



City of Cincinnati

801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Agenda - Final

Economic and Cultural Opportunity

Chairperson Jan-Michele Kearney
Vice Chair Seth Walsh
Councilmember Scotty Johnson
Councilmember Albi

Monday, March 23, 2026

10:00 AM

Council Chambers, Room 300

PRESENTATIONS

SPEAKERS

WORKFORCE COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST OHIO

Myron Hughes, Board Chair

Beth Yoke, Executive Director

Elaine Faye, Business & Community Relations Manager

BLACK ARTS SPEAK

Alandes Powell, President CEO

AGENDA

PRESENTATIONS

1. [202601119](#) **PRESENTATION**, submitted by Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney regarding Workforce Council of Southwest Ohio.

Sponsors: Kearney

Attachments: [PRESENTATION](#)

2. [202601131](#) **PRESENTATION**, submitted by Vice Mayor Kearney from Alandes Powell, President & CEO, regarding Black Art Speaks.

Sponsors: Kearney

Attachments: [PRESENTATION](#)

MOTION

3. [202601062](#) **MOTION**, submitted by Vice Mayor Kearney, **WE MOVE** for the administration to prepare a report within 60 days on all City opportunities for workforce development including, but not limited to the Youth2Work Program, Career Pathways Initiative, Fire Cadets (youth), Police Cadets (youth), Buildings &

Inspections Academy, internships with departments, and other opportunities.
(BALANCE ON FILE IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE)

Recommendation ECONOMIC & CULTURAL OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE

Sponsors: Kearney

Attachments: [202601062](#)

ADJOURNMENT



Workforce Council of Southwest Ohio

City of Cincinnati Economic and
Cultural Opportunity Committee

March 23, 2026



The Workforce Council of Southwest Ohio (WCSO)

- Administer federal workforce funds
- 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- Business-led
- Serve employers and job seekers in Cincinnati and Hamilton County
- Convene & connect local workforce entities
- Conduct workforce research and regional labor market analysis
- Engage a diverse range of employers to promote business representation and industry/sector partnerships
- Identify eligible training providers
- Oversee youth workforce activities



We offer free training services & provide funding for training

- Unique among local workforce entities
- Perform skill assessments and aptitude testing
- Support pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs
- Information and referral to local training providers
- Training and support costs covered (100% for qualified individuals)
- Incumbent worker training and on-the-job training



Services Funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Career Services for Adults & Employers

- The Workforce Council contracts with a local partner to operate the Cincinnati-Hamilton County OhioMeansJobs Center (OMJ).
- The OMJ Center serves as a one-stop-shop for job seekers and connects them to career development services, job training, and wrap-around supports.
- The OMJ Center also serves employers by coordinating job fairs, hiring events, lay-off aversion services, employer workshops, and more.

Amount



\$4,936,963

Partner



Hamilton County Job & Family Services

Funder



Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Time frame



July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2025



Return on Investment

- Last year, we served over **14,107 people** at career fairs, workshops, training programs, and by providing unemployment help. Job-seeking adults and laid-off workers engaged with us to learn new skills, secure employment in in-demand industries, and increase their income.
- This work is accomplished with federal funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

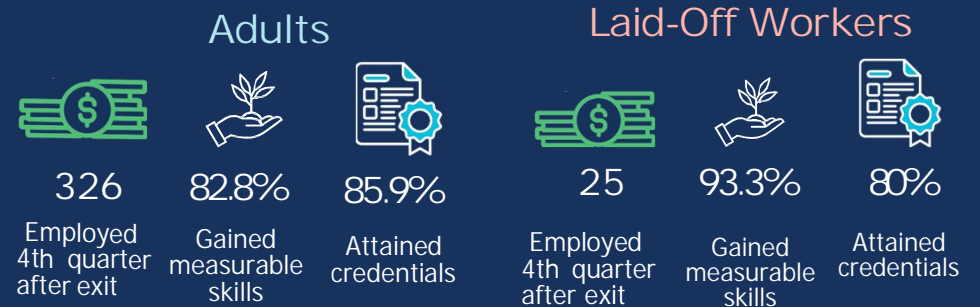
July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

We turned **\$1.5 million** in WIOA funds into **~\$10.61 million** in income for clients

WIOA Program Graduates



*Note this total doesn't account for variability in actual wages (some earn more, some earn less)



Services Funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Career Readiness Services for Youth

The Workforce Council contracts with the following to provide career readiness services to youth and young adults:

- Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio (ages 16-24)
- Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (ages 16-18)
- Hamilton County Job & Family Services (ages 14+)



Amount



\$5,219,734

Partner



Hamilton County Job & Family Services, Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, Urban League

