



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP VISIT 2025 CINCINNATI, OH

2025 COMMUNITY COMPARISON

REGIONAL DEFINITIONS

To illustrate how the communities of Springfield, Missouri, and Cincinnati, Ohio, compare to each other, this report compiles demographic, economic, and quality-of-life trends from both, using the designations below:

- **Springfield, MO Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)**
Includes 5 counties: Christian, Greene, Polk, Dallas, and Webster
- **Ozarks Regional Economic Partnership (OREP) Region**
A broader 10-county region that encompasses: Christian, Greene, Polk, Dallas, Webster, Dade, Lawrence, Barry, Stone, and Taney
- **Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)**
Spans 15 counties across three states, including:
 - Ohio: Hamilton, Butler, Warren, Clermont, Brown
 - Kentucky: Kenton, Boone, Campbell, Grant, Pendleton, Gallatin, Bracken
 - Indiana: Dearborn, Franklin, Ohio

These regional designations ensure consistent geographic boundaries throughout this data report when weighing differences in population, labor force, economic indicators, and quality-of-life measures.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

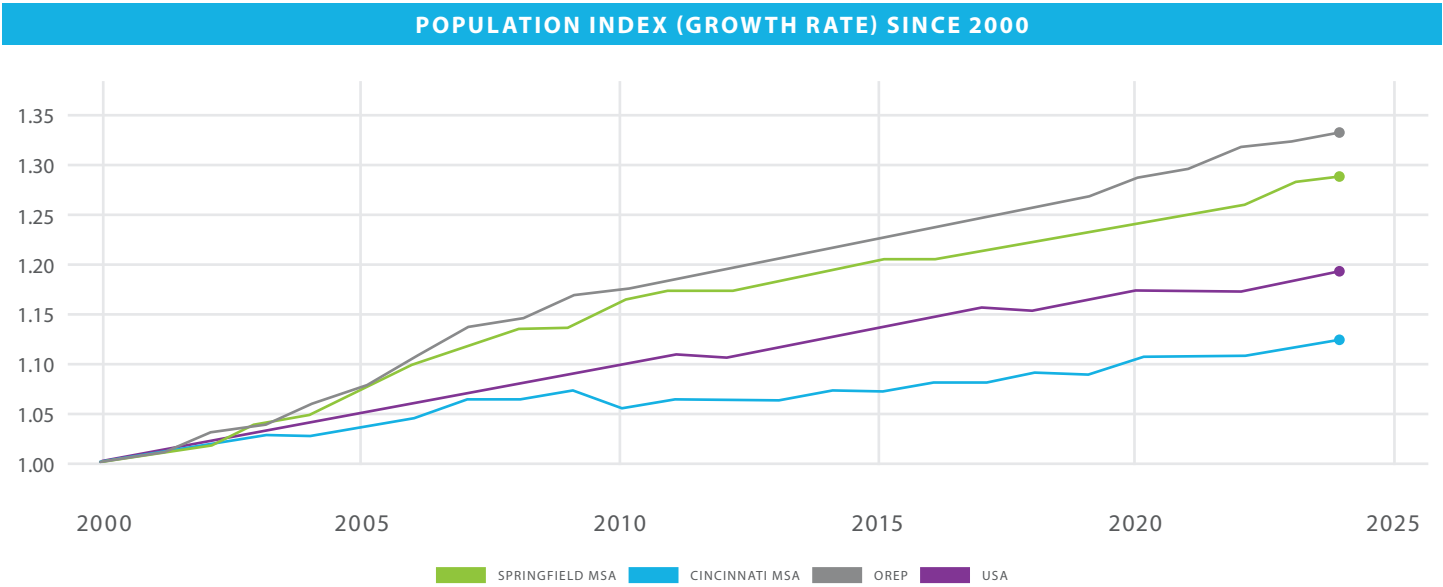
Population growth is a strategic priority for both the Cincinnati MSA (CVG) and Springfield MSA (SGF), tied to livability, economic opportunity, and cultural vibrancy.

The Cincinnati MSA, the largest metro spanning Ohio and Kentucky, has grown 14% since 2000, slower than the national average and many peer cities. In 2023, the Cincinnati Regional Chamber released its first regional population projections to inform future planning. With modest gains, Cincinnati continues to grow in a state where many metros face stagnation or decline.

