding 75,154.
- The Sedgwick County population is expected to increase by 3.3 percent between 2023 and 2028, adding 17,691.

Population growth in Sedgwick County outpaced both the United States and the State of Kansas from 2018 to 2023. Population growth between 2023 and 2028 is also projected to be higher in Sedgwick County than in Kansas or the United States.

## **Age**

From 2018 to 2023:

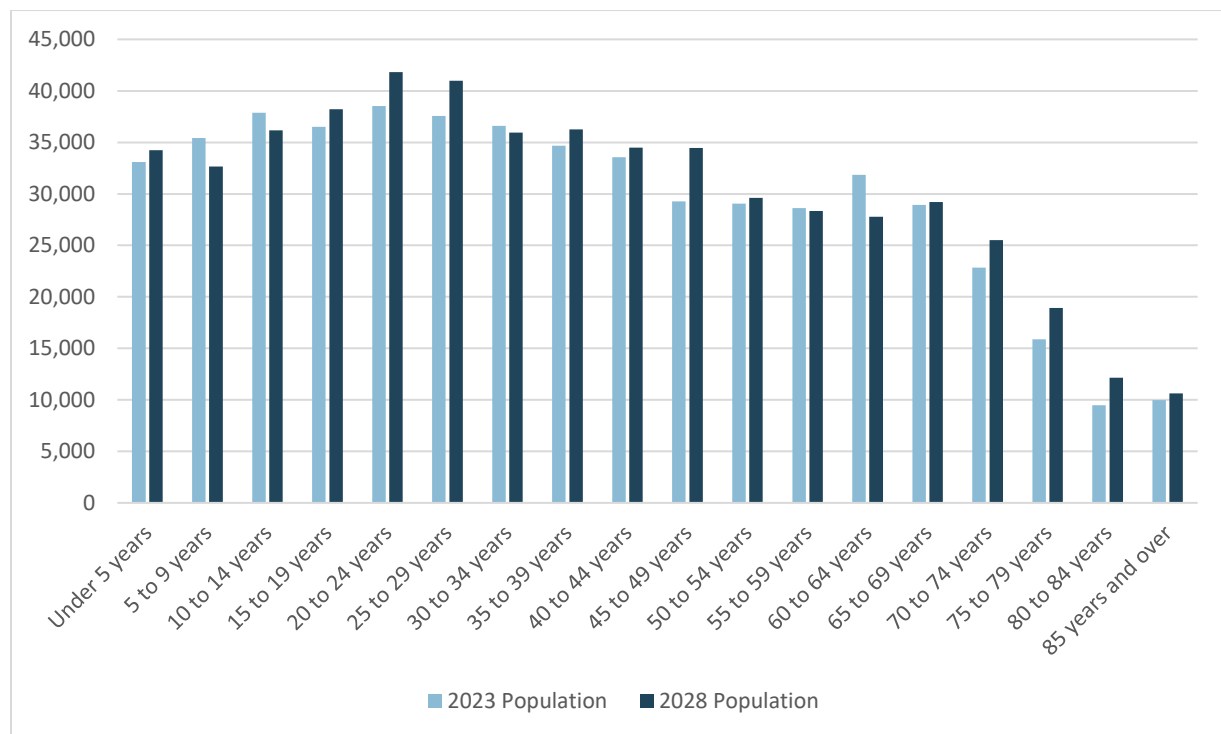
- The largest growth among age segments in the United States was 75 to 79 (+23 percent), followed by 80 to 84 (+16 percent). The 25 to 29 group saw the largest decline (-6 percent).
- In Kansas, the largest growth among age segments were 75 to 79 (+23 percent) and 70 to 74 (+20 percent), while the largest declines among segments were 55 to 59 (-14 percent) and under 5 years (-7 percent).
- In Sedgwick County, the largest growth among segments were 75 to 79 (+32 percent) and 70 to 74 (+23 percent), while 55 to 59 (-15 percent) and 5 to 9 (-6 percent) saw the largest declines.

