

KANSAS
Rural Justice Initiative

Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

The Rural Justice Initiative Committee

January 24, 2024

Justice K.J. Wall, Kansas Supreme Court
&
Laurel Klein Searles, Chief of Attorney Services & Education, Office of Judicial Administration

1

KANSAS
Rural Justice Initiative

Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

National Landscape

Lawyers per 1,000: 3.34 3.39 4.48 5.18

ABA Profile of the Legal Profession 2022: <https://www.abalegalprofile.com/demographics.php#anchor2>

2

KANSAS
Rural Justice Initiative

Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

Active Attorneys per 1000*

*Active attorneys minus district court and appellate court judges

3

KANSAS Rural Justice Initiative
Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

Gold counties are members of Kansas Legislative Policy Institute

*Active attorneys minus district court and appellate court judges

County	Atty per 1000*	County	Atty per 1000*
Hodgeman	0.337438839	Sheridan	0.337438839
Wichita	0.343997248	Edwards	0.343997248
Jewell	0.361663653	Wallace	0.361663653
Scott	0.367917586	Gove	0.367917586
Woodson	0.389952381	Stanton	0.389952381
Lane	0.402108837	Stevens	0.402108837
Rawlins	0.443993404	Norton	0.443993404
Kiowa	0.479769711	Ottawa	0.479769711
Logan	0.479846449	Stafford	0.479846449
Seward	0.510464523	Anderson	0.510464523
Rice	0.521322073	Lincoln	0.521322073
Meade	0.581648975	Trego	0.581648975
Phillips	0.628722636	Nemaha	0.628722636
Russell	0.734913852	Geary	0.734913852
Ness	0.742548	Republic	0.742548
Morton	0.75254343	Cowley	0.75254343
Marshall	0.760786871	Dickinson	0.760786871
Kearny	0.764525994	Cherokee	0.764525994
Grant	0.77502143	Cloud	0.77502143
Mitchell	0.793650794	Waskell	0.793650794
Rush	0.794281176	Hamilton	0.794281176

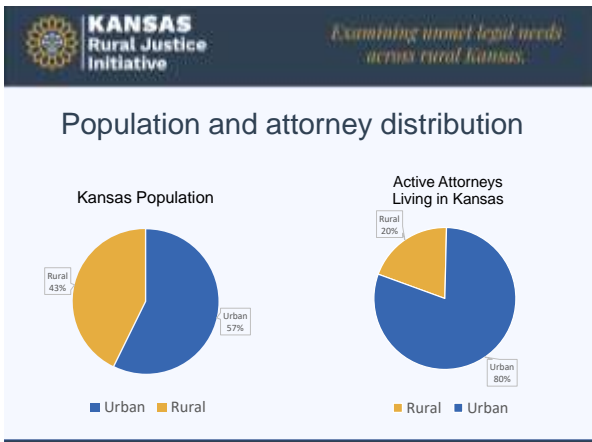
4

KANSAS Rural Justice Initiative
Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

County	Atty per 1000*	County	Atty per 1000*	County	Atty per 1000&*
Marion	0.796971508	Graham	1.242236025	Thomas	3.205128205
Jackson	0.816637631	Barton	1.250246538	Morris	3.707332469
Gray	0.864496134	Crawford	1.334291286	Labette	3.811944091
Allen	0.953800746	Clay	1.355180485	Montgomery	4.827330115
Bourbon	0.974930366	Washington	1.394052042	Pottawatomie	4.914273234
Cherokee	0.981303566	Sherman	1.400560229	Douglas	5.463652818
Greenwood	0.997340416	Pawnee	1.405340298	Miami	5.866114562
Ford	1.007392966	Johnson	1.408899927	Osage	6
Dobson	1.046207498	Leavenworth	1.411543387	Watt	6.247359547
Brown	1.051745888	Lin	1.448235923	Wabunsee	7.225322325
Doniphan	1.065246238	Crestley	1.557632398	Neosho	8.921894206
Coffey	1.078555014	Kingman	1.626016236	McPherson	9.864364582
Decatur	1.085383502	Roos	1.691474966	Jefferson	9.890859482
Harpur	1.093892434	Chautauque	1.779673278	Weno	15.40436457
Harvey	1.116858688	Butler	1.824467498	Saline	18.443020277
Franklin	1.154023668	Bris	1.831755022	Riley	21.7523887
Finney	1.169742621	Chase	1.944012442	Leavenworth	29.600190541
Barber	1.182592242	Clark	2.511300858	Sedgewick	53.40557276
Comanche	1.184332623	Wilson	2.568218298	Wyandotte	98.66511898
Elk	1.208215868	Lyon	2.875706598	Pawnee	290.1512056
Smith	1.227897838	Sumner	2.90037831	Johnson	855.1343209

