

# DIGNITY INDEX GLOBAL

## HUMAN RIGHTS READINESS ASSESSMENT

# *Dayton, Ohio*

*Department of Recreation*

Prepared by  
*Dignity Index Global*

# DAYTON HUMAN RIGHTS READINESS ASSESSMENT

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## Executive Summary

Dayton stands poised to become the first U.S. city to formally adopt Human Rights City status through an ordinance, joining a global network of communities committed to embedding dignity and equality in municipal governance. Following a December 2023 City Council Resolution, this assessment by Dignity Index Global evaluates Dayton's readiness through examination of the Department of Recreation, a service area that reveals how municipal systems can either advance or hinder residents' fundamental rights to health, leisure, safety, community, and cultural and political participation. **Becoming a Human Rights City is not a destination but a journey** — a commitment that demonstrates growth and potential to move toward human rights principles. This transformation must be jointly upheld by both the City's leadership and the residents, working in partnership to embed human rights into the fabric of municipal governance and community life of Dayton.

Dayton possesses meaningful assets that position it for human rights leadership. The city has completed its first recreation strategic plan in 20 years, demonstrating renewed commitment to comprehensive community services. High awareness of systemic challenges among residents and leaders creates a foundation for collaborative problem-solving, while the Peace Campaign and other initiatives show municipal dedication to addressing root causes of community challenges. Age-appropriate services span youth through seniors, and recreation staff demonstrate deep knowledge of and commitment to the communities they serve. Most importantly, Dayton's 50-year history of international partnership (including the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords), home-rule charter authority, and strong academic institutions create ideal conditions for human rights innovation.

The assessment examined three dimensions — People, Policies, and Places, revealing patterns that require urgent attention. Dayton operates three recreation centers for 137,000 residents, but service distribution reflects historical redlining patterns. West Dayton, where poverty rates reach 35–50% in surrounding census tracts, faces the most severe gaps. The Greater Dayton Recreation Center pool has remained closed since 2020, denying residents access to swimming during increasingly dangerous heat waves. Current city budget structures prioritize reactive rather than preventive approaches, though extensive research demonstrates that recreation access prevents violence, reduces health disparities, and strengthens community cohesion — making strategic investment in these services both a human rights imperative and sound fiscal policy.

## Three Foundational Weaknesses Undermining Service Effectiveness

### Communication

Systems don't reach all residents equitably – very limited multilingual materials despite 6.3% foreign-born residents; digital-only information excludes residents without internet access.

### Data Collection

No disaggregated data by neighborhood or demographic group making it impossible to demonstrate equity or target interventions effectively.

### Youth Voice

Youth remain largely absent from decision-making processes despite being primary recreation users and the population most affected by service gaps.

The assessment recommends a phased implementation approach for the Department of Recreation. Immediate priorities for the first six months include reopening the Greater Dayton Recreation Center Pool, launching disaggregated data collection within the department, and developing a robust communication system to engage and respond to community needs. For the City of Dayton, the assessment recommends creating a multi-stakeholder committee that includes youth, to work towards becoming a human rights city within the next three years.

## Recommendations: A Phased Approach

### Immediate · 1–6 Months

- Reopen GDRC pool
- Launch disaggregated data collection
- Develop robust community communication system

### Medium-Term · 6–12 Months

- Comprehensive policy review
- Staff human rights training
- Bilingual communications
- Technology upgrades

### Long-Term · 1–3 Years

- Human Rights City Ordinance
- Human Rights Office
- Neighborhood recreation network
- Annual progress reporting

The barriers documented in this assessment are not inevitable; they result from policy choices that can be changed. Dayton possesses unique advantages: legal authority through its home-rule charter, institutional capacity through its universities and international partnerships, demonstrated leadership through the Peace Campaign, and community readiness evidenced by high civic awareness. Becoming a Human Rights City with implementation standards would position Dayton as a national model, attracting resources, recognition, and partnerships while fundamentally improving quality of life for all residents.

The city that hosted negotiations ending a European war can now pioneer the framework for cities in the United States to fulfill their human rights obligations ensuring every resident, in every neighborhood, has access to the services, safety, and opportunities that human dignity requires. The question is not whether Dayton has the capacity to lead — it clearly does. The question is whether leaders will seize this moment to transform systems that currently fall short of the community's aspirations into infrastructure that makes Dayton a genuine Human Rights City.

## 1. Introduction

Dayton has established itself as a prominent city within the global diplomatic community, most notably through hosting the historic 1995 Dayton Peace Accords that ended the Bosnian War. The city maintains sister city partnerships with Augsburg, Germany; Holon, Israel; Monrovia, Liberia; and Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, fostering sustained cultural exchanges and economic collaborations. The University of Dayton, through its Human Rights Center, continues to engage actively in local, national, and global spaces while cultivating academic partnerships worldwide. Becoming a human rights city, therefore, represents not a departure but a natural progression for Dayton, a meaningful next step in its ongoing global engagement that will directly impact residents' ability to enjoy their inherent right to dignity and advance human rights principles at home.

### Human Rights Cities

The Human Rights City concept emerged in the late 1990s from a critical insight: human rights violations and systemic inequalities are most acutely experienced and most effectively addressed at the local level. While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Appendix A) established universal principles in 1948, its implementation has historically remained with national governments, often distant from people's daily realities. The Human Rights City movement represents a paradigm shift, recognizing that municipalities are where residents directly experience the fulfillment or denial of their rights to housing, education, healthcare, safety, and civic participation.

Following the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the People's Decade for Human Rights Education (PDHRE) launched the formal Human Rights Cities initiative. A Human Rights City explicitly anchors municipal governance to human rights obligations, creating what the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (Appendix B) describes as an "invigorating effect" that strengthens public trust, elevates discourse, and builds fairer societies.

Over 700 cities across five continents have declared themselves human rights cities, integrating a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) into governance, policymaking, and community engagement. Two exemplary models are Scotland and Vienna.

# DAYTON HUMAN RIGHTS READINESS ASSESSMENT

**700+**

CITIES WORLDWIDE

**5**

CONTINENTS  
REPRESENTED

**FIRST US**

DAYTON'S OPPORTUNITY

**1**

## **Legal Duty**

Public authorities must actively improve human rights, not merely avoid violations

**2**

## **Pre-Assessment**

All proposed legislation assessed for human rights impact before enactment

**3**

## **Cross-Sector**

Human rights embedded in land reform, environment, health, housing, and social protection

**4**

## **Progressive**

Government must show continuous, measurable improvement in rights realization

*Scotland's model shows that human rights governance carries legal force and measurable obligation at every level of government.*

## Vienna's Human Rights City Model

### Core Principles

#### Transparency

Open access to information and decision-making across all city functions

#### Accountability

Clear mechanisms for holding duty-bearers responsible for rights outcomes

#### Non-Discrimination

Active measures addressing all forms of discrimination in services and policy

#### Participation

Meaningful engagement of all residents, especially the most marginalized

### Innovative Mechanisms

#### Human Rights Office

Established September 2015, coordinating human rights as a cross-cutting topic across all Vienna City Administration areas — from recreation to infrastructure, budgeting to direct services.

#### Steering Group

Representatives from administrative groups, political parties, and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights provide strategic implementation guidance.

#### Focus Groups & Round Tables

Representatives from administrative groups, political parties, and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights provide strategic implementation guidance.

#### International Cooperation & COVID-19 Resilience

Active participation in global networks for exchanging best practices. Vienna provided coronavirus information in 24 languages and maintained local control over essential services. Currently serves as European Capital for Democracy 2024–2025.

*Vienna's commitment to human rights governance proved resilient during COVID-19 — demonstrating that human rights frameworks strengthen rather than constrain effective crisis response.*

## Human Rights Cities in the United States

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In the United States, over 60 cities and counties have passed ordinances and resolutions on specific human rights treaties, mainly on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which started in 1998 in San Francisco, California. Human Rights City Resolutions have been adopted by Seattle, WA and Atlanta, GA. A burgeoning Human Rights Cities Alliance is engaging more municipalities to embody human rights principles and contribute to an international human rights framework.

**Dayton, Ohio will set precedent as the first city in the United States to pass an ordinance formally becoming a Human Rights City.**

## 2.Scope and Methodology

The Human Rights Readiness Assessment for Dayton, Ohio by the Dignity Index Global team employed a comprehensive multi-dimensional approach to evaluate the city's preparedness for becoming a Human Rights City. The assessment team focused on the Department of Recreation as a pilot case study, examining three critical dimensions: People (elected and appointed leadership, staff, and community members), Policies (Programs and procedures), and Places (physical facilities). This framework enabled a holistic analysis of how human rights principles are currently integrated or could be strengthened across municipal operations, service delivery, and community engagement.

### Field Visits

Two phases — April and June 2025. In-depth interviews with the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Manager, Deputy City Managers, Law Director, Deputy Law Director, and Directors of Human Relations, Recreation, Environment, Public Works, Civil Service, and Human Resources. The team also attended the Police Department's recruitment orientation and met with the Chief of Police.

### Focus Groups & Interviews

Focus groups and individual interviews conducted both by phone and in person, held with more than 40 beneficiaries and clients of the three Recreation Centers. Additional site visits included the Jim Nichols Tennis Center, as well as meetings with management and field staff across all three Recreation Centers.

### Site Assessments

Physical site assessments of all recreation centers evaluating accessibility, safety, inclusivity, and alignment with human rights standards in the built environment. Systematic reviews of the city's publications, promotional materials, and websites assessed how human rights values are communicated and reflected in public-facing information.

## Scope and Methodology Cont.

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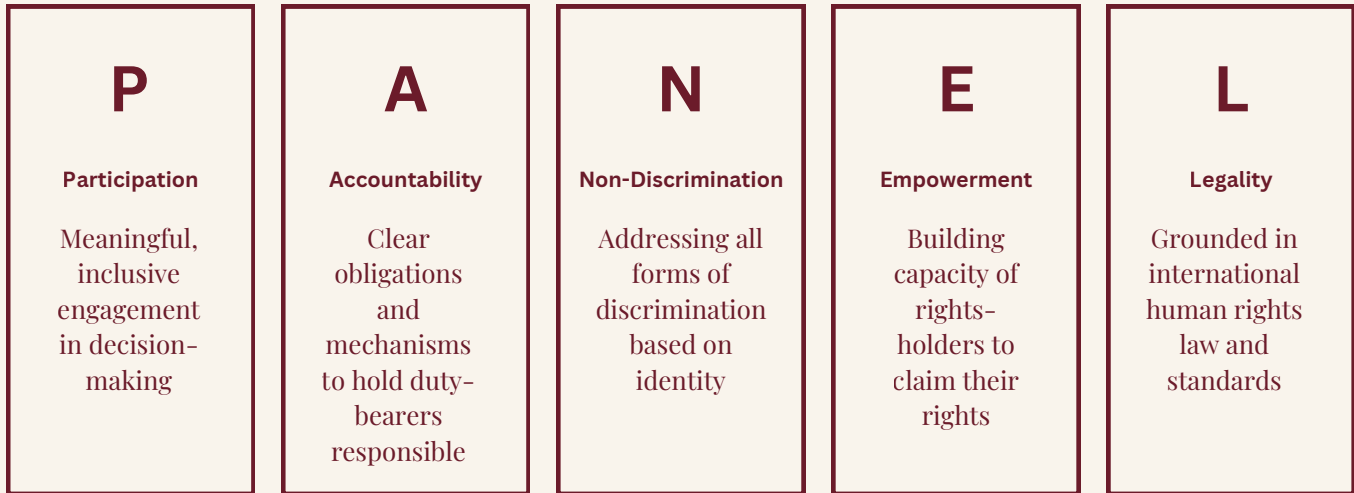
This mixed-methods approach was complemented by desk research examining relevant municipal policies, procedures, national and international human rights frameworks, and promising practices from other human rights cities. By triangulating data from interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and on-site observations, the assessment team developed a comprehensive understanding of Dayton's current human rights landscape. This rigorous methodology ensured that recommendations are evidence-based, context-specific, and grounded in both the lived experiences of Dayton residents and established human rights principles, positioning the city for meaningful change as it embarks on its journey toward becoming a Human Rights City.

## The Human Rights-Based Approach: Principles and Framework

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The Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) provides the methodological foundation for Human Rights Cities. As defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, HRBA is "a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights."

## The HRBA Framework – PANEL



## Two Primary Actors

### Rights-Holders

Individuals and communities – those entitled to rights and whose capacity to claim those rights must be built and supported.

### Duty-Bearers

Municipalities (governments) and third parties such as contractors (non-state actors) with obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill rights.

The HRBA recognizes that human rights inform both outcomes and processes of governance, policies, and programs. It shifts focus from charity-based approaches to rights-based frameworks, from needs to rights, from beneficiaries to rights-holders.

