



**CINCINNATI
FIRE MUSEUM**



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Photo credit: Glenn Hartong



**info@cincyfire
museum.com**



www.cincyfiremuseum.com



**315 W Court St., Cincinnati, OH
45202**

Letter from the Director



Dear Supporter,

As we step further into 2025, I want to take a moment to reflect on the past year at the Cincinnati Fire Museum. 2024 was filled with exciting milestones, successful events, and continued support from our community—making it one of our best years yet. One of our most significant achievements was the long-awaited installation of a brand-new HVAC system.

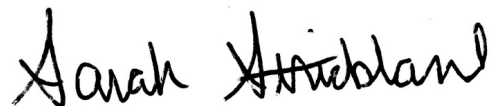
Thanks to the generosity of our donors and supporters, especially active and retired firefighters, we now offer a more comfortable experience for our visitors year-round while better preserving our historic artifacts. This was a much-needed upgrade, and we are thrilled to see its impact on both our guests and our historical collection.

Another highlight of the year was our Annual Firefighter Cook-Off Fundraiser, which continues to be a resounding success! Firefighters from across the region showcased their culinary talents, and the community turned out in record numbers to taste, vote, and support the museum. It was a night filled with great food, camaraderie, and a celebration of the brave men and women who serve our city. If you missed it, don't worry—2025's event is already in the works, and we promise it will be bigger and better than ever!

We also saw an increase in museum admissions this past year, welcoming more visitors than ever before. Whether you came for a guided tour, a seasonal program, or just to explore on your own, we appreciate your support of our mission.

As we move forward in 2025, we remain committed to preserving our region's firefighting history and offering engaging experiences for all ages. Thank you for being part of our journey—your support allows us to continue honoring the legacy of local firefighters while inspiring future generations.

Stay safe, and I hope to see you at the museum soon!



SARAH STRICKLAND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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KZF DESIGN

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Charles "Chuck" Klahm
Cincinnati Fire Department, Ret.

Mike Kruer
Cincinnati Fire Department, Ret.

Charles Riefle
Cincinnati Fire Department

Mission & Values



The Cincinnati Fire Museum highlights the significant contributions that Cincinnati has made to the firefighting profession. Cincinnati is the birthplace of the first paid, professional fire department and we are proud to display its history.

Our mission is to share and celebrate the history of firefighting in Cincinnati while providing a unique fire-safety education experience. Our vision is to bring the traditions of firefighting to life—in a museum that helps save lives.

MISSION

To share and celebrate the history of firefighting in Cincinnati, while providing a unique fire-safety experience.

To bring the traditions of firefighting to life in a museum that helps save lives.

VISION





**CINCINNATI
FIRE MUSEUM**

Our Historic Collection



Over 700 Artifacts

The Cincinnati Fire Museum's Collection is comprised of over 700 items plus a sizeable archive of photos, documents, and records. It represents the firefighting history of Cincinnati from the very first volunteer fire company formed in 1808. The fire alarm drum and brass key to the first fire house in 1808, along with parade hats, impressive hand pumped engines, and wooden water pipes have been displayed to illustrate the exciting bucket brigade years of the Cincinnati Fire Volunteers.



A Unique National Attraction

In 1917, Cincinnati became one of the nation's first fully-motorized fire companies, and the Ahrens-Fox Company of Cincinnati emerged as a leading builder of fire equipment. Two full-size Ahrens-Fox Engines in all their glory, are featured along with many other pieces of equipment. The outstanding collection of artifacts and graphics are the nucleus of the Cincinnati Fire Museum, making it a unique and prominent national attraction.

Next Steps

2025 Goals

- Organize an intern program to create a database to record each artifact in the collection in which every entry has a photo and description
- Evaluate current exhibits to explore how they can be improved and/or better preserved
- Physically sort archived items into categories such as firefighting gear (e.g., helmets, hoses, extinguishers), uniforms and badges, vintage models, and historical records such as logbooks and call reports



Fire Safety Education

Prevention Saves Lives

When children learn what to do in a fire—like crawling under smoke, knowing exit routes, or how to stop, drop, and roll—they're more likely to react safely if a fire occurs in their home.