*Active attorneys minus district court and appellate court judges

5

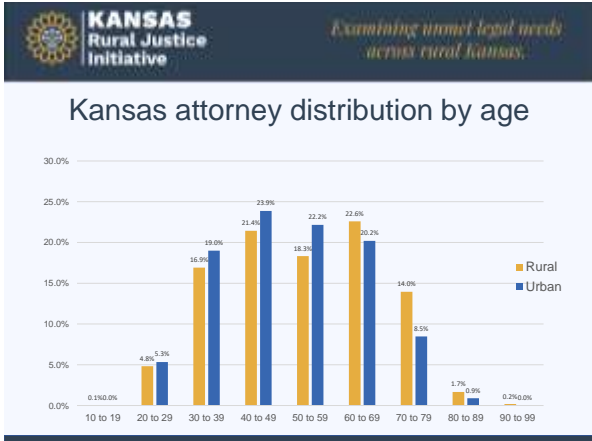


6

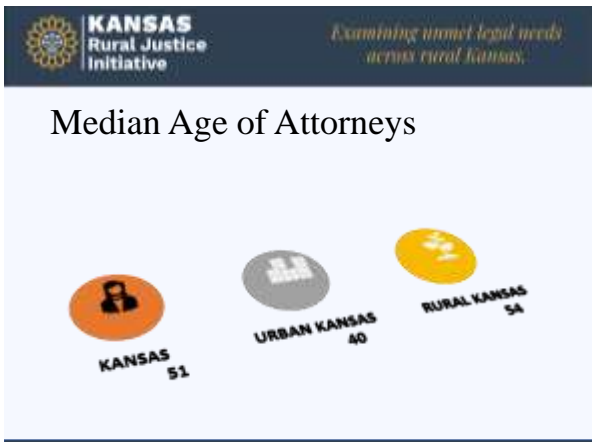
KANSAS Rural Justice Initiative *Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.*

Population	Ratio of Attorneys to Population
All Kansas	2 active attorneys for every 749 residents
Urban Kansas	2 active attorneys for every 535 residents
Rural Kansas	1 active attorney for every 808 residents

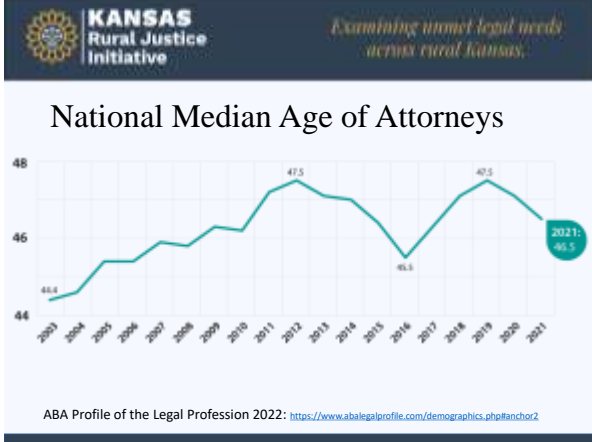
7



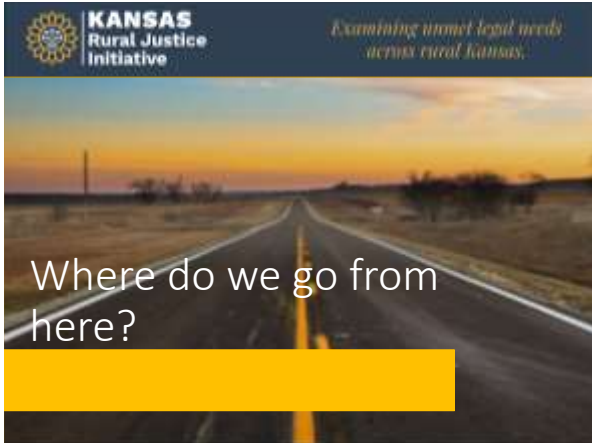
8



9



10



11

Kansas Rural Justice Initiative Committee

Established on December 1, 2023 by Kansas Supreme Court Administrative Order 2022-CM-081

