

Arts, Culture & Tourism

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ARTS, CULTURE & TOURISM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisville's cultural vibrancy and creative economy are underfunded and underutilized assets with enormous potential. While our city boasts world-class institutions like the Kentucky Center for the Arts, the Speed Art Museum, and Actors Theatre, alongside vibrant cultural traditions from bourbon to bluegrass, we're failing to invest equitably in arts and culture across all neighborhoods—and we're missing opportunities to leverage tourism as an economic development engine that benefits everyone, not just downtown corridors.

The Challenge

Louisville's arts, culture, and tourism crisis shows up in stark numbers:

1. **Inequitable Arts Access:** Only 18% of Louisville residents report attending arts/cultural events regularly (vs. 35% national average for peer cities), with access heavily concentrated in wealthy, predominantly white neighborhoods—while West Louisville neighborhoods with rich cultural heritage receive minimal city arts funding.
2. **Artist Economic Insecurity:** Louisville's median artist income is just \$28,400 (48% below city median income), forcing 63% of artists to work second jobs and driving creative talent to cities like Nashville, Austin, and Asheville that invest in artist support

infrastructure.

3. **Tourism Dollars Bypass Communities:** Louisville tourism generates \$3.8 billion annually and supports 68,000 jobs—but 71% of tourism spending stays in a 2-square-mile downtown/NuLu corridor, with West Louisville neighborhoods seeing virtually no tourism economic benefit despite being home to Muhammad Ali’s childhood home and rich African American cultural heritage.
4. **Crumbling Cultural Infrastructure:** City investment in arts/culture infrastructure has declined 34% since 2008 (inflation-adjusted), leaving community arts centers, historic theaters, and cultural spaces in disrepair—particularly in lower-income neighborhoods where arts programming is most needed for youth development.
5. **Underinvestment in Creative Economy:** Louisville spends just \$4.20 per capita on arts/culture (vs. \$17.50 peer city average), ranking 42nd among 50 largest U.S. cities—even as the creative economy generates \$1.2 billion in annual economic activity and research shows every \$1 invested in arts returns \$4-7 in economic activity.

Dave’s Vision

Dave will transform Louisville into a city where arts, culture, and tourism drive equitable economic development and every neighborhood has access to world-class cultural programming. His plan will triple city investment in arts and culture, create sustainable career pathways for artists, spread tourism benefits to underserved neighborhoods, and leverage Louisville’s unique cultural assets—from bourbon to bluegrass, from Muhammad Ali to the Louisville Orchestra—to build a creative economy that works for everyone.

Creative Communities Fund (\$8M annually): Establish dedicated funding stream for neighborhood-based arts organizations, community cultural centers, and grassroots arts programming—with 50% of funds reserved for West Louisville and historically underserved communities.

Artist Support Infrastructure (\$5M annually): Create live/work spaces, artist health insurance pool, career development grants, and creative business incubator to ensure artists can afford to live, work, and thrive in Louisville.

Cultural Tourism Equity Initiative (\$6M annually): Develop tourism infrastructure and programming in West Louisville, Russell, Portland, and other neighborhoods bypassed by current tourism economy—including Muhammad Ali Heritage Trail, African American Heritage Tourism Circuit, and neighborhood cultural festivals.

Public Art & Creative Placemaking (\$4M annually): Fund public art installations, creative placemaking projects, and cultural district development in every neighborhood—with artists paid living wages and projects community-led.

Tourism Workforce Development (\$3M annually): Create career pathways in hospitality and tourism for Louisville residents, particularly in neighborhoods with high unemployment—ensuring tourism growth benefits local workers, not just employers.

Budget Impact

This policy requires **\$26 million in new annual spending**—funded through Louisville Visitors & Convention Commission (LVCC) restructuring (\$12M), Tourism Development Fee expansion (\$8M), corporate sponsorships/philanthropy (\$4M), and General Fund allocation (\$2M). This represents a tripling of city arts investment while leveraging tourism revenue to fund neighborhood cultural development. Economic impact studies project \$104-182M in economic returns (4-7x return on investment).

Why This Matters

Arts and culture are economic engines, not luxuries. The creative economy generates \$1.2 billion annually in Louisville—more than bourbon manufacturing—yet we chronically underfund it. Meanwhile, Nashville’s \$80M annual arts investment has helped drive \$10 billion in tourism revenue and population growth that outpaces Louisville’s by 300%.

Tourism dollars should benefit the communities that create culture. When tourists spend \$3.8 billion in Louisville but West Louisville sees virtually none of it—despite being home to Muhammad Ali’s legacy and African American cultural heritage that draws visitors worldwide—that’s not just economic injustice, it’s a massive missed opportunity.

Creative workers deserve sustainable careers. When 63% of Louisville artists work second jobs and median artist income is 48% below city median, we lose talent to cities that invest in artist support. Austin’s \$15M artist housing fund has retained creative talent that drives \$8.9 billion in annual creative economy impact.

Cultural investment is one of the highest-ROI uses of public funds. Research consistently shows arts investment returns \$4-7 for every \$1 spent through job creation, property value increases, small business growth, and tourism attraction—while also improving educational outcomes, public health, and civic engagement.

Dave’s policy will ensure arts, culture, and tourism work for all Louisville residents—not just downtown property owners and wealthy neighborhoods. It’s about building a creative economy where artists can thrive, neighborhoods share in tourism prosperity, and Louisville’s unique cultural identity becomes our competitive advantage in attracting talent and investment.

CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

Arts & Culture Landscape

Louisville's cultural sector is simultaneously vibrant and struggling, world-class and inequitably distributed:

Major Cultural Assets:

- **Performing Arts:** Kentucky Center for the Arts (3 theaters, 200+ performances/year), Actors Theatre (home of Humana Festival of New American Plays, Tony Award-winning), Louisville Orchestra, Kentucky Opera, Louisville Ballet
- **Museums:** Speed Art Museum (oldest museum in Kentucky, \$60M expansion completed 2016), Frazier History Museum, Muhammad Ali Center, Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft
- **Music Heritage:** Bourbon & Beyond Festival (120,000+ attendees), Forecastle Festival, Kentucky Derby Festival (70+ events), Louisville Hip Hop Festival, bluegrass and jazz traditions
- **Literary Culture:** 3rd largest concentration of writers per capita in U.S., home to authors like Hunter S. Thompson, Sue Grafton, Silas House

The Equity Problem:

Despite these assets, arts participation shows stark racial and economic disparities:

- **Participation Gap:** Only 18% of Louisville residents attend arts/cultural events regularly (vs. 35% peer city average), with rates dropping to 7% in West Louisville ZIP codes vs. 42% in East End
- **Funding Concentration:** 82% of Metro Arts Fund grants go to organizations in or near downtown, leaving West Louisville organizations competing for 18% of funding despite representing 40% of city population
- **Representation Gap:** Only 12% of board seats at major cultural institutions held by people of color (vs. 24% city population), contributing to programming that doesn't reflect community diversity

Artist Economic Crisis:

Louisville artists face economic conditions that make creative careers unsustainable:

- **Income Gap:** Median artist income \$28,400 (vs. \$59,200 city median)—48% below city average
- **Multiple Jobs:** 63% of artists work second jobs to survive (vs. 28% general population)
- **Brain Drain:** Louisville loses 31% of arts graduates within 5 years vs. 18% retention

in cities like Nashville, Austin, Asheville with artist support infrastructure

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** Zero city-funded artist housing, no health insurance pool, minimal grant/fellowship opportunities compared to peer cities

Crumbling Infrastructure:

Years of underfunding have left cultural infrastructure in crisis:

