



Overview of the Pathways to Impact: Opportunity Blueprint



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Meet the Team

As a part of our Civic Collaboration program, The Office of Opportunity's Strategic Development Plan was composed by five interns from the Morehead Cain scholars program of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Over the past two months, we have conducted research and a series community interviews to understand the gaps and barriers that the Office of Opportunity hopes to address.



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Defining Opportunity

The Who, What, and Why of the Office



The Office of Opportunity (OOO) is a newly re-structured department under the City Manager's Office, aimed at reforming and reducing gaps in socio-economic systems for the City of Cincinnati.

The department absorbed the former Human Relations branch to holistically address issues of systemic inequality.

Mission Statement

The OOO is dedicated to identifying and filling systemic gaps that disproportionately affect divested citizens of Cincinnati, with a core mission to enhance the quality of life for all residents by fostering greater economic and social opportunity.



Values: Defined

COMMUNITY UPFLIFT

The intentional cultivation of an improved quality of life and shared value, while honoring the inherent dignity rooted in community.

ECONOMIC REPAIR

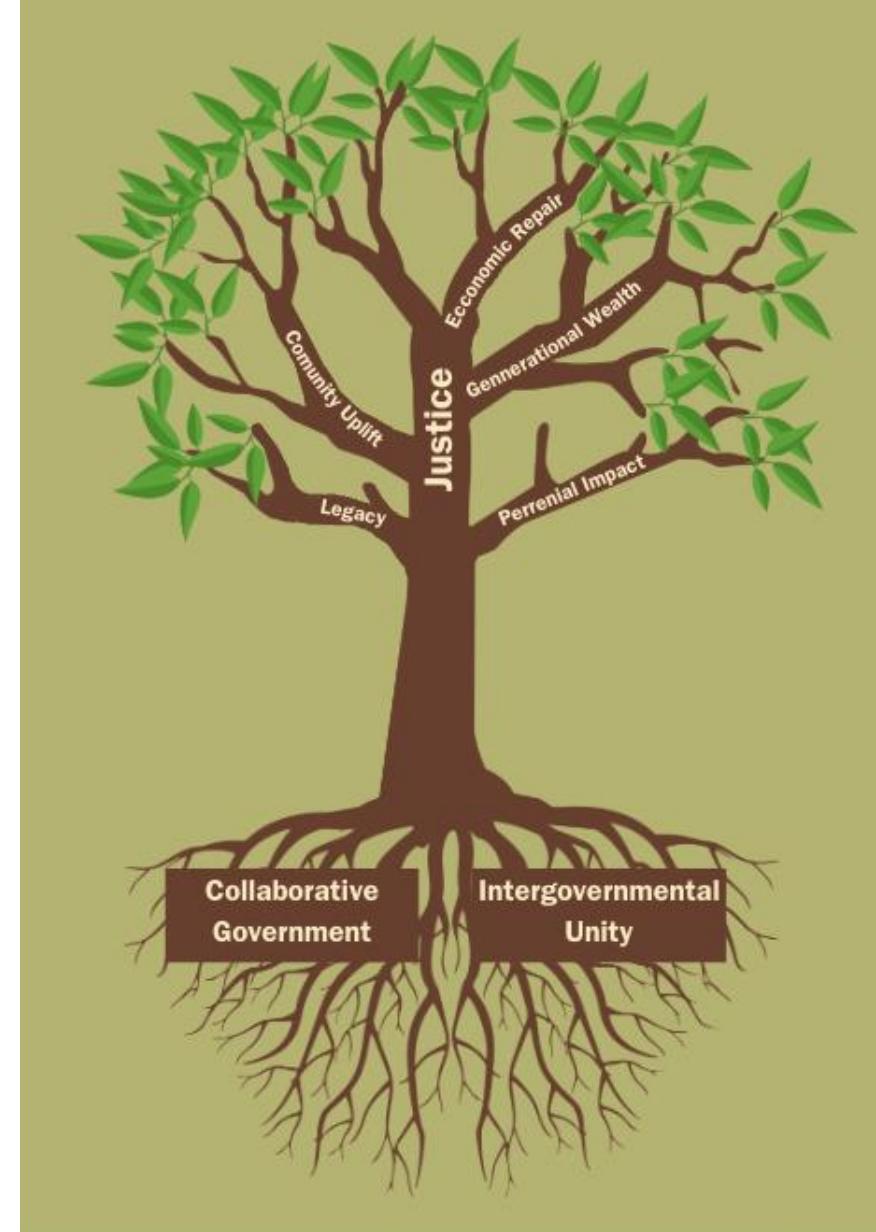
The restoration of financial autonomy to communities systemically alienated from economic mobility.

