



WOMEN'S FUND
of the **GREATER CINCINNATI FDN.**

Pursuing our Potential through Advocacy, Research, and Civic Engagement

2022 IMPACT REPORT



Dear Women's Fund Supporters,

In 2022, the Women's Fund eagerly transitioned to a new chapter with the goal of fortifying our organization for a more secure and sustainable future. Our brand-new team of change agents looked onward to 2024 and reimagined how we could continue trailblazing as the Greater Cincinnati Region's only organization dedicated to the economic self-sufficiency of women and girls.

2022 was a challenging year for women, as fundamental rights were threatened by the nation's highest court. But this only makes the work of the Women's Fund more important and relevant than ever. At a time when women's rights are under attack, we have a renewed mandate to seek out the biggest threats to and opportunities for economic mobility of women and girls in Greater Cincinnati. Despite the uncertainty of the times, we have found new connections in our region among those dedicated to promoting vibrancy and equity in our region.

The Women's Fund strengthened our relationships with elected officials so that we could more effectively advise them on best practices to create a more equitable region. We gave oral testimony to the statehouse about the importance of the Step Up to Quality rating system for childcare. We also relaunched in-person training for the *Appointed* program, a non-partisan initiative that identifies opportunities for women to serve on civic boards and commissions. We promoted policies that benefit women and their families through an advocacy campaign and op-ed published in *The Enquirer*. Through it all, we actively listened to what the region needs most by convening our community partners and advisory board of everyday experts who have firsthand experience with barriers to economic mobility.

We will continue to research, plan, and work to build our community into one where all women can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. The Women's Fund seeks to change the systems that stand in the way of long-term equity. We understand that communities – particularly the most marginalized among us – and the relationships within them are complex. Sufficient change will not come without significant transformation of the systems that continue to propel inequities for women and girls. The Women's Fund is a catalyst for that crucial, overdue transformation to a new system that guarantees all will have access to Cincinnati's vibrancy.

None of this can be done without the help of our supporters like you. We hope you will continue to support our efforts to promote intersectional gender and racial equity. Together, we will persevere.

Alicia Miller
Executive Director

Peggy Murriner
Leadership Council Chair

*The Women's Fund of the Greater
Cincinnati Foundation*

THE WOMEN'S FUND *of the* GREATER CINCINNATI FOUNDATION

HOW IT STARTED

More than 25 years ago, we set out to improve the self-sufficiency of women in our region. That fire, once ignited, has grown, and grown. At the Women's Fund, we pursue a world in which all women can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. We believe that by making the world a better place for women, we are truly making it better for everyone. We are a leader, bringing people together to find mutual advantage. We are a partner, channeling support and resources into projects that empower all women. And we are a catalyst, changing hearts and minds across our community. We want Greater Cincinnati to be a place where all women thrive – and to be a model for our nation.

WHO WE ARE

Our mission is to advance gender and racial equity for women by addressing systemic barriers to upward mobility. We are change agents committed to breaking down and redesigning inequitable systems in Cincinnati so all women can achieve self-sufficiency. According to research by the National Women's Law Center in 2021, 13.6% of Ohio women aged 18 and over lived in poverty and 24.8% of Black women lived in poverty. The data shows that women, especially minority women, have a disproportionately harder time supporting their families and achieving self-sufficiency.

OUR FOCUS

The work of the Women's Fund is in three key areas: we **research** issues like equal pay, Black women's economic mobility, childcare and reproductive justice. We **advocate** at the local and state government level and within the private sector. We push for greater **civic engagement** so women from all backgrounds can lead in their own communities.

These three pillars: **research, advocacy, and civic engagement** we believe, are game changers and help level the playing field for women across the board and benefit not only women but everyone.

Our work is at the **systems level** where real, lasting change happens. We would love to have a conversation about how you can join us and help support us.

MEET *our* TEAM



From left to right: **Travis Speice**, Research Director; **Rajani Menon**, Civic Engagement Manager; **Sara Kahmann**, Development Director; **Alicia Miller**, Executive Director; **Holly Hankinson**, Advocacy Director; **Melissa Rounds**, Coordinator; **Michelle Hopkins**, Communications Director.

