

## 2025 Natural and Cultural Grant Program Awardees

### University of Kansas Museum Studies Program

**Project Title:** Unlocking Haskell Cultural Center & Museum's Historic Collection

**Amount Requested:** \$35,929.95

**Recommended Award:** \$27,500.00

#### **First Time Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** KU's Museum Studies master's program will provide one graduate student to the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum for the 2025-26 academic year. The student will work 20 hours per week to document, rehouse, and digitize their collection of approximately 3,000 Native American historical artifacts and photographs, as well as pieces of artworks, basketry, pottery, and more. This project will both preserve the physical artifacts and make them more widely accessible to the larger community and scholars. Haskell will receive much-needed, qualified manpower and the Museum Studies student will get real-world, hands-on experience with a unique collection.

### Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

**Project Title:** Elk Creek Wetland Complex Restoration Project

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000

**Recommended Award:** \$27,500

#### **First Time Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** The Elk Creek Wetland Complex Restoration project at Clinton Lake Wildlife Area will revitalize 181 acres of critical wetland habitat. This project, a collaborative effort between the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, the City of Lawrence, the KS Department of Health and Environment, and others, will improve water quality flowing into Clinton Lake, and in turn, drinking water for area residents. The project will also increase outdoor recreational opportunities, creating a premier destination for bird watchers, nature seekers, and hunters. Through strategic engineering, permitting, and design, this restoration project will ensure a thriving wetland ecosystem for years to come.

### Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell Foundation)

**Project Title:** Haskell Wetlands Boardwalk Design

**Amount Requested:** \$39,375

**Recommended Award:** \$25,000

#### **Returning Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** Haskell Indian Nations University (HINU) hopes to fix the Haskell Wetlands accessibility concerns by initiating a boardwalk design phase known as "Phase 1." During Phase 1, HINU will hire a project manager to help oversee the project and a firm to help with surveying and creating the official design for a 420-foot, ADA-accessible boardwalk in the Haskell Wetlands. Once the design is complete, HINU can move into the construction phase or "Phase 2."

### LRM Foundation

**Project Title:** African American and Native American Arrival to Douglas County, Kansas between 1910-1970s: The Stories, The Impact, and The Legacy

**Amount Requested:** \$45,000

**Recommended Award:** \$25,000

#### **First Time Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** This project aims to explore and document the arrival of African American and Native American families to Douglas County, Kansas, through a combination of historical research and artistic expression. The project involves conducting interviews with families and descendants, researching historical events and shared experiences, and examining the significance of local landmarks such as Haskell Indian Nations University and the Underground Railroad in these arrivals. The project will culminate in three key deliverables: a

video documentary premiere, archived raw footage for future reference, and an original stage play production that artistically captures these communities' lived experiences and heritage.

**Somos Lawrence (Ballard Center)**

**Project Title:** Building spaces and practices of inclusion through outreach and multi-generational learning

**Amount Requested:** \$34,800

**Recommended Award:** \$25,000

**Returning Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** We are proposing a two-year plan to 1) enhance Somos Lawrence's advocacy reach and continue to facilitate the socio-cultural and spatial integration of Spanish-speaking women, families and youth in our area; 2) move toward long-term sustainability of Somos Lawrence's community-building efforts. The main deliverable under number one consists in enhanced opportunities for participation and training of community leaders within the format of the successfully piloted "cultural promoters" program. The main deliverable under number 2 consists in recruiting and training a part-time community liaison who can facilitate our outreach efforts and work closely with the Ballard Center and other partners.

**Lawrence Kansas Juneteenth Organization**

**Project Title:** Sharing Our Stories: Lawrence Juneteenth's Oral Histories & Underground Railroad Experience

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000

**Recommended Award:** \$20,000

**First Time Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** The Lawrence Kansas Juneteenth Celebration will expand its oral history storytelling, Underground Railroad tours, and Kids Corner educational programming to elevate under-told narratives of BIPOC individuals in Douglas County. As Kansas was founded as a Free State and a key player in the abolitionist movement, this project will highlight the region's role in Black history. Local Black community members will have dedicated spaces to share their stories through spoken word, essays, song, and dance, fostering intergenerational dialogue and cultural preservation while encouraging youth leadership development among high school students. A partnership with Watkins Museum will help increase access to the popular Underground Railroad bus tour, allowing more attendees to explore the historical sites of Lawrence's abolitionist past. The Kids Corner will feature storytelling, hands-on arts and crafts, and heritage-based activities, ensuring younger generations can engage with history in meaningful ways. With Lawrence's proximity to the 2026 FIFA World Cup, this project will position Juneteenth as a key cultural event for visitors and locals alike, strengthening its impact as a growing national celebration, which has already seen a 300% increase in attendance since 2022.

