

2025 - 26

Annual Report



Alliance Française
Kansas City





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Message from the President

When we began the 2025–2026 academic year last September, the Alliance Française de Kansas City reached an exciting milestone: for the first time in our history, we enrolled more than 100 students. This growth was the result of hard work and leadership on the part of our Academic director, Shieva Ghassemi, our President, Isabelle Guglielmi, our board and our instructors.

This remarkable growth also brought new challenges. Our physical spaces, on-line infrastructure, and our leadership needed to adapt to accommodate our increasing number of courses, students, and cultural activities. Therefore, during our Board Strategic Planning Meeting in November 2025, we identified two major priorities that would guide our work for the year.





Our first priority was to expand our facilities. We were able to secure an additional suite in the same building, providing much-needed classroom and office space while allowing us to remain in a familiar and accessible location. This expansion represents an important investment in the future of our organization and provides the flexibility needed to continue growing our programs.

Our second priority was to strengthen the organization's long-term sustainability by creating permanent leadership positions. The Board approved transitioning to a full-time **Academic Director** role for Shieva Ghassemi, recognizing the tremendous work she has done developing and managing our language programs. We also began discussing the creation of a full-time **Executive Director** position to support the continued growth of the AFKC.

Another major accomplishment this year was the successful launch of our new website. After many years on the WildApricot platform, we migrated to **Oncord**, which offers greater flexibility, improved data management and SEO, and a more user-friendly experience for our members, students, and visitors. The move required many months of planning, learning, and problem-solving, but the result is a website with a fresh new design, streamlined registration and membership management. It provides us with a solid foundation to support the Alliance's continued growth.

The year was also marked by two ambitious projects that reflect our mission to promote French language and culture. In early May, we proudly launched the **First Kansas City French Film Festival**, bringing outstanding French cinema to our community and welcoming more than 1,100 attendees throughout the festival. Later that month, we organized our first **immersion trip to Lyon, France**, giving 10 participants an unforgettable opportunity to experience the French language and culture firsthand.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the dedication of our Board of Directors, our staff, our volunteers, our teachers, our members, and our generous partners and sponsors. Together, we continue to build an Alliance Française that is vibrant, welcoming, and ambitious.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding our educational programs, strengthening our community partnerships, and creating even more opportunities for cultural exchange. We are excited for what the future holds and grateful to everyone who helps make our mission possible.

Isabelle Guglielmi
President

 Alliance Française
Kansas City



Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

To inspire a vibrant and connected Kansas City community through the study and exploration of the French language and Francophone cultures in all their diversity, fostering welcoming, enriching, and accessible educational and cultural experiences.

Mission



Values

LEARN FRENCH — Language & Learning

We believe in the power of learning French to open minds, build confidence, and create connections across cultures.

LIVE FRENCH — Cultural Exchange

We encourage our community to experience French and Francophone cultures through meaningful encounters, shared experiences, and cultural exchange.

LOVE FRENCH — Connection & Community

We create opportunities to build friendships, celebrate our shared passion for French, and strengthen connections between Kansas City and the French-speaking world.

FRENCH — Curiosity & Discovery

We inspire curiosity and lifelong discovery by opening doors to new perspectives, cultures, ideas, and experiences.



About us

History

The Alliance Française de Kansas City (AFKC) was founded in 1963 and is a non-political, non-discriminatory Missouri nonprofit organization.

As part of a worldwide network, AFKC promotes knowledge and appreciation of the French language and Francophone cultures while fostering friendship and collaboration between the Greater Kansas City community and the French-speaking world.

For more than sixty years, AFKC has served as a cultural and educational bridge, creating opportunities for people in Kansas City to learn, experience, and connect with the French-speaking world.

Founded in Paris in 1883, the Alliance Française is the world's largest network of French language and cultural institutions. Today, the network is present in more than **140 countries**, connecting communities around the world through the French language and the diversity of Francophone cultures.

In the United States, the Alliance Française network includes approximately 100 local chapters, each serving its own community while sharing the same commitment to promoting the French language and strengthening connections with the French-speaking world.

