



***Unmistakable Identity***

**Parks, Recreation and  
Culture**

# **Community Arts Grant Program FY2026**



This presentation, grant guidelines and links to other related documents are here:

<https://lawrenceks.gov/prc/art-grants>



# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT - BACKGROUND

The **Community Arts Grant program (CAG)** was established in 1991 to benefit the local arts community for art-related programs and projects. It is overseen by the Cultural Arts Commission and funded through transient guest tax (TGT) revenue (tax paid by hotel guests). Since 1991, 252 grants have been awarded, equaling \$409,000 in City grant support.

The Program aligns with the City's Strategic Plan, particularly the Unmistakable Identity outcome area and the following commitment areas: Community Engagement, Equity and Inclusion, and Environmental Sustainability.



# Strategic Plan

## Framework

### Vision

The City of Lawrence—supporting an unmistakably vibrant community with innovative, equitable, transparent, and responsible local government.

### Mission

We create a community where all enjoy life and feel at home.

### Values

- Character
- Competence
- Courage
- Collaboration
- Commitment

## OUTCOMES (5)

To realize our Vision for Lawrence, we endeavor to achieve these important strategic outcomes together:

- **Unmistakable Identity** 
- Strong, Welcoming Neighborhoods
- Safe and Secure
- Prosperity and Economic Security
- Connected City

## COMMITMENTS (6)

The way we do our work is as important as what we do. The community we create is reflected in the decisions we make every day. These are our commitments:

- Community Engagement
- Efficient and Effective Processes
- Equity and Inclusion
- Sound Fiscal Stewardship
- Engaged and Empowered Teams
- Environmental Sustainability

<https://lawrenceks.org/strategic-plan/>



# Strategic Plan

## Unmistakable Identity (UI)



*Lawrence is a welcoming community, synonymous with arts, diverse culture, fun, and a quintessential downtown. City parks and community events contribute to the vibrancy experienced by all people in Lawrence.*



# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT - GOALS

- Equity & Inclusion:** A new funding focus and scoring criterion has been added to prioritize projects that advance equity and inclusion, helping address historical disparities and ensure more equitable access to arts funding across Lawrence's diverse communities.
- Environmental Sustainability:** Projects that incorporate sustainable practices or promote environmental awareness are now eligible for additional scoring, aligning the grant program with the City's commitment to environmental sustainability.
- Community & Strategic Alignment:** The Community Arts Grant Program continues to support the City's Strategic Plan and the City-Wide Cultural Plan goals, including celebrating community, building creative places, strengthening local culture, promoting lifelong learning, and fostering a strong creative identity.





# UI - PROGRESS INDICATORS

Commitment Area	Community Engagement
UI-1	Percent of residents who are satisfied or very satisfied with the Parks & Recreation system
UI-2	<b>Percent of residents who are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of arts, cultural opportunities and related events</b>
Commitment Area	Efficient and Effective Processes
UI-3	Number of people who have visited or utilized a City recreation facility, City recreation program, Theatre Lawrence, Watkins Museum of History, Lawrence Arts Center, the eXplore Lawrence Tourism Center and/or Lawrence Public Library
UI-4	Number of residents who have attended select events in the past year
Commitment Area	Equity and Inclusion
UI-5	Percent of Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) residents rating the community as welcoming
UI-6	<b>Percent of residents who believe their culture is celebrated in the community (i.e. festivals, parades, events, etc.)</b>
UI-7	Percent of scholarship need that is met for recreation programs
UI-8	Number of scholarship recipients each year

Commitment Area	Sound Fiscal Stewardship
UI-9	Percent of Parks & Recreation programs that meet their cost recovery target
UI-10	Number of non-residents who have attended select events in the past year
Commitment Area	Engaged and Empowered Teams
UI-11	Employee Engagement Index for Parks & Recreation
Commitment Area	Environmental Sustainability
UI-12	Acres of park green space per resident
UI-13	<b>Number of events and programs that celebrate and enhance area environmental sustainability</b>
UI-14	Number of trees planted, removed and maintained to create a healthy tree canopy

To realize our Vision for Lawrence, we endeavor to achieve these UI outcomes. As such, the City Commission has identified several Progress Indicators to track progress towards this outcome.