## All Human Rights Under HRBA Are:

**Universal:** Applying to all human beings everywhere regardless of their identity.

**Indivisible:** All rights have equal importance and cannot be ranked.

**Inalienable:** Rights cannot be taken away as they are inherent to being human.

**Interdependent:** Rights influence each other and cannot be fully enjoyed independently.

# The DIG Assessment Framework – 3P + RPF + Five A's

## Pillar One – What We Assess



## Pillar Two – How We Evaluate



## Pillar Three – The Five A's – How We Measure Access



*The 3Ps define what is assessed. The RPF obligations define how government is evaluated. The Five A's define whether access is genuinely universal.*

## Significance: Why Dayton, Why Now?

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Dayton's pursuit of Human Rights City status was initiated through a City Council Resolution in December 2023 (Appendix C), and this assessment examines whether Dayton is ready to position itself as a human rights city. By examining the Department of Recreation as a case study, this assessment provides Dayton's leadership, communities, residents, and stakeholders with a clear-eyed evaluation of current readiness, identifies gaps, and offers recommendations that can serve as a practical roadmap toward Human Rights City designation.

The aim of becoming a human rights city is a deliberate action by both the city's leadership and residents to move from reacting to violation to becoming a city where human rights are intentionally prioritized and actively realized in the lived experience of all residents. This is a long-term proactive map for Dayton's future.

### **This report assesses Dayton's readiness to adopt the Human Rights City designation, which would commit the city to:**

- Referencing (explicitly) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other international human rights standards in policies, statements, and programs.
- Establishing a socio-political process where community and government integrate agreed-upon human rights principles in planning and governing.
- Implementing structures, tools, and accountability mechanisms consistent with international Human Rights City frameworks.

**This report assesses Dayton's readiness to become a Human Rights City by evaluating the Department of Recreation. It is not a human rights audit of the Department itself.**

## Section I – Context

### 3.1 Dayton, Ohio: Context and Historical Inequalities

Dayton, Ohio presents a compelling yet complex case for Human Rights City designation. Once a thriving industrial powerhouse known as the "Gem City" and home to innovators including the Wright brothers and Charles Kettering, Dayton has experienced substantial economic and demographic changes over the past half-century. Understanding Dayton's readiness to become a Human Rights City requires acknowledging both its current challenges and the historical forces that created them.

Dayton, Ohio is situated on the ancestral lands of Kaskaskia peoples, though the Kaskaskia natives did not live in great numbers in Ohio. The Treaty of Greenville, signed in 1795 following the Northwest Indian War, ceded a vast amount of land to the United States government, including territories that would later become Dayton, and established a boundary line between Native American lands and the expanding territory of the United States.

### Current Demographics and Economic Conditions

As of 2023, according to US Census Bureau data, Dayton has an estimated population of 136,741 residents, making it the sixth-largest city in Ohio. The city's demographic composition reflects both its industrial past and ongoing segregation patterns.

**136,741**

TOTAL POPULATION  
(2023)

**26.4%**

POVERTY RATE

**\$43,454**

MEDIAN  
HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME

**54%**

OF US MEDIAN  
INCOME

DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATOR	CURRENT STATUS
Total Population	136,741 (2023)
White (Non-Hispanic)	50%
Black/African American	37.8%
Hispanic/Latino	5.6%
Foreign-born	6.3% (≈8,500 residents)
Poverty Rate	26.4%–27.5%
Median Household Income	\$43,454 (54% of US median)
High School Graduation	87.9%

- 6.3% of Dayton residents are foreign-born per 2023 census data (approx. 8,500 residents). In 2021, new arrivals being resettled in Dayton came from Afghanistan (57%), the Democratic Republic of Congo (38%), Sudan (3%), Eritrea (1%), Iraq (1%), and Uganda (1%).
- Dayton hosts a community of 2,000–3,000 Ahiska Turks who fled persecution.
- Women make up 50.51% of Dayton's total population (69,066 females) compared to 49.49% males (67,675), with 1,391 more females than males in the city.
- Of the 50.51% women, 25.2% are white and 25.3% are women of color. Of the 49.49% men, 24.7% are white and 24.7% are men of color.
- 27,000 identify as LGBTQ (people of all ages in Dayton and Montgomery County, Ohio) and the University of Dayton, at least 15% of the student population self-identifies as being members of the LGBTQ+.
- No data is available for those with (dis)abilities in Dayton.
- Median age: 34.2 years.
- Median household income: \$43,454 (54.38% of the U.S. median).

## Trends

- Between 2014 and 2019, while the total population in the City of Dayton decreased by 0.2%, the immigrant population increased by 25.9% during the same period.
- While the native-born population of Dayton decreased by 15 percent from 2000 to 2010, the foreign-born population has more than doubled since the mid-2000s.
- Foster Care Group Homes: in 2024, the state had about 235 group homes licensed by the Ohio Department of Children & Youth, and 80 of those were in Montgomery County (34%).
- Dayton has about 62 foster care group homes, with 21 located in west and southwest Dayton and 37 located in northwest Dayton, and 4 in the city's northeast geography. There are none in downtown or southeast Dayton.
- Approximately 26.4% to 27.5% of Dayton residents live below the poverty line — nearly double Ohio's state average of 13.3% and more than double the national average of 12.6%. This represents one of the highest poverty rates among Ohio's major cities. The city's Gini coefficient of 0.4894 indicates moderate income inequality, with the highest-earning quintile earning 22 times more than the lowest quintile.
- Educational attainment shows persistent gaps: while 87.9% of residents have a high school diploma or equivalent, only 25.4% hold bachelor's degrees or higher — considerably lower than state and national averages. These educational disparities correlate strongly with economic outcomes and spatial segregation patterns.

## The Legacy of Redlining in Dayton

- Dayton's current inequality cannot be understood without examining its history of state-sanctioned racial segregation, particularly the practice of redlining. The Human Relations Institute of Dayton proclaimed in 1960 that, based on new census data, Dayton was "unequivocally more segregated" than it had been in 1950 — a statement that rang true for nearly all midwestern cities at the time.
- Redlining maps, introduced in the 1930s by the Homeowners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), delineated risk areas for federally backed mortgages and home-ownership programs. Risk was determined almost entirely by race. Neighborhoods where no loans would be made were outlined in red — literally "redlined." These maps had significant and long-lasting effects:

### Wealth Accumulation

White families in "desirable" (green-coded) neighborhoods gained access to federally backed mortgages, building generational wealth through homeownership. Black families, confined to "hazardous" (red-coded) neighborhoods, were systematically denied this primary wealth-building opportunity.

### Investment Patterns

Redlined neighborhoods experienced decades of disinvestment in infrastructure, schools, parks, and services. Green-coded neighborhoods received the opposite: continuous investment, quality schools, well-maintained infrastructure, and accessible services.

### Geographic Segregation

By 1988, researcher Douglas Massey found Dayton's housing patterns to be the third most racially segregated among the fifty largest metropolitan areas in the United States — surpassed only by Cleveland and Chicago.

### Health Disparities

A University of California, Berkeley study discovered direct links between historical redlining maps and current health disparities. Redlined neighborhoods in Dayton today face disproportionately higher rates of asthma, lead exposure from deteriorating housing stock, and environmental toxins. Old, poorly maintained housing contains lead paint, asbestos, and formaldehyde. Communities can visibly smell mold.

### Environmental Injustice

Minority and low-income populations in Dayton have not had access to clean, safe, healthy environments. Where there has been disinvestment and neglect, economic, environmental, and public health impacts compound. These add a layer of historical responsibility to Dayton's contemporary reckoning with inequality.

## The Impact of Redlining on West Dayton

Dayton's geographic inequality follows a notable East–West pattern. Interstate 75 and Interstate 35 function as dividing lines visible on contemporary maps that mirror the 1935 redlining map. The Dayton Recovery Program continues to make significant investment strides to prioritize West and Northwest Dayton.

While the city continues to make progress to address historical disparities, the systemic discrimination perpetuated by redlining is so severe that the city will need to continue its investments until these disparities are adequately diminished. At present, West Dayton continues to face:

### West Dayton Today — Ongoing Consequences of Redlining

Higher poverty rates and lower property values — homes worth less than in non-redlined areas even 80 years later

Food deserts, limited healthy food options, deteriorating infrastructure, and higher rates of vacant and derelict land

Reduced access to parks and recreational facilities, limited access to quality education, and environmental hazards including higher temperatures and poorer air quality

## 3.2 A Human Rights-Based Approach for Dayton

The question before Dayton is not whether inequality exists — the evidence is overwhelming and well-documented. The question for Dayton's leadership is whether the city possesses the political will, institutional capacity, and community partnership to consistently address these inequalities through a Human Rights-Based Approach that shifts governance, resource allocation, program and service delivery, aligned with civic participation, to become a human rights city that commits to thriving over survival.

*This report assesses Dayton's readiness to become a Human Rights City by evaluating the Department of Recreation. This is not a human rights audit of the Department itself.*

## Section II — Readiness Findings

### 4.1 The Human Rights Framework Applied to the Department of Recreation

The human rights framework of Respect, Protect, and Fulfill has been used to assess the three centers and People (City leadership, staff and community), Policies (processes and programs) and Places (infrastructure) that contribute to operationalizing the Department of Recreation.

The Department of Recreation provides an ideal lens for this analysis because recreation, leisure, and participation in cultural life constitute recognized human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 24: right to rest and leisure; Article 25: right to health and wellbeing; Article 27: right to participate freely in cultural life of the community). Moreover, recreation access intersects with multiple other rights including civic engagement (Article 21), education (Article 26), and non-discrimination (Article 2).

Most critically, recreation serves as both a standalone right and a crime prevention strategy — a fact that makes budget priorities between policing (reactive) and recreation (preventive) a direct human rights question.

Notably, the Department of Recreation holds both the promise and the challenge of Dayton becoming a human rights city. This paradox is normal as becoming a human rights city is about reimagining and intentionally operationalizing this vision for the city you are building while recognizing that the existing ways might be directly and indirectly reinforcing patterns of inequality. Of the eight recreation centers, the city has closed five, leaving only three operational.

In addition to the three centers, there are five athletic facilities operated by the Department. These include Kettering Field Sports Complex, Centennial Field, Jim Nichols Tennis Center, Howell Field and Community Golf Club.

# DAYTON HUMAN RIGHTS READINESS ASSESSMENT

## Three Recreation Centers

The City of Dayton currently operates three recreation centers serving a population of approximately 137,000 residents.

	<b>RC</b> West Dayton	Southeast Dayton	Northwest Dayton
<b>ADDRESS</b>	2021 W. Third St (45417)	2366 Glenarm Ave (45420)	1600 Princeton Dr (45406)
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	Predominantly Black, high-poverty West Dayton	Mixed-income, racially diverse Southeast Dayton	Northwest Dayton neighborhoods
<b>FACILITY</b>	50,000 sq ft · ~\$7M investment · Year-round indoor facility	Traditional RC with Belmont Pool	Traditional RC with Dabney Pool
<b>KEY AMENITIES</b>	Gym · Walking track · Cardio room · Computer lab · Senior space · Multipurpose rooms	Fitness facilities · Swimming pool · Multipurpose spaces	Gymnasium · Pool · Fitness facilities
<b>HOURS</b>	Mon–Fri 6AM–9PM · Sat 9AM–4PM · Sun Closed	Limited hours · Closed Tues & Thurs · No consistent weekend	Limited hours · Closed Wed & Fri
<b>POOL STATUS</b>	<b>CLOSED</b> Since 2020 — 5+ years "Lifeguard shortage" <b>HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN</b>	<b>Open</b> Severely limited hours · \$1.3M renovation 2025 requiring closure during construction	<b>Open</b> Limited hours · Closed Wed & Fri
<b>KEY GAPS</b>	No teen space · No pool · No heat cooling resource	No teen programming · Pool restricted · Renovation pending	Limited hours reduce access for working families

- *All three centers serve predominantly low-income communities with affordable programming. No center offers full, unrestricted pool access. West Dayton has had no pool access for over five years — a failure to Respect, Protect, and Fulfill the human right to recreation.*

## The Pool Closure Compromises the Enjoyment of Human Rights

The closure of the Greater Dayton Recreation Center pool since 2020 represents a clear gap across all three dimensions of the Respect–Protect–Fulfill human rights framework:

### Gap to Respect

The Department of Recreation has compromised the rights enjoyment of residents by closing a facility that residents previously accessed. It has been documented that the reason for the closure is the shortage of lifeguards. Yet, the decision to address this shortage by closing the pool in West Dayton specifically — while maintaining pools (even on limited schedules) in other areas — constitutes discrimination.

The city's own data reveals the discriminatory impact: "Even with a pool closure and reduced hours at the other facilities, more than 13,000 people took part in the city's aquatic programming in the first three quarters of [2024]." This statistic demonstrates that aquatic programming continues citywide — just not in West Dayton. The residents most impacted by poverty, heat islands (due to lack of tree canopy in redlined neighborhoods), and health disparities are denied access to swimming, a critical activity for physical health, heat relief, and child development.

