

Liberal, Kansas

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Liberal is located in southwest Kansas in Seward County. Liberal is the county seat of Seward County with approximately 20,000 residents. The National Beef packing plant, the largest employer within Seward County, employs approximately 2,100 workers of whom the majority would be classified as migrant workers. Even though Liberal is experiencing positive economic prosperity, the composition of the community has changed significantly which has and is challenging the human and economic resources of certain agencies.

High numbers of poor, illiterate and limited English proficient exist in Liberal. Those agencies affected in our community include housing, medical care, law enforcement and bilingual services. The greatest impact has been felt by the public schools. We are stretched for teachers and staff. Currently over 60% of our students are Hispanic with almost half of them being either currently or previously served in ESL.

Our community has made strides for inclusion of the new population; however, much more could be done. Community leaders have promoted involvement in the community especially through the many Hispanic-owned small businesses. Our schools have designed effective programs to assist migrant families with their needs. The migrant children and their families are more at-risk and have greater disadvantages than many groups within our society. They often receive limited or no services due to high mobility, limited English abilities, and lack of self-advocacy skills.

Within the Liberal community, individuals representing various agencies and organizations are working together to continue to identify the ever changing needs of our citizens, and to develop and implement services and programs which foster independent decision making of families yet focus on the goal of a united, healthy, progressive community.

Migrant Program Services

USD 480 is committed to the precepts of No Child Left Behind. Our district has made strides to ensure that all students achieve academically. Through the Migrant Program services are provided in math and reading, after school programs and staff development. We are developing a Dual Language program at McDermott Elementary and we have ESL staff at all schools. Paraprofessionals work with individual migrant students and recruiters assist families with needs as they acclimate to their new environment. Summer school is offered to migrant students in traditional formats and through packets that include literacy development activities and provide individualized assistance during the summer months. We provide an Even Start program and migrant preschool services. USD 480 purchases supplies and materials that are researched based and proven to assist migrant and ESL students.