



Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture (PRAC) Unmistakable Events Grant Program Guidelines

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.

The **Unmistakable Events Grant Program** is administered through the Parks, Recreation, Arts and Culture (PRAC) Department as part of the Unmistakable Identity outcome area. Grant application review will be conducted with the assistance of a diverse ad hoc volunteer committee of seven, comprising members from the Cultural Arts Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Boards as well as individuals with background in arts and culture, tourism, and economic development. This committee will review applications and make recommendations to the City Commission, which has final approval of grant funds.

Goals

The Parks, Recreation, Arts, and Culture (PRAC) Unmistakable Events Grant Program is a competitive funding opportunity for Lawrence-based events that are open to the public. To be eligible, events should meet most of the following goals:

Strengthening Lawrence's Unmistakable Identity: Enhance Lawrence's unmistakable identity as a welcoming community known for vibrant arts, culture, educational and recreational events. Events should showcase Lawrence's reputation as an unmistakable hub for regional visitors and contribute to the community's diverse and inclusive atmosphere.

- **Objective:** Position Lawrence as the go-to destination in the region for arts, culture, sporting, and vibrant public events.
- **Impact:** Funded events should enhance the city's brand as a welcoming, culturally rich and unique community. This will attract a steady flow of regional visitors and support the growth of the local creative economy.
- **Return on Investment:** Increased regional recognition leads to a rise in visitors and repeat tourists, which directly translates into higher transient guest tax revenues, and local spending in hospitality and retail sectors.

Economic Impact: Demonstrate a measurable economic benefit by enhancing the travel/tourism economy, including the generation of additional transient guest tax and sales tax revenue.

- **Objective:** Drive measurable economic benefits by supporting events that boost the tourism economy including sales tax and TGT revenue.
- **Impact:** Events should aim to increase visitor numbers and spending, especially by out-of-town guests, which will contribute to the city's economic vitality.
- **Return on Investment:** Successful events can result in a substantial increase in sales tax revenue and transient guest tax income, directly benefiting the city's budget and enabling further investments in community infrastructure and services.



Cultural Impact: Demonstrate a measurable cultural benefit by enriching Lawrence's diverse and Unmistakable Identity through activities or initiatives that foster cultural growth and attract visitors.

- **Objective:** Strengthen the cultural and tourism economies by supporting activities and initiatives that not only foster cultural growth but also draw in diverse visitors from the region and beyond.
- **Impact:** Events should aim to reflect and enhance Lawrence's cultural landscape by offering engaging cultural experiences that attract diverse audiences, contributing to the city's reputation as a vibrant and socially welcoming cultural hub.
- **Return on Investment:** By highlighting Lawrence's commitment to Equity and Inclusion, these cultural initiatives can attract a broad spectrum of regional and national audiences. This, in turn, supports Lawrence's welcoming community ethos and boosts visitor spending, benefiting the local economy.

Community Engagement and Inclusion: 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 aim to increase the percentage of residents who feel their culture is celebrated in the community.

- **Objective:** Promote events that actively engage and include diverse community groups, especially BIPOC residents, ensuring their cultures are celebrated and visible.
- **Impact:** By fostering inclusivity and cultural representation, these events will strengthen community bonds and improve social cohesion.
- **Return on Investment:** Greater community satisfaction and participation can reduce social disparities, leading to long-term social stability and making Lawrence a more attractive place for new residents and businesses, further enhancing local economic conditions.

Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship: Promote events and programs that celebrate, enhance and increase awareness about environmental sustainability, contributing to Lawrence's long-term environmental goals.

- **Objective:** Encourage environmentally sustainable events that align with Lawrence's long-term environmental goals.
- **Impact:** Events that prioritize sustainability will contribute to the city's environmental resilience, reducing the community's overall carbon footprint.
- **Return on Investment:** Sustainable practices can lower operational costs in the long run and position Lawrence as a forward-thinking, green city, attracting eco-conscious tourists and residents who contribute positively to the local economy.