The stated 'lifeguard shortage' explanation warrants scrutiny: shortages affect all pools, yet only the West Dayton pool was closed entirely rather than operating on reduced hours like the other two facilities. This suggests resource allocation decisions that disproportionately affect the Black, high-poverty community. Furthermore, the Department of Recreation and the city did not protect against environmental injustice. West Dayton's redlined neighborhoods have:

- Higher temperatures due to lack of tree canopy (result of historical disinvestment)
- Higher rates of asthma and respiratory illness (from environmental toxins)
- Older, poorly insulated housing stock without air conditioning
- Higher rates of heat-related illness and death

While the city operates several aging spray parks across Dayton, these are not equivalent substitutes for pool access — they do not provide swimming lessons, structured aquatic programming, or recreational swimming for teens and adults. Most have not been upgraded in over a decade. Closing the only pool in this area removes a critical cooling and recreation resource during increasingly dangerous heat waves driven by climate change. This gap to protect has life-and-death implications.

## Gap to Protect

While the Department of Recreation cannot be held responsible, the city has not protected West Dayton residents from harm stemming from systematic disinvestment from the private sector that impacts this community. The human rights principle of due diligence requires that a city government take reasonable steps to prevent and remedy direct or indirect harm of a third party.

## Gap to Fulfill

The city has not taken positive measures to realize the right to recreation, particularly for children and youth in West Dayton. The human rights framework requires progressive realization, meaning continuous improvement toward full rights enjoyment. Instead, West Dayton has experienced regression: moving backward from having pool access to having none. As of June 2025, GDRC pool was yet to open to its residents. This could be categorized as institutionalized inequality rather than lacking progressive realization.

## Section II — Readiness Findings

### 4.2 Promising Practices: The Department of Recreation

While there are challenges to enjoying human rights within the limitations of programs and services of the Department of Recreation, it is important to recognize the contributions the Department makes to the residents of Dayton. While these sections may appear contradictory, it is important to recognize that becoming a Human Rights City is not a linear path and the promising practices are key to moving Dayton to becoming a Human Rights City.

#### Youth Development Programs

The centers offer multiple children's and youth programs that support children's rights to education and development, rest, health and leisure.

- **Rec Connect:** Provides children with movies, crafts, and games while building friendships, social skills, and connections to their local recreation center.
- **LEAP Dance:** Helps youth build confidence, resilience, and dance skills in a supportive environment.
- **Culinary Creators:** Gives children hands-on cooking experience, teaching kitchen skills, nutrition basics, and safe appliance use.
- **Home School Gym:** Helps students stay active through fitness, games, and team sports while building coordination, teamwork, and friendships.
- **Back 2 the Basics:** Equips teens with essential life skills such as money management, resume building, and interview tips.
- **Urban Adventures Summer Camp:** Runs for 8 weeks (June–July) at two sites (Northwest and Lohrey) with the same programming and services at both sites.
- **Co-Rec Youth Basketball:** Takes place at all three centers for ages 3–15 with an average registration of about 200 youth per season.
- **Grand Slam Tennis Camp:** An eight-week program for 6–12-year-olds with a maximum registration of 60 campers and an average attendance of 50 campers weekly.
- **Recess After School:** Runs from September–May at all three centers taking up to 30 students from 3:00–5:00 PM. Students receive assistance with their homework and a meal free of charge.
- In addition to the above, the centers offer other notable programs such as swim lessons, Easter Egg hunt, SWAT Karate, NFL Flag Football, MLS Go Soccer, Youth Golf clinics, Kids Entrepreneur Expo and HER Time to Play.
- All centers also offer free programs including Open Gym and Recess After School.

**Human Rights Impact:** These programs support the right to education, development, rest, and leisure, and health along with protection from poverty and hunger by providing life skills and positive developmental opportunities.

## Digital Equity and Economic Rights

All three recreation centers received \$250,000 in funding for high-speed broadband internet access. The centers are free and open to the public, providing residents with access to online educational opportunities, telehealth services, financial aid assistance, and social platforms they may not have at home.

**Human Rights Impact:** This directly addresses the right to work (access to job search platforms), right to education (online learning), right to health (telehealth services), and digital inclusion — especially critical in Dayton's underserved neighborhoods.

## Affordable Fitness and Health Access

The centers offer affordable annual passes for fitness and aquatic facilities with unlimited visits and access to aerobic classes across all three recreation centers. The Greater Dayton Recreation Center has a daily fee of \$3. Facilities include fitness equipment and multipurpose rooms, swimming facilities (in two centers), courts for sports like basketball and pickleball, walking tracks, and gymnasiums.

**Human Rights Impact:** Low-cost access removes economic barriers to health promotion, particularly important given Dayton's 26.4% poverty rate and median household income of \$43,454.

## Senior Programming

The centers offer senior-specific events and programs. The seniors who contributed to the assessment were the happiest community members of all. They enjoy Halloween Party with music, food, dancing, and costume contests; fitness classes designed for seniors; and community celebrations during pandemic reopening.

- The centers reserve 8–10 AM hours exclusively for seniors ages 65+.
- The demography that has access to all three recreation centers are seniors who are mostly women.
- The Silver Sneakers classes are attended and enjoyed by the seniors, and they look forward to being in community with other participants. The ability to witness the joy expressed by the seniors was a remarkable experience for the assessment team.

**Human Rights Impact:** Shows targeted attention to age-specific needs and vulnerability of older adults, supporting their right to health, wellbeing and social participation.

## Community Building and Social Rights

Events like the Kids Entrepreneur Expo provide opportunities for youth entrepreneurship and community engagement, supporting cultural participation and economic development.

## Pool Restoration Efforts

The city plans to spend about \$1.3 million renovating the Belmont Pool at Lohrey Recreation Center. Dayton's three recreation centers make meaningful contributions to multiple human rights including health, education, work, cultural participation, leisure, and child development. The programs particularly excel at affordability.

**Human Rights Impact:** Aquatic programs provide low-impact exercise options particularly beneficial for people with disabilities, arthritis, and older adults.

The centers fulfill important obligations under international human rights standards and law by achieving the following:

- Ensuring availability of programs across three neighborhood locations
- Promoting accessibility through low-cost access
- Providing age-appropriate programming from youth to seniors
- Addressing the digital divide with free internet access
- Continued infrastructure improvements and enhanced equity monitoring would further strengthen the human rights impact of these vital community resources

## Section II — Readiness Findings

### 4.3 Case Study: What Would a Human Rights-Based Approach Look Like?

#### CURRENT REALITY — WHAT HAS NOT HAPPENED

The Greater Dayton Recreation Center pool has been closed since 2020 — more than five consecutive years. The following is what has *not* happened during that time:

- Pool closed in 2020; remained closed through June 2025
- November 2024 announcement of "weekend schedule" reopening — not full restoration
- No compensation or remedy provided to affected residents
- No policy changes implemented to prevent future closures
- No meaningful community engagement in the reopening process

To illustrate the gap between current practice and Human Rights City standards, consider what a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to the GDRC pool closure would have required:

#### RESPECT — WHAT SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED

- The pool should not have been closed without exhaustive assessment of alternatives.
- If closure was unavoidable, residents deserved advance notice, clear explanation, and definitive timeline for reopening.
- Residents should never have been left without pool access for five consecutive years while other neighborhoods retained services.
- The Department should have established lifeguard recruitment pipelines years before shortages emerged, including partnerships with schools and colleges to train certified lifeguards.
- Lifeguard compensation should have been increased to competitive levels to attract and retain staff.
- Regional cooperation agreements should have been established to share lifeguard resources across municipalities.
- If closure became unavoidable, the city should have provided free transportation to other facilities.

# DAYTON HUMAN RIGHTS READINESS ASSESSMENT

## PROTECT — THIRD-PARTY OBLIGATIONS

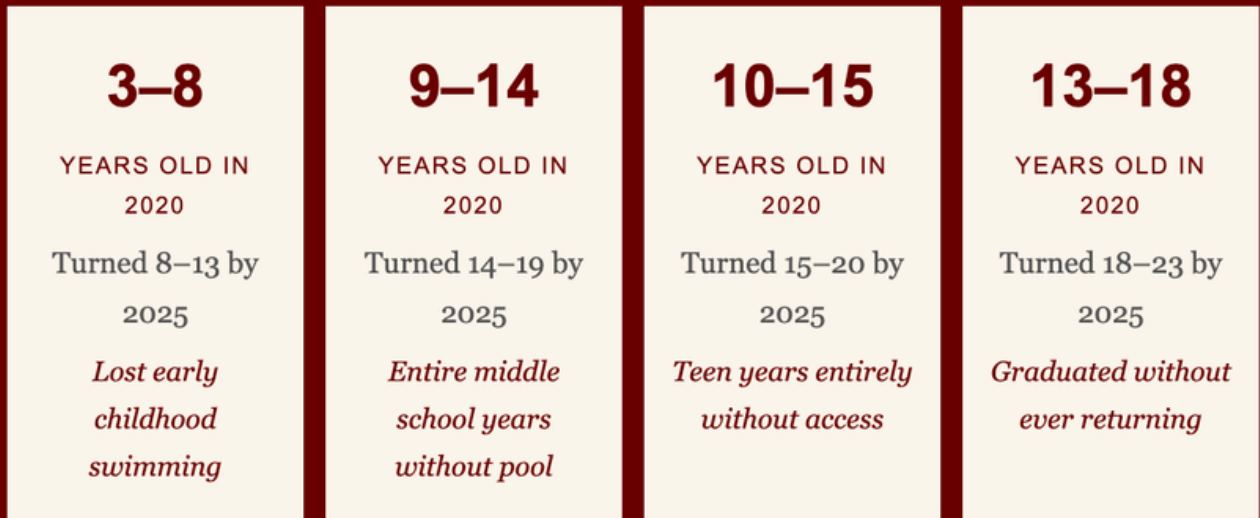
- The city should have monitored private pools and facilities to prevent discriminatory admission practices affecting West Dayton residents seeking alternative access.
- The city should continue to monitor, assess and respond to patterns of disinvestment in high-poverty neighborhoods.

## FULFILL — WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NOW AND GOING FORWARD

- Immediate full reopening of GDRC pool with hours equivalent to other city facilities.
- Enhanced summer programming to address five years of unmet recreational needs.
- Free swimming lessons for all West Dayton youth who lost access during closure years.
- Youth advisory board with decision-making authority over teen programming design.
- Hiring preference for recreation staff from West Dayton neighborhoods.
- Quarterly public reporting on participation rates, user satisfaction, and identified barriers.
- Independent community oversight mechanism with authority to prevent future closures.
- Formal acknowledgment of harm and community restoration process.
- Mandatory equity impact analysis before any future facility closure.

## The Five-Year Question

From 2020 to 2025, entire cohorts of West Dayton children grew up without a pool at their community recreation centre. Human rights analysis demands we ask: what were these children doing during summer months when their peers across Dayton were swimming?



National and Ohio data on youth violence, alongside Dayton's own crime statistics, provide a sobering answer. By May 2023, Dayton recorded 898 juvenile arrests — an 86% increase over the same period in 2022. By year-end 2024, more than two dozen young people had been killed in youth gun violence. Mayor Jeffrey Mims Jr. declared youth violence an emergency requiring "undivided attention" and launched a "Peace Campaign" in January 2025.

The connection between recreation access and violence prevention is extensively documented in research literature and explicitly recognized in Dayton's own history. The Genesis Project, a public-private partnership launched in 2000 to revitalize one of Dayton's oldest neighborhoods, placed community social workers and community-based police officers in targeted areas and was "credited with helping to reduce crime by nearly 20 percent."



The human rights framework compels us to acknowledge that denying youth in high-poverty, predominantly Black neighborhoods access to safe, structured recreation while simultaneously experiencing an 86% spike in juvenile arrests and record youth homicides is not coincidental. It represents a systematic failure to fulfill multiple interconnected rights.

## Primary Finding

### The Lifeline Testimony: What the Men Who Lived It Know

The evidence here is not statistical. It is testimonial and it is unanimous.

One key element that is vital to recognize is that ALL men of color interviewed who had worked or currently work at the Department of Recreation mentioned that Dayton's recreation centers were a lifeline. Those who didn't grow up in Dayton recognized the importance of recreation centers and access to sports that transformed their lives. For men of color (the majority of those interviewed), access to recreation centers and sports has been inextricably linked to their survival and success in life.

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*"For men of color, access to recreation centers and sports has been inextricably linked to their survival and success in life."*

Therefore, the role that the Recreation Centers of Dayton continue to play — even with resource restrictions, understaffing, and shortened hours — remains a lifeline for youth and the community. For Dayton to thrive, the Department of Recreation should be provided the means to succeed.

If the Department of Recreation had proactively spoken with women and marginalized community members, it would already know what is needed. The absence of participatory structures is itself a human rights failure — one that is correctable.

