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# New Communities Initiative in Wichita



Officials from the state of Kansas, Sedgwick County, and the City of Wichita are joining together to form the New Communities Initiative (NCI).<sup>1</sup> Focusing initially on one area within Wichita, these public and private sector leaders' mission is to design strategies that integrate state, county, city, and private resources to increase public safety, enhance educational opportunities for residents of all ages, improve housing conditions for neighborhood residents, and spur economic development.

## Background

With the number of people in prison rising, state legislators and corrections officials are searching for cost-effective ways to prevent crime beyond just building and operating additional prison beds. Through a detailed analysis of where people admitted to prison come from, corrections administrators identified a handful of neighborhoods across the state and within Wichita that accounted for a disproportionate share of prison admissions.

At the same time, representatives of other state, county, and city agencies have been analyzing where their resources and services are being deployed. When these officials came together, they realized that despite deploying a disproportionate share of their resources in the same set of neighborhoods, they were missing opportunities to coordinate and integrate these public resources, and align them with private efforts, to achieve a common set of outcomes for residents.

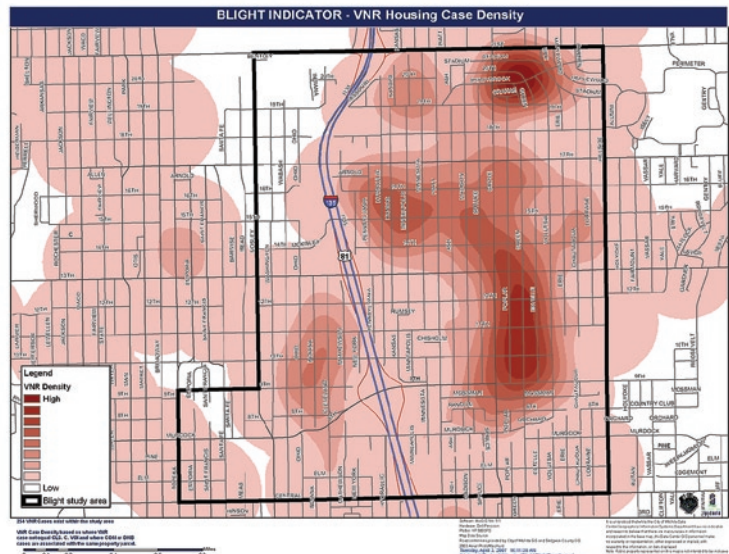
In response to this situation, community-based leaders, together with officials from

## Neighborhood Revitalization Areas in Wichita



## Active Code Compliance Cases in the NCI Area

This map reflects the density of active Code Compliance cases—dangerous and neglected buildings—in the areas that are being defined as the New Communities Initiative



state and local government, have decided to pursue a justice reinvestment strategy. Justice reinvestment is a data-driven strategy to reduce spending on corrections, increase public safety, and improve conditions in the neighborhoods to which most people released from prison return (please visit [justicereinvestment.org/home](http://justicereinvestment.org/home) for more on the strategy). To implement the strategy in Wichita, state, county, and city leaders, with the assistance of the Council of State Governments Justice Center and Urban Strategies,<sup>2</sup> formed a working group and designed the New Communities Initiative. This initiative will use existing and reinvested resources to integrate a human capital plan with public and private sector investments in certain neighborhoods to create safer, stronger, and more self-reliant communities.

## The Strategy

To guide the New Communities Initiative, a policy group of state, county, and city leaders from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors was established. This group agreed upon five outcome areas that would be the focus of its mission: provide quality housing for people of all incomes; create employment opportunities for those needing and seeking jobs; enhance the learning environment across all age groups; address safety and security concerns in the neighborhood, and improve quality of life for children and youth. Ultimately, state and local leaders hope their efforts in one area within Wichita will serve as a model for other communities in the city and across Kansas.

### New Communities Initiative Policy Group

Carl Brewer, Mayor, City of Wichita  
Sharon Fearey, Council Member, City of Wichita  
George Kolb, City Manager, City of Wichita  
Roger Werholtz, Secretary, Kansas Department of Corrections  
Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary, Kansas Department of Health & Environment  
Don Jordan, Acting Secretary, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services  
Jim Garner, Secretary, Kansas Department of Labor  
David Kerr, Secretary, Kansas Department of Commerce  
Kathy Greenlee, Secretary, Kansas Department of Aging  
J. Russell Jennings, Commissioner, Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority  
Winston Brooks, Superintendent, Wichita Public Schools  
Bill Buchanan, County Manager, Sedgwick County Courthouse  
Keith Lawing, Executive Director, Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas  
Dr. Donald L. Beggs, President, Wichita State University  
John Moore, Former Lieutenant Governor  
Rob Allison, President, Bank of America  
James N. Barber, President, Via Christi Foundation  
S. Edwards Dismuke, MD, MSPH, Dean KU School of Medicine-Wichita

Anne Corriston, Program Director, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation  
Susan Addington, Community Relations Manager, Koch Industries, Inc.  
Larry Schumacher, President & CEO, Via Christi Wichita Health Network  
Hugh Tappan, CEO, Wesley Medical Center  
Lyndy Wells, Executive Vice President, Intrust Bank

### Collaborating Agencies

Wichita Housing and Community Services Dept.  
Wichita Police Department  
Wichita Public Schools  
Sedgwick County Reentry Program  
Sedgwick County Division of Human Services  
Sedgwick County Department of Corrections  
COMCARE of Sedgwick County  
Kansas Housing Resources Corporation  
Kansas Department of Corrections  
Kansas Department of Health & Environment  
Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services  
Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority  
Kansas Department of Commerce  
Kansas Department of Labor  
Kansas Parole Board

1. The Open Society Institute is providing funding support to make this project possible through The After Prison Initiative, U.S. Justice Fund.

2. A national nonprofit that supports similar efforts in other cities like Wichita and is helping to staff the project.