

City of Lawrence Outside Agency Annual Report For Calendar Year 2017

Reports on activity should be submitted electronically to Danielle Buschkoetter, at dbuschkoetter@lawrenceks.org by Thursday, February 15th 2018 at 5:00pm. For the following questions please refer back to your [2017 application for funding](#).

Reporting Period: Calendar Year 2017

Agency Name: Downtown Lawrence, Inc.

1. Refer to the program in which your agency received funding; provide a participant success story that helps demonstrate the accomplishments of the program.

Our **Downtown Lawrence gift card program**, instituted in mid-November 2015, has continued to grow year over year and drives direct spending to participating DLI member businesses. This program has been an incredible success story since its inception. In 2017 we sold 3958 cards worth \$176,171 in 1701 transactions. The amount redeemed at participating merchants in 2017 was \$132,192 in 5431 transactions at over 130 businesses. Since the start of the program we have sold 8728 cards worth \$391,690 in funds and of that, \$248,511 has been redeemed in 10,711 transactions. That is nearly a quarter of a million dollars in direct spending driven to our members in 14 months – over half of that was in 2017. This program has been an incredible boost to the local economy.

2. Refer to your 2017 application for funding; provide a brief narrative of the activities funded with City funds.

DLI continued to expand its membership and engage with member businesses and to collaborate with local organizations and the community at large. We produced and coordinated many longtime community wide events, most of which are free and open to the public, that encourage residents and visitors alike to spend time downtown enjoying the atmosphere and patronizing our local businesses. DLI also sponsored other local events and assisted with marketing and advertising via earned media, social media, and traditional media buys. We promote downtown year round through a variety of media channels as a destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment and as a community gathering space. We support our member businesses and assist with business development, marketing, targeted initiatives and promotions in our role as an economic development organization. Our members are also afforded multiple marketing and advertising opportunities that are included as a benefit of membership. They are promoted online via our website, downtownlawrence.com, on our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and on our printed map and directory as well as the large format map and directories located at 9th and Mass. and in the Vermont St. garage. DLI also offered co-op advertising opportunities several times a year that allow businesses to increase the impact of their limited marketing dollars.

We strive to avoid duplication of services and programs and work with partner agencies year round to achieve this goal. Some of our collaborators in 2017 were eXplore Lawrence, Lawrence Public Library, Lawrence Arts Center, Lawrence Parks and Recreation, the Watkins Museum, the Lawrence Chamber, the University of Kansas, Kansas University Athletics, Lawrence Sports Corporation and the Kansas Craft Brewers Guild. DLI continued to develop and grow our collaborative relationships and partnerships with other local agencies and organizations for the benefit of downtown as well as our city as a whole. We continued to work with the City on issues related to downtown parking including communications, signage, and bike corrals and we worked with Lawrence Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste and Public Works to communicate with business owners and the public about street and sidewalk repairs, traffic pattern changes, beautification efforts and trash and recycling issues downtown.

DLI maintains a close relationship and open lines of communication with Lawrence Police on issues of downtown safety and security; we are often the liaison between businesses and residents and police and work to facilitate positive and proactive discussions to ensure that our downtown is as welcoming, safe and inviting as possible. Our goal is to offer any visitor to downtown Lawrence the best experience possible, to make them feel welcome and encourage them to visit often.

3. Refer to your 2017 application for funding; provide specific detail (use supportive documents, if needed) to demonstrate what progress was made toward your proposed outcomes.

