



Green Cincinnati Plan
2023

FOCUS AREA

Community Activation





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Community Activation

Empowering residents to play a central role in creating climate solutions.

Vision

All residents know about and are empowered to take action to address the systemic issues underlying climate change and environmental injustice through individual and collective action.

A Word from Kylie Johnson, Community Activation Focus Area Chair

From conducting educational programs, to leading outreach efforts, to advocating for stronger policies, I've dedicated my life to securing a healthier environment for my community. The most important lesson I've learned along the way—this work takes all of us.

This chapter of the Green Cincinnati Plan (GCP) was renamed “Community Activation” (from “Advocacy, Education & Outreach”) to better capture our need for collective action and engagement of all Cincinnati residents. It's going to take all of us to tackle the systemic issues of climate change and environmental injustice. Advocacy, education, and outreach serve as three foundational pillars to overall Community Activation, and you will find Goals for each in this chapter of the GCP.



Green Corps members working in Lower Price Hill. Photo courtesy of Groundwork Ohio River Valley.

It was an honor to lead the Community Activation Subcommittee, and I'm grateful for the tremendous level of support from my internal team: Molly Robertshaw from the Office of Environment and Sustainability (OES) and our Equity Liaison, Kelsey Hawkins-Johnson.

Together, we worked alongside community members and representatives from nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith communities, educational institutions, and advocacy groups to develop a framework for inspiring Cincinnati residents to take climate action. Our Subcommittee prioritized and refined more than 200 recommendations submitted by the community via written suggestions, online surveys, and three in-person meetings.

Together, we identified several promising pathways to drive the equitable and transformative change needed to address climate change and prioritize its disproportionate effects on marginalized communities. Strategies include:

- using advocacy as a lever to creatively and strategically solve problems
- strengthening school-based environmental education and experiences
- amplifying the workforce to meet the demands of the green economy
- increasing the capacity of residents to drive solutions to climate change.

These co-created Strategies build on the collaborative work so many have engaged in across the City. A new avenue for advocacy was created in early 2022 when Cincinnati established the Climate, Environment & Infrastructure Committee—making history as the first city council committee of its kind focused on climate action. Later that year, Mayor Pureval and City Council prioritized sustainability and education efforts in the city budget by investing \$4 million into the Green Cincinnati Plan implementation and expanding the youth employment budget by \$1 million. Cincinnati historically ranks as one of the best cities in the nation for a green career, and support for our next generation of leaders continues to grow through programs like Groundwork Ohio River Valley's Green Corps—the largest Green Youth Workforce Program in the nation.

The examples above demonstrate that our Mayor, City Council, City Administration, and community partners are aligned now more than ever to take bold action. Still, there is more work to do. The Green Cincinnati Plan's community-driven approach embodies our collective power, but it will take everyone activated and engaged to meet our aggressive carbon neutrality goals. I'm encouraged by our progress to date and hopeful—now more than ever—that we can build a sustainable, equitable, and resilient city. This work takes all of us, and I look forward to seeing what we will accomplish next through Community Activation.

FOCUS AREA CHAIR



**COMMUNITY ACTIVATION
FOCUS AREA CHAIR**

Kylie Johnson

ORGANIZATION

Southwest Ohio Regional Director
Ohio Environmental Council

EQUITY LIAISON



I have hope for the expansion of future, young, BIPOC changemakers in the green workforce and at City Hall.

EQUITY LIAISON

Kelsey Hawkins-Johnson

ORGANIZATION

Community & Climate
Resilience Program Director
Groundwork Ohio River Valley

NEIGHBORHOOD

Hartwell



Advocacy

Goal

Achieve \$25 million in resources toward GCP priorities by 2028 with at least 40% benefiting priority communities.

BASELINE YEAR(S)

2022

DATA SOURCE(S)

CEFA report for City grants and public/private partnership contacts

Strategy

Increase use of advocacy as a lever to creatively and strategically solve problems.