GENERATIONAL WEALTH

A multi-faceted approach to accessing capital that enables upward mobility for a legacy of community prosperity and sustained opportunity.

Values Tree

Our values form the roots of our work—anchored by three primary pillars (Community Uplift, Economic Repair, Generational Wealth) and supported by principles that ensure every policy and program remains people-centered and equity-driven. This values tree illustrates how each element connects to our mission of building stronger, more resilient communities.



Engine of Opportunity

I. Rooted in Meaning

Opportunity” = *ob portum veniens* →
“toward the port”

Not just wind guiding ships. Now: an engine driving change in Cincinnati

II. Cincinnati's Engine

Engines shaped our past: steamships, locomotives

Now: powered by partnerships, investment, collaboration

Many parts (cogs) → One powerful force

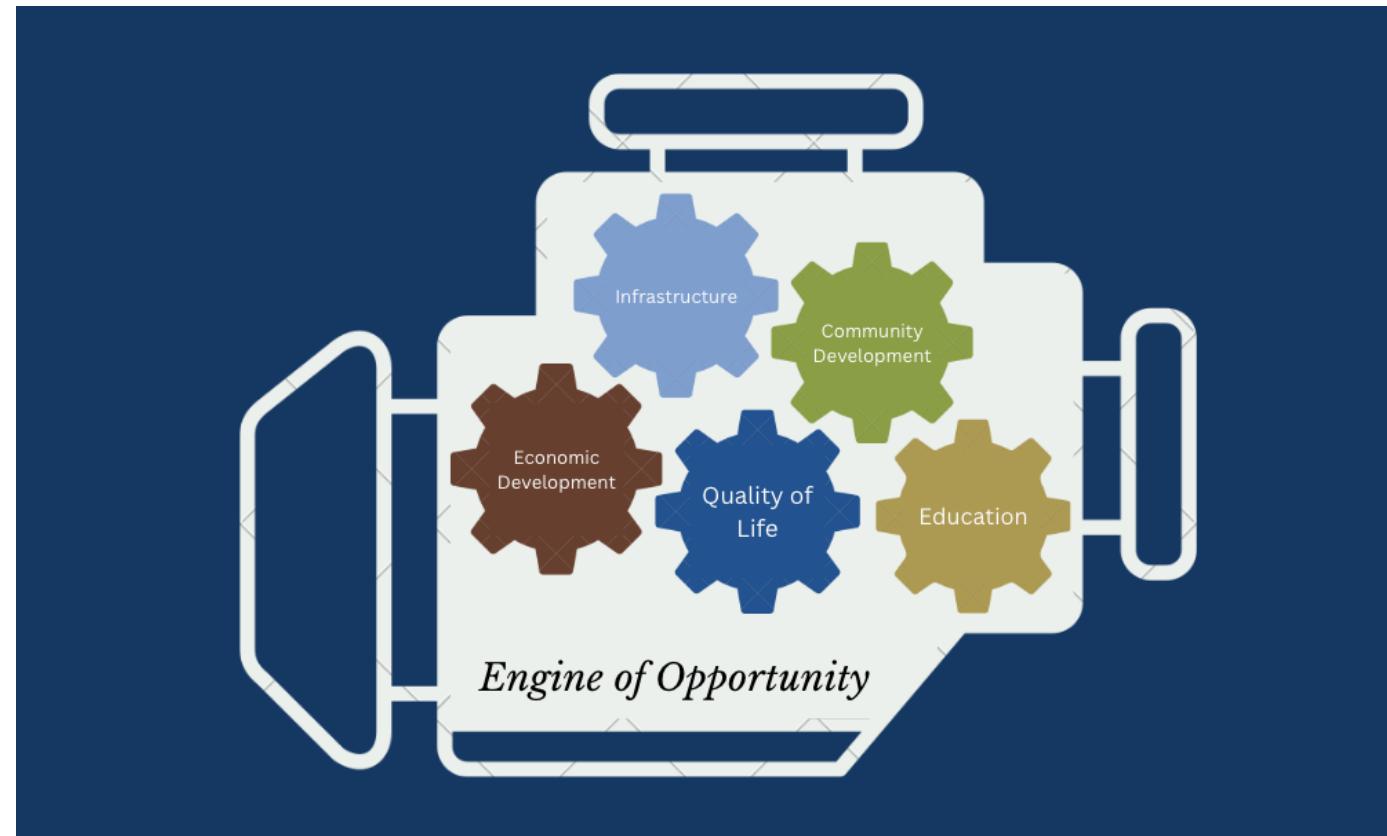
III. Driving the 4 C's

Community Advancement

Community Sovereignty

Community Parity

All through **Community Determination**



Educational Opportunity

Defining Educational
Opportunity and Access

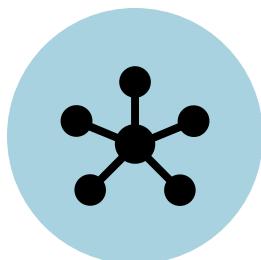
Defining Educational Opportunity

Cincinnati's education landscape consists of various entities and has three areas of need



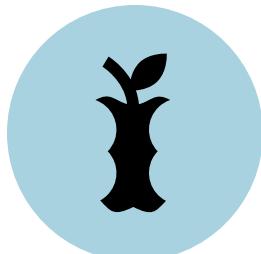
1. Education Equity

Ensuring every learner has access to the tailored resources, supports, and opportunities they need—regardless of background—to achieve outcomes on par with their peers.



2. Institutional Collaboration

The active alignment and partnership of schools, colleges, training providers, and public agencies to coordinate pathways, share expertise, and deliver seamless learning experiences.



2. Resource Equality

The fair distribution of funding, facilities, materials, and qualified educators across all programs and communities so that no student's education is limited by local wealth or demographics.

Education in Cincinnati



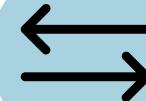
Early Foundations

- **Cincinnati pioneered public education**, from Woodward High to UC's co-op model.
