



# 2023 ANNUAL Report

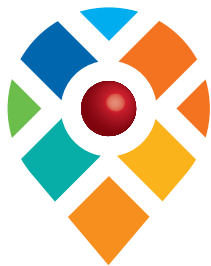


**explore**  
LAWRENCE

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# About Us

eXplore Lawrence represents the travel and tourism industry for Lawrence and Douglas County, Kansas. We are dedicated to creating economic development by attracting visitors, conventions, and events to our city.



At eXplore Lawrence, we pride ourselves on our hospitality - to visitors and residents alike. We are committed to ensuring that all people feel welcome in our community. We celebrate our community's authenticity, and we believe diverse perspectives make our work stronger and our community more attractive to all.

We are proud to partner with the many incredible community attractions, hotels, venues, restaurants, retail establishments, and planners that make Lawrence vibrant. eXplore Lawrence is proactive in meeting our partners' and travelers' needs. We collaborate with governmental, educational, and other community organizations to increase economic development.

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## OUR MISSION

eXplore Lawrence benefits the local economy by attracting diverse visitors, groups, and events to the City.



## OUR VISION

eXplore Lawrence celebrates Lawrence and Douglas County as an unmistakable destination known for its unique identity, inclusive community, and unforgettable visitor experiences.

# Year-in-Review

We are pleased to present our 2023 annual report. eXplore Lawrence is proud to continue to support Lawrence, Kansas's Unmistakable Identity by promoting tourism assets to visitors and ensuring Lawrencians also explore our City and enjoy our community. 2023 was a record-breaking year in economic impact, transient guest tax collections, and more.

In 2023, we adopted a new strategic plan to guide our organization through 2027. Our Board of Directors worked very hard to help set goals for our organization as we continue to elevate tourism in Lawrence. This process also formalized a new mission, vision, and core organizational values.

eXplore Lawrence welcomed three new staff members. Amy Schmidt-Cowardin joined our team in February as our Client Services Coordinator. Amy quickly dove into welcoming groups to Lawrence and assisting our community partners. We also welcomed Ruth DeWitt, Sales Manager, in August. Ruth's experience in communications, marketing, and community engagement helped elevate this new

position in our sales department. She quickly hit the ground running with our Director of Sales, Laura Hiebert-Carbrey, attending 3 tradeshow and meeting with over 80 meeting planners. Lastly, Allison Calvin joined our team as the new Director of Marketing and Communications. Her experience in the Kansas tourism industry and marketing made an immediate impact with our talented marketing team, Calley Vance and Laurel Nagengast.

2023 saw significant growth in Transient Guest Tax collection. Lawrence welcomed more overnight visitation, enhanced our marketing reach, and increased revenue opportunities for stakeholders.

We are committed to being a data-driven destination management organization that increases economic development in Douglas County and ensures the highest possible return on Transient Guest Tax revenue investment.

We look forward to welcoming new and returning visitors to Lawrence and continuing to celebrate Lawrence's Unmistakable Identity!



**“2023 was a record-breaking year”**



# Our Team



**KIM ANSPACH**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**ALLISON CALVIN**  
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
& COMMUNICATIONS