- **Deferred Maintenance:** Community arts centers in Portland, Russell, Smoketown, and Parkland have \$4.2M in deferred maintenance, limiting programming capacity
- **Theater Closures:** 7 neighborhood movie theaters closed since 2010, eliminating community gathering spaces—none replaced
- **Digital Divide:** Only 18% of arts organizations have capacity for digital programming (vs. 67% nationally), leaving Louisville behind in hybrid arts delivery

Tourism Economy

Louisville's tourism industry is a major economic driver—but benefits aren't shared equitably:

Tourism Impact:

- **Economic Impact:** \$3.8 billion in annual visitor spending (2023, Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau)
- **Job Creation:** Tourism supports 68,000 jobs (12% of Louisville workforce)
- **Tax Revenue:** Tourism generates \$182M in state/local tax revenue annually
- **Growth Trajectory:** Tourism spending up 47% since 2015, outpacing most Midwest peers

Geographic Concentration:

Tourism wealth is highly concentrated in small areas:

- **Downtown Dominance:** 71% of tourism spending occurs in 2-square-mile downtown/NuLu corridor
- **Bourbon Trail Effect:** Distillery tourism (1.7M visitors annually) primarily benefits downtown and isolated distillery locations, with limited neighborhood economic spillover
- **Derby Concentration:** Kentucky Derby generates \$400M in single-weekend economic impact—87% captured by downtown hotels, restaurants, and Churchill Downs area
- **West Louisville Desert:** West Louisville receives less than 2% of tourism spending despite being home to Muhammad Ali's childhood home (12th & Magazine), top-rated African American heritage sites, and music history

Workforce Equity Issues:

Tourism job growth hasn't translated to economic security for many workers:

- **Low Wages:** Median hospitality worker wage \$11.85/hour (38% below city median wage)
- **Part-Time Dominance:** 62% of tourism jobs are part-time or seasonal
- **Racial Wage Gap:** Black tourism workers earn 22% less than white counterparts in same positions
- **Limited Advancement:** Only 8% of hospitality workers advance to management within 5 years (vs. 19% nationally)

Competitive Context

Louisville is losing ground to peer cities that invest more in arts/culture:

Per Capita Arts Investment:

1. Nashville: \$23.50
2. Austin: \$19.80
3. Indianapolis: \$17.50
4. Cincinnati: \$12.30
5. **Louisville: \$4.20** (42nd of 50 largest cities)

Results of Underinvestment:

- **Population Growth:** Nashville grew 15.1% (2010-2020) vs. Louisville 10.8%—arts/culture investment cited as key factor in migration decisions
- **Creative Economy:** Austin's creative sector is 9.8% of economy vs. Louisville's 4.3%
- **Tourism Revenue:** Nashville tourism (\$10B) and Austin (\$7.5B) far outpace Louisville (\$3.8B) despite comparable metro populations

The Major Problems

1. Inequitable Access to Arts/Culture

Most Louisville residents, especially in lower-income communities of color, have minimal access to arts programming:

- **Geographic Barriers:** 14 of 26 neighborhoods have zero arts venues or organizations
- **Cost Barriers:** Average ticket price \$47 for major cultural institutions (vs. \$28,400 median artist income in city)
- **Transportation Barriers:** 73% of major cultural venues not accessible via TARC without transfers
- **Cultural Barriers:** Programming at major institutions doesn't reflect community diversity, with 89% of programming curated by white decision-makers

2. Unsustainable Artist Careers

Louisville can't retain creative talent without supporting infrastructure:

- **Housing Crisis:** Zero city-funded artist housing (vs. 47 units in Indianapolis, 215 in Austin)
- **Health Care Gap:** 54% of Louisville artists uninsured (vs. 11% city average), no artist health insurance pool
- **Grant Scarcity:** Louisville offers \$180,000 in annual artist grants (vs. \$3.2M Nashville, \$4.7M Austin)
- **Space Shortage:** Affordable studio/rehearsal space occupancy at 97%, with 3-year waitlists

3. Tourism Bypasses Communities

Billions in tourism spending generate minimal benefit for neighborhoods that created Louisville's culture:

- **West Louisville Exclusion:** Russell neighborhood (home to Muhammad Ali's childhood, historic African American business district) sees less than \$1M of \$3.8B tourism spending
- **No Infrastructure:** West Louisville has 3 hotels (412 rooms) vs. downtown 47 hotels (8,300 rooms)—tourists literally can't stay in communities they visit
- **Extraction Economics:** Tour buses visit West Louisville for 20-minute Ali home photo op, then return downtown for spending—classic economic extraction

4. Underfunded Cultural Infrastructure

Community cultural spaces are closing or deteriorating:

- **Budget Cuts:** City arts funding down 34% since 2008 (inflation-adjusted)
- **Facility Crisis:** Portland Community Arts Center, Smoketown Arts Center, California Neighborhood Center all need major repairs (\$4.2M total) to remain operational
- **Programming Cuts:** Neighborhood arts programs cut 58% since 2010 due to funding constraints

5. Missed Creative Economy Opportunity

Louisville dramatically underinvests in one of the highest-return sectors:

- **ROI Gap:** Every \$1 invested in arts returns \$4-7 in economic activity—yet Louisville invests 76% less per capita than peer cities
- **Job Creation:** Creative economy jobs grew 18% nationally (2010-2020) vs. 7% in Louisville due to underfunding

- **Youth Development:** Students in arts programs show 35% higher college attendance, 22% better reading scores—yet 67% of Louisville students lack access to robust arts education
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DAVE'S VISION: A CREATIVE CITY FOR EVERYONE

Dave envisions a Louisville where:

Every neighborhood has access to world-class arts and cultural programming, with community arts centers, public art, and cultural festivals in West Louisville, the South End, and every part of our city—not just downtown corridors.

Artists can thrive in Louisville with affordable live/work spaces, health insurance, career development support, and fair pay for creative work—making Louisville a city that retains creative talent instead of losing it to Nashville and Austin.

Tourism benefits everyone, with heritage tourism in West Louisville, neighborhood cultural tourism throughout the city, and hospitality jobs that pay living wages and offer career advancement—ensuring the communities that created Louisville's culture share in tourism prosperity.

Cultural investment drives economic development, with arts and culture recognized as infrastructure that returns \$4-7 for every dollar invested through job creation, small business growth, and community revitalization—not a luxury to fund after everything else.

Louisville's unique identity becomes our competitive advantage, with bourbon heritage, bluegrass music, Muhammad Ali's legacy, and Derby traditions leveraged to attract talent, investment, and visitors while remaining authentic to the communities that created these traditions.

Core Principles

1. **Arts Are Infrastructure:** Cultural programming and creative spaces are as essential as roads and sewers—they're economic engines, youth development tools, and community assets that deserve consistent public investment.
2. **Equity First:** Arts funding will prioritize historically underserved neighborhoods, artists of color, and communities bypassed by current cultural investment—with measurable equity goals and accountability.

3. **Tourism as Community Development:** Tourism should enrich the neighborhoods visitors experience, not extract from them—with infrastructure, spending, and jobs flowing to communities, not just downtown.
4. **Living Wages for Creative Work:** Artists, performers, and cultural workers deserve to earn sustainable livings from their creative practice without requiring second jobs—we'll fund artist support infrastructure that makes this possible.
5. **Community-Led Culture:** Cultural programming will be developed with neighborhoods, not for them—with community voices leading decisions about public art, cultural events, and arts center programming.

Four-Year Goals

By the end of Dave's first term:

- **Triple arts investment** from \$4.20 to \$13 per capita, closing gap with peer cities
- **Create 500 affordable artist housing units** through conversions and new development
- **Establish arts centers** in 5 neighborhoods currently lacking cultural infrastructure
- **Increase West Louisville tourism spending** from <\$1M to \$50M+ annually
- **Double artist median income** from \$28,400 to \$57,000 through sustainable career pathways
- **Achieve 50% of arts funding** going to organizations in historically underserved communities
- **Create 2,000 new creative economy jobs** at living wages
- **Reach 45% resident arts participation** (up from 18%) through free/low-cost neighborhood programming

DETAILED POLICY PROPOSALS

PROPOSAL 1: Creative Communities Fund (\$8M annually)

The Problem: 82% of city arts funding goes to downtown/East End organizations, leaving West Louisville and lower-income neighborhoods with minimal resources for cultural programming—despite vibrant creative traditions and demonstrated community need.

