

The Countdown Begins: With One Year To Go Until the FIFA World Cup 26™, KC2026 Unveils Official Countdown Clocks, Announces Official Host City Supporters of the Kansas City World Cup 2026

Populous and Purina Lead as Key Supporters of the Kansas City FIFA World Cup 26™ Host City

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (June 11, 2025) — Marking [One Year to Go until the FIFA World Cup 26™](#) inaugural match, Host City organizing committee KC2026 held a news conference at Union Station. At the event, they unveiled a countdown clock and announced their first Official Kansas City World Cup 2026 Host City Supporters: Populous and Nestlé Purina PetCare.

“We are incredibly proud to have the support of both Populous, a global design firm specializing in sports and entertainment, headquartered in Kansas City, and Purina, a leading pet care and nutrition company deeply rooted in our Animal Health Corridor,” said Pam Kramer, CEO of KC2026. “Their commitment as Host City Supporters signifies our talent, strength and diversity as a region that has already arrived on the world stage. Kansas City is prepared to showcase its vibrant atmosphere, strong sports culture and economic opportunities to 650,000 visitors and five billion viewers worldwide.”

The first match of the FIFA World Cup 26™ will happen in Mexico City on June 11, 2026, with the first match in Kansas City kicking off on June 16, 2026. Kansas City will host six matches:

- Group Stage Tuesday, June 16, 2026
- Group Stage Saturday, June 20, 2026
- Group Stage Thursday, June 25, 2026
- Group Stage Saturday, June 27, 2026
- Round of 32 Friday, July 3, 2026
- Quarter-Final Saturday, July 11, 2026

Official Kansas City World Cup 2026 Host City Supporters

Official Supporters of the Kansas City World Cup 2026 Host City are key civic and brand partners who are helping bring FIFA World Cup 26™ to life in Kansas City. These are mission-aligned organizations that go beyond sponsorship. They’re contributing to community engagement, regional storytelling and milestone moments leading to the matches. Their support reflects the spirit of Kansas City and reinforces the goal of delivering a globally visible, locally rooted tournament experience that drives long-term impact for the region. The Official Kansas City World Cup 2026 Host City Supporter program allows local organizations to play a central role in supporting Host Cities for the FIFA World Cup 26™. Official Kansas City World Cup 2026 Host City Supporters have rights to use the Kansas City FIFA trademarks and assets.

Populous, a Global Design Firm Rooted in Kansas City

Populous, a global design firm specializing in sports and entertainment with deep Kansas City roots, is supporting KC2026 in delivering a world-class Host City experience for FIFA World Cup 26™. Populous began with a singular focus — to draw people together around the things they love, through experiences that capture all the senses, amplifying the atmosphere of excitement and pure joy shared in human moments. Leveraging its global expertise and local insight, Populous is helping design key fan environments — including Kansas City FIFA Fan Festival™ — to deliver an unforgettable experience for fans from around the world.

“So many of the spaces and experiences we’ve designed have been at the heart of historic moments,” said Bruce Miller, global chair and CEO of Populous. “Hosting the FIFA World Cup is a once-in-a-lifetime event not just for the greater Kansas City area, but for the entire Midwest region. We’re honored to lend our global expertise to help Kansas City shine under this brightest of spotlights, and we’re ready to assist in delivering an experience that World Cup fans will never forget.”

Populous designs iconic spaces for the world’s most renowned names in sports and entertainment, from stadiums and arenas to event spaces and urban environments. The firm’s work includes Arrowhead Stadium, Children’s Mercy Park and Kauffman Stadium. Beyond Kansas City, Populous has led architectural design for some of the most iconic event spaces in the world, including Las Vegas’s Sphere, Saudi Arabia’s King Salman International Stadium (which will host the FIFA World Cup 34™), and the world’s largest indoor arena, Philippine Arena. Its innovations have revolutionized experiences in thousands of communities worldwide and for billions of viewers watching at home. The firm’s involvement highlights Kansas City’s reputation as a city that builds not just venues, but global moments and lasting impact.

Populous, recognized by Fast Company as a Most Innovative Company six times, earned the No. 1 spot in architecture in 2022. Notably, Populous is involved with 11 of the 16 FIFA World Cup 26™ stadiums.

Purina, Making KC the Most Pet-Friendly FIFA World Cup 26™ Host City

Whether engaging with fans at the upcoming Kansas City Kickoff community event on June 22 or at next summer’s FIFA Fan Festival™ at the National WWI Museum and Memorial, Purina will bring people and pets together around the shared joy of soccer, creating memorable moments that celebrate the bond between fans and their four-legged companions.

“It’s a great honor to work alongside KC2026 and show the world the tremendous fandom, culture and love for pets we have in the midwestern United States,” said Andrea Faccio, president and chief growth officer at Purina. “We’re on a mission to celebrate and showcase the shared passions for sport and pets, and all of us at Purina are overjoyed to have the opportunity to exhibit the remarkable power of pets on the global stage at KC2026.”

Purina’s belief that pets and people are better together is illustrated in its partnership with St. Louis CITY SC of Major League Soccer, where Purina helped deliver the nation’s first permanent pet-friendly section within a soccer stadium, the Purina Club, in 2023.

Purina has contributed more than \$150 million toward organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive. Among these initiatives is the Purple Leash Project, which creates safe spaces for domestic abuse survivors and their pets.

