

MEETING THE

MOMENT

ACTIVATING **THE POWER OF WE**



Visit
CINCY

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Visit
CINCY

MEETING THE MOMENT:



ACTIVATING THE POWER OF WE

“The Power of We” is more than a slogan, it’s the practice of bringing businesses, government, and community organizations together with a shared vision. The hospitality industry, the tourism economy, and the investments in conventions and events uplift our entire community for businesses, residents and visitors alike.

2024 was a landmark year for the Cincy Regional tourism industry and for Visit Cincy. Guided by our principle of “The Power of We,” our community has made significant strides in enhancing Cincinnati’s hospitality and tourism landscape, reinforcing the city’s reputation as a premier destination for business and leisure travelers and high-profile events and conventions.

We celebrated transformative developments, including the expansion of the Sharonville Convention Center and the official kick-off of the Duke Energy Convention Center’s modernization, setting the stage for the construction of our much-anticipated downtown headquarters hotel. These projects are more than just enhancements to our destination—they are bold investments in our future.

At Visit Cincy we are “Meeting the Moment.” We successfully secured major conventions and events that will fill our new, reinvented spaces, while also growing Cincinnati’s appeal as a vibrant leisure destination. From targeted national campaigns to expanding our reach in key global markets, we have positioned Cincinnati as a must-visit region. This comprehensive approach has driven impressive results — which you’ll see throughout this report.

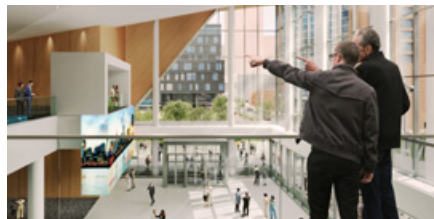
Our newly launched Inclusive Hospitality initiative underscores our commitment to making Cincinnati a welcoming and accessible destination for all. By embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion into every facet of the visitor experience, we are enhancing our industry while also strengthening our community.

None of this would be possible without the “Power of We,” the dedication of our partners, stakeholders, and the hardworking professionals in our hospitality industry. That support fuels our mission, and together, we will continue to meet the moment, elevate our region, and create unforgettable experiences for every visitor.

Thank you for being part of Cincinnati and Hamilton County’s incredible momentum.

JULIE CALVERT
President & CEO, Visit Cincy





The region's \$800 million investment in the new convention district began taking shape in July 2024 with the start of Duke Energy Convention Center's (DECC) complete reinvention. The \$240 million facility modernization, scheduled for **completion in January 2026**, will offer state-of-the-art amenities, meeting spaces, technology, and a dramatic rooftop terrace.

Visit Cincy advised on the RFP and participated in the selection of ASM Global as the new Convention Center operator, as well as a new food and beverage partner.

Adjacent to the Center, the new Elm Street Plaza is well underway. The two-acre site will have paved event space and a landscaped area permanently closed to traffic, with pedestrian connections to exhibit halls and Convention District hotels.

Plans are moving forward with a new Headquarters Hotel, with a groundbreaking planned for 2025. When complete, our downtown hotel room inventory will increase by 19% over pre-pandemic levels.

To maximize the investment, Visit Cincy developed a 'Trifecta' plan, a multi-year sales and marketing strategy that leverages three phases of Convention District development.

Targeting key accounts, the team is focused on building a pipeline for short and long term convention business. Through aggressive sales efforts including trade show outreach and establishing a new Washington, D.C. office, the team exceeded definite and tentative room night goals in 2024.

Media coverage of our facilities' progress was earned in 15 key trade publications such as *prevue*, *Venues Now* and *Meetings Today*. This targeted exposure, along with strategic marketing campaigns, more than doubled sessions on the meetings-related section of our website.

To support these efforts long-term, Visit Cincy, with support from the board, created a Convention Districts Accelerator Initiative. The 5-year investment plan will support specific, high-impact sales and marketing initiatives, including hosting key industry conventions in our new facilities.