- **Yet racial segregation persisted**, leading to the 1974 desegregation case and magnet schools—challenges that still echo today.



Landscape

- Today, CPS is Ohio's second-largest district, serving 35,000 students—80% minority, over 80% economically disadvantaged.
- Expansion of public infrastructure and attendance laws establish universal access, though not universal equity.



Current Landscape

- Black students are underrepresented in AP courses and overrepresented in suspensions.
- persistent achievement gaps (math & Reading scores, chronic absenteeism, graduation and enrollment rates)

Key Stakeholders

This map illustrates how schools, families, nonprofits, city agencies, Higher education institutions, and funders intersect to shape policy, resource allocation, and on-the-ground supports.



Goals For Educational Opportunity



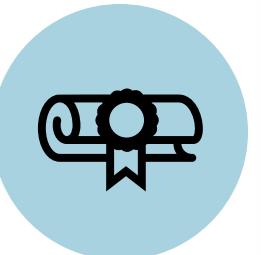
- 1. Strengthen family, school, and community partnerships to tackle Cincinnati's educational, social, and economic challenges.**

Ensure every Cincinnati community has access to trauma-informed educators, inclusive school partnerships, and culturally responsive family engagement.



- 2. Develop an accessible platform linking students and families to all of Cincinnati's educational opportunities.**

Ensure all Cincinnati learners and families have streamlined access to diverse educational pathways through a comprehensive platform that aggregates resources and connects K-12, higher education, and career programs.



- 3. Enhance matriculation and career readiness for Cincinnati's students**

Enhance college enrollment and career outcomes for underrepresented Cincinnati students through community partnerships, expanded mentorship and experiential learning, and targeted support for first-generation and low-income learners.

Goals For Educational Opportunity



4. Streamline funding and reduce educational barriers through strategic financial support.

Address Cincinnati's educational funding inequities by streamlining grant processes, expanding transportation support, leveraging community networks, and adopting flexible funding models.