12



Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

Committee Membership

- **Justice K.J. Wall**, Kansas Supreme Court, chair;
- **Judge Kim R. Schroeder**, Kansas Court of Appeals;
- **Chief Judge Daniel D. Creitz**, 31st Judicial District;
- **Chief Judge Kevin Berens**, 15th Judicial District;
- **District Judge Tom Drees**, 23rd Judicial District;
- **District Judge Richard Marquez**, 25th Judicial District;
- **District Magistrate Judge Regine Thompson**, 12th Judicial District;
- **Senator Elaine Bowers**, District 36;
- **Representative Tory Marie Blew**, District 112;
- **Stephen B. Angermayer**, Attorney, Pittsburg;
- **Paige Bangerter**, Attorney, Dodge City;
- **Andrew Bolton**, Attorney, Louisburg;
- **Stacey Blakeman**, Assistant Dean of Career Services, University of Kansas, Lawrence;
- **Ashley D. Comeau**, Attorney, Plainville;
- **Alan Cobb**, Kansas Chamber of Commerce, Topeka;
- **Aaron Cunningham**, Attorney, Hays;
- **Timothy Demel**, Attorney, Beloit;
- **Shirley Fessler**, Director of Outreach and Accessibility, Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, Topeka;
- **Wendee D. Grady**, Assistant General Counsel and Director of Legal Foundation, Kansas Farm Bureau, Manhattan;
- **Marilyn Harp**, Executive Director, retired, Kansas Legal Services, Topeka;

13



Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

Committee Membership, cont'd

- **Joslyn Kusiak**, Attorney, Independence;
- **Shawn Leisinger**, Associate Dean for Centers and External Programs, Externship Director, Washburn University School of Law, Topeka;
- **Angela Meyer**, Attorney, Pittsburg;
- **Joshua Ney**, Jefferson County Attorney, Oskaloosa;
- **Charles Peckham**, Attorney, Atwood;
- **Trisha Purdon**, Office of Rural Prosperity, Kansas Department of Commerce, Coffeyville;
- **Brad Ralph**, Attorney, Dodge City;
- **David J. Rebein**, Attorney, Dodge City;
- **Wendy Rohleder-Sook**, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director of Pre-Law/Legal Studies at Fort Hays State University, Hays;
- **Ann Sagan**, Director of Special Projects for the Kansas Board of Indigents' Defense Services, Topeka;
- **Sally Shattuck**, Attorney, Ashland;
- **Brien Stockman**, Attorney and Dane G. Hansen Foundation Trustee, Logan;
- **Elta L. Walker**, Attorney, Sharon Springs;
- **Jake Worcester**, Kansas 4-H Foundation, Manhattan; and
- **Jill Zimmerman**, Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership Program, Manhattan;
- The group will be supported by **Laurel Klein Searles**, Chief of Attorney Services and Education

14



Examining unmet legal needs across rural Kansas.

Data Collection & Information Gathering

- Collecting information and data about unmet legal needs across rural Kansas, including considerations for rural counties with different population densities.
- Studying pertinent statistical trends related to Kansas' population and demographics, including those specific to attorneys and other professionals who support court and court-adjacent programs.

15



Attorney Recruitment and Retention

- Studying rural incubator programs directed at professionals, including programs highlighted by the National Center for State Courts Rural Justice Collaborative, to determine whether those programs or elements of them may be useful to a coordinated Kansas effort.
- Examining court-based and court-adjacent programs used in other states to bolster the availability of attorney services in rural areas.
- Examining existing rural attorney recruitment projects in Kansas to make recommendations for supporting and expanding those projects.

16



Judicial, Legislative, and Community Initiatives and Solutions

- Identifying strategies to provide attorney services remotely in rural areas.
- Identifying options for non-traditional resolution of legal issues in rural environments, including alternative dispute resolution.
- Assessing judicial best practices that facilitate meeting legal needs across Kansas and identifying any impediments to implement those best practices.
- Recommending any necessary changes in law, regulation, or rule to improve the availability of attorney services in rural Kansas.

17



By June 1, 2024, the committee shall deliver initial recommendations to the Supreme Court.



18



KANSAS
Rural Justice
Initiative

*Examining unmet legal needs
across rural Kansas.*

Laurel Klein Searles

785-207-9562

Laurel.Searles@kscourts.org