

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



This primer provides background on the key organizations, partnerships, and initiatives shaping Cincinnati's economic growth and civic identity. It is designed to give our delegation context before hearing directly from local leaders during the visit.

3CDC – CINCINNATI CENTER CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

3CDC is a private, nonprofit real estate development and financing organization focused on revitalizing Cincinnati's urban core – downtown and Over-the-Rhine. Born out of the need to address blight and civil unrest in the early 2000s, 3CDC has become the anchor of downtown redevelopment.

- **Impact:** Over \$2B in development, 210 buildings restored, 49 new buildings constructed, 20 acres of civic space improved. Nearly 600 condos and 1,700 apartments created, plus more than 2M sq. ft. of commercial space. Hosts 1,500+ free events annually.
- **Funding:** Annual corporate contributions (~\$1M), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts (\$243M invested since inception), developer/management fees. Manages financing programs such as the Cincinnati New Markets Fund (CNMF) and Cincinnati Equity Fund (CEF).
- **Connections:** Works closely with Visit Cincy to align redevelopment with tourism and convention strategy. Manages Downtown Cincinnati Inc. and the Downtown Cincinnati Improvement District, ensuring safety, cleaning, and placemaking services. Partners with Duke Energy on infrastructure and sustainability projects.

4C FOR CHILDREN – TRI-SHARE PILOT PROGRAM

4C for Children is the region's designated Child Care Resource & Referral agency and administrator of the Tri-Share Pilot. The program tests a cost-sharing model to make childcare more affordable for families who earn too much for subsidies but still struggle with costs.

- **Impact:** Aims to ease childcare expenses and support workforce participation, though results to date have been limited.
- **Funding:** Uses a three-way split: employers contribute stipends, matched by the State of Ohio, with 4C determining employee eligibility.
- **Connections:** Engages employers, the state, and workforce advocates such as the Chamber and REDI, tying childcare access to broader talent retention goals.

AGAR

AGAR is a Cincinnati-based experiential marketing and creative agency that partners on civic branding, placemaking, and large-scale events. It is known for its innovative approach to blending arts, business, and community identity.

- **Role:** Co-creator of BLINK Festival and creative partner for the Chamber's civic campaigns.
- **Impact:** Designs immersive campaigns that elevate Cincinnati's cultural brand and showcase the city as a hub for creativity and innovation.
- **Connections:** Works closely with the Chamber, ArtsWave, Cincy Nice, and philanthropic foundations such as Haile.

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



BLINK FESTIVAL

BLINK, produced every other October, is the largest public art and light festival in the U.S., drawing more than 2M attendees in 2024. It transforms 30+ blocks across Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky into an illuminated outdoor gallery. The festival is co-produced by the Chamber, AGAR, and philanthropic partners such as the Haile Foundation.

- **Impact:** Global recognition, massive tourism draw, and unique integration of business, arts, and philanthropy; demonstrates Cincinnati's unique ability to merge business, arts, and philanthropy into a global cultural brand.
- **Connections:** Supported by ArtsWave and creative partners like Cincy Nice. Directly tied to the city's identity-building efforts (Cincinnati Experience) and tourism promotion (Visit Cincy).

CINCINNATI BUSINESS COMMITTEE (CBC) & CINCINNATI REGIONAL BUSINESS COMMITTEE (CRBC)

CBC and CRBC are CEO-led organizations that bring the voice of the region's top business leaders into civic and policy discussions. CBC focuses on government efficiency, education, and economic development within Cincinnati/Hamilton County, while CRBC works on broader regional competitiveness.

- **Impact:** Provide political support and convening power for major city initiatives, including recommendations from the Futures Commission. Collaborate with the Chamber, City Hall, and Hamilton County on transformative projects such as the convention center district, downtown revitalization, and education reform.

CINCINNATI DEVELOPMENT FUND (CDF)

The Cincinnati Development Fund is a nonprofit lender established in 1988 by regional banks to support neighborhood revitalization through real estate and nonprofit financing. It helps fill financing gaps in underserved areas.

- **Impact:** Provides high-impact lending for housing, community facilities, and neighborhood redevelopment projects. Supports projects that might not otherwise attract conventional financing.
- **Funding:** Local and regional bank loan pools, philanthropic grants, and reinvestment from program income.
- **Connections:** Partners with 3CDC and The Port to finance redevelopment and with local banks, community leaders, and government agencies to leverage resources.

CINCINNATI EXPERIENCE

Cincinnati Experience is a collaborative marketing and storytelling initiative designed to elevate the region's brand nationally and globally. It works to attract talent, investment, and visitors by showcasing Cincinnati's assets.