## The Resource Allocation Pattern

While comprehensive Department of Recreation budget details were not publicly available for this analysis, accessible data reveals a concerning pattern. In 2020, Mayor Nan Whaley stated that "police and fire make up roughly 60 percent of the city's budget." When budget cuts became necessary that same year, the city furloughed 470 employees — more than a quarter of the workforce — rather than reduce police spending. Subsequent years have seen continued investment in police vehicles, technology, facility improvements, and overtime for violent crime reduction initiatives.

Police services are undeniably essential for maintaining public order and responding to crime. However, law enforcement alone does not and cannot create sustainable community safety. According to Washington State Institute of Public Policy (2001), evidence suggests that well-designed preventive investments in youth programming and community infrastructure can reduce crime at costs comparable to or lower than reactive enforcement, though effects vary considerably by program type, population, and context.

Meanwhile, the Department of Recreation budget represents a small fraction of the General Fund. Capital investments in recreation facilities have been systematically deferred: the city's first recreation strategic plan in 20 years was completed only in 2024. Dayton has contracted from eight recreation centers to three. The \$1.3 million allocated for Lohrey pool renovation in 2025 represents the first significant recreation infrastructure investment in years.

This allocation pattern creates a self-reinforcing cycle. Underinvestment in recreation creates conditions where youth lack structured activities and safe gathering spaces. Predictable consequences follow — increased unsupervised time, elevated risk behaviors, and ultimately, greater demand for police intervention. The city then allocates additional resources to enforcement rather than prevention, deepening the original disinvestment.

## The Resource Allocation Pattern Cont.

The closure of the GDRC pool saved an estimated \$125,000–\$188,000 annually in lifeguard costs (based on average Dayton lifeguard wages of \$16.72/hour and a year-round indoor facility operating 6 days per week), totaling approximately \$626,000–\$940,000 over the five years of closure.

Meanwhile, according to Justice Policy Institute (JPI), the 86% increase in juvenile arrests has cost taxpayers millions in detention, court processing, policing, and long-term costs associated with interrupted education and criminal records. The JPI documents that 40 states and Washington D.C. pay a minimum of \$100,000 annually per incarcerated child, with some states reporting over \$500,000.



From a fiscal responsibility perspective, this approach is inefficient. Prevention costs less than reaction. From a human rights perspective, it violates principles of non-discrimination and progressive realization of rights. From a public safety perspective, it ignores evidence about what reduces violence.

This is not an argument against law enforcement. It is an argument for balanced, evidence-based investment that gives all neighborhoods — particularly those facing compounded disadvantages — access to the preventive infrastructure that makes enforcement less necessary.

## Section II – Readiness Findings

### 4.4 Identifying the Gaps

#### Equity and Equality

A significant gap in Dayton's recreation system is the absence of disaggregated data on participation by ethnicity and race, sex and gender, age, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, and income level, class, and other identities. This absence itself is inconsistent with human rights principles, which require transparent monitoring to identify inequity and discrimination. What is not measured cannot be managed or improved.

In our interviews with staff at all recreation centers, it was evident that the centers welcome everyone and are used by diverse community members, yet staff lack basic information about the needs of the most marginalized users at each center, including at the tennis and golf courts. For example, the Turkish community created their own recreational centers to ensure that women can access the swimming pools without the presence of men. This request by women is not only limited to the Turkish community and many women would prefer a time without men. If the Department of Recreation had spoken with the women in the community, they would have known that a 2-hour time period dedicated to women could increase the number of women who would access the pools.

#### National Data: Systematic Gender Disparities in Youth Recreation

##### NATIONAL DATA — PARTICIPATION RATES: BOYS VS GIRLS (NRPA)



##### Organised sports



Boys 41% · Girls 24%

##### Drop-in sports



Boys 28% · Girls 11%

##### Teen non-participation



Boys 25% · Girls 40%

- Girls have 1.3 million fewer opportunities to play high school sports than boys nationally
- Girls drop out of sports at twice the rate of boys
- By age 14, girls are dropping out of sports at two times the rate of boys
- 40% of teen girls do not participate in sports compared to 25% of teen boys
- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) data shows boys participate in both organized and drop-in youth sports at higher rates than girls (41% vs. 24% for organized sports; 28% vs. 11% for drop-in sports)

**Data Absence – What Dayton Cannot Answer**

Dayton's Department of Recreation provides no disaggregated data on: youth sports registration, recreation center usage, swimming participation, program enrollment, whether girls-only or boys-only programming exists, or whether facilities are allocated equitably between boys and girls.

**Critical Finding: The Absence of Data**

What cannot be measured cannot be addressed. Dayton currently does not collect disaggregated participation data for the Department of Recreation.

<i>Are girls in West Dayton participating in recreation at rates equal to boys?</i>	<i>Do girls have access to sports they want to play – research shows their interests differ from boys?</i>
<i>Are coaching staff gender-balanced to provide role models for girls and young women?</i>	<i>Are facilities of equal quality for girls' and boys' activities across all three centres?</i>
<i>What are the specific recreation needs and experiences of youth from group homes?</i>	<i>What are the experiences of transgender persons using Dayton's pools and recreational facilities?</i>

What barriers specific to young women (transportation, safety, cultural factors, lack of female-appropriate facilities) exist? Title IX requires gender equity in federally funded educational programs including athletics. While Title IX technically applies to schools rather than municipal recreation, the principle of equality of all persons is a fundamental human right under UDHR Article 2.

**The absence of disaggregated data is not a technical gap – it is a human rights accountability failure. A city cannot manage or improve what it does not measure. Collecting this data is an immediate priority.**

## Technology Gap: Digital Exclusion in Recreation

During COVID-19, students without home internet struggled with remote learning. Recreation centers could serve as technology access points for homework, college applications, job searches. Today's youth (particularly teens) engage with technology-integrated recreation (gaming, coding, music production, digital art). The absence of these options on a consistent and ongoing basis makes recreation centers unappealing to teens.

## Communication Gaps and Challenges

The City of Dayton and its Department of Recreation fall short of their obligation to communicate programs, services, and policies in ways that support residents' rights to participate in public affairs and access public services. The communication infrastructure is characterized by:

- Limited one-way communication with minimal resident engagement
- Inaccessible, English-only program information
- Absence of feedback mechanisms for resident participation
- Inadequate transparency in policies and decision-making

These gaps disproportionately impact low-income residents, non-English speakers, seniors, people with disabilities, and communities without internet access — exacerbating inequalities and preventing meaningful civic participation.

## Human Rights Framework Analysis

- **Right to Information (UDHR Article 19):** Everyone has the right to seek, receive, and impart information. The Department fails this obligation by not proactively publishing comprehensive, accessible program information and by creating barriers to basic information about public services.
- **Right to Participate in Public Affairs (UDHR Article 21):** Residents have the right to participate in public affairs and have meaningful input into government decisions. The Department's lack of structured community input mechanisms, absence of advisory boards including affected residents, and exclusion from decision-making violates this right.
- **Right to Equal Access to Public Services (UDHR Articles 21, 25):** Poor communication creates de facto barriers. Residents cannot benefit from programs they don't know exist, undermining their right to participate in cultural life and community development.
- **Right to Non-Discrimination (UDHR Article 2):** Communication failures create discriminatory impacts — Non-English speakers (5.6%) face language barriers; low-income residents (26.4%) face digital exclusion; Black neighborhoods (37.8%) experience digital redlining; people with disabilities lack accessible formats; seniors (12.76%) often lack digital literacy.

## Documented Communication Failures

**Minimal Online Information:** The official Recreation website provides only a mission statement and redirects to "daytonrec.com," where comprehensive information remains absent. There are no detailed program schedules, registration procedures, pricing, eligibility requirements, or calendars accessible online. While hard copies exist at centers, most residents, including current users, remain unaware of available services. The Department has a mobile app, yet most residents don't know it exists. Seniors at all three centers consistently report relying on "word of mouth" rather than official channels.

**Absence of Multilingual Communication and Insufficient Accessibility:** Despite Dayton's Hispanic/Latino population (5.6%, approximately 7,600 people) many of whom use recreation services, there are no Spanish-language materials, website translations, or multilingual outreach. While general city offices offer language access services, the Recreation Department provides no proactive multilingual communication. This creates barriers to publicly funded services paid for by all taxpayers. While initiatives like Welcome Dayton provide multilingual materials in print, this is not widely available for the Department of Recreation.

The Department's communication failures compound existing disadvantages. Low-income families without internet access cannot learn about programs online. Spanish-speaking parents cannot navigate registration, causing children to miss youth programs. Seniors and people with disabilities face digital literacy barriers and lack required formats. There are no large-print materials for visually impaired residents, unclear screen reader compatibility, no information about ASL interpretation, and minimal outreach to disability organizations.

**Lack of Policy Transparency and One-Way Communication Model:** Budget allocations, spending priorities, facility improvement decisions, and processes for proposing new programs remain unclear to residents, fostering exclusion from decision-making. The Department relies on information dissemination without dialogue, lacking mechanisms for community input on program design, resident feedback on services, public comment on policy changes, or transparent grievance procedures.

## Section III – People, Policies, Places

### People – Policies – Places: A Human Rights Review

The following section reviews the Department of Recreation and its relationship to other components of city administration that help operationalize the department. The Dignity Index Global team has employed a 'People-Policies-Places' framework to assess the viability of Dayton becoming a human rights city.

#### 5.1 People – Leadership, Staff, and Community

##### Governance and Leadership

On November 4, 2025, Dayton elected a new Mayor: Ms. Shenise Turner-Sloss, becoming the third woman to hold the city's highest elected office. Dayton's leadership, from past mayor to all commissioners, has demonstrated their utmost support and deep commitment to upholding human rights principles within the city of Dayton. The leadership recognizes the historical inequalities that continue to impact the city's residents and have expressed their commitment to addressing these.

The City Manager, Deputy City Managers, and Directors from the Human Relations Council, Recreation, Law, Human Resources, Civil Service, Environment, Public Works, along with the Police Chief, provided meaningful guidance throughout this process. Across discussions regarding Dayton's potential designation as a Human Rights City, three key questions consistently emerged:

- **Resources:** Ensuring sufficient staffing, funding, and operational capacity to implement a Human Rights City framework.
- **Jurisdiction and Influence:** The City's limited authority over decisions made by County, State, and School District entities that significantly affect residents
- **Framework Alignment:** Clarifying the distinction between enforcing civil rights compliance and adopting a broader human rights approach to guide City policy, practice, and culture.

Below are summarized responses to these questions.

## 1. Resources for Operationalizing a Human Rights Framework

Transitioning to a Human Rights City model would require planning, phased implementation, and alignment with existing city priorities and budget processes. The scale of resource needs depends on what the city chooses to prioritize and the pace of implementation. Key operational shifts would focus on integrating human rights principles into governance, budget decisions, and community engagement practices.

Many Human Rights Cities, including Vienna, have adopted structured mechanisms to ensure that major policy and budget decisions are evaluated for their potential impact on residents' rights and wellbeing. This commonly includes:

- Requiring departments to conduct human rights impact assessments when developing new policies or programs.
- Establishing participatory decision-making structures, including advisory or oversight bodies that incorporate residents, community organizations, and subject-matter experts.
- Creating transparent reporting and accountability mechanisms, such as periodic public reporting on shared human rights indicators aligned with the City's strategic plan.

While there are initial costs associated with training, coordination, and data systems, evidence from other cities based on multi-level study on neighborhoods and violent crime (Science 1997) demonstrates that upfront investment in preventive and equity-focused strategies can reduce long-term expenditures associated with emergency response, crisis intervention, and enforcement. The most significant operational shift is moving from a reactive model — responding after harm occurs — to a preventative model that sets measurable standards to improve community wellbeing over time.

## 2. Influence and Authority Beyond City Jurisdiction

Departments, including Recreation, frequently encounter issues that are shaped by actors beyond city authority — such as school districts, county agencies, and healthcare institutions. Case examples demonstrate that even without formal control, cities can shape outcomes through coordinated leadership, convening power, shared data agreements, and aligned priorities (full details in Appendix D):

# DAYTON HUMAN RIGHTS READINESS ASSESSMENT

LOCATION & ISSUE	KEY CHALLENGE	WHAT THE CITY DID
<b>Akron, OH — Public Health Outcomes</b>	High chronic disease and infant mortality, limited city control over healthcare systems	Formed cross-sector partnerships with hospitals and public health agencies; integrated health indicators into planning and transportation policy; used shared data to target interventions.
<b>Cincinnati &amp; Hamilton County — Child Poverty</b>	High child poverty rates and income disparities	Convened public, private, and community partners; created flexible support funds; leveraged state TANF waiver to address day-to-day financial barriers for families.
<b>Cincinnati — Student Transit Safety</b>	School dependence on Metro Transit and student safety downtown	City, Metro Transit, and schools redesigned bus routes; implemented RFID student passes; coordinated staffing and communication strategies to improve safety and reduce loitering.

