



Action Tank
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20
23

CIVIC HEALTH FIRST AID KIT

Ohio Edition

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Greater Cincinnati Ballot Overview

Cincinnati City Council

All nine Cincinnati City Council seats are up for election to a two-year term.

Cincinnati Public Schools School Board

Three of the seven school board seats are up for election to a four-year term.

Hamilton County Municipal Court

Seven Municipal Court judgeships are up for election. These races are non-partisan; municipal court judges serve six-year terms.

County, City, Township and Other Issues

A renewal tax levy for The Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens and a renewal and increase levy for the Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library are on the ballot, as well as and 16 other city, village or township issues.

Other Municipalities

Seventeen cities in Hamilton County have municipal elections in 2023 for positions of Mayor, City Council and other offices. Some races are partisan and some are non-partisan.

Other School Districts

Twenty-one school districts and the Hamilton County Educational Service Center have elections for Board Members in 2023.

Candidates for Cincinnati City Council



Anna Albi

Party: Democratic
Age: 31
Neighborhood: Madisonville
Non-Incumbent



Jeff Cramerding

Party: Democratic
Age: 50
Neighborhood: West Price Hill
Incumbent



Reggie Harris

Party: Democratic
Age: 41
Neighborhood: Northside
Incumbent



Mark Jeffreys

Party: Democratic
Age: 53
Neighborhood: Clifton
Incumbent



Scotty Johnson

Party: Democratic
Age: 60
Neighborhood: Mount Airy
Incumbent



Liz Keating

Party: Republican
Age: 39
Neighborhood: Hyde Park
Incumbent



Jan-Michelle Lemon Kearning

Party: Democratic
Age: 67
Neighborhood: North Avondale
Incumbent



Meeka Owens

Party: Democratic
Age: 44
Neighborhood: North Avondale
Incumbent



Victoria Parks

Party: Democratic
Age: 65
Neighborhood: College Hill
Incumbent



Seth Walsh

Party: Democratic
Age: 32
Neighborhood: Clifton
Incumbent - Appointed
December 2022

Candidates for Cincinnati School District Board of Education



Eve Bolton

Incumbent



Bryan Cannon

Non-Incumbent



Ben Lindy

Incumbent



Kendra Mapp

Non-Incumbent



Paul Schiele

Non-Incumbent

District Boundaries Cincinnati Public Schools' District

Cincinnati Public Schools district includes areas that are not within the City of Cincinnati, including **Silverton, Green Township, Cheviot, Columbia Township, Golf Manor,** and **Amberly Village.**



Registered voters in those separate entities are able to vote for CPS board members but not Cincinnati City Council.

UNDERSTANDING JURISDICTION

While Cincinnati is in both entities' names, the City Council and School Board are two separate entities with different responsibilities. Cincinnati City Council can not direct the Cincinnati School Board on policy, fiscal, or other matters.

Other Ballot Issues

Reproductive Freedom

Ohio Issue 1, Proposed Constitutional Amendment

The Right to Make Reproductive Decisions Including Abortion Initiative

A **"yes"** vote supports amending the Ohio Constitution to:

- establish a state constitutional right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions," including decisions about abortion, contraception, fertility treatment, miscarriage care, and continuing pregnancy, and
- allow the state to restrict abortion after fetal viability, except when "necessary to protect the pregnant patient's life or health."

A **"no"** vote opposes amending the Ohio Constitution to establish the constitutional right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions."

Recreational Marijuana

Ohio Issue 2: Proposed Initiated Statute

To Commercialize, Regulate, Legalize, and Tax the Adult Use of Cannabis

A **"yes"** vote supports this ballot initiative to legalize marijuana in Ohio, including:

- allowing the sale and purchase of marijuana, which a new Division of Cannabis Control would regulate;
- allowing persons who are at least 21 years old to use and possess marijuana, including up to 2.5 ounces of marijuana; and
- enacting a 10% tax on marijuana sales.

A **"no"** vote opposes this initiative to legalize marijuana in Ohio.

Municipal Court Districts

Hamilton County Municipal Courts handle misdemeanor criminal cases, traffic charges, and civil cases less than \$15,000.00. There are seven Municipal Court districts within Hamilton County. Two judges —serving separate six-year terms— are elected to serve each district.

In 2023, seven of the 14 judgeships are up for election. Voters will vote for one non-partisan candidate in their respective districts.

Tax Levies

Registered voters throughout Hamilton County will vote on two county-wide tax issues.

The **Hamilton County Commissioners** approved a renewal tax levy for the **Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens**; the tax levy would support operating costs for the Zoo.

The Commissioners also approved a renewal and increase levy for the **Cincinnati-Hamilton County Public Library**; the levy supports both operating costs and capital improvements.

Other Ballot Issues

Sale of Cincinnati-Owned Railroad

Issue 22: Ordinance Regarding the Sale of Cincinnati Southern Railway

- The railway, a 337-mile freight route from Cincinnati to Chattanooga, was built by the city in the 1870s.
- Norfolk Southern, the freight operator whose subsidiaries have been running the Cincinnati Southern Railway for more than a century, is offering \$1.6 billion to buy the railway outright
- Cincinnati voters will vote in November on whether to sell the Cincinnati Southern Railway to Norfolk Southern.