**Ecumenical Campus Ministries**

**Project Title:** ECM Event Hall Restoration

**Amount Requested:** \$75,000

**Recommended Award:** \$16,000

**Returning Applicant and First Time Awardee**

**Project Description:** Since its construction in 1960, the second-floor event hall of the Ecumenical Campus Ministries Community Center has served the Lawrence community as a meeting space for student groups, theatrical performances, religious services, fitness classes, community organizing, and other activities. Funding from a Natural and Cultural Heritage Grant will allow us to undertake a restoration of our main event hall space, including removing the aging asbestos acoustic ceiling, repairing broken windows, and replacing the flooring on the stage. Renovating the event hall will allow us to continue sharing an important and historic gathering space with the community.

**Lecompton Historical Society**

**Project Title:** National Register Nomination for the Lewis-Crowder Cemetery

**Amount Requested:** \$11,000

**Recommended Award:** \$11,000

**Returning Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** The project's goal is to compile research and write a National Register nomination for the Lewis-Crowder Cemetery, a historic African American cemetery northeast of Lawrence, Kansas, near Lake View Lake. The project will also include a public presentation at the Lecompton Historical Society and a cemetery tour to inform the public about the historical and cultural significance of the cemetery. The presentation will include background information about the people buried in the cemetery in the form of short biographies when information is available.

**Baker University**

**Project Title:** Douglas County History Driving Tour

**Amount Requested:** \$10,000

**Recommended Award:** \$10,000

**Returning Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** This project aims to improve Douglas County cultural heritage education by easing access to information about existing landmarks. The project will post signs describing these landmarks and direct that audience to online content through QR codes. The signs will help to create a network of historical landmarks in southern Douglas County to be used as part of direct and casual tours as well as class projects.

**Lawrence Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

**Project Title:** Markers for African-American Burials at Potters Field

**Amount Requested:** \$10,000

**Recommended Award:** \$10,000

**Returning Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** The goal of this project is to order, engrave and install granite markers on the graves of 30 African Americans buried in Potters Field at Oak Hill Cemetery. The markers would be a visual reminder of the presence of African Americans in Lawrence since the 1850s. A link to the biographies of those commemorated—lynching victims, civil rights politicians, and formerly enslaved men and women (ages 14-83) in various occupations—would bring visitors to engaging stories of African American life in Lawrence since its early days.

**Lumberyard Arts Center**

**Project Title:** Protecting and Stabilizing the Ives Hartley Lumber Building, Home of the Lumberyard Arts Center, Baldwin City, KS

**Amount Requested:** \$9,795

**Recommended Award:** \$9,000

**Returning Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** The Lumberyard Arts Center (LAC) is housed in the Ives Hartley Lumberyard built in 1914. The building is a contributing property, located in the epicenter, of the approved nomination of the Baldwin City Downtown Historic District to the Register of Historic Kansas Places. This historic preservation project has two primary goals: 1) to mitigate water leakage through weatherproofing and new guttering with adequate down spouting and 2) to execute tuck pointing to solve issues with deteriorating or absent mortar that will protect and stabilize the south, east and west building walls.

**Children's Learning Center**

**Project Title:** Cultural Connections

**Amount Requested:** \$5,000

**Recommended Award:** \$4,000

**First Time Applicant and Awardee**

**Project Description:** Our proposed project, Cultural Connections, will help foster a safe and enriching environment where CLC families can learn, share, and celebrate Hispanic culture and heritage. We connect families, caregivers, community members, and educators with the shared goal of raising compassionate, open-minded children who appreciate and embrace Hispanic culture. Through our collective learning, we strive to create intentionally inclusive lesson plans and school events that reflect and honor cultural diversity.