Dave's Solution:

Create a **Creative Communities Fund** with \$8 million in annual dedicated funding for neighborhood-based arts organizations, community cultural centers, and grassroots arts programming—with 50% of funds (\$4M) reserved for West Louisville, Russell, Portland, Parkland, Smoketown, and other historically underserved communities.

Program Components:

A. Neighborhood Arts Organization Support (\$3M annually)

Provide multi-year general operating support to community-based arts organizations:

- **3-Year Operating Grants:** \$50,000-\$200,000/year for established neighborhood arts organizations (25 organizations funded)
- **Start-Up Grants:** \$15,000-\$40,000 for emerging community arts groups (30 organizations funded)
- **Capacity Building:** Technical assistance for grant writing, board development, fundraising, financial management
- **Equipment Grants:** \$5,000-\$25,000 for sound systems, lighting, musical instruments, art supplies
- **Geographic Distribution:** Minimum 50% of funding to West Louisville neighborhoods, 25% to South End/other underserved areas, 25% citywide competitive

B. Community Cultural Centers (\$3M annually)

Renovate and operate cultural centers in neighborhoods lacking arts infrastructure:

- **Capital Improvements:** Upgrade Portland Community Arts Center, Smoketown Arts Center, California Neighborhood Center, and establish 2 new centers in Russell and Shively (\$1.5M annually, leveraging \$6M federal/state capital funds)
- **Operating Support:** Fund programming staff, utilities, maintenance for community cultural centers (\$1M annually)
- **Programming Grants:** Support free/low-cost arts classes, performances, exhibitions at community centers (\$500K annually)
- **Hours Expansion:** Ensure cultural centers open evenings and weekends with staffing support

C. Neighborhood Cultural Festivals (\$1.5M annually)

Fund community-led cultural celebrations in every neighborhood:

- **Festival Grants:** \$25,000-\$75,000 for neighborhood cultural festivals (20 festivals annually)
- **Technical Support:** City provides permitting assistance, traffic control, marketing support at no cost

- **Artist Payments:** Require festivals to pay performers/artists minimum \$200/performance (no free artist labor)
- **Examples:** West Louisville Hip Hop Festival expansion, Portland Somali Cultural Festival, Smoketown Jazz Festival, Germantown Oktoberfest, Phoenix Hill Arts Celebration

D. Public School Arts Partnerships (\$500K annually)

Fund partnerships between community arts organizations and Jcps schools in underserved areas:

- **Residencies:** 50 artist residencies in Jcps schools (10-week programs, artists paid \$5,000 each)
- **After-School Programs:** Arts programming in 25 schools lacking arts resources
- **Summer Intensives:** 2-week summer arts programs at community centers for 1,000 students
- **Teaching Artist Training:** Professional development for 100 artists to work effectively in schools

Implementation Timeline:

- **Months 1-3:** Establish fund governance with community representatives, develop application process
- **Months 4-6:** Issue first RFP, community engagement in every neighborhood
- **Months 7-9:** Award first grants, begin capital improvements at cultural centers
- **Months 10-12:** Programming launches, evaluation framework established
- **Years 2-4:** Scale successful programs, establish new cultural centers in additional neighborhoods

Success Metrics:

- Number of neighborhood arts organizations funded (Target: 55 by Year 4)
- Geographic distribution of funding (Target: 50% to underserved communities)
- Residents served by neighborhood arts programs (Target: 50,000 annually by Year 4)
- Arts participation rates in underserved neighborhoods (Target: 25% participation, up from 7%)
- Cultural center usage hours (Target: 40 hours/week average)

Peer City Examples:

- **Seattle:** \$12M Creative Communities Fund has supported 200+ neighborhood arts organizations over 10 years, contributing to 300% increase in arts participation in lower-income communities
- **Philadelphia:** \$5M Neighborhood Arts Program funds community-based organizations in every district, reaching 75,000 residents annually with free/low-cost programming
- **Portland, OR:** Cultural Equity Grants reserve 50% of arts funding for organizations led by people of color, leading to 87% increase in diverse arts programming

PROPOSAL 2: Artist Support Infrastructure (\$5M annually)

The Problem: Louisville loses creative talent to cities that invest in artist support. With 63% of artists working second jobs, no affordable artist housing, and median income 48% below city average, Louisville can't compete with Nashville, Austin, or Indianapolis for creative workforce retention.

Dave's Solution:

Create comprehensive **Artist Support Infrastructure** that enables sustainable creative careers in Louisville—including affordable live/work spaces, artist health insurance pool, career development grants, and creative business support.

Program Components:

A. Artist Housing Program (\$2.5M annually)

Create 500 affordable artist housing units over 4 years:

- **Building Conversions:** Partner with developers to convert vacant industrial buildings (old warehouses, factories) into artist live/work spaces—city provides \$15M in capital funding leveraging \$45M in federal/private investment
- **Affordability Requirements:** Rents capped at 30% of area median artist income (\$28,400)—approximately \$710/month for 800 sq ft live/work space
- **Artist Certification:** Residents must be practicing professional artists (50+ hours/month creative practice) with portfolio review
- **Geographic Distribution:** 250 units in West Louisville (Russell warehouse district, Portland), 150 units in Smoketown/Shelby Park, 100 units scattered sites
- **Income Diversity:** 40% units for extremely low-income artists (<\$17,000), 40% for low-income (\$17,000-\$34,000), 20% for moderate-income (\$34,000-\$50,000)
- **Lease-to-Own Option:** After 5 years, artists can purchase units through community land trust at affordable prices

Operational Model:

- **Year 1:** Acquire/begin conversion of 3 buildings (150 units)
- **Year 2:** Complete first buildings, begin leasing, start additional 3 buildings (150 units)
- **Year 3:** 300 units operational, begin final 4 buildings (200 units)
- **Year 4:** 500 units operational, long-term sustainability model established

B. Artist Health Insurance Pool (\$1M annually)

Create affordable health insurance access for uninsured artists:

- **Premium Subsidies:** Sliding-scale subsidies for ACA marketplace plans based on artist income (average \$3,000/artist/year, serving 300 artists annually)
- **Catastrophic Coverage:** For artists who only need emergency coverage, fund catastrophic plans (\$150/month per artist, serving 100 artists)
- **Vision/Dental:** Partner with University of Louisville dental/vision schools for free/low-cost care (city funds equipment/supplies)
- **Mental Health:** Contract with Seven Counties Services for artist-specific mental health services (creative career stress, economic insecurity, etc.)—\$200K annually

Eligibility: Professional artists earning <\$50,000/year, Louisville residents, portfolio verification

C. Artist Career Development Grants (\$1M annually)

Fund grants that enable artists to advance their careers:

- **Creation Grants:** \$5,000-\$15,000 for artists to create new work (60 grants/year)
- **Professional Development:** \$1,000-\$5,000 for workshops, conferences, residencies, skills training (100 grants/year)
- **Equipment Grants:** \$500-\$3,000 for equipment purchases (cameras, instruments, kilns, etc.)—100 grants/year
- **Emergency Grants:** \$500-\$2,000 for artists facing unexpected financial crises (medical bills, eviction prevention)—100 grants/year
- **Application Process:** Simple online application, rolling deadlines, 2-week turnaround, peer artist review panel

D. Creative Business Incubator (\$500K annually)

Help artists build sustainable businesses from their creative practice:

- **Physical Space:** 10,000 sq ft incubator space in Russell or Smoketown with shared studios, office space, equipment (\$200K annually)
- **Business Training:** Workshops on pricing, marketing, contracts, intellectual property, taxes, accounting for creative businesses (50 artists/year)
- **Microgrants:** \$1,000-\$5,000 seed funding for artist businesses (30 grants/year)
- **Mentorship:** Match artists with successful creative entrepreneurs for 6-month mentorships (30 matches/year)
- **Market Access:** Connect artists with corporate buyers, hotels, developers for commissions and sales

Implementation Timeline:

- **Months 1-6:** Acquire first artist housing buildings, establish health insurance pool, launch first grant cycle
- **Months 7-12:** Begin housing conversions, enroll first 100 artists in health insurance, distribute first \$500K in grants
- **Year 2:** 150 housing units completed and leased, 300 artists covered by health insurance, \$1M in grants distributed, incubator space opens
- **Years 3-4:** Scale to 500 housing units, 400+ artists with health coverage, \$1M+ in annual grants

Success Metrics:

- Artist housing units created (Target: 500 by Year 4)
- Artists served by health insurance pool (Target: 400 by Year 4)
- Career development grants distributed (Target: \$1M annually)
- Artist income increase (Target: median artist income rises to \$42,000 by Year 4, up from \$28,400)
- Artist retention rate (Target: 80% of artists remain in Louisville 5 years post-program participation, up from 69%)
- Creative business sustainability (Target: 70% of incubator businesses still operating after 3 years)

Peer City Examples:

- **Austin:** Artist housing program has created 215 affordable live/work units since 2015, contributing to Austin's creative workforce growing 3x faster than Louisville's
- **Indianapolis:** Artist health insurance pool covers 500+ artists annually, cited as key factor in retaining creative talent (retention up 23% since program launch)
- **Providence, RI:** Artist career grants (\$800K annually) have 78% recipient retention rate vs. 54% for non-recipients—grants are proven retention tool

PROPOSAL 3: Cultural Tourism Equity Initiative (\$6M annually)

The Problem: Louisville's \$3.8 billion tourism economy bypasses the neighborhoods and communities that created much of our cultural heritage. West Louisville, home to Muhammad Ali's childhood and rich African American culture, receives less than 2% of tourism spending—classic economic extraction.

Dave's Solution:

Launch a **Cultural Tourism Equity Initiative** that develops tourism infrastructure and programming in West Louisville and other underserved neighborhoods—ensuring communities share in tourism prosperity and visitors experience authentic Louisville culture beyond downtown.

Program Components:

A. Muhammad Ali Heritage District (\$2.5M annually)

Create world-class heritage tourism destination in West Louisville:

- **Ali Heritage Trail:** Develop walking/biking trail connecting Muhammad Ali's childhood home (12th & Magazine), Ali Center, Columbia Gym, Central High School, and other significant sites—with interpretive signage, public art, streetscape improvements (\$1M capital Year 1, leveraging \$4M federal funds)
- **Ali Home Museum:** Convert Muhammad Ali's childhood home into small museum/visitor center operated by West Louisville community organization (\$300K annually)
- **Ali District Wayfinding:** Professional signage, maps, mobile app connecting Ali sites to nearby restaurants, shops, cultural venues (\$200K Year 1)
- **Small Business Support:** Grants for West Louisville businesses near Ali sites to upgrade facades, improve accessibility, expand hours for tourists (\$500K annually, 40 businesses)
- **Tour Development:** Support community-led tour businesses (walking tours, bike tours, bus tours) with equipment grants, marketing, liability insurance (\$200K annually)
- **Events Programming:** Fund 12 annual events in Ali District (boxing exhibitions, cultural festivals, speaker series) that draw visitors (\$300K annually)

B. African American Heritage Tourism Circuit (\$1.5M annually)

Develop comprehensive African American heritage tourism across Louisville:

- **Heritage Sites:** Restore/interpret additional sites including Whitney Young's birthplace, Georgia Powers' legacy sites, historic African American business districts, churches, and cultural landmarks (\$500K annually)
- **Underground Railroad Trail:** Develop marked trail connecting Louisville's 14 verified Underground Railroad sites with interpretation, commemoration, and connections to contemporary justice movements (\$300K Year 1, \$100K ongoing)
- **Heritage Tourism Marketing:** Professional marketing campaign targeting heritage tourism segment (fastest-growing tourism market, \$100B nationally) (\$200K annually)
- **Partnerships:** Fund partnerships between West Louisville organizations and established heritage tourism operators (Kentucky Derby Museum, Frazier Museum, etc.) to cross-promote (\$100K annually)
- **Capacity Building:** Support 10 West Louisville organizations to develop tourism products (tours, events, programming) with training and seed grants (\$200K annually)
- **Heritage Tourism Infrastructure:** Fund 3 small inns/B&Bs in West Louisville neighborhoods so visitors can stay in communities they're visiting (\$200K annually in

forgivable loans/grants)

C. Neighborhood Cultural Tourism (\$1.5M annually)

Expand tourism to neighborhoods citywide:

- **Neighborhood Tourism Grants:** \$50,000-\$150,000 grants for neighborhood organizations to develop tourism products—Germantown brewery trail, NuLu art district expansion, Highlands restaurant week, Irish Hill heritage tour, etc. (10 neighborhoods annually)
- **Cultural District Designations:** Establish formal cultural districts in 5 neighborhoods with tax incentives for cultural businesses, marketing support, and infrastructure investment
- **Festival Tourism:** Market major neighborhood festivals (St. James Court Art Show, Garvin Gate Blues Festival, etc.) as tourism draws with hotel packages, transportation, and extended programming
- **Trail Connections:** Connect bourbon, bluegrass, and heritage trails to neighborhood businesses—ensuring tourists spend time and money beyond distilleries and downtown

D. Tourism Workforce Equity Program (\$500K annually)

Ensure West Louisville residents benefit from tourism job growth:

- **Hospitality Training:** Partner with community colleges for hospitality career training specifically recruiting West Louisville residents (200 people/year)
- **Tour Guide Training:** Certify 50 West Louisville residents annually as professional tour guides for heritage tourism
- **Small Business Loans:** Low-interest loans for West Louisville residents to start tourism businesses (tour companies, B&Bs, restaurants, retail)—\$200K loan fund
- **Employment Connections:** Require tourism businesses receiving city incentives to recruit 30% of workforce from West Louisville

Implementation Timeline:

- **Months 1-6:** Community engagement in West Louisville, site planning for Ali Heritage Trail, begin Heritage District business grants
- **Months 7-12:** Begin Ali Trail construction, launch first neighborhood tourism grants, begin tour guide training
- **Year 2:** Ali Heritage Trail opens, Muhammad Ali home museum operational, 5 neighborhood tourism initiatives launched
- **Years 3-4:** Expand to additional heritage sites, scale neighborhood tourism program citywide, establish sustainability model

Success Metrics:

- Tourism spending in West Louisville (Target: \$50M annually by Year 4, up from <\$1M)
- Visitors to Ali Heritage District (Target: 250,000 annually by Year 4)
- New tourism businesses in West Louisville (Target: 40 by Year 4)
- Tourism jobs held by West Louisville residents (Target: 500 by Year 4)
- Hotel rooms in West Louisville (Target: 200 additional rooms by Year 4, up from 412)
- West Louisville small business revenue from tourism (Target: \$15M annually by Year 4)

Peer City Examples:

- **Memphis:** Soulsville heritage tourism initiative in South Memphis has generated \$85M in annual tourism spending in historically Black neighborhood, creating 600 jobs and spurring \$120M in private investment
 - **New Orleans:** Cultural tourism in Treme neighborhood generates \$200M+ annually, with 73% of spending captured by Black-owned businesses—demonstrating tourism can benefit origin communities
 - **Milwaukee:** Bronzeville cultural tourism district has attracted 180,000 annual visitors to previously bypassed African American neighborhood, generating \$30M in economic impact
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PROPOSAL 4: Public Art & Creative Placemaking (\$4M annually)

The Problem: Public art in Louisville is concentrated in wealthy areas, with most neighborhoods lacking public art infrastructure. Meanwhile, research shows public art increases property values 15-30%, reduces crime, and strengthens community identity—but only if equitably distributed and community-led.

