

2022

# BUILDING ON WE

## ANNUAL REPORT

Visit  
**CINCY**

For us at Visit Cincy and for our regional hospitality industry, we've come a long way in just a few short years. From the full-stop in 2020, we're on track to our pre-pandemic targets of nearly \$5 billion in visitor spending, tax revenue exceeding \$1 billion, and a hospitality industry that makes up 10 percent of our regional economy. When we look at key industry stats like hotel revenue and occupancy, you can see the rebound has come much faster than predicted.

From a full stop to a tangible vision for a reimagined convention center district, new headquarters hotel and plans for an arena.

Our Visit Cincy name and new brand debuted in early 2022. It's more than just a name – it's an invitation and a call-to-action that conveys our mission and helps us take advantage of breaking opportunities, planned events, bursting community pride and our own aggressive selling. Results were stellar in 2022, and for this year, we're crafting a dynamic national marketing campaign to invite meeting planners here and show them what our revitalized convention districts, in both Sharonville and Downtown, will look like. Modern, high-tech, best-in-class and built for the business and convention traveler.

Together with all of you, we are continuing to strengthen our regional hospitality industry and driving economic impact, community pride and partnerships with purpose and results.

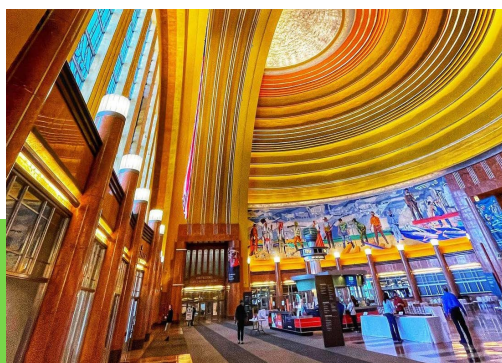
Thank you for your commitment to the Cincy Region. Here's to a bigger and better year ahead!

**Julie Calvert**

President & CEO

**Jeff Berding**

Board Chair







## MEETING & CONVENTION SALES & SERVICES

**2022 saw rapid recovery in group lead volume, group attendance, short term group booking conversion, hotel revenue growth and overall sales production. Highlights include:**

- 2022 booked business represents \$118M direct attendee spend and \$218M total business sales economic impact
  - Achieved 110% of definite room night goal
  - Definite group production increased by 47% over 2021
- Achieved 122% of tentative room night goal
  - Group lead volume increased by 26% over 2021
- Strengthened client engagement opportunities, while enhancing convention center and regional collaboration
  - Hosted familiarization tours for Trust in Insuring Educators (TIE), welcoming clients from education associations
  - Represented Cincy region at key industry meeting planner trade shows including RCMA, Cvent Connect, Connect Marketplace, ASAE, IMEX and Holiday Showcase
  - Fully implemented 360 degree virtual tours of 75 local venues and meeting spaces to assist planners with choosing Cincy region locations
  - Promoted the upcoming expansion of the Sharonville Convention Center at tradeshow and in sales presentations.

**As the liaison between local services and convention groups, the Visit Cincy Convention Services team assists clients to help make their events successful. With more in-person meetings returning since 2020 the team:**

- Assisted 54 groups in 2022
- Earned a 9 out of 10 on the planner surveys







## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

**Visit Cincy's DEI team engages diverse audiences to choose Cincinnati and the region as a leisure and meeting destination. Highlights include:**

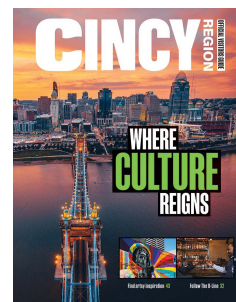
- Launched the new Vibe "The Untold Speaker Series" focused on stories of diversity and empowerment from nationally acclaimed speakers. Presented through a collaboration with Fifth Third Bank, the sessions featured speakers including the Hon. Ambassador Andrew J. Young Jr.; Raekwon the Chef, co-founder of Wu-Tang; Victoria Early Butler, master blender of Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey; Dr. Gina Paige, co-founder of AfricanAncestry.com; and more.
- Engaged with clients at five diversity-focused trade shows through hosting Vibe-branded events, garnering 61,869 hotel room night leads.
- Supported and sponsored place-making events to celebrate diverse Cincy region cultures, including the Moon Festival, Cincy Soul, Cincinnati Pride and the Cincinnati Compass Welcome Reception.
- Visit Cincy completed a comprehensive review to examine the current landscape of the organization as it relates to DEI. Recommendations are continually examined and implemented, and a task force formed to continue the progress.
- 42 students graduated from the Dan Lincoln Institute for Hospitality Leadership, our workforce development program to prepare diverse leaders for tourism industry leadership. The program expanded into Withrow High School in 2022.



