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## Bridge Project: Audience Revenue Cohort



Six Black-led newsrooms from across the U.S. have been selected to be part of the inaugural cohort of the Black Media Initiative Bridge Project: Audience Revenue. The six-month program provides technology and design support for Black publishers looking to launch an audience revenue campaign.

The selected newsrooms are both traditional print media and digital-first organizations and represent communities all over the country from Maryland, Mississippi, Colorado, Ohio, Tennessee, and New York.

"I am thrilled to announce this cohort. Audience revenue can provide a sustainable source of income for Black media outlets, allowing them to continue producing meaningful content with less reliance on traditional sources of funding," said Cheryl Thompson-Morton, director of the Black Media Initiative.

She added: "Audience revenue for Black media provides a unique opportunity to empower Black voices and stories. By giving readers the chance to directly support Black media, we can create a more equitable system of media production, one in which Black journalists are given the resources they need to tell their stories."

The chosen publishers will launch a subscription, membership, or donation campaign in 10 weeks and receive ongoing support throughout the six-month program at no cost to their organization. These newsrooms will also be able to harness technical, analytic, and messaging support and expertise.

United States. Since 1938, it has served as "The Voice of Black Mississippians." While informing its audience about local, national, and global issues affecting their lives, The Jackson Advocate records readers' histories of challenges, sacrifices, and triumphs and advocates for social justice. DeAnna



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Made possible by a generous grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Bridge Project is also being supported by Upside Analytics, Get Current Studio, News Revenue Hub, Pool and SimpleCirc  
**Meet the 2023 cohort:**

The Jackson Advocate is among the oldest continuously published Black-owned and operated newspapers in the

Tisdale Johnson, Publisher, will participate in the program. Harlem World Magazine helps readers live their best life and style around the block and around the world. Harlem World Magazine shares stories that celebrate the community's way of life in the Harlem neighborhood of NYC. The brand has global reach and national

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## King Holiday Re-ignites Call For Voting Rights



By Gregory T. Moore

As Ohio and the nation commemorate the Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday, civil rights advocates still find themselves engaged in struggles to preserve the civil and voting rights that were established during the civil rights movement led by Dr. King. Today, there are ever-increasing pronouncements in the media that indicate our democracy is facing its greatest threat as states are accelerating their efforts to restrict voting rights across the U.S., including here in Ohio.

In Washington, look no further than the failure of the U.S. Congress to pass a new formula for the sections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) that were struck down in 2013 by the US Supreme Court's Shelby v. Holder landmark decision. The court

ruled that the VRA's formula for the Department of Justice's pre-clearance of their new state election laws was outdated and unconstitutional. Many political leaders in Washington have blamed the Supreme Court's ruling for the continued failure to fix the VRA. However, the U.S. Congress is the only governmental institution that can repair the damage to the VRA inflicted by the Supreme Court ruling according to the Brennan Center for Justice.



Despite the fact that Republicans now control the U.S. House of Representatives, many

advocates have not absolved the new Congress of the responsibility to take action to restore and protect the voting rights of all Americans. They have vowed to continue their advocacy for the passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Amendment Act into law as a remedy to the court's decision as their top priority. With the raucous dysfunctional beginning of the 118th Congress, prospects for passing this or any important civil rights legislation in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives are grim.

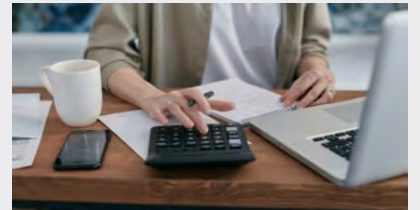
By the same token, the voters of Ohio will soon face a new wave of restrictive voter suppression bills and constitutional amendments introduced by the Republican-controlled Ohio Assembly that voting advocates claim will dilute the voting strength of all Ohio voters. Bill HB458 passed during the lame-duck session by the Ohio legislature reduces early voting, restricts mail-in balloting, and imposes strict ID requirements on Ohio Voters according to the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition.

The League of Women

### Inside

Check out our new scan codes Take a picture and listen.

No reading!!!



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Voters, the Ohio NAACP, and other advocates have argued that HB458 will make it harder for African Americans, young people, the elderly, and the disabled to cast a vote. The newly seated Republican-controlled and gerrymandered Ohio legislature is also considering legislation that will make it even harder for voters to amend the Ohio constitution or repeal their regressive anti-voter and anti-worker laws through the referendum process.

Ohio voter advocates vow to continue to live up to the hopes and dreams of Martin Luther King by calling on Governor Mike DeWine to resist the efforts of the hyper-partisan Ohio legislature to restrict Ohioan's voting rights and freedom to vote.

## Cleveland News Wire - Highlights



Meeting coverage by Cleveland Documenters and Compiled by Signal Cleveland's Doug Breehl-Pitorak.

**Public commenters push for participatory budgeting; council discusses ARPA contract delays**

**Jan 9th** – Mental Cleveland City Council  
Covered by Documenters Yorel Warr and Chau Tang

**New council member:** Council appointed Danny Kelly to represent Ward 11. Outgoing Council Member Brian Mooney narrowly won a race for Cuyahoga County judge in the November 2022 election. Kelly is coming from a job with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. He is also a retired construction worker with Laborer's Local 310.



Jonathan Welle of Participatory Budgeting CLE speaks in Council Chambers Jan. 9, 2023. (Credit: Cleveland City Council YouTube / Org: Cleveland City Council).

**What happened:** Public comment returned when City Council met Jan. 9 after a four-week holiday break. Five community members spoke in favor of participatory budgeting, a process that lets residents help decide how the city spends some public money. Mayor Justin Bibb and three council members introduced legislation that would support a pilot program. "Participatory budgeting is a concrete, proven practice for getting people involved in the decisions that matter most," Ward 6 resident Ben Stein said.

**And also:** Council passed legislation allowing the city to contract with the Fair Housing Center for Rights and Research. The center will work with a group focused on vacant properties.

**City Council members discuss ARPA contract delays**

**Jan. 9** – Caucus meeting, Cleveland City Council  
Covered by Documenter Kellie Morris

**What happened:** Cleveland City Council met as a caucus, a gathering where council members typically discuss issues but take no formal

action on them. But in this meeting, they voted as a political group to accept the nomination of Danny Kelly to council. Kelly will replace Brian Mooney as representative of Ward 11. Council formally approved Kelly's appointment at its regular meeting later that night.

**ARPA contract issues:** Council President Blaine Griffin said the city is behind in issuing contracts related to ARPA. He said only one ARPA contract has been paid and that the city is considering hiring a law firm to draft contracts.

**Students on Almira School's IT team present on their work**

**Jan. 10** – Board of Education Work Meeting, Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Covered by Documenters Kellie Morris, Giorgiana Lascu, and Charlestine Pride

**What happened:** Current and past students from Almira PreK-8 Academy spoke about their positive



Karen Dorsey, Verizon tech coach at Almira PreK-8 Academy, tells the board about the school's tech lab. (Credit: Cleveland Metropolitan School District YouTube / Org: Cleveland Metropolitan School District).

experiences with the school's tech team. Almira has a 5G Tech Lab sponsored by Verizon. It offers students the chance to experiment with coding and 3D printing. The team presented Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) CEO Eric Gordon with a tech team t-shirt.