Driving SYSTEMS CHANGE

Systems change refers to the process of transforming the underlying structures, policies, and norms of a complex system to achieve significant and sustainable improvement in social, economic, or environmental outcomes. It involves a holistic approach and seeks to address root causes of problems rather than symptoms. Systems change work is challenging and complex, requiring patience, perseverance, and a willingness to embrace uncertainty and ambiguity. However, successful systems change leads to significant and lasting improvements in the well-being of individuals and communities.

One shining example of our systems-level work is the Salary History Ban. On March 13, 2019, Cincinnati City Council passed a law prohibiting employers in the City of Cincinnati from asking job applicants about their salary or wage history.

Why does that matter? Women in the Cincinnati region make \$0.82 for every \$1.00 earned by men, adding up to an average loss of \$406,000 in wages over the course of a career. The Women's Fund was deeply involved in the passage of this ordinance, providing key testimony and working with city council and other interested parties to negotiate final language of the law.

As a result of this ordinance, Cincinnati employers are not allowed to inquire about, screen, or rely on salary history information including wages, benefits, or other compensation during the job application process. By the way, the wage gap is even greater for persons of color. The salary history ban prevents historic gender and racial disparities from following an employee from one job to the next. Research shows that salary history ban ordinances like this are a tangible step forward in closing the gender pay gap. The Women's Fund is proud to have played such a critical role in the passage of this law.



PURSuing OUR POTENTIAL through RESEARCH

- In 2022, we leaned into our research on Black Women’s Economic Mobility Project by sharing our findings with four constituent groups including the Mount Healthy City Council, Dress for Success, the African American Chamber of Commerce and HER Cincinnati, formerly Cincinnati Union Bethel.
- The Black Women’s Economic Mobility Project research was published on The Gender Point & Women’s Funding Network websites.
- Women’s Fund research on Pay Equity, the Cliff Effect, Economic Self-Sufficiency, Employment Landscape, (Jobs Outlook Report) was also shared to constituencies in the region.

The Black Women’s Economic Mobility Project is an example of how the Women’s Fund is changing the conversation and focusing on one of the most disadvantaged groups in our region.

“Research from the Women’s Fund provides useful insight into our work, helping us to think more strategically about how to approach services, and offering strong evidence to support our fundraising and grant seeking efforts. More importantly, the Women’s Fund advocates for practical and effective policy changes that will truly make a difference in the lives of the women that we work with at HER Cincinnati. We know that our housing, education, and recovery services help women on an individual basis, but real and permanent systemic change will only come about with policy shifts. We’re so appreciative that the Women’s Fund is working toward that purpose.”

– Beth Schwartz, President & CEO (Chief Empowerment Officer) of HER Cincinnati



Our work to help employers develop policies and practices for frontline employees gained significant traction in 2022. **The Employer Toolkit**, launched in 2018, is a groundbreaking resource that compiles common workplace policies. An estimated 630 companies and more than 54,000 employees utilize the toolkit.

In the summer of 2022, the Employer Toolkit was adopted by the Buffalo-Niagara Partnership, that area’s regional chamber of commerce adopted the toolkit. The Fort Wayne (IN) Women’s Fund was also a 2022 toolkit adopter.

“I really like the toolkit. It is so easy to navigate and provides great ideas and resources. I appreciate the ability to filter ideas by common workplace challenges as well as industry. The toolkit is thorough and extremely user-friendly. We have been able to implement an option for remote co-workers to submit for reimbursement for their internet. In addition, we are exploring allowing co-workers to access earned yet unpaid wages, as well as our need to conduct an internal wage gap analysis based on gender.”

– Hallie Custer, VP of Human Resources at Parkview Health



In the Cincinnati Region, **Easterseals Redwood** has utilized the Employer Toolkit and considers it a critical resource in helping frontline employees. For them, the toolkit has been both important to their operations and impactful.

“At Easterseals Redwood, we have always prided ourselves on policies that prioritize our employees’ health and well-being, with generous health insurance and PTO policies, for example. But the toolkit made me realize there is more we can do—with little downside for us but lots of upside for our employees, and especially our frontline staff.

For example, we have always made an additional contribution to employees who participate in our high-deductible health insurance plan, but we realized paying that out in bi-weekly paychecks was not helpful to employees who do not have savings to fall back on. So now, we deposit it in two large chunks, once in January and once in July. Another area where we made a change was in tuition reimbursement. In the past, it was paid based on the grade that was attained and only applied to associate degrees or higher. We challenged ourselves to think about the end-goal, which is a learning organization. So now, reimbursement is not dependent on grade, and we also pay for industry-recognized certifications and credentials.