Cincinnati has many strong individual and organizational advocates for environmental causes. Some are effective at rallying and equipping residents to speak up for individual policies, while others are trusted, expert sources that guide local leaders toward stronger and more just systems and structures. Greater coordination between advocacy groups could help Cincinnati solve pressing environmental challenges more quickly. Likewise, helping advocates align on priorities would ensure the right challenges are being tackled. With creative and persistent advocacy at the municipal level and beyond, the City has the opportunity to create broadscale change and attract significant resources.



Ohio Environmental Council team members share their new Advocacy Toolkit at Paddlefest 2022. Photo courtesy of Ohio Environmental Council.

Priority Actions

	GCP PILLARS			ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES			
	Sustainability	Equity	Resilience	Jobs	Investment	Health	Feasibility
Advocate for the passage of a city budget that supports GCP priorities with at least 40% benefiting priority communities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Build and present a case for long-term funding mechanisms that drive emissions reductions; reallocate the resources generated to reduce disparate impacts	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Support codification of climate justice and racial equity in city decision-making mechanisms	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Continue to strengthen regional partnerships—like OKI and the Regional Climate Collaborative—to better coordinate, share, and build strategic advantage	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Increase investment in advocacy, lobbying, grant seeking, and partnership development to increase local receipt of federal/state resources	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● strong alignment ● moderate alignment ● weak alignment



Local residents advocate at the Ohio Statehouse. Photo courtesy of Ohio Environmental Council.



Education

Goal

100% of public schools have safe and accessible outdoor learning spaces by 2028.

BASELINE YEAR(S)

2020

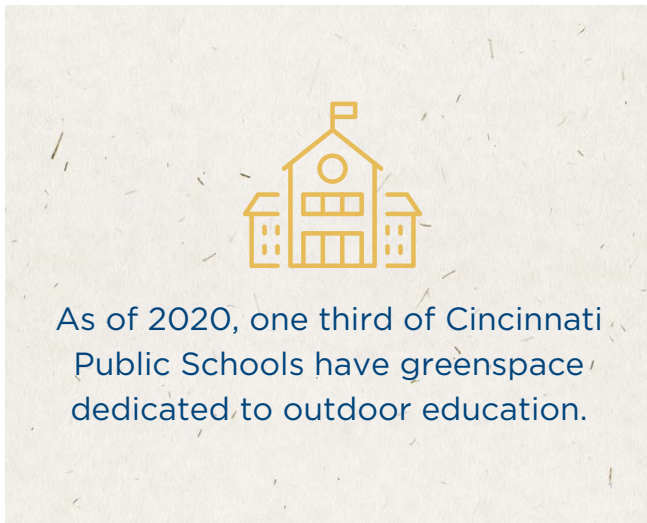
DATA SOURCE(S)

Green Umbrella’s CPS Outside Impact Team

Strategy

Strengthen the breadth and depth of school-based environmental opportunities.

Children and youth spend most of their time for most of the year attending one of the City’s many quality educational institutions. Schools are hubs for much of our community’s life, making them a logical place to implement sustainability efforts. Given the large demands placed on educational institutions, we need to leverage creative partnerships and passive learning opportunities to integrate sustainability more broadly and deeply in our schools. This degree of collaboration can have a transformative impact on our City’s next generation of leaders in a way that inspires them, challenges them, and invites them to find their own role in solutions.



Rockdale Elementary students take part in a garden workday. Photo courtesy of Cincinnati Public Schools.

Priority Actions

	GCP PILLARS			ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES			
	Sustainability	Equity	Resilience	Jobs	Investment	Health	Feasibility
Increase school/environmental org partnerships to grow environmental education and climate justice opportunities at schools, including hands-on outdoor learning spaces like Green Schoolyards, with priority given to schools in priority communities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Support schools to increasingly model sustainable practices inclusive of operations, buildings, fleet, and grounds in alignment with the US Department of Education’s Green Ribbon Schools pillars or similar standards	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● strong alignment ● moderate alignment ● weak alignment



Education

Goal

4,000 individuals trained for green economy jobs by 2028 (800/year).

