Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative

28+
Years

SERVING CINCINNATI

Economic & Cultural Opportunity Committee
City Council Presentation | March 9, 2026

Presented by Willie Hill, Executive Director | willie@gcmination.org | www.gcmi.org

WHO WE ARE

Our Mission

GCMI is a Certified CDFI serving low-to-moderate income individuals and underserved communities across Greater Cincinnati through:

- Entrepreneurship Education & Training
- Business Coaching & Technical Assistance
- Access to Capital (Microloans $1K–$35K)
- Capital Readiness & Loan Packaging Support
- Youth & Student Entrepreneurship Programs

Certified CDFI

Community Development Financial Institution

GCMI is a minority-led CDFI — one of the few in the Cincinnati region — dedicated to building wealth and economic opportunity in communities that traditional financial institutions have underserved.

Our city partnership is central to our ability to deploy capital and deliver services to Cincinnati's entrepreneurs.

OUR PARTNERS, FUNDERS & COLLABORATORS

Government	Financial Institutions	Community & Ecosystem	Support Organizations
City of Cincinnati Economic Development	US Bank	United Way Greater Cincinnati	LISC
CDFI Fund	Fifth Third Bank	African American Chamber of Commerce	Ohio CDC
	First Financial Bank	Mortar Cincinnati	Community Action Agency
	PNC Bank	Lightship Capital	LKC Foundation
	Truist Bank	Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio (ULGSO)	Represent Cincy
		Cincinnati Business Excellerator	AA Alliance of CDFIs

Every partnership amplifies GCMI's reach — and the City's investment — across Cincinnati's underserved communities.

5-YEAR IMPACT | 2020–2025

Through two distinct phases, GCMI delivered critical economic support to Cincinnati's minority business community.

PHASE 1 | COVID Relief (2020–2022)

400+	Minority Businesses Supported
500+	Relief Grants Provided
$2.4M+	in Relief Grants Deployed
1,800+	Jobs Sustained or Impacted

PHASE 2 | Recovery & Rebuilding (2023–2025)

300+	Minority Businesses Supported
300+	Grants Provided
8	Microloans
$2.0M+	in Grants & Loans Deployed

COMBINED 5-YEAR TOTAL: 700+ businesses served | 800+ grants | $4.4M+ in economic support | 1,800+ jobs impacted