(Source: [Governing Magazine](#))

Elections in the City of Cincinnati

Issue 23: Charter Amendment Regarding Voting and Election of Both Mayoral and Council Candidates and Charter Amendments, Initiatives and Referendums

Characterized as a “clean-up amendment,” this amendment to the City’s charter would make some changes to public initiatives, including:

- Giving council permission to vote electronically instead of only by voice vote.
- Requiring a copy of any initiative, referendum, or charter amendment petition must be filed with the Clerk of Council before any signatures can be collected.
- Limiting citizen-led ballot measures to one proposal.
- Adding a "cure period" for ballot measures and candidates for mayor and council.
- Clarifying throughout the charter that council terms are two years
- Clarifying that candidate petition circulators must sign a statement rather than provide a notarized affidavit on candidate petitions
- Extending the deadline for filing candidate petitions in the case of a special election to fill the unexpired term of the mayor (from 50 days prior to any primary election, extended to 60 days)

(Source: [WVXU Radio](#))

Affordable Housing

Issue 24: Charter Amendment to Require the City of Cincinnati to Raise Income and Withholding Taxes by Three-Tenths of One Percent (0.3%) to Finance Affordable Housing.

- A 2022 report found that since 2010, there has been a 35% decline in rental housing supply for people in households with an income less than \$30,000 a year
- The amendment will require the City to levy a 0.3% earnings tax increase to generate between \$40-\$50 million annually for affordable housing.
- It creates a community advisory board, appointed by City Council, to consult with the City on how to use the funds.

(Source: [Cincy Action for Housing Now](#))

How To Vote



A new Ohio Law requires that voters present a Photo ID when voting in person. Make sure you know the new requirements before coming out to vote!

Registering To Vote

October 10, 2023, is the deadline to register to vote or update your registration to vote in the November 7, 2023, General Election.

Register Here: Board of Elections (BOE), BMV, Public Library, or Online.

Voting By Mail

To Vote By Mail, you must first fill out an application and send it back to the Board of Elections.

Applications to Vote Early By Mail are available at the Hamilton County Board of Elections or Hamilton County Public Library.

You can also call the Board of Elections at 513.632.7039 but the easiest way to request a Vote by Mail ballot is online.

[CLICK HERE](#) 

Voting On Election Day

Vote at your polling location between 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 8.

- Polling places change; check yours on the Board of Elections Website.
- Remember your ID and Sample Ballot.
- If the lines are long, stay in line.



Voting Early In Person

Anyone who is registered to vote in Ohio and resides in Hamilton County can cast their ballot early at the Board of Elections Office

- Early Voting In Person begins October 12.
- Early Voting includes the two Saturdays, and the Sunday and the Monday before Election Day.

WHETHER YOU MAIL IT BACK OR DROP IT OFF, THERE ARE IMPORTANT DEADLINES YOU MUST MEET.

- **YOUR VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT MUST BE POSTMARKED BY THE DAY BEFORE ELECTION DAY.**
- **YOU MUST DROP OFF A VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT BY 7:30 P.M. AT THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS.**

City of Cincinnati

Form of Government

Cincinnati is a Council-Manager form of government. In this model, a city manager runs the day-to-day operations and the City Council sets the policy. The Mayor and nine Council members are elected “at large,” meaning a Council member does not have to represent a specific ward or neighborhood.

THE ROLE OF THE MAYOR



The Mayor appoints the City Manager, recommended by City Council. The Mayor appoints the Vice Mayor.

The Mayor can propose and introduce legislation and assign it to the appropriate committee for consideration.

The Mayor does not have a vote on Council legislation, but does have the power to veto.

THE ROLE OF THE CITY MANAGER



The City Manager is the CEO of the city, leading the day-to-day operations.

The City Manager executes the policy vision of the Mayor and City Council.

They propose the city's budget and hire key personnel including the Chief of Police.

THE ROLE OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS



The City Council is the legislative body for the City of Cincinnati.

They are responsible for proposing resolutions, motions, and ordinances, discussing those at committee, and voting on them during Council meetings.

They may also impose taxes, establish policy, and have input on matters such as economic development, planning and zoning, and human services.

Why does Cincinnati have a council-manager form of government?

Find the history behind Cincinnati's government here:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Discussion & Policy Guide

Transportation

Discussion

Do you find it easy or difficult to make your way through the City of Cincinnati?

Is there a large distance from your home or workplace to the nearest public transportation stop, a.k.a “last mile issues”?

Do you feel that Cincinnati’s public transportation meets your needs? What about your neighbors? Students? Those without cars? Commuters?

Policy

City Council sets rules on road maintenance, bike infrastructure, bus rapid transit lanes, streetcar funding and schedule, and traffic calming.

Infrastructure

Discussion

Has your or your neighbor’s basement flooded during a storm?

Do you feel safe while crossing the Western Hills Viaduct?

Do you have lead pipes and know how to address the issue?

