

Douglas County 2020 Legislative Statement



Douglas County Initiatives

The annual operating budget serves as the most significant policy document for Douglas County. It determines what services are most crucial, who receives those services, at what cost, and how those costs are paid.

During the past several years, Douglas County's budget has included expanded services and initiatives to help meet critical needs in our community:

- alternatives to incarceration
- behavioral health services

Douglas County has implemented several innovative programs to provide alternatives to incarceration, including: pre-trial release, house

arrest, substance abuse diversion for women, behavioral health court and drug court.

The County's commitment to behavioral health initiatives is shown through the passage of a quarter-cent sales tax that is dedicated exclusively to improving our behavioral system.

On Nov. 8, about 100 people attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the Treatment and Recovery Campus of Douglas County and two housing projects that will be located on the campus. Those projects — Transitions and The Cottages — will provide safe and secure housing for clients with serious mental illness and substance use disorders.

Douglas County's Legislative Priorities

1. Crisis Center of the Treatment & Recovery Campus of Douglas County

The first priority is to secure funding for the Crisis Center that will be located on the Treatment and Recovery Campus of Douglas County. Because our local investment in the Crisis Center saves the State funding for individuals who will now be treated in our community, Douglas County is seeking financial support from the State. This would ensure local community services are addressed as they are in five other Kansas communities.

2. Expansion of the South Lawrence Trafficway (SLT)

During the recent KDOT Local Consult meetings, Kansans from various geographic regions of the state ranked highly a project to expand the west leg of the SLT from two lanes to four or six lanes. In the interest of safety and economic vitality and transportation mobility for the state and region, we urge our legislators to include in the next 10-year transportation program a project to expand the West Leg-SLT to four or six lanes.

While we support expanding the West Leg-SLT to four or six lanes, we believe some portions of the project could be advanced on an accelerated schedule. Construction of the planned interchange at Wakarusa Drive/27th Street would eliminate the serious safety concerns and capacity bottleneck at the existing at-grade intersection. Douglas County has already dedicated CIP funding for a project to connect to the planned interchange and extend Wakarusa Drive south across the Wakarusa River, completing an essential connection three miles west of US-59. While funding for the West Leg-SLT expansion project should be a high priority, we encourage consideration of accelerated funding for initial phases to address the critical needs of the corridor as soon as possible.



Douglas County supports and would like to acknowledge these issues:

✓ ***KanCare Expansion.*** We support expansion of the Kansas Medicaid program, KanCare, bringing more federal dollars to Kansas, and extending health care coverage to our lower-income residents.

✓ ***Fiscal Support of District Courts.*** We continue to urge the legislature to fully fund the state's district court obligations as set out by existing state law. Douglas County continues to pick up ever increasing portions of the district court budget as state funding has failed to keep pace with the fiscal needs of the court system.

✓ ***Community Corrections.*** We support full funding for mandated community corrections programs and grants.

✓ ***Spending and Taxing Lids.*** We continue to strenuously oppose any constitutional or statutory amendment to impose additional spending or taxing limitations on county government.

✓ ***Home Rule.*** We support constitutional home rule for counties and oppose any additional erosion of existing statutory home rule authority. We support counties using their current home rule powers when applicable rather than seeking specific legislative remedies.

✓ ***Natural Resources.*** We support any legislative initiative to conserve prime farmland, forests, prairies, wetlands, historic areas, wildlife habitat, and scenic views for the benefit of future generations.

✓ ***Housing.*** We support counties' home rule authority to address affordable housing needs, which are now at a crisis level, through all available methods, including inclusionary zoning. This includes a repeal of the prohibition in state law that removes this option for local governments.

✓ ***Local Food System Support.*** We support the recommendations of the State's Local Food and Farm Task force to create a statewide Local Food and Farm Plan with policy and funding recommendations to increase production of locally grown foods.

✓ ***Renewable Energy.*** We support public and private incentives to encourage investment in renewable energy sources. We support a statewide plan and program to increase renewable energy goals and increase energy efficiency by establishing a statewide PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program.

✓ ***Statewide Climate Crisis Plan.*** We support and encourage the Legislature in establishing a statewide climate crisis plan to address global climate change.

✓ ***Monitoring of Oil & Gas Industries.*** We oppose the use of high volume, high pressure salt water injection wells and waste water injection wells used for oil and gas extraction. We support monitoring oil and gas extraction activity as it relates to the increasing frequency of seismic activity and earthquakes across Kansas.

✓ ***Sales Tax on Food.*** We encourage the legislature to follow the Governor's Tax Council recommendation to lower the State sales tax on food for low income citizens by establishing a food sales tax rebate.

Douglas County Crisis Center

Why?