By contrast, the Springfield MSA is one of the fastest-growing mid-sized metros in the Midwest, up 34% since 2000 and well above national and peer growth rates. Springfield’s expansion reflects its role as a hub for education, health care, and advanced manufacturing, combined with affordability and livability. Approaching the 500,000-population mark, a common benchmark for attracting major employers, federal funding, and infrastructure investment, positions Springfield as an increasingly competitive metro.

YEAR	SPRINGFIELD MSA	OZARKS 10 COUNTY REGION	CINCINNATI MSA
2024	496,975	668,740	2,302,815

SOURCE: US Census Bureau, retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2025



Note: Index values are scaled so that Year 2000 = 1.0.
For example, the index of 1.10 in year 2010 indicates that there was 10% growth in the USA since 2000.

SOURCE: US Census Bureau, retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2025

GENERATIONAL COMPOSITION

Springfield has a younger demographic profile, with above-average shares of Millennials (25.9%) and Generation Z (21.6%). Cincinnati matches Springfield’s Gen Z share (21.1%), supported by strong universities, but lags in Millennials (21.1%), signaling challenges in retaining early- and mid-career talent. (U.S. averages: Millennials: 26.9%, Gen Z: 19.4%)

RACE & DIVERSITY

Both regions are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, with at least a 14-point increase in the nonwhite share from the Silent Generation to Generation Alpha. In Cincinnati, diversity is concentrated in the urban core, where nonwhite residents make up 50.6% of the population—above the metro average but below national levels. This shift is especially evident in K–12 enrollment, where many White families opt for private schools over the public system, particularly within Cincinnati Public Schools district. These trends indicate a future in which both metros will be significantly more diverse than today.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY BY REGION			
CATEGORY	SPRINGFIELD MSA	CINCINNATI MSA	USA
White	89%	78%	63%
Black	2%	12%	12%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.3%	0.9%	1%
Asian	1%	3%	6%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Other	1%	2%	7%
Two or more	6%	6%	11%
Hispanic or Latino	4%	4%	19%

SOURCE: JobsEQ, 2023

FOREIGN-BORN WORKFORCE & GROWTH POTENTIAL

Foreign-born residents strengthen both regions through higher workforce participation, larger shares of prime-age individuals participating labor force, and lower public assistance use than native-born residents. In Springfield, foreign-born workers are concentrated in the education, retail, and professional services sectors. In Cincinnati, they are clustered in manufacturing, healthcare, and education, with generally higher education levels and earnings. India is Cincinnati’s top country of origin—a rare national trend. Both metros have smaller foreign-born shares than the U.S. overall and trail high-growth peers like Charlotte and Austin, where immigration is a major driver of population and workforce expansion.

INCOME & AFFORDABILITY

Both Cincinnati and Springfield have a lower cost of living than the U.S. average, with Springfield’s advantage driven by significantly lower housing, utilities, and transportation costs, as well as slightly lower miscellaneous expenses (clothing, entertainment, professional services). Cincinnati promotes itself as a place where residents enjoy affordability without sacrificing amenities, while Springfield’s lower costs remain a strong draw for young professionals and families.

COST OF LIVING INDEX (U.S. AVERAGE = 100)		
CATEGORY	SPRINGFIELD MSA	CINCINNATI MSA
Overall Index	87.3 (-12.7)	96.1 (-3.9)
Grocery	94.6 (-5.4)	100.6 (+0.6)
Housing	75.9 (-24.1)	87.3 (-12.7)
Utilities	82.8 (-17.2)	99.7 (-0.3)
Transportation	87.3 (-12.7)	96.0 (-4.0)
Health Care	95.5 (-4.5)	95.0 (-5.0)
Misc.	93.5 (-6.5)	100.5 (+0.5)

SOURCE: Council for Community and Economic Research, 2024

Cincinnati’s higher median household income (\$77,844 vs. Springfield’s \$62,921) offsets its higher costs, giving residents slightly greater purchasing power (\$81,003 vs. Springfield’s \$72,074). However, Springfield’s lower costs still allow wages to stretch further for many lower- and middle-income households. Household earnings are more concentrated at the high end in Cincinnati, where 39% of households earn over \$100K annually, compared to 30% in Springfield, which has a larger share earning under \$50K (39%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION		
INCOME RANGE	SPRINGFIELD MSA	CINCINNATI MSA
< \$50K	39%	32%
\$50K–\$100K	31%	29%
\$100K–\$200K	24%	28%
\$200K+	6%	11%

SOURCE: US Census Bureau, 2023

Cincinnati also faces significant income disparities across racial and geographic lines. The median Black household earns \$40,628 less than the median White household—the sixth-largest gap among peer metros—driven in part by industry mix and access to higher-wage sectors. Both Springfield and Cincinnati are working to expand access to professional, business, and technical careers to improve wage equity and economic mobility.

