IGNITE PEACE

BE A SPARK FOR JUSTICE

2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

215 E 14th St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

513.579.8547
www.ignitepeace.org

FORMERLY

Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC)



A LETTER FROM SHANNON HUGHES

Over the past year, I have witnessed extraordinary courage, compassion, and solidarity. Across Greater Cincinnati, people have chosen connection over isolation, care over punishment, and nonviolence over despair. That choice is at the heart of Ignite Peace's work and has shaped how we have grown in 2025-2026.

This was my first full year as Executive Director of Ignite Peace. I have been continually reminded that peacebuilding is both deeply relational and deeply practical. It asks us to listen, learn, prepare, teach, convene, and show up - sometimes quietly and sometimes with a megaphone. I am grateful to our committed staff, board, volunteers, partners, and supporters who make this work possible.

This year we strengthened our organizational capacity by welcoming our first Director of Development and Communications. Her leadership has already been an asset to our team, helping us tell the story of this work and build the resources we need for the years ahead. Sustaining peacebuilding requires not only responding to urgent needs, but also building the power to do this work for the long haul.

And the need is clear. This year, we trained thousands of people, strengthened coalitions, supported communities facing immigration enforcement, equipped neighbors with tools for nonviolent action, and created spaces for people to come together across differences.

The pages of this Annual Report reflect what we accomplished, what we learned, and what we are building. Thank you for building that future with us.

With gratitude,
Shannon Hughes
Executive Director, Ignite Peace



INVESTMENT AND IMPACT

$9,900
Given by our sustaining Peace Partners

652
Individual donors committed to peace

34
Advocacy actions to support justice such as letter writing for commutations, protesting ICE, and submitting testimony against harmful state legislation.

56
Training sessions and

46
Presentations shared with

2400+
individuals

"[The presentation] was gentle and well-guided, leading to a deeper understanding and different perspective."

- Unpacking Nonviolence Participant

"This was one of the best sessions I've been to in all the 65 years I've been interested [and] engaged in aiming myself to support structural justice."

- Engaging Nonviolence Partcipant



VISION

A just and peaceful world.

MISSION

Ignite Peace educates and advocates for peace, challenges unjust systems, and promotes the creation of a nonviolent society.

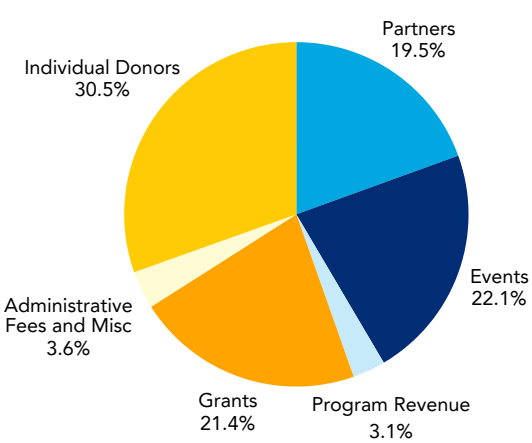
VALUES

Education
Intersectionality
Nonviolence
Racial Equity
Radical Compassion
Solidarity

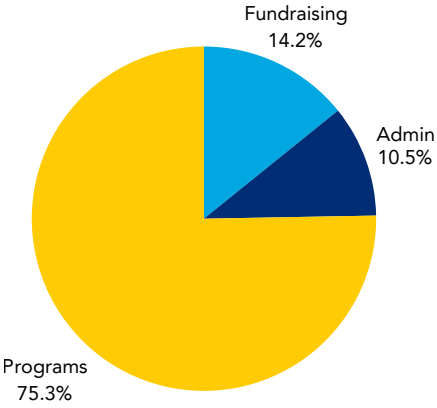


FINANCIALS

Income: $388,122



Expenses: $342,969



Ignite Peace is grateful to the many individual and community supporters whose generous contributions help us fulfill our mission.

Thank you to the following foundations and grantors: Mercy Ministry Foundation, The 513 Fund, Dominican Sisters of Hope Ministry Fund, Marianist Spirit Committee of St. Francis de Sales Parish, and Interfaith Alliance.

The financials presented here are preliminary, with final figures to be provided in our upcoming Form 990.

PARTNERS

Founding Partners

Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Congregation of St. Joseph

Partners

Anawim Community, Bellarmine Chapel, Beloved Community Church, Cincinnati Friends Meeting, City Peace Church, Congregation of Divine Providence, Dominican Sisters of Hope, Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, Glenmary Home Missioners, Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church, New Jerusalem Community, Sisters of Notre Dame of Covington, St. John Unitarian Universalist, Ursulines of Brown County, and Ursulines of Cincinnati.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

7
speaking engagements with death row exoneree Elwood Jones

339
people attended events to learn about the death penalty and receive up-to-date details on legislation

As part of the No Death Penalty Ohio Coalition, we work to mobilize grassroots supporters and people of faith to support legislation to repeal the death penalty. This year, our advocacy helped transform personal stories into public action and meaningful steps towards policy progress against both the death penalty and police brutality.

We celebrated the news that, after 30 years on death row fighting to prove his innocence, Elwood Jones became Ohio's twelfth exoneree. In collaboration with Ignite Peace, Elwood shared his journey at churches, colleges, law classes, community gatherings, and public witness events across Ohio. His story helped people see the human cost of the death penalty, exposing the devastating harm caused by prosecutorial error and the lack of accountability that follows. One professor said that students found Elwood's presentation the most impactful part of their coursework that semester.