# TRANSIENT GUEST TAX (TGT)

Transient Guest Tax (TGT) is a 6% tax levied on the rental of rooms, lodging, or other sleeping accommodations within the city. This tax applies to establishments offering more than two bedrooms for guest accommodations and is applicable to short-term stays of 28 consecutive days or less. In 2026, the guest tax is increased to 8%.

The revenue generated from the TGT is allocated to support tourism-related activities and events that enhance Lawrence's cultural and economic landscape. A notable initiative funded by the Lawrence City Commission from the TGT is the Unmistakable Events Grant Program, formerly known as the Transient Guest Tax Grant Program. This program provides financial assistance to events that demonstrate a measurable economic benefit, such as boosting the cultural or travel/tourism economy and generating additional sales tax revenue. Additionally, it aims to enhance Lawrence's unique identity and reputation for tourist activities, attracting regional visitors.

Overall, the Transient Guest Tax in Lawrence and other cities serves as an important tool for promoting tourism and supporting events that contribute to the city's cultural vibrancy and economic growth.





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT GUIDELINES

**Grant Categories and Level of Support:** There are two grant categories: **Mini Grants** and **Community Arts Grants**. Applicants may apply for either a Mini Grant or a Community Arts Grant; but not both in the same year.

**Community Arts Mini Grants** will provide up to five grants of up to \$500 each to help support artists with start-up costs for **equipment** specifically aligned with their art practice. *NOTE: Mini Grant application review will follow a different schedule than the regular grants, see timelines. The Mini grant online application form will also be different than the online form for regular grants.*

**Community Arts Grants** awards will range between \$500 to \$10,000 per project. Community Arts Grants awards will equal no more than 50% of the total project or activity cost. Cost-share may be cash and/or in-kind. Fifty percent match funds must be clearly shown in the budget proposal on the grant application. Only one grant is allowed per project.





# MINI GRANT INFORMATION

**Mini Grant Application Deadline:** Applicants must submit their final application online by **11:00 p.m. on March 6, 2026**. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered.

**Project Timeline:** The proposed art project or program for these grants must begin no earlier than January 1, 2026 and end no later than December 31, 2026. Grant awards can be retroactive to January 1, 2026. The final report is due within one month of project completion or no later than December 31, 2026. Failure to submit a final report will result in future ineligibility for Community Arts Grants.

**Application Eligibility:** 18+ individuals and organizations with a Lawrence, KS, address proposing projects sited in Lawrence that are designed to meet the purpose of the Grant Program and benefit Lawrence residents. All art-forms—visual, musical, and performing—are welcome and encouraged as part of this grant program. Only one grant can be awarded per project.





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT INFORMATION

*For those who are new to the Community Arts Grant application process, a **Pre-Application review** is offered. Interested applicants can submit their grant application in PDF form by 11:00 p.m. on by January 15, 2026 – or sooner – for initial screening and review of basic minimum requirements by staff. Feedback will be returned by January 26, 2026 prior to the final application deadline. The pre-application fillable PDF form can be downloaded HERE. Pre-applications are optional, not required.*

*Applicants must submit their final online application by 11:00 p.m. on February 2, 2026.*

*The final online application must also include current, signed letters of commitment confirming in-kind or cash contributions to a project from any third-party contributors and current letters from the named collaborators (or a representative of named collaborating organizations) confirming their participation. Applications that do not include these letters may be disqualified.*





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT GUIDELINES

## Ineligible for a Lawrence Community Arts Grant are:

- Prior recipients of a Lawrence Community Arts Grant who failed to submit a final report
- Educational activities for college students that are a requirement of their major discipline
- Projects that are not collaborative in nature
- Projects that do not take place at least partially within the Lawrence community
- Projects that are not submitted by a Lawrence-based organization or individual
- Capital projects





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT - SCORING CRITERIA

## **Community Value**

- Degree to which the project meets the Lawrence Community Arts Grant Program purpose
- Project's anticipated impact on the Lawrence community
- Value of the project as described by the applicant
- Evidence of collaboration

## **Project Quality**

- Qualifications and strengths of the partners involved in the proposed project
- Feasibility as demonstrated by the detailed timeline for implementation
- Well designed and documented budget sufficient to support all proposed activities
- Current, signed letters of commitment documenting all collaborations and cost share (including in-kind and cash match) commitments described in the proposal

