



FY2027 Unmistakable Events Grant Program Guidelines

Web page with application:

lawrenceks.gov/City/PRC/Arts-Culture/Unmistakable-Events-Grant-Program

City of Lawrence Unmistakable Identity Statement:

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.

GOALS

The Unmistakable Events (UE) Grant Program will provide funding for specific events that meet the following goals aligned with our [Strategic Plan](#) and [Key Progress Indicators](#):

- **Economic Impact:** Demonstrate a measurable economic benefit by enhancing the cultural economy or travel/tourism economy, including the generation of additional transient guest tax and sales tax revenue.
- **Strengthening Lawrence's Unmistakable Identity:** Enhance Lawrence's unmistakable identity as a welcoming community known for arts, culture, and vibrant events. Events should showcase Lawrence's reputation as a hub for regional visitors and contribute to the community's diverse and inclusive atmosphere.
- **Community Engagement, Inclusion and Cultural Impact:** Foster community engagement, with a focus on inclusivity, by hosting events that resonate with diverse audiences, including black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) residents. Events should strive to increase the percentage of residents who feel their culture is celebrated in the community.
- **Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship:** Promote events and programs that celebrate and enhance and increase awareness about environmental sustainability, contributing to Lawrence's long-term environmental goals.

The UE Grant program will have one funding cycle per calendar year, with applications being accepted in the fall of the year preceding the funding year. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will review the applications and make recommendations for funding to the City Commission for final approval.

GUIDELINES

A scoring matrix aligned with the program's goals and the Unmistakable Identity outcomes of the Strategic Plan will be used to evaluate applications.

- **Eligibility:** State registered for-profit and non-profit businesses may submit one grant request for events held throughout the year in Lawrence, Kansas.
- **Local Focus:** Only events that are held within the city limits are eligible for grant funds.
- **Focus on Marketing and Promotion:** Funding can be used for overall event support, with a particular emphasis on marketing and promotional efforts.
- **Impact on Tourism:** Events expected to generate overnight stays, especially during non-peak times (December through March and weekdays, Monday through Thursday night), are particularly desirable. Benefit scoring will reflect the potential for generating transient guest tax during off-peak periods.
- **Grant awards:** Range from \$500 to \$15,000 per event and require a 50% match, meaning recipients must contribute at least one dollar in matching funds for every dollar awarded.

- **City Funds:** Grant recipients are required to Enter into an agreement with the City and register as a vendor with the City to receive payments.
- **In-Kind and Cash Support:** Applications should note the value of in-kind services or cash support from other organizations, with required letters of commitment included as confirmation.
- **Post-Event Reporting:** Recipients of grant funds must sign an agreement with the city, including a requirement to submit post-event reports within one month of the event. Reports must include a summary, participant data, and details on the use of city funding. Failure to submit a report may disqualify the organization from future funding opportunities.
- **Recognition:** Events receiving funding must include the City of Lawrence and the Unmistakably Lawrence logos on sponsorship materials and acknowledge the city's support.

PLEASE NOTE - Increased Equity for the City's Two Grant Programs

The City administers two annual grant programs funded by Transient Guest Tax (TGT) revenue: the **Unmistakable Events Grant Program**, which supports public events, and the **Community Arts Grant Program**, which supports arts and culture projects, programs and initiatives.

To help distribute funding more equitably among community organizations:

- **An organization may receive funding from only one of the two grant programs each year.** An organization that receives an Unmistakable Events Grant is not eligible to also receive a Community Arts Grant for the same funding year.
- **Separate organizations collaborating on the same event or project may apply independently.** For example, if one nonprofit receives an Unmistakable Events Grant for an event, a separate nonprofit arts organization partnering on that event may apply for a Community Arts Grant to support its own eligible activities.
- **The application schedules are coordinated to help applicants plan.** Unmistakable Events Grant funding decisions will be made before the Community Arts Grant application deadline, allowing organizations to know the outcome of their UEG application before deciding whether to apply for a Community Arts Grant. This approach is intended to broaden access to City grant funding while continuing to encourage collaboration among local organizations.

PROCESS

Target TIMELINE for FY2027 Grant Program

- October 2 – November 1, 2026 – Application period for FY2027 event grants.
- Thursday, October 8, 2–3 p.m.: Virtual informational meeting via Zoom for prospective grant applicants. Register for Zoom meeting [here](#). Note: The Zoom meeting will be recorded and posted on the web page for those who may not be able to attend.
- **Sunday, November 1, 11 p.m.: Online Application deadline.**
- November 2–8: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members independently review and score eligible grant applications.
- Monday, November 9, 5:30 p.m.: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board reviews the compiled scores, discusses applications, and develops funding recommendations as part of its regular monthly meeting at City Hall.
- Tuesday, December 1 or 8: City Commission considers the FY2027 Unmistakable Event Grant funding recommendations for final approval.

For more information: Please contact Porter Arneill, Assistant Parks, Recreation and Culture Director - (785) 832-3449, parneill@lawrenceks.gov

The deadline for FY2027 TGT Grant applications is November 1, 2026, by 11:00 p.m.

Applications will be accepted online at:

lawrenceks.gov/City/PRC/Arts-Culture/Unmistakable-Events-Grant-Program.