

To The City of Lawrence and Commissioners:

Final Fridays Exhibits and Performing Arts began in August of 2010, and has now successfully held 26 consecutive monthly events. Final Fridays began in the Downtown Lawrence area as a combined effort of the Lawrence Arts Center, Downtown Lawrence Inc., The Chamber of Commerce and a core group of volunteers that included gallerists, local business owners, artists and curators with a \$10,000 grant from the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission managed by Jane Pennington, the 2010 Executive Director of Downtown Lawrence Inc.. The goal of Final Fridays is to bring all forms of the arts to the community of Lawrence through a monthly festival featuring exhibits and performances from local, regional, national and international artists in all disciplines, as well as providing an economic platform from which artists, merchants, cultural institutions and our local economy benefit.

In January 2011, management of Final Fridays was transferred to the Lawrence Arts Center. Molly Murphy was hired as Coordinator for 40 – 45 hours per month . Support for this position was paid in equal parts by the Lawrence Arts Center, Downtown Lawrence Inc. and The Chamber of Commerce. Late in 2011, The Chamber of Commerce declined to continue support of Final Fridays, and The Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission agreed to fill this hole, becoming an equal supporter of Final Fridays with The Lawrence Arts Center and Downtown Lawrence Inc..

It came to our attention that as of September 2012, the funding from The Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission, which consisted of \$300 a month, is depleted. We are requesting a commitment from the City of Lawrence to continue funding this one-third investment in this position.

Participation in Final Fridays continues to grow each month, as does the job of the Coordinator. New venues have been added in Downtown Lawrence to have an average of 20 – 25 participating locations each month. The new Warehouse Arts District (Poehler Development area) joined Final Fridays with an opening night that drew 1200 people to the one-block area that includes a gallery, the Poehler corporate collection, artist studios and several flash spaces. Partnerships to promote Final Fridays have been made with Lawrence.com, the Lawrence Journal World, The Lawrence Arts Center and Great Plains Media. Since January of 2011, Lawrence.com has added a Final Fridays tab and section, resulting in 57 feature articles that share content with the Lawrence Journal World, 20 Final Fridays blogs, monthly calendar listings and a monthly column of Final Friday events in the Journal World. Great Plains Media provides monthly interviews and highlights of Final Fridays artists and events. Further press coverage has been in Ink Magazine, Review Magazine, Everyone Needs An Editor, The Pitch, KCUR, KJHK and a feature in Kansas Magazine is coming out in the next publication.

In November of 2011, an independent group (the STArt Alliance) conducted a one-night economic impact study funded through a grant from LCAC, which concluded that Final Fridays provide a significant economic boost to the Downtown Lawrence area during the night of the event. Anecdotal surveys have been conducted with restaurants, bars, coffee shops and cafes in the downtown area, and suggest that these types of businesses enjoy nearly double their normal business activity during the hours of and a couple of hours after Final Friday events.

To continue the development and momentum of this important cultural event in Lawrence, we are asking the City of Lawrence to approve the request of \$300 per month to be managed by The Lawrence Arts Center for the Final Fridays Coordinator position.

Sincerely,

The Lawrence Arts Center