Part of a network

The Alliance Française de Kansas City follows the principles and values established by the **Fondation des Alliances Françaises**, the organization that supports and coordinates the worldwide Alliance Française network.

AFKC is also a member of the **Federation of Alliances Françaises USA (AFUSA)**, which brings together and supports Alliance Française chapters throughout the United States. Through these connections, AFKC benefits from a strong international and national network while remaining an independent, locally governed organization dedicated to serving the Greater Kansas City community.

Meet Our Team



ACADEMIC DIRECTOR

Shieva Ghassemi



Board of Directors

Dr Isabelle Guglielmi - President
Dr Joseph Lewandowski - Co-Vice-President
Nelle Cook - Co-Vice-President
John Vogrin - Treasurer
Marie Braswell - Secretary

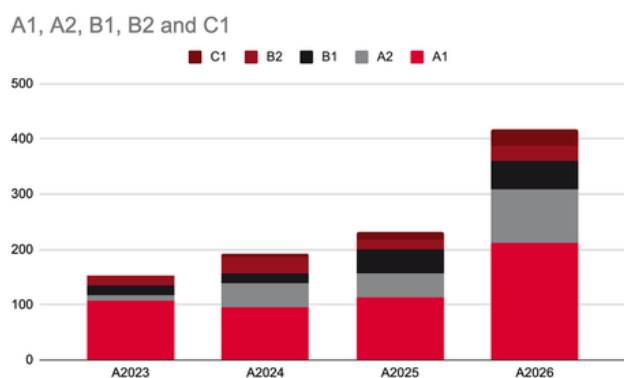
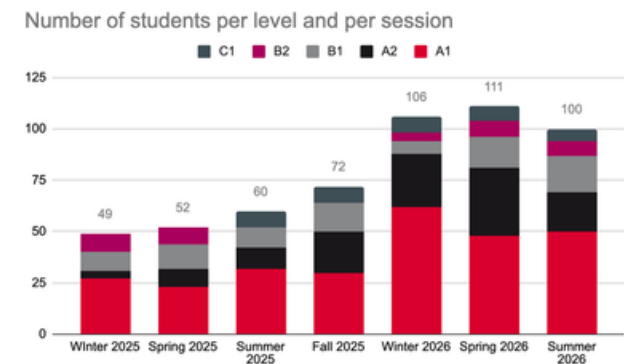
Tasha Zugazagoitia
Bryan McElderry
Dr Kathy Krause
Michael Baraboo
Dorothee Werner - Honorary member

Teachers

Michael Adem
Isabelle Baron
Jean-Louis Bruyère
Agathe Debavelaere
Moctar Diaw
Shieva Ghassemi

Christopher Gustanto
Jacob Hendrix
Zach Lottes
Kerry Miller
Drew Petty

French Language Education



A Major Milestone in 2025–2026

For the first time in AFKC's history, enrollment surpassed **100 students in a single session** (in Winter 2026). This milestone marked an important step in the continued growth of the Language Center. Even more significantly, already in 2026, with only three sessions completed, AFKC has already reached a record number of student enrollments, surpassing the previous annual benchmark. This growth reflects the increasing demand for French education in the Kansas City community and the strength of AFKC's expanding language program, with courses ranging from A1 Beginner to C1 Advanced, as well as conversation classes, tutoring, and, specialized courses on subjects such as **etymology, phonetics, and cultural topics**.

Key Numbers	Achievement
Winter 2026	100+ students in a single session for the first time
2026	Record number of student enrollments already, after only 3 sessions
2025–2026	349 student enrollments
Group instruction	1,020 hours
Tutoring	236 hours
Conversation classes	2 levels: Beginners: once a month with Kerry Advanced: once a week with Jean-Louis

TCF

The TCF (Test de Connaissance du Français) is the French language test administered by the French Ministry of Education. The TCF examination assesses a person's level of French language for general purposes. It is intended for people who are not native French speakers and who, for professional, personal or academic reasons, wish to have their competency in French assessed and certified simply, reliably and quickly. Based on the reason a candidate takes the test, they need to opt for one of the following declinations:

- TCF Canada : (Immigration to Canada)
- TCF TP : (General public and Students)
- TCF IRN : (French citizenship / residence)
- TCF Q : (Immigration to Quebec)



TCF Examination Program: Continued Growth

The TCF certification program at AFKC continued to experience strong growth throughout 2025–2026, becoming an increasingly important part of AFKC's Language / Testing Center.