HOUSING & COMMUTE

Cincinnati remains relatively affordable for a large metro, like Springfield. However, housing construction has not kept pace with population growth, particularly in urban areas, contributing to affordability pressures. In 2024, Cincinnati adopted *Connected Communities* zoning reforms to allow more housing types and greater density along major transit routes, while the regional chamber emphasizes the need for municipalities to expand housing supply within their boundaries. Springfield faces similar challenges, with *Forward SGF* identifying zoning and code changes to promote density as priorities for supporting future growth.

- Median Home Value: Springfield \$242,200 | Cincinnati \$269,200
- Fair Market Rent: Springfield \$998 | Cincinnati \$1,287
- Mean Commute Time: Springfield 22.1 min | Cincinnati 24.2 min

SOURCES: Office of Policy Development and Research 2025; US Census Bureau, 2023

HOME VALUE DISTRIBUTION		
CATEGORY	SPRINGFIELD MSA	CINCINNATI MSA
<100K	12%	9%
100K-200K	25%	22%
200K-300K	27%	26%
300K-400K	17%	18%
400K-500K	8%	11%
500K+	10%	13%

SOURCES: US Census Bureau, 2023; US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023; State of the Region, 2024

EDUCATION SYSTEMS

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) is one of the region’s largest employers, serving more than 34,000 students across 66 schools. Education equity is a key concern, as Cincinnati K–12 students attend private schools at a rate three times higher than Springfield. This reflects a sharp racial divide, with many White families opting for private education while Black families are more likely to remain in CPS. Springfield Public Schools (SPS), Missouri’s largest district, serves nearly 24,000 students across 57 schools. A smaller percentage of students attend private schools, and the racial demographics of public and private schools more closely mirror the community overall.

PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE K-12 ENROLLMENT SNAPSHOT		
CATEGORY	SPRINGFIELD MSA	CINCINNATI MSA
Public Enrollment	23,899	34,860
Private Enrollment	3,837	25,651
% Private	14%	42%
Graduation Rate (Public)	97%	82%

SOURCES: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2024; National Center for Education Statistics, 2024; Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, 2024; National Center for Education Statistics, 2022

HIGHER EDUCATION

Cincinnati’s higher education landscape is a key strength for the region, anchored by the University of Cincinnati (UC). While many universities nationwide face declining enrollment, UC has outpaced national trends by growing 22% over the past decade, nearly double the growth rate of Missouri State University in Springfield over the same period. Once considered a commuter school, UC has created a destination campus adjacent to the historic Over-the-Rhine district, with a strong residential student population and a nationally recognized cooperative education program.

The scale of UC and Cincinnati’s broader mix of institutions drives an advantage: in 2023, the Cincinnati MSA awarded over 27,000 degrees, more than double Springfield’s 11,700, and leading to higher educational attainment.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT A GLANCE – CITY LEVEL

CATEGORY	SPRINGFIELD	CINCINNATI
Students (Citywide)	41,439	64,532
Colleges & Universities	13	21
Largest University	Missouri State – 25,038	University of Cincinnati – 53,235
Largest Community College	OTC – 11,036	Cincinnati State – 8,681

SOURCES: Missouri State University, 2024; National Center for Education Statistics, 2023; University of Cincinnati, 2024

PUBLIC SAFETY

CRIME OVERVIEW

In 2024, the Springfield Police Department (SPD) reported more offenses overall than the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD), but on a per capita basis, Cincinnati’s crime rate is 28% lower:

- Springfield: 111 offenses per 1,000 residents (Pop. 170,596)
- Cincinnati: 82 offenses per 1,000 residents (Pop. 314,915)

SOURCES: Cincinnati Police Department, 2025; Springfield Police Department, 2025

In terms of crime trends, Springfield has experienced dramatic reductions in recent years:

- Crimes Against Persons fell 51%, from 5,886 in 2020 to 2,840 in 2023
- Crimes Against Property declined 38%, from 17,047 in 2020 to 10,573 in 2023
- Per capita rates (2023): 16.7 per 1,000 (persons), 62.0 per 1,000 (property)

