

ANNUAL REPORT



2025

This year's annual report is dedicated to the memory of longtime board member, Bill Brown.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Supporter,

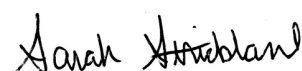
As we move further into 2026, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the past year at the Cincinnati Fire Museum. 2025 brought meaningful milestones, successful events, and continued support from our community.

Because of the generosity of our supporters, especially active and retired firefighters, we were able to grow admission revenue, expand our programming, and enhance the experience we provide to every visitor. This progress came at a time when national reports indicated that museums across the country were experiencing their most significant economic challenges since the pandemic. Although the year presented obstacles, I am proud to share that we remained resilient and concluded the year on strong footing during my sixth year as Executive Director.

Operating a small museum within a 120-year-old building certainly brings challenges, yet our community has proven time and again that through shared commitment and collaboration, the Cincinnati Fire Museum will continue to flourish. Whether you made a donation, attended the Cook-Off Fundraiser, joined a group as part of a guided tour, or explored the museum on your own, your support of our mission is why 2025 was a successful year.

As we look ahead in 2026, we remain dedicated to preserving our region's rich firefighting history while creating meaningful and engaging experiences for visitors of all ages. It is a true privilege to serve as Executive Director, and I am honored to continue leading this important institution into the future as we celebrate the legacy of local firefighters and inspire generations to come.

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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ABOUT OUR MUSEUM

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.



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

MISSION

VISION

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

OUR COLLECTION



OVER 700 ARTIFACTS

The Cincinnati Fire Museum preserves more than 700 unique artifacts spanning from 1808 to the 21st-Century, in our collection, showcasing the rich history and evolution of area firefighting.



A UNIQUE NATIONAL ATTRACTION

The Cincinnati Fire Museum is a unique national attraction that preserves historic firefighting artifacts, apparatus, and offers hands-on exhibits that tell the story of the birth of American firefighting. Our immersive exhibit offers visitors an exceptional look into the current practices and heroism of Cincinnati firefighting.



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CINCINNATI FIRE DEPARTMENT'S HISTORY

The Cincinnati Fire Department is the nation's first paid, professional fire department. The Cincinnati Fire Department has shaped firefighting practices, innovation, and professional standards for generations.



OUR BUILDING

The Cincinnati Fire Museum is located in a historic 20th-century firehouse that once operated as an active engine company in downtown Cincinnati. The preserved structure offers visitors an authentic glimpse into the working environment and daily life of early firefighters.

FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION



Prevention Saves Lives

Fire safety prevention saves lives by reducing the risk of fires before they start and ensuring people know how to respond if one occurs. Simple measures like installing and maintaining smoke alarms, practicing escape plans, safely using electrical equipment, and educating communities about fire hazards can dramatically lower property loss, injuries, and even fatalities. By promoting awareness, preparedness, and responsible behavior, fire prevention helps protect families and entire communities from devastating and often preventable tragedies. Teaching prevention is part of the important work that the CFM continues to do in our community.

Safe House Exhibit

The Safe House exhibit at the Cincinnati Fire Museum is a hands-on, mock home environment that teaches visitors how to spot fire hazards and prevent fires before they start. It also helps families learn life-saving skills and safely respond if a home fire occurs.

Guided Tours

On guided tours at the Cincinnati Fire Museum, trained guides, often active firefighters, share important fire safety tips and real-life stories. Their explanations help visitors understand how to prevent fires and respond safely in an emergency.

Practice

The Safe House exhibit encourages young visitors to practice the life-saving technique “stay low and go” by crawling out of the mock home. It also features a realistic window where children can safely practice escaping in an emergency.



How many safety hazards can you find as you walk through the Safe House?



NEW IMMERSIVE EXHIBIT

WE ARE CFD –
*WHO WE ARE AND
WHAT WE DO*

Created in partnership with Chili Dog Productions, this groundbreaking exhibit uses cutting-edge technology to transport you into the heart of a firefighter’s workday. Through interactive storytelling, realistic soundscapes, and advanced visual displays, visitors learn what it’s like to gear up, respond to calls, and carry out the lifesaving work of the Cincinnati Fire Department.

This immersive experience is designed to educate, engage, and inspire visitors of all ages by blending history with state-of-the-art learning tools.



Fire Apparatus

The CFM immersive exhibit highlights a variety of firefighting apparatus in its dynamic video presentation, giving visitors an up close look at the current look at fire service vehicles.



CFD Members

The immersive exhibit also features different members of the Cincinnati Fire Department, highlighting the diverse roles and teamwork that keep our community safe.