Across all examples, cities influenced outcomes by convening stakeholders, aligning shared goals, leveraging data, and prioritizing resident-centered approaches, even where direct authority was limited.

## 3. Framework Alignment

Human Rights framework encompasses civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights. Following are the ways in which the frameworks align:

**CIVIL RIGHTS FRAMEWORK****HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK**

Focuses on preventing discrimination and ensuring equal treatment under the law.

Affirmative — recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living and wellbeing, and therefore housing, healthcare, clean water, access to food, education, safe environments, work, and economic security are foundational.

Primarily reactive — a violation must occur before enforcement begins.

Primarily proactive — policies are assessed to prevent harm and promote equitable outcomes before implementation.

Enforced through litigation, agency complaints, and compliance oversight.

Implemented through long-term planning, goal setting, community participation, measurable indicators, and public accountability.

## Staff Capacity and Commitment

The Department of Recreation has a dedicated staff that is committed to serving the residents of Dayton. Most of the staff have benefitted from the recreation centers as children and youth and they are deeply committed to ensuring that the centers serve the youth and families of Dayton.

Staff are unclear about the roles and decision-making processes of the department and the city. Most staff at the recreation centers are concerned for their own safety and prefer a parked police car in the parking lot or in front of the recreation center. Yet, the adult community members of Dayton express concern that this falls under the category of "extreme policing." There is a great need for a community forum to discuss safety with the Department of Recreation, residents, and police at each of the locations to ensure safety without restricting the rights of youth who participate in recreational activities.

None of the recreation centers collect disaggregated data and therefore are unable to identify participation rates by demographics, barriers to access reported by residents, satisfaction levels by demographic groups and/or usage patterns across different neighborhoods. The staff have not been provided training on cultural competency and therefore are unable to recognize the needs of the diverse populations who need culturally appropriate services. For example, young Muslim women, women identifying as lesbian/bisexual and some young heterosexual women mentioned that they would prefer a 'women only' time 2 hours a week to use the pool. While all staff interviewed are deeply committed to serving the community, they are unable to identify needs and proactively improve the centers to meet the needs of those who are not the norm of the city.

The staff expressed that they are inadequately compensated, there is no career pathways or professional development and struggle with insufficient staff to operate all facilities fully. Together, these conditions render recreational staff capacity critically insufficient.

## **Community Readiness: High Awareness, Limited Power**

Assessment of community engagement at the recreation centers reveals a paradox: Residents are highly aware of inequality and actively demanding change, but they lack formal power within governance structures to compel it. Most 'Silver Sneakers' participants have great ideas and are willing to volunteer their time and skills to both the recreational centers and the city.

## **Evidence of Community Awareness and Demand**

- **Public Commentary:** Residents attending city meetings asking "How exactly are we going to save our neighborhoods? Everything sounds good, but we have to have specifics." (State of the City, 2025).
- **Usage Despite Barriers:** 13,000+ aquatic program participants despite pool closure and reduced hours demonstrates hunger for recreation access.
- **Youth Engagement:** 300 teens participating in Mayor's Youth Summit shows youth want opportunities.
- **Community Organizations Active:** UMADAOP of Dayton providing youth violence prevention programs; East End Community Services working on neighborhood revitalization; multiple faith organizations engaged in youth mentoring.
- **Historical Advocacy:** The UnDesign the Redline exhibit, ThinkTV documentary, and University of Dayton conferences demonstrate sustained community education about inequality.

## **Community Readiness is Limited by**

- **Formal Decision-Making Role limitation:** Residents can comment but feel that they are unable to engage on recreation budget, programming, or facility decisions.
- **Community Oversight limitation:** No community boards with authority over Recreation Department.
- **Youth Voice absence:** Despite teens being primary recreation users, no formal youth advisory structures exist.
- **Information Barriers:** Budget documents, participation data, and decision-making processes not readily accessible to community members.

The Human Rights City model requires meaningful participation — not just consultation but actual power-sharing. Vienna's model includes steering groups with civil society representation. Scotland's approach involves extensive participatory planning. Dayton has taken meaningful steps toward community engagement and has the potential to transition into a more participatory decision-making model.

## Internal Grievance Processes

A critical component of Human Rights City frameworks is accessible, effective grievance mechanisms that allow residents to report rights limitations and seek redress. Dayton currently has processes embedded within the Human Relations Council specifically addressing housing and employment discrimination; residents also use the public comment session during Commission meetings. This model can be extended to other program and service areas offered by the city.

## Representation and Inclusion

Human rights principles require that those most affected by decisions participate meaningfully in those decisions. For example, the Teen Youth Summit is adult-organized and not youth-led. While there is currently no access for youth to engage in decision-making, the Department of Recreation and the city are well poised to integrate a youth component within their decision-making spaces.

### STRENGTHS — INDICATORS OF EMERGING READINESS

- ✓ Leadership awareness that recreation matters for quality of life
- ✓ Completion of first strategic plan in 20 years shows commitment to assessment
- ✓ Community engagement in strategic planning process and current human rights assessment process
- ✓ Recognition that youth violence requires new approaches (Peace Campaign)
- ✓ Commitment to reopen closed pool (even if inadequate timeline/scope)
- ✓ Active community organizations providing youth services
- ✓ High community awareness of issues and rights

## 5.2 Policies – Readiness of Legal and Policy Environment

Human rights principles require that we examine not only individual policies in isolation, but how multiple policy domains interact to create barriers – or opportunities – for rights realization. This section analyzes how policies affecting the Department of Recreation intersect with policies governing housing, education, health, transportation, disability access, and employment to either advance or obstruct human rights. It examines how individuals and families experiencing multiple forms of marginalization – based on their lived experiences and geographic location – face compounding barriers that no single policy addresses.

The analysis applies a human rights framework to assess whether Dayton's policy environment:

- Respects rights by avoiding discriminatory policies that create barriers
- Protects rights by preventing third parties from violating rights
- Fulfills rights by proactively removing structural barriers and ensuring universal access

### Recreation-Specific Policies: What Exists

**Municipal Code Provisions:** Research into Dayton's Municipal Code reveals limited specific ordinances governing recreation access, equity, or non-discrimination beyond public facility policies.

- Recreation Specific Policy: Dayton has not codified recreation as a right
- Equity Requirements: Municipal code does not require recreation facilities or programming to be distributed equitably or geographically
- Participation Standards: No ordinances mandate minimum service levels (e.g., "all neighborhoods shall have pool access within 3 miles")
- Fee Structures: Code provisions exist for recreation fees (\$3 daily, \$10/month for pool/fitness combo, annual passes \$85 adults/\$75 seniors/\$60 youth/\$315 family) but no analysis of affordability relative to poverty-level incomes
- Language Access Requirements: Municipal code does not mandate recreation information/programming in languages other than English

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

Based on available evidence, Dayton's three recreation centers show structural compliance – all three centers have accessible entrances. However:

- Pool Access: When GDRC pool closed, no alternative accessible aquatic programming was provided in West Dayton. For residents with mobility limitations who cannot travel to other facilities, this constitutes program access denial.
- Technology: GDRC and Northwest centers have no access to digital programming for persons with visual or mobility impairments who need assistive technology.
- Communication: No evidence of ASL interpreters available for deaf/hard of hearing participants.
- Sensory Accommodations: Two of the recreation center staff recognized the need and provide quiet rooms or sensory-friendly programming when needed.
- Cognitive Accessibility: No indication of materials available in plain language or pictographic formats for persons with intellectual disabilities.

## Recreation and Housing

Recreation access cannot be separated from housing policy because where families can afford to live determines which recreation facilities they can reach.

- Affordable housing developments (Section 8, LIHTC properties) are concentrated in West Dayton, Northeast Dayton.
- Private market rents in low-poverty neighborhoods exceed Section 8 payment standards.
- Landlord discrimination (refusing voucher holders) pushes families into limited areas.
- Result: Low-income families, disproportionately Black and Latino, concentrated in areas with limited recreation access.

### What's Missing — Dayton has no policy requiring the following:

- Recreation facility distribution to align with affordable housing concentration
- Enhanced recreation investment in areas with concentrated poverty
- Transportation provision connecting low-income neighborhoods to recreation
- Income-based fee waivers ensuring affordability

## Recreation and Employment

- **Civil Service:** Operates under city charter and formal Civil Service Rules — establishes examinations, lists, seniority/promotion rules, and formal hiring pipelines intended to prevent patronage. This creates predictability and legal protection for workers but can limit local discretion and rapid policy changes.
- **Human Resources:** Operates under City Manager direction; associated with ADA accommodations, discrimination complaints, employee relations, and recruitment for unclassified roles. HR is the conventional place for equity investigations, training, and policy implementation.

Dayton's city leaders, staff, and community members have raised the issue of an 'inequitable' system that positions "fairness" in its operations. This pipeline is standardized and heavily used for police hiring, making majority of the police force (and fire personnel) non-residents of Dayton. This challenge was repeatedly highlighted by Dayton's Police Chief who is committed to having a majority police force from Dayton.

**Human rights implication:** If many police/fire officers live outside Dayton, it can erode community trust and weaken community-based accountability. Civil Service's emphasis on open, merit-based lists can unintentionally disadvantage local recruitment if local candidates face barriers (test design, access to prep, timelines, or awareness). HR-led outreach and removal of access barriers are needed to make the civil-service pipeline produce locally representative hires.

## Recreation and Education

As of the 2025–26 school year, Dayton Public Schools is purchasing RTA bus passes for high school students following a legal challenge. In August 2025, DPS filed a lawsuit against the state of Ohio after a provision in the state budget (HB 96) prohibited the district from purchasing bus passes for students who would transfer at the downtown Wright Stop Plaza hub. Notably, DPS claimed it is likely the only school district in the state impacted by the law. The Franklin County Court granted DPS a temporary restraining order in mid-August 2025 and then extended it with a preliminary injunction on August 29, 2025, allowing the district to continue providing RTA passes to all high school students (grades 9–12) for the entire 2025–26 school year. The case is scheduled to continue in court in September 2026.

In May 2022, DPS eliminated yellow bus service for high school students when the First Student Transportation contract was mutually dissolved. The biggest transportation challenge is that DPS must transport both public and non-public students through eighth grade under Ohio law, which includes students attending dozens of charters and private schools across the region, making yellow bus transportation extremely expensive and logistically complex.

Wright Stop Plaza is the downtown transit center located just north of Fourth Street, between Main and Jefferson Streets. This facility serves as the central hub where students must transfer between bus routes to reach their schools across the district.

Education and recreation policies operate in silos, compounding disadvantage for students in under-resourced schools who are disproportionately Black, low-income, and living in formerly redlined neighborhoods. Nearly 80% of DPS students belong to ethnic and racial minorities. Transportation policy creates mobility segregation where affluent families can easily access multiple recreation options while low-income families cannot access even one. This raises serious questions about alignment with the principles of non-discrimination and equal access.

### WRIGHT STOP PLAZA — SAFETY CRISIS

Greater Dayton RTA has security personnel at Wright Stop Plaza, and the agency has a contract with Dayton Police to monitor and patrol the property during high-traffic times.

**350+**

Police calls for service since mid-August 2023 — approximately two per day

**18**

Calls for fights in progress  
· A dozen theft calls · Half a dozen weapons complaints

**April 4, 2025**

Alfred Hale III, 18, Dunbar High School senior, shot and killed at 7:22 AM while waiting for a bus to school

## Recreation and Safety

The Department of Recreation and the Department of Police work collaboratively to ensure safety near and within recreation centers. Recreation center staff rely heavily on police presence during certain hours, yet youth report discomfort with police presence when utilizing the centers—creating a tension between stated safety goals and actual youth access.

Current resource allocation raises questions about municipal priorities and the right to recreation. Based on available data, the police department receives approximately 60% of the general fund (~\$95 million of \$158 million) while recreation receives less than 5%, creating a resource allocation ratio of approximately 12:1.

While collaboration between departments serves legitimate safety functions, the current approach reflects an over-reliance on policing that may undermine the welcoming, accessible environment necessary for recreation to fulfill its role in youth development and community well-being.

## Recreation and Budget

The Department of Recreation receives less than 5% of Dayton's general fund (\$7-8 million). Dayton publishes its city budget on the OpenGov transparency platform and has developed a multi-layered budget process that incorporates various forms of input:

- City Commission guidance reflecting elected leadership priorities
- Annual public opinion surveys capturing resident satisfaction and community values
- Departmental input from service delivery staff
- Community advisory boards, including the federally mandated Community and Neighborhood Development Advisory Board
- Neighborhood engagement for capital projects involving months of community feedback
- Equity-focused procurement policies embedding fair wages, living wage standards, and goals for minority, women-owned, and veteran-owned business participation

As a home-rule city, Dayton possesses the legal authority to implement these commitments independent of shifting state or federal climates.