ACTIVE LENDING PORTFOLIO

$325K

Active Loan Portfolio

Deployed to Cincinnati businesses

13

Companies in Portfolio

Active borrowers receiving TA support

$25K–$35K

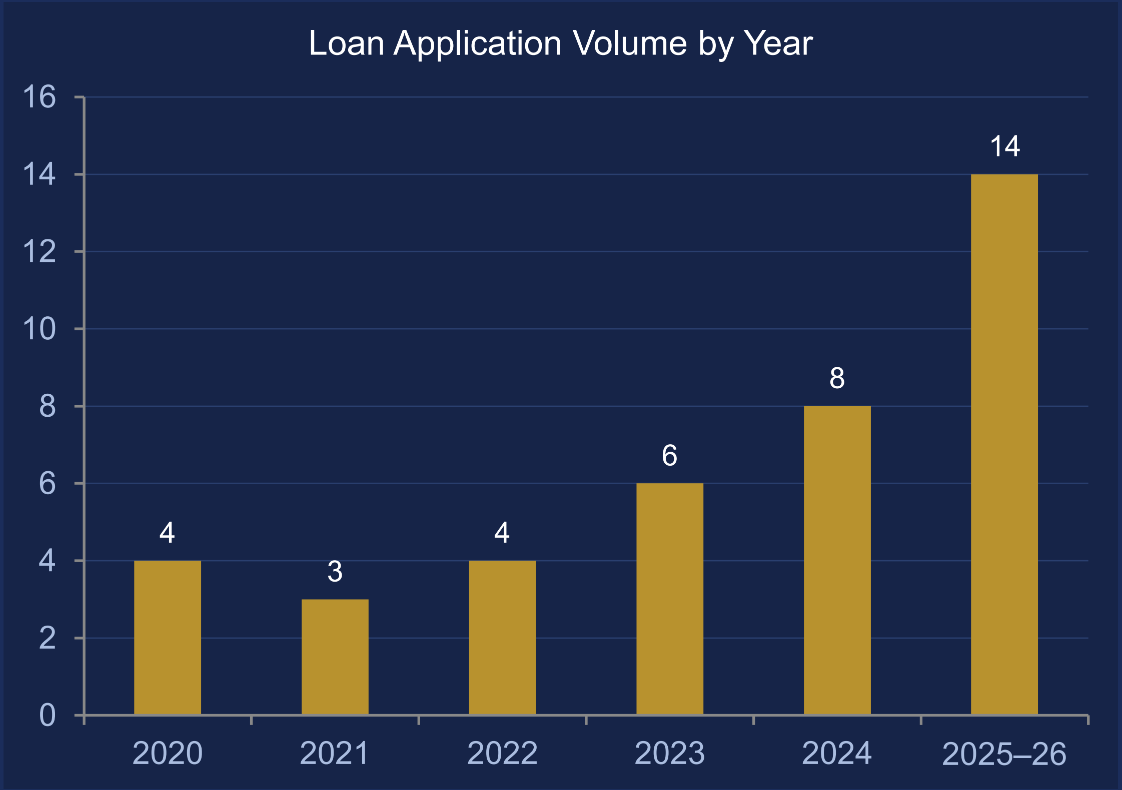
Loan Range

Accessible capital for microbusinesses

Portfolio Context & Momentum

Lending volume slowed during the COVID years as GCMI redirected capacity toward emergency grant management — serving over 700 businesses in crisis. As the economy stabilized, GCMI has strategically shifted back to active lending. **Loan applications have increased significantly in 2025–2026,** driven by rising demand among minority entrepreneurs navigating the current economic climate — higher costs, tighter credit markets, and limited access to traditional bank financing.

DEMAND IS GROWING



Why Demand is Rising

- Higher operating costs & inflation pressure on small businesses
- Traditional banks tightening credit requirements
- Post-COVID entrepreneurs entering the market
- Growing awareness of GCMI's services
- Economic uncertainty driving gig/self-employment demand

CINCINNATI BUSINESSES WE'VE HELPED BUILD

A sampling of GCMI-supported startups and businesses across our neighborhoods:

Mazunte Taqueria

Madisonville & Downtown

Black Coffee

Downtown & Clifton

Cutman Barbershop

Walnut Hills

Muse Fusion Café

Westwood

H&H Demolition

Queensgate

OTR Fun Plex

OTR & Hartwell

6 'n the Mornin'

Walnut Hills

DME Fitness

Bond Hill

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY

The City's partnership through the Microcity Program is foundational to GCMI's ability to serve Cincinnati entrepreneurs — particularly those in neighborhoods that have historically lacked access to capital and business development resources.

Capital Deployment

City partnership funds enable GCMI to make microloans through the Microcity Program, leveraged alongside GCMI's proprietary loan fund.

Neighborhood Focus

Targeted support to Avondale, Downtown, OTR, Walnut Hills, Bond Hill, Westwood, Madisonville, and other underserved Cincinnati neighborhoods.

Economic Multiplier

Every dollar deployed creates jobs, stabilizes businesses, and generates tax revenue — returning value to the City's investment many times over.

LOOKING AHEAD | GCMI 2026 & BEYOND

New Initiatives Underway

- Revenue-Based Lending product (flexible repayment tied to business cash flow)
- POS-integrated loan products launching Q3 2026
- Expanded Coaching & Technical Assistance capacity
- AI Integration Tools for Capacity Building
- Workforce Development support for small businesses
- Self-Employment & Capital Readiness programming
- Youth Entrepreneurship — gig economy & workforce transition

Our Continued Partnership with the City Of Cincinnati

We are asking for the Committee's continued support of GCMI's partnership with the City of Cincinnati through:

- Continued Microcity Program partnership and funding
- Leverage Funding (1st year in 2025-26)
- Support for expanded microlending capacity as application volume grows
- Alignment with the City's economic equity and neighborhood development goals

With your support, GCMI can scale its impact — reaching more entrepreneurs, deploying more capital, and strengthening Cincinnati's neighborhoods.

Thank You

Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative

Willie Hill, Executive Director | willie@gcmination.org
Shelanda Frazier, COO & Credit Officer | shelanda@gcmination.org
Tracey Hayes, ETA Program Director | tracey@gcmination.org

www.gcmi.org | 513-569-1247 | @GCMINATION