Dave's Solution:

Launch a **Public Art & Creative Placemaking Program** that funds public art installations, murals, creative placemaking projects, and cultural district development in every neighborhood—with artists paid living wages, projects community-led, and 50% of investment in historically underserved areas.

Program Components:**A. Neighborhood Public Art Program (\$2M annually)**

Fund public art in neighborhoods currently lacking art infrastructure:

- **Mural Program:** Commission 40 large-scale murals annually in commercial corridors and community spaces—50% in West Louisville, South End, and other underserved neighborhoods (\$800K annually, \$20K average per mural including artist payment, supplies, wall prep, anti-graffiti coating)
- **Sculpture Installations:** Commission 10 permanent sculptures annually for parks,

streetscapes, and public spaces (\$400K annually, \$40K average per installation)

- **Digital/Interactive Art:** Fund 5 large-scale digital or interactive public art installations annually (projection mapping, interactive sculptures, sound installations)—\$250K annually
- **Temporary Installations:** Support 20 temporary/seasonal art installations (6-month duration) that activate underutilized spaces (\$200K annually)
- **Artist Payments:** All artists paid at minimum \$50/hour for design time, installation, and community engagement (enforced through contracts)
- **Community Selection:** Each neighborhood forms public art committee that selects projects through democratic process—no top-down decisions

B. Creative Placemaking Initiatives (\$1M annually)

Fund creative placemaking projects that use arts/culture for community development:

- **Creative Corridors:** Transform commercial corridors through coordinated public art, facade improvements, lighting, landscaping, and cultural programming (3 corridors annually: e.g., Broadway in West Louisville, Dixie Highway, Preston Street)—\$400K annually
- **Creative Pop-Ups:** Fund temporary activation of vacant storefronts with artist studios, galleries, performance spaces (20 spaces annually)—\$200K annually
- **Parklet Program:** Install artist-designed parklets (small public spaces in parking spots) in commercial districts—\$150K annually, 15 parklets
- **Wayfinding Art:** Artist-designed wayfinding systems for neighborhoods developing cultural tourism—\$150K annually, 3 neighborhoods
- **Bus Stop Art:** Transform 50 TARC bus stops annually into artistic landmarks with shelters, seating, lighting designed by local artists—\$100K annually (cost-share with TARC)

C. Cultural District Development (\$750K annually)

Establish formal cultural districts with infrastructure investment:

- **District Designation:** Designate 5 cultural districts by Year 4 (e.g., West Louisville Arts District, NuLu expansion, Portland Cultural Corridor, Smoketown Jazz District, Germantown Arts Quarter)
- **Tax Incentives:** Property tax abatement for cultural businesses, artists, and arts organizations locating in cultural districts (revenue neutral—development pays for itself)
- **Facade Grants:** \$10,000-\$50,000 matching grants for building improvements in cultural districts (20 grants annually)
- **Marketing Support:** Professional branding, wayfinding, and marketing for each

cultural district (\$150K annually)

- **Infrastructure:** Pedestrian improvements, lighting, street furniture in cultural districts (\$400K annually, leveraging \$1.6M in federal/state funds)

D. Percent-for-Art Program (\$250K annually)

Require 1% of capital project budgets for public art:

- **Capital Project Requirement:** All city capital projects >\$1M must allocate 1% of budget for public art commissioned from Louisville artists
- **Dedicated Staff:** Hire 2 public art administrators to manage commissions, community engagement, and maintenance
- **Artist Registry:** Maintain database of Louisville artists available for public art commissions
- **Maintenance Fund:** 20% of percent-for-art funding reserved for maintenance/conservation of existing public art

Implementation Timeline:

- **Months 1-3:** Establish Public Art Commission with community representatives, develop artist selection processes
- **Months 4-6:** Issue first RFPs, community engagement for neighborhood public art committees
- **Months 7-12:** Install first 20 murals, 5 sculptures, begin creative corridor projects
- **Years 2-4:** Scale to 40 murals annually, establish 5 cultural districts, implement percent-for-art program citywide

Success Metrics:

- Public art installations created (Target: 200+ by Year 4)
- Geographic distribution (Target: 50% of investment in underserved neighborhoods)
- Artists commissioned (Target: 300 Louisville artists paid for public art by Year 4)
- Total artist payments (Target: \$5M paid to artists by Year 4)
- Property value impact (Target: 15% increase in corridors with creative placemaking)
- Community satisfaction (Target: 80% of residents report pride in neighborhood public art)

Peer City Examples:

- **Philadelphia:** Mural Arts Program (largest public art program in U.S.) has created 4,000+ murals since 1984, generating \$250M in economic impact and contributing to neighborhood revitalization throughout the city
- **Nashville:** \$2M annual public art budget has created 400+ installations across all council districts, cited as key factor in neighborhood identity and property value increases
- **Austin:** Cultural district program has established 8 districts generating \$180M in annual economic activity—with artists earning \$12M annually from district-funded commissions

PROPOSAL 5: Tourism Workforce Development (\$3M annually)

The Problem: Louisville’s tourism industry creates thousands of jobs—but most are low-wage, part-time positions without advancement pathways. The median hospitality worker earns \$11.85/hour (38% below city median wage), 62% of positions are part-time, and only 8% of workers advance to management. Tourism growth should create career pathways, not just low-wage service jobs.

Dave’s Solution:

Launch a **Tourism Workforce Development Program** that creates career pathways in hospitality and tourism, particularly for residents of high-unemployment neighborhoods—ensuring tourism growth benefits Louisville workers with living wages, benefits, and advancement opportunities.

Program Components:

A. Hospitality Career Academy (\$1.2M annually)

Create training pipeline for hospitality careers:

- **Culinary Training:** Partner with Jefferson Community & Technical College for 6-month culinary arts program training 100 people/year for chef and line cook positions—with guaranteed job placement at \$16+/hour
- **Hotel Management Training:** 12-week hotel operations program covering front desk, housekeeping management, sales, revenue management—training 75 people/year for supervisory positions at \$18+/hour
- **Tourism & Events:** 8-week program covering event planning, tour operations, convention services—training 50 people/year for event coordinator positions at \$17+/hour
- **English Language Support:** For immigrant/refugee participants, integrate English language training with hospitality skills
- **Barriers Removed:** Free tuition, tools/uniforms provided, stipends (\$400/week) during training, childcare assistance, transportation support
- **Recruitment Focus:** Prioritize recruitment from West Louisville, Russell, Portland, Smoketown, and neighborhoods with unemployment >10%

B. Tourism Apprenticeship Program (\$800K annually)

Create earn-while-you-learn pathways into skilled tourism jobs:

- **Registered Apprenticeships:** Establish Department of Labor-registered

apprenticeships in culinary arts, hotel management, and event management—combining on-the-job training with classroom instruction

- **Employer Partnerships:** Partner with 20 hotels, restaurants, and tourism employers to host apprentices
- **Wage Progression:** Apprentices start at \$15/hour, progress to \$22/hour by completion (2-year programs)
- **Cohort Size:** 100 apprentices enrolled annually across all programs
- **Retention Bonuses:** \$2,000 bonus for apprentices who complete program and remain employed 1 year post-completion
- **Employer Incentives:** City reimburses 50% of apprentice wages in Year 1, 25% in Year 2 to encourage employer participation

C. Worker Advancement Fund (\$600K annually)

Help current hospitality workers advance into higher-wage positions:

- **Tuition Assistance:** Up to \$3,000/year for hospitality workers pursuing degrees/certificates in hospitality management, culinary arts, or business (200 workers annually)
- **Supervisory Training:** 40-hour supervisory skills training for frontline workers seeking management positions—free to workers, covering conflict resolution, scheduling, performance management, labor law (150 workers annually)
- **Professional Development Scholarships:** \$500-\$2,000 scholarships for hospitality workers to attend conferences, workshops, certification programs (100 scholarships annually)
- **Language Skills:** English classes for immigrant hospitality workers to improve communication skills and qualify for advancement
- **Career Coaching:** One-on-one career coaching for 200 hospitality workers annually to identify advancement pathways and overcome barriers

D. Living Wage Incentive Program (\$400K annually)

Incentivize tourism employers to pay living wages and provide benefits:

- **Wage Subsidies:** Businesses that commit to \$15+ minimum wage for all positions receive wage subsidies of \$2/hour/employee for 2 years (max 25 employees per business)—helping businesses transition to higher wages
- **Health Insurance Support:** Businesses that offer health insurance to all full-time employees receive \$100/employee/month for 2 years to offset premium costs
- **Good Jobs Certification:** Create “Louisville Good Jobs” certification for tourism businesses meeting standards (living wage, benefits, advancement pathways, worker voice)—certified businesses receive marketing support and priority for city

contracts/incentives

- **Full-Time Conversion Incentives:** Businesses that convert part-time positions to full-time receive \$1,000/conversion (max 10 conversions per business)
- **Employer Recognition:** Annual awards ceremony recognizing hospitality employers with best wages, benefits, and advancement practices

Implementation Timeline:

- **Months 1-4:** Develop partnerships with JCTC, hospitality employers, establish curriculum
- **Months 5-8:** Begin recruitment in high-unemployment neighborhoods, launch first training cohorts
- **Months 9-12:** First 100 graduates placed in jobs, apprenticeship program launches
- **Years 2-4:** Scale to 225+ people trained annually, expand apprenticeships, measure wage/advancement outcomes

Success Metrics:

- Workers trained (Target: 225/year by Year 4)
- Job placement rate (Target: 85% placed within 90 days of completion)
- Starting wages (Target: \$17 average starting wage, up from \$11.85)
- Retention rates (Target: 75% still employed in hospitality after 2 years)
- Advancement rates (Target: 35% advance to supervisory roles within 3 years, up from 8%)
- Racial equity (Target: 60% of participants are people of color, matching hospitality workforce demographics)
- West Louisville participation (Target: 40% of participants from West Louisville zip codes)

Peer City Examples:

- **San Francisco:** Hospitality training program has placed 5,200+ workers since 2006 with 82% retention rate and average starting wage \$18.50/hour—demonstrating hospitality can be pathway to middle class
- **Seattle:** Tourism apprenticeship program has 850 active apprentices with 89% completion rate and average wage \$24/hour post-completion
- **Portland, OR:** Living wage incentive program has helped 200+ hospitality businesses transition to \$15+ minimum wage, with 72% reporting improved retention and customer service

BUDGET SUMMARY

Total Annual Investment: \$26 Million

Program	Annual Cost	Funding Source
Creative Communities Fund	\$8M	LVCC restructuring (\$4M), General Fund (\$4M)

Program	Annual Cost	Funding Source
Artist Support Infrastructure	\$5M	Tourism Development Fee expansion (\$3M), Philanthropic partnerships (\$2M)
Cultural Tourism Equity Initiative	\$6M	LVCC restructuring (\$4M), Tourism Development Fee (\$2M)
Public Art & Creative Placemaking	\$4M	General Fund (\$2M), Percent-for-Art (\$1M), Corporate sponsorships (\$1M)
Tourism Workforce Development	\$3M	Tourism Development Fee expansion (\$3M)

Funding Sources Detail

Louisville Visitors & Convention Commission (LVCC) Restructuring (\$12M annually):

The LVCC currently receives \$36M annually from hotel/motel taxes and transient room taxes. Under Dave's policy, LVCC funding will be restructured to dedicate \$12M annually (33% of revenue) to community cultural development and equity initiatives:

- **Current Practice:** LVCC funds primarily benefit downtown convention/hotel interests with minimal neighborhood investment
- **Restructuring:** \$12M redirected to Creative Communities Fund (\$4M), Cultural Tourism Equity Initiative (\$4M), Artist Support Infrastructure (\$4M)
- **Justification:** Tourism taxes generated by Louisville's cultural attractions should fund community cultural development, not just downtown marketing
- **Accountability:** Community representatives added to LVCC board to ensure funding serves neighborhoods

Tourism Development Fee Expansion (\$8M annually):

Expand tourism development fee to generate dedicated revenue for arts/culture/tourism workforce:

- **Fee Structure:** \$2/room/night fee on all hotel/motel stays (current fee is \$1/night in limited areas)
- **Revenue Generation:** 4.8M room nights annually × \$2 = \$9.6M (conservative estimate \$8M after collection)
- **Distribution:** Artist Support Infrastructure (\$3M), Tourism Workforce Development (\$3M), Cultural Tourism Equity Initiative (\$2M)
- **Visitor Impact:** Minimal (\$2/night on average \$120 room = 1.7% increase)—peer city research shows no impact on tourism demand
- **Precedent:** Nashville charges \$3.33/room/night, Austin charges \$1.87, Indianapolis charges \$3

General Fund Allocation (\$6M annually):

Dedicate \$6M in new General Fund spending to arts/culture:

- **Increase:** From current \$2.6M to \$8.6M (tripling per capita investment from \$4.20 to \$13)
- **Still Below Peers:** Nashville spends \$23.50 per capita, Austin \$19.80, Indianapolis \$17.50
- **Justification:** Arts/culture investment has 4-7x return on investment through economic activity, job creation, property values—one of highest-ROI uses of public funds
- **Distribution:** Creative Communities Fund (\$4M), Public Art (\$2M)

Corporate Sponsorships & Philanthropy (\$4M annually):

Leverage private sector support for arts/culture initiatives:

- **Corporate Partnerships:** Partner with major Louisville corporations (YUM!, UPS, Humana, Brown-Forman, etc.) for arts sponsorships—\$2M annually
- **Foundation Grants:** Pursue national arts funders (NEA, Mellon Foundation, Kresge, etc.) for specific initiatives—\$1M annually
- **Individual Philanthropy:** Major donor campaigns for artist housing, cultural centers—\$1M annually
- **Match Requirement:** City funding serves as match to leverage private investment

Percent-for-Art Program (\$1M annually):

Dedicated public art funding from capital projects:

- **Source:** 1% of all city capital projects >\$1M allocated to public art
- **Annual Capital Budget:** \$100M+ in capital projects annually
- **Conservative Estimate:** \$1M annually for public art (actual likely higher as capital budget grows)

Budget Impact on Louisville Metro

Total New Investment: \$26M annually represents 2.2% of Louisville Metro \$1.2 billion General Fund budget.

Combined Policy Spending (Policies #1-10):

- Total across all 10 policies: \$463.5M annually
- Percentage of General Fund: 38.6%
- Remaining capacity: \$736.5M for existing operations and future priorities

Revenue Generation & Offsets:

This policy generates substantial economic returns that offset costs:

- **Direct Economic Impact:** \$104-182M annually (4-7x ROI per arts research)—through tourism spending, creative economy job creation, property value increases
- **Tax Revenue Generated:** \$8-14M annually in new sales, property, and income tax revenue from economic activity
- **Federal Funding Leverage:** \$10-15M in federal grants annually (NEA, historic preservation, economic development) matched by city investment
- **Private Investment Leverage:** \$15-20M in private investment annually (corporate sponsorships, philanthropy, private development responding to cultural district investment)

Net Fiscal Impact: While costing \$26M in direct city spending, this policy generates \$41-67M in total economic benefit to the city—making it revenue-positive over time.

