



## Reggie Harris

Councilmember

April 7, 2023

### Councilmember Reggie Harris Budget Priorities for FY24 Recommended Budget

We have had the privilege of engaging the community, our City Administration, and our partner organizations for the past several months to gather the greatest needs of Cincinnatians in the upcoming FY24 budget. We have a lot of difficult decisions before us as a city, and our budget needs to reflect both the harsh fiscal realities on the horizon while simultaneously aggressively tackling our most pressing issues. The recommended FY24 budget should focus on the key areas of housing, healthy neighborhoods, financial empowerment, and the arts.

#### Housing

We are in the midst of a housing shortage that is impacting our most vulnerable Cincinnatians at disproportionate rates. Due to market pressures resulting from inadequate housing supply, this council is pushing historic, systemic reforms to increase housing stock that is accessible and attainable. While this work is ongoing, we must help those who need help now by prioritizing:

1. **Homelessness Prevention** through the continued prioritization of rental assistance, access to counsel, and other proven effective eviction prevention programs.
2. **Home Repair Assistance** for existing low-moderate income homeowners through increased funding for programs like Homeowner Assistance Repairs and Building Order Relief (HARBOR), Home Enhancement Loan Program (HELP), Housing Repair Services, Compliance Assistance Repairs for the Elderly (CARE)
3. **Keeping Cincinnatians in Their Homes** through increased funding for the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program.
4. **Making Homeownership More Attainable** through maintaining adequate funding for the American Dream Downpayment Assistance (ADDI) program.

#### Equitable Access to Capital

Social mobility is undeniably attached to access to capital. Many well-intentioned programs put undue burden on benefit recipients while not providing clear pathways to wealth-building. The City should be bold in employing programs that directly increase access to capital by:

5. **Supporting the Cities for Financial Empowerment** initiatives which will promote financial freedom and social mobility for those who need it most in our community.
6. **Increasing Capacity for MBE and WBE Participation** so that the financial benefits of Cincinnati's growth are seen equitably, and we can continue to exceed our inclusion goals, especially for large construction projects such as the Convention Center, Western Hills Viaduct, and Brent Spence Bridge.

### **Healthy and Stable Neighborhoods**

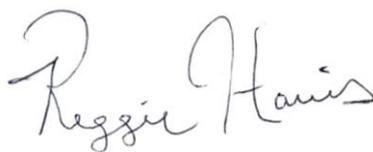
This year's Neighborhood Summit was themed "healthy neighborhoods." Through community feedback we consistently hear the need for keeping communities safe, clean and supporting the programming and community development that makes them great. The city should do this through prioritizing support for:

7. **Core Services**, specifically Fire, Police, and DPS to remove recruiting barriers and restore the full complement of staffing levels and provide critical services to our neighborhoods.
8. **Administrative Support for Buildings and Inspections and the Department of City Planning and Engagement** so that as we continue to grow as a city, we can ensure that it is equitable, and the City is responsive to the changing needs and concerns of the community.
9. **Community-Based Grant Programs** such as Boots on the Ground, Safe and Clean Fund, and the Neighborhood Capital Catalytic Investment Program (NCCIP) which are proven, effective programs that help create a sense of place and drive further positive neighborhood investment.
10. **Pedestrian Safety** through continuing to support DOTE's efforts to roll out funded street-calming projects and increase staff capacity.

### **Arts & Culture**

Cincinnati has a rich Arts environment that punches above its weight class. Maintaining support for the arts is key in maintaining the character that makes Cincinnati unique, provides a medium for expression and entrepreneurship, and breaks cycles of poverty. The city should consider:

11. **Funding for Arts-Based Organizations** that have people-driven missions through the leveraged support process and other sources.



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