Funder



Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Time frame



July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2027



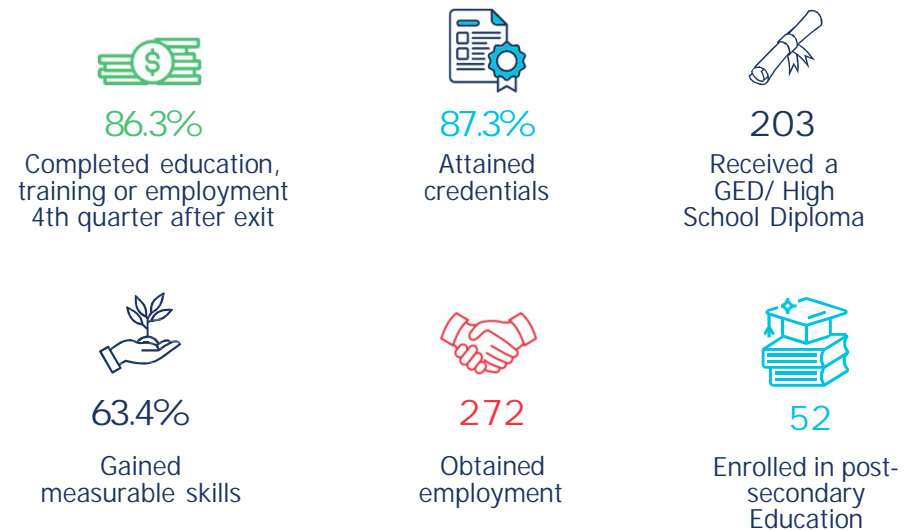
Return on Investment

- In 2024-2025, the Workforce Council contracted with Career Team, Hamilton County Job & Family Services, and Santa Maria to serve youth ages 14 - 24 who were neither in school nor working.
- Eligible youth received life skills training, job training and credentials, work experiences, and wrap-around supports to put them on the path to self-sufficiency.

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

\$1.6 million Investment in Career Readiness Services

Enrollments: 661 participants



100% graduation rate for in-school youth



Current Areas of Focus

- Relocation of the Cincinnati-Hamilton County OhioMeansJobs Center
- Selecting the Next Job Center Operator
- Identifying a new Fiscal Agent
- Strengthening the construction workforce pipeline
- Identifying youth career readiness barriers and opportunities
- Find our impact reports by scanning the QR code:
 - Annual report
 - Report on the construction workforce
 - Youth career readiness report
 - Strengthening apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships



Connecting with City Goals & Priorities

- City Goal: Growing economic opportunity in the City of Cincinnati
 - Ensuring all residents and businesses have access to the tools they need to achieve economic stability and prosperity

Example: providing a community resource fair for West End residents on March 25, with funding help from FC Cincinnati Foundation

How else can WCSO support this goal and the city?



Black Art Speaks

Building Systems, Not Moments

Peter Niehoff • Board member

Asha White • Chief Operating Officer

Alandes Powell • President & CEO

We are not here to ask for inclusion.

We are here to lead.

Are you coming!



Who We Are

A Cincinnati-based ecosystem of creativity and impact

- 150+ artists, designers, and entrepreneurs and mid size businesses
- 501(c)(3) with nearly \$1M annual operations 80% growth over 5 years.
- Born from the Black Lives Matter mural
- Building careers, public art, and community wealth

We don't just create art — we build the systems behind it.

The Pattern

What we see today:

- Black stories are funded
- Black culture is elevated
- But **Black artists are not always centered** in decision-making or economics

*It's not about effort or talent —
it's about who leads and who benefits.*



Real Examples

Where the pattern shows up:

- National selection; impacts local talent
- Black Artist left out of creative process
- Representation disconnected from execution

When we're not in the lead, trust and opportunity leave the community.

The Core Issue

The issue isn't representation.