Emergency Preparedness

In a fire, every second counts. Fire safety education helps people know exactly what to do—like how to stop, drop, and roll, use a fire extinguisher, or safely evacuate a building.



CFM FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION SAVES LIVES

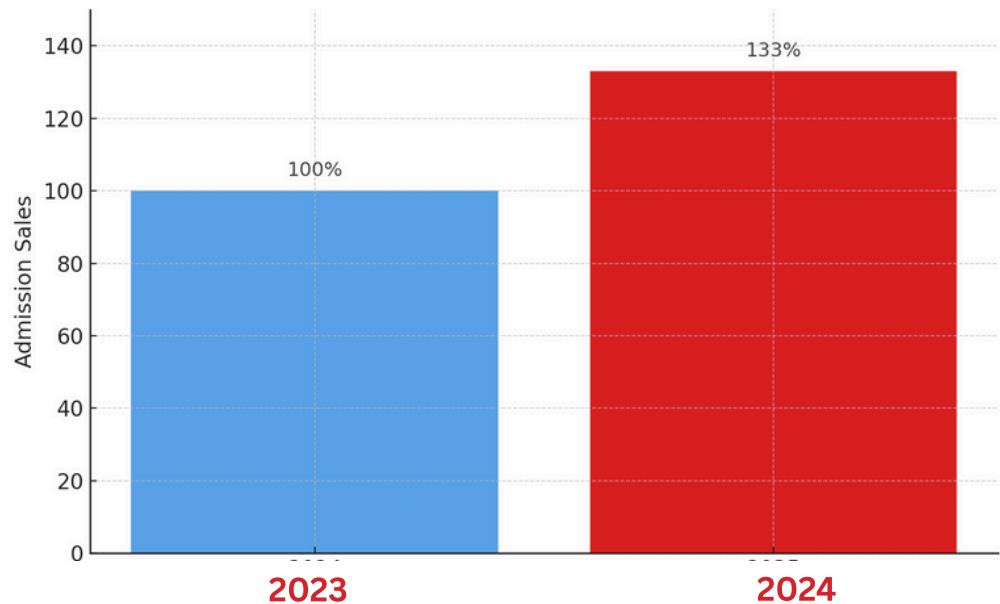
In 2024, the U.S. Fire Administration reported a staggering 92 home fire fatalities, with victims as young as one year of age.



Visitorship

Admission sales increased by 33% from the previous year.

Admission Sales Growth from 2023-2024



By offering interactive and educational experiences, the museum continues to attract a diverse and growing audience. In the current year, we strive for continued growth as a destination for families, students, and history enthusiasts alike.

 **Chase Dillingham**
Local Guide • 82 reviews • 281 photos

★★★★★

We had a fantastic time visiting the Cincinnati Fire Museum as a family! The museum is packed with interesting exhibits and activities that kept all of us engaged, from learning about the history of firefighting to trying out some of the hands-on displays. The staff was friendly and made the experience even better. It's a perfect spot for kids and adults alike – fun, educational, and really well done. We definitely recommend it to anyone looking for a great family outing!

 **Travis Amato**
Local Guide • 73 reviews • 3 photos

★★★★★

I loved my experience at the Cincinnati fire museum! The exhibits are very informative and the employees were very helpful. The historic fire trucks and other equipment really transport you to a different time. It's also very fairly priced, I will definitely be coming back if I ever find my self in Cincinnati again.

 **Jonathan Brutt**
Local Guide • 79 reviews • 40 photos

★★★★★

Beautiful museum and great place to go with kids.

What our Visitors are Saying



2024 CFM Happenings



Easter Egg Hunt

We had another fantastic turnout for our sold-out Easter Egg Hunt in 2024! Families were invited into the museum for a fun-filled morning of egg hunting throughout both floors of our history exhibits. The Easter Bunny made a special appearance to greet visitors and pose for photos. The event took place on Saturday, April 12, beginning at 9:00 a.m.—just before the museum opened to the public.



National Fire Safety Day

The Cincinnati Fire Department and Cincinnati Fire Museum proudly hosted a family-friendly open house in celebration of National Fire Safety Day. Guests of all ages enjoyed a variety of activities, including photo opportunities with a CFD fire truck, engaging fire safety presentations, guided tours of the CFD mobile smoke trailer, and complimentary refreshments.



