



Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Vice Mayor

April 4, 2025

MOTION

WE MOVE that the Cincinnati City Council ensure that the following entities receive funding allocations in the City of Cincinnati's FY26 Budget. There are amount recommendations included for some of the organizations, while amounts for others are to be determined upon further discussion with the administration, the Mayor, and City Council. The projects cited in this motion should be budget priorities because of their broad impact across the City of Cincinnati, and their importance in providing economic opportunity for residents and small businesses, resources for youth, and improving the quality of life for underserved communities.

Capital Funds

1. Projects that are shovel ready or already in process:

ArtWorks' Headquarters and Creative Campus (\$150,000)

ArtWorks has renovated a vacant building on Gilbert Avenue and turned it into a year-round, vibrant venue for artists' workshops, classes, exhibits, and community events. Its new park across from ArtWorks' headquarters on Gilbert Avenue will be a tremendous asset to the beauty and vitality of the Walnut Hills neighborhood.

Building Futures (\$300,000)

The goal is to increase the number of cohorts that the Urban League runs each year, and if possible, house additional classes in neighborhoods such as Winton Hills. Through a partnership with the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, the NAACP, the Urban League, and the Building Trades, Cincinnati created the second Building Futures program in the country, following the success of the Columbus program. Building Futures is a 12-week pre-apprenticeship program that helps participants overcome challenges that might prevent them from beginning a career in the building trades. In addition to learning about the construction industry, the program teaches life skills: financial literacy, math and reading. Building Futures prepares participants for careers in the skilled trades and places them directly in good-paying union apprenticeships including the Bricklayers, Carpenters, Iron Workers, Pipefitters, Cement Masons, Electricians, and Tile Layers. They receive union benefits and good, middle class wages during their apprenticeships. An additional \$300,000 would increase the number of cohorts per year by two.

Cadets

The Cincinnati Fire and Police Cadet Programs are important youth programs that provide a pipeline to future employment with the City. The programs are instrumental in providing the young people with opportunities for career exploration, skill building, and personal development. Acquiring 15-passenger vans is a necessary step to facilitate participation and logistics.

Cincinnati's Poet Laureate Program (\$7,500)

The City of Cincinnati partners with the Mercantile Library to implement Cincinnati's Poet Laureate Program. The Mercantile and the City each agreed to contribute \$250,000 annually to the program. While the program has

continued, the City's obligation has inadvertently fallen short. To date, the City owes the Mercantile \$2,500 per year for FY'24 and FY'25. Going Forward, the City's budget should include \$2,500/year to the Mercantile Library for the Cincinnati Poet Laureate Program.

Clifton Cultural Arts Center (CCAC) – (\$500,000)

Construction of the new CCAC began and was completed without 100% of the funding in place. There were several unexpected challenges including an anticipated \$1M donor/angel that did not arrive, and cost overruns pursuant to COVID. Yet, the new CCAC was completed and activated with more than 50,000 visitors from across Cincinnati. CCAC's Board has pledged another \$250K on top of their previous support, leaving a balance of \$500,000 debt. Assistance from the City would allow efforts to focus on providing more programming to serve residents of Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods.

Habitat for Humanity (\$400,000)

Habitat meets three critical needs of Cincinnati: more housing that is affordable, more homeownership, and more workforce training. Habitat addresses all three needs and is requesting \$200,000 for a construction training program to provide hands-on experience, and \$200,000 to increase the number of homes being built in Cincinnati to 25 homes per year, and to make critical home repairs on 75-100 existing homes annually.

Imperial Theatre – (\$1,000,000)

The historic Imperial Theatre will be a catalyst for development and revitalization of the historic Mohawk neighborhood, and promote business growth, more resources for the performing and visual arts, and the growth of a business district.

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (\$150,000)

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful cleans up neighborhoods and highways, sometimes through neighborhood volunteers, and at other times through day-job hiring.

PigWorks (\$340,000)

The organization: Pig Works, a non-profit formally known as Cincinnati Marathon, Inc., is the parent company of premier events such as the Flying Pig Marathon, the Queen Bee Half Marathon celebrating female runners, and others. The Flying Pig Marathon provides an annual economic impact in Cincinnati of an estimated \$22 million. Pig Works partners with more than 300 charities and raises approximately \$1 million annually for their philanthropic partners. Pig Works awards to 14 high school students from the Greater Cincinnati area the amount of \$20,000 each year per student for post-secondary education.

