

Topeka



Topeka, the capital of Kansas, was founded by 9 men at the site of the Oregon Trail crossing of the Kansas River. Topeka is the home of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* National Historic Site, which commemorates the landmark Supreme Court decision that ended segregation in public schools.

Downtown Topeka is home to the Kansas State Capitol; the Topeka Performing Arts Center; and many historic sites, including the mansion of Charles Curtis, the only person of Native American descent to have served as vice president of the United States, and the Monroe School, the all-black school cited in *Brown vs. Board of Education*. The First Presbyterian Church features the only sanctuary west of the Mississippi River to have all Tiffany windows. Topeka's newest attraction, the Holley Museum of Military History, features a collection of dioramas, models, and artifacts from the Civil War to the Persian Gulf War.

Other attractions in Topeka include the Great Overland Station, a former train station that is now a museum celebrating Kansas's railroad heritage; Old Prairie Town at Ward Meade, a complex with a Victorian home, log cabin, turn-of-the-century town, and botanical garden that preserves Topeka's early history; the Kansas Museum of History; the Museum of the Kansas National Guard; Alice C. Sabatini Gallery at Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library; Cedar Crest, the home to the governor of Kansas; Art Guild Gallery of Topeka; and Yesterday's Motorcycle Museum of Topeka Harley-Davidson. The Kansas Expocentre Performing Arts hosts trade shows, sports, concerts, and other events. Topeka Civic Theatre offers community theatre productions.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Among Topeka's many neighborhoods, Historic Holliday Park, located near the Capitol Plaza and the Central Business District, is characterized by early 20th-century architecture and reflects distinctive styles, including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Bungalow, Prairie, Homestead, and Tudor. The neighborhood also has 2 National Historic Districts. Most of the residences within Chesney Park reflect various styles of architecture popular in the early 20th Century, including Bungalow, Homestead, and Four-Square styles with Victorian and Arts and Crafts influences. Several brick sidewalks and streets still remain. The western edges of Chesney Park, closest to the University, are characterized by larger, stater homes; those on the eastern side, near the Kansas Expocentre, are generally more modest. About one-third of the houses are owner-occupied. The Oakland neighborhood is predominately single-family, owner-occupied residences. However, the area does include some agriculture land uses. The area surrounding Washburn University has many rental properties that cater to students. The Wanamaker and Urish Road areas have new development with neighborhoods that feature newer, large homes, such as Clarion Lakes.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Topeka has several large parks. Gage Park is home to the Topeka Zoo; the Reinisch Rose Garden; the Blaisdell Family Aquatic Center; the Helen Hocker Center for the Performing Arts; a mile-long mini-train ride; a

historic carousel; and recreational facilities, including volleyball, tennis courts, and horseshoe courts. Lake Shawnee has many recreational opportunities, including swimming, fishing, boating, rowing, sailing, golf, youth softball and baseball, tennis, soccer, and frisbee golf, as well as an arboretum and acres of gardens. Hummer Sports Park is a multifacility sports park that includes a football stadium; soccer stadium; track, baseball and softball fields; and a pool.

Professional sports teams include the Kansas Koyotes (arena football) and Topeka RoadRunners (hockey).

EDUCATION

Topeka Public Schools serve 13,600 students in the city with 21 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 3 special schools. The elementary schools include 2 magnet schools; one specializes in science and fine arts and the other in computer technology. In addition to Topeka Public Schools, 3 other school districts serve a portion of Topeka as well as the surrounding Shawnee County communities: Auburn–Washburn, Seaman, and Shawnee Heights.

Washburn University is a municipal university with programs leading to associate, bachelor, master, and juris doctor degrees. The university is the site of many of Topeka's cultural attractions, including plays at The Andrew J. and Georgia Neese Gray Theatre; the Topeka Symphony Orchestra, Community Concerts Series, Festival Singers, and Sunflower Music Festival at the Elliot Hill White Concert Hall; and the Mulvane Art Museum.

Friends University–Topeka and Baker University School in Topeka offer associate, bachelor, and master programs, primarily in business fields. Bryan College and Kaw Area Technical School offer diploma and associate degree programs.

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HEALTH CARE

Two hospitals serve Topeka with over 950 acute-care beds. Topeka also has a facility that specializes in long-term acute care and another that specializes in rehabilitation. The Colmery–O'Neil VA Medical Center provides mental health, primary care, pharmacy, and geriatric and extended services to veterans in the Topeka area.

CITY STATS

2007

City Population	122,565
Metropolitan Statistical Area Population	228,295
Per capita personal income, Topeka MSA	\$33,4667