March 10, 2026

Career Pathways Initiative Update

CY2025 | FY26

Deputy Director Kelly Carr
Department of Human Resources

city of CINCINNATI

Building Cincinnati's Future Workforce

Historical Context
While City Youth Employment has long provided young people with meaningful summer job opportunities, the community called for a stronger focus on long-term career development. Community members emphasized the need for a stable, City-managed approach that connects early youth employment to real career pathways. In response, CPI was launched in 2022 to create a clear, consistent pathway from youth jobs into City careers, and in 2023 CPI transferred to Human Resources to support and manage this expanded workforce development vision.

CPI's Core Vision

- Positioning the City of Cincinnati as an employer of choice and creating pathways that launch youth into long-term City careers.

Role & Influence

- Recruitment
- Fund Management
- Long-term Workforce Development

How CPI and CRC Youth to Work (Y2WK) Work Together

Youth to Work (Y2WK) provides hundreds of young people with meaningful summer employment, serving as the City's primary early-exposure entry point.

Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) strengthens and expands this pipeline through:

- **Recruitment:** promoting Y2WK, co-ops, internships, job shadowing, and entry- to mid-level City careers in schools, colleges, community events, and City facilities.
- **Fund Management:** supporting key youth-development components such as financial literacy, social-emotional learning, and career-readiness training.
- **Workforce Development:** building year-round pathways that show young people how their interests (IT, law, trades, marketing, public safety, business, videography, etc.) connect to City careers.

Citywide Engagement: CPI partners with departments across the City, bringing employees into classrooms and bringing students into City facilities, helping youth understand how local government works and the wide variety of career paths available.

Expanding Opportunities: CPI supports co-op cohorts, the Seasongood Internship Program, Miami University J-Term experienceships, vocational school job shadowing, and placements through workforce development partners e.g. CYC Worksite placements at CHD.

Pipeline Vision: Together, Y2WK and CPI create a coordinated system where early work exposure can lead to deeper training experiences and ultimately **long-term City careers**.

Recruitment

Schools & Outreach 2025-2026 School YR

- 55 High Schools
- 12 colleges, universities, and tech schools
- 7 workforce development organizations
- 7 business advisory councils

Overview of the City-Signature Program 2025

15 sessions (City Hall/Area Schools)
Est. 500+ Students Reached

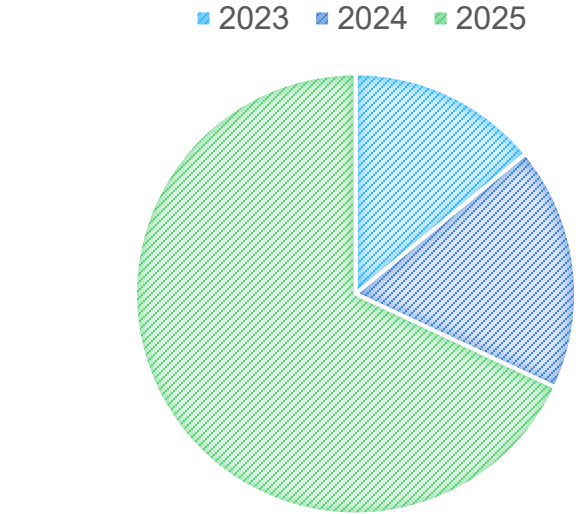
Recruiting for Y2WK, School to work, Co-op/Internships, Post Graduate Entry Points into the City.