**RUTH DEWITT**  
SALES MANAGER



**LAURA HIEBERT-CARBREY**  
DIRECTOR OF SALES



**LAUREL NAGENGAST**  
DIGITAL MARKETING  
MANAGER



**CALLEY VANCE**  
VISITORS CENTER  
MANAGER

**RICHARD SMALLEY**  
VISITORS CENTER STAFF

**SARAH POTTER**  
VISITORS CENTER STAFF

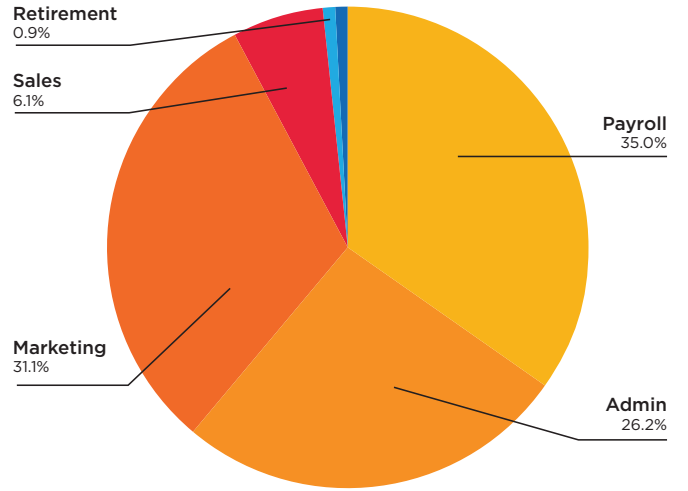
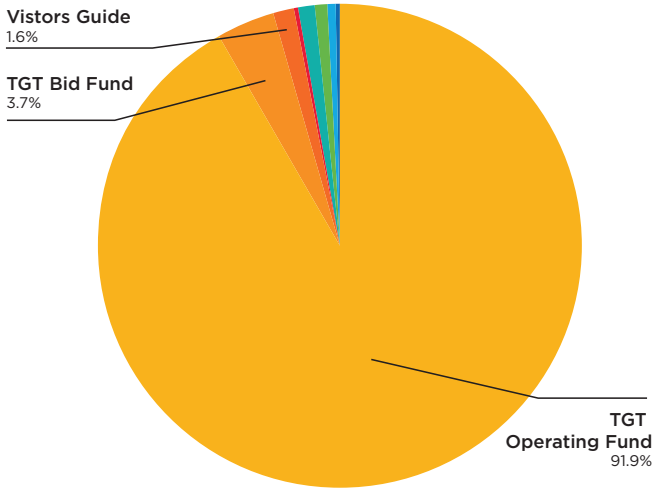
## 2023 Board of Directors

- Mike Logan The Granada - 2023 Chair
- Ivan Simac Country Inn & Suites - Chair
- Anthea Scouffas The Lied Center - Treasurer
- David Hayob Jayhawk Community Partners
- Drew Gaschler Kansas Athletics
- Heidi Champagne Springhill Suites
- Tina Tourtillott Haskell Indian Nations University

- Derek Rogers\* City of Lawrence Parks & Recreation
- Amber Sellers\* Lawrence City Commission
- Kathy Gerstner\* The Chamber, Lawrence
- Andrew Holt\* Downtown Lawrence, Inc

\*Ex-Officio

# Income & Expenses



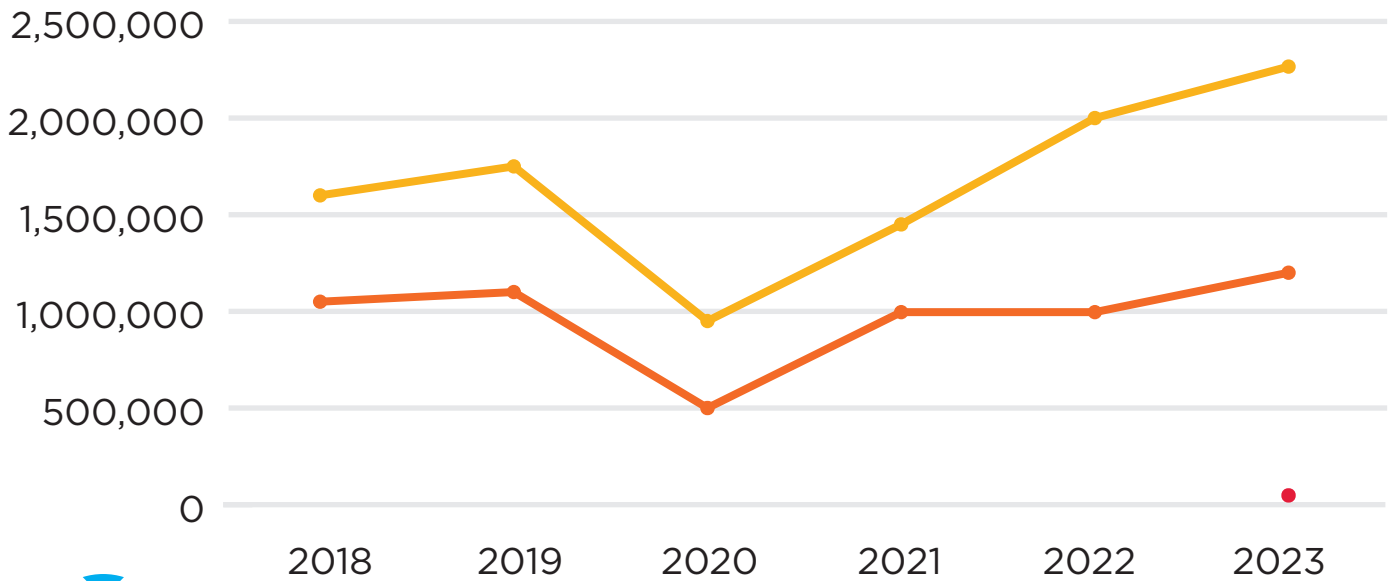
Total Income: **\$1,305,997**

Total Expenses: **\$1,247,444**

- TGT Operating Fund: \$1,200,000
- DMI: \$12,000
- TGT Bid Fund: \$48,000
- Co-op Marketing: \$12,269
- Visitors Guide: \$20,531
- DTN: \$6,200
- Merchandise: \$4,647
- Misc: \$2,350

