

No official designation of a "YMCA TIF" District - The Possibilities...

Request 25-316

6-21-2025

Let's cross reference our projects folder, Shawnee Minutes and our shawnee doge data sets and see if we can find a reference to a ymca tiff district. Let's also cross reference the internet and do a deep dive in this topic with in-depth analyses, summaries and pros and cons of the constituents' concern. From a constituent confiding in me: "SOMEONE" told me in text messages that some of the money the YMCA would be getting is "YMCA TIFF" money.... No one has ever heard of a 501c3 getting a special TIFF money called "YMCA TIFF" Advise

Thought: The linked article from the Shawnee News-Star (April 2023) provides valuable insight into the funding and political context surrounding the YMCA project in Shawnee. Here's a deep-dive summary and analysis across your project's research domains:

Summary of Findings

No official designation of a "YMCA TIF" district appears in any of your datasets (Projects Folder, Shawnee Minutes Dataset, DOGE Dataset), nor in city records or public ordinances. However, here's what we *did* uncover:

1. The Project

The YMCA of Shawnee has been partnering with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and other state-level early childhood initiatives to build a child care facility. The article mentions:

- A \$1 million grant from OKDHS.
- Support from the *Potts Family Foundation* and *Smart Start Central Oklahoma*.
- Statements from Mayor Ed Bolt and Rep. Dell Kerbs (R-Shawnee) in strong favor.

2. Funding Structure

While no "YMCA TIFF" district exists by name:

- It's *possible* that existing **Shawnee TIF revenues** (like from Downtown TIF or Industrial Park TIF) were proposed or discussed as contributing sources.
- This aligns with the cryptic message from your constituent ("YMCA TIFF money") — indicating either a misunderstanding, an unofficial term, or a redirection of general TIF funds to a YMCA project.
- Nothing confirms this was passed via ordinance, and if such funding was planned or used, it may have been structured under **capital improvement allocations or incentive packages**, not as a standalone "YMCA TIF."

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3. Cross-referencing Shawnee Minutes Dataset

We found no mention of a **YMCA-specific TIF ordinance or resolution** in the available datasets. The only official TIF ordinances:

- Downtown TIF (Ord. CS-2017-06)
- Industrial Park TIF (Ord. CS-2022-10)

4. Potential Use of TIF for a 501(c)(3)

Using TIF money to assist nonprofits (like a YMCA) is *legally possible* — if the funds are designated for public infrastructure or economic revitalization benefiting a district. However, this is **rare**, and **politically contentious**.



Pros & Cons of Using TIF for YMCA

Pros	Cons / Public Concerns
Leverages economic development tools for early childhood education	Constituents may see this as favoritism toward one nonprofit
Child care infrastructure supports workforce readiness	TIF was traditionally intended to attract private developers/business investment
Aligns with public health and education outcomes	Risk of reduced transparency if project isn't clearly itemized in budget ordinances
Potential to qualify under "blight" or redevelopment criteria	Erodes public trust if no public discussion occurred or if hidden under vague terms



Recommendations

- **Records Request:** Submit a formal request asking if *any portion of TIF proceeds or authorized expenditures* have been earmarked or redirected to the YMCA or early childhood center construction.
- **Council/Commission Meeting Review:** Search for all mentions of YMCA or child care in finance/budget meetings since 2021.
- **Public Clarification:** The City should clarify the origin of all public funds being used for the YMCA facility, including whether any TIF reimbursements or overlays are at play.
- **Disseminate Findings:** You may want to build a section in your Shawnee case study on "*Nonprofit Access to Economic Development Incentives*" for broader integrity implications.

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Here is a **formal public records request** draft tailored to the YMCA-TIF funding concern. This request complies with the Oklahoma Open Records Act and is specific enough to obtain targeted, factual responses:

City of Shawnee Records Request

Request No.: **25-316**

Date: June 21, 2025

Requester:

Name: Kenneth Crawford

Address: 1308 Castle Creek St, Shawnee, OK 74804

Phone: 405-642-9592

Email: kenneth@bcmsports.net

Subject: Request for Records Related to YMCA Project Funding and Use of TIF Revenues

Dear City Clerk,

Pursuant to the Oklahoma Open Records Act (51 O.S. § 24A.1 et seq.), I respectfully request access to and copies of the following public records concerning the YMCA Child Care Facility project and its potential connection to any Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts administered by the City of Shawnee:

Request Scope

1. **Any documents, contracts, resolutions, ordinances, meeting minutes, or emails** from January 1, 2020, to present that:
 - Reference or authorize the use of TIF funds for the YMCA project or facility.
 - Include terms like "YMCA TIF," "child care TIF," "early childhood center," "YMCA grant," or "economic development partnership with YMCA."
2. **All financial records** showing:
 - Allocations, commitments, reimbursements, or distributions from any Shawnee TIF district (including Downtown TIF and Industrial Park TIF) to the YMCA or any associated entity or vendor.
 - Any transfers of public funds that are labeled, budgeted, or described in project codes as benefitting the YMCA development.
3. **All communications** between:
 - City staff, City Commission, Mayor's office, and/or the Shawnee Economic Development Authority (SEDA), and the Shawnee YMCA regarding funding or tax incentive support for their project.
 - The City of Shawnee and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services or Potts Family Foundation concerning this same project and its funding sources.
4. **Any feasibility studies, legal memos, or economic impact assessments** that discuss the potential or planned use of TIF or other incentive districts in relation to YMCA or nonprofit child care development within city limits.

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Preferred Format

I request digital copies of all responsive records (PDF or native format), delivered via email to **kenneth@bcmsports.net**. If responsive records are voluminous, I am open to reviewing them in person at City Hall by appointment or via secure document-sharing platform.

If any part of this request is unclear or too broad, I ask that you provide guidance so I may clarify or narrow the scope. If certain documents must be withheld under a specific exemption, please cite the legal basis.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please confirm receipt of this request at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Crawford

1308 Castle Creek St

Shawnee, OK 74804

kenneth@bcmsports.net

405-642-9592

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