From 2023 to 2028:

- In the United States, the 80 to 84 age group is expected to grow the most (+20 percent), followed by the 75 to 79 group (+13 percent).
- In Kansas, the 80 to 84 age group is expected to grow the most (+21 percent), followed by the 75 to 79 group (+17 percent).
- In Sedgwick County, the 80 to 84 age group is expected to grow the most (+28 percent), followed by the 75 to 79 group (+19 percent).

The population is expected to trend older over the next five to ten years with declines projected among the 5 to 14 and 60 to 69 age groups. The subpopulation making up the majority of WSU Tech’s enrollment—15 to 24—is expected to remain flat or see modest growth during the next five to ten years.

Figure 1: Sedgwick County Population by Age Cohort



Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.1

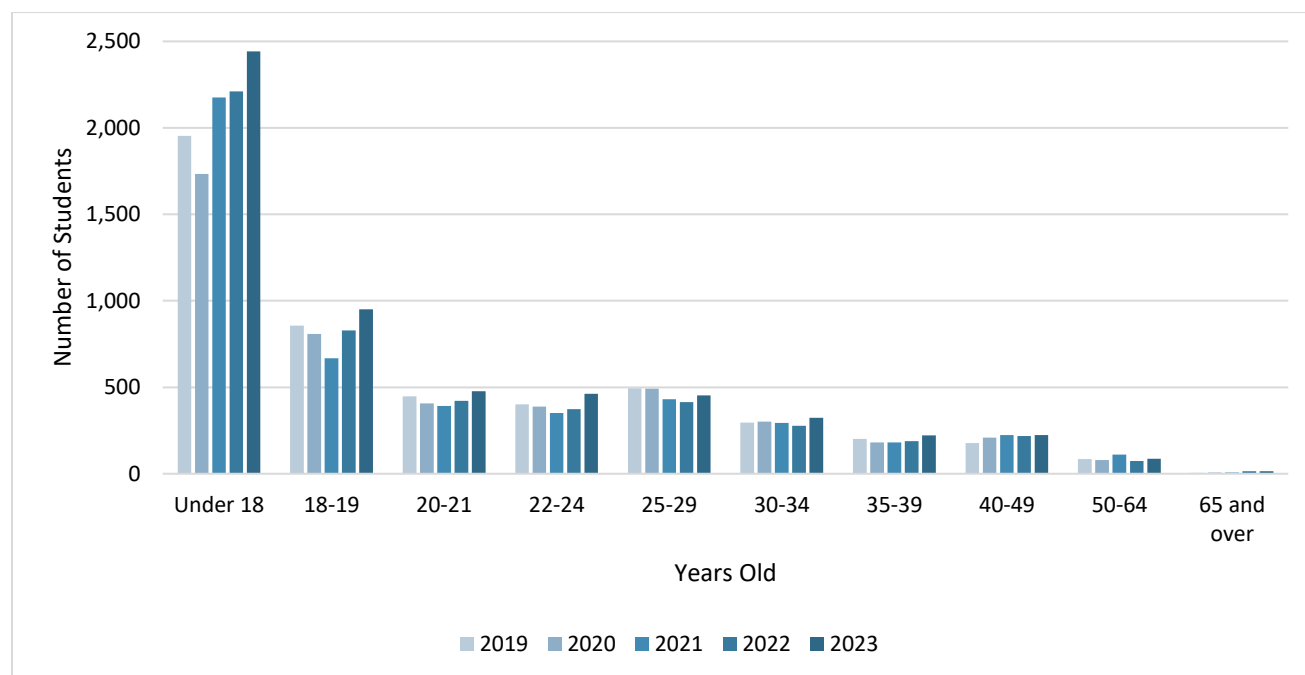


### WSU Tech Enrollment

- Students under 18 years old make up the school's largest age group.
- Enrollment numbers for students under 18 years old significantly decreased in 2020, a decrease unique to the age group and attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic as school districts postponed some of their dual credit CTE enrollment.
- Since 2020, enrollment for students under 18 has increased.