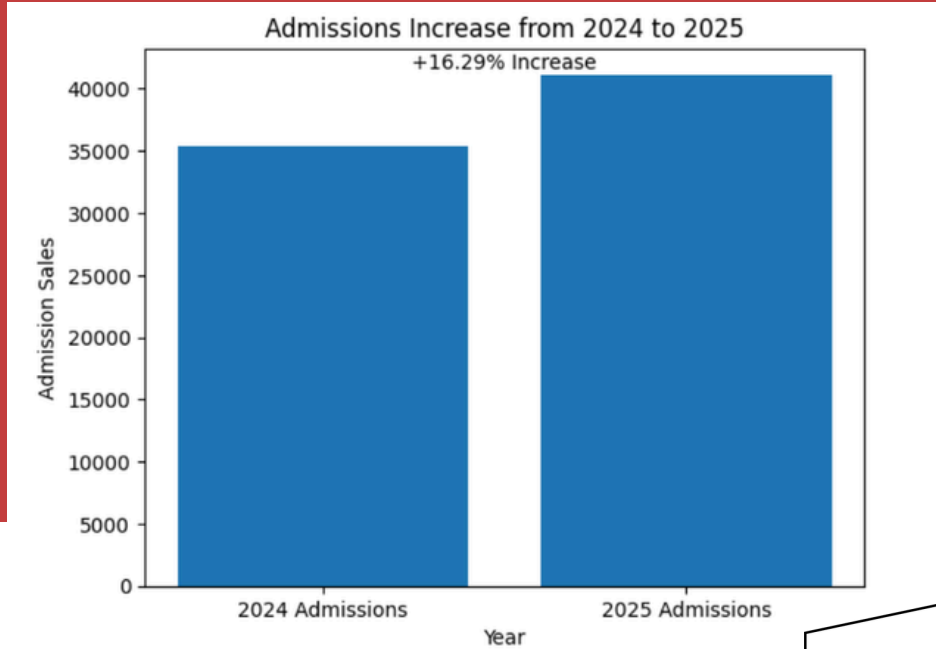


Medical Component

The video highlights the paramedic side of firefighting, showcasing how CFD personnel work hand-in-hand with UC Health to deliver critical, lifesaving care to the community.

VISITORSHIP

2025 saw a 16% increase in admission sales from the previous year.



REVIEWS



★★★★★ a month ago

Brought my grandson to see the museum and thoroughly enjoyed our visit. Well done! .

★★★★★ 9 months ago

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!

★★★★★ 3 weeks ago **NEW**

If you are interested history, this is a must visit museum. The scavenger hunt was fun and informative.

★★★★★ 10 months ago

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.

What our visitors are saying!



2025 CFM EVENTS

Easter Egg Hunt

April 12

Miles Greenwood
Fire Muster

June 6

Commemorating
9/11/2001

September 13

National Fire
Safety Day

October 11

Immersive Exhibit
Unveiling

October 23

CFM Santa Rescue

November 29



FUNDRAISING

GRANT AWARDS

- Robert & Adele Schiff Family Foundation - \$15k
- The Edelweiss Foundation - \$5k
- The Unnewehr Foundation - \$5k
- FC Cincinnati Foundation - \$5k
- Cincinnati Children's Hospital - \$1k

SUPER BOWL SQUARES

- A CFM Tradition led by Events Coordinator, Bill "Gumby" Donovan
- 100 Squares Sold
- \$6,665 Raised

SUMMER CAMPAIGN

- 130 letters postal mailed
- 900 emails sent
- Social media blast to over 10,000 followers
- \$7,985 raised

COOK-OFF

- 7 Firefighter chefs
- 8 Sponsors
- 50 Donation raffle prizes
- \$18,650 Raised

END-OF-YEAR LETTER CAMPAIGN

- An annual fundraising campaign aimed at raising operational support for the upcoming year
- 950 letters mailed
- \$67,426 raised



CINCINNATI FIRE MUSEUM



2025 CFM FIREFIGHTER COOK- OFF & FUNDRAISER



An annual tradition that celebrated five years in 2025.

The Fifth Annual CFM Firefighter Cook-Off and Fundraiser was an unforgettable evening of food, fun, and community spirit! A distinguished panel of local celebrities, including Chef Caitlin Young of Top Chef and owner of Young Buck Deli, Chef Joe Cheeks of the award-winning restaurant Mid-City, and locally celebrated DJ John Doe, shared the task of judging the firefighter chefs' dishes. Guests were invited to sample each dish and cast their votes for the People's Choice favorite. The event included a beer and wine bar, decadent cookies from Davis Cookie Collection, BBQ from City BBQ, live music by the incredibly talented Aprina Johnson, and exciting raffle prizes from top Cincinnati favorites like Court Street Kitchen, CSO POPS, Gold Star, and more. Thanks to the generous support of sponsors and attendees, the event raised an impressive \$18,650 in support of the museum.