Distribution by Focus Area

Focus Area	Annual Investment	% of Total
Neighborhood Arts Access	\$8M	31%
Cultural Tourism Equity	\$6M	23%
Artist Support	\$5M	19%
Public Art	\$4M	15%
Workforce Development	\$3M	12%

Equity Allocation

50% of funding (\$13M) dedicated to historically underserved communities:

- Creative Communities Fund: 50% reserved for West Louisville/underserved neighborhoods (\$4M)
- Artist Support Infrastructure: 50% of housing, healthcare, grants for artists of color in underserved areas (\$2.5M)
- Cultural Tourism Equity: 100% focused on West Louisville and underserved neighborhoods (\$6M)
- Public Art: 50% of installations in underserved neighborhoods (\$2M)
- Tourism Workforce: 40% recruitment from West Louisville and high-unemployment neighborhoods (\$1.2M)

This ensures Louisville's arts investment corrects historic inequities rather than reinforcing them.

FOUR-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Year 1: Foundation Building

Months 1-3: Planning & Community Engagement

- Establish Creative Communities Fund governance with community representatives
- Complete community engagement in every neighborhood for arts priorities
- Form neighborhood public art committees
- Issue RFPs for first Creative Communities Fund grants
- Launch LVCC restructuring process

Months 4-6: Program Launches

- Award first \$4M in Creative Communities Fund grants to 30 organizations
- Begin artist housing building acquisitions and conversions
- Launch artist health insurance pool enrollment (target: 100 artists Year 1)
- Begin Ali Heritage Trail planning and community engagement
- Issue first public art RFPs, select 20 murals

Months 7-9: Implementation Begins

- First 10 neighborhood arts programs launch with Creative Communities Fund support
- Begin capital improvements at 3 community cultural centers
- Launch Hospitality Career Academy with first cohort (75 people)
- Install first 10 murals and 3 sculptures
- Begin Ali Heritage Trail construction

Months 10-12: Momentum Building

- 20 murals and 5 sculptures installed
- First 75 Hospitality Career Academy graduates placed in jobs
- Artist housing conversions underway (150 units in progress)
- Community cultural centers renovations 50% complete
- First 5 neighborhood cultural festivals funded and held
- Tourism Apprenticeship Program launches with first 30 apprentices

Year 1 Outcomes:

- 30 neighborhood arts organizations funded
- 100 artists enrolled in health insurance pool
- 150 artist housing units under construction
- \$500K in artist career grants distributed to 150 artists
- 20 murals and 5 sculptures installed
- Ali Heritage Trail construction 60% complete
- 75 workers trained and placed in hospitality jobs at \$16+ average wage

- \$8M in new arts funding flowing to neighborhoods

Year 2: Scaling & Expansion

Arts & Culture:

- Increase Creative Communities Fund to 40 organizations
- Complete first 150 artist housing units and begin leasing
- Enroll 200 additional artists in health insurance pool (300 total)
- Distribute \$1M in artist career grants to 260 artists
- Creative Business Incubator opens with first 20 artists
- Install 35 murals and 8 sculptures
- Open 2 renovated community cultural centers

Tourism:

- Complete Ali Heritage Trail and open Muhammad Ali home museum
- Launch 3 neighborhood tourism initiatives (Germantown, Portland, Smoketown)
- Install first cultural district wayfinding systems
- Train 50 community members as heritage tour guides
- Hospitality Career Academy graduates 150 workers

Metrics:

- Artist median income increases to \$33,500 (from \$28,400)
- Arts participation in underserved neighborhoods rises to 12% (from 7%)
- West Louisville tourism spending reaches \$8M (from <\$1M)
- 225 workers trained and placed in hospitality careers

Year 3: Maturity & Refinement

Arts & Culture:

- 50 organizations funded through Creative Communities Fund
- 300 artist housing units operational, 200 additional in construction
- 350 artists covered by health insurance pool
- Creative Business Incubator supports 40 artist businesses
- 3 cultural districts formally established with infrastructure investment
- 40 murals and 10 sculptures installed annually
- 5 community cultural centers fully operational

Tourism:

- Ali Heritage District attracting 100,000 visitors annually
- 5 neighborhood tourism initiatives operational
- 20 new tourism businesses in West Louisville
- Underground Railroad Trail completed and marketed nationally
- Hospitality Career Academy and Apprenticeship Program at full capacity (225 trained annually)

Metrics:

- Artist median income reaches \$39,000
- Arts participation in underserved neighborhoods reaches 18%
- West Louisville tourism spending reaches \$25M
- 400+ workers trained and placed in hospitality careers

Year 4: Sustainability & Long-Term Vision**Arts & Culture:**

- 55 organizations funded through Creative Communities Fund
- 500 artist housing units fully operational
- 400+ artists covered by health insurance pool
- \$4M+ in cumulative artist career grants distributed
- Creative Business Incubator has supported 80 artist businesses
- 5 cultural districts fully operational generating \$40M+ economic activity
- 150+ murals and 30+ sculptures installed citywide since program launch
- 5 community cultural centers serving 50,000+ residents annually

Tourism:

- Ali Heritage District attracting 250,000 visitors annually
- West Louisville tourism spending reaches \$50M+ annually
- 8 neighborhood tourism initiatives operational citywide
- 40 new tourism businesses in underserved neighborhoods
- 200 additional hotel rooms in West Louisville
- 500+ West Louisville residents employed in tourism industry
- Heritage tourism marketing campaign reaches 2M people nationally

Metrics Achieved:

- City per capita arts investment: \$13 (up from \$4.20, closing gap with peers)
- Artist median income: \$42,000+ (up 48% from baseline)
- Arts participation in underserved neighborhoods: 25% (up from 7%)
- Citywide arts participation: 45% (up from 18%)
- West Louisville tourism spending: \$50M+ (up from <\$1M)
- Creative economy jobs: 2,000+ new jobs at living wages
- Total economic impact: \$180M+ annually (7x ROI on city investment)

Long-Term Sustainability (Years 5-10)**Sustained Investment:**

- Creative Communities Fund becomes permanent with dedicated funding stream
- Artist housing program becomes self-sustaining through rents and lease-to-own
- Tourism Development Fee expansion generates ongoing revenue
- Percent-for-Art program funds ongoing public art maintenance and new commissions

Economic Transformation:

- Louisville's creative economy grows to 7% of total economy (vs. 4.3% baseline)
 - Tourism revenue reaches \$5 billion annually (up from \$3.8B)
 - Louisville recognized nationally as arts/culture destination, not just bourbon/Derby
 - Artist retention rate matches peer cities—Louisville becomes place artists move to, not from
 - West Louisville becomes recognized cultural tourism destination generating \$100M+ annually
-

SUCCESS METRICS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Dave's Arts, Culture & Tourism policy will be evaluated on measurable outcomes, not just activity. The administration will publish quarterly public reports on progress toward these goals:

Cultural Access & Participation Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **Overall arts participation rate:** 18% → 45% of residents attending arts/cultural events regularly
- **Underserved neighborhood participation:** 7% → 25% in West Louisville, South End zip codes
- **Youth arts participation:** 33% → 65% of K-12 students in regular arts programming
- **Free/low-cost events:** 120 → 400+ free community cultural events annually
- **Geographic distribution:** 18% → 50% of city arts funding to underserved communities

Data Collection: Annual arts participation survey (1,000+ residents), neighborhood-level participation tracking, youth program enrollment data

Artist Economic Security Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **Median artist income:** \$28,400 → \$42,000 (48% increase)
- **Artists with health insurance:** 46% → 85%
- **Artists working second jobs:** 63% → 35%
- **Artist retention rate:** 69% → 80% (artists remaining in Louisville 5 years)
- **Artists of color income parity:** Close 22% income gap between white artists and artists of color

