

City of Cincinnati



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Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Vice Mayor

December 9, 2025

MOTION

WE MOVE that the City Council allocate to the Cincinnati Recreation Commission the amount of \$700,000 from the \$5.42 million allocated for public safety by Ordinance No. 290-2025 to help in funding the expansion of the Youth2Work program to year-round jobs, including afterschool jobs. Youth2Work includes not only preparation for the world of work through the development of soft skills, but sessions on setting and reaching goals, career exposure and exploration, financial literacy, post-high school plans, and more.

WE MOVE further that the City administration assist in helping to connect the Youth2Work program participants with organizations that provide mentorships, and involve the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC) and the We Mentor Cincy collaboration of mentoring organizations, as well as other organizations.

WE MOVE further the City administration assist in suggesting additional funding sources for the Youth2Work program expansion.

These are the first steps in creating an organization for youth similar to the former Citizens Committee on Youth (CCY).

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney".

Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

Councilmember Scotty Johnson

STATEMENT

Following is an excerpt from a *Cincinnati Enquirer* article that describes the Citizens Committee on Youth (CCY):

Cincinnati had a jobs program for teens for 50 years. Could reviving it stop gun violence?

By Cameron Knight

Cincinnati Enquirer, August 21, 2020

Cincinnati had a dedicated jobs program for teens for half a century before it shut down in 2007. Will reviving it help stop killings in Cincinnati?

Neighborhoods United Cincinnati wants to do just that as part of a sweeping set of proposals unveiled Friday on the steps of City Hall.

Their 45-page plan includes ideas from people all over Cincinnati and covers many issues. It calls for increased education about racism, the designation of gun violence as a public health crisis and establishing a city-run gun buyback program. But on page 20, the plan calls for reestablishing the Citizens Committee on Youth (CCY), something Neighborhoods United leader Brian Garry said would cost about \$2 million.

For the past few years, Cincinnati has dedicated funds to summer jobs through the Cincinnati Recreation Commission. City Council recently voted to massively expand the program as well, but it is unclear what the expanding service will look like.

What is clear is that those involved with the long-running CCY believe it had a huge impact on the city. Established in 1958 with \$28,000 in city funds, the committee's goal was to curb juvenile delinquency by connecting youth with jobs.

In the wake of the civil unrest of 2001, the program surged with the help of Procter & Gamble Chairman John Pepper who expanded it to include some year-round employment opportunities. Giving lives 'a different trajectory'

Dorothy Smoot started working at the CYC [sic] in 2002. She would eventually become its director leaving just before the program was shuttered. "It's seldom I met a person under 30 that didn't come through CCY," she said. "For many young people, it was their first exposure to employment."

Teens were placed in jobs all over the city: the federal courthouse, Cincinnati City Hall, non-profits, businesses. Often the jobs took the teens out of their own zip code so they could be exposed to new places and people.

Funded by Cincinnati, Hamilton County and by grants, Smoot says she has no doubt that helped keep kids off the streets. "Youth employment would be considered prevention," she said. "When you occupy young people with positive opportunities and positive adult role models, it can give their life a different trajectory."

Neighborhoods United agrees. "A better community starts with supported youth because they will be better equipped to contribute to their communities and support the next generation of children," their plan states.

In 2002 and 2003, CCY provided summer jobs to 1,500 teens throughout the city, Smoot said. That was the peak. There were nine offices throughout the city where teens could go to get help finding a job. She said funding varied from \$300,000 to \$600,000 a year from local government, but grants also came and went. But in 2006, a particularly bad year for gun violence, the city gave \$1.4 million to the program, in part to address the problem, according to previous *Enquirer* reporting. . . .

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