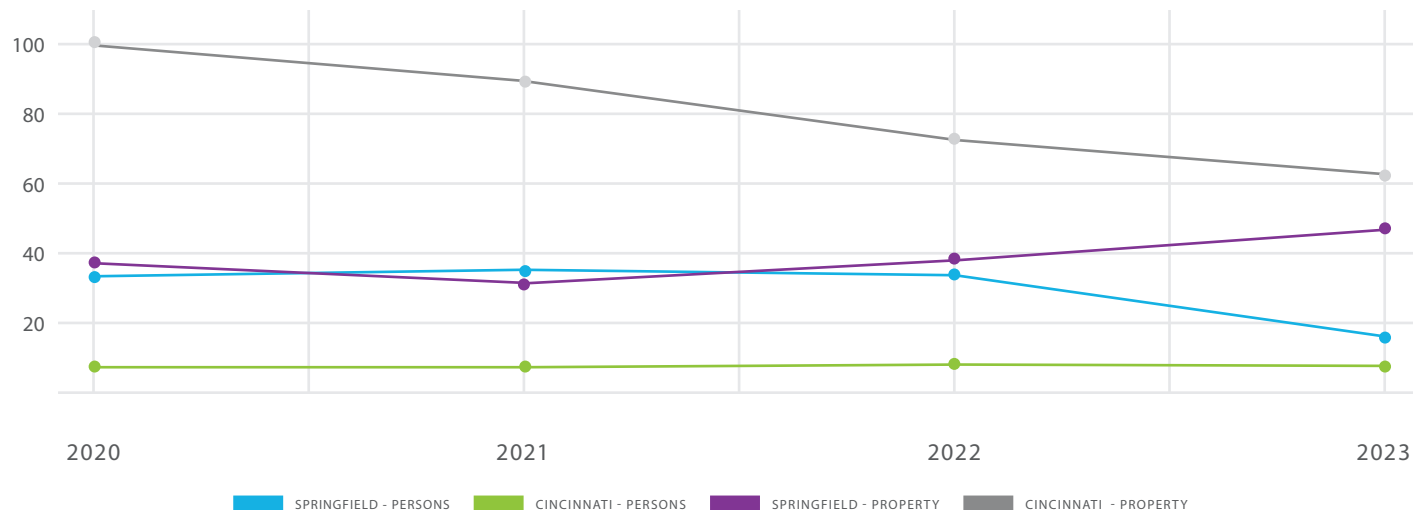
By contrast, Cincinnati shows more mixed outcomes:

- Crimes Against Persons declined 14%, from 2,020 in 2020 to 1,720 in 2023
- Crimes Against Property increased 19%, from 11,622 in 2020 to 13,928 in 2023
- Per capita rates (2023): 5.5 per 1,000 (persons), 44.5 per 1,000 (property)

SOURCES: Cincinnati Police Department, 2025; Springfield Police Department, 2025



PER CAPITA CRIME RATES (2020-2023) SPRINGFIELD VS. CINCINNATI



SOURCES: Cincinnati Police Department, 2025; Springfield Police Department, 2025

POLICE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Both communities' police departments face staffing shortages that affect service levels despite incentives. Springfield has historically averaged approximately 25 officer vacancies at a time, but reached 60 open positions in May 2025, while Cincinnati was 130 officers short as of March 2025 due to a recruitment class gap between 2009-2013.

LABOR FORCE & ECONOMIC OUTPUT

Cincinnati’s labor force is nearly five times larger than Springfield’s, though both metros grew their labor force by 10% over the past decade. Cincinnati reports a stronger labor force participation rate but a higher unemployment rate, which may reflect more job seekers reentering a dynamic market. Economic output mirrors this difference in size with much higher gains in GDP and exports, demonstrating Cincinnati’s global connectivity and Springfield’s more locally oriented economy.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMPARISON: EMPLOYMENT, GDP, AND TRADE

CATEGORY	SPRINGFIELD MSA	CINCINNATI MSA	USA
Employment Size	235,626	1,124,958	166,407,769
Employment Growth (10-Year)	10%	10%	13%
Unemployment Rate (Apr 2025)	3.5%	4.4%	3.9%
Real GDP (2023) in 2017 dollars	\$22.6B	\$160B	22.7T
Exports (2023)	\$0.4B	\$31.2B	\$3,053.5B
Exports per Capita (2023)	\$843	\$13,548	\$9,110

