



"We Have Tomorrow – Bright Before Us, Like A Flame." *Langston Hughes*



#### HOLIDAY LIGHTS ON MASS STREET

Did you know our Parks, Arts, Recreation & Culture staff put up an estimated 300,000 lights every year ahead of the holiday season?! The magical lights typically stay up on Mass St. through Valentine's Day.

We're thankful to our team for putting in this effort every year! The holiday lights on Mass are a tradition everyone can enjoy.



## City breaks ground on Municipal Services & Operations field operations campus

In early December, despite freezing temperatures, the City of Lawrence celebrated the official groundbreaking for our Municipal Services & Operations Field Operations Campus!

With City Manager Craig Owens, City Commissioners, Municipal Services & Operations (MSO) Director Melissa Sieben, and an incredible turnout of crew and staff bundled up and braving the chill, the excitement for this transformative project kept us warm.

The new MSO Field Operations Campus will consolidate our operations into a single, state-of-the-art facility, improving working conditions, enhancing safety, and creating a more efficient environment for our essential workers. Plus, this thoughtfully designed campus prioritizes sustainability, neighborhood harmony, and flexibility to meet the needs of Lawrence today and into the future.

Our MSO department has 318 employees, making it the largest City department! The potential MSO workgroups that will be housed at the new campus include the Central Maintenance Garage, Streets, Traffic,

Stormwater, Water, Wastewater, Inspections, Solid Waste, Admin, and Construction Management, Engineering and Development.

The Field Operations Campus is located at the Farmland Remediation site on the east side of Lawrence (east of O'Connell Road and north of Venture Park Dr.) Part of the project will include developing a phasing strategy that allows for the site to be methodically remediated over time.

Construction began in December 2024, and the City anticipates Phase 1 construction will conclude in 2026. More updates will be shared throughout the project's progress.

*Pictured above (left to right):* MSO Assistant Director Melinda Harger, Field Operations Campus Project Manager Andy Ensz, MSO Director Melissa Sieben, Commissioner Amber Sellers, MSO Assistant Director Trevor Flynn, Mayor Bart Littlejohn, City Manager Craig Owens, and Commissioner Brad Finkeldei.

#### OUR MISSION

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

City information is available at [lawrenceks.org](http://lawrenceks.org) and on cable Channel 25.

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# Nine projects receive 2025 Affordable Housing Trust Fund awards

The City of Lawrence is allocating Affordable Housing Trust Fund awards to nine projects as part of the 2025 grant cycle. The Lawrence City Commission approved the awards during an early December meeting.

Eligible projects for Affordable Housing Trust Fund awards include the acquisition, rehabilitation and development of affordable housing, accessibility modifications to affordable housing, housing vouchers and emergency rental assistance, projects that increase community awareness on affordable housing, and projects that advance racial equity in affordable housing access.

The City's Affordable Housing Advisory Board, which recommends funding allocations for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, has a strong commitment to equitable access to accessible, sustainable and dignified affordable housing across all Lawrence neighborhoods.

## Here are the nine projects selected to receive funds in 2025.

The Douglas County Housing Stabilization Collaborative will be awarded \$200,000 for **emergency rental and utilities assistance**. The collaborative is a collective impact group of social service agencies and government whose mission is to prevent evictions and homelessness through short-term housing assistance.

Flint Hills Holdings Group will be awarded \$450,000 for **9 Del Lofts II**, which is a new construction of mixed-use, mixed-income (both affordable and market-rate) multifamily rental housing. 9 Del Lofts II will offer eight work/live units and 51 one-bedroom apartments, of which 36 will be restricted to households earning 30%, 40% and 60% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Lawrence Habitat for Humanity will be awarded \$100,000 for their **Critical Repair Program**. Lawrence Habitat partners with

low-income homeowners in our community to complete necessary home repairs, like new roofs, ramps, plumbing and heating and cooling systems, to ensure affordable housing remains affordable and homes are safe, healthy and decent for years to come.

Independence, Inc. will be awarded \$75,000 for their **Accessible Housing Program**, which assists low-income seniors and people with disabilities with accessibility modifications to their homes.

The Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority (LDCHA) will be awarded \$150,000 for **Delmar Place**, which is a new construction of permanently affordable multifamily senior housing units. Delmar Place will add 32 one-bedroom units and will serve low-income seniors earning below 80% of the AMI. LDCHA plans to have the units ready by January 2026.

The LDCHA will also be awarded \$50,000 to continue their **New Horizons Transitional Housing Program**. Grants from the program provide 24 months of rental assistance, which is paired with case management to help guests of Lawrence Community Shelter and Family Promise transition to affordable rental housing.

Lawrence Tenants will be awarded \$70,000 for **a community educator** who will plan and execute public programming and other activities to engage with renters, particularly low-income and underrepresented renters. Their goal is to increase tenant awareness of renter protections and empower people with lived experience related to housing affordability and instability.

The Senior Resource Center will be awarded \$25,000 for **accessibility modifications for low-income seniors**.

Tenants to Homeowners will be awarded \$80,000 for their **Affordable Rental Management program**, which focuses on rehabilitation of vacant and/or underutilized housing for the purpose of creating a new unit of affordable housing.

## Payment arrangements now available for Utility Billing

As of December 23, 2024, the City of Lawrence is offering payment arrangements for utility billing customers.

### What is a payment arrangement?

Payment arrangements can be made between the City of Lawrence and utility billing customers who have an outstanding balance to pay. The arrangement will outline a timeframe (up to three months) for when the full outstanding payment amount is due. The City anticipates that payment arrangements will make it easier for people to clear any outstanding account balances.

### Do I qualify for an arrangement?

1. The customer must be two months or more past due with a past due balance of \$150 or more.
2. The customer must not have had a previous payment arrangement with the City of Lawrence in the last 12 months.

### How do I sign up this program?

Customers can sign up for a payment arrangement through the utility billing team – either online, over the phone or in person. The team will offer payment arrangements in terms up to three months.

### What are the arrangement terms?

- The monthly arrangement amount must be paid in addition to all other regular monthly bills.
- All payments are due on the bill due date printed on the monthly bill.
- All future bills must be paid by the due date for the duration of the agreement.
- If the required payment is not paid in full by 5 p.m. on the monthly bill due date, service may be disconnected without further notice.
- If service is disconnected for non-payment, the entire account balance and reconnection fee must be paid before service is restored.
- If a payment arrangement is broken, it is not eligible for reinstatement.
- If the account is closed before the terms of the payment arrangement are completed, the entire balance will be due on the final bill due date. Closed accounts not paid within 90 days of the final bill due date will be sent to debt collection agencies without further notice.

