



“We Have Tomorrow – Bright Before Us, Like A Flame.”

Langston Hughes



City of Lawrence

The Flame | April 2023

City passes Source of Income Ordinance

New law makes affordable housing easier for renters with Housing Choice Vouchers

The Lawrence City Commission recently passed an ordinance that will create new protections against discrimination in housing and public accommodations in Lawrence. Beginning June 1, 2023, discrimination in housing based on a person’s source of income or immigration status will be prohibited.

Among other protections, the new law will help protect people who use a Housing Choice Voucher – also known as a Section 8 voucher – to access affordable housing. Landlords will no longer be able to reject a tenant solely based on their use of a voucher.

Having landlords that will accept vouchers is critical to housing choice for voucher holders and for making units affordable.

In Lawrence, 50.9% of renters are housing cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. The City of Lawrence has made a commitment to reducing the percentage of households experiencing housing stress and to reducing the number of Lawrence residents experiencing homelessness.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development began using Housing Choice Vouchers so people in need of affordable housing would have more choice in where they decide to live. In Douglas County, all Housing Choice Vouchers are administered by the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority (LDCHA). The City helps

support the LDCHA through its affordable housing trust fund, which allocates money annually to organizations working to improve the availability of affordable housing in our community.

The new ordinance also benefits partner organizations that are working to provide housing supports and affordable housing, such as Tenants to Homeowners and the Housing Stabilization Collaborative, as it will create more housing opportunities for voucher holders.

When the new ordinance goes into effect on June 1, it will immediately increase the housing options for low-income Lawrence residents, which the City anticipates will reduce the amount of people currently experiencing homelessness in Lawrence. Some of these people have Housing Choice Vouchers now, but they are unable to find a landlord who will accept them.

Housing is the solution to homelessness, and this ordinance is another piece that gets this community a step closer to functional zero, which is a milestone that indicates a community has measurably solved homelessness for a population. When its achieved, homelessness is rare and brief for that population.



The new law also includes additional housing protections for any person who is a survivor of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, or stalking, so long as the victim notifies

the landlord appropriately. Finally, the ordinance prohibits discrimination based on immigration status in public accommodation.

The City, in conjunction with local agencies, such as the Lawrence Douglas County Housing Authority, will host several community meetings to answer questions before this law goes into effect. Mark your calendar for these upcoming events:

- April 18: 10 a.m. in the, Lawrence Public Library Auditorium
- May 9: 2 p.m. in the Bly Room at Holcom Park Recreation Center
- May 24: 6 p.m. in the Legacy Room at Sports Pavilion

For more information on this new law, you can visit the City’s website at: lawrenceks.org/attorney/soi.



Now accepting Phoenix Award nominations!

The Phoenix Awards are back for their 24th year! Given out by the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission, the Phoenix Awards recognize outstanding artistic achievements in the Lawrence community – particularly those that go “above and beyond” and have a lasting impact on arts and culture in Lawrence.

Nominations for 2023 Phoenix Awards are open through May 31, 2023. Emerging and established artists working in the visual, literary, musical, theatrical, and media arts can be nominated. Arts educators, administrators, patrons, supportive entities, advocates, and volunteers are also eligible.

If you're interested in applying or nominating, visit our website: lawrenceks.org/phoenix-awards.

Meet the Phoenix Awards 2023 Artist!

The Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission has selected the artist to create the physical Phoenix Awards for this year's honorees! A former recipient of a Phoenix Award in the Visual Arts (2011), Toni Brou is a sculptor living in Lawrence.

Brou sculpts smiling sun faces and often incorporates found objects as a nod to the ideas of hope and transformation. Having shipped her work to every state in the U.S., Brou is an accomplished artist and sculptor!

April is Fair Housing Month

Fair Housing Month is celebrated in April in commemoration of the Fair Housing Act, which was passed in April 1968. The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on race, color, national origin, religion and gender.

In Lawrence, Chapter 10 of our City Code contains our local laws that prohibit discrimination within housing, public accommodations and employment.

The City of Lawrence's Human Relations Division is a resource to any resident who believes they may be the victim of discrimination in housing, employment or public accommodation. Residents are encouraged to confidentially contact our staff to discuss whether they might be a victim.

For more information, you can email the Human Relations Division at humanrelations@lawrenceks.org or call 785-832-3310.

Two City departments earn accreditation this year

Congrats to Municipal Services & Operations and Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical!

We are thrilled to celebrate two City departments who have recently earned accreditation! Municipal Services & Operations earned the department's first-ever accreditation while Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical maintained accreditation for the fourth, five-year cycle in a row.

Why pursue accreditation? The process promotes excellence in the operation and management of an agency, its programs and employees. Accreditation is designed to assist the department in continuous improvement of operations and management, and provide a valid and objective evaluation of agency programs as a service to the public and the profession.

Earning accreditation demonstrates the commitment and dedication of all the employees working hard in these departments to bring the City's mission and strategic vision to life.

Municipal Services & Operations

The City of Lawrence Municipal Services and Operations (MSO) department received full accreditation by the American Public Works Association (APWA). This accreditation formally verifies and recognizes that the agency is in full compliance with the recommended management practices set forth in APWA's Public Works Management Practices Manual.

The MSO Department is the largest in the City and includes 21 programs, such as solid waste, water and wastewater treatment, street maintenance, facilities maintenance, traffic operations and more.

The City of Lawrence Municipal Services and Operations Department joins only 179 other agencies across the US and Canada who hold APWA Accreditation, and it is the seventh Kansas agency to receive accreditation.

Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical

Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical (LDCFM) has earned their fourth accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). They first achieved accreditation in 2008 and successfully achieved accreditation renewal (a process that takes place every five years) in 2013 and 2018 as well.

LDCFM is one of more than 300 agencies to achieve Internationally Accredited Agency status with the CFAI and the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. (CPSE). It is one of nine agencies in Kansas that have earned accreditation.

LDCFM is a joint agency for the City of Lawrence and Douglas County, Kansas, offering fire prevention, fire protection and emergency medical services to the greater community.

It's Fare Free 2023!

All Lawrence Transit busses are free to ride in 2023! Take advantage of this exciting pilot program and hop on a bus! More information on routes and travel training opportunities is online: lawrencetransit.org.



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