The TCF declination with the most success is the TCF, due to a grater demand. Around 90% of the candidates travel to AFKC from other states and we occasionally have test takers fly in from Canada.

We administer the on computer (sur ordinateur) module. In this module, the collective sections (listening, reading, language structure and writing) are taken on laptops and the individual section (speaking) is administered by and examiner, graded and sent to FEI for a second grading.

Our current capacity is 4 simultaneous candidates per session and depending on the declination the real test time can be from 3 to 5 hours.

	2024	2025	2026
Nr of TCF sessions	11	36	30
Nr of students	21	87	99 (so far)



A YEAR IN REVIEW

From April 2025 to August 2026

New Website

In July 2025 we launched our new website

**JULY
2025**

New Office

In February 2026, we opened our new offices downstairs in Suite 100

**FEB
2026**

Pawpaw Tales

On March 29, 2026, Brian Hawkins presented his animated short films, offering audiences a fascinating look into Missouri's French Creole.

**MAR
2026**

Opening Ceremony

On April 30th we opened our First French Film Festival at Cezanne KC with 90 attendees.

**APRIL
2026**

Film Festival

From April 30 to May 10, we held our First French Film Festival

**MAY
2026**

Immersion Trip

From May 28 to June 6th, 10 people went to Lyon for our first Immersion Trip.

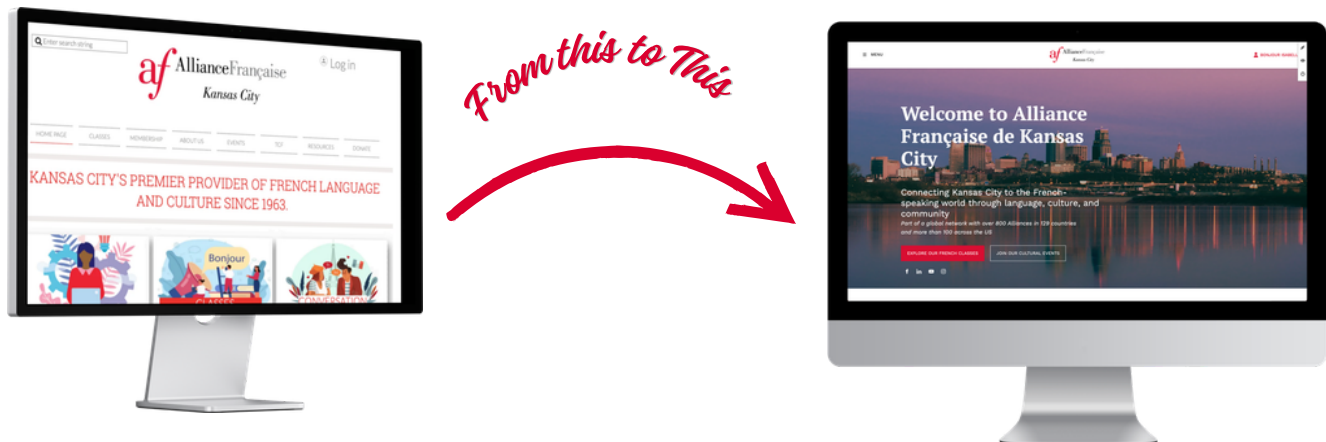
**JUNE
2026**

Meet Jamie Beck

On August 3rd, we met best selling author, Jamie Beck,

**AUG
2026**

A new website launched in July 2025



In July 2025, AFKC launched a new website and completed an important transition to a new integrated management system. This project represented a major investment of time and effort, requiring many months of preparation to ensure that we were ready to move to a new platform.