**Grant for enhanced safety:** A \$2.4 million grant from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission is on the table. It would be put toward safety and security in the form of parking-lot lighting, new metal detectors, new cameras, and more. The board is set to hold a vote on the grant at a future meeting.

**And also:** Gordon is set to step down as CEO at the end of the school year. Board Chair Anne Bingham referenced a newly launched page on CMSD's website where community members can track updates on the search for a new CEO and take a survey about the search. It also has details on how to attend community meetings in person or virtually. There was meeting scheduled for, Jan. 18, and Jan. 19.

**RTA planning to upgrade rail systems dating from the 1920s**

**Jan. 10** – Standing Committees, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority  
Covered by Documenters McKenzie Merriman and Gennifer Harding-

Gosnell

**RTA planning to upgrade rail systems dating from the 1920s**

**Jan. 10** – Standing Committees, Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Covered by Documenters McKenzie Merriman and Gennifer Harding-Gosnell

**What happened:** The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) board of trustees Operational

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Planning & Infrastructure Committee approved a proposal to select Clark Transportation Consultation &

Services to help with repairs to the signal system on the Blue and Green Line light rail lines. The project, to replace equipment from the 1920s, would result in a six-week shutdown affecting service between E. 79th Street and Shaker Square. The full board of trustees is set to hold a final vote on the contract at a future meeting.

Surveys coming: A separate GCRTA committee approved the hiring of

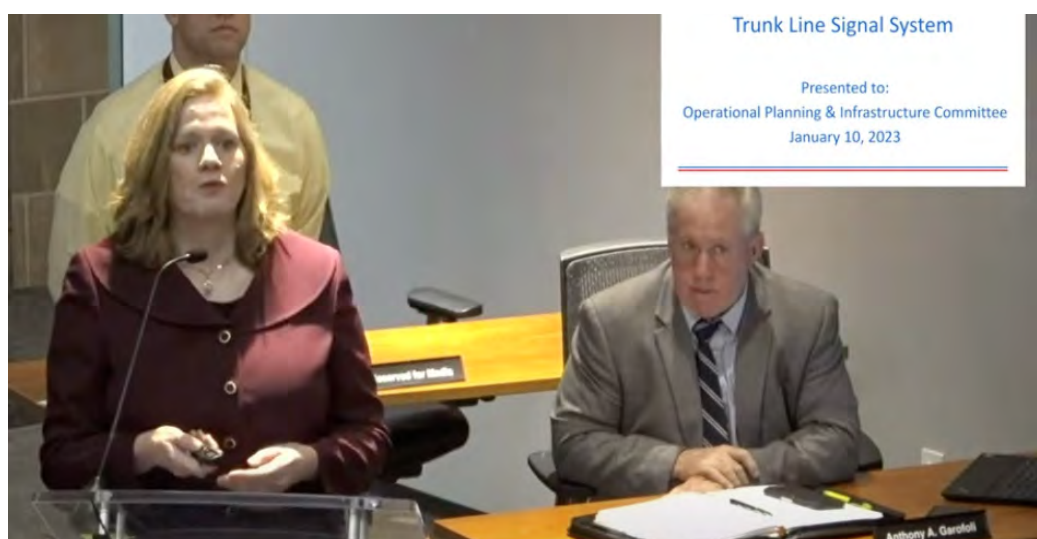
ETC Institute to produce community and customer surveys. A community value survey will focus on perception, while the customer survey will focus on service satisfaction, presenters said. The proposal goes to the full board next.

**Handful of West Park residents oppose event center**

**Dec. 12** – Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals

Covered by Documenters Karima McCree-Wilson and Giorgiana Lascu

**What happened:** The board denied a business owner's request to use a West Park building as an event center. Precanna Brown, owner of LeSweets Party LLC, had leased the space to hold meetings, baby showers and



Karen Kathleen McGervey, resident engineer/architect with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA), explains plans for signal repair on the light rail system. (Credit: GCRTA YouTube / Org: GCRTA)

### Article Submission Policy

The Cleveland Observer will take article submissions electronically via email or through theclevelandobserver.com. Registration required. Submitter must provide name, e-mail address, and phone number with submission.

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retirement parties. Seven nearby residents urged the board to deny the request as did Ward 17 Council Member Charles Slife. City Planner Shannan Leonard said City Planning supported Brown's request. Leonard said Brown, who is Black, sought to create a space where everyone -- including people who look like her

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## Cleveland News Wire-Highlights From page 2

would feel comfortable. She said the community had not welcomed Brown or her business. Slife and Board Chair Kelley Britt pushed back on that and Britt asked Leonard to stick to the zoning facts.

**Focus on the landlord:** Resident Susie Coreno said the community's resistance has more to do with a permanent zoning change to the neighborhood than with Brown or her business. Rosemary Murdy, of West Park Kamm's Corner Neighborhood Development, said the crux of the issue rests with a landlord who acts first and seeks forgiveness later, something she sees as a trend in Cleveland. Daniel Packis, representing his mother, who is listed as the property owner, said he did not realize the event space went against the zoning code when he issued the lease. And also: The board approved Jaishawna Bates' request to operate a daycare in Ward 6. Bates intends to care for up to 12 children per shift.

The zoning case tied to Precanna Brown's business dates back to 2021. Brown also discussed the issue in a March 4 City Planning Commission meeting. Introduction to Cleveland zoning by City Planning's Matt Moss.

**Community members express concerns about school security**  
**Dec. 13** - Board of Education Business Meeting, Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
*Covered by Documenters Kellie Morris and Nicholas Ventura*

**What happened:** Five speakers - including parents and employees - addressed the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Board of Education. Topics included school security and the \$20 million donation from billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. Famika Bonner said CMSD needs to assign a full-time security officer to Marion C. Seltzer



Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (BOE) officials discuss building repairs, early in-person voting, and precinct maps. Left to right: Board Member Lisa Stickan, Deputy Director Anthony Kaloger (top right) and Director Anthony Perlatti. (Credit: Cuyahoga County BOE YouTube / Org: Cuyahoga County BOE).

School, where Bonner works. Don Freeman asked CEO Eric Gordon if the district is capable of filling 63 vacant security positions by February 2023. Gordon said no. **Deadline for selecting high schools:** Gordon announced that the district is encouraging eighth-graders and their families to select high schools by Jan. 15, 2023.

**And also:** The board approved the hiring of 41 employees, including teachers, substitute teachers, and paraprofessionals, who support teachers and students.