DUKE ENERGY CONVENTION CENTER
\$240 MILLION
MODERNIZATION COMPLETE JAN 2026



SHARONVILLE

CONVENTION DISTRICT

200+ PLANNERS
ATTEND

**MEETINGS MADE CINCY
EVENT AT BOGART'S**

Early in 2024, the Sharonville Convention Center (SCC) completed a \$24 million renovation that doubled its exhibit hall to nearly 40,000 sq. ft.



The project also included a full kitchen, restaurant and sports bar, ticket window, first aid room, additional restrooms, show offices, more entrances, and additional parking. The expanded space allows for larger shows and expos, and the SCC has become a preferred venue to host events that were displaced from the DECC construction to keep them in the region.

In June, Visit Cincy showcased the facility to the Ohio Society of Association Professionals by hosting their Annual Conference, and the event won rave reviews from state association meeting execs who plan group business.

Visit Cincy developed a new strategic campaign, Meetings Made Cincy, designed to connect regional meeting professionals to the Sharonville Convention Center and other unique venues and hospitality services in the Cincy region.

The campaign had more than 3.4 million impressions.

We brought this campaign to life, in March, by creating an inaugural event hosted at the iconic Bogart's in Clifton attracting more than 200 regional meeting planners and industry professionals.



RESULTS

ECONOMIC IMPACT

NUMBERS

\$6.5 BILLION
OR \$17 MILLION A DAY
IN VISITOR SPENDING

The latest report from Tourism Economic showed that visitors spent **\$4.4 billion in Hamilton County**. Including Northern Kentucky in those results, and it increases to \$6.5 billion, or \$17 million a day.

46,000
EMPLOYED IN TOURISM



In Hamilton County, more than 46,000 people are employed in tourism.

VISITOR SPENDING ADDS
\$229 MILLION
IN LOCAL TAX REVENUE

VISITORS ACCOUNTED FOR
25%
OF ALL LOCAL
BUSINESS REVENUE
UP 8%
FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

MEETING & CONVENTION SALES & SERVICES

In 2024, Visit Cincy demonstrated strong meeting and convention sales and service performance, achieving and often exceeding strategic targets set for the year. The efforts to enhance the region's appeal for meetings and conventions yielded substantial results:

EXCEEDED DEFINITE ROOM NIGHT GOALS:

- Achieved 111.9% of the goal.
- We set our first goal specifically for hotel room nights in northern Hamilton County, and achieved 103.2% of the target.

TENTATIVE ROOM NIGHTS GOAL ACHIEVED:

- Exceeded our goal with 613,465 tentative room nights, showcasing strong interest and potential future bookings.

MEETING PLANNER SATISFACTION

- Maintained a strong focus on planner satisfaction, a cornerstone of Visit Cincy's strategy, receiving 24 surveys with an impressive 99.5% satisfaction rate.



MARKETING



WEBSITE TRAFFIC

UP 88%

ENGAGEMENT UP 12%

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 2024 include:

- Visit Cincy and meetNKY unified its two websites into **VisitCincy.com**.
 - Traffic is up 88%
 - Engagement is up 12%
- Provided enhanced convention logistic support, marketing and branding for marquee conventions including Forbes Under 30 Summit, Black Tech Week, OSAP, and World at Work.

- Updated and integrated new technologies for sales efforts including destination virtual tours, 360-degree tours of venues, and digital bids.

The initiatives to drive these successes included targeted marketing campaigns which significantly boosted engagement:

- Enhanced ad strategies led to a 42% increase in ad click-through rates.
- **Email Marketing:** Expanded email campaigns targeting meeting professionals more than doubled outreach from the previous year.

REGIONAL TOURISM MARKETING

Visit Cincy intensified our partnership with meetNKY on strategic efforts to drive leisure travel dollars and visitors to the region.