Oncord is an Australian company that has developed a system specifically designed to meet the needs of Alliance Française organizations. The platform is now used by several Alliances Françaises in both the United States and Australia.

We first met the team from Oncord at the Alliance Française convention in Seattle. We quickly recognized the potential of their platform and believed that it could provide an important boost to our organization and support AFKC's continued growth.

Importantly, **AFUSA**, the Federation of Alliances Françaises in the United States, which provides support and assistance to Alliance Française chapters across the country, provided a grant which covered half of the cost of this project, making it possible for AFKC to undertake this important investment in its future.

The transition was not without its challenges. Changing systems always requires time, training, and adaptation. Our team invested a tremendous amount of time learning how to use the new platform and adjusting our processes. While the transition required patience, the system has provided us with a more modern and efficient way to manage many aspects of our organization.

Today, the Oncord platform allows AFKC to manage:

- Our membership database
- Class creation and registration
- Online payments and payment gateways
- Event registration
- Website content and design with a better SEO.

The launch of our new website also gave AFKC a fresh and modern look that better reflects the growth and energy of our organization.

The new platform gives us the tools to operate more efficiently, improve the experience of our members and students, and support the continued growth of the Alliance Française de Kansas City.

New Growth requires new office

Expanding Our Space to Support Our Growth

Given AFKC's growth, we recognized the need for additional space to support our expanding educational and cultural offerings. In 2025–2026, we took an important step forward by adding new classroom and office space.

Thanks to the generous support of **the Snyder Foundation**, the owners of the office complex we were able to rent additional space to expand our operations within the same building. The Snyder Foundation also supported the renovation and reconfiguration of the new space, helping us transform it into welcoming and functional classrooms.

In addition, **The Federation AFUSA** provided a grant to defray some costs of the new classrooms.



The additional space allows us to:

- Create new classrooms to accommodate our growing number of students.
- Move our growing French-language book collection into a dedicated library space.
- Provide a more welcoming and comfortable environment for students and teachers.
- Create greater flexibility for classes, workshops, and cultural activities.
- Prepare AFKC for continued growth in the coming years.

We were also fortunate to receive generous in-kind donations that helped us furnish the new classrooms. The orange chairs were donated, and we were able to obtain, for a good price, tables originally used in the Walmart offices in Bentonville, Arkansas, giving them a new life in our classrooms.

This expansion is more than an improvement to our physical space. It represents the strong community support behind AFKC and our shared commitment to making French language and Francophone cultures accessible to an ever-growing Kansas City community.

Our new space gives AFKC the capacity to welcome more students, offer more programs, and create new opportunities for cultural exchange. It is an investment in the future of the Alliance Française de Kansas City and in the growing community of people who Learn, Live, Love French.

A New Home for our French Library



A New Home for Our French Library

The expansion into **Suite 100** also gave AFKC the opportunity to create a dedicated and welcoming space for our growing collection of French books. Hundreds of books were carefully moved and organized in the new space, allowing us to create a cozy environment where members can browse, discover, and enjoy French literature.

Our collection includes books for a variety of interests and reading levels, offering members opportunities to continue their French learning and explore French and Francophone literature beyond the classroom. AFKC members are welcome to borrow books from the collection, making the library an additional benefit of membership and an important resource for students and French-language enthusiasts.

We welcome **donations** of French-language books to help us continue growing and diversifying our collection. Through the generosity of our members and community, we hope to build a library that reflects the richness and diversity of the French-speaking world.

The creation of this cozy library space is another way AFKC is expanding its role as a welcoming cultural center—a place not only to attend classes, but also to discover books, share ideas, and connect with the French language and Francophone cultures.

Cultural Center & Community Life



Building a French Community in Kansas City

Beyond language classes and cultural programming, AFKC's social events provide an important opportunity for members, students, families, teachers, and friends to meet, celebrate, and build lasting connections. These events bring French culture into everyday community life and create a welcoming space for people to share their passion for France and the Francophone world.

Workshops & Cultural Experiences

Throughout the year, AFKC offered a variety of workshops, educational activities, and cultural experiences designed to complement language learning and encourage exploration beyond the classroom.