## The Gap Between Process and Participation

Despite these formal mechanisms, significant concerns emerge when examining whether the budget process genuinely enables meaningful public participation through a human rights lens (Appendix E) Key issues include:

- **Form over substance:** While the city characterizes its process as "inclusive and transparent," most recreation staff and community members report the process does not feel inclusive in practice.
- **Limited input mechanisms:** Residents primarily provide input through surveys — a one-way communication channel that does not facilitate dialogue, deliberation, or substantive discussion of recreational needs and priorities.

**Limited input mechanisms:** Residents primarily provide input through surveys — a one-way communication channel that does not facilitate dialogue, deliberation, or substantive discussion of recreational needs and priorities.

**Lack of meaningful influence:** Community input appears to have minimal impact on actual resource allocation decisions, particularly regarding recreation funding levels.

**Structural barriers:** The budget process may be formally open, but if residents lack information about how decisions are made, when and how to engage effectively, or evidence that their input shapes outcomes, procedural accessibility does not translate to meaningful participation.

## 5.3 Places — Readiness of Physical, Digital, and Public Spaces

The "Places" dimension of Human Rights City readiness examines whether physical, digital, and public spaces are accessible, safe, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable for all residents. Space is not neutral — the built environment can either enable or prevent rights realization.

The pool serving the Black, poorest, most female-headed household neighborhood received the most significant spatial intervention — complete closure rather than reduced hours. This prolonged five-year closure has denied an entire childhood cohort access to aquatic programming.

### Environmental Dimensions

- West Dayton: Historically redlined, resulting in 30–40% less tree canopy than affluent areas
- Surface temperatures: 10–15°F hotter than areas with tree cover
- Indoor temperatures: Older housing stock lacks AC, poor insulation
- Vulnerability: Elderly persons, pregnant women, young children most susceptible to heat illness

### Women's Safety

- Women report feeling unsafe walking to/from centers in evening due to poor lighting
- Lack of benches means elderly women cannot rest, limiting walking-track use
- No lactation rooms (breastfeeding mothers have no private space)
- No family changing rooms (single mothers with sons need appropriate facilities)
- No women-only hours (important for religious/cultural needs, trauma survivors)
- No childcare at fitness facilities (women cannot exercise while supervising children)
- No teen girls-only programming spaces (girls report harassment in mixed spaces)

# Five A's Framework — Assessment Results for Dayton's Recreation Centres

The Five A's framework was utilized to assess the Recreation Centers across all dimensions of access:

<b>A1 — AVAILABILITY</b>		<b>INSUFFICIENT</b>
<p><b>WHAT EXISTS</b></p> <p>Three recreation centers for 137,000 residents          · Pool access: One closed, two with limited hours          · Each center provides programming          · GDRC has space dedicated to seniors          · Pricing model allows low-income families to access programs and services</p>	<p><b>GAP</b></p> <p><i>Insufficient facilities; uneven geographic distribution          · West Dayton has had no pool access for over five years</i></p>	
<b>A2 — ACCESSIBILITY (PHYSICAL)</b>		<b>PARTIAL</b>
<p><b>WHAT EXISTS</b></p> <p>Pools and programs are accessible to persons with disabilities          · All three centers have accessible entrances</p>	<p><b>GAP</b></p> <p><i>Deteriorated sidewalks prevent safe pedestrian access          · Poor lighting limits evening access          · No transportation connections          · No ASL interpreters for deaf/hard of hearing</i></p>	
<b>A3 — ACCEPTABILITY (CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE)</b>		<b>PARTIAL</b>
<p><b>WHAT EXISTS</b></p> <p>All three centers have welcoming staff who are helpful          · Staff deeply committed to serving their communities</p>	<p><b>GAP</b></p> <p><i>No women-only hours          · No programming accommodating diverse religious observances          · Multilingual information extremely limited          · Staff lack training in cultural competency</i></p>	
<b>A4 — ADAPTABILITY (RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING NEEDS)</b>		<b>LIMITED</b>
<p><b>WHAT EXISTS</b></p> <p>Recognition of need for low-cost programming          · First strategic plan in 20 years completed in 2024</p>	<p><b>GAP</b></p> <p><i>No specific teen programming despite youth violence crisis          · No response to heat wave cooling needs after pool closure          · Limited response to community needs</i></p>	
<b>A5 — AFFORDABILITY</b>		<b>PARTIAL</b>
<p><b>WHAT EXISTS</b></p> <p>Low fees (\$3 daily, \$10/month pool/fitness combo)          · Flexible fee for summer programs          · Annual passes available</p>	<p><b>GAP</b></p> <p><i>Transportation costs exceed program costs          · No free childcare provided          · Economic barriers exclude some low-income persons</i></p>	

## ASSESSMENT AT A GLANCE

<b>A1</b> AVAILABILITY <b>Insufficient</b>	<b>A2</b> ACCESSIBILITY <b>Partial</b>	<b>A3</b> ACCEPTABILITY <b>Partial</b>	<b>A4</b> ADAPTABILITY <b>Limited</b>	<b>A5</b> AFFORDABILITY <b>Partial</b>
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*Human Rights City designation requires spatial justice: ensuring that ALL places — recreation facilities, parks, sidewalks, streets — enable rather than prevent rights realization for those most marginalized.*

## Other Factors Relevant to Clients of the Department of Recreation

While this assessment focuses on Dayton's Department of Recreation, many have communicated their needs and struggles to the ongoing housing crisis in Dayton. Three themes consistently surfaced during our engagement as 'Dayton's Crisis' — lack of affordable housing (and high level of vacant, dilapidated homes in the city); high poverty rate (predominantly among African Americans); and high violence perpetuated by and against youth.

## SECTION IV — RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**IMMEDIATE**

1–6 Months

- Reopen GDRC pool with equivalent hours
- Establish supervised afterschool spaces 2–6 PM
- Launch disaggregated data collection
- Strengthen security at recreation centres
- Develop robust community communication system

**MEDIUM-TERM**

6–12 Months

- Comprehensive recreation policy review
- Staff capacity building — human rights & cultural competency
- Create bilingual documents and multilingual signage
- Technology and digital upgrades
- Non-violent communication programming for youth

**LONG-TERM**

1–3 Years

- Comprehensive neighbourhood recreation network

**FOR THE CITY OF DAYTON**

- Formally adopt UDHR as governance norms
- Create Human Rights Office
- Establish human rights indicators and tracking
- Annual Human Rights Progress Report

## I. City of Dayton

Create a multi-stakeholder committee that includes youth (like "Welcome Dayton") to work towards Dayton becoming a human rights city within the next three years. The legislation and operations to become a human rights city should include the following:

- Formally adopt UDHR, and other relevant treaties as governance norms.
- Develop a Dayton-specific Human Rights Charter and within it establish a four-pillar approach focused on transparency, accountability, non-discrimination, and participation.
- Create a Human Rights Office to operationalize implementation, along with an oversight body constituted by public and city officials.
- Establish human rights indicators and a system to track progress.
- Disaggregate data for all programs and services by race, gender, income, neighborhood, age, and other factors.
- Create a digital public dashboard making data accessible multilingually, including to those with disabilities.
- Conduct an annual Human Rights Progress Report assessing progress and use the data to guide resource allocation.

## II. Department of Recreation

Establish cross-sectoral implementation committee co-chaired by representatives from affected communities and city government including youth representatives (minimum 30%), parents/families, Department of Recreation, Dayton Public Schools, Police Department, community organizations to implement the following recommendations:

PRIORITY LEVEL	TIMEFRAME	KEY FOCUS AREAS
<b>Immediate</b>	1–6 Months	Emergency interventions, Youth safety, Extended hours
<b>Medium-Term</b>	6–12 Months	Infrastructure, Data systems, Policy reforms
<b>Long-Term</b>	1–3 Years	Integration of Human Rights principles/framework within the city of Dayton

## 6.1 Immediate Actions (1–6 Months)

These urgent interventions address immediate harms while laying groundwork for systemic change:

#	ACTION	DESCRIPTION & IMPACT	TIMELINE
1.	<b>Prioritize reopening of Greater Dayton Recreation Center Pool</b>	Allocate resources to staff and reopen the GDRC pool with hours equivalent to other facilities. Provide free swimming lessons for youth who lost five years of access; provide transport to other centers as needed. This addresses the most visible rights violation affecting West Dayton residents.	<i>1–2 months</i>
2.	<b>Establish afterschool spaces with easy transportation access</b>	In partnership with police and community organizations, establish supervised youth spaces (2:00–6:00 PM) with homework help, recreational activities, conflict mediation, and violence interrupters.	<i>2–3 months</i>
3.	<b>Launch disaggregated data collection</b>	Immediately begin collecting participation data by race, income, gender, neighborhood, age, and (dis)ability status across all recreation programs. Essential for identifying disparities and measuring progress.	<i>2 months for system design; ongoing collection</i>
4.	<b>Strengthen security at recreation centers</b>	In collaboration with community, youth, and staff, set up safety mechanisms for each recreation center.	<i>2–4 months</i>
5.	<b>Robust communication system to engage community</b>	Audit current communication and community engagement system and develop engagement and accountability system.	<i>3–6 months</i>

## 6.2 Medium-Term Reforms (6–12 Months)

These structural reforms build essential infrastructure and accountability mechanisms.

#	REFORM	DESCRIPTION & IMPACT	TIMELINE
6.	<b>Comprehensive Recreation Policy Review</b>	Conduct systematic review of all recreation policies through human rights lens. Codify recreation as a right, establish equity standards for facility distribution, require minimum service levels for all neighborhoods. Develop language access policy for multilingual communications.	<i>6–8 months</i>
7.	<b>Staff Capacity Building Program</b>	Implement comprehensive training on human rights principles, cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and community engagement. Establish career pathways and competitive compensation. Prioritize hiring from communities served.	<i>6–12 months</i>
8.	<b>Create bilingual documents and multilingual signage</b>	Begin by setting up a taskforce of bilingual Spanish-speaking staff from diverse departments to design a plan to make all announcements, signage and instructions in Recreation Centers bilingual.	<i>6–12 months</i>
9.	<b>Technology and digital upgrades</b>	Install functional computers, ensure reliable Wi-Fi, create technology-integrated programming (gaming, coding, digital art) to engage youth. Address digital divide affecting low-income communities.	<i>6–8 months</i>
10.	<b>Non-violent communication and conflict resolution programming for youth</b>	Engage community organizations, youth-led initiatives, Department of Recreation and police to provide skills through training and workshops, with a focus on creating safe spaces for non-violent conflict resolution.	<i>6–12 months</i>

### 6.3 Long-Term Reforms (1–3 Years)

These transformative initiatives embed human rights as Dayton's governance framework:

#	INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION & IMPACT	TIMELINE
11.	<b>Comprehensive Neighborhood Recreation Network</b>	Building on the existing strategic plan, develop a 10-year plan ensuring every neighborhood has high-quality recreation within 10-minute walk. This can include additional community centers in underserved areas, upgraded parks with splash pads/sports facilities, outdoor recreation areas, cultural centers. Prioritize West Dayton.	<i>18–36 months for planning and initial implementation</i>

### 6.4 Conclusion

This assessment of Dayton's Department of Recreation reveals both significant opportunities and urgent imperatives for advancing human rights at the municipal level. The findings demonstrate that while Dayton possesses foundational infrastructure and dedicated personnel to move forward with its commitment to becoming a human rights city, the systemic inequalities require the City of Dayton to be intentional in its policies, processes, and practices.

While there are many findings that the report outlines, the fundamental shifts that are vital to the department, and the city include the following:

- Improving communication system
- Collection of disaggregated data
- Increasing youth perspectives and their leadership in decision-making

This assessment also reveals Dayton's unique positioning to become a leader in municipal human rights implementation. The city's history as host of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, its sister city partnerships fostering international engagement, and the University of Dayton Human Rights Center's active scholarship create a foundation for meaningful transformation.

Equally significant is the presence of Dayton United for Human Rights, a civil society-led coalition whose organizing capacity, community relationships, and rights-based education and awareness training represent an indispensable asset in the city's journey toward Human Rights City designation. Together, these institutional and civic resources position Dayton to build a human rights infrastructure that is both government-led and community-rooted. Dayton's home-rule charter provides legal authority to implement human rights commitments independent of state or federal policies.

Research demonstrates that recreation programming offers among the highest returns on municipal investment. Studies show structured after-school and summer programs reduce youth crime by 20–50%, with summer employment programs producing 35–43% reductions in violent crime arrests. Every dollar invested in prevention programming generates substantial cost savings in justice system expenses. Recreation programs targeting the 3–6 PM window when juvenile crime peaks can fundamentally alter trajectories for young people while strengthening community cohesion and well-being.

Dayton has the opportunity to set a national precedent as the first U.S. city to pass an ordinance formally becoming a Human Rights City. This commitment would establish a governance framework anchored in transparency, accountability, non-discrimination, and meaningful participation — principles that can guide resource allocation, policy development, and service delivery across all municipal functions.