I am a little evangelical about the Employer Toolkit, and tell everyone to read it, read their own policies, and challenge what can be improved. We often think the only thing we can do for employees is raise pay, which is not always an option. The Employer Toolkit gives you lots of other tools for your toolkit.”

– Pam Green, President & CEO of Easter Seals Redwood



PURSUING OUR POTENTIAL through CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Appointed.

Appointed is at the forefront of a movement that is inspiring women to take leadership roles in our region.

The non-profit initiative launched in 2018 and identifies opportunities for women to serve on civic boards and commissions.

Quarterly training sessions are held to teach the nuts and bolts of civic engagement and board service, including, how decisions are made and how women can make an impact by serving the community.

In November of 2022, *Appointed* 101 training brought together women from all walks of life, elected officials, and leaders of non profits to discuss various aspects of public service.

Cincinnati City Councilwoman, Meeka Owens, and Interact for Health President and CEO, Kate Schroeder, participated by lending their expertise and experience to the group of about forty participants.

Rajani Menon, who manages the *Appointed* initiative says, "It was a wonderful opportunity to bring like-minded women in the community together. It was the first time after Covid that the Women's Fund was holding an in-person training event and it was extremely well-attended. The attendees got a chance to network, listen to important community leaders and spend time reflecting on their own skills and passions. Overall, it was a great event and a wonderful way to restart *Appointed* after Covid."

Appointed has engaged over five hundred women in the region. The trainings and networking events are growing in popularity with women who are eager to serve and learn more about how to get a seat at the table from others who have done it.

Alicia Miller is Executive Director of the Women's Fund. "Women serving in leadership roles make a dramatic difference. We realize that civic leadership should reflect the communities in which they serve, and *Appointed* addresses the fact that women today, especially women of color, are underrepresented on boards and commissions in our region."

While women make up more than half of the population, less than one-third of all civic board seats are filled by women and commissions and 32% of civic boards have no women at all.

Meeka Owens, Cincinnati City Council

"*Appointed* is helping change the face of boards and commissions in our region. I was proud to be a part of the training and provide insight into what it is like to have a seat at the table. City Council may not be where these women start but it certainly is where they could end up. It is a journey and I want women to know they can serve their community in many different capacities. What is important is that they get a seat and are prepared when they get there."



Meridy Glenn, West Chester Township Board of Zoning Appeals

"I attended the appointed training session. It was a great introduction to civic engagement and learning about board basics. It included sessions on legal basics, inclusive decision-making, and a panel discussion on navigating decision-making.

The training gave me great insight into what to expect at the local government level. I also realized in a way that I never did that having a voice at the table as a woman, is a tremendous asset to government operations.

Here are five reasons why I would recommend *Appointed* to other women:

First, it is a genuine and non-partisan initiative.

Second, the culture provides an open, safe space to discuss real life experiences.

Third, there is no judgment.

Fourth, it creates an awareness of the inner workings of local governments. Whether one applies to serve on a board, commission, or not; it is important to understand the opportunities that exist. This knowledge can be shared to those who do want to serve!

Fifth, *Appointed* has the potential to benefit local governments by being a resource of best practices and a source for quality and diverse applicants. This can only help boards govern better and be more reflective of their population. I am of the mind that diverse boards get better results!"

Meridy was appointed in February of 2022 to the West Chester Township Board of Zoning Appeals and credits *Appointed* for helping her get the seat.



PURSuing OUR POTENTIAL through ADVOCACY

In 2022, the Women's Fund and the City of Cincinnati invested in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). GARE is a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and opportunities for all. It has over four hundred active members and provides tools, resources, and guidance for governments to operationalize equity in a way that best fits their unique structure and needs.

The Women's Fund worked together with Vice Mayor Jan-Michelle Lemon Kearney's office on an arrangement for the City of Cincinnati to join the GARE network and take advantage of these learnings to advance equity work in the City.

"Participating in GARE provides tools and best practices to embed equity-based practices across city operations. The Women's Fund was proud to advocate for this crucial step in deepening the city's commitment to gender and racial equity," said Holly Hankinson, Advocacy Director for the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation.