- **How to Go About Etymology — May 2025 and September 2025**

An introduction to the origins and evolution of words, helping participants discover the connections between French and other languages. So popular we had to offer it twice!

- **Versailles: How to Visit the Palace of the Kings - June 2025**

A cultural workshop exploring the history of the Palace of Versailles, with practical guidance on how to make the most of a visit to one of France's most iconic landmarks.

- **Travel in France Like a Pro — June 2025**

A practical workshop offering tips and insights for navigating France and making the most of a French travel experience.

- **Discover Culturethèque — October 2025**

An introduction to the digital library of the Institut français and its extensive collection of French and Francophone books, magazines, podcasts, and other resources.

- **Pawpaw Tales - March 29, 2026 at the KC Public Library**

Brian Hawkins presented his animated short films Chasse Galerite and Les Vouèsins at the KC Public Library, offering audiences a fascinating look into Missouri's French Creole folklore, language, and cultural heritage.

- **A wonderful afternoon with Jamie Beck - August 2026**

Jamie talked about her book and her work as a photographer. She explained how Covid forced her to write an American in Provence.

Celebration & Community

- Galette des Rois, Bastille Day, Wine & Cheese, Beaujolais Nouveau, Noël.

And so much more

- 14+ **Monthly Book Club** exploring French, Francophone, and international literature
- 12+ **Monthly Ciné Club** discussions

First Kansas City French Film Festival

The inaugural Kansas City French Film Festival was a major highlight of the 2025–2026 year, attracting more than **1,100 attendees** across the festival's screenings. Each film drew strong audiences and was warmly received, demonstrating the Kansas City community's enthusiasm for French cinema.

The festival was made possible in part through a **STAFE grant** from the **French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs**, which provided important financial support for this new initiative.

The festival was strengthened by excellent partnerships with the **Glenwood Arts Theater** and the **National WWI Museum and Memorial**, whose support provided outstanding venues and helped us reach new audiences.

The Opening Night Gala on April 30th, attended by **90 guests**, was a particularly memorable evening, combining a delicious French meal with the celebration of French cinema and culture at **Cezanne KC in downtown Kansas City**.

The success of this first edition confirms the potential of the festival to become a signature annual event for AFKC, bringing French and Francophone cinema to Kansas City while creating new opportunities for cultural exchange and community engagement.

Movies	Number of persons	Evaluation out of	Nbre of 5 strs
Colors of time	213	4.84	90%
The Musicians	144	4.50	62%
The safe house	122	4.060	35%
Leave one day	126	4.24	41%
The stranger	234	4.36	58%
A very long engagement	150	4.84	86%
Spices and lies	104	4.36	48%



Looking Ahead: Kansas City French Film Festival

Following the tremendous success of our inaugural festival, **preparations are already underway for the second edition of the Kansas City French Film Festival.**

The festival will return in **early April 2027**. Save the date and stay tuned for the announcement of the films, special events, and full program.

As we work to make the second edition even stronger, we are actively seeking **donations, sponsors, and new partners** to help us develop the festival and ensure its long-term sustainability.

There are many ways to support the festival, and every contribution helps us bring more French and Francophone cinema to Kansas City.

Save the date!

Stay tuned.!

*And join us in making
the second edition a reality!*



First Immersion trip to Lyon in partnership with AF Lyon

A Memorable First Immersion Trip to Lyon

In May-June 2026, AFKC launched its first French immersion trip to **Lyon**, in partnership with the Alliance Française de Lyon.

Ten participants from Kansas City joined Isabelle for this memorable experience, combining French language learning with authentic cultural and social experiences.

Participants were warmly welcomed by the Alliance Française de Lyon, where they completed one week of French classes and had the opportunity to practice their language skills in a French-speaking environment.