Policy

Council offices navigate MSD’s compensation system for residents experiencing flooded basements.

Council sets aside money for the lead pipe replacement program and sets water and sewer rates for businesses and residents.

Council allocates capital funding for large projects like the Western Hills Viaduct and Columbia Parkway.

Environment

Discussion

What is the City of Cincinnati doing to address climate change?

What are the priorities of the City’s Office of Environment and Sustainability? Do they make sense? Does it have enough resources?

What do you think about the Green Cincinnati Plan ?

Policy

City Council approves the Green Cincinnati Plan, can set environmental policies, such as plastic bag tax, urban agriculture, and LEED-based tax incentives.

Discussion & Policy Guide

Human Services

Discussion

Are you aware of the current human services funding levels?

What are your biggest human services concerns? Think about addiction, homelessness, violence prevention, youth services, for example.

What non-profit that the human services funding assists?

Policy

City Council introduces and passes motions and ordinances to set the level of human services funding, support non-profits directly through leveraged funds, develop human services funding priorities, emergency winter shelter funding, and stopgap funding. Council leads partnerships for addiction, homelessness, and food insecurity services.

Jobs

Discussion

Do you and your neighbors feel that you have access to jobs?

Do you feel that jobs you have access to offer a living wage?

Do you feel that you have access to education and job training?

City Council sets employment policies, such as the salary history ban or ban on discrimination of natural hair.

Council allocates money to support workforce development programs and business accelerators.

Council sets minimum wage requirements for city employees and programs to protect workers.

Public Health

Discussion

Are you aware of the health care services provided by the Cincinnati Health Department?

Do you support needle exchange programs?

Have you visited any of the seven primary health centers or the free standing dental center?

Policy

City Council approves emergency public health orders.

Council has the ability to institute new public health initiatives outside of legislation, such as the Safe Places Cincy Program, the Northside Health Clinic Group Prenatal Care, and the needle exchange program.

Council's Budget and Finance Committee has oversight jurisdiction for the City's Health Department, including its public health clinics that provide low-cost health care and dental services to the public, including in Cincinnati Public Schools.

Discussion & Policy Guide

Housing Discussion

Do you spend more than the recommended 30% of your income on housing?

Is there enough affordable housing in your neighborhood and the City of Cincinnati?

Do you have concerns of being “priced out” of your neighborhood?

Policy

Learn about the Affordable Housing Charter Amendment on the 2023 Cincinnati ballot.

Council created an eviction prevention fund to help pay rent and provide legal support for people at risk of being evicted.

Council sets property tax rate (for the portion of taxes that go to the City).

Zoning and Tax Abatements Discussion

Do you feel that the current zoning laws are fair for your neighborhood?

Do you feel that tax abatements are positively or negatively impacting your neighborhood?

Policy

Council can create zoning regulations and approve zone changes for new buildings or new uses, such as zone changes that are required for major development projects like The Banks to proceed.

Council sets tax abatement policy for commercial and residential tax abatements, and it must vote to approve or disapprove each commercial tax abatement request.

Economic Development and Economic Inclusion Discussion

Do you think the City of Cincinnati supports minority-owned and women-owned businesses?

Do you think the City has business-friendly policies?

Policy

Council supports business accelerators such as MORTAR, Hillmann, and CincyTech.

Councilmembers help small businesses navigate the bureaucracy of City Hall, such as permitting and zoning.

City Council sets policies that may support small businesses, like policies to support cooperative business initiatives.

Council set economic inclusion targets for Women and Minority-Owned Business inclusion.

Discussion & Policy Guide

Pedestrian and Bike Safety

Discussion

Would you feel comfortable taking a bike to work or school?

Do you feel safe riding a bike in the City of Cincinnati?

Do you think the city is taking appropriate street calming measures, such as speed bumps, pedestrian walk signs or crosswalks?

Policy

Council can allocate funding to pedestrian safety initiatives in the city budget, such as speed bumps and other street calming policies.

Council provides input to the City Administration on pedestrian safety signage.

Council members often serve as champions for resident or neighborhood-level requests for enhanced pedestrian safety measures in specific locations.

City Council earmarks funding for bike infrastructure, such as Wasson Way and the Oasis trail.

Public Safety

Discussion

Are you aware of the Collaborative Agreement?

Do you feel safe in your neighborhood? Do your children feel safe?

Have you ever had interactions with the Citizen Complaint Authority?

Do you think the Shot Spotter initiative is working? If yes, would you like to see it expanded?

Do you feel comfortable calling the Cincinnati Police Department in an emergency?

Policy

Council allocates funding for the Citizen Complaint Authority, which investigates resident complaints about police conduct.

Council approves the police budget annually, including money for new technology, uniforms, buildings, and fleet improvements.

Council approves the Police Union contract and Fire Union contract every few years when it is renegotiated. These multi-year contracts are in force until each new contract is approved.

Council has the ability to work with the administration to create new policies at the Emergency Communication Center.

Acknowledgements

**Thank you to our
supporters, our volunteers
and contributors to the
Action Tank First Aid Kit.**