- Provide immediate, cost-effective, clinically-appropriate, trauma-informed care for adults in crisis.
- Reduce capacity pressure and demands on state hospitals and local criminal justice systems.
- Keep people in their community close to family, services and support.

INTEGRATED SERVICES AND RESOURCES

24/7 telephone crisis line—provides a clear first contact point.

Mobile crisis teams—meet people where they are and reach more residents in isolated areas.

Crisis facility offers:

- Walk-in for patients with lower acuity.
- Alternative to Emergency Department or jail for first responders.
- 23-hour observation, 72-hour stabilization and medication-assisted SUD detox services.
- Assessment and treatment for co-occurring mental health and SUD patients.

Post-crisis services (hospitalization, respite/transitional & supportive housing, SUD treatment including medication-assisted detox)

CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL COST SAVINGS

- ✓ **Douglas County has a high percentage (23.2%)** of residents with depressive disorder.
- ✓ **Douglas County's suicide mortality rate** is higher than the state and national average.
- ✓ **Headquarters Counseling Center** fields 224 calls per month from Douglas County residents to the suicide prevention hotline.
- ✓ **Douglas County's homeless population** is challenged by recent reduced capacity at the Lawrence Community Shelter.

✓ **Osawatomie State Hospital**

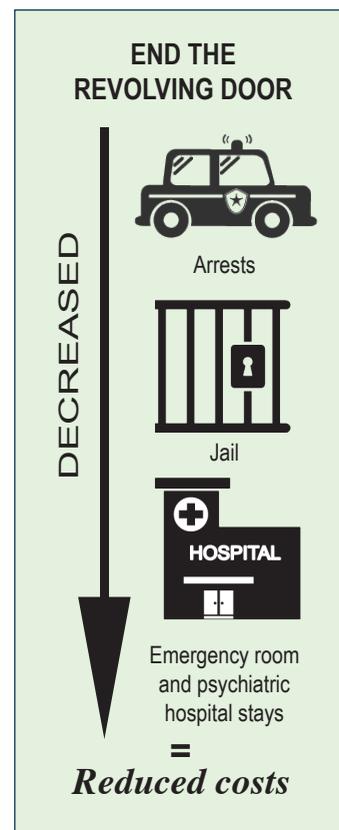
- In 2018, Douglas County residents represented nearly 12% of the patient population at the state hospital. Diversion of patients will lower the costs and reduce the number of beds accessed by County residents.

✓ **Lawrence Memorial Hospital Emergency Department**

- Approximately 4,200 behavioral health visits last year contribute to significant uncompensated costs.
- Estimated \$8.5 million in ED boarding costs for behavioral health patients could be reduced by up to \$3.9 million with a 50% reduction in admissions.
- Reduces risk of behavioral health-related incidents and injuries in ED.

✓ **Law Enforcement and first responders cost avoidance:**

- Diversion to crisis treatment avoids booking fees, jail per-diems, medical care, court costs, and transportation costs for transfer to Osawatomie State Hospital.
- Decreased police turnaround time at a crisis center is more efficient than booking process at a jail.
- Recent reductions (52%) in jail booking for defendants with behavioral health issues increase pressure on community systems.



CRISIS CENTERS ARE A KEY RESOURCE

- State of Kansas currently supports crisis centers in Wyandotte, Riley, Sedgwick, Shawnee, and Saline counties.
- Current funding supports design, planning, construction and ongoing operations.
- 2019 legislation requires funding not less than the prior year to sustain operational funding.
- Regional service can potentially include treatment for

neighboring counties without a crisis center.

- Patients receive treatment in their own communities, close to family and support.
- Residents reconnect with community-based care once their needs are met immediately following crisis.
- Community support of ¼ cent sales tax allows lower request for state funding and increased coordination of care.

Treatment and Recovery Campus of Douglas County

COMBINING CRISIS SERVICES AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN ONE LOCATION

The Treatment and Recovery Campus will serve as a behavioral health hub. New facilities will include a 24/7 Crisis Stabilization Center that will provide assessment and triage, 23-hour observation, 72-hour stabilization and medication-assisted detox services for people with substance use disorders (SUD).

The campus will also provide three tiers of supportive housing, including short-term crisis respite, transitional and permanent supportive housing.



Housing construction will begin in the fall of 2019 and be completed by the fall of 2020. The crisis center

construction is targeted to begin in fall of 2020 with an anticipated completion date in late 2021.

AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF CARE

Moving from crisis as a norm to prevention and recovery as a practice

Person in crisis



Crisis line



80% resolved on the phone



Mobile crisis teams



70% resolved in the field



Crisis facility



65% discharged to the community



Post-crisis wrap-around



80% remain stable in community-based care

Douglas County Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Partners

- Douglas County Government
- Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center
- DCCCA
- LMH Health
- Heartland Community Health Center

- Heartland RADAC
- Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department
- Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Local Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

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