

The background of the entire page is a collage. The top half shows a street scene in Dodge City with various international flags (including China, Mexico, and the United States) and a large bronze statue of a cowboy on a horse. To the right, a street sign for Dodge City is visible. The bottom half of the collage is a grid of small, colorful illustrations depicting diverse people in various settings, representing a multicultural community.

# STRATEGIC PLAN

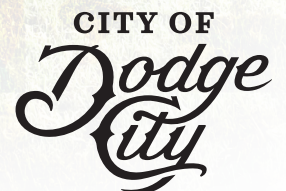
## FOR WELCOMING AND INTEGRATION



**GATEWAYS**  
*for* **GROWTH**



Catholic  
Charities  
of Southwest Kansas







In partnership with Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, the City of Dodge City completed this strategic plan for welcoming and integration in Dodge City. The strategic plan provides vision, values and recommendations decided through community participation that offer recommendations for welcoming and integration efforts in Dodge City. It is designed to help position City of Dodge City become more welcoming by integrating newcomers in our growing and diverse community.

## **PROCESS**

The planning team made up of staff from the City of Dodge City, Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, and Lead for America worked with a 10-member steering committee to prepare this strategic plan for our community. The planning process began in February 2021 and continued through February 2022.

The Planning Team included:

- ★ Coral Lopez, Director, Dodge City Main Street
- ★ Debbie Snapp, Executive Director, Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas
- ★ Ernestor De La Rosa, Assistant City Manager/Legislative Affairs, City of Dodge City
- ★ Kate Schieferecke, Dodge City Community Engagement Coordinator, Lead for America

A diverse steering committee was selected by the planning team. The committee was charged to provide guidance and input with organizing the public input and focusing it into a working document. The steering committee included:

- ★ Anna Bjerken, President, Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce
- ★ Lori Juhlin, Executive Director, Dodge City Public Library
- ★ Monica Vargas, Political and Community Outreach Director, UFCW2
- ★ Alejandro Rangel-López, Lead Coordinator, New Frontiers Project



- ★ Elva Dominguez, Patient Navigator, Genesis Family Health
- ★ Gloria Calderon, Community Health Worker Supervisor, Genesis Family Health
- ★ Blanca Soto, Engagement Coordinator of EOSL and Diversity, Dodge City Public Schools-USD 443
- ★ Bianca Alvarez, Bright Beginnings Parent and Community Specialist, Dodge City Public Schools – USD 443
- ★ Father Wesley Schawe, Pastor, Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
- ★ Corky Spitler, Pastor, Christ the King Lutheran Church

**Community Engagement:** Over 200 Dodge City residents completed online surveys. Most of the participants completed the survey at the USD 443 in-person registration days and students from the Dodge City Community College Adult Learning Center also participated by completing the same questionnaire.

In addition to the survey, to identify the appropriate strategic planning issues, the planning team facilitated focus groups with the following Dodge City organization/groups:

- ★ Dodge City Community College Adult Learning Center (50 attendees)
- ★ Dodge City High School Students (25)
- ★ Catholic Church (4)
- ★ USD 443 Bright Beginnings Family Advocates (20)
- ★ Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigration Services Staff (8)
- ★ Genesis Family Health Staff & Board Members (4)
- ★ UFCW2 Citizenship Classes (8)



## THE PILLARS OF A WELCOMING DODGE CITY

*Adapted from Welcoming America's framework, these five pillars organize and focus our work.*

- ★ **Equitable Access-** Local governments lead the effort, whether through partnership programs, to promote a welcoming and inclusive environment, provide information on community services and identify and reduce barriers to access the many facets of community life so that all members of Dodge City feel welcome, connected and able to thrive.
- ★ **Civic Engagement-** Newcomers and underserved populations learn about and participate in governmental, nonprofit, and volunteer opportunities. All Dodge City

residents are encouraged to participate in civic life opportunities, including increasing access to leadership, and community participation.