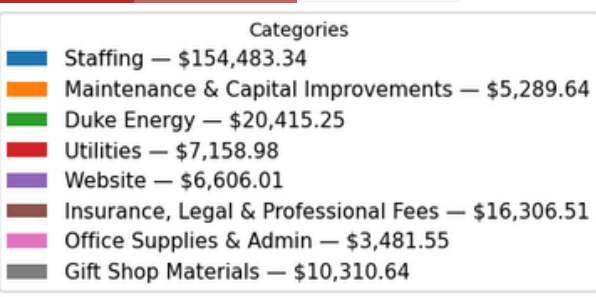
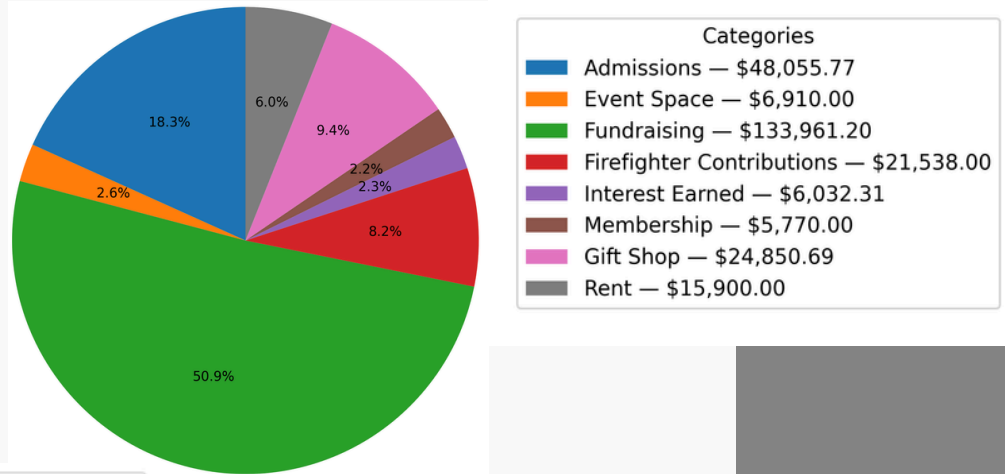
2025 CFM FIREFIGHTER COOK-OFF FUNDRAISER SPONSORED BY



FINANCIAL YEAR IN REVIEW

The Cincinnati Fire Museum relies on the generosity of our supporters to sustain its daily operations and mission. Funding comes from a wide range of sources, including individual donors, charitable foundations, grants, memorial gifts, and corporate partners. We are particularly thankful to the members of the Cincinnati Fire Department who participate in the payroll deduction program, an enduring commitment that provides consistent, automatic support through contributions from their pay.

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 2025 supporters.

\$10,000 - \$25,000

The Hardy Foundation
Hubert Koehler
Robert & Adele Schiff Family Foundation

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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

\$2,000 - \$4,999

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Ethan and Susan Pagliaro
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Queen City Restaurant Supply

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***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 \$20,787. We extend our deepest gratitude as we recognize these members for their generous support.



Joshua Abner
Adekemi Adewunmi
Drew Ahern
John Aisenbrey
Alex Anderson
Michael Anderson
Bentley Andrews
Melissa Arnold
Alex Arnold

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Eric McCarthy	Ryan Pickering	Dylan Paul Smith	Nathan Ware
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Robert Mengler	Eric Todd Prather	Carlier Smyth	William Washington
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Kylie Meyer	Andrew Raterman	Michael Stanton	Nathaniel Weber
Jenna Millay	Daniel Raterman	Eric Stearns	Mike Wentzel
Daniel Miller	Scott Ray	Andre Steed	Carley Wesseler
Edward PJ Miller	Scott Rice	Emily Steedman	Brendon West
Troy Mirick	Joshua Reid	D'Asya Steels	Anthony Whitfield
Anthony Molfetta	Charles Riefle	Todd Stegmuller	Eric Whitis
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Tyler Monahan	Thomas Rodgers	Matthew Stickley	Samuel Williams
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Bryan Moore	Janos Roper	Mitchel Strassel	Peter Willig
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Lorenzo Morgan	Joshua Ross	Austin Sumrall	Chad Woodrum
Tyler Morgan	Jared Runyon	Michael Swafford	Kelvin Woods
Robert Murley	Cody Saffell	Wayne Tate	Kristen Worth
Antonio Murphy	Jena Samelak	David Taylor	Matthew Wright
Stephen Myers	Brent Sanders	Michael Taylor	Seth Wright
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Brian Otten	Joshua Schultz	Jeffrey Tyree	
Elijah James Otten	Ryan Schumann	Kevin Uhl	
Jonathon Robert Pack	Kyle Schwable	Alec Joseph Uhlhorn	
Robert Painter Jr.	Stephen Schwettmann	Catherine Upchurch	
Diego Adrian Palacios			

IN-MEMORY GIFTS

The Cincinnati Fire Museum would like to recognize and honor the lives of those we have lost and in whose memory donations were made to the museum. We are deeply grateful for these gifts, which help preserve their legacy and support our mission.

Doris Ante
Bill Brown
Jacqueline Childs
Jim Dewald
William Gilbert
Ron Goens
Daryl Gordon
Jan Hardy
John "Frank" Hauck
Henry Klein
Howard Lange
Tom Lange
Thomas Lane
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John Sucher

Additionally, the Cincinnati Fire Museum is deeply grateful to have been named a beneficiary of Hubert "Champ" Koehler. His generous gift provides meaningful support to the museum's mission, and we are truly honored to help preserve his legacy for generations to come.



Including a gift in your will or living trust, is a meaningful way to ensure your legacy lives on. You can designate a specific dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or the remaining balance after other distributions have been made. Email info@cincyfiremuseum.com with questions.



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— EST. 1978 —



**CINCINNATI
FIRE MUSEUM**



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info@cincyfiremuseum.com



www.cincyfiremuseum.com