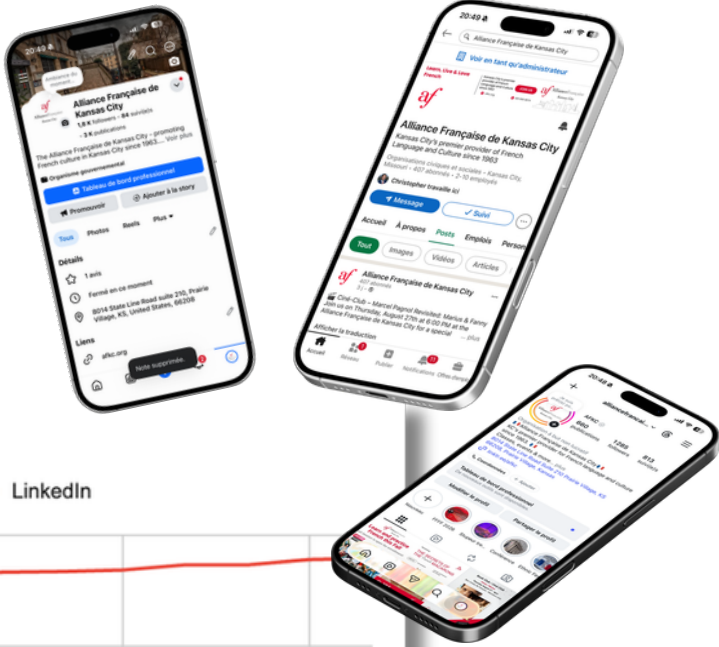
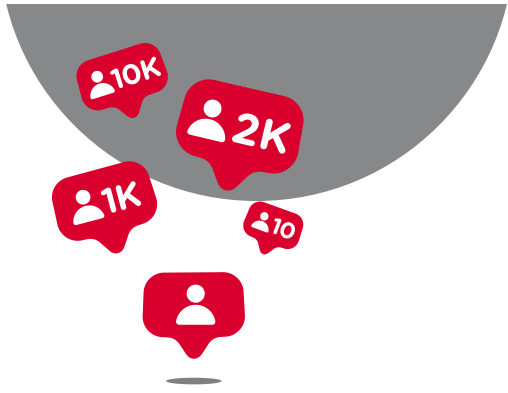
The program also included a variety of cultural activities and excursions, allowing participants to discover Lyon and its heritage, as well as the surrounding region. Highlights included visits to **Annecy** and **the village of Oingt in the Beaujolais region**, offering participants the opportunity to experience the diversity of the region beyond the classroom.

For some participants, the experience was enhanced through homestays with French families, providing an even deeper immersion into everyday French life and culture.

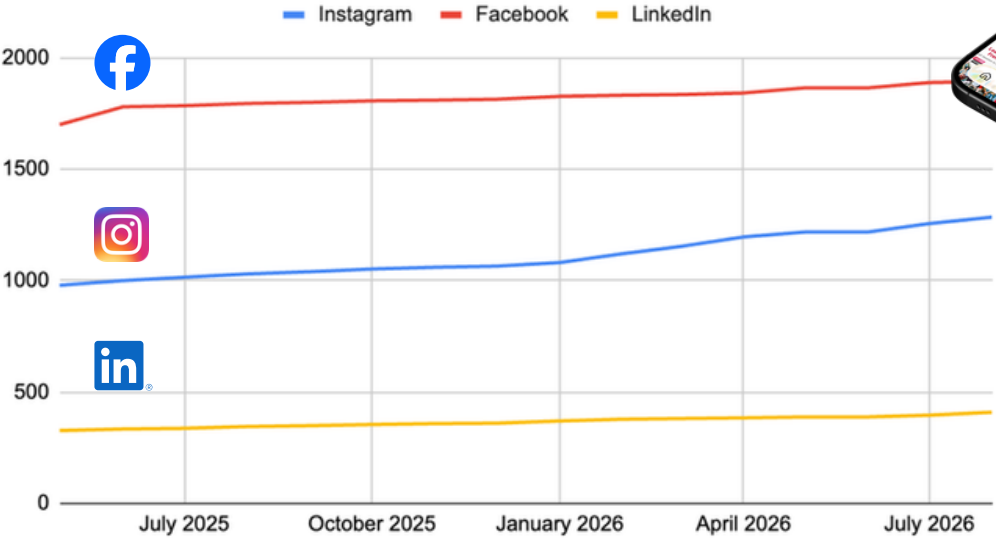
The success of this first trip demonstrates the value of combining language education with authentic cultural experiences.