5. Unify all stakeholders to maximize collective impact on educational improvement.

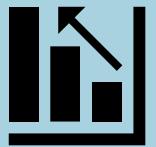
Align education stakeholders through shared metrics, collaborative data systems, and equity-centered convenings for sustained collective impact.

Economic Freedom

A Hands UP Approach

Defining Economic Freedom

Economic Freedom in Cincinnati is measured through three essential indicators:



1. Income Equality

Seeking to increase the number of individuals debt-free entering the work force in order to create a system-based definition of equality.



2. Access to Institutions

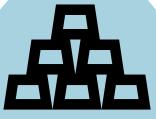
Seeking the ability for all individuals to have access to reliable and stable banking institutions that are working in the interest of the account holder.



3. Economic Equity

Seeking to empower individuals and communities systematically disinvested in by providing a hand up to financial freedom and fulfilling careers.

Economic Landscape of Cincinnati: Then vs Now



Foundations of Economic Landscape

- **1800s:** Ohio Black Codes (denied employment and residency rights)
- **1829:** Fourth Ward Mob (forced mass exodus of thousands of black folk)
- **1865:** Freedman's Bank Collapse (Panic of 1873)



Construction of Economic Landscape

- **1900s:** First major instance of white flight (process of institutionalization)
- **1920s:** Cincinnati Real Estate Board exclusionary policies
- **1970s:** Millcreek Express Highway



Current Economic Landscape

- 1 in 3 Cincinnatians live in racially homogenous neighborhoods (past policy impacts present)
- Presence of predatory financial institutions
- Financial Education Classes
- Financial Freedom Blueprint

Key Stakeholders

Highlights the diverse network of organizations, agencies, and community actors that shape the Economic Landscape of Cincinnati Proper.



Goals For Future Economic Landscape



1. Funding and Supporting Local Agencies Doing the Work

The office will seek to recognize local agencies, non-profits, and initiatives already promoting financial liberation for those impacted by systemic disinvestment.



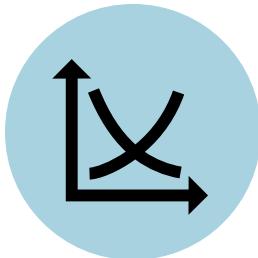
2. Provide Transportation Access

The office will address inequities found in the Cincinnati transit system and advocate for alternative transportation services.



3. Provide Training for Diverse Employment Opportunities (Fulfilling Employment)

Systematically disadvantaged individuals often face significant vocational limitations. Everyone deserves the opportunity to pursue a career that brings fulfillment, regardless of their background.



4. Include Financial Education In Upper Elementary and Middle School

The Office promotes early financial education—beginning in the upper elementary grades and continuing through middle school—to ensure that children acquire essential financial literacy skills before entering the workforce.

Community Development

All for One, and One for All

Defining Community Development

Cincinnati's vibrant sense of community is founded upon two key indicators:



1. Arts, Entertainment, and Tourism

The interconnected organizations, institutions, and activities that contribute to Cincinnati's wealth of culture and sense of vibrancy as a city.



2. Civic Engagement

The continued action and involvement in the affairs of a community by its members with the intention of improving the general sense of well-being.

Arts, Entertainment, and Tourism in Cincinnati



Breaking Artistic Ground

- 1800s: Cincinnati as a leader in arts and design for the Midwest.
- Historical institutions that were the first of their kind.
 - Art Academy of Cincinnati
 - Cincinnati Art Museum



Building Community

A century of growth followed...

- The Contemporary Arts Center
- Aronoff Center
- Cincinnati Ballet



Current Landscape

- Ever present attack on funding for the arts.
 - Resulting competition for funding and grants
 - Disconnect between core institutions and their funder.
- CPS partners with arts education programming
 - Issues in accessibility

Key Stakeholders

Highlights the diverse network of organizations, agencies, and community actors that shape the Arts, Entertainment, and Tourism space of Cincinnati.



Goals For Arts, Entertainment, and Tourism



1. Creation of an Arts and Culture Department in City Hall

Looking to other urban hubs for arts and culture, a new department would address outstanding issues with the current funding and decision-making process.