Advocacy Day

The Women's Fund team turned out along with thousands of early childhood education advocates at the statehouse in Columbus on March 2, 2022. Advocacy Day is a unique opportunity to meet and open a dialogue with state legislators about the importance of investing in the first five years of a child's life to ensure quality early learning and healthy beginnings for all of Ohio's children.

"Every day, state legislators consider policies impacting women and families across Ohio. But Ohio women and families do not have the benefit of high-paid lobbyists at the Statehouse. It is why the Women's Fund advocates and provides testimony; to share data and stories of those individuals most impacted. It is critical that their perspective be heard," said Holly Hankinson, Advocacy Director, Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation.

Engaging Everyday People in Advocacy

Kendra Davis never saw herself as an advocate until she started doing the work. She calls it heart work.

After spending a few minutes with Kendra, it is easy to see her decision to get involved with the community is as genuine as it gets.

It all started when she was asked to be a part of a focus group that solicits grassroots community input on a variety of topics. Articulate and opinionated, Kendra quickly caught the attention of others, and was asked to serve as a member of the Women's Fund community advisory board, a group that helps decide which organizations receive grant funding.

"I gained a tremendous amount of confidence from those experiences. I also learned that if your heart is in it, you are enthusiastic and dedicated in what you're advocating for, that's enough," said Kendra Davis.

When her three-year term on the advisory board expired, Kendra was asked to stay and be a part of the Women's Fund Leadership Council and serve alongside professional women in business and non profit organizations. It was quite a step up for Kendra and she knew it.

But she did what she has always done, and stepped up to the challenge.

"I always want to be a part of advocating for the change I want to see. Cincinnati is my home. I attended public schools, the University of Cincinnati and Chatfield College. I am deeply rooted here with a stake in what happens here."

Whether she is speaking to Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown about child tax credits or advocating for better healthcare or more affordable housing, Kendra Davis continues to speak her truth and speak her mind.

"The Women's Fund has inspired me to do what I can to help advance women in Cincinnati. I figure, who better than me, I have been on the receiving end of the safety net, so I understand the importance of making a real change, not surface level but real systems change. I want to be a part of making that happen."

Kendra says she is also thinking of her 12-year-old daughter Kamila Rose and setting a good example of a woman who takes care of her family and her community. The heart work.

"I am extremely grateful to the Greater Cincinnati Foundation for the gift to the city of a two-year membership in the Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE), said Vice Mayor Lemon Kearney. "GARE provides resources, research, and connections with other entities that, like the City of Cincinnati, are committed to racial equity. We are grateful to the Women's Fund for the investment in creating a better more equitable community."



Community PARTNERSHIP/GRANTS

The Women's Fund designates its grant funding to support organizational transformation benefiting gender and racial equity in our region. The Women's Fund is proud to support organizations in their efforts to improve their operations, build their capacity or invest in initiatives that could change the landscape for issues of women's self-sufficiency in our region.

Grant decisions are made by the Women's Fund Advisory Council, a group of women who are directly experiencing barriers to economic mobility. Here are two examples of how the Women's Fund supports organizations that align with our mission.

Helping Women Make a Change

It sounded too good to be true; a way to earn a medical certification in less than 4 months.

Shamyia Ford remembers the day her best friend told her about the healthcare training program offered by Making a Change Cincy. She decided to go for it. Little did Shamyia know at the time the healthcare training program would make a lasting, positive change in her life.

Founded in 2010, Making a Change Cincy (MACC), is a local non profit that offers a safe, supportive, and structured learning environment maximizing training and education in the high demand fields of healthcare and personal development.

Shamyia, a working single parent of three, enrolled in the training program in June of 2022 with her sights set on earning a medical certification to advance her career and make a better life for her family. After only a few weeks in the program, Shamyia ran into trouble with her living situation.

Fortunately, during her short time in the program, Shamyia demonstrated a tremendous amount of grit and determination, which would be her saving grace.

"We believed in her, so we leveraged our partnerships and helped Shamyia get a place to stay and a paid internship so she could get on her feet, finish the program, and continue to move forward," said Candace Jones, founder of Making a Change Cincy.

"I come from a single-parent household. I have seen my own mother struggle to make a change for the better and things happen. I could see that Shamyia just needed support and we were happy to help her overcome the hardship," Jones said.

Shamyia's been working as a medical assistant at UC Health Primary Care, where she says the best part of her job is working with a variety of patients from the youngest to the oldest.

