

Sara M. Sheets

Strong, collaborative community development professional working across sectors to improve neighborhoods through economic and housing development, community engagement, citizen planning, civic improvement, fundraising, and grant writing.

Core Knowledge & Skill Areas

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| * Real Estate Development | * Program Development | * Project Management |
| * Community Engagement | * Organizational Leadership | * Grant Writing |
| * Public Speaking | * Media & Press Relations | * Budgeting |
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Cincinnati Development Fund Cincinnati, OH
Loan Officer (April 2019-present)

- Provide technical assistance to developers working on residential, commercial, and affordable housing projects.
- Originate loans through the existing client base and the cultivation of new relationships consistent with organization's mission and goals.
- Underwrite and prepare loans to be presented to Loan Committee and Board, coordinate loan closings.
- Assist nonprofit organizations with acquiring loans for expansions or facility improvement efforts.

Madisonville Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation Cincinnati, OH
Executive Director (January 2013-March 2019)

- Served as first Executive Director and grew nonprofit community development corporation from an operating budget of \$25,000 to \$400,000 and grew assets from \$650,000 to \$1,900,000.
- Raised annual operating budget and led a full-time staff of 3, part-time staff, interns, volunteers.
- Partnered with City of Cincinnati to acquire over 7 acres of property and lead the selection process for a developer for the Madisonville Neighborhood Business District, resulting in an \$80M mixed-use project.
- Negotiated development agreement, partnered to structure complex deal involving public and private funding sources.
- Rehabilitated two vacant commercial buildings to productive use. Raised \$1,150,000 in public and private sources for the historic buildings resulting in 10,000 sf of new, mixed-use property in business district.
- Launched \$900,000 new affordable housing development program, building 4 new homes on vacant lots using \$265,000 in City gap funding, traditional construction loan, and private grants.
- Awarded \$40,000 national grant to create new brand identity.
- Initiated annual events, the Madisonville 5k, the Cincinnati Jazz & BBQ Festival, Music on Madison, and Tuesdays at the Park, driving community engagement and bringing in event sponsorships.
- Worked with 10-member Board of Directors to set vision and budget for the organization.
- Managed all aspects of grant writing, reporting, and compliance for private, City, State, and Federal grants.
- Collaborated with over 60 partners, including schools, churches, businesses, and civic organizations to implement the Madisonville Quality of Life Plan.

Madisonville Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation Cincinnati, OH
Consultant (2011-2013)

- Revived a 36-year-old, defunct community development corporation through Board development, strategic planning, and program development.

- Managed a \$100,000 single-family rehabilitation project, resulting in sale to a first-time homeowner.
- Led 15-month neighborhood planning process with a diverse steering committee of stakeholders and hundreds of neighborhood residents. Facilitated dozens of large and small group meetings.
- Published the Madisonville Quality of Life Plan, a 10-year vision plan for the neighborhood's future, focused on six key areas.

Community Development Consultant (2003-2013)

Cincinnati, OH

Represented a variety of clients including, non-profit organizations, development corporations, community councils, and public schools. Services included community engagement, program management, grant writing, commercial and residential real estate development, and organizational development.

- Represented neighborhoods on Form Based Code Working Group.
- Assisted community leaders to reenergize their business districts through market research, business recruitment, physical planning, marketing, and real estate development.
- Assisted CDC in bringing credit union to the neighborhood; secured \$350,000 grant for construction costs.
- Managed multiple façade grant programs utilizing public funding, working with contractors, property owners, and City of Cincinnati.
- Managed over \$80,000 for economic and organizational development projects for two neighborhoods.
- Facilitated three community learning center planning teams by bringing stakeholders together to plan for future Cincinnati Public Schools and community programming needs.

**Miami Purchase Preservation Fund
Assistant Director (2000-2003)**

Cincinnati, OH

**Office of the Mayor
Legislative Aide (1998-2000)**

Cincinnati, OH

**Nancy Lewis Associates
Development Assistant (1996-1997)**

Los Angeles, CA

**Los Angeles Unified School District
Teacher (1993-1995)**

Los Angeles, CA

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Urban Planning, *University of California, Los Angeles*

State of California Teaching Credential

Bachelor of Arts, *Ohio Wesleyan University, cum laude, Urban Studies and Sociology*

Economic Development Certification, National Development Council

AWARDS

Most Outstanding Executive Director, 2015, CDC Association of Greater Cincinnati

Most Outstanding Collaborative Effort, 2013, CDC Association of Greater Cincinnati

Most Outstanding Consultant, 2007, CDC Association of Greater Cincinnati

King Award, 1993, Ohio Wesleyan University

BOARD SERVICE

HomeBase, Treasurer, Board Member 2013-present

Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United, Board Member 2019-present

Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority, Board Member 2022-present