2. Increased visibility for Arts, Entertainment, and Tourism

Mayoral support and a centralized marketing presence would elevate public awareness, institutional integrity, and connectivity among Cincinnati's arts organizations while encouraging civic engagement.



3. Enhanced Support for Arts Education Opportunities

Financial barriers limit youth access to arts programming which makes increased visibility and scholarship support essential for expanding equitable opportunities.

Civic Engagement in Cincinnati



Cincinnati's History of Unrest

Unrest From Cincinnati's Conception:

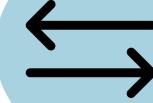
- Cincinnati Riots of 2001 and the case of Timothy Thomas.
 - Civic Engagement & AET Clash



Community Ties

Small scale Civic Engagement has always been integral:

- 1950's and the push for "community action"
- Organizational Involvement:
 - The Urban League of SW Ohio (1948)
 - The Woman's City Club, etc.



Current Landscape

- Ms. Iris Roley and continued action by civic organizations
- Limited Longevity and Declining participation by both volunteers and the under-served
 - Initial Barrier of knowledge
 - Conflicting Mental Modes

Key Stakeholders

Highlights the diverse network of organizations, agencies, and community actors that shape the Civic Engagement space of Cincinnati.



Goals For Civic Engagement



1. Creation of a centralized directory for opportunity

A centralized directory vouched for by the mayor's office with information regarding available resources would tackle the primary obstacle to opportunity in the civic engagement space: public awareness.



2. Targeted motivation for increased community engagement

Even with awareness, barriers like generational trauma, transportation challenges, and financial constraints hinder civic engagement—making it vital to address these issues and incentivize participation.

Infrastructure

Making Culture Tangible

Defining Infrastructure



1. Parks and Open Spaces

Unbuilt lands open and available to the public for the purposes of recreation and conservation.



2. Public Facilities

Any other public building, structure, or system, including those used for educational, recreational, or cultural purposes.



3. Infrastructure Investment

The mechanism and systems that facilitate the transfer of public and private funding towards the built structures and unbuilt spaces of Cincinnati.

Cincinnati's Infrastructure Story: A story of transportation



Transportation Milestones

- Cincinnati established as a port town on the Ohio river
- Union terminal unites 7 railways
- I-75 and highway system displace urban residents



State of the Community

- Racially stratified neighborhoods
- Unmaintained or temporarily closed parks
- Disparate public facility quality by neighborhood
- **CPACs stewarding parks and open spaces**



Investment Landscape

- Southern Railway trust to distribute \$1.6B
- **Rise of CDCs – which have not been equally funded**
- **CRCs controlling neighborhood investment**

Stakeholder Model



Goals For Public Facilities



1. Develop community spaces to bolster youth and community engagement

- Accessible third space
- Foster youth engagement
- Facilitating community engagement



2. Leverage public spaces to ameliorate food security

- Many Cincinnatians live in areas that have limited access to affordable healthy foods.
- Providing food fridges or bringing food suppliers into these spaces would increase the Cincinnati community's ability to access foods.

Goals For Parks and Open Spaces



1. Boost autonomy over parks and open spaces

- **Cincinnati Park Advisory Councils**



2. Increase equal representation in CDC involvement

- asymmetrical infrastructure investment across the various neighborhoods of Cincinnati.
- Boosting universal citizen involvement in CDCs ensures equitable input

Goals For Infrastructure Investment



1. Financial transparency in how infrastructure investment is decided and distributed

- Various city initiatives for infrastructure development
- increases opportunity for civic engagement on equitable distribution of funds for targeted impact.



2. Community specific affordable housing

- Economic advancement has not always been felt equally by all neighborhood residents.
- neighborhood/city specific approach to setting affordable housing requirements

Quality of Life in Cincinnati

Defining Quality of Life in Cincinnati and
Access to Food, Health, and Safety

Defining Quality of Life

Quality of Life in Cincinnati is measured through three essential indicators:



1. Food Access

Reliable and affordable access to healthy food that meets people's nutritional, cultural, and daily living needs, without facing barriers related to income, transportation, or neighborhood conditions.



2. Health Access

Having the practical ability to receive the care you need, when you need it, regardless of your income, location, identity, or circumstances. The presence of services and the ability to use them without fear or hardship.



