

"We Have Tomorrow — Bright Before Us, Like A Flame." *Langston Hughes*



Lawrence water is Best in State!

The Clinton Water Treatment Plant was awarded Best Tasting Tap Water in Kansas at the Kansas Section of the American Water Works Association (KsAWWA) and the Kansas Water Environment Association's (KWEA) annual joint conference.

Winning this award reflects not just the quality of Lawrence's water, but also the dedication, expertise, and tireless work of the City's water treatment team. The Clinton Plant operators and staff (pictured above) maintain strict compliance with state and federal regulations, working around the clock to ensure that every drop of water reaching Lawrence residents is clean, safe, and great-tasting.

OUR MISSION

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

City information is available at lawrenceks.org and on cable Channel 25.

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Updates ahead for Outdoor Aquatic Center

City to take on building and pool improvements over the next two years, but will keep the outdoor aquatic center open for full swim seasons in 2026 and beyond!

It's been nearly thirty years since the Outdoor Aquatic Center in Downtown Lawrence last saw a renovation, and time has taken its toll.

In 2024, the City of Lawrence began working on plans to help modernize our beloved community pool. After extensive community engagement to determine what was most important to achieve within our budget, we're ready to get this renovation started!

The anticipated renovations will include maintaining the existing open water area, separating the zero-depth entry pool from the main pool, and installing separate filter systems. Additional work to improve the outdoor aquatic center will include:

- An accessible ramp to the main pool
- Renovation of some existing buildings
- New water slides (budget permitting)
- Renovation of the existing shade structure (budget permitting)

Project Timeline

The Outdoor Aquatic Center renovations will take place in two phases to allow work to first

be completed on the Jayhawk Watershed Project, which is adjacent to the pool. The Jayhawk Watershed Project will upgrade outdated stormwater infrastructure in the area.

Phase 1: Building Improvements

Phase 1 will begin this fall (now that the 2025 swim season has concluded) and wrap up in early 2026 before the next swim season. The building improvements will focus on renovating the pool restrooms.

Phase 2: Aquatic Improvements

In late 2026 (after the 2026 swim season), we'll begin work to rehabilitate the existing pool, including replacing the pool deck and ADA access improvements. Phase 2 work should conclude before the 2027 swim season!

Pictured above: The latest renderings of the proposed design of the Outdoor Aquatic Center, provided by the City's partners in this work: SFS Architecture, Vireo, and Water's Edge Aquatic Design.

Fund will support access to Parks, Recreation and Culture services

Dr. John Nalbandian, former Lawrence mayor and professor emeritus at the University of Kansas School of Public Affairs and Administration, generously gifted \$25,000 to establish the John and Carol Nalbandian Fund.

The fund, administered through the Douglas County Community Foundation (DCCF), will provide financial assistance to residents who may not otherwise have the means to participate in parks and recreation programs. The gift reflects Dr. Nalbandian's deep, personal connection to the department and his continued commitment to the wellbeing of the Lawrence community.

"When people ask me why I am giving this money to the Parks, Recreation and Culture department, I say, 'I am not giving to the department — I am giving back to the department for the facilities, programs and staff that have enriched my family's life over the years. The city's unmistakable identity is a living theme for me,'" said Dr. Nalbandian.

Dr. Nalbandian's gift is named in memory of his late wife, Carol, who passed away in 2014 and was deeply engaged in community affairs. Together, the Nalbandians have been long-time champions of Lawrence's public spaces, programs and services.

"Every year I look forward to the beautiful flowers in South Park," said Dr. Nalbandian. "I love watching the kids at the aquatic centers where I swim. I am blown away by the dynamism around the tournaments at the sports complex. Annually I sign up for three different fitness classes. I look forward to spring when I can cycle on the loop. As mayor, I remember our dedication of Eagle Bend. Parks and Recreation is part of my life, and I want this financial assistance to enable others to enjoy an active life as much as I do."

According to Dr. Nalbandian, the endowment is intended to provide flexible support to residents in need, allowing the department to apply the funds where they are most impactful. He hopes this gift will inspire others to contribute — to this fund or to future fundraising efforts.

Community members who wish to contribute to the John and Carol Nalbandian Fund may contact the Douglas County Community Foundation at 785-843-8727 or through www.dccfoundation.org.

2025 Point-In-Time Count data available:

Lawrence reduces unsheltered homelessness by 63%

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officially verified a 63% reduction in unsheltered homelessness for the Douglas County region in a single year. Between January 2024 and January 2025, nearly 100 community members moved from living outdoors into shelter or housing.

What does it mean? The City of Lawrence — in collaboration with community partners invested in this issue — has achieved one of the largest year-over-year decreases reported anywhere in the country.

Most communities report only single-digit or low double-digit reductions each year. Comparable reductions to Lawrence's typically take multiple years. *The Douglas County region achieved a 63% reduction in just 12 months.*

"This milestone reflects a community-wide effort, featuring strong partnerships across agencies participating in multidisciplinary outreach," said Misty Bosch-Hastings, Director of Homeless Solutions, City of Lawrence. "It's more than a number. It's nearly 100 of our neighbors no longer sleeping outside, now connected to care and on the path to stability."

How did we do it? The progress stems from a community-wide commitment, scaled access to services and a coordinated service model, including:

- Multidisciplinary outreach teams that bring healthcare, behavioral health, and housing navigation directly to people living outdoors.

- Coordinated shelter pathways that align access to shelter and services across providers to reduce barriers.
- Strong partnerships and collaboration across the City of Lawrence, Douglas County, Mirror Inc., Lawrence Community Shelter, and others.

By the Numbers: Douglas County 2025 Point-In-Time Count.

- 63% Reduction in unsheltered homelessness (142 to 52 people)
- 30% Reduction in total homelessness (414 to 290 people)
- 130 People meet HUD's definition of chronic homelessness
- 21% are employed but still homeless
- 38% are experiencing homelessness for the first time
- 10 unaccompanied youth (under 25)

Through our commitment to the A Place for Everyone plan to reach functional zero in homelessness in our community, the City of Lawrence is working toward a community where all residents have access to safety, dignity, and opportunity. With a continuum of outreach, shelter, supportive housing, and wraparound care, Lawrence is advancing long-term solutions to homelessness.

For more information, the Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition publishes PIT Count data on their website: kshomeless.com/about-ks-bos-coc/reports.

Call for Poems: Lawrence Transit Poet Laureate Program

Lawrence Transit invites poets to explore how we create and discover belonging through the pathways we travel — both literal and metaphorical. Whether it's the bus route that carries us to work each morning, the walking path that leads us to a friend's door, or the emotional journey that brings us closer to community, we all navigate routes that shape our sense of place and connection.

For the Poet Laureate Program, we encourage poems that celebrate the intersections where lives meet, the stops along the way that become gathering places, and the quiet moments of recognition when we realize we're exactly where we need to be.

We invite submissions that explore:

- The familiar faces we encounter on our daily routes

- Moments of unexpected connection during travel
- Places along our paths that hold meaning and memory
- The ways transportation brings diverse communities together
- Stories of arrival, departure, and the spaces in between
- How movement through our city creates belonging

All ages welcome. Poems may be submitted in English or any language spoken in our community, with English translation if desired.

Submit your poems using the QR code to the right. More information online at lawrencetransit.org.

