

City of Cincinnati
Ordinance No. _____ - 2021

Adopting a community engagement policy and principles and directing the city manager, with input and participation from community councils and other community groups, **to** create a community engagement program to be implemented by the City of Cincinnati, including the city administration, city boards, commissions and committees, that is based upon the mission, vision, policy, and principles set forth in Attachment A, attached herein.

WHEREAS, the mission of Cincinnati City Council is to provide, in a democratic and transparent manner, efficient and effective services that will make Cincinnati a better place in which to live, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, citizen engagement enhances City government's democratic processes, increases transparency and effectiveness, improves the quality of government decisions, and enlists the problem-solving capacities of the general public and organizations outside of City government; and

WHEREAS, the Council acknowledges that those affected by local government decisions should have the opportunity to participate in making those decisions; and

WHEREAS, there have been dramatic changes in technology, especially through broadcast media and the internet, allowing, **if used effectively**, for greater transparency and participation in government decision making; and

WHEREAS, **it is necessary to have** a formal policy or program regarding the engagement of citizens in the governance of the City; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That council adopts their Attachment A.

Section 2. That the city manager shall, with input from citizens, establish and implement a policy and program to promote citizen engagement in City government, including the **Mayor**, City Council, the City administration, and City boards, commissions and committees, **based upon the mission, vision, policy and principles** in Attachment A, attached herein.

Section 3. That the City Manager **shall** within **60** days after the effective date of this ordinance present to Council the plan for and status of implementation of this ordinance, and **annually by August 1** thereafter, the City Manager shall present a report on the status of the engagement program including its planned annual goals, objectives, and benchmarks and actual performance on annual goals, objectives, and benchmarks.

Section 4. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Passed **2021**

John Cranley, Mayor

Attest

Clerk

ATTACHMENT A

SUMMARY

Section 1 . Definitions

- a. "Citizen engagement" includes equivalent terms such as "public engagement," "citizen participation" or "community engagement" and legal notice requirements. Citizen engagement methods include, but are not limited to, any form of in-person, technology-aided, or online communication that provides for discussion, dialogue, and/or deliberation among participants, encouraging citizens to meaningfully engage in the policy-making and/or problem-solving processes.
- b. "Policy process" is defined as "A course of action produced as a response to an opportunity, a perceived problem or issue involving a constituency, formulated by a deliberative political process and adopted, implemented and enforced by a public agency."

Section 2. Community Engagement Mission and Vision

- a. Vision—To be a thriving Cincinnati where all are engaged as empowered participants in shaping our shared future
- b. Mission—To strengthen the culture of citizen engagement in Cincinnati by providing opportunities for all to participate in meaningful and proactive ways in the city's decision-making processes

Section 3. Community Engagement Principles

- a. Right to Involvement: Those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the problem-solving/decision-making process regarding that decision.
- b. Careful Planning and Preparation: Actively pursue citizen groups, through adequate and inclusive planning and outreach, ensuring that the engagement design and the needs of the participants are met. Included are community and/or economic development projects with emphasis upon those that request taxpayer assistance in the form of direct and/or indirect subsidies. Citizens are provided with the information they need to participate in a meaningful, that is, consequential way (~~DELETED~~ “[see the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation below](#)”), and are involved in designing how they participate.
- c. Inclusion and Demographic Diversity: Actively reach out to equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy. Seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in the decision.

- d. Collaboration and Shared Purpose: Support and encourage participants, including government, community institutions, and other key stakeholders to work together to advance the common good. Promote sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the long-term needs and interests of all citizens.
- e. Openness and Learning: Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options.
- f. Transparency and Trust: Be clear and open about the process and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed. Annually report on and rigorously evaluate citizen engagement efforts and activities for effectiveness and improvements to be made.
- g. Impact and Action: Ensure each participatory effort has potential to have a real impact and that participants are aware of that potential. Communicate to all participants how their input affected the decision making.
- h. Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture: Establish and maintain a culture of ongoing and quality citizen engagement (**DELETED “see the Spectrum below”**) within departments, offices, programs, local agencies, business partners and institutions.
- i. Accountability for Results and Financial Support: City leaders and staff are held accountable for ensuring meaningful citizen engagement in the policy making and work of city government and providing the resources to ensure ongoing success.

Section 4. Community Engagement Policy

- a. It is hereby declared to be city policy that active engagement and participation—to assemble, to deliberate and to take action on public problems or issues—of community members is important and highly valued by the city.
- b. The purpose of this citizen engagement policy is to provide broad, inclusive, deliberative and meaningful participation in the policy process with the general public and stakeholders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. This policy should be broadly construed to promote the fullest opportunity to meaningfully participate in governance and the policy process and to provide their city government and all related authorities with the benefits of their collective expertise and information.
- c. The city, including its offices, departments and partner authorities, may use any process that meets the principles for citizen engagement set forth in Section 3 in addition to notice and comment or public hearings required by law.
- d. The city shall adopt and make publicly available a Citizen Engagement Policy Manual to guide the city and its partners in the use of strategies satisfying the citizen engagement principles set forth in Section 3.

Section 5. Implementation and Reporting

Within **60** days of the passage of this ordinance the city manager shall present to the city council the plan for and status of implementation of this ordinance. Thereafter, the city manager shall annually present, by **August 1**, reports on the status of the engagement program including its planned annual goals, objectives and benchmarks and actual performance on annual goals, objectives and benchmarks.