23rd Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks

To honor the 343 members of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, the Cincinnati Fire Museum, in partnership with the Cincinnati Fire Department, held a solemn ceremony to formally retire badge number 343. The museum's piece of World Trade Center steel served as a poignant backdrop for this significant tribute.

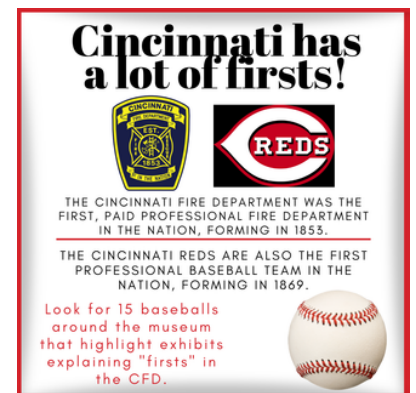
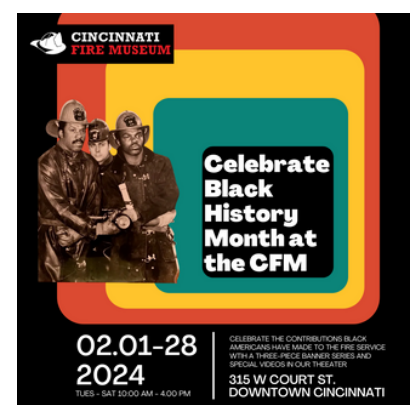


Santa Rescue

This popular holiday tradition once again drew a large crowd, with community members gathering outside the museum to watch as Santa was rescued from the Fire Museum roof by a Cincinnati Fire Department ladder truck. The outdoor rescue, held at noon, was free and open to the public. Guests who chose to continue the festivities inside—enjoying hot chocolate, snacks, and a chance to visit with Santa—were welcomed with standard museum admission.

2024 CFM Seasonal Programming

To stay connected with today's audience and foster repeat visits, the museum designs dynamic programs that blend pop culture and seasonal events, sparking curiosity and inspiring deeper exploration of the rich history the museum showcases. These engaging experiences not only highlight our history signage and Safe House exhibit but also celebrate months dedicated to honoring significant historical contributions, offering visitors both fun and meaningful learning opportunities.





**CINCINNATI
FIRE MUSEUM**

Fundraising

Throughout 2024, we organized numerous fundraising initiatives and campaigns. These efforts not only assist in covering day-to-day operational expenses but also contribute to the development of special projects and programs.

Grants Awarded

- Greater Cincinnati Foundation \$20,000
- CSX \$5,000
- The Edelweiss Foundation \$5,000
- The Unnewehr Foundation \$5,000
- Children's Hospital \$1,000

Superbowl Squares

- A CFM tradition led by Events Coordinator, Bill "Gumby" Donovan
- 100 Squares Sold
- \$6,300 Raised

HVAC Campaign

- Raised funds for an imperative HVAC replacement
- 29 donors with one family donating a generous \$13,000
- Raised \$26,406

Lucky Draw

- Using social media and email promotions, sold tickets for donors to win a total of \$500
- Raised \$920

End-of-Year Letter Campaign

- An annual fundraising campaign aimed at raising operational costs for the year ahead
- 920 letters mailed
- Raised \$39,793