- Payroll: \$436,496
- Sales: \$76,422
- Admin: \$327,020
- Retirement: \$11,343
- Marketing: \$387,830
- Bid Fund: \$8,333

# Transient Guest Tax



- TGT Total Collections
- EL TGT Bid Fund
- EL TGT Income

# Economic Impact of Tourism in Douglas County

## VISITOR SPENDING

In 2022, visitors spent **\$279 million** in Douglas County.

Visitor spending increased by **13.7%**.

All categories saw a double digit growth, except for retail which was just shy of the **9%** mark

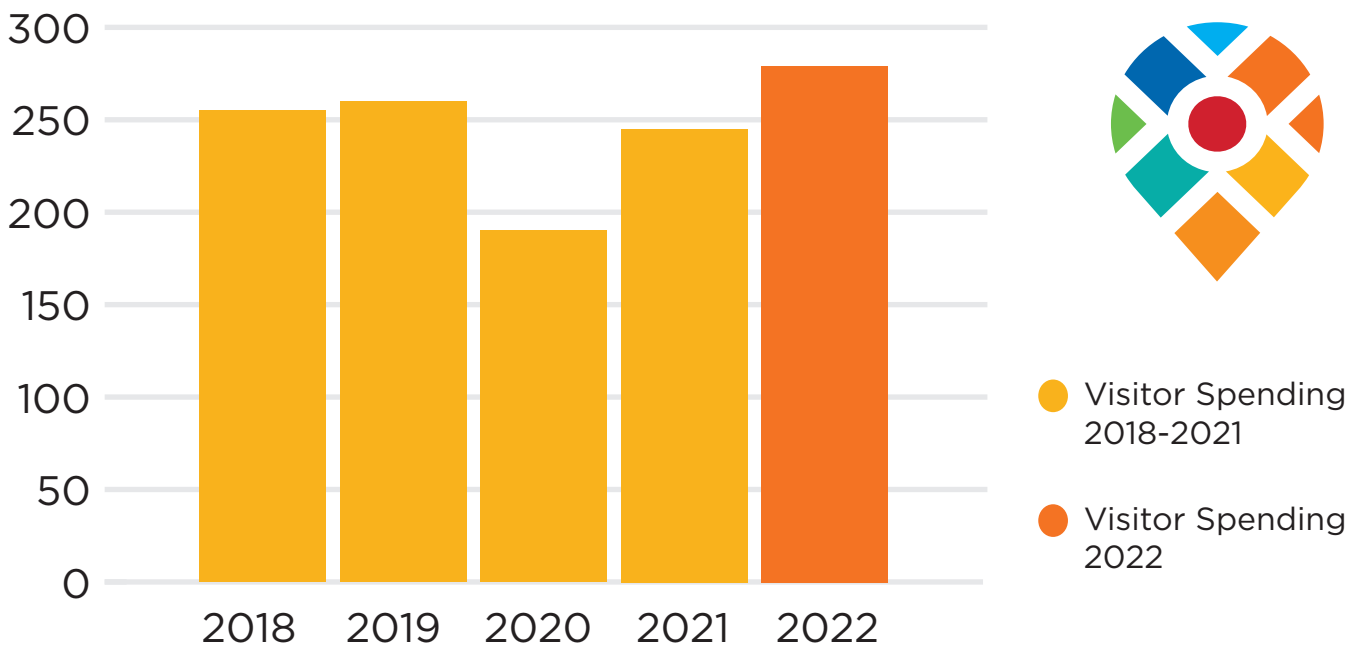
Lodging recovered to within **8%** of 2019 levels, with its sizeable growth of **26%**.

## EMPLOYMENT GENERATOR

Tourism supported **3,515 jobs** in Douglas County.

## FISCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Visitor activity supported **\$30.5 million** in state and local tax revenues in 2022.