Recruitment

CPI Impact
E.g., Inspector 1

2023: 140 Applicants
2024: 179 Applicants
2025: 679 Applicants

385% increase since 2023

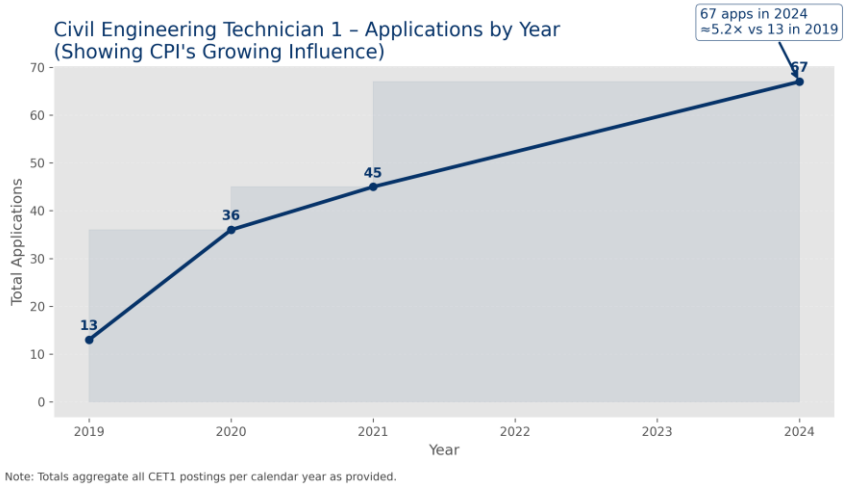


Recruitment

CPI Impact
E.g., Civil Engineering Tech 1

2019: 13 Applicants
2020: 36 Applicants
2021: 45 Applicants
2024: 67 Applicants

415% Increase since 2019

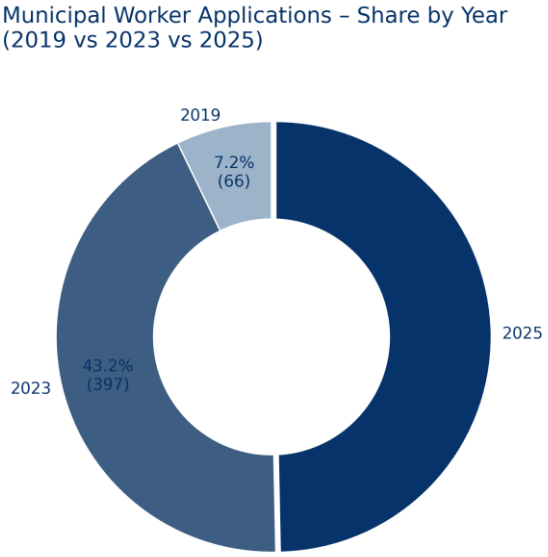


Recruitment

CPI Impact
E.g., Municipal Worker

2019: 66 Applicants
2023: 397 Applicants
2025: 457 Applicants

592% percentage increase since 2019



Note: Totals aggregate all postings per listed year.

FUND MANAGEMENT

CPI Manages City Restricted Fund 308 which supports

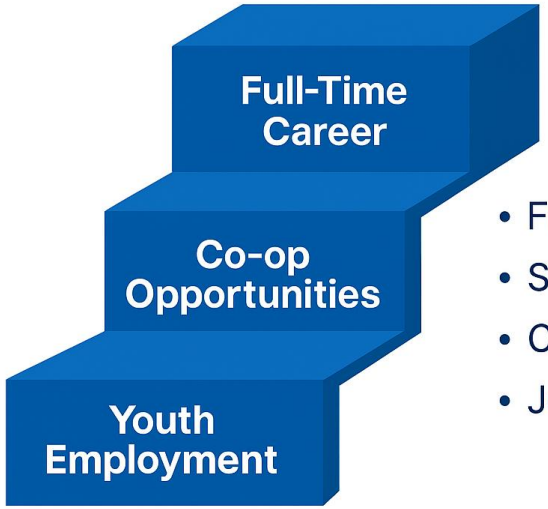
- Y2WK, Co-op, CPI Salaries
- Training Costs
- Recruitment Costs

Fund 308 Balance as of 1.31.2026	**$1,430,434.20**
CRC Y2WK FY26	($347,000.00)
CFD Cadets (FY YTD Spent $82,560.31)	($48,375.74)
CPD Cadets (YTD $45,374.45)	($116,257.81)
CPD Understudy Program (YTD $52,000)	($68,000.00)
Youth at the Center (last year)	($100,000.00)
Financial Literacy Training (3yr NTE)	($75,000.00)
SEL & Career Readiness Training (3yr NTE)	($105,000.00)
FY26 anticipated balance	$570,800.65
FY27 anticipated allocation	$533,290.00
Total available funds for Fy27	**$1,104,090.65**
CRC Y2WK FY27	($415,000.00)
CPD Understudy Program	($120,000.00)
CPD Cadets (wk w/PD on reduction exercise)	($85,000.00)
CFD Cadets (wk w/FD on reduction exercise)	($85,000.00)
Legal Fellowship Program	($147,000.00)
Referral Bonus Program (3 yr NTE)	($20,000.00)
Recruitment Registration Costs	($3,000.00)
CPI HR Salary Reimbursement	($150,000.00)
Balance	**$79,090.65**

Workforce Development

CPI – through its recruitment efforts, fund management, and the programs it supports – create clear, supported pathways that prepare young people to move confidently from early work opportunities into long-term, full-time City careers.

Career Pathways Model



- Financial Literacy
- Social Emotional Learning
- Career Readiness Training
- Job Shadowing

Milestones & Wins

Momentum builds confidence.

- Record number of fire recruits (averaging 2,000)
- Wait lists for Municipal Workers
- Expanded financial literacy (Cities for Financial Empowerment grant)
- Promotion of and Highest attended Mayor's Career Expo
- City of Cincinnati CPI Nominated for 2026 Greater Cincinnati Business Advisory Council – **Business Partner of the Year Award**

Thank you + Questions

Thank you for your support of the Career Pathways Initiative.
For additional information or partnership opportunities, please contact:
Jude Johnson, CPI Divisional Manager; or,
John Brown, CPI Admin Tech at
(513) 352-6239
Careers@cincinnati-oh.gov

Let's continue building Cincinnati's future workforce together