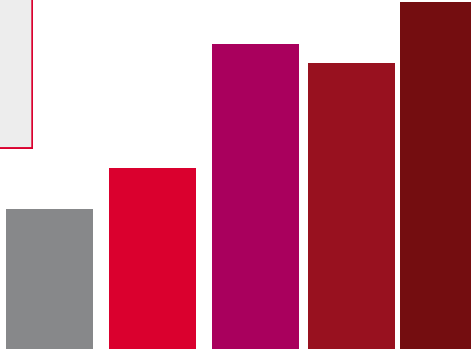
COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA



Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn



	Memberships	Contacts
Direct contacts	August 2026 369	August 2026 2121



Strategic Priorities for 2026-2027



Building on a year of strong growth and important achievements, AFKC enters 2026–2027 with a clear objective: to consolidate what we have built while continuing to grow in a sustainable fashion.

Our five priorities for the coming year are centered on five areas:

Goal 1 — Strengthen and Expand Educational Programs

The Language Center remains at the heart of AFKC. With enrollment reaching record levels, we want to continue developing our educational programs while maintaining the quality and personal attention that our students value.

Our priorities include:

- Expanding our course offerings and responding to student demand.
 - Developing children's classes for both beginners and native French-speaking children.
 - Developing additional conversation classes and opportunities for students to practice French.
 - Continuing to develop specialized courses such as phonetics, etymology, and French culture.
- Strengthening student retention and encouraging continued learning from one level to the next.
- Working closely with our teachers to develop new educational initiatives and respond to the needs of our growing student community.

With a full-time Academic Director now in place, we have an important opportunity to further structure and develop the Language Center and provide stronger support to our teachers and students.

Goal 2 — Expand Cultural Programming and Community Engagement

AFKC will continue to make French and Francophone culture accessible to the wider Kansas City community.

We plan to:

- Offer more cultural and social events throughout the year.
- Develop new partnerships with local cultural, educational, and community organizations.
- Strengthen existing partnerships with institutions such as libraries, universities, theaters, and cultural organizations.
- Increase AFKC's visibility throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area.
- Continue creating welcoming opportunities for members, students, families, and newcomers to connect through French culture.

Goal 3 — Build on the Success of the French Film Festival

The success of our inaugural Kansas City French Film Festival demonstrated the strong interest in French and Francophone cinema in our community. Our goal is to build the festival into a sustainable annual cultural event.

For the next edition, we plan to:

- Increase attendance and reach new audiences.
- Develop long-term relationships with sponsors and partners.
- Invite filmmakers, actors, academics, or other special guests when possible.
- Develop educational partnerships with schools, universities, and other organizations.
- Expand opportunities for discussions, Q&As, and educational activities around the films.
- Continue strengthening our partnerships with the Glenwood Arts Theater and the National WWI Museum and Memorial.

Strategic Priorities for 2026-2027 (2)



Goal 4 – Develop International Experiences

The success of our first immersion trip to Lyon confirmed the value of offering members the opportunity to experience French language and culture directly in France.

We plan to continue this initiative with a **new immersion trip to Aix-en-Provence in September 2027**, combining French classes, cultural activities, excursions, and opportunities to experience everyday life in France.

We will also continue building stronger relationships with Alliance Françaises and other French cultural and educational institutions to create new opportunities for our members and students.

Goal 5 – Strengthen Organizational Sustainability

Growth also requires a stronger organizational foundation. As AFKC expands its programs and reaches more people, we need to ensure that our structure and resources grow alongside us.

Our priorities include:

- Continuing to grow our membership.
- Diversifying revenue through classes, cultural programs, the film festival, TCF examinations, partnerships, grants, and donations.
- Strengthening donor engagement and developing long-term relationships with supporters.
- Expanding our sponsorship opportunities.
- Improving our administrative systems and processes.
- Consolidating our administrative capacity with a permanent position to ensure continuity, efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Our investment in people, technology, facilities, and partnerships is essential to ensuring that AFKC can continue to grow without compromising the quality of the experience we offer our community.