The issue is power —

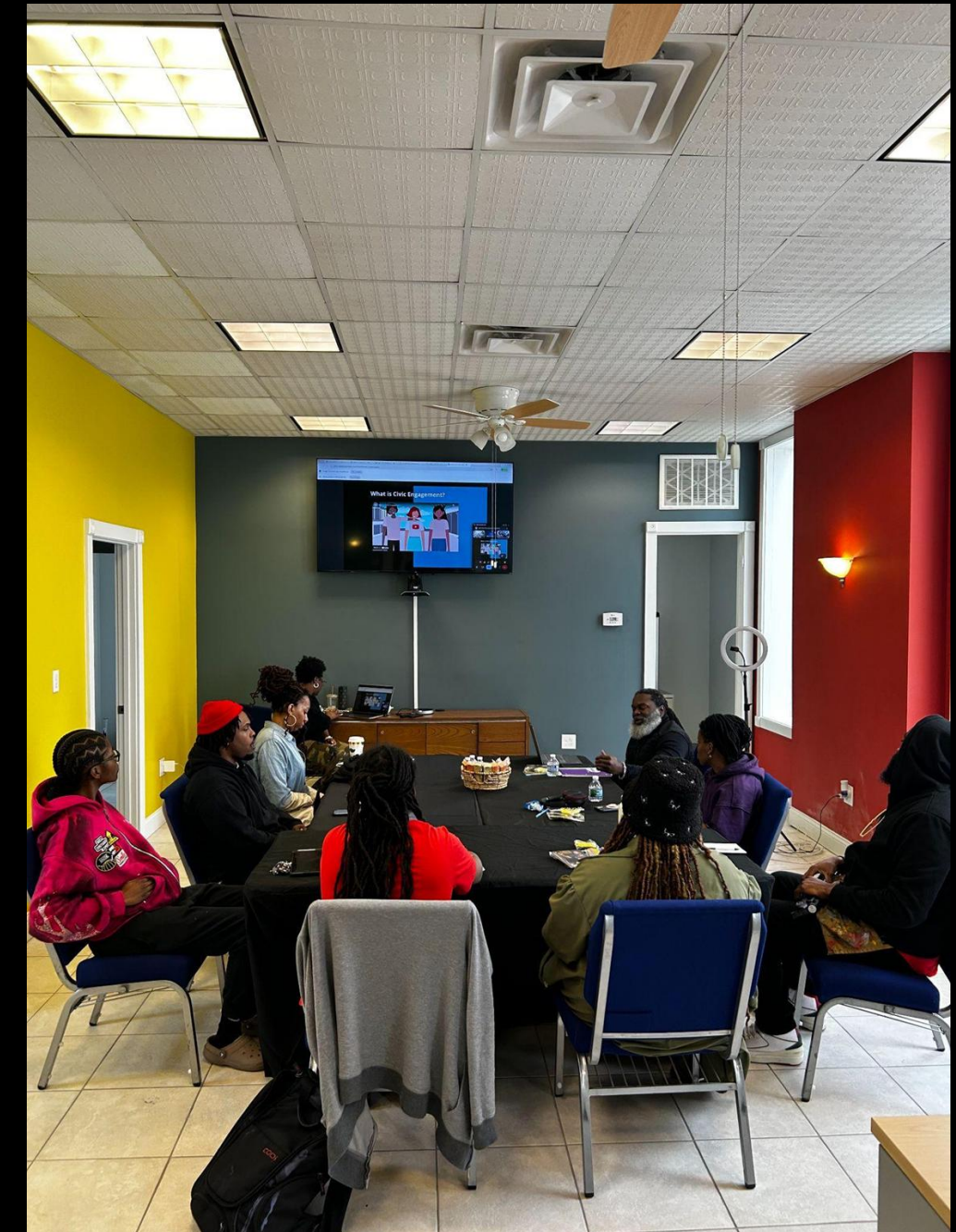
who is trusted to lead, decide, and benefit when Black stories are told and investments are made.

Our Role

Black Art Speaks exists to:

- Train and develop artists as entrepreneurs
- Drive neighborhood revitalization through art
- Build cultural and economic systems that last
- Lead projects with community, not just about community