3. Safety

Safety means living without constant fear of harm and having trusted support systems in place when danger arises. Safety is more than the absence of danger it is the presence of trust, stability, and dignity in one's life.

Food Access in Cincinnati: Then vs Now



Urban Growth and Food Access

- Rapid city expansion brought prosperity, **but limited fresh food access** in dense neighborhoods
- Findlay Market (1855) served as a historic food hub
- By the 20th century, **the flight to suburbs** created widespread food deserts



Community Response

Freestore Foodbank (1971) began emergency food aid.

Grassroots efforts led to:

- Mobile markets
- SNAP incentives at farmers' markets
- Urban agriculture & education



Current Landscape

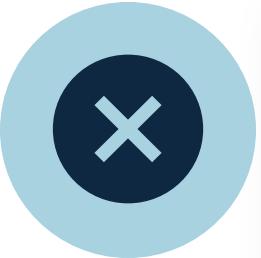
- Community gardens & school nutrition programs expanding
- **Persistent disparities remain**
- Ongoing need for **strategic investment & community-led solutions**

Key Stakeholders

Highlights the diverse network of organizations, agencies, and community actors that shape food access in Cincinnati.



Goals For Food Access



1. Eliminate Food Deserts through Targeted Retail

Ensure every neighborhood has at least one affordable source of fresh, nutritious food within a half mile



2. Strengthen School & Early-Childhood Nutrition Infrastructure

Guarantee universal access to healthy meals for every child during the school day and out-of-school time.



3. Expand Nutrition Education & Cooking Capacity

Equip residents with the knowledge and skills to make healthy choices with available foods.



4. Strengthen Emergency & Crisis Food Systems

Ensure rapid, coordinated response to food-insecurity spikes caused by economic shocks or disasters.

Health Access in Cincinnati: Then vs Now



Foundations for Health Access

- 1800s disease outbreaks
- **Cincinnati Health Dept. (1826) & General Hospital (1869)** built early infrastructure
- **Children's Hospital (1883)**
- Civil rights era spurred creation of **community health centers**



Longstanding Barriers

- Deep **racial and economic disparities** shaped access
- Black and marginalized residents faced **segregation, discrimination, and poor outcomes**
- Gaps in **preventive care** and **life expectancy** persist