- ★ **Refugee and Immigrant Integration-** Natural opportunities for newcomers and long-time residents to engage with and learn about each other exists regularly and in various forms throughout the community. Legal assistance and integration program partnerships are accessible and available with the goal to fully integrate newcomers in Dodge City.
- ★ **Safe and Healthy Community-** All residents feel a sense of responsibility to their neighbors and their community and interact with genuine care for one another. Public safety officers are engrained in the culture of neighborhoods, providing valuable and reliable support to all residents.
- ★ **Economic Opportunity and Education-** Dodge City residents can access educational opportunities that support their growth and encourage them to aspire to reach their full potential. Dodge City's workforce possesses the skills and education needed to meet the needs of our area employers. In addition, businesses harness the full potential of our global talent base and join the entire community in cultivating diverse leaders and entrepreneurs that become a key part of our growing economy.

## I. EQUITABLE ACCESS AND COMMUNICATION

### Vision

All residents are aware and can access governmental and community services and programs. Communication systems are diverse, accessible, and centralized for all residents.

### Values

- ★ Comprehensive language services ensure all are heard and can access needed services
- ★ Comprehensive access to technology for all basic services and community information
- ★ Resources are physically accessible because transportation services are improved
- ★ Opportunities to understand, engage with and participate in local government and civic life are well-known and accessible.
- ★ All communication modes are accessible, effective, and culturally relevant.
- ★ Communication between governmental entities, non-profit organizations and community organizations is collaborative, consistent, and centralized for all Dodge City residents.
- ★ Governmental entities, non-profit organizations and community organizations are cognizant of all languages spoken in Dodge City and are encouraged to adopt and implement a Language Access Plan to further inclusivity and welcoming.
- ★ Residents are connected to each other and know where to turn for support and information.





## Recommendations

1. Language Access- Encourage local public entities to adopt and implement a Language Access Plan with a comprehensive and current bank of qualified interpreters.
  - ★ USD 443, City of Dodge City, Victory Electric, Black Hills Energy, Ford County, Dodge City Community College
2. Diverse Community Ambassadors: Assemble, inform, and engage key influencers, leaders, and potential leaders from the entire community to better understand how information is received by community members, ensure accurate information is disseminated and engagement is inclusive.
  - ★ Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, City of Dodge City, UFCW2, Ministerial Fellowship
3. Connect Communities: Community-building events bring newcomers, long-time residents, law enforcement officers, nonprofits, and others together to learn from and about each other, share food and music and build trust.
  - ★ Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation (Main Street), City of Dodge City (International Festival), Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce, Boot Hill Museum, Dodge City Public Library
4. Internet access and technology is equitable, affordable, and available to all residents. Basic computer skills classes and technical assistance are available and affordable. Community partners provide culturally relevant services.
  - ★ Dodge City Public Library, Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation (REWA), Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, USD 443 (ESOL and Diversity Program), Dodge City Community College Adult Learning Center, Workforce Center
5. Public transportation is available at the times residents need it (including evenings and weekends), alternative transportation (walkability and biking) safety is improved.
  - ★ City of Dodge City, Ford County
6. Initiatives such as the Engage Dodge Program that help residents understand, engage with, and participate in local government and civic life are well-known and accessible to newcomers.
  - ★ City of Dodge City, Adult Learning Center, Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas and USD 443 (ESOL and Diversity Program).

## II. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### Vision

All Dodge City residents feel empowered to engage in civic life

### Values

- ★ Elected and appointed leadership in all sectors (government, nonprofits, and other community



organizations) reflects Dodge City's diversity to ensure policies enacted are equitable and well-informed.

- ★ Dodge City residents are well informed and educated of the Census counts and are inclusive.
- ★ Eligible and registered voters know and understand local issues and candidates and vote.
- ★ All Dodge City residents are aware and engage in local forums and public meetings.
- ★ Leadership and civic engagement opportunities are accessible, promoted and engaged in.