## REGIONAL TOURISM MARKETING WITH meetNKY

**Visit Cincy intensified its partnership with meetNKY on strategic efforts to drive leisure travel dollars and visitors to the region. Key successes in 2022 include:**

- Invested more than \$1.4 million in a digital advertising campaign to bring the "Our Culture. Your Cincy" brand to target markets, increasing brand awareness of the Cincy region as a travel destination, website traffic and bookings. Targeted audiences within a 300-mile drive radius and key MSAs included Nashville, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Columbus, Louisville and Lexington.
- Campaign garnered more than 310 million impressions, 8.9 million clicks, and 17,322 conversion actions, effectively putting destination content in the hands of leisure travelers and helping them recognize the value in Cincy's offerings.
- Produced the first Cincy Region Official Visitors Guide since 2020, and it was named the best in the state by the Ohio Conference on Travel.



# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

**The Visit Cincy marketing team builds and executes strategic marketing programs to drive awareness, build reputation and generate convention and tourism revenue across all audiences. Key achievements and successes in 2022 include:**

- Implemented new Visit Cincy branding across all organizational efforts, including sales presentations, videos, collateral, email templates, and tradeshow booth.
- Launched the newly redesigned VisitCincy.com in November 2022. The site received more than 8 million sessions (215% increase over 2021) and 12.6 million pageviews (144% increase).
- Created and ran strategic ad campaigns promoting meeting in Cincinnati and Sharonville to national meeting planner contacts. Created a "Meet Local" campaign targeted to C-Suite execs throughout the region to keep their meetings in Hamilton County.
- Activated custom welcome programs, marketing for Vibe events and 15+ key convention groups, including American Booksellers, Dayton Junior Volleyball, AAU Volleyball, Pure Romance, Midwest Homeschool, Cincinnati Music Festival, Moon Festival, and more.
- Created a campaign blitz for the Bengals Super Bowl run. Promotions included a landing page, blog posts, digital advertising, video, email marketing, direct marketing, social media and public relations. National media mentions of Cincinnati as the Bengals charged to the playoffs totaled an estimated value of \$46.6 million and Cincinnati media coverage during that month reached 1.5 billion people.
- Developed brand activations and cultural experiences around key sales events and tradeshows, including artist activations, Oktoberfest experiences, and screen printing.
- Created new membership model based on feedback from partner surveys and input.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

- Visit Cincy's main source of revenue (hotel tax) from Hamilton County increased more than budgeted, approaching pre-pandemic levels.
- Controls over spending continued resulting in a \$1.9 million favorable budget variance.
- Visit Cincy received \$2 million from Hamilton County ARPA and \$1.7 million from City of Cincinnati ARPA funds and is strategically spending them to meet the objectives of the grant.
- Significant positive budget variance from Regional Tourism Alliance will be applied to key endeavors, including increased marketing, attracting large conventions, international tourism and support of new convention district.

Financial statements are available upon request.

# FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- Our ongoing work to implement recommendations from our comprehensive DEI study produced by The Ladipo Group, included hiring of a senior-leadership level human resources professional.
- With the addition of the new HR role, the decision was made to bring all of the previously outsourced HR functions back in house. This includes: Payroll, Benefits, Workers Compensation and Unemployment.
- Conducted extensive Policy and Benefit review. Resulted in modifying enrollment eligibility for Visit Cincy's 401(K) retirement plan.

**VISIT CINCY IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE REGION TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC VITALITY:**