DLI produced and collaborated on community-wide public events in Downtown Lawrence including:

- **Downtown Lawrence Restaurant Week** was a great success from January 20-28, 2017. We were able to drive business to 23 participating restaurants during a historically slow business week. This date change also allowed us to capitalize on Kansas City Restaurant Week, which is held the week prior, and take advantage of some of their marketing efforts. We marketed the event both to Lawrence residents as well as out-of-towners in order to encourage travel to Lawrence, including overnight hotel stays and were able to develop and implement a comprehensive and successful \$12,000 media plan this year as a result of developing corporate sponsorships with US Foods, Crown Distributors and eXplore Lawrence.
- **Downtown Summer Film Festival: Dinner & A Movie.** In 2017 we screened three films (May 25, June 23, July 26) at the Library Civic Plaza in collaboration with the Lawrence Public Library. Each event, which was free to the public, featured live entertainment prior to the film screening, downtown food and drink vendors, door prizes, community outreach tables, and free popcorn provided by DLI. The July 26 film was shown at Abe & Jake's Landing, an air conditioned venue, as part of the Junior Olympics outreach events. We had approximately 1100 community members attend the events over the summer.

DLI produced a **Dinner & A Movie event called "Livin' in the City" expressly for the KU Office of First Year Experience** on August 26, 2017 at the Library Civic Plaza. This event was an official Hawk Week event and was a terrific collaboration to help students get oriented to downtown Lawrence as well as the Lawrence Public Library and area non-profit agencies via a specially designed community outreach and volunteer opportunity trailer. Students were offered a variety of giveaway and promotional items as well as food and drink tickets for five local food vendors, entertainment and a screening of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Because the event was so successful and well received, DLI will be working on other events throughout the academic year and in future years with KUOFYE.

- **58th Annual Downtown Lawrence Sidewalk Sale** was Thursday, July 20, 2017. We coordinated all logistics, creature comforts, and developed and implemented a \$6,000 regional marketing campaign to encourage shoppers from across the region to spend the day on Mass. Street shopping and dining. DLI also partnered with Happy Shirt Printing to give out free shopping bags at our DLI information booth that day.

- Additional shopping events included the **Downtown Wedding Walk**, a new event on April 30, 2017 featuring over 20 downtown businesses and venues that offer wedding related services. This was a huge hit and had over 200 attendees in its first year. Our second annual **Moonlight Madness** late night shopping in mid-October was also a success, encouraging evening shopping and sidewalk sale bargains with over 40 DLI members participating.

- DLI presented the 3rd Annual **Oktoberfest Lawrence** on October 14, 2017 in partnership with The Chamber and the Lawrence Public Library. Unfortunately our weather did not cooperate and affected our attendance, which was close to 700 attendees over the day vs. over 1200 in 2016, but the event continues to be popular and well received. We collaborated with local food vendors and local breweries/distributors to provide marketing and exposure opportunities for Lawrence businesses.

- **Holiday Lighting Ceremony & Santa Rescue on November 24, 2017** followed by Small Business Saturday the next day. We implemented a coordinated marketing initiative among members and an intensive social media campaign to raise awareness of and participation in Small Business Saturday. Our Holiday Lighting Ceremony continues to grow each year and this year we hosted an audience of close to 2500 at US Bank Plaza for entertainment by Theatre Lawrence, Lawrence Arts Center, Liberty Memorial Central Middle

School and Lawrence High School, further cementing our partnerships with local arts and educational organizations.

- **Winter Wonder Weekend December 2-3, 2017.** This was the fourth year for this collaborative event featuring several ongoing holiday events and community organizations (**Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade, Watkins Museum, Lawrence Civic Choir, Lawrence Festival of Trees, Craft Collective Arts & Crafts Show, Big Brothers Big Sisters Gingerbread Festival, Abe & Jake's Landing**) over the first weekend in December. This branding allows us to maximize our individual marketing budgets while encouraging increased retail and entertainment spending Downtown that weekend. We also provided additional entertainment opportunities including live caroling on Mass. Street that weekend.
- **DLI collaborated on a number of other long-standing community partner events** including: Final Fridays, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Lawrence Busker Festival, Free State Festival, Tour of Lawrence, KU Homecoming, Halloween Paint In, Halloween Trick-or-Treat, and Summer Brown Bag Concerts.