## Recommendations

1. Voter registration and Get Out The Vote Efforts: Eligible voters are registered and informed on the issues and candidates, voting polls are accessible and voters know where to exercise their right to vote.
  - ★ UFCW2, City of Dodge City, Ford County (Elections Office)
2. Continuous education about the decennial Census, the American Community Survey, and the redistricting process occurs in the community
  - ★ City of Dodge City, Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation, USD 443
3. Civic mentorship programs are established: Current civic leaders are paired with community members to mentor them about civic leadership and encourage them to pursue leadership positions in the community.
  - ★ City of Dodge City (Engage Dodge), Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce (Leadership Dodge program), Lead for America, Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas.
4. Local leadership positions are publicly advertised, and all members of the community are encouraged to apply. Workshops and information sessions on how to run for local office and join local boards are held in multiple locations, times, and languages.
  - ★ City of Dodge City, Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation, Ford County (Elections Office), Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce.



## III. REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

### Vision

All community members are welcomed, included, and valued in Dodge City.

### Values

- ★ All community members are aware of and have access to all basic community services.
- ★ Immigration and consular services are available, promoted, and accessible.





- ★ Long term community members and newcomers are connected and have a sense of community and belonging.
- ★ Governmental entities and community organizations advocate for inclusive legislation, policies, and initiatives.



## Recommendations

1. Community Welcome Center: Centralized location (both physical and virtual) for accessing information about community services relevant to newcomers. The Welcome Center also facilitates communication between service provider agencies in the community and there is follow-up on referrals made.
  - ★ Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, City of Dodge City (Convention and Visitors Bureau), USD 443, Cargill, National Beef, and other major employers
2. Immigration legal assistance including free clinics (DACA renewal and Naturalization consultations), United States Citizenship and Immigration services and consular mobile services are held regularly, accessible and advertised widely. A permanent USCIS office be established in Southwest Kansas, with preference of a Dodge City location. Immigration legal services assistance capacity is expanded with additional funding support and community volunteers.
  - ★ Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, City of Dodge City, UFCW2, USD 443, private attorneys, Cargill, National Beef, and other major employers.
3. Provide education and training about acceptable identification documents commonly used by immigrants and refugees in the community, including documents produced by USCIS consular offices of foreign countries in the United States.



- ★ Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, City of Dodge City, Mexican Consulate in Kansas City, Guatemalan Consulate in Oklahoma City
4. Positive stories and spotlights about newcomers are regularly published in local news outlets and across the state.
    - ★ Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, Dodge City Globe, City of Dodge City, local radio stations and other media sources
  5. Regular opportunities for newcomers to interact with long-term residents and build neighborly friendships are coordinated intentionally; New arrivals are paired with long-term residents for mentorship and social connection. In addition, initiatives, and programs to build trust among New Americans and Law Enforcement are available and promoted.



Volunteer opportunities are widely available.

- ★ Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, Lead For America Friendship House, Dodge City Community College Adult Learning Center, Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation (Main Street), City of Dodge City (DCPD), Local Church Congregations

6. Governmental entities and community organizations advocate for inclusive legislation, policies, and initiatives at the local, state, and federal level.

- ★ City of Dodge City, Dodge City Area Chamber of Commerce, Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, USD 443