- Visitor Spending 2018-2021
- Visitor Spending 2022



# Marketing & Communications

## Website

**338,394** users  
**332,276** new users  
**4,387,237** events  
**12.97** events/user

## Social Media

**33,494** fans/followers  
**4,889** new fans/followers  
**3.3 million** impressions  
**347,708** engagements

## Digital Advertising

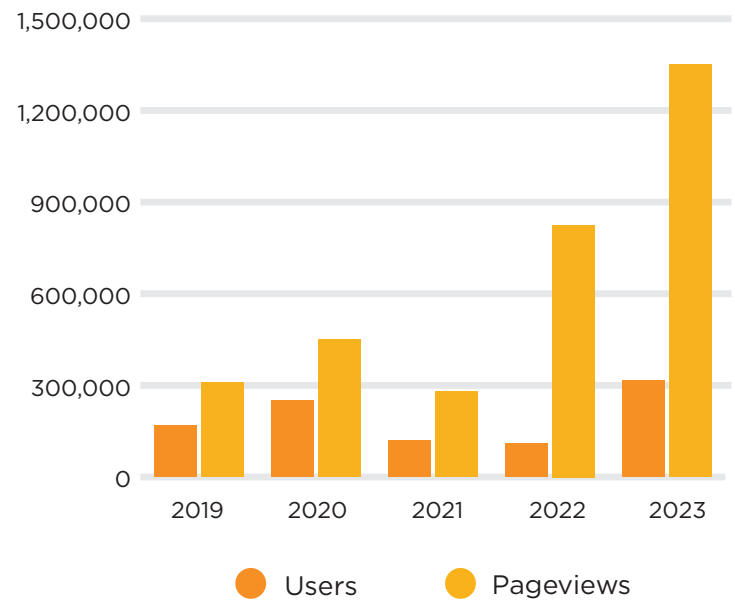
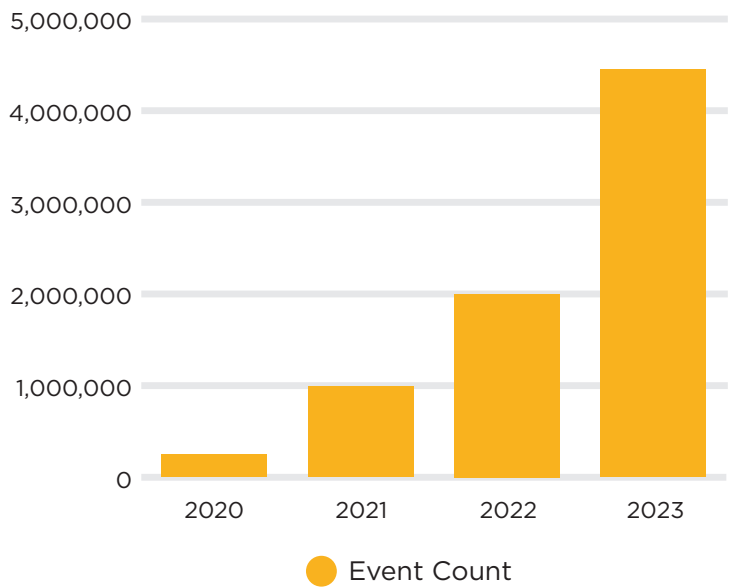
**13.4 million** impressions  
**181,938** clicks

## E-Newsletter

**11** emails sent  
**21,972** opens  
**2,090** clicks

## Lawrence Passports

**2,826** pass sign-ups  
**2,474** check-ins



## 2023 Lawrence Passport Program



**4** passports created  
 (Summer of Fun, Kaw Valley Craft Pass, Winter Wonder Pass, Bucket List)

**2,826** total passport sign-ups

**2,474** location check-ins

**188** offers redeemed





## Sales & Services

**41** leads booked

**7,854** booked rooms

**\$1,446,986** estimated economic impact

Provided collateral for **24** groups, events, and conferences.



Attended **5** tradeshows and met with **78** rights holders.

## Lawrence Visitors Center

Lawrence Visitors Center served **8,086** walk-in visitors.

Net sales at the Visitors Center was **\$5,088.60** in 2023.

Top selling items of the year were **Apparel & Games**.

**6** Final Friday events hosted.



# Community Engagement

Trained **34** tourism ambassadors.

**178** new partner accounts in 2023.

**706** partner portal logins.

**2,281** partner events added to online events calendar.

Hosted **12** art roundtable meetings.

**265,209** partner listing hits.



## CONTACT



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