Becoming a Human Rights City requires Dayton to move beyond aspirational statements toward structural reform. The recommendations in this assessment provide a roadmap organized across three timeframes: immediate actions (1–6 months) addressing urgent access barriers; medium-term reforms (6–12 months) building systemic capacity; and long-term change (1–3 years) embedding human rights as Dayton's core governance framework. Immediate priorities include:

- Reopen the Greater Dayton Recreation Center Pool
- Launch disaggregated data collection within the department
- Develop a robust communication system to engage and respond to community needs

## A Defining Moment

Dayton stands at a critical juncture. The city can continue patterns of disinvestment that perpetuate inequality, criminalize poverty, and deny residents their fundamental rights or it can embrace its international legacy by becoming a Human Rights City that prioritizes the dignity, development and wellbeing of all residents, particularly the most marginalized.

The barriers documented in this assessment are not inevitable. They result from policy choices that can be changed. The tragic death of Alfred Hale III reminds us that these are not abstract questions of governance, but matters of life and death, dignity and opportunity, justice and equity.

Dayton has the resources, authority, and institutional foundation to lead the nation in municipal human rights implementation. The question is whether it will summon the political will and moral courage to make the transformative investments required. By adopting a Human Rights City framework, Dayton can ensure that every child has safe places to play, learn, and grow; that every family can access recreation regardless of income or zip code; that every community member can participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives; and that every person's inherent dignity is respected, protected, and fulfilled through municipal governance. Becoming a human rights city is not a destination but a journey toward ensuring that the city and its residents together uphold human rights principles that enable all residents to thrive in an imperfect and unequal society, within a beautiful world.

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*Dayton stands at a critical juncture. The city can continue patterns of disinvestment — or it can embrace its international legacy by becoming a Human Rights City that prioritizes the dignity, development, and well-being of all residents.*

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## Universal Declaration of Human Rights — Plain Language Version

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948. This plain language version was developed by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission.

<p><b>ARTICLE 1</b></p> <p>Everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights.</p>	<p><b>ARTICLE 2</b></p> <p>Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms in this Declaration.</p>
<p><b>ARTICLE 3</b></p> <p>Everyone has the right to life and to live in freedom and safety.</p>	<p><b>ARTICLE 4</b></p> <p>No one can be forced into slavery.</p>
<p><b>ARTICLE 5</b></p> <p>No one can be tortured or treated cruelly.</p>	<p><b>ARTICLE 6</b></p> <p>Everyone has the right to be treated equally by the law.</p>
<p><b>ARTICLE 7</b></p> <p>The law is the same for everyone and should be applied in the same way to everyone.</p>	<p><b>ARTICLE 8</b></p> <p>Everyone has the right to ask for legal help when their rights are not respected.</p>
<p><b>ARTICLE 9</b></p> <p>No one can be randomly imprisoned or sent away from their own country.</p>	<p><b>ARTICLE 10</b></p> <p>Everyone has the right to a fair and public trial by an independent court.</p>
<p><b>ARTICLE 11</b></p> <p>Everyone should be considered innocent until proved guilty.</p>	<p><b>ARTICLE 12</b></p> <p>Nobody can interfere with someone's family, home, privacy or correspondence without good reason. Everybody has the right to be protected from such actions.</p>

**ARTICLE 13**

Everyone has the right to travel wherever they want within their own country. Everyone also has the right to leave their country and to return to it.

**ARTICLE 14**

Everyone has the right to go to another country and ask for protection if they are being mistreated or are in danger.

**ARTICLE 15**

Everyone has the right to belong to a country. Nobody can be prevented from belonging to another country without good reason.

**ARTICLE 16**

All men and women have the right to marry and have a family.

**ARTICLE 17**

Everyone has the right to own property and possessions.

**ARTICLE 18**

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Everyone has the right to practice a religion. Everyone also has the right not to practice a religion.

**ARTICLE 19**

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

**ARTICLE 20**

Everyone has the right to peacefully take part in meetings and belong to groups.

**ARTICLE 21**

Everyone has the right to choose to take part in the government of their country. The will of the people is the foundation for the authority of government.

**ARTICLE 22**

Everyone has the right to social security and is entitled to economic, social and cultural rights.

**ARTICLE 23**

Everyone has the right to work, the right to equal pay for equal work and the right to a decent income and working conditions. Everyone also has the right to form and to join trade unions.

**ARTICLE 24**

Everyone has the right to have time to relax and have fun.

**ARTICLE 25**

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and wellbeing. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and help.

**ARTICLE 26**

Everyone has the right to free education. Primary school education should be available to all. Everybody should also have access to higher education.

**ARTICLE 27**

Everyone has the right to participate in their community's cultural life.

**ARTICLE 28**

Everyone has the right to live in a society in which the rights and freedoms in this Declaration are available.

**ARTICLE 29**

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that the rights of others are respected.

**ARTICLE 30**

No one has the right to try and take away any of the rights in this Declaration.

## The European Union Framework for Human Rights Cities

**Why This Matters for Dayton:** The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has developed a comprehensive, field-tested framework used by over 700 cities worldwide. This framework provides Dayton with a proven roadmap — not a theoretical model, but practical tools and structures successfully implemented in cities from Vienna to Utrecht.

*Key Insight: Nine out of 10 Europeans believe human rights are important for creating fairer societies and addressing inequalities. This framework shows how cities can operationalize that commitment.*

In October 2021, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights launched its Framework for Human Rights Cities, developed collaboratively with Vienna, Utrecht, Lund, and other European cities alongside academic experts and international organizations. The framework provides a comprehensive, adaptable toolkit for municipalities seeking to advance human rights locally.

The framework structures implementation along three interconnected dimensions: Foundations (commitments), Structures (mechanisms), and Tools (methods). This organized approach makes human rights city development manageable and measurable.

## DIMENSION 2: STRUCTURES — BUILDING MECHANISMS

*What it means: The institutional systems and processes that integrate rights into daily city operations.*

### KEY ELEMENTS

- **Human Rights Office:** Dedicated coordination unit managing implementation
- **Steering Committees:** Multi-stakeholder bodies providing strategic guidance
- **Department Integration:** Human rights-based approach embedded across all municipal departments
- **Training Programs:** Capacity building for all city employees
- **Participation Processes:** Meaningful community engagement mechanisms
- **Grievance Mechanisms:** Accessible complaint and accountability systems
- **Data Systems:** Disaggregated data collection identifying discrimination

**For Dayton:** This means creating a Human Rights Office, establishing the Human Rights Taskforce, training recreation and other city staff, and building data systems to track equity outcomes.

## DIMENSION 3: TOOLS — IMPLEMENTING METHODS

*What it means: The practical methods and resources cities use to apply human rights principles.*

### KEY ELEMENTS

- **Impact Assessments:** Evaluating policies and programs for human rights impacts
- **Rights-Based Budgeting:** Frameworks linking budget decisions to rights outcomes
- **Participatory Planning:** Methodologies for inclusive decision-making
- **Monitoring Systems:** Tracking and evaluating rights realization
- **Service Delivery Protocols:** Rights-based approaches to providing services
- **Education Programs:** Community engagement and human rights education
- **Knowledge Networks:** Peer learning and exchange with other cities

**For Dayton:** This means implementing human rights budget checks (Appendix E), creating the Recreation Rights Snapshot, developing participatory budgeting pilots, and joining networks like the U.S. Human Rights Cities Alliance.

## Current Implementation: The RIGHTSCITIES Project

The RIGHTSCITIES project (2024–2027), led by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute and involving cities including Vienna, Utrecht, Lund, Gdansk, and Sopot, is actively operationalizing this framework. The project provides:

- Online learning modules for city officials and staff
- Train-the-trainer programs building local capacity
- Self-evaluation tools for cities to assess progress
- Gender equality and non-discrimination expertise embedded throughout

**Opportunity for Dayton:** As the first U.S. city to pass a Human Rights City ordinance, Dayton could connect with the RIGHTSCITIES network and European cities, accessing tested resources and contributing American municipal perspectives to global human rights city development.

## Key Principles Underlying the Framework

- **Leave no one behind:** Explicit commitment to reducing all forms of inequality
- **Intersecting discrimination:** Recognition that people face multiple, compounding forms of marginalization
- **Vulnerable populations:** Particular attention to those in vulnerable situations
- **Creating fairer societies:** Nine out of 10 people believe human rights are essential for addressing inequalities

Rather than starting from scratch, Dayton can adapt this comprehensive, field-tested framework to the U.S. context, becoming both a national pioneer and an international partner in advancing human rights at the municipal level. The recommendations throughout this assessment align with the EU framework's three dimensions — providing Dayton with a coherent roadmap from foundational commitments through structural mechanisms to practical implementation tools.

# City of Dayton — Informal Resolution (December 2023)

**By: Ms. Turner Sloss No: 1007-23**

## AN INFORMAL RESOLUTION

*Committing to Necessary Steps for the City of Dayton to Declare Itself a Human Rights City that Supports Human Rights Practices Locally and Globally, Including Assessing the City's Human Rights Practices and Infrastructure.*

WHEREAS, The City of Dayton takes great pride in the diversity of its residents; and

WHEREAS, On December 10, 1948, Resolution 271 A of the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 'as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to be universally protected'; and

WHEREAS, Since 1962, the Human Relations Council (HRC) of the City of Dayton has been a leader in the promotion of civil rights and continues to promote equity, engagement, and the dignity of all; and

WHEREAS, HRC, as an agency of the Commission, focuses on eliminating prejudice and discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, familial status, ancestry, sex, place of birth, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or disability; and

WHEREAS, Through HRC, Dayton intends to analyze ways to continue and improve the execution of these practices by becoming a Human Rights City; and

WHEREAS, The City is committed to furthering its work on diversity, equity, and inclusion by evidencing international human rights standards, including fostering mutual understanding, respect, sustainability, and a sense of belonging; and

WHEREAS, The City recognizes the catalytic role of the Dayton United for Human Rights coalition in advocating for Dayton to declare itself a Human Rights City; and

WHEREAS, The City recognizes its duties to promote human rights in its interactions with the public through transparency, accountability, and principles of good governance; and

WHEREAS, The City aspires to be a leader in advancing human rights and human dignity related to its services to the public; and

WHEREAS, The City of Dayton acknowledges past failures of federal, state, and local government to uphold the human rights of people when it came to the Indian Removal Act, segregation, redlining, economic disadvantages, and access to the necessary tools to build wealth; the City is working continuously to right these past wrongs, and amend relevant policies within its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, Despite historical and contemporary efforts, Dayton faces challenges related to systemic racism, healthcare, housing and basic human dignities; and

WHEREAS, A Human Rights City embodies the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to guide the spirit of the laws, practices, and policies carried out with and on behalf of the residents of Dayton; and

WHEREAS, A Human Rights City builds infrastructure for conflict prevention, human security, sustainable development, active civic engagement, and transparent government; and

WHEREAS, A Human Rights City is one whose residents and local jurisdictions, through a number of potential methods, including ongoing discussions and creative exchanges of ideas, come to understand that human rights, when widely known as a way of life, can positively influence social, economic, and political rights, privileges, and equal opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Declaring a municipality as a Human Rights City provides an opportunity and responsibility to call attention to human rights violations and to continue to promote the importance of educating its citizens about human rights; and

WHEREAS, Dayton supports international human rights principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and subsequent international human rights treaties which promote the humanity of all persons, and enable all peoples to meet their basic needs; and

WHEREAS, Dayton has been featured prominently on the world stage as a destination focused on the pursuit of peace and understanding, most notably as the host of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, better known as the Dayton Peace Accords, which was a peace agreement reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in 1995 that brought an end to the three-and-a-half-year-long Bosnian War; and

WHEREAS, On September 21, 2010, the International Day of Peace, the Mayor and Dayton City Commission officially declared Dayton, Ohio a City of Peace; and

WHEREAS, In October of 2011, the Dayton City Commission unanimously adopted the Welcome Dayton initiative, supporting the integration of immigrants into the Dayton community; and

WHEREAS, The City of Dayton commits to the ongoing process of improving internal practices and engagement with residents related to Human Rights values and principles; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF DAYTON:**

**Section 1.** That the City of Dayton intends to declare itself a Human Rights City, formally stating its commitment to the principles of equality, equity, inclusion, respect, and the recognition of human dignity. The City of Dayton supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and will uphold and promote the principles that apply to service areas under its jurisdiction.

**Section 2.** That the City shall take necessary steps over the next year to enact its commitment to human rights by consulting with community partners during its assessment of the current organizational environment, including City infrastructure, staffing, services, protections, and practices associated with human rights principles, and determining who the appropriate and necessary partners are to accomplish the necessary changes and provide periodic updates to the public. The Commission is executing a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Dayton, specifically the University of Dayton Human Rights Center.

**Section 3.** That the City will undertake this assessment in cooperation with the University of Dayton Human Rights Center, with their respective roles defined in a Memorandum of Understanding.