## IV. SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

### Vision

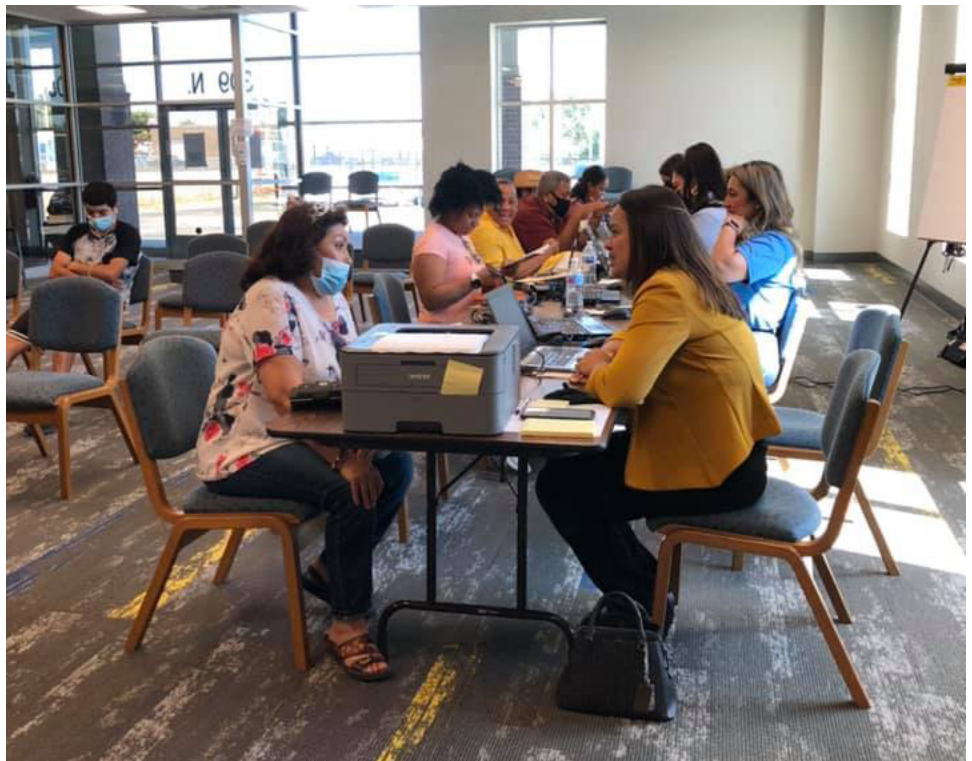
All residents are connected to the resources they need to stay healthy and feel safe.

### Values

- ★ Healthcare is accessible, barriers such as location, affordability, language, and childcare are eased or removed.
- ★ Mental healthcare is accessible.
- ★ All residents are comfortable interacting with law enforcement and know its leaders.

### Recommendations

1. Healthcare access: All Dodge City residents know when and where to access healthcare services, including dental and vision services, and are able to get the support they need regardless of insurance status, socioeconomic status, cultural concerns, language challenges or other barriers. Health education community outreach and clinics for basic healthcare needs occur frequently.
  - ★ Genesis Family Health, Ford County Health Department, Western Plains Medical Complex, Ford County Health Coalition
2. Mental healthcare is available and accessible Bilingual providers are available. All providers are trained in trauma informed





care. Mental health services are culturally competent. Community outreach assists with overcoming stigma of mental health diagnoses and treatment.

- ★ Genesis Family Health, Compass Behavioral Health, Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, Rural Frontier Subcommittee for the Governor's Behavioral Health Committee

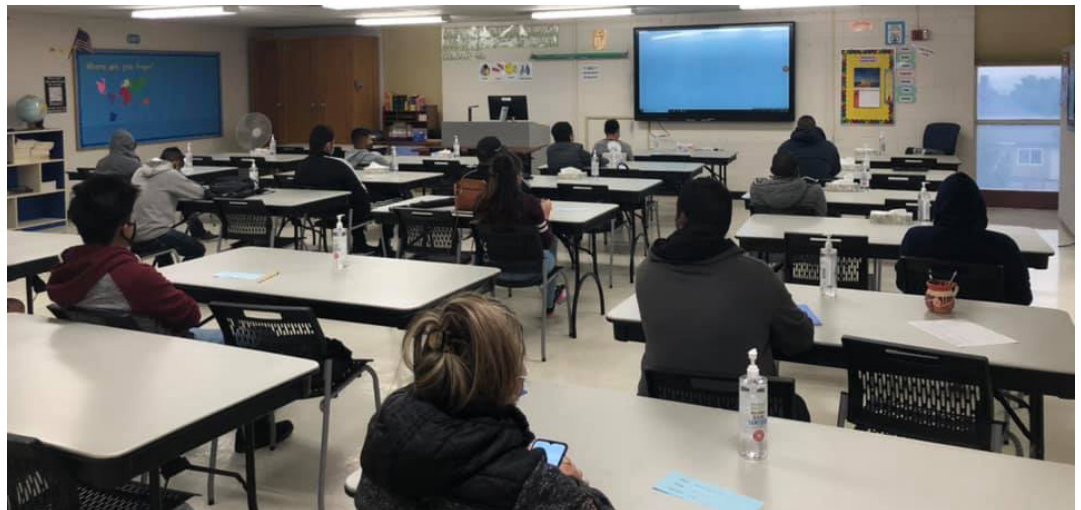
3. Disaster Preparedness: Enhance outreach and support for disaster preparedness and emergency responses that are culturally and linguistically responsive through coordination with local disaster response agencies and Ford County Emergency Management. Interpretation services are immediately available for 911 calls.