SOURCES: BLS, 2024; JobsEQ, 2025; BEA, 2023; International Trade Administration, 2023

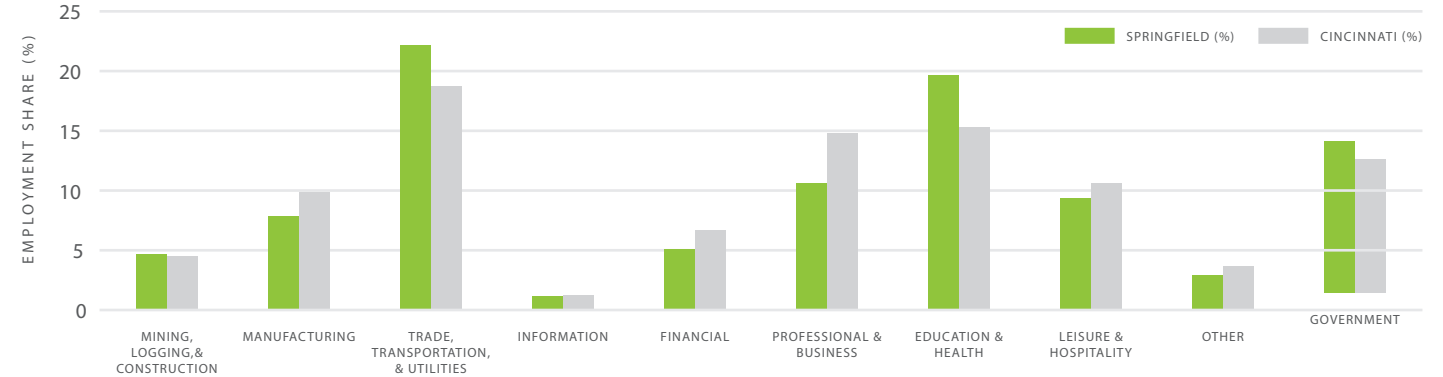
KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Cincinnati’s economy is broadly diversified, anchored by healthcare, manufacturing, retail, education, and professional services. Professional and business services alone employ 15.4% of the metro workforce, reflecting a stronger base of higher-wage office jobs. Springfield’s sector mix is similar but leans more heavily on trade/transportation and education/health, underscoring its regional service center role.

Both metros show distinct specializations. A location quotient (LQ) measures how concentrated an industry or job type is in a region compared to the national average. Cincinnati’s LQ highlights rapid growth in logistics, with Scheduled Freight Air Transportation rising from 0.17 in 2013 to 19.88 in 2023, driven largely by Amazon and DHL. Flavoring Syrup & Concentrate Manufacturing (LQ 29.82) is another standout industry. Springfield’s strengths include Metal Tank Manufacturing, Air & Gas Compressor Manufacturing, and Boat Building, reflecting the region’s blend of legacy and specialty producers.

Fortune 500 headquarters also highlight the gap in corporate presence: Springfield is home to O’Reilly Automotive (No. 259, \$16.7B revenue), while Cincinnati hosts seven—Kroger, Procter & Gamble, Western & Southern Financial, Fifth Third Bancorp, Cincinnati Financial, Cintas, and American Financial—together generating \$276B in revenue.

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR DISTRIBUTION



TAX AND BUSINESS CLIMATE

Although Cincinnati’s strong corporate presence demonstrates its role as a stable, opportunity-rich metro, Ohio lags behind Missouri in overall tax competitiveness according to the Tax Foundation’s 2025 rankings. These rankings weigh heavily in site selection decisions, particularly for firms comparing long-term costs when expanding or relocating across state lines.

Springfield benefits from Missouri’s stronger tax environment but faces its own barriers to large-scale economic development. With a metro population just under the 500,000-population threshold often used by site selectors, Springfield can be overlooked for major projects. While new land has become available, challenges remain around site readiness, including due diligence, utility infrastructure, and national visibility, factors further delayed by pandemic disruption.

Minimum wage policies also shape the business environment. Ohio increased its minimum wage in January 2025 to \$10.70/hour for non-tipped employees, compared with Missouri’s scheduled increase to \$15/hour by 2026. These differences influence labor costs in industries with large hourly workforces, while reflecting each state’s broader approach to workforce and affordability.