- **Impact:** Raises the city's profile through national campaigns, creative storytelling, and destination marketing. Highlights quality of life, culture, and economic opportunity to prospective residents, businesses, and visitors.

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



- **Connections:** Partners closely with Visit Cincy on tourism branding, and with the Chamber and REDI to reinforce Cincinnati's competitiveness for workforce and business attraction.

CINCINNATI FUTURES COMMISSION

The Cincinnati Futures Commission was established in 2022 by Mayor Aftab Pureval as an independent group of business and community leaders charged with addressing the city's fiscal challenges and long-term growth. Managed by the Chamber, it brought together 33 business and labor leaders, engaged over 800 individuals, and consulted with 70 organizations through surveys and focus groups.

- **Purpose:** To analyze the city's financial trajectory in light of a projected \$400M+ 10-year budget deficit and to propose strategies for population, job, and revenue growth.
- **Work Completed:** Produced a comprehensive 77-page report with 36 recommendations, including establishing an Office of Strategic Growth, creating new funds to prepare development sites, and recommending modest earnings tax increases for public safety and economic development.
- **Connections:** Worked closely with the Chamber, City Hall, CBC, and CRBC to ensure its recommendations reflected both civic needs and business perspectives.

CINCINNATI USA REGIONAL CHAMBER

One of the nation's largest chambers, representing 4,000 businesses across Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The Chamber's mission is to grow the region's economy, population, and cultural vibrancy through advocacy, talent initiatives, and business growth strategies.

- **Impact:** Manages large civic projects such as BLINK and the Cincinnati Futures Commission, while advocating for policies that strengthen the business climate.
- **Connections:** Partners with CBC, CRBC, Visit Cincy, REDI, and The Port to align advocacy, talent, and growth strategies.

THE CROWN INITIATIVE

The Crown (Cincinnati Riding Or Walking Network) is a bold plan to complete a 34-mile urban trail loop around the city, linking existing regional assets like Wasson Way, Little Miami Scenic Trail, Mill Creek Greenway, and the Ohio River Trail.

- **Impact:** About 65% complete as of 2025, The Crown connects neighborhoods, improves active mobility, supports health and equity, and enhances placemaking.
- **Connections:** Led by Tri-State Trails with support from governments, philanthropy, and foundations. Tied to branding and placemaking strategies alongside BLINK and Cincinnati Experience.

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



CVG AIRPORT

Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport is a regional economic engine and logistics hub. Home to Amazon Air's primary hub and DHL's Global Super Hub, it has a \$9.3B annual economic impact and supports 49,000+ jobs.

- **Impact:** Serves as a global cargo and passenger hub, strengthening Cincinnati's competitiveness for business and talent.
- **Role in Economic Development:** Partners with REDI and JobsOhio to highlight cargo capacity (Amazon Air hub, DHL's Global Super Hub) as a business recruitment tool.
- **Connections:** Works with REDI and JobsOhio as a recruitment tool, emphasizing its logistics assets in business attraction efforts.

DOWNTOWN CINCINNATI

Downtown Cincinnati is the region's central business district and home to major corporate headquarters including Kroger, Fifth Third, and Procter & Gamble. Its success is tied to collaborative management and investment by both public and private partners.

- **Impact:** Focuses on creating a clean, safe, and vibrant urban core. Provides safety, cleaning, placemaking, and hosts hundreds of events that reinforce downtown as a hub for business and culture.
- **Funding:** Services are funded through assessments via the Downtown Cincinnati Improvement District (DCID).
- **Connections:** Managed by 3CDC, with Downtown Cincinnati Inc. serving as an operational arm. Works with Visit Cincy on tourism promotion and event strategy, and with city government on infrastructure and redevelopment priorities.

DUKE ENERGY

A Fortune 150 company, Duke Energy partners closely with 3CDC, The Port, and the city on sustainable development projects, including streetlight upgrades and redevelopment infrastructure.

- **Impact:** Provides critical infrastructure upgrades that enable downtown redevelopment and sustainability.
- **Connections:** Collaborates with 3CDC and Visit Cincy on placemaking and redevelopment projects.

DUKE ENERGY CONVENTION CENTER REVITALIZATION PROJECT

The Duke Energy Convention Center is undergoing a major \$800M revitalization effort to modernize Cincinnati's convention and event infrastructure. The project includes a full overhaul of exhibit halls, ballrooms, breakout rooms, and energy systems, plus new outdoor and hotel amenities.

- **Impact:** Expected to generate \$48M annually in added economic impact by attracting larger conventions and events. Will strengthen Cincinnati's tourism and convention competitiveness regionally and nationally.

