

ATTACHMENT A – PRIORITY PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The primary challenge of setting priorities for the Human Services Fund is that the City’s human services needs far exceed current available resources. Current HSF investments are spread across X priorities and Y funded programs. As a result, it is impossible to “move the needle” in any particular area. Although funded programs achieve results for the individuals they serve, the current funding structure is not sufficient for community-level impact.

In 2014, the Human Services Priority Review Working Group strongly recommended that the City restore HSF to 1.5 percent of the General Fund. If that goal was not possible, the Working Group recommended in the alternative that to achieve measurable impact, that “Council must adequately invest in one goal before establishing additional goals.”

With this past budget, the City has finally restored the Human Services Fund to 1.5 percent of the General Fund. Yet there is still an opportunity to make a measurable, community-level impact by investing significant dollars in one priority.

Council will maintain funding based on the current priorities, however they are re-framed to take a strategic focus. The goal is to impact specific city-wide issues with the HSF. In this partnership with local organizations, the City can use data and analytics to address these insights to better understand and solve for disparities as they relate to the City’s funding of Human Services, and the delivery of those services, to implement effective programs and generate better outcomes for residents.

Throughout all of these priority initiatives, the City seeks to partner with local organizations to collaboratively use their data to better understand the problems facing Cincinnati residents. By introducing specific, measurable priorities and leveraging city leadership and departmental resources, we can build a stronger and healthier City, together.

Impact Award: Eviction Prevention and Housing Stabilization

Cincinnati is in the middle of a historic housing crisis. In 2017, less than one percent (0.4%) of evictions in Hamilton County were decided in favor of the tenant.¹ This is further an issue of equity, with neighborhood racial composition being the strongest predictor of eviction filing rates in Hamilton County.² The housing crisis is further impacted by the rapid spike in rental

¹ https://cincinnati.legalaid.net/wp-content/uploads/Eviction-Report_Final-1.pdf, page i

² *Id.* at 7

rates across the entire state. Just last month, Cincinnati ranked as one of the Top 10 U.S. Cities for largest year-over-year rent increases.³

With the Impact Award, Council seeks to fund one collaborative project between multiple organizations and the City to address Cincinnati's eviction and housing crisis. The project should work to reduce evictions and stabilize housing by tracking eviction trends; using predictive analysis; funding immediate costs; and providing access to legal services. Project proposals are encouraged to leverage multiple solutions to create a comprehensive strategy to address eviction and housing instability, including access to legal services, financial support, and social services.

Reducing the number of evictions will ensure more stability for families and children, reduce the community costs associated with evictions, maximize the City's limited housing supply, and create a better quality of life for residents of all our neighborhoods.

Comprehensive Workforce Development

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 2.4 million women left the workforce, and nearly half (46%) were Hispanic or Black women.⁴ Between 2019 and 2021, there was a 6.0% decline in high school graduate women in the labor force.⁵ In comparison, men with the same education only saw a 1.8% decline.⁶ Women who did not graduate high school had a 12.7% decline in the workforce, while men of a similar education level only saw a 4.9% decline.⁷ This loss in the workforce has resulted in lower financial stability for families and a loss of tax revenue for the City. A large percentage of these women were mothers who left due to family demands, such as school closures or lack of childcare.

Through this priority, Council seeks to fund projects that:

- expand access to quality childcare;
- build capacity and career opportunities within the childcare industry;
- provide upskill training that prepares women for careers in growing sectors such as technology, infrastructure, or sustainability;
- or other similar projects with a focus on creating economic stability.

³ <https://www.citybeat.com/news/report-cincinnati-in-top-10-us-cities-for-largest-year-over-year-rent-increase-13897025#:~:text=Average%20rents%20throughout%20the%20Buckeye,year%20to%20%241%2C253%20in%20August.>

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/14/u-s-labor-market-inches-back-from-the-covid-19-shock-but-recovery-is-far-from-complete/>

⁵ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/01/14/some-gender-disparities-widened-in-the-u-s-workforce-during-the-pandemic/>

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

Removing barriers to workforce participation and providing the training for a meaningful career will empower mothers and caregivers to return the workforce, achieve financial stability, and increase the tax base for the City.

Youth Gun Violence Prevention and Reduction

In February 2022, the City of Cincinnati declared gun violence as a public health crisis. Gun violence can happen anywhere: places of worship, grocery stores, hospitals, schools. Gun violence has surpassed traffic crashes as a leading cause of death among US children and teens. The increase in juveniles charged with murder in Hamilton County has increased significantly in the last two years.⁸ The City must address the root causes of gun violence and collaborate with our community partners to create truly comprehensive, trauma-informed solutions to gun violence and its effect on our youth (14-35). Initiatives should be data-driven and explore innovative solutions to both stop the violence and uplift our residents.

With this project, Council seeks to fund projects that:

- target youth in the Top 10 neighborhoods for gun violence;
- address all those caught in the cycle of gun violence - both the potential victims and the potential perpetrators;
- provide economic stability for youth at-risk such as job training, training stipends, credentialing, or placement in good-paying jobs;
- and other community- and place-based initiatives.

These types of community-based intervention and prevention strategies help to break the cycle of violence and will help us build a safer Cincinnati.

Supporting, Securing, and Stabilizing Housing for High-Risk Populations

Some populations are disproportionately high-risk for homelessness, including but not limited to, the chronically homeless, senior citizens, those with mental illness or substance use disorders, and LGBTQIA+ teens. For example, nearly a quarter (23%) of the entire sheltered population is over the age of 50, with a predicted increase in the older adult homeless population.⁹ Most residents of encampments are adult men with disabilities, including mental illness and substance use disorders.¹⁰ Local housing providers estimate that as many as 40% of homeless teens in Cincinnati are LGBTQIA+.¹¹

⁸ <https://www.wlwt.com/article/wlwt-investigates-an-in-depth-look-at-youth-violence-surg-ing-in-hamilton-county/41322823>

⁹ <https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Covid-Fact-Sheet-3.25.2020-2.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Unsheltered-Homelessness-and-Homeless-Encampments.pdf>, page 2

¹¹ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr-edge-inpractice-050216.html>

Through this priority, Council seeks to provide funding for projects aimed at the populations the most high-risk for homelessness that

- provide housing support;
- provide transitional housing for those in recovery;
- or other housing resources.

Taking a housing-first approach to helping our most high-risk and vulnerable residents will create a stable, equitable future for all Cincinnatians.

Project LIFT

Project LIFT is an initiative of the United Way that works through nearly 30 sponsor agencies that provides wraparound services, short-term financial assistance and ongoing coaching to families to help them weather temporary, short-term setbacks that might otherwise knock them off the path to economic well-being. Poverty is a complex and stubborn issue, but Project LIFT has led to impactful results, with more than 15.5 percent of participants seeing their income increase by at least 20 percent, and nearly 10 percent having their income increase by at least one interval of the Federal Poverty Level. Providing ongoing financial support to Project LIFT allows for these wraparound services to continue having a significant impact on Cincinnatians living on the precipice.