WSU Tech's key age segments are not expected to decline (in Kansas and Sedgwick County) over the next five to ten years; however, decreased enrollment in Wichita Public Schools could mean WSU Tech may need to expand into additional school districts or increase outreach in existing partner districts to mitigate potential contraction in its primary market.

Figure 1.2: Age of Students Enrolled (2019 – 2023)



Except for the 25 – 29 and 50 – 54-year-old groups, most age groups saw their highest enrollment in 2023 when compared with the last five years. This highlights both the importance of CTE concurrent and dual enrollment among high school students and a need to diversify the student body to include more adult learners over the age of 21.

## **Race and Ethnicity**

- Table A shows the demographic concentration for the State of Kansas and Sedgwick County in 2023 and the projected concentration in 2028.
- Demographic concentration quantifies the concentration of the population in a region relative to the national average.
- If a number is greater than one, it means that the region has a higher concentration of that population relative to the nation.

Table A: Demographic Concentration for Kansas and Sedgwick County

Demographic	Kansas		Sedgwick County	
	2023	2028	2023	2028
White, Non-Hispanic	1.26	1.27	1.13	1.14
Black, Non-Hispanic	0.46	0.46	0.69	0.68
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Non-Hispanic	1.1	1.19	1.06	1.04
Asian, Non-Hispanic	0.51	0.5	0.71	0.66
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	0.65	0.76	0.42	0.44
Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic	1.18	1.18	1.44	1.37
White, Hispanic	0.7	0.73	0.86	0.9
Black, Hispanic	0.45	0.47	0.58	0.56
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic	0.78	0.83	0.93	0.88
Asian, Hispanic	0.47	0.54	0.72	0.75
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic	0.53	0.68	0.33	0.33
Two or More Races, Hispanic	0.84	0.9	1.02	1.01

Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.1

### WSU Tech Enrollment

- The number of students identifying as White, Non-Hispanic has decreased over the last five years from 58 to 53 percent.
- The number of Hispanic/Latino students (regardless of race) has steadily increased over the last five years.
- In 2023, nearly one-quarter of students (24 percent) were Hispanic/Latino, qualifying WSU Tech as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).



## **Educational Attainment**

- 21.1 percent of U.S. residents hold a bachelor's degree, and 8.9 percent hold an associate degree.
- 22.1 percent of Kansas residents hold a bachelor's degree (1.0 percent above the national average), and 9.1 percent hold an associate degree (0.2 percent above the national average).
- 19.9 percent of Sedgwick County residents possess a bachelor's degree (1.3 percent below the national average), and 8.8 percent hold an associate degree (0.1 percent below the national average).

Table B: Educational Attainment as a Percentage of the Population (Age 25 and Older)

Education Level	United States	Kansas	Sedgwick County
Less Than 9th Grade	4.60%	3.50%	4.50%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	6.00%	4.80%	6.30%
High School Diploma	26.10%	25.10%	26.10%
Some College	19.70%	22.10%	23.00%
Associate Degree	8.90%	9.10%	8.80%
Bachelor's Degree	21.10%	22.10%	19.90%
Graduate Degree and Higher	13.60%	13.30%	11.50%

Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.<sup>1</sup>

While educational attainment in Kansas is above the national average, Sedgwick County is slightly below the national average.<sup>1</sup> Table B shows the percentage of the population—age 25 years and older—by education attainment for the United States, Kansas, and Sedgwick County.

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<sup>1</sup> Educational attainment is based on the number of adults age 25 years or older.



