

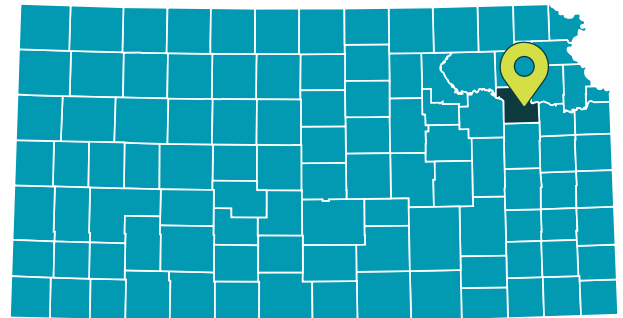
Kansas

Kansas Division of Public Health

Website: [Division of Public Health | KDHE, KS](https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/)

Immunize Kansas Coalition

Website: immunizekansascoalition.org



Community Profile

Kansas is a large state in the Great Plains region with a population of slightly under 3 million and landmass of 81 thousand square miles. As of 2023, its population density is 35.9 people per square mile, and it is divided into 105 counties. Its most populous cities are Wichita, Overland Park, Kansas City, and Topeka. Kansas is currently experiencing a decrease in its rural population due to migration to urban areas.



In terms of sociodemographic factors,



89.7%

have health insurance



3.7%

unemployment rate



12.0%

poverty rate



\$69,747

median income



91.8%

hold a high school diploma



34.7%

have a bachelor's degree or higher

Coalition Overview

The Immunize Kansas Coalition was founded in 2015 as an evolution of Immunize Kansas Kids, a coalition originally focusing solely on pediatric immunization. Now, as the primary immunization coalition in Kansas, they work to protect all Kansans from vaccine-preventable diseases. Coalition programming is shaped by its three pillars:



1. Strengthening vaccine confidence through education, awareness, and partnerships with trusted community sources;
2. Increasing child, adolescent, and adult vaccination rates and vaccines access, with a particular focus on gaps in a current community; and
3. Promoting health equity.

Structure

Initially, the coalition was guided by a board, and most paid positions were contract-based. By 2018, the coalition transitioned to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and brought in more funding for staff and activities. In 2022, an executive director was hired, transitioning the coalition from a working board to a governing board. The coalition now employs an executive director, a program manager, and several community health specialists who are embedded across the state. These specialists act as ambassadors, bridging the gap between health care providers and the community to mobilize support for immunizations. In total there are six paid staff and the coalition plans on hiring more in the coming months.

The coalition's board consists of a chair, chair-elect, immediate past chair, a representative from the Kansas Department of Health, and a secretary/treasurer. There are four committees: Policy, Health Equity, Improved Systems Performance, and Education and Outreach. Each committee has a chair to oversee priorities and work.

Funding

During its founding, the Kansas coalition nearly disbanded due to a lack of funding. The former executive director successfully diversified the coalition's income sources, increasing both private and federal funding. The coalition now receives funding from the state, federal government grants for their community health specialists, donations, grants from foundations, and income

from annual conferences. In 2024, the coalition's funding policy was adjusted to allow a percentage of their revenue to come from pharmaceutical companies. Like many coalitions, they also received COVID-19 pandemic funding from the state.

Activities

Some of the main activities of the coalition are:

- Hosting regional meetings
- Conducting training for vaccination community navigators
- Holding back-to-school events
- Developing [key resources](#), including brochures, booklets, and informational cards.
- [Education modules](#) on preventing flu, faith perspectives, youth-focused outreach, pregnancy-focused outreach, and more
- The [Honest Conversations video series](#), which amplifies the voices of Kansans with a focus on stories from refugee, immigrant and migrant (RIM) communities
- Advocacy day at the capitol
- [Media campaigns](#)
- Long-term care and senior center partnerships

Working with Entre Mujeres: the Health of Women Conference:

In 2023, the Kansas Immunization Coalition held a Spanish language conference that focused on women's health and cancer prevention. Attendees participated in education sessions and listened to speakers; 20% of them received HPV vaccinations. The event is being held again due to its success.

For more information about activities that the coalition is involved in see the [coalition's homepage](#).

Successes

Focus on Health Equity

Immunize Kansas is focused on elevating health equity. It collaborates with non-traditional partners, like migrant community leaders and organizations that serve physically and developmentally disabled people, to host local events and develop materials tailored for historically marginalized and medically underserved communities. The coalition has developed hundreds of partnerships with community-based organizations, immunization champions, and experts from associations and health systems with a focus on health equity.

"I truly believe that equity is for everyone. We think about all aspects of equity and are making sure that we are reaching populations that we sometimes overlook."

- **Geovanni Gone**, former Kansas Coalition Director

Flexibility Around Advocacy and Communications

The coalition has flexibility around advocacy and communications where the state immunization program is limited. The coalition can advocate for supportive immunization legislation, engage contacts to provide testimonies during bill hearings, and host immunization events during the legislative session. They play an important role in ensuring state laws are supportive of immunization.

Flexibility in Approval Process

In promoting immunization campaigns, the coalition is not bound by the same approval process as the state, allowing them to quickly post on social media, distribute flyers, and promote vaccine messaging. This agility allows them to reach a larger portion of the population compared to the state program.

Partnership

Building and strengthening the relationship with the state immunization program takes time. While the immunization program and coalition work well together, they have learned a few lessons from their partnership:

- Communicating and meeting frequently is important for understanding each other's goals and priorities.
- Clearly defining expectations of project deliverables and timelines can prevent frustration.
- Conducting transparent conversations about funding can avert disappointment and should happen early in planning.
- Including each other in program planning increases trust and transparency.

Challenges

In the spring of 2023, the coalition aimed to partner with the state to reach uninsured adults and cover the cost of vaccine administration. The state lacked an established Vaccines for Adults (VFA) Program and had limited 317 vaccine funds available. Despite these challenges, the state, in collaboration with enrolled vaccination facilities, provided the coalition with nearly 40% of its 317-funded vaccines to support vaccination efforts. Due to limited 317 vaccine funding and some difficulty identifying an enrolled partner in the desired areas, they were unable to reach everyone they intended. Initially, the coalition was unaware that the state did not have an established VFA program and that federally funded vaccines needed to be distributed and monitored by enrolled providers. Once the coalition understood these issues and was included in the vaccine allocation process, they gained a better understanding of the program's administration and were able to manage their expectations more effectively.

Early, open communication about goals, available funding, and requirements tied to funding streams can help to prevent misunderstandings and allow realistic goal setting for all partners involved.

Advice for building and maintaining a coalition

The former coalition director and immunization program manager offered the following advice for program managers interested in expanding coalition work or starting a new coalition:

- Schedule multiple meetings throughout the year for the state immunization program and coalition to discuss goals and priorities.
- Include a non-voting member of the immunization program on the coalition board.
- Clearly define expectations when working with partners.
- Recruit people who are truly invested in immunization, regardless of their healthcare background.
- Talk with other coalitions and immunization programs about their partnerships.
- Encourage your coalition staff to lean into their strengths and talents.
- Provide funding to support the coalition if the budget allows.
- Focus on shared goals rather than dictating tasks.

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