"Making a Change Cincy prepared me well, but even more than that they are like my family. Candace and the instructors held me accountable, encouraged me and helped me believe in myself. I can honestly say the program changed my life," said Shamyia.

Samaritan Car Clinic: Helping Single Moms Stay on the Road to Success

With less than a year to go, Mia Potter can finally see light at the end of the tunnel. After eight years, she is about to get the bachelor's degree she's been working toward. What has kept her moving forward is her own drive and determination as well as the help she's received from the Samaritan Car Clinic in Covington. The clinic is a lifeline for many low-income families, enabling them to get routine maintenance and car repairs at little to no cost.

Mia first learned about the Samaritan Car Clinic while attending Gateway Community College to get an associate degree.

"Let's just say I had an older minivan; it was in bad shape. I would utilize the clinic for free oil changes. When I needed a new tire, Bruce and his team were able to quickly help me get back on the road," said Mia Potter, single mom and NKU student.

In 2022, the clinic served 315 families. More than 70% are single moms like Mia.

"We know from speaking with many of the referring agencies like Brighton Center and the Welcome House that access to affordable, reliable transportation is one of the biggest barriers to economic self-sufficiency. If you cannot get from point A to point B, it's hard to hold down a job. We help eliminate the transportation barrier," said Bruce Kintner, Samaritan Car Clinic.

Next year, Mia will graduate with a bachelor's degree from Northern Kentucky University.

"I am grateful to Bruce and the Samaritan Car Clinic for helping me at a time when I'm juggling my three children, work and school. I can keep moving forward without the worry of car trouble. They really helped me out. The main thing is, I felt like I could trust them. I always felt confident that they were looking out for me," said Mia.

Thanks to grants from the Women's Fund and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Samaritan Car Clinic is able to provide routine care maintenance like oil changes, air filters and windshield wipers at little to no charge to those referred to the clinic. The Women's Fund has provided grant funding to the Samaritan Car Clinic since 2011.

For Mia, the car clinic has helped on her road to self-sufficiency.

"I have children and I want to give them a good life. They see me struggle, but I also want them to see me win and thanks in part to the Samaritan Car Clinic,

I am on my way."



GETTING TO KNOW *Alicia Miller*, Executive Director OF THE WOMEN'S FUND

A LEADER WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE; A LEADER FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Alicia Miller is grateful and proud to lead the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. For many reasons, she says it's the perfect place to continue her career journey.

"The mission and the work of the Women's Fund aligns with my own life and personal goals so strikingly. I face substantial barriers to access childcare, and I am keenly aware of the everyday obstacles faced by Black women and girls in our city. I know the stats (thanks to the work of The Women's Fund), but I also live the experience every day," said Miller.

Nothing compares to Alicia's lived experience, except maybe her background; a licensed attorney who has spent the last decade working to uplift families and communities, particularly when their lives intersected with the criminal justice system.

"For the past eight years, I've provided direct legal services for individuals who could not afford a private attorney and whose livelihood were threatened by the burdens that result from contact with the criminal legal system; before that, I spent three years working in extensive public interest internships while in law school. This direct contact with individuals who bear the brunt of marginalization in our city and society taught me that poverty, power, and equity are forces that tint every system that is supposed to help people – our supposed social safety nets.," added Miller.

Alicia credits her success to the education, connections, mentorship, and skills she received from the Nathaniel Jones Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice at University of Cincinnati College of Law. As both a student employee of the Jones Center and participant in the Center's programming and coursework she learned to practice and approach all her work with an intersectional lens.

"I learned to practice law and lead with a focus on people who are in the margins, so I am constantly thinking about how specific forms of relief from criminal-records-based barriers impact women of color.

My law career exposed me to gender inequities in the legal system, but also in the nonprofit world. My work with the Ohio Justice and Policy Center prepared me to continue my career as a tested nonprofit leader who is grounded in real-life experiences and interactions with directly impacted people," Miller said.

Miller's role at the Women's Fund allows an even more targeted approach to her work by helping remove barriers to financial security for Black women, single mothers, and all marginalized groups of people.

"It is more obvious than ever that what women need to thrive is trusted to make the best decisions for themselves and their families. I consider it a blessing to work for an organization that is just as passionate about designing a fairer, kinder future for my daughter as I am."

Alicia joined the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation in May of 2022.



WOMEN'S FUND *Volunteer Committees*

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