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



- **Funding:** No new taxes are being levied on residents. The project is primarily funded through existing hotel tax revenues and a strategic refinancing plan between the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Visitors to the region help fund the improvements that benefit the economy.
- **Connections:** Closely tied to Visit Cincy's tourism promotion strategy and 3CDC's downtown redevelopment leadership. Includes construction of a 700-room Marriott headquarters hotel with a skywalk connection. Partners include the City of Cincinnati, corporate stakeholders, and Duke Energy on efficiency improvements.

FC CINCINNATI

FC Cincinnati is the region's Major League Soccer (MLS) team, founded in 2015 and joining MLS in 2019. Beyond its role as a professional sports franchise, it has become a driver of neighborhood redevelopment and civic pride.

- **Impact:** The club's West End Stadium project spurred adjacent redevelopment and community investment. The team contributes to the city's visibility, tourism, and local economy.
- **Connections:** Works with 3CDC and The Port on stadium-area development, and with Visit Cincy on promoting tourism and events.

HAMILTON COUNTY

Hamilton County is the home county of Cincinnati and plays a central role in regional governance, infrastructure, and funding. The county frequently partners with the City of Cincinnati, the Chamber, and economic development organizations on shared priorities.

- **Impact:** Provides public funding and governance support for key projects, including transportation, workforce development, and public facilities.
- **Connections:** Collaborates with the City, 3CDC, and The Port on redevelopment efforts; partners with Visit Cincy and the Chamber on tourism and convention initiatives; joint funder with the City for the Duke Energy Convention Center project.

JOBSOHIO

JobsOhio is the state's private, nonprofit economic development agency with a unique funding model that uses profits from the JobsOhio Beverage System, rather than tax dollars. It provides state-level incentives and resources to support regional economic growth.

- **Impact:** Since its creation, JobsOhio has supported hundreds of projects across the state, funding advanced manufacturing, technology, life sciences, and small business initiatives.
- **Funding:** Exclusively funded by profits from the JobsOhio Beverage System (a 25-year franchise purchased from the State of Ohio in 2013 for \$1.4B, financed through private revenue bonds). No state tax dollars are used; liquor tax revenue continues to flow to the State.
- **Connections:** Works directly with REDI Cincinnati on regional projects, and with CVG Airport, The Port, and local chambers to align state and regional recruitment efforts. Works directly with REDI Cincinnati on regional projects, and with CVG Airport, The Port, and local chambers to align state and regional recruitment efforts.

THE PORT OF GREATER CINCINNATI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Port is a quasi-governmental agency focused on transforming unproductive real estate for industrial, commercial, and housing purposes. By preparing sites for development, The Port provides shovel-ready opportunities that support regional business recruitment.

- **Impact:** Revitalizes land for advanced manufacturing, equitable housing, and commercial redevelopment.
- **Funding:** Revenue from redevelopment projects, bond financing, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) proceeds, and philanthropic support.
- **Connections:** Works hand-in-hand with REDI Cincinnati, often preparing sites that REDI then markets to employers. Collaborates with JobsOhio and local municipalities to connect redevelopment with infrastructure investment. Works hand-in-hand with REDI Cincinnati, often preparing sites that REDI then markets to employers. Collaborates with JobsOhio and local municipalities to connect redevelopment with infrastructure investment.

REDI CINCINNATI

REDI Cincinnati is the region's economic development engine, serving the 15-county tri-state metro area (OH-KY-IN). It acts as the first point of contact for companies considering expansion or relocation—connecting them to resources, incentives, data, and regional partners.

- **Strategic Framework (2025–2027):** REDI's 3x3 Strategic Plan focuses on three bold goals to power regional growth:
 1. **Booming Business** – Targeted business attraction, expansion, and retention with a focus on high-quality jobs, pro-growth site development, and talent alignment.
 2. **Unified Global Brand** – Amplify the region's identity as a globally competitive place for business and talent.
 3. **Engagement & Inclusive Growth** – Strengthen collaboration, support inclusive economic opportunity, and promote equity in regional growth.
- **Impact:** In 2024 alone, REDI supported 66 company expansions or relocations, delivering \$1.2B in capital investment, \$326M in new payroll, and securing recognition as a top-10 metro for corporate investment by *Site Selection* magazine.
- **Funding:** REDI's operations and programs are supported by a mix of private investments, JobsOhio contributions, and public funding from the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, and regional universities.
- **Connections:** REDI works closely with JobsOhio for state-level incentives and collaborates with CVG Airport, The Port, and the Chamber to promote sites and infrastructure. Its strategic goals also link to Cincinnati Experience and Visit Cincy for talent and global branding, and to university partners for workforce alignment.

