

REAP | Regional Economic Area Partnership

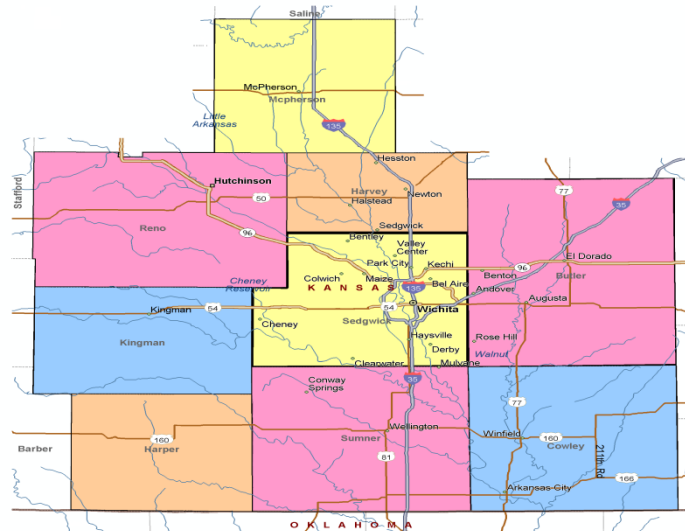
ABOUT THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AREA PARTNERSHIP (REAP)

REAP'S MISSION

Guide state and national actions that affect economic development in the region and adopt joint actions among member governments that enhance the regional economy.

OVERVIEW

In 1997, 27 cities passed resolutions adopting an intergovernmental agreement creating the South Central Regional Council of Governments, changing their name to REAP in 1999. Also in 1999, REAP extended membership to county governments. Currently REAP has representation from twenty-seven local governments.



Since its inception, REAP has grown as a regional organization and is an established voice on issues of common concern among local governments in South Central Kansas.

WHAT WE DO

Leadership

- Create a vision for regional economic and workforce development
- Provide a forum to identify and discuss future economic needs
- Promote consensus and commitment to regional solutions

Partnership

- Engage stakeholders on issue specific committees and task forces
- Encourage inter-jurisdictional planning to promote a growing regional economy
- Coordinate policies that guide progress in the region

Advocacy

- Guide state and national policies that impact the regional economy
- Provide a unified voice to promote regional economic development
- Advance prosperity in the region's vision for growth and development

For more information on REAP, please visit our website at www.reap-ks.org or contact Marla Canfield at 316-771-6613, mcanfield@workforce-ks.com

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Legislative & Policy Priorities

Each year, REAP establishes a legislative agenda advocating for state investments and encouraging strategic public policies to create jobs and grow the economy in South Central Kansas. The members of REAP focus on issues of common concern that drive the regional economy including transportation, water, energy and workforce development. REAP also hosts an annual Legislative and Policy Summit to engage state legislators and local government officials in the region. The Summit discusses items that may impact the upcoming legislative session.

Blueprint for Regional Economic Growth (BREG)

In October 2014 a group of stakeholders in the Wichita MSA joined together to participate in an industry cluster study, targeting the nine counties of REAP plus Marion County. The study will focus on regional thinking, industry clusters, building input foundations from industries to local governments, and work across jurisdictions and sectors to build a strong and diversified regional economy. The study was completed in mid-2015 and is moving to an implementation phase.

Workforce Development

Since 2004, REAP has served as the grant recipient for Kansas Local Area IV Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds from the U. S. Department of Labor. The Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas is the Operator and Administrator for these funds, which are overseen by the Chief Elected Officials Board (CEOB), housed within REAP. Wichita City Council Member Jeff Longwell is the Kansas Local Area IV Chief Elected Official, overseeing \$3-\$4 million annually in WIOA funds invested in South Central Kansas.

Transportation Taskforce

In August 2015, REAP initiated a regional transportation task force as part of its 2015 work plan. The taskforce is identifying and discussing issues of common concern in South Central Kansas including: identifying regional public transit strategies and monitoring state policies impacting public transit, and analyzing current regional transportation issues and coordinating with the state planning process. Membership from partners includes but is not limited to WAMPO, the Kansas Department of Transportation, Wichita Transit, and REAP member jurisdictions. The development of a formal structure for regional planning and coordination will be a primary goal in the REAP 2016 work plan. The taskforce will draw upon recent initiatives including the Regional Strategic Export Plan, the South Central Kansas Prosperity Plan, and BREG.

Regional Export Plan

In December 2013, of South Central Kansas region was selected to participate in the Brookings Global Cities Exchange (GCX) program to create a regional strategy to enhance exports. REAP is a key partner with Kansas Global Trade Services on this initiative. The goal of the regional export plan is to nurture an intentional export economy in South Central Kansas that accelerates job growth, diversifies exports and improves global competitiveness and fluency. The objectives of the plan are to catalyze export growth at five aviation suppliers per year, diversify exports by fostering growth of non-aerospace exports by 30 percent in five years and of services exports by 15 percent in five years, coordinate export assistance and promotional efforts to build a recognizable export eco-system in two years, increase global fluency of the region by educating community leaders and companies, increase exports of small-medium sized companies, increasing the number of new markets entered per year, and introducing exporting as a growth strategy to 100 companies in five years.