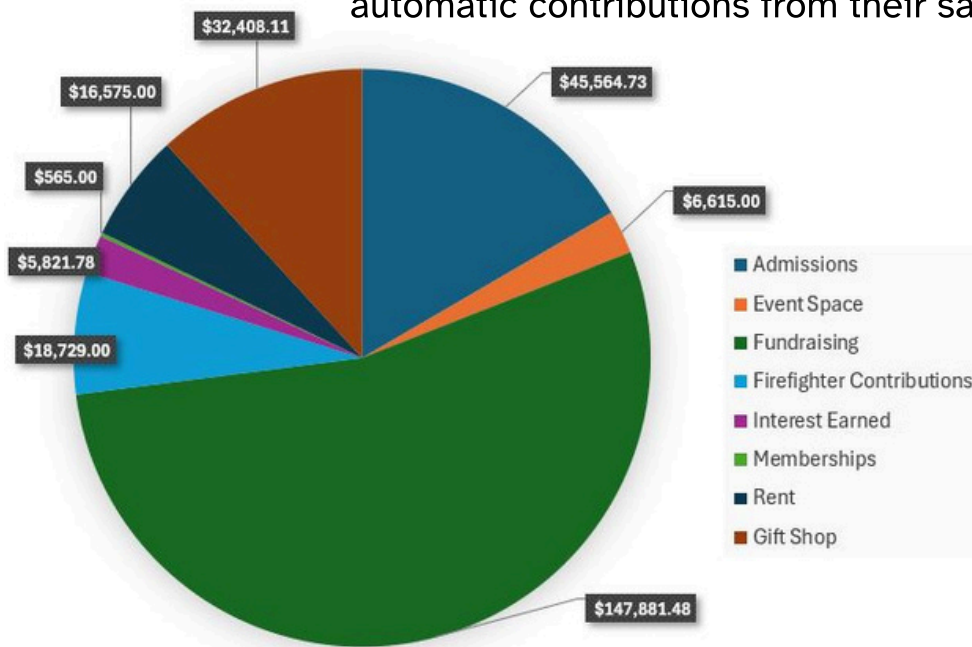
2024 CFM Firefighter Cook-Off & Fundraiser

The Fourth Annual CFM Firefighter Cook-Off and Fundraiser was an unforgettable evening of food, fun, and community spirit! A distinguished panel of local celebrities—including James Beard–nominated chef Jose Salazar, beloved sportscaster Marty Brennaman, and Channel 12’s Sheila Gray—had the delicious task of judging the firefighter chefs’ culinary creations. Guests sampled each dish and cast their votes for the People’s Choice favorite. The festive atmosphere was complete with a beer and wine bar, decadent cookies from Insomnia Bakery, live music by the incredibly talented Aprina Johnson, and exciting raffle prizes from top Cincinnati favorites like Mid-City Restaurant, CSO POPS, Gold Star, and more. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of sponsors and attendees, the event raised an impressive \$20,512 in support of the museum.



Financial Year in Review

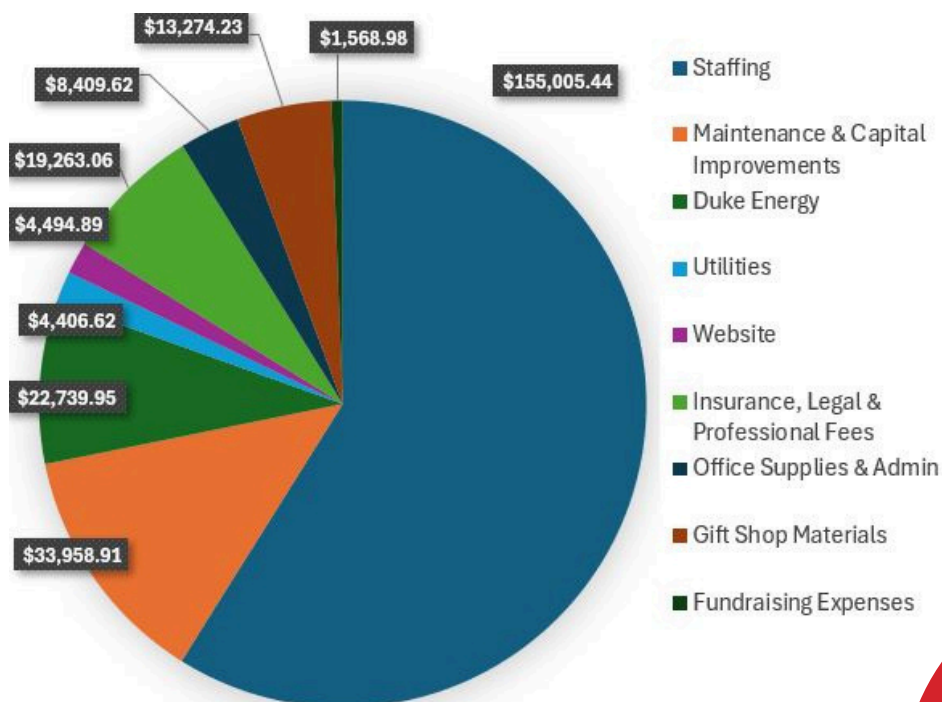
The Cincinnati Fire Museum depends greatly on the generosity of our supporters to maintain daily operations. Contributions come from individual donors, charitable foundations, grant funding, memorial gifts, and corporate partners. We are especially grateful to the members of the Cincinnati Fire Department who choose to participate in the payroll deduction program—an ongoing act of support that allows automatic contributions from their salaries.