**Board of Elections talks ward and precinct changes**  
**Dec. 14** - Cuyahoga County Board of Elections  
*Covered by Documenter Marvetta Rutherford*

**What happened:** The board formally acknowledged ward changes and precinct changes in six communities: Bay Village, Berea, Brook Park, Fairview Park, Garfield Heights and Parma. The city councils adjust the wards due to population changes, and the Board of Elections (BOE) adjusts the precincts, said Board Director Anthony Perlatti. **Capital improvements:** Various repairs are ongoing at a building housing BOE

facilities. Perlatti detailed challenges to elevator repairs at the Halle Building downtown, as well as a leaky roof at the Perkins garage. They also reviewed conditions at another building the board uses. Members discussed the possibility of relocating operations -- including early in-person voting -- for upcoming elections.

**And also:** The board acknowledged a staff report on early in-person voting for the Nov. 8 election. There were 261 "takeaway" voters who picked up a ballot from the early-voting location, and later returned it to the office or a curbside dropoff box.

**Sidaway Bridge moves closer to landmark status**  
*Covered by Documenters Juice McKenna, Christina Easter and Tina Scott*

**What happened:** The Cleveland City Planning Commission signed off on designating the Sidaway Bridge a Cleveland landmark. Cleveland City Council has final say over city landmark designations and still must approve the legislation. The Sidaway Bridge is a pedestrian foot bridge that rises above a wooded area off of Kinsman Road and the Opportunity Corridor. An unknown person set some of the bridge on

fire and removed planks during the Hough Riots in 1966, disconnecting a mostly Black neighborhood and a mostly white one. The city, which owns the bridge, never repaired it.

**One less barrier to Public Square bollards:** Plans

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## Uncle Sam Called—He Wants His Taxes



By Ray'Chel Wilson

Jay-Z once rapped, "It's gross what I net." Great line! However, how many of us don't know what that means? Today, we introduce the topic of taxes.

Taxes are financial charges placed on individuals, businesses, and other entities by the government. They fund public services and programs. When we pay taxes, the government can use the money to help people in our community. The government uses our tax dollars to pay for things such as schools, roads, and even the police and firefighters who keep us safe. Just like we have to pay for things we want or need, the government needs money to do its job too.

The government takes taxes from people's paychecks,



which means a certain amount of money is taken out of what you earn.

People also have to file a tax form every year which is similar to a report card that tells the government how much money you made and how much tax you owe. However, some people

might not owe any taxes because they don't make a lot of money.

Want to best prepare for tax season? Here's how you can plan for taxes, based on your employment status:

### For our side hustlers:

1. Keep track of your income earned using an accounting management software like WaveApps. Opening a business account with a bank or local credit union (which are often more community-focused than banks) will help you start this organization process.
2. Keep track of your expenses. Things like materials you used, equipment you bought, or money you spent to tell people about your side job can be written off as a tax deduction, meaning you pay fewer taxes for having business expenses. It's like when your child gets a toy at the store and they have a coupon, you don't have to pay the full price, you can use the coupon and pay less. It's the same thing with taxes—you might be able to pay less because of the money you spent doing your side job.
3. Keep track of your calendar. Taxes are typically due on April 15 of each year, with financial penalties if you submit late. Begin your tax reporting process early!

### For those employed:

1. When you have a job and get paid, your employer takes out money from your paycheck to pay taxes to the government.



This is called withholding taxes. Your employer uses a form called W-4 to know how much money to take out.

2. At the end of the year, your boss gives you a form called a W-2 that shows how much money you made and how much tax was taken out of your paycheck. You need this form to fill out your tax returns.
3. It's important to make sure all the information on your W-4 and W-2 forms is correct; including your name, address, and social security number, otherwise, it might cause a problem when you file your taxes.
4. You can also take off from your taxes some of the money you spent on things such as donations given to charity or money paid for state taxes. These are called deductions. In addition, there are also special discounts you can receive on your taxes called credits.
5. If you have questions about taxes or need help filling out your tax forms, you can ask

an experienced adult you trust or a tax expert such as an accountant.

A tax refund, also known as a "refund check," occurs when the government gives back money to individuals who have paid too much in taxes. The returned amount is the excess money that was paid and is not considered additional income. The refund check is the government returning money that it had been holding on to, similar to how a savings account holds onto money.

It's important to remember that taxes can be complicated, and if you've never completed a tax return before, you may need help understanding how they work and how much you owe. When in doubt, seek help through an online service such as TurboTax.com or a tax expert like an accountant.

Stay tuned for the next article to always better your money moves.

**Affirm:** The more I manage my money, the more it will flow to me.

## A New Creation—Really?



Editorial by Larry Frazier

At some point in time after making their first confession of faith, I wonder how many people have said, "I don't feel renewed, or different for that matter." The good news is that God's work does not depend upon, nor necessarily produce, emotional feelings within you.

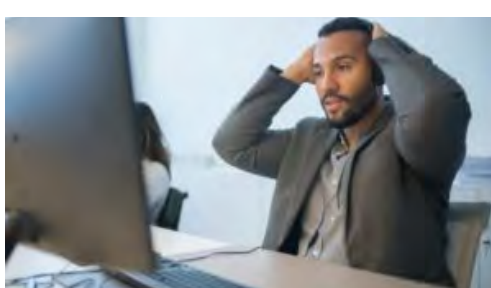
God's initial work in you goes by many names, such as renewal, regeneration, rebirth, saved, and being born again. "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13). God's act of renewing a person is a spiritual thing, not physical. This action involves God producing faith within you, changing you, and giving you a different way to work. By way of an imperfect example, think of us for a moment

as computers. People are like new computers without software or older ones that already have an operating system. Without the proper software, a computer is not useful at all and will not perform correctly. Just as computers need regular software updates, so God has to give us regular faith-strengthening.

Problems at home, work, school, in the nation, around the world, and in our relationships can pick at our spiritual well-being and wear down our faith. We are prey to an unbelieving world and sometimes forget the strength given to us in our regeneration. Sometimes



church members come to their pastors and ask to be baptized again because they don't feel renewed and empowered. Pastors must remind them, "One Lord, one faith,



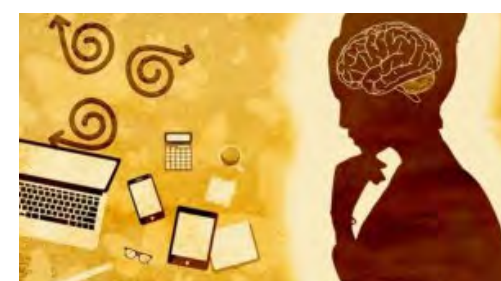
one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:6).

God has given us examples in His word of how believers can sometimes experience doubt and weakened faith. The father of the boy stricken by an evil spirit came to Jesus for help, saying, "I do believe; help me to overcome my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). At the death of her brother Lazarus, Martha, feeling let down, said to Jesus, "If You had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). Paul the Apostle acknowledged his weakness and sin, saying, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate, I do...What a wretched man I am!" (Romans 7:15, 24).

Our emotions, feelings, and actions come and go like tides in the

ocean. Be glad that our salvation is not tied to such changing things. The words of the Psalmist are comforting: "If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness" (Psalm 130:3, 4).