A global leader in pet care and nutrition, Purina is at the forefront of scientifically based nutritional innovations and cutting-edge research and development. Purina is based in St. Louis and is an industry leader in a region that is home to the world’s largest concentration of animal health companies. Across Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma and Arkansas, the six-state KC2026 marketing territory, Purina operates 11 manufacturing, research and corporate office facilities, accounting for roughly half of its total U.S. workforce.

THE COUNTDOWN TO 2026

KC2026, together with special guests and state and local elected leaders, unveiled a countdown clock and announced additional clocks that will be present throughout Kansas and Missouri leading up to the FIFA World Cup 26™.

A set of custom Kansas City heart-shaped countdown clocks was fabricated by a Kansas design/build company over seven weeks, made of aluminum and steel and standing at just under 10 feet tall. One clock will be on display in Kansas City at Union Station's Grand Hall, where it was unveiled Wednesday. The other will be unveiled in Johnson County, Kansas, later in June.

In addition to Kansas City's countdown clocks, FIFA has supplied two clocks to commemorate next year's competition. FIFA countdown clocks will be installed in central and iconic locations across all 2026 Host Cities, counting down to June 11, when the greatest soccer tournament kicks off in North America. Kansas City's FIFA countdown clocks will be on display throughout the region at locations that will be announced at a later date.

Kramer invites social media users to participate by sharing their photos featuring the clock. They can use the hashtag #KCCountdown and tag and follow @FWC26KansasCity to follow the clocks' progress throughout the coming year.

One Year to Kickoff in Kansas City

The Countdown to 2026 festivities will continue throughout the month: on June 22 at the Aspiria campus in Overland Park, KC2026 will host the [Kansas City Kickoff](#) community event, a day of free family fun and an opportunity to learn about the FIFA World Cup 26™ Kansas City.

At the event, the community is invited to learn about KC2026, Host City Supporters, resources for small businesses and volunteer opportunities. Prospective volunteers can now [register their interest](#) ahead of the August application period. For more updates in the countdown to the FIFA World Cup 26™, visit [the KC2026 website and social channels](#) and [sign up](#) for the KC2026 e-newsletter.

FIFA World Cup 26™

The FIFA World Cup 26™ will mark the 23rd edition of the tournament and is set to break multiple records. Building on the global success of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, which engaged five billion fans across all media platforms and drew more than 3.4 million spectators, the 2026 edition is expected to welcome 6.5 million fans – truly bringing the world to North America like never before. This will be the largest and most inclusive FIFA World Cup™ in history, with 48 teams competing for the first time. It also marks the first edition of the tournament to be hosted across three countries and 16 vibrant Host Cities, uniting an entire continent through football.

Group stage matchups will be determined by the Final Draw for the FIFA World Cup 26™, which will take place later this year. Tickets for the FIFA World Cup 26™ will go on sale to the general public in the coming months. [Select ticket-inclusive hospitality packages are already available](#). Fans can sign up to receive more information at FIFA.com/tickets, the official and preferred source of tickets for the tournament. Additional hospitality packages, including for matches in Canada and Mexico, are set to go on sale in July.

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About KC2026

A nonprofit organization overseeing strategy and delivering Host City duties for the FIFA World Cup 26™, KC2026 will plan, construct and implement all aspects of Kansas City's largest sports and fan engagement event in the region's history. Learn more at KansasCityFWC26.com.

About Greater Kansas City

Home to 2.5 million people, Kansas City is a vibrant metro in the heart of the U.S., known as the "KC Heartland." An all-new single terminal at Kansas City International Airport welcomes guests by air, while 85% of the U.S. is less than a two-day drive away. The region's red-hot sports culture is embraced every season, headlined by the Kansas City Chiefs, Kansas City Royals, Major League Soccer's Sporting Kansas City and the National Women's Soccer League's Kansas City Current.

Kansas City, home to renowned arts and culture, offers live entertainment in the downtown Power & Light District, as well as 40 jazz clubs throughout the area. Find food from James Beard Award-winning chefs and sample true KC tradition at more than 100 barbecue restaurants across the metro. Dive into some of the country's most significant historical moments at KC's treasured institutions, from the National WWI Museum and Memorial and the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and the American Jazz Museum. Learn more at KC.org.

About The FIFA World Cup 26™

The FIFA World Cup 26™ will be the biggest sporting event ever, with three Host Countries, 16 Host Cities, 48 teams and 104 matches uniting an entire continent to showcase a momentous new tournament format. With more countries, cities, teams and games, the FIFA World Cup 26™ will be the most inclusive tournament ever, engaging millions of fans across 16 unique stadiums and billions worldwide. The tournament will take place in June and July 2026. For the latest FIFA World Cup 26™ information, please visit the [FIFA World Cup 26™ website](https://FIFAWorldCup26.com). For media representatives wishing to stay up to date on all things 2026, please register via the [FIFA Media Hub](https://FIFAMediaHub.com).

About Populous

Populous is a global design firm that began with a singular focus — to draw people together around the things they love, through experiences that capture all the senses and amplify the pure emotion shared in human moments. Over the last 40+ years, the firm has designed more than 3,500 projects worth over \$60 billion across emerging and established markets. Populous' comprehensive services include architecture, interior design, event planning and overlay, branded environments, wayfinding, and graphics, planning and urban design, landscape architecture, aviation and transport design, hospitality and sustainable design consulting. Populous has over 1,500 employees in 32 global offices on four continents with regional centers in Kansas City, London and Brisbane. For more information, visit populous.com.

About Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations.

Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina

scientists, veterinarians and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than \$150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or [subscribe here](#) to get the latest Purina news.

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