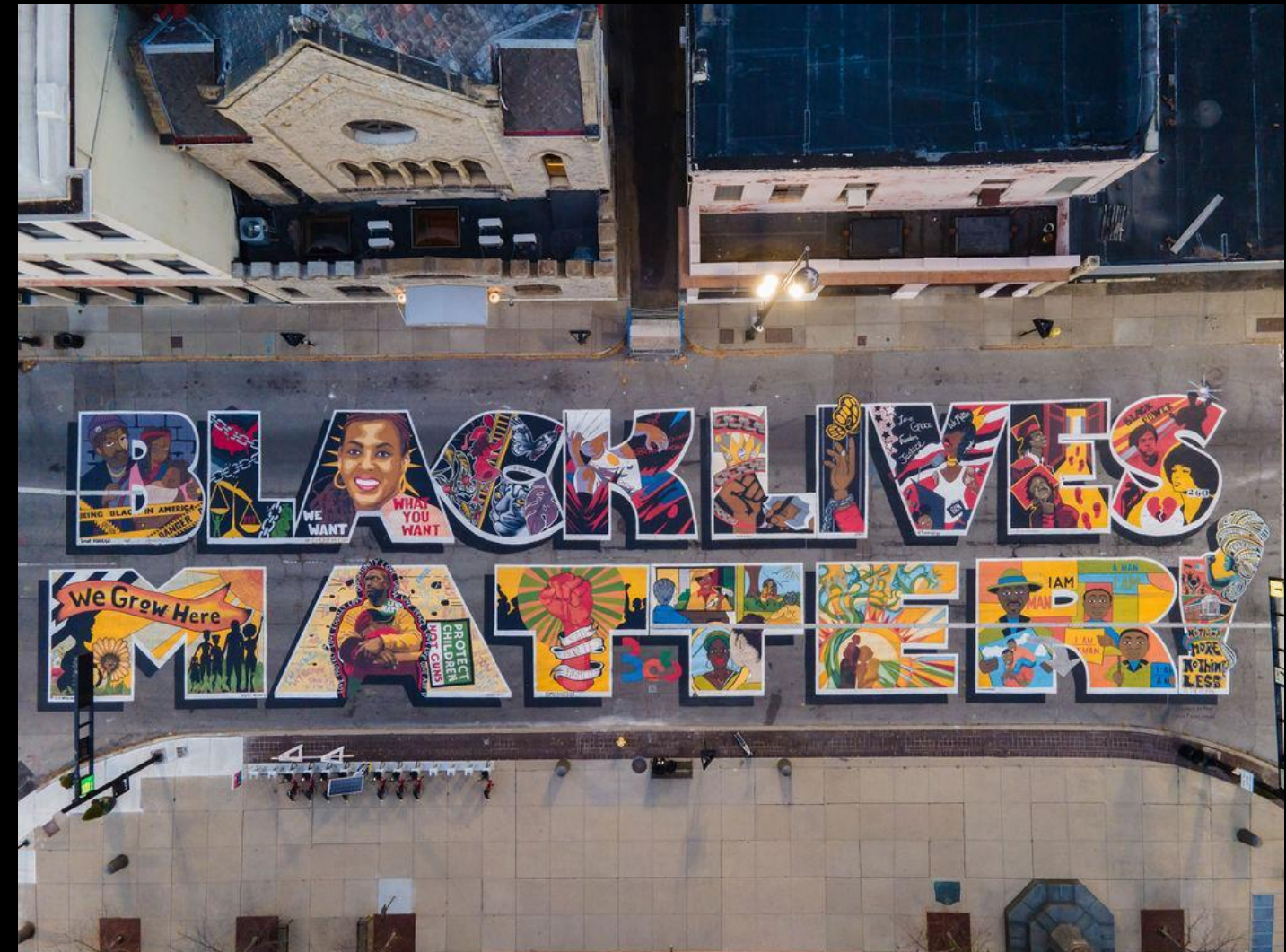
We are the decision-makers closest to the culture.



Our Track Record

- Nearly \$1 million in annual operations
- 30% growth year-over-year
- Partnerships with schools, corporations, and neighborhoods
- Proven artist workforce and youth engagement outcomes

Trust + Results = Readiness to Lead



2025 National Mural
Award Winner

What We're Asking For

- **Lead Locally**
Public funds for Black culture should be led by **Black-led, local organizations.**
- **Share Power, Not Just Process**
We should **co-design and co-decide** funding priorities and partnerships.
- **Build Infrastructure, Not Moments**
Invest in training, entrepreneurship, and systems that deliver long-term impact.



What it Looks Like

- Local preference in City RFPs
- Co-design committees for project selection
- Multi-year ecosystem investment
(*approx. \$400–500K over 3 years*)

The City sets the goals — we build the system that achieves them.

The Vision

When Black artists lead:

- Culture drives economic activity
- Youth see real career paths
- Neighborhoods gain wealth and pride
- The City achieves true equity and inclusion

Cincinnati wins — because its artists do.



Closing

“The art is powerful.
But the system behind the art —
that’s what changes lives.”

*Cincinnati can fund moments... or
build infrastructure that lasts.
Black Art Speaks is ready to
lead.*





WU D102

Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Vice Mayor

March 6, 2026

MOTION

WE MOVE for the administration to prepare a report within 60 days on all City opportunities for workforce development including, but not limited to the Youth2Work Program, Career Pathways Initiative, Fire Cadets (youth), Police Cadets (youth), Building & Inspections Academy, internships with departments, and other opportunities.

This report should not include traditional hiring to fill part-time or full-time positions with the City. Information requested in this report includes annual data from 2023-2025: department overseeing the particular program, number of participants in the program, age ranges of participants (*e.g.*, 40% under 18 y.o., 40% between 19 and 30 yo; 20% 30 yo and older), amount of funds spent on program, number of participants from each zip code involved, and any other information that the administration finds relevant.

The purpose of this request is to show what workforce development programs exist, whom are we serving, and how much are we spending on each program.

Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

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