

City of Cincinnati



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Mark Jeffreys
Councilmember

Motion: Implementing Lift Assistance Fees

November 17th, 2025

WE MOVE that the administration:

- That the administration prepare a report within 90 days to assess the feasibility of establishing a “lift assistance fee” through the Cincinnati Fire Department; we ask that the report include the following: (1) Process for fee collection; (2) Anticipated revenue impact; (3) Recommended criteria for exemptions; (4) Establish a clear definition of a repeat offender; (5) the responsibilities of the State of Ohio in regulating nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities as it relates to patient care.

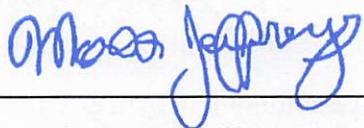
STATEMENT

The Cincinnati Fire Department responds to approximately 1,600 annual “lift assist” calls—calls for service in which firefighters are dispatched solely to assist individuals, often at senior living centers, nursing homes, and other institutions, with being physically lifted from a chair, bed, or floor without providing additional emergency medical treatment. These calls, while important to community safety, divert firefighter time and resources away from higher-acuity emergencies and carry significant costs to the City in personnel time, vehicle wear, and overall operational impact.

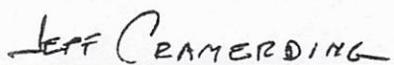
Other cities across the United States, including Springfield, MO, Mesa, AZ, Youngstown, OH, and communities in Wisconsin and California, have adopted “lift fees” or similar cost-recovery models to ensure that the financial burden of routine non-emergency lift assists does not fall entirely on taxpayers, but rather is shared by the facilities and institutions that regularly rely on municipal fire services for these needs. Evidence from these municipalities demonstrates that implementing reasonable lift fees not only offsets costs but also encourages institutions to adopt improved fall-prevention and in-house assistance practices.

Nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, and other institutions increasingly shift the responsibility for routine lift assistance onto municipal fire departments, creating an unfunded subsidy from taxpayers to private operators. The City of Cincinnati should recover costs fairly while maintaining a commitment to serve residents in genuine emergencies.

The purpose of this motion is to ensure that the City of Cincinnati equitably allocates the costs of non-emergency lift assistance. While the Fire Department will always respond to emergencies, routine reliance by institutions on taxpayer-funded emergency services for non-emergent lift assistance is neither financially sustainable nor equitable. By adopting a lift fee policy similar to other municipalities, Cincinnati can recover up to \$1.28 million–\$1.6 million annually, reduce strain on fire crews, and incentivize facilities to invest in appropriate staffing and fall-prevention measures.



Councilmember Jeffreys



Councilmember Cramerding