If you don't know Jesus, He desires you to be part of His spiritual family: "And it shall come to pass that whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord SHALL • BE • SAVED" (Acts 2:21). And if you are already a child of God, you are a NEW creation. Don't let your emotions and feelings deceive you. Jesus has told His spiritual brothers and sisters all they need to know, saying, "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).



## Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority: SOARing Into Sisterhood!



SCAN TO LISTEN

By Belva Denmark-Tibbs

Spring is arriving early in Downtown Cleveland, blossoming with beautiful shades of pink and green.

The Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated is excited to host the 92nd Great Lakes Regional Conference in Cleveland, Ohio at the Huntington Cleveland Convention Center, March 2-5, 2023. Under the leadership of Gwendolyn L. Kirtley, their regional director, this annual conference will attract over 3,000 members from Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, and Western New York.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated is a historic organization founded by African-American women in 1908 on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C. They have over 325,000 members who are dedicated to serving their communities, their country, and the world through international service programs.

Members are dynamic, college-educated women from a variety of professional backgrounds. Many are business owners, attorneys, doctors, nurses, social workers, artists, engineers, and more. They are also servant leaders who unselfishly serve their communities through sorority activities. The annual conference offers leadership and personal development opportunities for its members and helps strengthen skills in the areas of community programming, volunteerism, and organizational sustainability.

As an international not-for-profit volunteer service organization, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. is focused on empowering families, building economic wealth, enhancing the environment, advocating for social justice, uplifting local communities, and providing service to all mankind. Additionally, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Educational Advancement Foundation (EAF) awards numerous scholarships and grants every year to deserving college students.

On Friday, March 3, 2023, at 7 p.m., the public meeting will recognize local leaders and celebrate the service leaders in the Greater Cleveland community for their hard work that aligns with its initiatives. This year, AKA Great Lakes Region in collaboration with local organizations is hosting a community job fair on Thursday, March 2, 2023, at the Hilton Downtown Cleveland Hotel. They are looking forward to affording the community the opportunity to attend the Great Lakes Regional Conference job fair and meet with local businesses and organizations that are ready to hire.

*Belva Denmark-Tibbs, 92nd Great Lakes Regional Conference chairperson is a guest content provider for the Cleveland Observer.*



## First Black Media Initiative Bridge Project

From front page

distribution. Danny Tisdale, Publisher, will participate in the program. Denver Urban Spectrum is an award winning monthly publication based in Denver, Colorado that has been spreading the news about people of color since 1987. It is supported by advertising dollars, donations, and event sponsorship but adding an audience revenue strategy would be a big boost to the newsroom's growing operations. Brittany Winkfield, Transition Coordinator, will participate in the program. The New Tri-State Defender is the home for news, entertainment, and information specifically focused on the African-American community in Greater Memphis and beyond. It is the oldest African-American-owned newspaper company in the tri-state area of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. Latasha Jackson, Administrative Assistant,

will participate in the program. Bloc By Block News is a media cooperative owned by readers and news producers. The outlet is helping Marylanders make informed decisions in communities through its newsletter, social media, and mobile app. Kevon Paynter, Executive Director and Co-Founder, will participate in the program. The Cleveland Observer is an information and resource hub that engages, educates, and empowers Cleveland's urban communities. The news outlet reports on relevant topics through timely news updates, effective content communications, collaboration with partners, and efficient programming. Ron Calhoun, Publisher, will participate in the program..

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## No Pork at Samone's



By Marvetta Rutherford

When the door opens, the first thing you notice at Samone's Kitchen is the positive vibe. From the paintings and fresh décor to the well wishes of their first customers on the "Dollar Wall," the smell of great food is wafting across the room, and the folks behind the counter smile as you walk in.

"I try to interact in a positive mood with my customers. They may not be in a good mood, but I try to be nice and proactive. I treat people like I want to be treated. This has earned us respect in the area," said Samone Robinson, owner of Samone's Kitchen.

L.C. and Samone Robinson In six short months, Samone and LC Robinson have transformed a vacant spot and blessed a neighborhood with Samone's Kitchen. Located at 3705 E 116th St. at the roundabout of MLK and Farringdon in Union-Miles, this place has a welcome variety of foods, including breakfast all day. But if you love pork products, don't

visit unless you're open-minded.

They have a full array of dinners, sandwiches, drinks, and baked goods. They are priced right, even by today's standards. From the dreams of this East Cleveland couple, they have produced a good place for neighbors to support. From the steady stream of customers, the Robinsons are doing something right.

Depending on your taste buds, choose from a huge array:

- Gyros
- French Toast
- BLT
- Omelets

- Salmon Burgers
- Shrimp And Grits
- Veggie Burgers
- Wings
- Assorted Phillies
- Mac n Cheese, and more

The other half of this couple, LC, is a modest but loving man. "I work for her," he says. As a Muslim, LC doesn't eat pork, and when they began dating, Samone excluded pork from her diet as well. The customers have learned to love beef bacon and the other meats they offer.

Samone says that in light



of the heightened crimes in the area, she wonders what more they can do to instill positivity into the community. She suggested that artwork be done on the blank canvas that is the exterior of her business. The "right words" are important to her to uplift the people that are driving by, not just her customers. "Auntie" is what many young people call her. "All of the people need a mental uplift as well as full stomachs with good food. The community has been very supportive and we have customers who come in every day," she says.

Together, they work as a powerful team and serve meals with grace and the most important ingredient—love.



L.C. and Samone Robinson owner's of Samone's Kitchen. Located at 3705 E 116th St.

## How NOT To Become A Slave: Editorial



By Margaret Adams

In 21st-century America, it is important for citizens to learn how to avoid enslavement. Since this is Black History Month, let's examine the history and system of slavery in the U.S., and go over ways to protect yourself from becoming a modern-day "slave."

Slavery has existed throughout mankind's history and on every continent. Slaves built most of the world's monuments. But the enslavement of Africans for the purpose of economic exploitation in the U.S. attracts the most attention. The African slave trade as practiced by this country's founders is said to be one of the most inhumane treatments of a group of people.

The Emancipation Proclamation was supposed to be the formal end of slavery. While the law stated slavery was over, it has been practiced in other forms throughout the years, such as Jim Crow laws that were enacted after emancipation. Segregation has been another form of slavery, denying people of African descent access to the same benefits that people of the dominant society enjoy every day. The United States has been

very creative in enslaving the very people they claimed to set free on Jan. 1, 1863.

Here are some suggestions for avoiding modern-day enslavement in this country.

First, become knowledgeable. The less you know about your history and the world around you, the more easily you can become enslaved. During slavery, teaching slaves to read was not encouraged. Educate yourself and take advantage of the educational and library systems in this country. Make it a point to learn your personal family history, then the history of the people who were brought here against their will. Learn the history of the U.S. on your own, not the history that has been promoted and taught by the dominant society of this country.