The project: The property at 792 E. McMillan will serve as the permanent headquarters for PigWorks, the organization behind the Flying Pig Marathon and numerous other events that contribute to Cincinnati's health and fitness ecosystem. With this location, they will centralize operations, improve efficiency, and create a dedicated space for staff and community outreach efforts. This move will significantly benefit Walnut Hills by bringing more events and participants to the Walnut Hills area, fostering fitness, movement, and healthy living throughout Cincinnati, particularly in historically underserved neighborhoods like Walnut Hills, and supporting ongoing revitalization efforts in Walnut Hills.

Robert O'Neal Multicultural Arts Center (ROMAC) – (\$3,000,000)

The conversion of the historic Regal Theatre into the ROMAC will be a catalyst for the arts and small businesses to grow and thrive in the West End, creating jobs, programming (especially for youth), and revenue. The ROMAC will attract residents from all Cincinnati neighborhoods, as well as tourists from other states and countries. The ROMAC has been awarded \$1.2 million in Ohio tax credits, and will seek new market tax credits and historical tax credits. The City of Cincinnati contributed \$200,000 from the Neighborhood Catalytic Capital Investment Program (NCCIP) for predevelopment needs; the State of Ohio contributed \$200,000 from the Strategic Community Investment Fund; and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation contributed \$50,000 for roof repairs. The Haile Foundation has

pledged \$500,000 towards the capital campaign and operational infrastructure. The ROMAC is requesting a capital investment of \$3 million from the City of Cincinnati in order to begin construction in the fall/winter.

Winton Hills Community Center (\$250,000)

The Winton Hills Community Council is working to change the narrative of Winton Hills. Through the purchase of the Mother of Christ Church including its four acres of land, the Winton Hills Community Council will create a community hub. The community building will include workforce development classes, financial education classes, programs for youth, adults, and families, meeting spaces, healthy cooking classes, and more. The surrounding four acres will become a community urban farm community with assistance in design from the Cincinnati Zoo.

2. Programs to be created in order to meet an essential need:

Buy the Building/Vacant Building Renovation

This fund will help small businesses and small developers to acquire vacant buildings for the creation of affordable housing at 60% AMI or lower, or for mixed use where the buyer is a business owner and would locate their business would in the building. The program would be similar to Hamilton County's Down Payment Match Program, but would allow residential units as well.

Rising 15 Economic Development Fund (\$3,000,000)

The fund was part of a general discussion pursuant to the 2023 debate on whether the City should sell the Cincinnati Southern Railway. The purpose is to incentivize development in underserved communities (the "Rising 15") as indicated by socioeconomic status and lack of development and economic opportunity.

Sidewalk Repair Fund

Currently, homeowners are responsible for repairing the sidewalks adjacent to their properties although sidewalks are used by the public and some of the damage to sidewalks has been caused by trees planted years ago by the City of Cincinnati. Further, the cost of sidewalk repair for low to moderate income property owners can be prohibitive.

General Funds

1. Programs currently in existence:

All-In Cincinnati (\$250,000)

Through policy and systems change, advocacy, collaboration, and action, All-In Cincinnati works to shape a fair economy that benefits all. Some of All-In Cincinnati's work includes collaboration with and support of Cincinnati City Council's initiatives such as assisting with establishing the City's Office of Opportunity, advancing anti-bias work in housing appraisals, recommending policy to close the racial wealth gap, and helping to fund the Food Policy Initiative in Winton Hills.

Art Academy (\$250,000)

The Art Academy located on Jackson Street hires additional year-round security for Jackson Street and the surrounding area to ensure the safety of their students, staff, and visitors, and also those in the OTR neighborhood who are not affiliated with the Art Academy.

Ascend 2030 (\$125,000)

Accompanying the MidwestCon Conference, now going into its third year, is the goal of making Cincinnati a national leader in AI and innovation. Toward that goal, the initiative includes CEO founders as well as academic leaders to partner with the City. There are numerous opportunities for digital transformation (including replacing outdated manual processes), investing in automation, and enhancing workflow to boost efficiency and reduce

costs. For example, the 311 system can be re-imagined to improve accessibility, response times, and transparency. Deliverables will be fast-tracking suggestions and solutions with a prototype.

Boots on the Ground Fund (\$500,000)

This fund, managed and contributed to by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, provides funds for small non-profit organizations (under \$1 million in revenue) that do grassroots community work to address residents' needs in the areas of health, safety, and economic opportunity, as well as overall quality of life.

Center for Closing the Health Gap (\$250,000)

The Center for Closing the Health Gap is a grassroots mobilization organization and helps individuals to activate their agency to live healthier lives. Its mission is to eliminate racial health disparities in the Greater Cincinnati community through education, advocacy, and outreach. They target African American, Latino, and White Appalachian populations to fulfill their vision to make Greater Cincinnati a healthier region for all. The Center for Closing the Health Gap is leading the fight against health disparities in Cincinnati by addressing the social determinants of health disparities, and raising the muted voices of the community. The Health Gap meets people where they are and empowers them to make healthier, sustainable change within their families.

Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC)

Established by former P&G President & CEO John Pepper three (3) decades ago, CYC has grown to encompass many youth-focused programs such as Saturday Hoops, Jobs for Cincinnati Grads, Mentors, and others. The majority of the youth served by CYC are Cincinnati residents.

Community Councils

Most of the City's 52 neighborhoods have community councils – volunteers who work tirelessly for the betterment of their community as well as the city as a whole. In FY'25, the community councils received \$10,000 per council in Neighborhood Support Program (NSP) funds, but several thousand dollars of these funds went to pay for increasingly high insurance, leaving councils with approximately \$7,000 for year-round programming. In addition to increasing the overall funding per community council, community councils that create a youth participation component should receive an additional \$2,000 to be spent specifically on youth programming by and for youth (18 years old and younger).

HomeBase Cincinnati (\$150,000)

HomeBase manages City funds and provides intermediary services to equip, support, and sustain Cincinnati's Community Development Corporations, Community-Based Organizations, neighborhood business districts, and small businesses through program administration, project management, technical assistance, and strategic capacity-building. The City's priorities include growth, increasing development, and increasing economic opportunity throughout the City, including neighborhoods that do not have formal community development organizations. Currently, HomeBase has a staff of three (3). To meet the growing need, HomeBase needs an additional \$150,00 to support and expand staff in order to continue to be an efficient and efficacious partner.

HomeSafe Property Tax Relief Program

Additional funding is needed in FY'26 to assist with delinquent property taxes for low and moderate income Cincinnati residents for their owner-occupied homes. The goal is to help residents to maintain ownership of their homes.

Karen Rumsey's Non-Violence Work

Karen Rumsey is a social worker who works through the Cincinnati Police Department with victims of violence and their families. She not only is present at the scene of the crime but in the ensuing months and years. She and her team hold survivor support groups, help families of victims obtain resources such as counseling, funds for funerals, victim services, and when the family is in danger, housing relocation. When perpetrators are prosecuted, Ms.

Rumsey's Cincinnati Citizens Respect our Witnesses (CCROW) program plays a crucial role in witnesses cooperating with the prosecution of the perpetrator. The work of Ms. Rumsey and her team occurs at all hours of the day, night, weekdays and weekends. Additional staffing is needed.

Ohio Justice and Policy Center (OJPC)

OJPC partners with the City of Cincinnati to implement Expungement Clinics that address barriers to re-entering citizens obtain employment and housing. Court actions such as expunging or sealing criminal records, and allowing prohibitive fees to be waived, allow the re-entering citizen to have the opportunity to be gainfully employed and appropriately housed, thereby reducing the chances of recidivism. OJPC, the City, the Hamilton County Public Library, and the Hamilton County Office of Re-Entry implemented a pilot clinic at the Hamilton County Public Library in December 2024. All but one pre-registrant appeared and met with an attorney to fill out the necessary paperwork and discuss options and next steps. Given the waiting list of more than 200 would-be applicants, the need for such clinics on an ongoing basis was apparent. To meet the need, OJPC needs to hire additional staff.

Safe and Clean Fund (\$500,000)

The Safe and Clean Fund managed by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful provides funds for small non-profit organizations that focus on cleaning up blight in communities and providing programs and resources to decrease violence.

Youth2Work (Cincinnati Recreation Commission)

The Cincinnati Recreation Commission's Youth2Work program is more than providing a summer paycheck for youth. The program includes college and other post-secondary planning, financial education classes, soft work skills training, and the requirement that the companies where the youth are employed expose them to the company's leadership. The idea is to expand their vision for themselves and their future. Rather than focusing on monitoring youth at transit centers, send them to afterschool and summer jobs where they can acquire skills, grow, get mentored, and change their mindset to a more positive future. The goal of Youth2Work must be to employ 1,000 youth annually, year-round.

2. Programs to be created to meet an essential need:

Small Business Assistance

Businesses often fail due to a lack of access to capital. The City previously had a fund where small businesses could apply for a small grant to assist with operations. This fund also would help businesses that were being harmed by nearby construction, and could be used for tools such as signage, as well as operations.

Youth Sports Leagues

Youth Sports Leagues are in need of assistance with funding, especially in underserved communities where costs such as fees, safety equipment, and uniforms are not affordable for many families. In addition, youth sports leagues need resources such as trauma counseling when a tragedy strikes, and training for coaches including conflict resolution.



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