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



TRI-STATE TRAILS

Tri-State Trails is a regional nonprofit coalition advocating for an interconnected tri-state trail and bikeway network. It facilitates planning, advocacy, and community collaboration to expand active mobility and equity in the region.

- **Impact:** Led visioning for the CROWN – a proposed 34-mile loop that connects key regional trails. Successfully helped secure funding and planning momentum for segments like Wasson Way, including approximately \$10 million in private-local matching funds to unlock federal and state grants.
- **Funding:** Supported through philanthropic contributions (including from foundations like the Haile Foundation), local fundraising campaigns (e.g., capital campaigns to package trail segments), and leveraged federal and state grants via public-private collaborations.
- **Connections:** Serves as the lead convener guiding trail development across jurisdictions, linking trails such as Wasson Way, Little Miami Scenic Trail, Mill Creek Greenway, and the Ohio River Trail. Collaborates with government, community organizations, and funders to move the CROWN from concept to implementation.

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

A flagship public research university founded in 1819, and the birthplace of the cooperative education (co-op) model. UC remains a cornerstone of regional talent development, innovation, and academic rigor.

- **Impact:**
 - UC pioneered the co-op concept in 1906 and today remains ranked among the top 5 in the U.S. for co-op and internship programs.
 - In the 2024–25 academic year, students completed 8,395 co-op placements with 1,757 employers, earning a staggering \$94 million collectively – about \$11,220 per student per semester.
 - The 1819 Innovation Hub serves as a dynamic intersection between UC and industry, facilitating co-ops, internships, networking events, and innovation programs with partners like Microsoft, P&G, and Western & Southern.
- **Funding:** UC's co-op and experiential learning programs are supported through institutional budgets and partnerships facilitated by the College of Cooperative Education and Professional Studies. The 1819 Innovation Hub is sustained through university funding combined with corporate collaborations and grant support (e.g., corporate partner spaces)
- **Connections:** The co-op program links students directly to major employers — spanning Fortune 500s to startups — and supports workforce needs across industries and sectors; The 1819 Innovation Hub operates as a collaborative space where students, faculty, startups, and industry converge for innovation, commercialization, and experiential learning

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



VISIT CINCY

Visit Cincy is the official tourism and convention bureau. It co-markets the region with meetNKY and is directly tied to the revitalization of the Duke Energy Convention Center, an \$800M project set to reopen in 2026.

- **Impact:** Drives both leisure travel and convention business, supporting downtown redevelopment.
- **Connections:** Partners with 3CDC on placemaking and with Cincinnati Experience on branding.

CROSS-ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Cincinnati's civic and economic development success relies on intentional partnerships between public, private, and philanthropic organizations. Several notable examples highlight how collaboration drives progress:

Cincinnati Futures Commission & Business Committees

- Established with support from the Chamber and the Cincinnati/Regional Business Committees (CBC & CRBC).
- Operated with City Hall's backing, providing direct recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.
- Conducted extensive engagement, uncovering a projected \$400M+ 10-year budget deficit.
- Produced strategies including modest earnings tax increases (pending voter approval), creation of growth funds, expanded affordable housing investment, and establishing an Office of Strategic Growth.
- CBC/CRBC act as conveners between City leaders, Hamilton County, and regional organizations like the Chamber, 3CDC, and Visit Cincy, aligning public and private investment strategies.

3CDC, Downtown Cincinnati Inc. (DCI) & Downtown Cincinnati Improvement District (DCID)

- 3CDC functions as the strategic driver, securing funding and leading redevelopment.
- DCID provides funding through assessments.
- DCI executes day-to-day services, including safety, cleaning, and operations.
- Together they ensure downtown's vitality, while aligning with Visit Cincy to connect redevelopment with tourism and conventions.

REDI Cincinnati, JobsOhio & the Chamber

- REDI serves as the front door for companies considering expansion or relocation.
- The Chamber provides advocacy and connections to civic leadership.
- JobsOhio offers state-level incentives, funded through profits from the JobsOhio Beverage System (not tax dollars).
- REDI's funding mix: 42% private, 40% JobsOhio, 13% public.

2025 CINCINNATI PRIMER



- Partnership process: REDI identifies prospects → JobsOhio offers incentives → Chamber supports advocacy → local partners (The Port, CVG, utilities, municipalities) provide site and workforce readiness.
- Recent joint initiatives include small business grants and inclusion funds.

Infrastructure & Regional Development Partnerships

- The Port, Tri-State Trails, and CVG Airport collaborate on connectivity, site readiness, and quality-of-life improvements.
- Duke Energy partners with 3CDC, The Port, and the City on sustainability and infrastructure projects.
- CVG's global logistics role (Amazon Air, DHL) is leveraged with REDI and JobsOhio to attract new businesses.