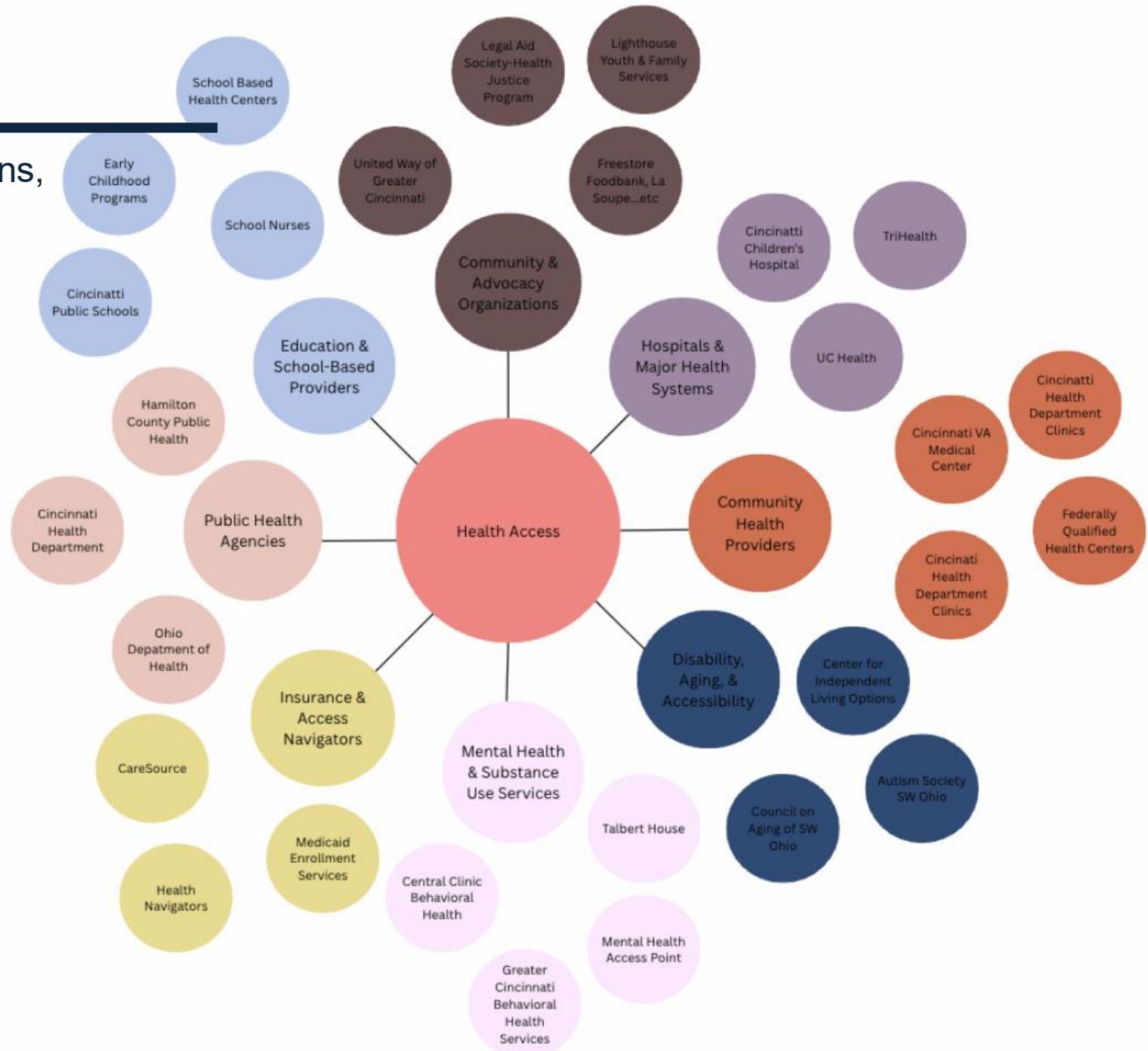


Current Landscape

- Movement toward **trauma-informed, community-based care**
- **Mobile units and screenings** help reduce access gaps
- Ongoing need for **equity-driven investment and collaboration**

Key Stakeholders

Highlights the diverse network of organizations, agencies, and community actors that shape health access in Cincinnati.



Goals For Health Access



- 1. Increase Access to Affordable, Preventive Care in Underserved Neighborhoods**

Expand access to community-based clinics and school-based health services in high-need ZIP codes



- 2. Improve Health Navigation and Insurance Enrollment for Vulnerable Populations**

Ensure every resident, regardless of income, immigration status, or life circumstance, can get the care they need.



- 3. Address Structural Barriers to Health (Transportation, Housing, Food Access) through funded programs**

Make it easier for people to physically and financially access care.

Safety in Cincinnati: Then vs Now



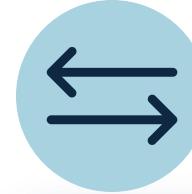
Foundations of Public Safety

- **1853:** Fire Department formed to combat fires in dense urban areas
- **1859:** Police Department established, evolving from informal watch groups