According to a 2024 report from Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, the 5.2 percent increase in post-secondary attainment in Kansas between 2010-2020 will add \$67 billion in net lifetime earnings gains (Carnevale, et al., 2024). However, most of the growth in educational attainment remains concentrated among white students. In Kansas, post-secondary educational attainment among the Hispanic/Latino population increased by 1.7 percent over this period, while educational attainment among the Black and African American population fell 1.3 percent over the same decade.

### **Program Completions and Growth**

- The number of public, two-year institution completions declined from 2018 to 2022 in both Kansas and Sedgwick County.
- Completions remained flat or trended upward for the state’s public, four-year institutions.

Table C shows the number and percentage change in completions in Kansas and Sedgwick County by institution type.

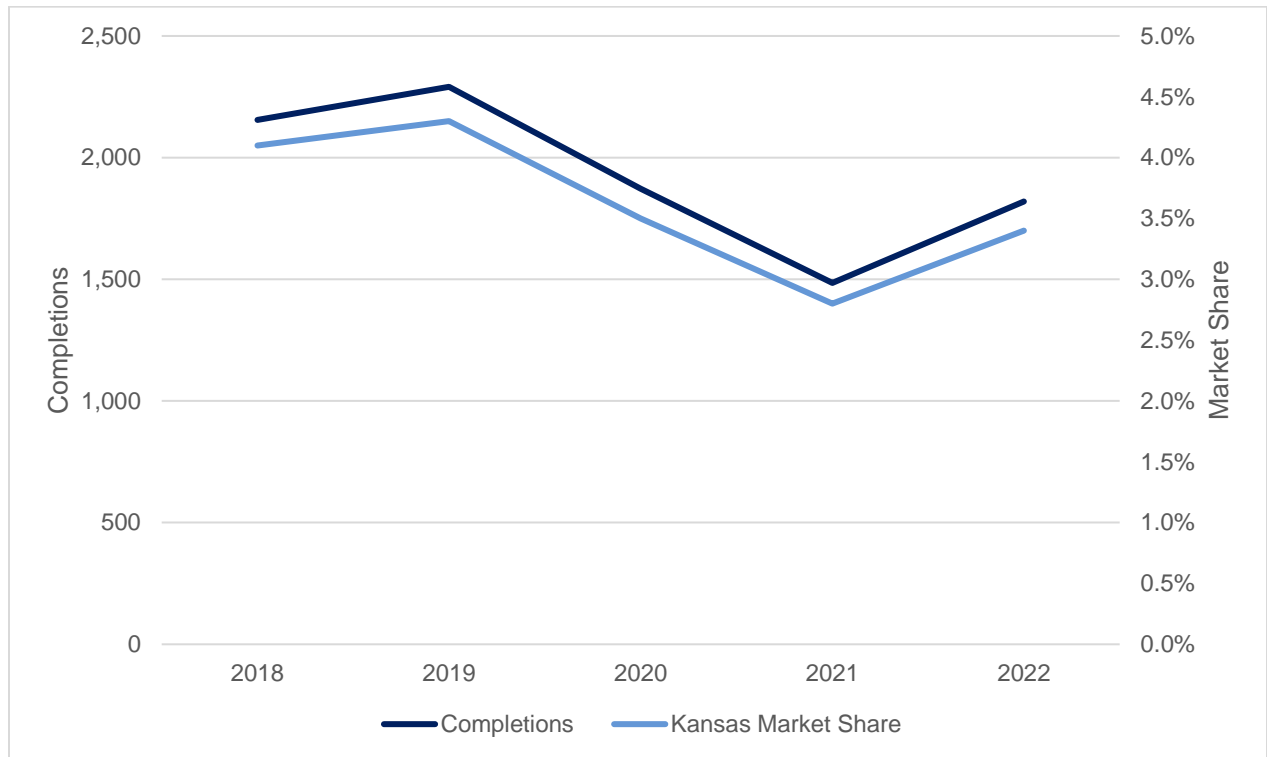
Table C: Completions by Institution Type

	Kansas			Sedgwick County		
Institution Type	2018	2022	Pct Change	2018	2022	Pct Change
Public, 4-year or above	25,507	26,844	5.24%	3,344	3,714	11.06%
Public, 2-year	18,678	18,168	(2.73%)	2,155	1,819	(15.59%)
Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above	6,223	5,557	(10.70%)	1,042	901	(13.53%)
Other	2,683	2,889	7.68%	875	1097	25.37%

Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.1

Figure 2 shows the number of completions and market share for WSU Tech by year from 2018 to 2022.