Learn how the local, state, and federal governments are supposed to operate and vote accordingly. Since slavery, the vote has been denied or suppressed because the vote means the power to change things. By not reading and voting, you become more likely to be enslaved by this system.

Next, stay out of jail. After emancipation, laws were enacted so that former slaves could be jailed for numerous petty reasons. Once jailed, they were placed on chain gangs that provided free labor under the law. Today's form of chain gangs is the school-to-prison pipeline which provides labor at a



low pay rate (as low as \$3/month in Ohio) and results in former inmates losing their right to vote and gain meaningful employment. When legitimate employment can't be found, former inmates resort back to crime and the cycle repeats itself.

Next, don't be a slave to debt. This country denies poor people, people of color, and especially Black people the opportunity to participate economically on equal footing. While denying equal participation in financial wealth building, the financial institutions have been very clever and creative in the ways they have managed to trap people into never-ending debt situations. This is done by pushing credit card debt,

and predatory lending practices. People are constantly bombarded via the media with things they just have to buy. This is by design—the more they can get people to buy and live above their incomes, the richer the few billionaires who own almost everything become.

So, during this Black History Month and every day and month hereafter, let's put on our armor and fight against 21st-century enslavement. Become more knowledgeable, vote, stop criminal activities, and don't be a slave to consumer debt.

## Promises, Plans and Progress in Central



By Kellie Morris

Since the early 1800s, a diverse group of people defined the streets from Euclid to Woodland and 22nd St. to 71st St. as Cleveland's Central neighborhood. According to a historical account in the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, the area was identified as multi-ethnic. It was home to German, Greek, Italian, Hungarian, and Jewish immigrants. With the Great Migration of the 1900s, many African Americans relocated to the area from the South. Today the community remains populated by African Americans.

Poverty has been the central economic condition of the area throughout its history. Historically smaller, family-owned businesses once lined the streets of Woodland, East 55th, and Central. Gwendolyn Garth, a lifelong Central resident, remembers Kronheim Furniture Company and Gleason's Musical Bar. Today, the same is true with the absence of large retailers, pharmacies, and grocers. Central is the focus of a coordinated effort of development to bring residents, housing, jobs, and businesses to the area.

Cleveland's Central neighborhood has been in the conversation for change for years. Now some of that change is visible, tangible, and experienced. The recent demolition of the Carver Park Estates draws stark responses from those who work at local businesses. Horace Duncan, who has worked at the Friendly Inn for over 30 years, identifies the demolition as the biggest change that he has seen in his 69 years of life. Mr. Duncan was raised in the Central community. He still remembers the address of his childhood home on Quincy Avenue, and how they complained that 20 cents was too much money to pay to see a movie. The Haltnorth Theatre was located on East 55th St. and Woodland Ave and was one other neighborhood institution that did not survive the changing times in Central. He remembers when Central High School welcomed students. He now applauds the

potential for the building to be renovated to create 90 senior apartments, saying, "it's about time something was done with the building." Movie theatres, schools, and apartment buildings are just some of the entities that one would expect to see in a neighborhood but are those the only elements that make a neighborhood viable? According to a story published by Jindie, the following items are 12 factors that contribute to the building of a great neighborhood ([www.jindie.com.au/blog/12-things-that-make-a-neighbourhood-truly-great](http://www.jindie.com.au/blog/12-things-that-make-a-neighbourhood-truly-great)). Is Central a great neighborhood? Can it become a great community?

### Pride In Ownership

This is identified as one of the most common factors of a great neighborhood. Whether one owns or rents their residence, the way the residences are maintained is important. The dominance of subsidized housing has been a mainstay of the Central

park from 55th and Kinsman to Woodland. They indicated that businesses seek to locate near the recently opened Opportunity Corridor. Other developers like Beacon Communities, LLC, TCB Ohio, Incorporated and Burten Bell Carr CDC have invested in building apartments in the former Central High School and Mount Auburn Elementary School respectively. International Food Solutions and Snap Gourmet Foods plan to operate businesses with the support of a grant from the US Department of Agriculture and the State of Ohio, according to a story recently published in Cleveland.com

([www.cleveland.com/news/2023/01/frozen-meal-producer-gets-96-million-grant-for-plant-in-cleveland.html](http://www.cleveland.com/news/2023/01/frozen-meal-producer-gets-96-million-grant-for-plant-in-cleveland.html)).

### Low Crime Rate

Crime statistics reports do not report favorably about Central or Cleveland overall, but efforts to improve policing are a priority for



Proposed development for the Central Neighborhood.

community since the 1930s. According to historical accounts, the Outhwaite Homes Estates, the Cedar Apartments, and Lakeview Terrace were the first three public housing projects to be completed in Cleveland. In recent years several new homes have been built in the area.

### Lifestyle Match

This is referring to the ability to access activities that one enjoys, for example, baseball. Central has a baseball field within its borders at the Lonnie Burten Recreation Center. It is located close to Progressive Field and League Park, both of which are in the neighboring communities.

### A Passionate Developer

Several businesses are committing to development in Central. Representatives from Biggar Ventures and Premier Development attended a community meeting in September 2022 hosted by Ward 5 Councilman Richard Starr. They shared their desire to purchase land and build a business

Cleveland residents. The residents passed Issue 24 to create a Citizens Police Review Board. The police continue to work through the Cleveland Consent Decree. The Mayor and the Cleveland City Council consistently fund tools to support policing in an effort to make the city safe for residents and visitors.

### Great Schools

The educational landscape is complicated. The schools that exist in Central (parts of 44115 and 44104) are public and private. They also serve those from elementary to elders. There are Cleveland Public Schools (K-8) open to residents. They have the support of Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood, which supports academic success from "cradle to college." For grades 9-12, Cleveland residents may select a high school. There are also chartered high schools in the area. New Bridge Cleveland Education Center offers Adult Workforce Programs and Certifications. The main campus of Cuyahoga



Central resident Horace Duncan

Community College is also located in Central, which allows access to the campus for members of the Central Community.

### Outdoor Activities

There are no parks located within Central, but playground equipment for the area youth can be seen on the grounds of the housing complexes. The Lonnie Burten Recreation Center, which Mr. Duncan remembers as the "POC" (Portland-Outhwaite Center), is also available to the residents.

### Historical Vibe and Landmarks

Although Central is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Cleveland, some of the historical content has been lost with the building of gas stations, fast-food restaurants, shopping plazas, and other construction. The historical sites that remain are identified as the Woodland Cemetery, Shiloh Baptist Church, and The Phillis Wheatley Association by the Encyclopedia of Cleveland/Case Western University.

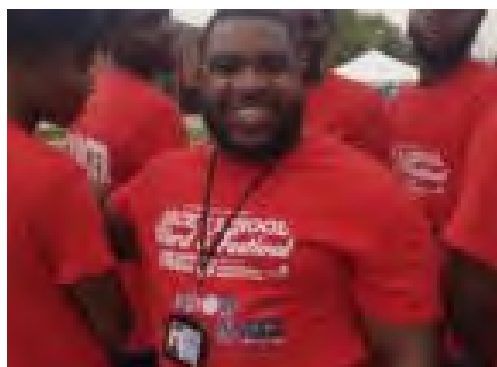
### Access to Healthcare

Residents are able to access wellness care at St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, Faith Community Baptist Clinic, and Care Alliance.

