



# City of Lawrence

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## CITY COMMISSION

**MAYOR**  
MICHAEL DEVER

**COMMISSIONERS**  
ROBERT CHESTNUT  
DENNIS "BOOG" HIGHBERGER  
MIKE AMYX  
SUE HACK

March 10, 2010

National Endowment for the Arts  
ATTN: Advisory Panel  
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Advisory Panelists:

Lawrence, Kansas, with its nationally recognized arts scene, is uniquely situated to make effective use of the NEA Mayor's Institute on City Design initiative (MICD). A community of 92,000 situated halfway between two major metro areas (Kansas City and Topeka), with a long-standing reputation for vitality in both business and the arts, Lawrence can speak to the concerns of similar-sized cities throughout the nation's heartland as they face a major economic downturn.

In the first decade of this century, John Villani ranked Lawrence among the top 15 in *The 100 Best Small Arts Towns in America* and the NEA placed Lawrence in the top 12 among "Cities in the US with the largest percentage of professional artists in the work force." We hoped to capitalize on this recognition to develop an arts district.

Unfortunately, Lawrence's business and arts communities, and the City itself, now face serious challenges as storefronts empty, unemployment grows, contributions to the arts decrease, and tax revenues decline. The MICD offers us the opportunity to find answers to these challenges and realize our dream. The City of Lawrence requests \$200,000 to pilot a Downtown Lawrence Arts District (DLAD) as the first step in an initiative to stimulate arts engagement and promote economic development and revitalization through the arts.

The City has a proven commitment to the arts. It fully funds the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission (LCAC), a volunteer body that oversees the City's One Percent for Art, community arts grants, Phoenix Awards for arts leadership, and annual juried outdoor sculpture programs. It funds utilities and maintenance for the Lawrence Arts Center (LAC), which was built through a municipal/private capital campaign partnership. The City will designate the LAC, which has a 35-year record of sustained service to the community, as the lead for this initiative. LAC, housed in spacious new quarters at the center of the proposed DLAD, is already the area's hub of arts activities and information with its extensive calendar of exhibitions, events, and classes. The Center will spearhead the efforts outlined in the following proposal, make monthly progress reports to the City through the LCAC, and work with City administration to complete the final report detailing the results of the DLAD effort.

We are eager to set the stage for a fully realized Downtown Lawrence Arts District that will have an impact well beyond the 72 blocks of the DLAD. We believe that infusing the arts in all their forms into our economic initiatives will refresh the business atmosphere of the target district and bring new audiences, businesses, and shoppers into the City's heart.

Sincerely,

Robert Chestnut  
Mayor



We are committed to providing excellent city services that enhance the quality of life for the Lawrence Community

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**A) Budget.** The City of Lawrence seeks \$200,000 to design, develop, and implement the Downtown Lawrence Arts District (DLAD) pilot project as the foundation for a longer-term initiative. The target district encompasses the downtown and East Lawrence neighborhoods, which will form a hub of civic and cultural activity. In this area of mixed residential housing are an elementary school, five public parks, the public library, and five nonprofit arts entities as well as grassroots and commercial art spaces (including seven galleries). Among committed in-kind resources to support this effort are office space and equipment at the LAC valued at \$16,640; City administration and other labor (incl. website design, site placement) estimated at \$9,025; Verbally promised in-kind includes use of space in empty storefronts for exhibits (\$16/sq ft) valued at \$159,840 and volunteer labor by arts agency personnel estimated at \$3,750. The LCAC will contribute \$10,000 in hard-dollar match.

Budget Categories	NEA Request	In-Kind	Cash Match	Total
<b>1. Personnel/labor</b>	\$81,100	12,775		81,100
<b>2. Public Art</b>	10,000	0	\$10,000	
<b>3. Rental fees/Services</b>	35,000	169,815		
<b>4. Travel</b>	3,900	0		
<b>5. Publicity/Marketing</b>	45,000	0		
<b>6. Materials/Supplies</b>	25,000	7,410		
<b>Total Project Expenses</b>	200,000	190,000	10,000	400,000
1. <u>Personnel/Labor</u> : ARO @ \$50,000/yr + fringe @ 30% (\$15,000) = \$65,000 + .50FTE & admin. asst. @ \$30,000/yr (1/2 = \$15,000) + Fringe @ 15% (\$2,250) = \$17,250: total request = \$81,100. 2. <u>Public art</u> : We request \$10,000 for four works of juried public art. 3. <u>Rental fees/services</u> : Funds are requested to help cover costs associated with the capstone conference and other activities that will not be covered entirely by in-kind contributions. 5. <u>Travel</u> : minimal travel is built in to allow the ARO and key members of the arts and business community to engage in fact-finding missions to key existing downtown arts districts. 6. <u>Publicity/marketing</u> : design of banners, print ads, radio ads, fliers; printing; signage for artworks				