Figure 2: WSU Tech Completions and Market Share from 2018 to 2022



Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.1

# Labor Market Information

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## **Jobs**

From 2018 to 2023:

- Jobs increased by 3.6 percent in the United States from 165,130,759 to 171,071,791.
- Jobs in Kansas increased by 1.4 percent from 1,590,551 to 1,612,653.
- Jobs in Sedgwick County increased by 3.3 percent from 279,639 to 288,992.

The change in jobs in Kansas and Sedgwick County fell short of the national growth rate of 3.6 percent by 2.2 percent and 0.3 percent, respectively. According to Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass), the State of Kansas is expected to add 61,000 jobs between 2023 and 2028, while Sedgwick County is expected to add approximately 8,000; however, these period-over-period increases of 3.77 percent and 2.71 percent, respectively, fall short of the expected 6.05 percent job growth rate for the United States (Lightcast, 2024).

## **Labor Force Participation**

From 2018 to 2023:

- The U.S. labor force participation rate increased from 62.3 percent to 62.6 percent.
- The Kansas labor force participation rate decreased from 66.3 percent to 65.8 percent.
- The Sedgwick County labor force participation rate decreased from 63.0 percent to 61.7 percent.

The United States overall saw an increase in the labor force participation rate from 2018 to 2023, while the labor force participation rates in Kansas and Sedgwick County fell over the same period. Table D shows the labor force breakdown for the United States, Kansas, and Sedgwick County.<sup>2</sup>

Table D: January 2024 Labor Force Breakdown

Labor Force Participation	United States		Kansas		Sedgwick County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Non-Institutionalized Population</b>	268,692,349	79.63%	2,302,842	77.47%	412,077	77.27%
<b>Not in Labor Force</b>	102,264,794	38.06%	805,246	34.97%	156,943	38.09%
<b>Labor Force</b>	166,427,555	61.94%	1,497,596	65.03%	255,134	61.91%
<b>Employed</b>	159,649,781	95.93%	1,456,304	97.24%	247,075	96.84%
<b>Unemployed</b>	6,777,774	4.07%	41,292	2.76%	8,059	3.16%
<b>Under 16, Military, and/or Institutionalized Population</b>	68,725,764	20.37%	669,823	22.53%	121,208	22.73%

Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.1

<sup>2</sup> The breakdown is based on an examination of the noninstitutional population: persons 16 years of age and older residing in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, who are not inmates of institutions, and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces.



## **Employment Projections by Industry**

From 2023 to 2028:

- In the United States, the elderly and disability services industry is expected to add the most jobs (+516,602), followed by full-service restaurants (+300,537).
- In Kansas, the general medical and surgical hospital industry is expected to add the most jobs (+3,485), followed by the elderly and disability services industry (+3,069).
- In Sedgwick County, the elementary and secondary school industry is expected to add the most jobs (+741), followed by colleges, universities, and professional schools (+692).

Table E shows the anticipated top and bottom five growth industries in Sedgwick County from 2023 to 2028. The education sector represents an area of growth, while the fitness and recreation center industry is expected to experience the greatest decline in the number of jobs over this period.

The employment projections come from Lightcast (2024). Lightcast uses industry data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) dataset, plus some supplemental datasets that provide information for industries not covered by QCEW. Initial industry projections are adjusted to the National Industry-Occupation Employment Matrix (NIOEM), another BLS dataset. Lightcast also adjusts to long-term industry projections as published by each state.