### Family Friendly

Residents live within close proximity. Area churches, community organizations like Friendly Inn, and Councilman Richard Starr sponsor events for residents to come together.

Continue on page 8



Councilman Starr (center) with other volunteers



Festival hair stylists

## Progress in Central From page 7

They sponsor community meals, neighborhood clean-up drives, and festivals. The Ward 5 Back-2-School Festival held in August 2022 was a well-attended community event where residents were able to connect with resources and children received school supplies and had their hair styled by volunteers.

### Close to Public Transportation

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority provides various routes of transportation for residents.

### Shopping & Restaurants

There are some smaller retail businesses that exist in the community. Residents desire to have a larger retail grocer. Today, residents have the option of online grocers like Misfit Markets or grocery delivery through Instacart. Residents also shop at Steelyard Commons or nearby neighborhoods.

### Walkability

The area is walkable with sidewalks, crosswalks, and street lighting. The residents have access to libraries and the post office.

These are the things that make Central a neighborhood of

promises, plans, and progress. Residents of the Central community will have the opportunity to share their opinions about their hopes for the neighborhood by speaking to the Signal Central Listening Team. This team will be available on Tuesdays from 3pm to 5pm at the Sterling Branch of the Cleveland Public Library (2200 E 30th St between Central & Cedar Aves.) during the months of February and March.



## Legal Aid Helps With Rental Housing Questions



By Tonya Sams

There are a number of questions that may come up when you are a tenant of a rental property. Renters may feel that they have very few rights because they do not own the property that they dwell in. If tenants are unaware of their rights, they can be taken advantage of by their landlords. Legal Aid can help answer your questions regarding these rights.

Tenants can call Legal Aid's Tenant Information Line at 216-861-5955 and leave a message. A housing specialist will call back during normal business hours, within 1-2 business days. Legal Aid housing specialists can answer several tenant questions such as:

- Am I allowed to break my lease?
- My landlord needs to make repairs. How can I get them to do this?
- What can I do to get my security deposit back?

- Do I have to keep paying rent if my landlord is not paying the utilities that they are responsible for?
- Do I need to move if I received a 3-day notice?
- How much can my landlord charge for late fees?

Legal Aid's Tenant Information Line is for information only. Callers will get answers to their questions and will also receive information about their rights. Some callers may be referred to other organizations for additional help. Callers who need legal assistance may be referred to Legal Aid's intake or a neighborhood Brief Advice Clinic. For a list of upcoming free Brief Advice Clinic dates and locations, visit [laslev.org/events](http://laslev.org/events). For more information about Legal Aid's Tenant Info Line, visit [laslev.org/tenantinfo](http://laslev.org/tenantinfo).

*Tonya Sams is the Development and Communications Assistant for The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.*

## By the People, For the People?



By Bruce Checefsky

Ward 13 Councilman Kris Harsh shook his head in disbelief while PB CLE Organizer Jonathan Welle called on city council members to support funding for participatory budgeting. Welle spoke on behalf of PB CLE during the public comments portion at the Jan. 9 council meeting.

Mayor Bibb proposed legislation under a pilot participatory budgeting program intended to engage historically underrepresented and marginalized communities in the further selection and funding of projects within and by the city. The plan calls for more than \$500,000 from the City's Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (ARPA) to cover initial administrative costs.

"Opposing a people's budget means looking residents in the eye and telling them that they don't deserve a vote on how to spend public money," said Welle.

Harsh responded to his public comments in an email to the paper by saying that while community organizing is essential, the PB CLE coalition has put the cart in front of the horse.

"I was an activist and organizer for two decades. Whenever

you can organize people around issues that matter to them and push reforms you are doing good work. The problem with Participatory Budgeting is that they have put the cart in front of the horse. Instead of organizing the community and advocating for reforms, they are demanding money so that they can organize the community. This demand comes on the premise that the government does not adequately represent the voters.

"This statement [by Johnathan Welle] is asinine and feeds into the same anti-government sentiment that right-wing activists have been using for decades to undermine our institutions of democracy. The idea that saying 'no' to a blanket request for \$5 million is itself a rebuke of citizen involvement in spending is Orwellian. The whole campaign for participatory budgeting is less democratic than our current system. This group wants tax money but won't say what for. They claim to represent 'the people' but there are only a few dozen of them. The premise of their entire argument is based on the same Reaganesque concept that government itself is the problem. Then they claim that this is going to encourage more participation in local elections! You cannot tell people 'government is a failure, go vote' with a straight face. They are leaning into shallow analysis and emotional triggers in the name of funding. Ultimately, the proposal



Robin Brown PB CLE founding member and the founder of Concerned Citizens Organized Against Lead

Mayor Bibb introduced on Monday night will first disburse \$510,000 to a local non-profit for staff and salary before even a single dollar in public spending is discussed. Participatory budgeting might be a lot of things, but it is not a transparent or democratic use of public funds."

Robin Brown (pictured in plaid coat), a PB CLE founding member and the founder of Concerned Citizens Organized Against Lead, said she would like to see the money used to support lead paint poisoning issues.

"[We] come up with sustainable ideas that we sit at our kitchen table thinking about . . . and [we come] up with an answer, but [we don't have] the resources," said Brown. "This is a way we

can start having the resources."

"As it has been presented to date, no!" said Ward 8 Councilman Michael D. Polensek, when asked if he would vote in favor of participatory budgeting. "It is set up to cause divisions in our neighborhoods! Not good! I came into the council as a community activist! Now we have to pay folks to attend or organize community meetings, give me a break!" PB CLE organizers expect to see the results of their advocacy and organizing by late February or March of this year.

*This article first appeared in the Plain Press.*

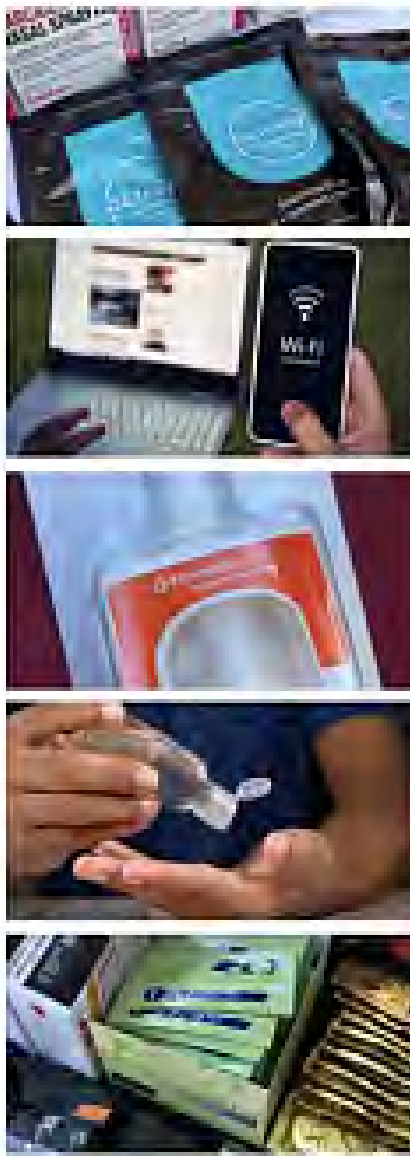




## Pop-up Event at The SE Cleveland Resource Center



PROJECT WHITE BUTTERFLY



### About The Event

- NARCAN & TRAINING
- HYGIENE & SAFER USE KITS
- RECOVERY SUPPORT
- WIFI ACCESS
- KIDS BOOKS
- & MORE

**EVERYTHING IS FREE!**

### When?

Date: : Every 2nd Wednesday of the Month  
Time : 11 am- 2 pm  
Location : 5211 Fleet Ave, Cleveland, Ohio