Guidelines

A scoring matrix aligned with the goals listed above 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. Grants start at \$600 and are limited to \$15,000 per event.
- **Local Focus:** Only events that are held within the city limits are eligible for grant funds. Events should strive to become self-sustaining over time, although the city retains the discretion to fund events that align with the grant program goals.
- **Focus on Marketing and Promotion:** Funding can be used for overall event support, with a particular emphasis on marketing and promotional efforts. This could include advertising



(print, social media, digital, radio, television), printing (flyers, posters, banners), video production, email marketing, web design, and graphic design services.

- **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.
- **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. City logos can be obtained from www.lawrenceks.org/identity, and the Unmistakably Lawrence logos can be obtained by contacting Allison Calvin of eXplore Lawrence at allison@explorelawrence.com.
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PLEASE NOTE - Increased Equity for the City's Two Grant Programs

The City administers two annual grant programs which are both funded by Transient Guest Tax (TGT). These are the Unmistakable Events Grant Program, which supports public events, and the Cultural Arts Commission's Community Arts Grant Program, which is dedicated to arts and culture projects and initiatives.

- Starting in 2025, to make things more equitable, each event or arts & culture program can only receive one grant. This can be either from the **Unmistakable Events Grant Program** or the **Community Arts Grant Program**, but not both.
- However, if two separate non-profits are working together on the same event, they can each apply for their own grant. For example, if the XYZ event is awarded funds from the Unmistakable Events Grant Program, the ABC arts program, which is part of XYZ, could still get support from the Community Arts Grant Program. This setup helps encourage local event organizers and arts agencies to collaborate, creating more opportunities for everyone involved.
- Plus, the application timelines for these grant programs are organized so that applicants will know if they will receive an Unmistakable Events Grant before the deadline for the Community Arts Grant Program. This makes it easier to plan and helps provide a fair chance to receive funding.

Important Things to Remember

- The program will have one funding cycle each calendar year, with applications being accepted in the fall of the year preceding the funding year. A volunteer committee will review the applications and make recommendations for funding to the City Commission for final approval.
- The value of financial support or services provided by other organizations should be included



in the application and noted as in-kind support. If cash or in-kind support has been received for the event, the application must include a letter of commitment as confirmation.

- Any entity receiving Unmistakable Identity Grant Program/TGT funds for an event must be registered with the [State of Kansas](#) and will be required to sign an agreement with the city which will require post-event reporting including a summary of the event, data captured from the event including participant projections and use of city funding in the overall budget. Post-event reporting is due to the City of Lawrence within one month of the event/program. If an event report is not filed, future funding opportunities through this program may not be allowed.
- Any entity receiving Unmistakable Identity Grant funding will be required to include the City of Lawrence and the Unmistakably Lawrence logos on sponsorship program materials and credit the city for sponsorship where appropriate. The city logo is available at www.lawrenceks.org/identity. For Unmistakably Lawrence logos, contact Allison Calvin of eXplore Lawrence at allison@explorelawrence.com.
- After the applications are received by the deadline, the committee will begin their review process. Applications will be posted on the city's website. The meetings of the committee are open to the public.

Unmistakable Identity Grant Program web page: <https://lawrenceks.org/lprd/tgt-grants/>

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Unmistakable Events Grant Program (TGT Grant) 2024-2025 Schedule

- November 8 – December 11, 2024 – Application period for FY2025 event grants
 - Application deadline: December 11, 2024, by 11 p.m.
- Thursday, November 14 (2 to 3 p.m.) and Friday, November 22 (2 to 3 p.m.) – Informational meetings for grant applicants – Virtual and recorded on YouTube
- Friday, January 3 (1-3 p.m.) – Ad hoc committee meets to review scores and make recommendations
- Tuesday, January 7, 2025 – City Commission reviews Unmistakable Events Grant Program funding recommendations for approval at City Commission meeting