Key successes in 2024 include:

- Launched the “Culturally Rich, No Kitsch” leisure marketing campaign. The digitally-driven effort encourages visitors to actively engage with our authentic, culturally diverse experiences.
- Key engagement metrics on VisitCincy.com nearly doubled year-over-year, including 5.2 million website sessions and 315,000 partner referrals, the most traffic ever recorded on our Cincy tourism website.
- Traffic from organic social media was up 284% and engaged sessions from organic social media were up 324%.

5.2 MILLION
WEBSITE SESSIONS
315,000
PARTNER REFERRALS

**JOURNALISTS WE HOSTED
WROTE STORIES GENERATING
1.9** BILLION
IMPRESSIONS
58% ABOVE GOAL

- Visit Cincy publicity efforts drove significant regional, national, and international awareness. Journalists we hosted penned stories generating 1.9 billion impressions, 58% above goal, along with dozens of internationally syndicated stories with resulting impressions 24% above goal.
- Requests for the Cincy Region Official Visitors Guide increased 73%, and it was named the best in the state by the Ohio Conference on Travel.

INCLUSIVE HOSPITALITY

Visit Cincy: Inclusive Hospitality launched in 2024 and embodies our commitment to fostering a welcoming environment that honors the diversity of our guests, partners, and community.



This guiding principle influences every aspect of our organization, ensuring that every interaction is characterized by respect, value, and engagement. It's not just an initiative, it's the foundation of how we operate, making every moment and every experience in Cincy inclusive by design.

Visit Cincy is tracking and increasing our supplier diversity spend and hosted an event to build our network of partners, attended by more than 200 diverse business owners and local and state elected officials.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Visit Cincy's Social Inclusion team engages diverse audiences to choose Cincinnati and the region as a leisure and meeting destination.

Highlights include:

- Established Visit Cincy Foundation for Hospitality Excellence bylaws and scholarship criteria.
- Held an outreach event to connect with local diverse businesses and enhance Visit Cincy's Supplier Diversity resource.
- Supported local community events and trade shows through 16 diversity-focused activations.

16 INCLUSION-
FOCUSED
ACTIVATIONS

77 STUDENTS
GRADUATED
DAN LINCOLN INSTITUTE
FOR HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

- Supported local community events and trade shows through 16 inclusion-focused activations.
- Graduated 77 students from the Dan Lincoln Institute for Hospitality Leadership, Visit Cincy's workforce development program to prepare diverse leaders for tourism industry leadership. The program expanded with community partners LADD and Talbert House to offer IHL to non-traditional students.



CINCINNATI REGIONAL SPORTS COMMISSION

Nationally, the sports-events industry delivers \$128 billion in total economic impact annually, with more than 200 million people traveling each year for youth and adult amateur sports and collegiate championships.

\$128 BILLION
IN TOTAL
**SPORTS INDUSTRY
ECONOMIC IMPACT**

200 MILLION
PEOPLE
**TRAVEL RELATED TO
SPORTS ANNUALLY**

With the number of sports travelers steadily increasing and their spending rising just as fast, cities that invest in sports tourism are seeing powerful returns. That is why Visit Cincy has been working alongside city, county, and business leaders to establish a regional Sports Commission.

Sports tourism is not only an economic driver, it is also a unifying force. Whether it is a youth tournament bringing families from across the country or a championship game filling stadiums with cheering fans, these events bring energy, excitement, and connection. Cincinnati is ready to capture its share of this growing opportunity.

Working closely with the Cincinnati Regional Business Committee and the Cincinnati Business Committee, an initial board for the Cincinnati Regional Sports Commission was seated in 2024. These organizations, along with Hamilton County, the City of Cincinnati, and corporate partners such as Western & Southern, P&G, and Kroger, have joined Visit Cincy and meetNKY in pledging financial support.

The commission, expected to be formalized in the second quarter of 2025, will position our region to compete for high-profile sports events and tournaments that drive overnight visitation, generate substantial economic impact, and reinforce Cincinnati's reputation as a passionate sports destination.

FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

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