Table E: Top and Bottom Five Growing Industries in Sedgwick County (2023-2028)

Description	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	Change	Percent Change
Elementary and Secondary Schools	13,906	14,647	741	5%
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	5,282	5,974	692	13%
General Warehousing and Storage	2,170	2,846	677	31%
Full-Service Restaurants	9,943	10,390	446	4%
Computer Systems Design Services	1,285	1,636	351	27%
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	7,271	7,048	(223)	(3%)
Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores	3,651	3,413	(238)	(7%)
Department Stores	1,646	1,328	(318)	(19%)
Telemarketing Bureaus and Other Contact Centers	1,377	921	(456)	(33%)
Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers	2,002	1,530	(472)	(24%)

Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.1

## **Employment Projections by Occupation**

From 2023 to 2028:

- The occupation expected to add the most jobs in the United States (+680,220), Kansas (+3,337), and Sedgwick County (+417) is home health and personal care aide
- The occupation expected to add the second most jobs in the United States (+305,055), Kansas (+2,241), and Sedgwick County (+327) is software developer.
- Sedgwick County is expected to experience declines in the number of jobs for cashiers (-226), customer service representatives (-386), and aircraft structure, surfaces, rigging, and systems assemblers (-390).

Table F shows the anticipated top and bottom five growth occupations in Sedgwick County from 2023 to 2028. Home health aides and software developers represent growth opportunities, while cashiers and customer service representatives are expected to experience a decline in the number of jobs over this period.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> The employment projections come from Lightcast (2024).

Table F: Top and Bottom Five Growing Occupations in Sedgwick County (2023-2028)

Description	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	Change	Percent Change
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	5,456	5,873	417	8%
Software Developers	1,966	2,294	327	17%
Cooks, Restaurant	2,677	2,984	307	11%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,973	3,238	265	9%
Stockers and Order Fillers	5,407	5,661	253	5%
Exercise Trainers and Group Fitness Instructors	869	710	(158)	(18%)
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	4,984	4,798	(186)	(4%)
Cashiers	6,240	6,014	(226)	(4%)
Customer Service Representatives	6,588	6,202	(386)	(6%)
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	5,406	5,016	(390)	(7%)

Source: Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass) 2024.1



# Aligning Perceptions with Workforce Needs

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## **Outlook**

- According to the United States Department of Education, the future of job training will almost certainly require most laborers to engage in some kind of post-secondary training to engage in skills-intensive professions emerging in the technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and trade professions.
- Advancements in technology and computing systems point to a need for a future workforce that is skilled compared to the expectations of the past.
- CTEs play a crucial role in future workforce development by offering greater accessibility to affordable, applied learning.
- CTEs also offer opportunities for populations seeking employment opportunities that do not require four-year degrees.

## **Public Perceptions of CTE**

- Public perceptions of Career and Technical Education (CTE) are sensitive to changes to funding, curriculum, and priorities.
- Many students and parents are unaware these programs can lead to high-wage jobs (Career and Technical Education Programs Face Challenges In Preparing the Future Workforce, 2022).
- Current CTE students/parents report higher levels of satisfaction when compared to prospective CTE parents/students across several educational dimensions.

In 2017, Advance CTE, a national CTE association, conducted a national survey of parents and students concerning the value of CTE (The Value and Promise of Career Technical Education: Results from a National Survey of Parents and Students, 2017). The online survey asked current CTE students and parents and prospective CTE students and parents about their school experience across several dimensions.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Prospective students and parents are those not currently involved in CTE but demonstrating some degree of interest after hearing a brief description of CTE.

Current CTE students/parents reported higher levels of satisfaction than prospective CTE parents/students across every measure. Table G shows the percentages of current and prospective students and parents who indicated they were satisfied with their school experience. These numbers indicate CTE still has an awareness challenge.