DLI improved and expanded signage to Lawrence and the Historic Downtown Business District in preparation for the USATF Junior Olympics - July 24-30, 2017.

- **DLI designed and produced 25 new clearer, more visible signs for "Historic Downtown Lawrence"** at the exit ramps from I-70/SLT/K-10 and within the city limits along 6th Street from Rock Chalk Park, 23rd Street, and South Iowa Street directing motorists to downtown.

Additional signage programs and projects on which we collaborated with the City included City assistance with digital message boards for special events to help direct motorists and ease traffic and parking congestion on event days. DLI, The Chamber and the City of Lawrence have also been working with KDOT for a dedicated "Historic Downtown Lawrence" sign at the first exit from Kansas City on the eastern leg of the SLT/K-10. This has been an arduous and drawn out process but is slated to come to fruition in spring 2018.

DLI increased marketing and collaboration for Downtown Lawrence businesses and events, especially related to the USATF Junior Olympics.

- **DLI developed a Downtown Lawrence mobile app for iOS and Android phones** with a business directory and listings, events calendar, parking map and parking and downtown FAQs, camera and posting to social media features. The app went live the day prior to the Sidewalk Sale and has nearly 2000 downloads to date. This is a tremendous added benefit to members as well as to the public looking for information about events and businesses downtown.
- **DLI provided Downtown Lawrence maps, information and downtown shopping passports at local hotels, visitor's information stations and at Rock Chalk Park to all Junior Olympics visitors.**
- **We assisted downtown visitors** using the bus service from Rock Chalk Park to Downtown Lawrence and **acted as volunteer ambassadors** onsite at the event venue.
- **We promoted downtown and DLI member events held during the Junior Olympics week.**
- In 2017 we **developed new initiatives with Kansas University via the Office of First Year Experience and the Provost's office** to work more closely and welcome new and returning students and parents during orientation and Hawk Week as an introduction to downtown as a safe and welcoming space. DLI and KU produced welcome signs for students that Downtown businesses posted throughout the summer and early fall. KUOFYE included **and KU Admissions** included DLI promotional materials, maps and shopping passports in all of their orientation sessions throughout the summer and fall.
- **DLI developed and implemented National Small Business Week social media campaign** highlighting all business sectors among membership. This is especially beneficial for DLI members in the professional, financial, and personal service sectors.

- **Continued to update and maintain the Downtown Lawrence merchant directory kiosk at 9th & Mass**, which provides visitors with a map, business directory, quarterly events calendar, and affordable advertising space for businesses. The directory and events calendar/advertising are updated quarterly.
- **Vermont Street Garage Downtown map and business directory maintenance** and updated quarterly.
- **Design, production and distribution of DLI printed maps** (20,000 maps minimum) and a minimum of three updates per year. Maps are currently distributed at the Lawrence Visitors Center, in all eXplore Lawrence welcome bags for conferences and meetings, all Lawrence hotels, KU Visitors Center, Office of First Year Experience, and Dean's Office, Lawrence Public Library, Lawrence Arts Center, Watkins Museum of History, and all DLI member businesses. Special Junior Olympics print run of 5,000 additional maps with a special JO Week events tear off calendar was a collaborative effort between DLI and eXplore Lawrence.
- **Our "Downtown Quarterly Passport" was distributed** to all large groups requesting special offers and discounts when visiting Lawrence. This is distributed directly by the DLI office as well as through eXplore Lawrence) in their welcome bags, Sports Pavilion Lawrence at tournaments to visiting coaches and teams and The Eldridge Hotel.
- Our **weekly public e-newsletter featuring Downtown Lawrence events, news, promotions, and information was distributed via email to 3200 subscribers** and shared with our 38,000+ social media followers on Facebook and Twitter.

4. Refer to the line-item budget provided in your 2017 application for funding; is this accurate to how your allocation was actually spent? If no, what changed and why?

YES