## **Equity**

## **Sustainability**

## **Application Quality**

Completeness, organization, and clarity of the application packet





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT - SCORING CRITERIA

Unmistakable Identity	Equity and Inclusion	Environmental Sustainability	Community Value	Project Quality	Application Quality	Overall Merit	CRITERIA
<p>Does this project exemplify and/or help promote Lawrence's Unmistakable identity?</p> <p><b>KPI*</b> <i>Percent of residents who are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of arts, cultural opportunities and related events.</i></p>	<p>Does this project exemplify and/or help promote Lawrence's commitment to Equity and Inclusion?</p> <p><b>KPI*</b> <i>Percent of residents who believe their culture is celebrated in the community (i.e. festivals, parades, events, etc.)</i></p>	<p>Does this project exemplify and/or help promote Lawrence's commitment to Environmental Sustainability?</p> <p><b>KPI*</b> <i>Number of events and programs that celebrate and enhance area environmental sustainability.</i></p>	<p>Degree to which the project meets the Lawrence Community Arts Grant Program purpose/goals of <b>Cultural Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~Project's anticipated impact on the Lawrence community</li> <li>~Value of the project as described by the applicant</li> <li>~Evidence of collaboration</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~Unmistakable Identity</li> <li>~Equity &amp; Inclusion</li> <li>~Environmental Sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>Qualifications and strengths of the partners involved in the proposed project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~Feasibility as demonstrated by the detailed timeline for implementation</li> <li>~Well designed and documented budget sufficient to support all proposed activities</li> <li>~Current, signed letters of commitment documenting all collaborations and cost share (including in-kind and cash match) commitments described in the proposal</li> <li>~Application Quality</li> </ul>	<p>Completeness, organization, and clarity of the application packet</p>	<p>Reveiwler-added points for strong projects that align well with the program intent and in which you are confident of success. (0 to 5 points)</p>	
*Key Progress Indicators (KPIs)							
<b>0 (Lowest) to 10 (Highest)</b>	<b>0 (Lowest) to 15 (Highest)</b>	<b>0 (Lowest) to 15 (Highest)</b>	<b>0 (Lowest) to 10 (Highest)</b>	<b>0 (Lowest) to 10 (Highest)</b>	<b>0 (Lowest) to 5 (Highest)</b>	<b>0 (Lowest) to 5 (Highest)</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT - SCHEDULE

## Regular Grants

December 31, 2025, to February 2, 2026, at 11 p.m. Application deadline: February 2, 2026, by 11 p.m.

Thursday, January 8 (2 to 3 p.m.) and Friday, January 16 (2 to 3 p.m.) – Informational meetings for grant applicants – Virtual and recorded on YouTube

Pre-Application review. Interested applicants can download the pre-application PDF form, fill it out and submit it by email by January 15, 2026 – or sooner – for initial screening and basic minimum requirements staff review. Feedback will be returned by January 26, 2026.

Wednesday, February 11 (7:30 p.m.) – Cultural Arts Commission meeting – review scores and make recommendations

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 – City Commission reviews regular Community Arts Grants Program funding recommendations for approval at City Commission meeting





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT - SCHEDULE

## **Mini Grants**

January 26, 2026, to March 6, 2026 – Application period for FY 2026 Community Arts Mini Grants

*Application deadline: March 6, 2026, by 11 p.m.*

Wednesday, March 11 (7:30 p.m.) – Cultural Arts Commission meeting – review scores, discussion and make recommendations

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 – City Commission reviews Community Arts Grants Program funding recommendations for approval at City Commission meeting





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT

**All grant recipients are required to set up an account in the City's Vendor Access online platform and sign an agreement with the city for use of TGT funds.**

## **Post Award Requirements:**

Awardees must acknowledge the support of the City of Lawrence in publicity associated with the programming funded by the LCAC Grant and during presentations of the project or program. The City of Lawrence logo will be provided to grant recipients.

Awardees must submit a **final report** that details the outcomes of the project to the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission within one month of project completion or no later than December 31, 2026. Failure to submit the final report will result in disqualification for future Lawrence Community Arts Grants Program competitions.





# COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT - CONTACT INFO

**This presentation and links to other related documents are here:**

**<https://lawrenceks.gov/prc/art-grants>**

**Porter Arneill**, Assistant Director, Parks, Recreation and Culture

Lawrence Parks, Recreation and Culture

1141 Massachusetts Street, Lawrence, KS 66044

[parneill@lawrenceks.gov](mailto:parneill@lawrenceks.gov)

**O** 785-832-3449 | **M** 785-764-3270