Table G: Student and Parent Satisfaction with Education Experience

Dimension	Students		Parents	
	Current	Prospective	Current	Prospective
Overall satisfaction with school experience	88%	76%	96%	79%
Opportunities to take elective courses	86%	70%	87%	63%
Ability to learn real-world skills	82%	51%	90%	49%
Opportunities to explore different careers of interest	82%	51%	89%	48%
Ability to begin preparing for/get a leg up on a career	81%	44%	91%	44%
Opportunities to earn college credits	81%	54%	85%	46%
Quality of the classes	81%	66%	89%	69%
Quality of the teachers	80%	69%	85%	70%
Opportunities to earn credits towards a certification	77%	44%	87%	39%
Social life opportunities	75%	68%	84%	66%
Opportunities to make connections with employers	69%	32%	83%	31%
Opportunities for internships	65%	28%	80%	30%

## Future of Work Study

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Deloitte conducted a study to understand the future of work in the Greater Wichita region (Deloitte, 2022). The report highlights several disruptors that will likely impact attracting, retaining, and developing the workforce of the future:

- Emerging Technologies
- COVID-19 Pandemic
- New Talent Requirements
- Supply Chain Disruptions
- Diversity and Generational Changes
- Automation and Robotics

The report indicates these disruptors have created several opportunity areas that need to be examined when considering the Greater Wichita region's future workforce:

### *Awareness of Professional Opportunities*

The Greater Wichita region offers many professional and development opportunities; however, students and job seekers are either unaware or unable to access these opportunities. Barriers to accessibility include transportation, childcare, and scheduling conflicts.

### *Competitive Pay*

Participants in the study indicated dissatisfaction around pay. Despite the region's low cost of living, talent may consider opportunities outside of the Greater Wichita region if their financial needs are not being met.

### *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

To make progress on its Future of Work goals, it will be important for the Greater Wichita region to establish DEI as a core component of business and community decisions to make sure future opportunities are accessible and available to diverse groups.

### *Future-Proofing the Industrial Landscape*

Regional stakeholders disagree on whether, and how, the Greater Wichita region's industrial landscape will diversify; however, these stakeholders agree on the need to future-proof the region's economy. This might include staying on top of developments in robotics, automation, and other smart manufacturing technologies.

### *Investment in Diverse Career Pathways*

Attracting and retaining talent will require that students and job seekers see career stability and networked career paths that encourage entrepreneurship and innovation. The region's concentration in aviation and manufacturing is a strength but also an opportunity area, as many students are unable to see long-term career paths—in the Greater Wichita region—outside of these industries.





## State and Federal Funding

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The following funding opportunities for CTEs outline national and state-level funding priorities that are responsive to meeting future workforce needs.

### **Kansas CTE Grants**

The Kansas Department of Education offers several sources of funding to meet state targets for post-secondary education, including incorporating adult learners, forming stronger industry partnerships, and filling job gaps in key sectors.

Funding Source	Description
Kansas Promise Act	Provides support for CTE training for Kansas adults willing to work in the state for at least two years post-graduation. <sup>5</sup>
Accelerating Opportunities	Supports adult learners returning to school to receive additional job training or skills training to enter a new industry. <sup>6</sup>
Workforce Development	Provides support and funding to develop programs supporting high growth, highly skilled jobs in high-demand industries.
Innovative Technology and Internship Grant	Supports the development of courses, programs, and faculty skills in high-demand, technical jobs identified by/in collaboration with local industry partners.
Kansas Nursing Initiative	Supports training of nursing students and faculty to address the employment gap in healthcare in Kansas.

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<sup>5</sup> This is set to expire July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2028.

<sup>6</sup> For those lacking a high school diploma, the fund allows students to earn a GED on the way to graduating with necessary employment credentials.

