



Living Cities' Capital+Culture Series: Turning Global Attention Into Wealth in Kansas City

KANSAS CITY, MO, UNITED STATES, July 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Few cities understand the power of local identity like Kansas City.

Its barbecue is local. Its jazz history is local. Its sports pride is local. Its culture, small businesses, neighborhoods, and civic spirit are deeply local. And now the world has come to this Midwest city.

The FIFA World Cup will bring visitors, visibility, spending, contracts, and global attention to Kansas City. For a city with a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem and a strong sense of place, the opportunity is significant.

But Living Cities believes the more important question is whether that opportunity reaches the local businesses, entrepreneurs, workers, and neighborhoods that give Kansas City its identity.

A major event can fill hotels, restaurants, stadiums, and fan zones. It can bring headlines, foot traffic, and economic activity.

But activity is not the same as access.

Attention is not the same as ownership.

And a global spotlight does not automatically create local prosperity.

Through its Capital + Culture series, Living Cities explores a broader question: How can major sporting and cultural events strengthen local economies? Kansas City provides another opportunity to examine how local entrepreneurship, workforce participation, neighborhood investment, and community wealth can grow alongside global attention.

"The question is not simply whether the World Cup brings money into Kansas City," said Joe Scantlebury, President and CEO of Living Cities. "The question is whether local people and local businesses are positioned to participate in that opportunity, build from it, and carry its benefits forward after the final whistle."

Kansas City offers a powerful place to explore that question.

The city has already made small-business participation part of its World Cup preparations. Local leaders have launched tools and marketplaces designed to connect entrepreneurs, makers, artists, and vendors to the economic activity surrounding the tournament.

That work matters because Kansas City's World Cup legacy will not be defined only by what happens inside the stadium.

It will be shaped by whoever receives contracts. Who gains customers? Who builds business relationships? Who accesses capital? Who expands operations. Who hires? Who owns it. Who is still stronger after the visitors leave?

For Living Cities, Kansas City represents a defining challenge facing host markets across the country: how to ensure that a major cultural and sporting event not only showcases a city's identity but also strengthens the people and businesses behind it.

"Kansas City has a chance to show what it looks like when local culture becomes local economic power," said Scantlebury. "A true legacy is not only measured by tourism spending or attendance. It is measured by whether entrepreneurs gained a foothold, whether small businesses grew, and whether more residents had a chance to build wealth."

Living Cities believes the success of the World Cup should be measured by more than visitor counts, hotel bookings, and projected economic impact.

The more important measure may be whether Kansas City's entrepreneurs became more visible, more connected, and more investable.

Whether local businesses moved from exposure to growth.

Whether workers gained pathways to mobility.

Whether neighborhoods captured value.

Whether culture became a pathway to capital.

The matches will end. The visitors will leave. The headlines will move on.

But will Kansas City gain lasting economic benefit from the games? The most important question may not be how many people came to Kansas City. It may be who had the opportunity to grow because they did.

ABOUT LIVING CITIES

Living Cities is an Action Engine for Equitable Cities—a member collaborative of leading philanthropic foundations and financial institutions committed to closing income and wealth gaps in the United States and building an economy that works for everyone.

For 35 years, Living Cities has collaboratively helped advance policy and systems changes nationwide, promoting profitable and inclusive wealth-building. Specifically, Living Cities addresses barriers to capital investment through knowledge sharing and collective action among its members, its partners, and an extensive network of city leaders around the country.

Learn more at <https://livingcities.org/>.

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