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Language Barrier Becoming A Problem For Dodge City Police

Dodge City is not the Wild West town it once was and it has modern lawmen looking to better understand its citizens.

Police work in Dodge City isn't just about investigating crimes. Sometimes officers have to investigate someone's culture.

"We have a very populated city with Hispanics, not just Spanish speaking ones, but other languages," said Leslie Fisher, Hispanic outreach officer.

Particularly on the east side of town, which is now home to a growing population of immigrants from Somalia and Guatemala. The growing diversity has created concerns for police dealing with the language barrier.

A routine traffic stop can take hours and understanding a call for help might take three to four people to translate. Police say translators are essential in not only finding suspects but in helping victims. Investigations can easily be delayed hours by waiting for the right translators.

"There's people out there trying to victimize them, they see them as easy targets," said Fisher.

Police say often times recent immigrants don't trust our banking systems, so they keep their cash on them.

"They keep it on them, traveling by foot, they have the money with them, often \$700 to \$800," said Fisher.

Translators also would help fight an active gang problem in Dodge City by getting investigator quick, accurate information, helping to solve crime with the spoken word

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