Tensions & Reform

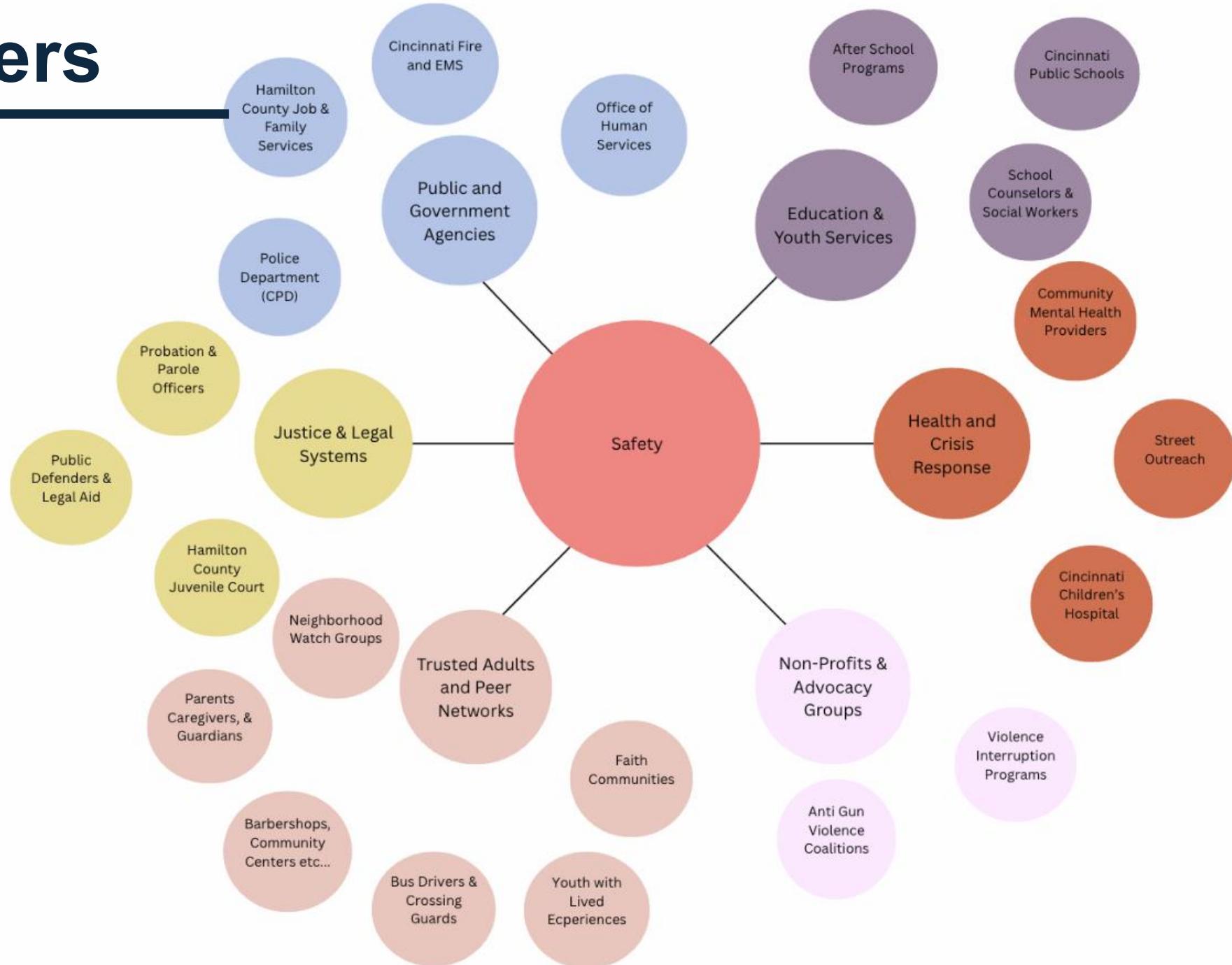
- **1960s–70s:** Rise of neighborhood watch groups amid social unrest
- **2001:** Civil unrest after the police shooting of Timothy Thomas
- Led to protests and the creation of the Collaborative Agreement
→ Focus on transparency, equity, and police-community relationships



Current Landscape

- Shift toward **public health approaches** to safety
- **Mobile crisis teams** address mental health needs without police intervention
- Programs like **Cure Violence Cincinnati** interrupt cycles of violence
- **Beautification & lighting projects** improve neighborhood safety and trust

Key Stakeholders



Goals For Safety



1. Expand Access to Trauma-Informed Support in Schools and Communities

Ensure that every public school and major youth-serving organization has access to trauma-informed counselors and crisis support.



2. Strengthen Housing Stability and Shelter Access as a Foundation for Safety

Decrease rates of family homelessness and housing-based displacement, which often drive youth into unsafe conditions.



3. Improve Safety & Crisis Response for Vulnerable Populations

Ensure every resident, regardless of age, background, or documentation status, can safely access..

Overall Goal for Quality of life



1. Strengthen Data, Community Voice, and Equity Accountability

Use data and lived experience to drive decision-making and build trust. Have a centralized way of collecting data in order to make informed decisions on how to implement solutions

Ending Statements

You do not rise to the level of your goals; you fall to the level of your systems

-James Clear, Atomic Habits

Thank you!

We would like to open the floor to questions