## **Kansas Department of Education Funding Projections FY 2025**

In the Governor's Budget Report for fiscal year 2023, the Kansas Division of the Budget expressed concern over historically inconsistent funding of CTE programs (Proffitt, et al., 2024). Given the current national priority to better align CTE training with workforce needs, this could negatively impact the Kansas economy in the coming decades.

The Division of the Budget produces budget projections for the current and upcoming fiscal year. The latest available data include projections for FY 24-25. Table H outlines funding commitments for tiered and non-tiered programs.<sup>7</sup> These include commitments to specific programs, such as Excel in CTE.

Table H: Funding Commitments for Tiered and Non-Tiered Programs

	<b>Tiered</b>	<b>Non-tiered</b>
<b>FY24</b>	66.1 million	95.4 million
<b>FY25</b>	69.1 million	98.4 million

The Division of the Budget also committed \$6.5 million to fund cybersecurity initiatives aimed at protecting student and network data to CTEs looking to upscale their IT infrastructure.

## **Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act**

The current seated 118<sup>th</sup> United States Congress is considering a bill that provides Pell Funding to eligible students enrolled in short-term post-secondary degree programs with the “goal of aligning educational opportunities with workforce needs,” according to CTE Policy Watch (Koch, 2023). With significant support going back at least a decade, such a bill would provide invaluable support to working-class students seeking educational opportunities in the coming decades.

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<sup>7</sup> “Tiered technical course” means a postsecondary credit-bearing course included in the sequence of courses comprising a technical program. “Non-tiered course” means any postsecondary credit-bearing course identified by the state board as not meeting the definition of a tiered technical course.

The bill has not been voted on by Congress, but its bipartisan support and alignment with current federal funding targets for post-secondary education are promising and would provide financial opportunities for prospective students.

### **Perkins Excel in CTE**

The Perkins Excel in CTE program provides funding for the following:

- Tuition for secondary students
- Incentives for high schools to graduate credentialed students
- Reimbursement of transport costs incurred by rural students

Collectively, these indicate an opportunity to increase partnerships with Kansas schools in person and online, tapping tuition assistance, school incentives, and transportation funds to support rural and continuing education learners.

### **CHIPS and Science Act**

In 2022, the Biden Administration signed into law the \$250 billion CHIPS and Science Act. The purpose of this funding is twofold, to invest in the semiconductor industry and increase related research and innovation.

The funds are allocated through the U.S. Department of Energy and Department of Commerce and independent agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Agencies have not yet fully appropriated the funds; however, some opportunities are currently available. The website, [chipsact.com](https://chipsact.com), advises educational institutions interested in receiving CHIPS funding “seek corporate partners” because “businesses submitting grant proposals must partner with educational entities to provide workforce training.”

# Conclusion

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The factors discussed in this report provide information on existing conditions, opportunities, trends, and challenges WSU Tech leadership should consider as they consider short and long-term strategic planning.

## **Summary of Influencing Factors**

### *Key Influencing Factors: External*

- **Regional Economic Trends** – industry growth sectors and specific high-demand skills
- **State/Federal Funding and Policy** – support for technical education and regulatory changes
- **Evolving Student Demographics and Attitudes** – shifts in population and perceptions affecting enrollment

### *Key Influencing Factors: Internal*

- **Program Alignment** – how closely programs match evolving workforce demands
- **Technological Infrastructure** – robustness to support different learning opportunities (e.g., hybrid, dual enrollment)

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## Appendix: Data Sources and Calculations

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Some of the data in this report were obtained using Lightcast (formerly EMSI Burning Glass). Lightcast is a software company that supplies labor market information through its Analyst and Developer products. This software as a service compiles data from several sources using a specialized process.

Data obtained from Lightcast and contained in this report come from the following agencies:

### Demographic Data

- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Health Department

### Institution Data

- U.S. Department of Education (National Center for Education Statistics)

### Industry Data

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- U.S. Census Bureau (Count Business Patterns)

### Occupation Data

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics)
- U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey)

### State Data Sources

- Kansas Department of Labor