



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

City Manager's Office

Annual Salary: Competitive,
targeted at \$150,000 +/- DOE/DOQ



Are you a strategic, relationship-driven leader who can advance a high-impact economic development agenda through collaboration, innovation, and accountability? If so, apply to be Lawrence's next Economic Development Director!

We're looking for an exceptional systems-thinker and connector who is:

- Experienced in business attraction, retention, and site development
- Skilled at navigating intergovernmental partnerships and land use planning
- Grounded in values-based leadership with a data-informed approach

Lawrence is unmistakably vibrant and future-focused – read on to learn more about this opportunity!



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

Lawrence, Kansas is a dynamic, university-driven city known for its progressive values, cultural richness, and civic energy. Nestled in Northeast Kansas just off I-70 and K-10, Lawrence blends small-town friendliness with metropolitan access to Kansas City (30 minutes from downtown) and 40 minutes to new KCI Airport.

Home to the University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University, the city boasts a highly educated population, a thriving arts scene, and one of the most celebrated downtowns in the country—Massachusetts Street (“Mass Street”).

Residents enjoy over 50 parks and trails, vibrant annual festivals like the Art Troupe Parade and Busker Festival, and natural destinations like Clinton State Park and the Baker Wetlands. Community pride, innovation, and inclusion define daily life.

Tourism



History



POPULATION

94,934



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$62,608



MEDIAN HOME VALUE

\$285,000

AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT:

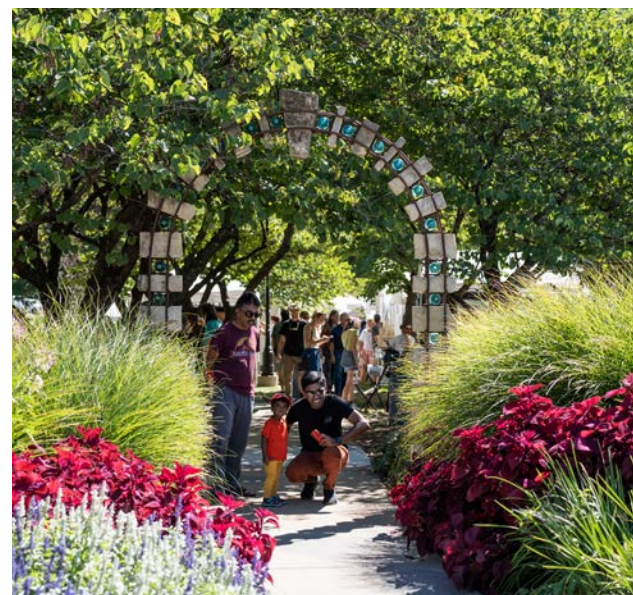
\$1,097

GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

Lawrence operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The City Commission consists of five at-large elected members, including a Mayor and Vice Mayor selected annually.

The City provides a full range of services including:

- Planning and Development Services
- Public Works and Utilities
- Parks and Recreation





THE JOB

The City Manager's Office leads the City's strategic initiatives and cross-departmental collaboration. Economic Development is a core function, focused on sustainable growth, business partnerships, and regional coordination.

This position serves as a key champion of the City's strategic priority to promote prosperity, economic security, and mobility:

- Lead implementation of the City's economic development strategy
- Serve as the primary liaison to the Chamber, EDC, KU, and Douglas County
- Promote business retention, site readiness, and industrial development position is key contact with and coordinates responsiveness to developers and investors.
- Manage incentive programs in compliance with City policies
- Advance workforce development and innovation partnerships
- Will facilitate and support entrepreneurship supports.

DEPARTMENT DIVISIONS

CURRENTLY A SOLO PROFESSIONAL ROLE WITH CONTRACTED SUPPORT RESOURCES; FUTURE EXPANSION POSSIBLE.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- LEAD THE CITY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, ALIGNING WITH CITY COMMISSION GOALS AND THE 2021 ERNST & YOUNG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS
- SERVE AS THE CITY'S REPRESENTATIVE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS AND CONVENE REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS TO ADVANCE SHARED GOALS
- COLLABORATE WITH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ON ZONING AND LAND USE, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEWLY ADOPTED LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE (2025)
- PARTNER WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS, ESPECIALLY KU INNOVATION PARK AND THE GATEWAY DISTRICT, TO LEVERAGE RESEARCH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENTS
- NAVIGATE COMPLEX INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS, PARTICULARLY WITH DOUGLAS COUNTY AND THE EDC HOUSED WITHIN THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- WORK WITH PEASLEE TECH AND OTHERS TO SUPPORT WORKFORCE READINESS AND SITE DEVELOPMENT
- SUPPORT STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS LIKE THE NORTH LAWRENCE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT
- OVERSEE AND MANAGE INCENTIVES IN COMPLIANCE WITH CITY POLICIES
- CONTRIBUTE TO EXPANDING THE CITY'S TAX BASE, FOCUSING ON COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH TO COMPLEMENT LAWRENCE'S STRONG RESIDENTIAL FABRIC

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2025

- IMPLEMENT THE NORTH LAWRENCE CORRIDOR PLAN
- PROMOTE AND SHARE THE IMPROVEMENTS FROM THE ADOPTED NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE (2025)
- DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH KU INNOVATION PARK AND GATEWAY DISTRICT



THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will bring deep experience in municipal or regional economic development and a strong record of fostering public-private partnerships. They will demonstrate:

- Political savvy and collaborative leadership
- Strong facilitation and communication skills
- Entrepreneurial drive with public sector accountability
- Community-centered, inclusive mindset

This individual must thrive in a dynamic, interconnected environment with high visibility and expectations.



EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- Bachelor's degree in public administration, planning, economics, or related field
- Substantial experience in economic development, business recruitment, or site readiness

Preferred:

- Master's degree
- Experience in real estate development and commercial and industrial development.
- Familiarity with university-city economic initiatives
- Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) designation or progress toward certification



SALARY & BENEFITS

Compensation: \$150,000 +/- DOE/DOQ

Health Benefits: Medical, dental, vision, and life insurance

Paid Leave: Vacation, sick leave, holidays, and professional development time

Retirement: Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs) participation

Additional Perks:

- Relocation assistance considered
- Access to contracted professional support
- Dynamic, high-impact executive leadership opportunity

HOW TO APPLY

Apply Here



For more information on this position, contact:

Clay Pearson, Senior Vice President

ClayPearson@governmentresource.com

713-816-8639

The City of Lawrence is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity in its workforce. Applicants selected as finalists will undergo a comprehensive background check.