Elwood Jones (L)
Bekky Baker (R)

After months of strategy and advocacy among coalitions, Governor DeWine called for an end to the death penalty—the first sitting Republican governor to do so. His statement outlined why it is bad policy, reflecting years of tireless activism by so many of us. It is important that we celebrate this victory while continuing to pursue clemency, accountability, and justice together.



IMMIGRATION JUSTICE

Our immigrant justice work this year was marked by courageous leadership, rapid response, and powerful community solidarity. In addition to giving educational presentations on immigration issues to 1,387 people in Greater Cincinnati this year alone, Ignite Peace continued to convene the Immigrant Dignity Coalition (IDC). IDC Rapid Response Team leaders trained 15 canvassers who reached out to businesses across 19 neighborhoods with Know Your Rights information to protect their immigrant workers and patrons. A new ICE sighting hotline is now fully operational, strengthening our Neighborhood Safety Team efforts.

35

Member Organizations and

35

Supporter Organizations of the Immigrant Dignity Coalition

422

Small Businesses canvassed with Know Your Rights Materials



Imam Ayman Soloman Freedom Day

We partnered with community members and organizations to support Imam Ayman Soliman after his detention by ICE, organizing press conferences and standing with him at rallies, vigils, and his ICE check-in.

After 72 unjust days in detention, Imam Ayman was released following a public pressure campaign that gained national attention and engagement from Ohio lawmakers.

We released an Immigration Policy Platform to the Cincinnati City Council, engaged city leaders, raised immigration questions at mayoral forums, and helped Butler County launch a long term campaign to end the county's ICE contract.



NONVIOLENCE

34
trainings and educational workshops hosted with

638
attendees

Our nonviolence programming expanded participation, strengthened relationships, bolstered our nonviolence cohort, and equipped communities with practical tools for collective action. In our second round of Engaging Nonviolence programming, several of which were open to the general public, participants explored systemic violence, conflict, and community. We also supported emerging leaders through direct-action pre-trainings, trust-building, strategy development, and case-study analysis, preparing groups to launch campaigns.

Bekky attended a Freedom Trainers train-the-trainer program in Chicago, broadening our national network and informing a new training on noncooperation as a strategy to challenge authoritarianism. We presented this curriculum to our board and later hosted the Meeting the Moment noncooperation training, bringing together people from across social justice movements. Our reach extended beyond greater Cincinnati through trainings with organizers in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and through our partnership with Pace e Bene, Bekky and Samantha led trainings for 80 participants in Madison, Wisconsin, on nonviolent direct action and campaign planning. Participants developed action plans and formed groups working to keep ICE out of Madison.



Samantha Searls (L)
Bekky Baker (R)



ANTI-RACISM

Several local groups, including Public Allies and the University of Cincinnati's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) adult learning program, engaged with our Race and Racism in Cincinnati three-part docuseries that inspires attendees to reflect on how they can address issues of race and racism where they live, work, and play. Attendees with lived experience of discrimination shared their pain, while others sat in disbelief that they've lived in Cincinnati their whole lives and never heard of some of those stories. Learning our past through the storytelling of a people's history allows us to gain perspective on how we are situated in the present.

In this era of anti-DEI efforts and Ohio's harmful SB1 going into effect, we have seen a decline in groups' ability to host our anti-racism programming.

In November of 2025, we supported the work of the Greater Cincinnati Faith Leaders by signing on to a letter calling for Ohio Representative Connie Pillich's office to address over policing.

We began 2026 by attending the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day March. We walked with Ignite Peace partners and friends to honor and commit to carrying on the legacy of Dr. King in an important unifying moment.

Through critical analysis, we continue to highlight the effects of systemic racism within our immigration and criminal justice systems. This is evident through the rise of mass surveillance and the targets of recent immigration policies and sanctions.

4

organizations and educational institutions hosted the Docuseries

55

individuals learned the history of race and racism through the Docuseries and walking tour



STAFF

Bekky Baker, MSW, Program Director
Hayley Huge, Operations Director*
Shannon Hughes, Executive Director
Samantha Searls, MSW, Program Director
Kelly Sheehy, Director of Development & Communications

BOARD

Mark "Zeek" Childers*
Shane Dixon
Corey Bushle
Sharon Harris
Michael Howard II*
Erica Johnson
Rebecca Kelley
Brad King*
Krishna Mahadevan*
Wendy Maxian, Ph.D.
Megan McClendon
Jeremiah Pennebaker
Michael Rench
Bob Sanker*
Lauren Staley

2025-2026 INTERNS

Hanna Anderson, *Aurora University*
Isabella Barb, *Xavier University*
Sarah Ann Drebes, *Xavier University*
Lilly Jarc, *Xavier University*
Andrew Lion, *U. of Cincinnati*
Teagan Phillips, *U. of Cincinnati*
Katherine Simon, *U. of Cincinnati*
Charlie Stauffer, *U. of Cincinnati*
Anneliese Rojas, *U. of Cincinnati*

*With gratitude for former Staff and Board Leaders



EACH PERSON CAN

BE A SPARK FOR JUSTICE

www.IgnitePeace.org

@IgnitePeaceCincy




IGNITE
PEACE