Looking Ahead

The coming year is about building on this momentum while creating the structure needed for sustainable growth. With a full-time Academic Director leading the development of our Language Center, a growing team of teachers, an expanding cultural program, and stronger administrative support, AFKC is entering a new phase in its development.

Our ambition is not simply to offer more programs. It is to build a strong, sustainable, and welcoming French cultural center for Kansas City—one that provides high-quality education, brings people together, creates meaningful cultural experiences, and strengthens connections with France and the wider Francophone world.

Our goal remains simple yet ambitious:

To make French language and Francophone cultures accessible, vibrant, and relevant to the entire Kansas City community.

Learn, Live, Love French!

Partnerships and sponsors



The growth and success of the Alliance Française de Kansas City would not be possible without the support of our partners, sponsors, donors, and the many local businesses and organizations that believe in our mission.

Their support helps us offer high-quality French classes, cultural programs, community events, and new initiatives that connect Kansas City with the French-speaking world.

Our Business Partners — 2025–2026

We are grateful to the local businesses and organizations that supported AFKC throughout the year:

Buffalo State Pizza, Café Provence, French Market,
Westport Café, The UPS Store, Thrive, Emilie's French Teas

Through their support, generosity, and collaboration, these partners help us strengthen our presence in the Kansas City community and create authentic opportunities to experience French culture.

Our Generous Donors

We extend our sincere gratitude to the foundations and donors whose financial support has helped AFKC develop its programs and strengthen its organization:

- J. Scott Francis Foundation
- Breidenthal Snyder Foundation
- The Coventry Foundation

Their support has been instrumental in allowing AFKC to invest in its facilities, educational programs, cultural activities, and long-term development.

Kansas City French Film Festival Sponsors

The success of our inaugural Kansas City French Film Festival was made possible with the support of:

- STAFE — French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
- UMKC World Language department
- TV5 MONDE

Raffle Donors

We would also like to thank the local businesses and organizations that generously donated prizes for the Film Festival raffle. Their contributions added an exciting element to the festival and helped us engage with our audience beyond the screenings.

thank you!

Behind every successful event, every new student, every cultural program, and every new initiative is a community of people who believe in what AFKC is building.

To all of our partners, sponsors, foundations, donors, volunteers, teachers, and members: thank you for helping us grow and for being part of the Alliance Française de Kansas City community.

af
Alliance Française
Kansas City





How you can help

Support the Alliance Française de Kansas City

The generosity of our members, donors, partners, and community creates a virtuous circle of support. Your contributions allow AFKC to offer high-quality educational and cultural programs, while keeping many activities accessible to our entire community.

By supporting the **Alliance Française de Kansas City**, you help us continue to grow, welcome new students and members, develop cultural programs, and create meaningful connections between Kansas City and the French-speaking world.

Make a Donation

Every contribution makes a difference. You can make a one-time or recurring donation through our website:

Donate: <https://www.afkc.org/donate/>

The Alliance Française de Kansas City is a **tax-exempt nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code**, and contributions may be tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Check for Employer Matching Gifts

Many companies in the United States match charitable contributions made by their employees. Check with your employer's Human Resources or community giving department to see whether your company offers a matching gift program. Your donation to AFKC may go twice as far!

Volunteer

Our community is powered by people who generously give their time and talents. Volunteers help us with cultural events, community activities, our French library, and many other initiatives.

If you would like to get involved, contact us to learn about current volunteer opportunities.

Become a Sponsor

Businesses, foundations, and individuals can support AFKC by sponsoring an educational program, cultural event, workshop, or teaching position.

We would be happy to discuss opportunities that align with your interests and philanthropic goals.

Thank you for helping us Learn, Live, Love French.



Contact Us



(816) 666-8674



info@afkc.org



https://www.afkc.org



Follow us on Social Media



Alliance Française
Kansas City