**Section 4.** HRC and the City Manager are directed to work on this assessment. The HRC Director will draft the assessment report, informed by City of Dayton Departments, community partners, independent experts, and the human rights practices of other cities.

**Section 5.** The Dayton City Commission will present the completed report to the public as soon as it is complete, at the latest by January 31, 2025.

**Section 6.** The Dayton City Commission hereby commits to the meaningful adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as guiding principles.

ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION: December 20, 2023

Signed by the Mayor of the City of Dayton, Ohio, and attested by the City Attorney.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

This Memorandum of Understanding ('MOU') is made and entered into this day of December, 2023, between the City of Dayton, Ohio ('Dayton'), and the University of Dayton, particularly the University of Dayton Human Rights Center ('UDHRC').

- Section 1. The purpose of this MOU is to establish the framework by which each party will operate as Dayton works to establish itself as a Human Rights City.
- Section 2. Dayton will be responsible for all costs and resources necessary to complete an assessment. These resources will include staffing, procuring a third party to execute the assessment, and other resources as needed.
- Section 3. Dayton will utilize an open bid process to retain an expert to conduct the assessment. Dayton commits to inviting the Executive Director of the UDHRC to participate in setting up the parameters of the assessment and in scoring received bids.
- Section 4. Once an expert is retained, Dayton will be responsible for the scope, process, and execution of the assessment. UDHRC may provide an affiliated student to assist the expert in their work.
- Section 5. The assessment process will include an initial assessment of one appropriate process or procedure by which Dayton, along with the Executive Director of the UDHRC, can evaluate and adjust the previously assigned assessment parameters to achieve more optimal results.
- Section 6. Dayton will share the assessment's recommendations via a report to the Office of the Commission once said report is complete.
- Section 7. Dayton hopes to identify recommendations that may be implemented immediately. The Office of the Commission in consultation with the City Manager will determine which recommendations are able to be prioritized and implemented in an accelerated manner.
- Section 8. After the assessment is complete, the Office of the Commission will determine and establish the necessary structures, committees, and/or staffing changes needed to continue the work of designating Dayton as a Human Rights City.
- Section 9. The terms of this MOU shall renew annually. Should either party choose to terminate this MOU, notice shall be issued not less than thirty (30) days prior to the renewal date.

**City of Dayton**

Shelley Dickstein, City Manager

*Date: December 21, 2023*

**University of Dayton**

Darlene Weaver, Ph.D.

Provost and Executive Vice President of  
Academic Affairs

## Proven Partnership Models

**Why This Matters for Dayton:** Dayton faces challenges that stretch beyond traditional city responsibilities — education, housing, poverty, and youth safety. Other mid-sized cities have found practical solutions by partnering with counties, school districts, nonprofits, and the private sector. This appendix provides real examples from Ohio cities and similar communities showing what becomes possible when local governments use their convening power — even without direct control over all systems.

### Section 1: Cross-Sector Partnerships

#### Case Study 1: Akron, Ohio — Improving Community Health Through Cross-Sector Collaboration

##### THE PROBLEM

- High rates of chronic illness and poor birth outcomes
- Significant health disparities, including high Black infant mortality
- Fragmented health and social service sectors
- City lacked direct control over Medicaid, hospitals, or county health systems

##### THE SOLUTION

- Starting 2012: Partnered with Summit County Public Health, local hospital systems, and insurers
- Integrated health into urban planning (linked transportation access to health outcomes)
- Developed shared quality-of-life measures
- Focused on social determinants of health (housing, education)

##### RESULTS

- Improved performance on 19 of 33 health system measures
- Strengthened primary care services
- Reduced avoidable hospitalizations
- Enhanced cross-sector collaboration

*Source: Commonwealth Fund (2017)*

## Proven Partnership Models

### Case Study 2: San Jose & Santa Clara County — Tackling Homelessness Through City-County Partnership

THE PROBLEM	THE SOLUTION	RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~9,706 people homeless in 2019 (31% increase since 2017)</li> <li>• Disproportionate impact on communities of color</li> <li>• Fragmented governance and lack of coordinated data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formed Destination: Home public-private partnership</li> <li>• Adopted 5-year Community Plan with housing-first approach</li> <li>• Secured \$950 million in County bonds for affordable housing</li> <li>• Engaged 200+ stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housed over 14,000 individuals (2015–2020)</li> <li>• Prevention system serving ~1,000 households annually</li> <li>• Expanded affordable housing supply</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Results for America (2022)</i></p>

### Case Study 3: Cincinnati & Hamilton County — Reducing Child Poverty Through Collaborative Action

THE PROBLEM	THE SOLUTION	RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40% of children in Cincinnati below poverty line</li> <li>• Significant income disparities by race</li> <li>• Working families struggling with unexpected expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015: Established Child Poverty Collaborative</li> <li>• 2019: Launched Project LIFT providing flexible funding</li> <li>• Secured state waiver to use TANF funds for non-traditional expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided financial assistance to numerous families</li> <li>• Empowered families to secure sustainable employment</li> <li>• Contributed to a regional poverty alleviation approach</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Results for America (2020)</i></p>

**Key Lessons for Dayton — Section 1:** Counties are critical allies, especially for health, housing, and poverty initiatives. Shared data builds trust — making collaboration accountable and fundable. Cities have convening power — even without legal control, they can bring players to the table and set priorities.

## Section 2: School-Transit-City Partnerships

### Case Study 4: Cincinnati School Transit Partnership — Metro Transit + Cincinnati Public Schools + City Collaboration

THE PROBLEM	THE SOLUTION	RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPS relied on Metro Transit buses, funneling students through Government Square downtown hub</li> <li>• Safety issues and loitering concerns</li> <li>• Truancy problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025–26: Added crosstown and direct neighborhood routes reducing downtown transfers</li> <li>• Color-coded student passes with RFID chips</li> <li>• Increased staffing and safety presence at hubs</li> <li>• Used robocalls to reach families with clear instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only ~300 of 13,000+ student riders now transfer at Government Square</li> <li>• Youth-involved calls downtown dropped by ~18%</li> <li>• Incidents declined by ~35%</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Go Metro, WLWT, WCPO</i></p>

### Case Study 5: Cleveland Student Safety Coordination — RTA + Cleveland Metropolitan School District + City Police

THE PROBLEM	THE SOLUTION	RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students faced safety risks and crowding at bus stops after school</li> <li>• Concerns heightened after serious incidents occurred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMSD, Greater Cleveland RTA, and City Police identified priority schools</li> <li>• Added extra trips and adjusted route timing</li> <li>• Expanded Safe Passage Project with community volunteers</li> <li>• Integrated security cameras into city monitoring system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faster student dispersal</li> <li>• Improved safety perceptions at stops</li> <li>• Stronger multi-agency partnerships</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Ideastream, Signal Cleveland</i></p>

**Key Lessons for Dayton — Section 2:** Neighborhood dispersal works — Cincinnati shows how to redesign routes and passes to minimize downtown crowding. Safety partnerships matter — Cleveland demonstrates targeted, multi-agency safety fixes. Each case required overcoming funding disputes and scheduling misalignments, but collaboration delivered solutions.

## **Conclusion: The Power of Collaboration**

What stands out across all these examples is the power of collaboration to expand resources, improve equity, and build trust. For Dayton's Department of Recreation and its broader Human Rights City goals, these case studies demonstrate that even when a city does not control every lever — whether in health, housing, education, or transit — it can still shape outcomes by convening partners, sharing data, and setting community-centered priorities.

The partnerships described here were not easy. They required overcoming bureaucratic hurdles, aligning funding streams, navigating data governance, and maintaining community trust. But they proved achievable — and they created measurable improvements in residents' lives. Dayton has the same convening power and the same opportunity to bring stakeholders together to address complex challenges that cross traditional boundaries.

## Strengthening Dayton's Budget Process Through a Human Rights Lens

**Quick Overview:** Dayton has built a strong foundation for inclusive budgeting with transparent processes, community engagement, and equity-focused policies. This appendix provides practical recommendations to strengthen these efforts through a human rights framework — ensuring budget decisions advance fairness, reach underserved communities, and create measurable improvements in residents' lives.

*Key Takeaway: These recommendations build on what Dayton already does well, offering practical, phased steps to deepen equity and community participation.*

### What Dayton Is Already Doing Well

Dayton has established multiple mechanisms for inclusive, transparent budgeting that provide a strong foundation for a human rights approach:

- **Multiple Streams of Input:** City Commission guidance, annual public opinion surveys, and departmental input from staff who deliver services directly to residents
- **Structured Community Engagement:** Community and Neighborhood Development Advisory Board provides representation from low-income communities; neighborhood engagement for capital projects
- **Equity-Focused Policies:** Fair wage and living wage standards in procurement; goals for minority, women-owned, and veteran-owned business participation; home-rule authority
- **Strategic Investments:** \$4.8 million annually for Preschool Promise; small business development programs; balanced affordable housing strategies
- **Recreation and Budget Transparency:** 'Rec Your Hood' program; OpenGov transparency platform publishing city budget for public review

### **RECOMMENDATION 1: MAKE RECREATION BUDGETS MORE TRANSPARENT**

*The Opportunity: Residents value transparency but need clarity to understand budget decisions.*

- Publish plain-language budget breakdowns by program, facility, or neighborhood
- Link spending to outcomes (e.g., '\$50,000 expanded after-school programming to reach 200 youth')
- Create visual dashboards showing recreation investment by neighborhood

### **RECOMMENDATION 2: PROMOTE EQUITY ACROSS NEIGHBORHOODS**

*The Opportunity: Not all neighborhoods start from the same place — data can guide investments where they are needed most.*

- Map underserved areas using demographic and facility access data
- Prioritize recreation upgrades in historically disinvested neighborhoods
- Set minimum service standards ensuring every neighborhood has quality recreation access

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: EXPAND PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETING**

*The Opportunity: Build on successful capital project engagement by extending participation to operating budgets.*

- Pilot participatory budgeting in 1–2 neighborhoods, allocating \$50,000–\$100,000 for residents to decide
- Host 'budget cafés' at recreation centers or libraries for face-to-face priority discussions
- Systematically ensure diverse participation, especially from underrepresented groups (youth in group homes, immigrant communities)

*Example: Greensboro, NC was one of the first mid-sized U.S. cities to adopt citywide participatory budgeting, allocating \$500,000 for residents to decide. Projects funded included park improvements, bus shelters, and street lighting — building trust through quick, visible results.*

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4: ADOPT RIGHTS-BASED PROCUREMENT**

*The Opportunity: Every contract is a chance to promote fairness and community well-being.*

- Prioritize vendors who contribute to community well-being (healthy food, sustainable practices, local hiring)
- Require accessibility standards in all recreation-related contracts
- Track and report procurement outcomes by equity metrics

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5: INTRODUCE HUMAN RIGHTS BUDGET CHECKS**

*The Opportunity: Simple questions can help avoid blind spots in decision-making.*

- Who benefits from this decision?
- Who might be left out or disadvantaged?
- Does it risk rolling back progress we have already made?
- How does it advance human rights outcomes (health, education, housing, fair labor)?

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6: MONITOR OUTCOMES THROUGH AN EQUITY LENS**

*The Opportunity: Data reveals where gaps remain and tracks progress toward equity goals.*

- Collect and publish data on recreation facility use by neighborhood, age, income, race, and disability status
- Create an annual 'Recreation Rights Snapshot' showing progress in an accessible format
- Link budget allocations to measurable outcomes (e.g., 'increased youth program participation in West Dayton by 40%')

## A Phased Implementation Timeline

TIMEFRAME	KEY ACTIONS
<b>Short Term (1–2 years)</b>	Conduct staff workshops on human rights budgeting · Publish simplified recreation budget breakdowns in plain language · Host listening sessions at recreation centers · Map underserved neighborhoods and facility access
<b>Medium Term (3–4 years)</b>	Pilot participatory budgeting in 1–2 neighborhoods (\$50K–\$100K) · Implement human rights budget checklist for all proposals · Launch annual Recreation Rights Snapshot with equity data · Adopt rights-based procurement standards
<b>Long Term (5+ years)</b>	Embed human rights analysis in annual budget reviews · Expand participatory budgeting citywide · Systematically report budget allocations linked to rights outcomes · Integrate equity metrics into all governance systems

## A Phased Implementation Timeline

Dayton has already built a strong foundation for inclusive, transparent budgeting. By gradually introducing a human rights framework, the city can amplify these strengths — ensuring resources are distributed fairly, services reach all residents, and trust in local government grows.

The path forward is incremental and achievable. Small shifts — clearer communication, targeted data collection, pilot participatory processes — can create meaningful change while building momentum for deeper transformation over time.

*By connecting budgets more directly to people's rights and community well-being, Dayton can set a national model for how mid-sized cities can operationalize human rights principles through fiscal policy — creating more equitable, responsive, and effective governance for all residents.*

# Dignity Index Global

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