Income



Expenses

Contributions

The Cincinnati Fire Museum could not fulfill its mission without the generosity of the support it receives from donors and foundations. It is with enormous gratitude that we present the following list of 2024 supporters.

\$10,000 - \$20,000

The Hardy Foundation
Greater Cincinnati Foundation
Ethan and Susan Paglirao

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Ahrens Family Foundation
Helen E Allen Charitable Foundation
The Edelweiss Foundation
Harry Goetz
Gary and Carolyn Miller
The Unnewehr Foundation

\$2,000 - \$4,999

Cincinnati Fire Fighters Union Local 48
Driehaus Insurance
James Elsbrock
Kemba
KZF Design
Douglas Marsh
Roehr Agency
Silco
Unity Financial

\$1,000 - \$1,999

Alpaugh Foundation
Manley Burke
Cheviot's Fireman's Association
Cincinnati Air Conditioning Company
Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Fire & Iron Motorcycle Club
Scott Csendes
William and Rita Diss
Patricia Dudsic

\$500 - \$999

Kimberly Abner
James Bunner*
Gregory Jeranek*
Gary Gruber
Steve Hagy
Robert Kuhn
Morgan McKay
Robert Morgan

\$200 - \$499

Melissa Arnold*
Alex Arnold*
Bill Brown
Michael Brown*
Cathy, Clarke & Stanley Carmichael
Kenneth Christo*
Alan Eccard*
William Elfers
Ashley Ford
Al Gerhardstein and Mimi Gold
Miles Greenwood Club
William Herm
Mario Jackson*
Derek Riley Johnson*
Andrew Jones*
Nathaniel Kroeger*
Daniel and Barbara Kuhn
Adam Lacefield*
Lynn Love
Thomas Lane
Louis Rauh
Charles Riefle*
Janis Roper*

Scott Skeabeck
Steelcase Foundation
Bryan Stockelman*
Joshua Williamson*
Matthew Wright*
Michael Zimmerman*

****Donor is a member of Club 1853***

Club 1853

This club is comprised of Cincinnati Fire Department members who are enrolled as sustaining donors in the City's payroll deduction program. This year, we had a record amount of firefighters participate and received our largest contribution from Club 1853 yet, totaling \$20,079. We extend our deepest gratitude as we recognize these members for their generous support



Joshua Abner
Drew Ahern
John Aisenbrey
Alex Anderson
Michael Anderson
Bentley Andrews
Melissa M. Arnold
Alex Arnold
Antonio Axle
Ashley Ba (Booker)
John Baer
Lawrence Baibak
Steven Baldauf
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Jerrell Brown
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Kevin Brown
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Rebecca Bryant
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Jacob Campbell
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Mark Edsall
Kyle Egbert
Michael Engelkamp
Zachary Enterline
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Dominic Faillace
Louis Faillace
Kyle Findley
Timothy (Jr) Findley
Matthew Flagler
Ben Foote
Matthew Fornshil
Erin, Kelsey Fox
Douglas Freeland
Ortiz, Osvaldo Gallego
Mitchell Geers
Brady Goins
Joseph Gonzalez
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Chad I. Hunter
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Cameron Jameson
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Matthew Johnson
Derek Riley Johnson
David Johnson Jr.
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Jacob Jones
Michael Kappa
Robert Kastner
Donald Wayne Kavanaugh
Michael Kilcoyne
Joshua Kim
Robert Klasemer
Jeffrey Klug
Nathaniel Kroeger
Samuel Gregory Krugel
Adam Lacefield
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Tyler Lang
Jacob Allen Lawhorn

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Joshua Williamson
Peter Willig
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Chad Woodrum
Kelvin Woods
Sam Woodward
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Jacob Young
Michael Zimmerman



2024 Annual Report



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