Cant make it? That's alright, these resources are still available to you. Give us a call or send us a message on Facebook!

 [216-598-5647](tel:216-598-5647)

 [www.thrive4change.org](http://www.thrive4change.org)

 [arossier@thrive4change.org](mailto:arossier@thrive4change.org)


 [Thrive for Change](#)

## TCO Kids Korner February 2023



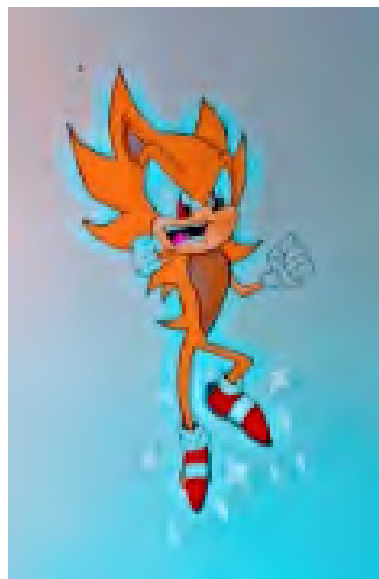
By Trish Johnson

### Season's Greetings from the TCO Kids Korner!

Greetings! I hope you are having a great new year so far!  
Please enjoy our latest reader submissions, many of which were in response to our request for Valentine's Day drawings. 



Happy Valentine's Day! - Heaven S. Age 6



Nathaniel Y. - Age 20



Happy Valentines Day Mommy from me and Cleo - Ebony B - Age 8



Ebony B. - Age 8



Happy Valentines Day from Snoopy - Ume S. - Age 10



Nathaniel Y. - Age 20



Nathaniel Y. - Age 20

# UNDERSTANDING CLEVELAND'S WARD BOUNDARIES (EXPLAINER)



SCAN TO LISTEN

**How are wards drawn? How have they changed over time? How might they change in the future?**

by Abbey Marshall

Cleveland has 17 City Council wards. Many Clevelanders probably think about those boundaries when they elect council members every four years - or if they need to know who to call about a problem with their trash cans.

The number of council seats is expected to shrink by two before 2025 because Cleveland's population is shrinking. That means the ward boundaries will change.

How does that happen? Who gets to decide which wards are eliminated and which new ward takes in those residents?

## What is a ward?

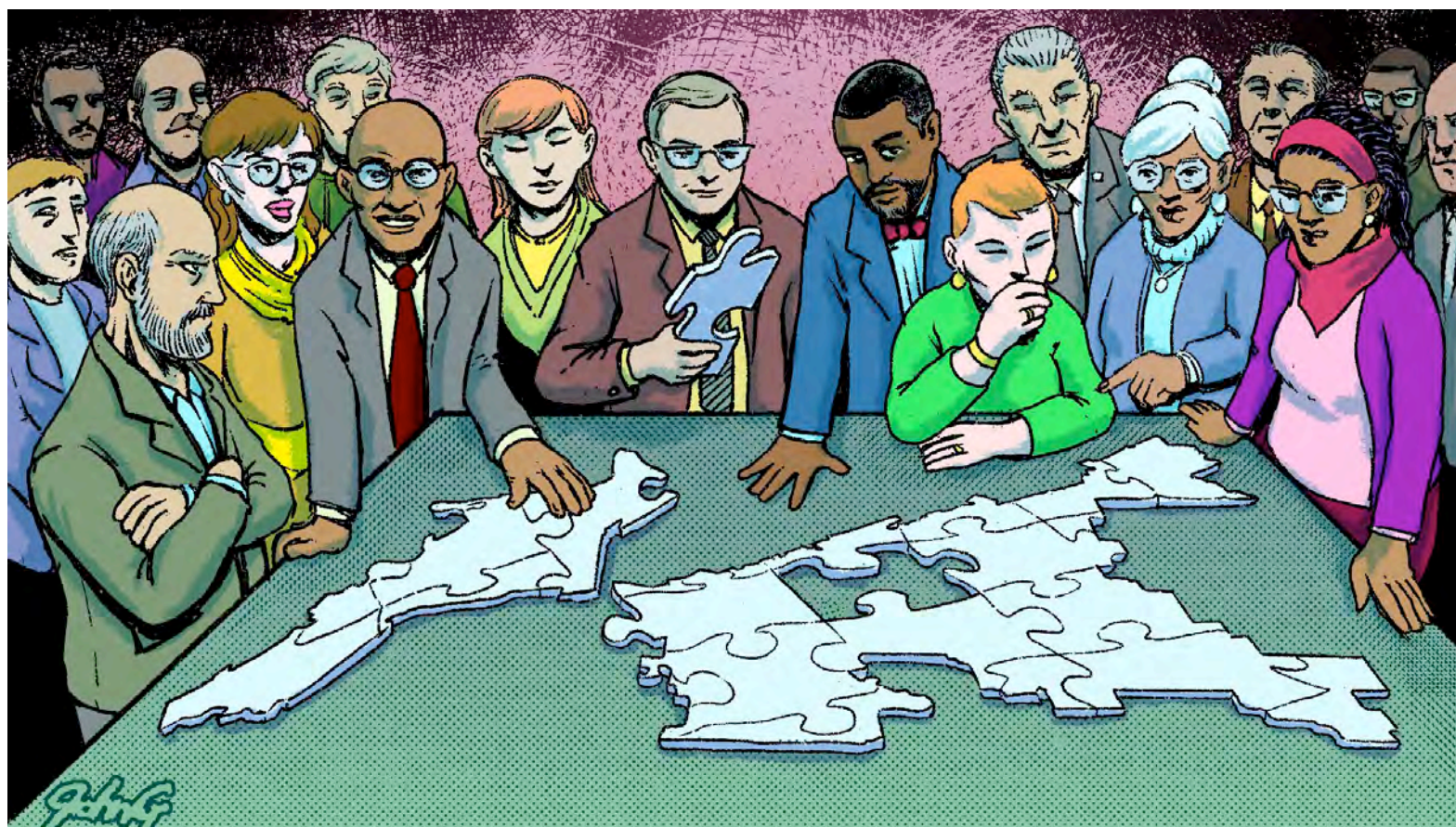
A ward is a political boundary used to determine representation on Cleveland City Council. Right now there are 17 wards, a number that can fluctuate based on population change.