**B) Major project activities.** We will: 1) hire an Arts Resource Officer (ARO) to define and implement the DLAD; 2) unite existing arts entities with business owners to plan a series of arts-related events such as a juried commission of artwork for public spaces, monthly Second Saturdays Storefront Art events, juried public arts shows, and Final Fridays Gallery Walks; 3) develop the marketing plan; 4) connect artists with owners of vacant storefronts to increase temporary exhibit and performance spaces; 5) build partnerships among landlords, architects, and artists/performers; 6) plan a capstone conference focused on arts and place-making for city leaders; 7) identify and obtain long-term funding to sustain and expand the initial activities, including continued funding of the ARO; and 9) compile and analyze evaluation data for reporting purposes and to inform the comprehensive long-term arts and culture master plan.

**C) Goal and Objectives.** Recognizing that the arts contribute to the strengthening of communities, the long-term goal of the DLAD initiative is to revitalize the urban core of Lawrence through enhanced arts engagement and participation by citizens and visitors. The major initial takeaway will be a comprehensive long-term arts and culture master plan, based on the success of the pilot activities, which is thoroughly vetted by all stakeholders and aligned with the City's 2020 Plan for economic development. The project will benefit arts organizations through skilled marketing strategies and businesses through increased consumer visits. The objectives for the grant year are to 1) organize Lawrence arts and business organizations to build partnerships among landlords, architects, and artists/performers active in the city; 2) develop strategies for

engaging these stakeholders in joint efforts to develop an arts and culture master plan with a central focus on the DLAD; and 3) develop and promote the pilot programs to the point that they can form a solid foundation for a fully realized DLAD. This phase will culminate in a capstone conference to share results with peer cities. By the end of the grant period, we intend that the DLAD will be self-supporting through infusions of funds from arts-related tax income to the City and continued cash and in-kind contributions from other stakeholders, and be prepared to implement a master plan (based on the results of this pilot program) to guide continued work in this area. Immediate economic benefits will be renewed investment in this struggling neighborhood; but the project will set the stage for increased arts engagement among all Lawrence citizens and help make the City of Lawrence more highly attractive to business interests generally.

**D) Schedule.** Upon award notification: Hire ARO; establish offices in the LAC. Data collection and work on comprehensive plan has already started and will continue throughout the grant period. First quarter (Sep.–Nov. 2010): Identify arts organizations, business leaders, and building owners; plan marketing strategies for the year; publicize and launch monthly Second Saturdays and Final Fridays events. Second quarter (Dec. 2010–Feb. 2011): Announce public art call-for-entries, establish jury for public art commissions. Third quarter (March–May 2011): Announce public art winners; prepare installation sites. Fourth quarter (June–Aug. 2011): Site completed artworks; host capstone conference; review data, write final report, and edit long-term plan.

**E) Key Partners, organizations, and individuals.** Initial partners were selected based on continued commitment to the arts in Lawrence. Committed partners include LAC, which will implement the grant and house staff and offices; Downtown Lawrence, Inc., a nonprofit organization that will liaise between grant staff and business and property owners; Stephen Johnson, an artist experienced in public art commissions; and key partners in the storefront arts program: Van Go Mobile Arts, an arts-based social service agency; downtown building owners George Paley and Dan Sabatini; and Callahan Creek, a Lawrence-based, internationally known design firm. Among Proposed partners are the Lawrence Community Theatre, Public Library, Chamber of Commerce, Conventions & Visitors Bureau, and Lawrence K-12 and post-secondary institutions.

**F) Target community.** Establishing the DLAD will unify the arts scene and connect it with local businesses, which will increase visibility and stimulate economic recovery. The estimated 2,820 residents of the DLAD comprise 3% of Lawrence’s population. Most residents are underserved, particularly children; the neighborhood’s New York Elementary School is a Title I school with 100% of its students qualified for free or reduced lunch.

**G) Publicity plan.** Marketing will begin with announcement of the award, followed by mailings and advertisements announcing the events as well as postings on the City’s, LCAC’s and LAC’s websites. We will nurture media relationships made at this time and extend publicity beyond Lawrence with the aid of the Convention & Visitors Bureau.

**H) Monitoring and Assessment Plan.** We will work with existing businesses to track increased foot traffic; monitor growth in arts activities with the assistance of resident (and new arts) organizations; and measure business growth by reviewing state sales tax data and comparing collections in the DLAD with collections throughout the city before and after initiating the project. Other measurable indicators include visitor and participant numbers and ticket sales at DLAD events, pre/post event surveys and on-site event journals for participant comment. Ultimately, we hope to measure success by increased tax revenue and property valuation.