STATE COMPETITIVENESS RANKINGS		
CATEGORY	MISSOURI	OHIO
Overall	13 TH	35 TH
Corporate Taxes	4 TH	45 TH
Individual Income Taxes	20 TH	25 TH
Sales Taxes	24 TH	43 RD
Property Taxes	11 TH	6 TH
Unemployment Insurance Taxes	5 TH	14 TH

SOURCE: Tax Foundation, 2025

HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

Cincinnati has established itself as a major destination for conventions, leisure travel, and events, supported by an inventory of more than 32,000 hotel rooms. In 2023, the city raised its hotel tax to 19.3%—one of the highest rates in the nation—to help finance a \$240M renovation of the Duke Energy Convention Center, with \$40 million generated directly from hotel tax revenue. The convention center, originally opened in 1967, will reopen by late 2025 with 750,000 square feet of upgraded space, modern meeting facilities, a rooftop terrace, and a new 800-room hotel next door. Despite the disruption of construction, Cincinnati’s hospitality sector has remained resilient. Visitors to Hamilton County spent \$4.4B in 2024, including \$900M on spectator sports, generating \$229M in local tax revenue. Visit Cincy surpassed its annual sales goal by 11%, reflecting the region’s strong appeal even without its flagship venue.

Springfield’s hospitality market is smaller but poised for growth with 7,000 hotel rooms currently, and the potential for catalytic tourism development. In November 2025, voters will consider a 3% increase to the hotel/motel tax, designed to support a \$175M downtown convention and event center projected to generate \$1.3B in economic impact over 30 years. The United Soccer League is also exploring the feasibility of a downtown Springfield stadium, which would further enhance the city’s capacity to host professional sporting events and large-scale gatherings. Together, these initiatives represent a strategic effort to elevate Springfield’s visibility as a regional destination.

HOTEL MARKET PERFORMANCE: SPRINGFIELD VS CINCINNATI (2025)

	SPRINGFIELD	CINCINNATI
Inventory Rooms	7,049	32,921
Occupancy Rate	56.60%	58.10%
Change vs. Prior Year	-3.70%	3.50%
Average Daily Rate	\$103.23	\$123.54
Change vs. Prior Year	1.80%	-1.50%
Revenue Per Available Room	\$58.47	\$71.77

SOURCE: CoStar (2025)

AIRPORT & CONNECTIVITY

CINCINNATI/NORTHERN KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (CVG)

CVG is a major regional growth engine, serving more than 9 million passengers annually across 55+ nonstop destinations and 12 airlines. The airport is investing \$575M in Elevate CVG, a terminal modernization project slated for completion in 2029.

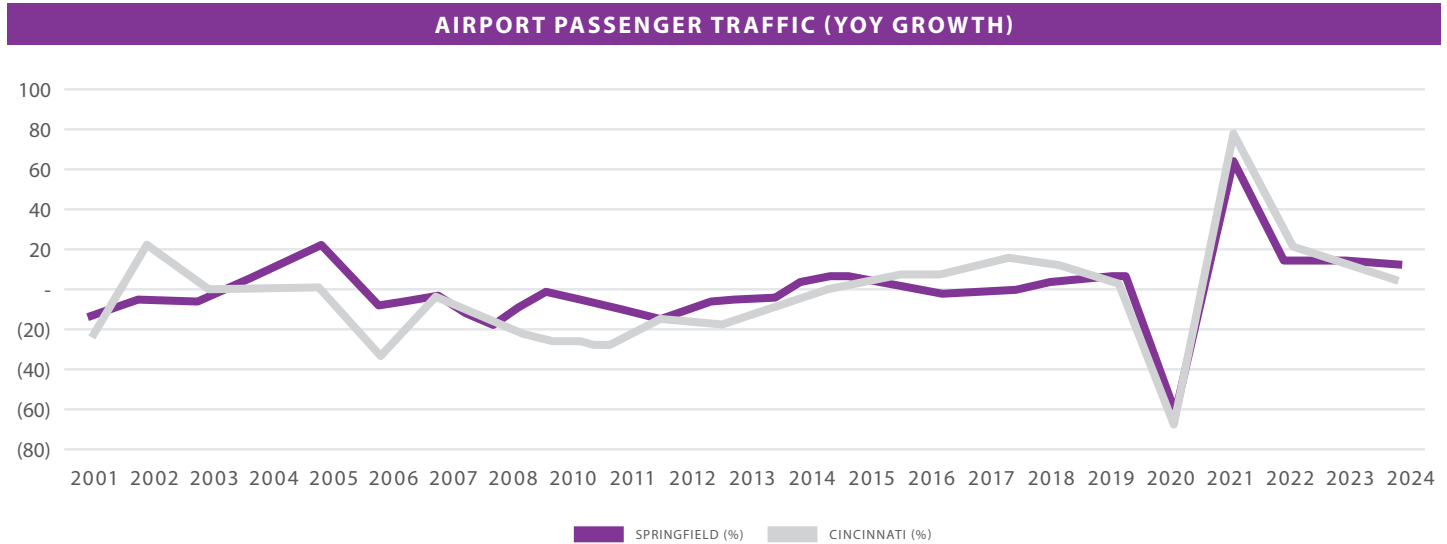
Freight is central to CVG’s rise. In 2023, 45% of all planes carried cargo, making it the 6th busiest U.S. airport and 12th globally for freight. Since 2013, the region’s air freight sector has expanded dramatically, with its location quotient jumping from 0.17 to 19.88 - an 11,556% increase, well above the 1.25 threshold that indicates a regional specialization. Anchors include Amazon’s \$1.5B Air Hub and DHL’s \$192M maintenance hangar. Overall, Cincinnati’s airport market has grown 155% since 2020.