Unlike other major Ohio cities such as Cincinnati and Columbus, Cleveland has no at-large council members, who represent the city as a whole rather than individual wards.

Update: In 2023, Columbus will shift from at-large council seats to seats based on new council districts. Residents citywide can vote for each of the district seats.

Geographic boundaries are created in different ways and serve different purposes. Neighborhoods can be determined informally by residents, census tracts or historical events and are often used to define community. ZIP codes are defined by the U.S. Postal Service. Ward boundaries are used to break up the city for legislative representation.

City Council elections are held every four years. In addition to their legislative responsibilities for creating and passing city laws, a council member will shoulder the responsibility to serve the ward's best interests.



Cleveland's ward boundaries have changed over the years and may change again. How are boundaries drawn and what is the process to change them? Credit: John G/Shiner Comics

Having clearly defined ward boundaries helps council members better understand the residents they serve using census data, which includes demographics of race, income and more.

## How is the number of wards determined?

Cleveland's charter, the city's governing document, details how population informs the number of wards the city will be divided into at the time of redistricting.

Number of wards will be an odd number between 11 and 25 based on population data (shown right), reflecting a ratio of roughly one ward for every 25,000 people.

The city's current population is about 367,000, according to the 2021 population data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The last time the wards were changed in 2013, Cleveland's population had dropped to about 375,000 and the number of council wards was reduced from 19 to 17.

## How are ward boundaries determined?

Ward boundaries are formed by census tracts, which include data on population, demographics and income but in the end are approved by council during the redistricting process.

Council selects a consultant to redraw the districts. Alternatively, the council president

can appoint the consultant.

Once a consultant is selected, that firm will review census data and survey the community to suggest ward boundaries. The firm then presents that information to council, which approves it as legislation.

change what is currently in the charter. That has to be approved by voters.

"We want to make sure that we don't diminish the body to the point where citizens don't have access to government the way they need to,

If the City's population is:	This City shall be divided into the following number of wards:
More than 575,000	25
575,000 or less but more than 525,000	23
525,000 or less but more than 475,000	21
475,000 or less but more than 425,000	19
425,000 or less but more than 375,000	17
375,000 or less but more than 325,000	15
325,000 or less but more than 275,000	13
275,000 or less	11

## What is redistricting, and how often does it happen in Cleveland?

Redistricting, or redrawing ward boundaries, happens once a decade after the census. According to the city's charter, the ward boundaries must be redrawn and established before the next election cycle in 2025. The city's current population requires the number of wards to decrease from the current 17 to 15 unless legislative action is taken to

but we also want to make sure we're lean enough to not be self-preserving," Cleveland City Council President and Ward 6 representative Blaine A. Griffin said.

The early stages of redistricting, such as finding a consultant and surveying the community, will likely begin soon, he said.

Redistricting can lead to divisive political debates. Two council people are slated to

Continued on page 12



## UNDERSTANDING CLEVELAND'S WARD BOUNDARIES (EXPLAINER)

From page 11

lose their wards by the 2025 election, potentially pitting current council members against each other after wards are combined. In previous redistricting processes, some council members have fought tooth-and-nail to keep their wards in place.

"I compare it to a feudal system; of course lords want to keep his or her power and seat so they will argue over the data and lines drawn and how that will shift in any direction," said Lawrence Keller, an

associate professor emeritus in Cleveland State University's public administration program. "There's a lot of behind-the-scenes negotiation.

The process can be "contentious," Keller said, citing instances in recent redistricting efforts where council members pushed for moving boundaries that would keep a majority of votes in their favor.

"Since council has to approve the boundaries, you can imagine the politics that can come up when you have to get a majority to vote," Keller said.

### Why are neighborhoods sometimes split up?

Griffin said the city attempts to keep neighborhoods as whole as possible. But sometimes population growth or loss in certain

neighborhoods makes that impossible.

"You always want to keep neighborhoods as whole as possible because people are really attached to their neighborhood, that's what gives them a sense of community, that's what people embrace as

**"We don't want to create islands of wealth, and we don't want to create islands of poverty."**

a built environment," he said.

Each of Cleveland's 34 neighborhoods has its own needs, Griffin said. The goal is to try to avoid splitting up

neighborhoods—but having diverse wards is also important.

"We don't want to create islands of wealth, and we don't want to create islands of poverty," he said. "It's good to have mixed income, mixed race — I think they make a neighborhood strong and vibrant and culturally relevant."

### How can residents get involved in the redistricting process?

Council ultimately votes on the new boundaries. Residents also have some voice in the process. The consulting firm and City Council will conduct community conversations and surveys, Griffin said, but any resident wishing to speak about redistricting may voice their opinions or concerns at the weekly City Council meeting's public comment period. ❖

## How Have Ward Boundaries Changed Over Time?

A look back on notable historical moments that shaped the makeup of today's city council.

1836

Wards: 3

### CLEVELAND INCORPORATED AS A CITY WITH THREE WARDS

When Cleveland was first established, it was at "the mercy of the state," City Archivist Charles Mocsiran said. Ohio's legislature decided how the city was split up. In 1836, there were three wards, each with three council people and one alderman (another representative)

1914

### HOME RULE ESTABLISHED

Cleveland first established home rule in 1914, allowing the city to define its own ward boundaries. Lawmakers decided to establish one ward per 25,000 residents. The measure was approved by voters, as required for any charter change.

1924 – 1931

Wards: 0

### CITY MANAGER GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED

Between 1924 and 1931, the city did away with wards entirely and instead split Cleveland into four districts with 25 council members through a city manager form of government, Mocsiran said.

1931 – 1981

Wards: 33

### CITY RE-ESTABLISHES WARDS; 33 OF THEM

The city manager system of government was changed in 1931, when Cleveland residents voted to give each new ward one council member per 30,000 people. For 50 years, Cleveland had 33 different wards and council people representing them. Though boundaries changed during those times, the number of wards did not.

1981

Wards: 21

### NUMBER OF WARDS SLASHED

In 1981, the number of wards were slashed from 33 to 21 due to a charter change and population decline. Those boundaries changed two additional times without reducing the number of wards.

2009

Wards: 19

### NEW (AND CURRENT) CHARTER ESTABLISHED

In 2009, voters approved the current charter amendment, again establishing one councilman per 25,000 residents, and the city went down to 19 wards as steady population loss continued.

2013

Wards: 17

### WARDS REDUCE AGAIN

The city then reduced its wards once more in 2013 to its current 17 based on census data.

2025

### NEXT ELECTION CYCLE

The next election cycle for city council will take place in 2025, when new maps must be finalized. As it stands, Cleveland will lose two wards due to population loss unless a new charter amendment is proposed by council and approved by voters.