- ★ Catholic Charities of Southwest Kansas, USD 443, City of Dodge City (First Responders), United Way of Southwest Kansas VOAD, Ford County Emergency Management, Local Emergency Planning Committee

## V. EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

### Vision

Dodge City's workforce and entrepreneurs will possess the skills and education to grow our economy.



### Values

- ★ Quality, affordable, and accessible childcare and early learning opportunities exist for all families.
- ★ All youth have support at school and at home to pursue post-secondary opportunities that prepare them for tomorrow's workforce needs
- ★ Newcomers can apply their foreign education and experience to be fully employed.
- ★ Adult education is available and accessible for all newcomers and meets their needs
- ★ Housing is available, accessible, and safe for low- and moderate-income families of all sizes
- ★ Banking services in Dodge City are accessible, equitable and fully utilized by newcomers

### Recommendations

1. Quality childcare is affordable and available at the times parents need to work (including 2nd and 3rd shifts), go to school, or engage in the community. Newcomers are empowered, educated and are aware of resources available to become certified childcare providers.
  - ★ USD 443 (Bright Beginnings), Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation, Dodge City Community College
2. Banking and Financial Services: Lending institutions offer products and services that are appropriate and accessible across cultural, religious, and national origin status.

Banks and financial institutions recognize and accept identification documents and immigration status (other than exclusively citizenship and/or green card status) while catering these services.

★ City of Dodge City, Dodge City Chamber of Commerce, local banks

3. Housing Challenges and Opportunities: Affordable, appropriate housing is available, families are educated about tenant rights and responsibilities, local governments and nonprofit organizations are partners in improving housing opportunities and families can become homeowners.

★ Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation, Community Housing Association of Dodge City (CHAD), local landlords, Dodge City Housing Authority, City of Dodge City

4. Youth mentorship programs are established: Current community leaders and professionals are paired with youth (with intentional outreach to immigrant and refugee youth) to mentor them about post-secondary opportunities, specific career paths and encourage them to pursue staying or coming back to Dodge City after college graduation.

★ Lead for America, USD 443, Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation, Dodge City Community College

5. Clear paths to professional recertification exist for foreign-educated professionals through local and state education institutions

★ Dodge City Community College, Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation, UFCW2

6. Adult education is available and accessible for all newcomers and meets their needs, including English as a Second Language and trade certification programs.

★ Dodge City Community College Adult Learning Center, Dodge City Ford County Development Corporation (REWA)

## IMPLEMENTATION

The City's Cultural Relations Advisory Board is ready for the work that lies ahead, and ready to be a welcoming, growing community. The enthusiasm to successfully implement the recommendations and achieve the values and vision statements outlined previously is so high that many of the recommendations were



underway before this strategic plan was complete. Catholic Charities and the City of Dodge City are proud to support this work as convener, connector, promoter, or whatever role best ensures the successful implementation and sustainability of each vehicle. As we move forward, we will continue to engage stakeholders and refine recommendations, and we want you to join us! Contact Ernestor De La Rosa at [ernestord@dodgecity.org](mailto:ernestord@dodgecity.org) to learn more.