BASELINE YEAR(S)

2022

DATA SOURCE(S)

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System and local workforce training partners

Strategy

Amplify the workforce to meet the demands of the green economy.

In the U.S., “green jobs” are those that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, green economy jobs are growing faster than most other job sectors although the number of jobs is still much lower compared to other sectors. Most of the occupations in the “green” sector pay higher than the annual median wage in the U.S., providing greater opportunities for self-sufficiency. However, these jobs also require advanced education and training. With these realities in mind, training and re-training our workforce to meet the rising need for occupations like EV mechanics, solar panel installers, and weatherization technicians is a must.



Green Corps members take a break from invasive species removal. Photo courtesy of Groundwork Ohio River Valley.

Priority Actions

	GCP PILLARS			ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES			
	Sustainability	Equity	Resilience	Jobs	Investment	Health	Feasibility
Partner with the local Workforce Investment Board, educational institutions, employers, County, State and more to amplify equity-focused, green workforce training and career pathways	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Continue to grow paid, hands-on learning opportunities and jobs in the green economy with an emphasis on preparing youth and the unemployed and/or difficult to employ for living wage jobs	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● strong alignment ● moderate alignment ● weak alignment

Selected green occupations with projected employment growth, 2020–30

Occupation	Median annual wage, 2021 ¹	Employment, 2020	Employment, projected 2030	Typical entry-level education
Environmental engineers	\$96,820	52,300	54,300	Bachelor's degree
Environmental scientists and specialists, including health	\$76,530	87,100	94,400	Bachelor's degree
Conservation scientists	\$63,750	25,300	26,800	Bachelor's degree
Wind turbine service technicians ²	\$56,260	6,900	11,700	Postsecondary nondegree award
Environmental engineering technologists and technicians	\$48,390	17,300	18,600	Associate's degree
Solar photovoltaic installers ³	\$47,670	11,800	17,900	High school diploma or equivalent
Environmental science and protection technicians, including health	\$47,370	34,200	37,800	Associate's degree

Note: None of these occupations typically requires work experience in a related occupation for entry.

1 Wage data exclude self-employed workers.

2 This occupation typically requires long-term on-the-job training to attain competency.

3 This occupation typically requires moderate-term on-the-job training to attain competency.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections.



Goal

25 priority community members equipped to co-lead the 2028 GCP refresh.

BASELINE YEAR(S)

2022

DATA SOURCE(S)

Groundwork Ohio River Valley

Strategy

Increase the capacity of residents, communities, and businesses to drive solutions to climate change.

Residents are fully capable of driving solutions to localized impacts of climate change when provided opportunities to share and learn, prioritize and act. Building both awareness of pressing environmental issues and social cohesion within and across neighborhoods will equip people to create a better future. Residents of priority communities—those experiencing the greatest burdens of environmental injustice—are best positioned to both inform and drive equitable change. The vibrant start-up ecosystem also presents opportunity.



Beekman Corridor Climate Safe Neighborhoods residents meet to learn and share with one another. Photo courtesy of Groundwork Ohio River Valley, 2022.



Fifth Third employees work to remove invasive honeysuckle during a volunteering event at Rapid Run Park. Photo courtesy of Cincinnati Parks.

Priority Actions

	GCP PILLARS			ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES			
	Sustainability	Equity	Resilience	Jobs	Investment	Health	Feasibility
Create and support more opportunities—like Climate Safe Neighborhoods (CSN)—to identify local environmental problems and enable climate ambassadors to implement sustainable solutions	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Support the Youth Environmental Council to mobilize the next generation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Support the launch of a one stop shop—physical and virtual—to support residents in making lifestyle changes through informing and incentivizing efforts	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Support business owners and the start-up community to build and enact market solutions to address environmental issues, with a focus on women and minority-owned enterprises	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● strong alignment ● moderate alignment ● weak alignment