2025 COMMUNITY COMPARISON

PLAY

SPRINGFIELD-BRANSON NATIONAL AIRPORT (SGF)

SGF is also seeing sustained growth, surpassing pre-pandemic passenger levels by 20%. Passenger traffic reached 1.43 million in 2024 across 14 destinations and 4 airlines. Planned investments of \$35M by 2026 will improve terminal flooring and expand parking capacity. [Freight] The airport provides cargo services through carriers such as FedEx and UPS, handing over 29 million pounds of total cargo in 2024. Since 2013, the region’s air freight sector location quotient has increased from 0.05 to 0.23.



SOURCES: Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, 2025; Springfield-Branson National Airport (2025)

PHILANTHROPY & NONPROFIT ECOSYSTEM

Both metros benefit from robust nonprofit networks, and both are anchored by health organizations as major contributors, though the total revenue scale differs significantly.

TOP NONPROFIT CATEGORIES BY ANNUAL REVENUE				
RANK	SPRINGFIELD	REVENUE	CINCINNATI	REVENUE
1	Health organizations	\$4B	Health organizations	\$21B
2	International-focused organizations	\$0.4B	Mutual assistance organizations	\$2.4B
3	Educational institutions	\$0.3B	Foundations	\$1.8B
4	Human service organizations	\$0.3B	Human service organizations	\$1.5B
5	Public, co-ops, and veteran organizations	\$0.2B	Education institutions	\$1.4B
TOTAL		\$6.0B		\$35.0B

SOURCE: Cause IQ, 2025

TRAILS & PARKS

Cincinnati is nationally recognized for its expansive and integrated park system, ranking No. 4 on the Trust for Public Land’s ParkScore index. Its system spans over 8,000 acres across 380 parks, with 91% of residents living within half a mile of a park. The region’s trail infrastructure is equally ambitious. The Tri-State Trails network encompasses more than 450 miles of trails across 15 counties. The CROWN (Cincinnati Riding or Walking Network) is a signature initiative designed to create a 100+ mile system anchored by a 34-mile loop, connecting 350,000 residents to parks, schools, job centers, and entertainment districts.

Springfield’s park system spans 1,280 acres across 71 parks, with 43% of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park. While smaller and less dense, the system complements the Ozarks’ broader natural amenities and access to outdoor amenities. Trail development in the Springfield region has accelerated in recent years, with Ozark Greenways’ “UnGap the Map” campaign aiming to complete over 200 miles of connected trails. Major projects like the Chadwick Flyer and Jordan Creek restoration are underway, supported by zoning updates that integrate greenways into new development.

PARK & TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE COMPARISON		
	SPRINGFIELD	CINCINNATI
Miles of trail	121	452
Parks	71	380
Park acreage	1,280	8,366
Park access	43%	91%

SOURCES: Ozark Greenways, 2025; The Trust for Public Land, 2024; Tri-State Trails, 2025

ARTS & CULTURE

Cincinnati’s arts sector is a major economic driver, generating \$5.4B in GDP and \$3.4B in earnings, with over \$751M invested in cultural institutions since 2015. In 2024, it also led Ohio in film production (\$48M). Springfield’s arts community generates \$90 million annually, including a current investment of \$27M for renovation of the Springfield Art Museum, reflecting local commitment to cultural vibrancy.