Data Collection: Biennial artist economic survey, health insurance enrollment tracking, creative workforce retention study

Creative Economy Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **Creative economy jobs:** 18,500 → 20,500+ (2,000 net new jobs)
- **Creative economy GDP:** \$1.2B → \$1.8B annually
- **Creative sector as % of economy:** 4.3% → 6.5%
- **Arts organizations:** 185 → 240 organizations (30% growth)
- **Creative businesses started:** Average 40/year → 100/year

Data Collection: Bureau of Labor Statistics creative economy data, Metro business license tracking, economic impact studies

Cultural Infrastructure Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **Artist housing units:** 0 → 500 units
- **Community cultural centers:** 3 operational → 5 renovated/operational
- **Public art installations:** ~200 existing → 400+ (200 new installations)
- **Cultural districts:** 0 → 5 formally designated districts
- **Neighborhoods with arts venues:** 12 of 26 → 20 of 26

Data Collection: City facilities management data, public art registry, cultural district economic tracking

Tourism Equity Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **West Louisville tourism spending:** <\$1M → \$50M+ annually
- **Ali Heritage District visitors:** 0 (no formal district) → 250,000 annually
- **Tourism businesses in underserved areas:** ~5 → 40+ businesses
- **West Louisville tourism jobs:** <50 → 500+ jobs
- **West Louisville hotel rooms:** 412 → 600+ rooms

Data Collection: Tourism spending survey by geography, Ali Heritage District visitor tracking, business license data, employment by zip code

Tourism Workforce Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **Median hospitality worker wage:** \$11.85/hour → \$16/hour (35% increase)
- **Hospitality jobs offering health insurance:** 32% → 60%
- **Full-time hospitality jobs:** 38% → 55%
- **Worker advancement to management:** 8% within 5 years → 20% within 5 years
- **Workers trained through city programs:** 0 → 900+ over 4 years

Data Collection: Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data, employer benefits surveys, career academy graduate tracking

Public Art & Creative Placemaking Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **Murals installed:** ~200 existing → 400+ citywide (40 new/year)
- **Sculptures installed:** ~50 existing → 80+ citywide
- **Artists commissioned:** ~30/year → 150/year
- **Artist payments for public art:** ~\$200K/year → \$1.5M+/year
- **Property value increase in creative corridors:** Baseline → 15% increase in creative placemaking zones

Data Collection: Public art commission records, artist payment tracking, property assessor data for creative corridors

Equity & Inclusion Metrics

Baseline → Year 4 Target:

- **% arts funding to underserved communities:** 18% → 50%
- **Artists of color receiving grants:** 22% → 45% (matching city demographics)
- **Cultural institution board diversity:** 12% people of color → 35%
- **Arts programs in schools serving low-income students:** 35% of schools → 75%
- **Tourism jobs held by West Louisville residents:** <5% → 15%

Data Collection: Grant recipient demographic tracking, board composition surveys, JCPS arts program data, employment by residence zip code

Financial Accountability Metrics

Investment Tracking:

- **City arts investment per capita:** \$4.20 → \$13 by Year 4
- **Total creative economy investment:** \$26M annually in city funds
- **Leverage ratio:** \$1 city investment → \$3-5 total investment (with federal, philanthropic, private funds)
- **Return on investment:** \$1 invested → \$4-7 economic return

Outcome Tracking:

- **Economic impact:** \$26M invested → \$104-182M total economic impact annually
- **Tax revenue generated:** \$8-14M in new tax revenue from creative economy growth
- **Jobs created per \$100K invested:** 2.5 jobs per \$100K (75 jobs per \$3M workforce investment)

Budget Dashboard:

All metrics published quarterly on public dashboard at arts.louisvilleky.gov/dashboard with:

- Progress toward Year 4 targets (red/yellow/green indicators)
- Spending by program and neighborhood
- Demographic breakdown of beneficiaries

- Economic impact data
- Stories and testimonials from artists and communities served

Accountability Mechanisms

Community Oversight:

- **Arts & Culture Advisory Commission:** 15-member commission (majority from underserved communities) with approval authority over major spending decisions
- **Neighborhood Arts Councils:** Each neighborhood receives funding has community council overseeing local programming
- **Annual Public Forums:** Town halls in every council district to review progress and gather community input

Independent Evaluation:

- **Year 2 Evaluation:** Independent evaluation of Creative Communities Fund effectiveness, equity outcomes, economic impact
- **Year 4 Comprehensive Evaluation:** Full program evaluation by university researchers assessing all metrics and recommending adjustments
- **Ongoing Research Partnership:** Partner with University of Louisville and Bellarmine for ongoing creative economy research

Mayoral Accountability:

- **Quarterly Progress Reports:** Mayor presents progress to Metro Council with detailed data
- **Annual State of Culture Address:** Public address reviewing year's accomplishments and next year's priorities
- **Performance-Based Budgeting:** Continued funding contingent on meeting equity and economic impact targets

Dave commits to full transparency and community accountability. If programs aren't meeting equity or economic goals, we'll adjust—with community input driving changes. The goal isn't just spending money on arts, it's transforming Louisville into a city where culture drives equitable economic development and every neighborhood has access to world-class creative opportunities.

RELATED GLOSSARY TERMS

This policy connects to the following terms in Dave's Louisville Voter Education Glossary (available at rundaverun.org/glossary):

- **Creative Economy:** Economic sector including artists, performers, designers, writers, and cultural organizations—generating \$1.2 billion annually in Louisville
- **Cultural District:** Designated neighborhood with concentration of arts/culture

organizations receiving special investment and tax incentives

- **Community Arts:** Arts programming developed by and for local communities, particularly in underserved neighborhoods
- **Public Art:** Art in public spaces (murals, sculptures, installations) accessible to everyone regardless of ability to pay
- **Creative Placemaking:** Using arts and culture as tool for community development and neighborhood revitalization
- **Heritage Tourism:** Tourism focused on experiencing cultural heritage and history of communities—fastest-growing tourism sector nationally
- **Artist Housing:** Affordable live/work spaces for artists, typically in converted industrial buildings
- **Percent-for-Art:** Policy requiring percentage of capital project budgets (typically 1%) be allocated to public art
- **Living Wage:** Wage sufficient to meet basic needs (\$15/hour minimum in Louisville context)—contrasted with minimum wage
- **Tourism Development Fee:** Per-room-night fee on hotel stays generating revenue for tourism development and marketing
- **Arts Participation Rate:** Percentage of residents attending arts/cultural events regularly—indicator of cultural access
- **Economic Development Accountability:** Requiring businesses receiving public incentives to meet community benefit standards (jobs, wages, local hiring)
- **Community Land Trust:** Nonprofit organization that owns land in trust for community benefit, leasing to residents at affordable rates (see)
- **Participatory Budgeting:** Democratic process where residents directly decide how to spend public funds (see)
- **Complete Streets:** Streets designed for all users—pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, drivers—not just cars (see)

For definitions and additional context, visit rundaverun.org/glossary.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why should taxpayers fund arts and culture when we have roads to fix and schools to fund?

Answer: Arts and culture ARE infrastructure—economic infrastructure that returns \$4-7 for every dollar invested through job creation, property value increases, tourism attraction, and small business growth. That’s one of the highest returns on investment for any public

spending.

Research shows arts investment:

- Creates 30 jobs per \$1 million invested (vs. 20 jobs for general infrastructure)
- Increases property values 15-30% in creative placemaking zones, generating more tax revenue
- Improves educational outcomes (35% higher college attendance for students in arts programs)
- Reduces youth crime and improves public health outcomes

Nashville's \$80M annual arts investment has contributed to \$10 billion in tourism revenue and population growth 300% faster than Louisville's. Meanwhile, Louisville's \$4.20 per capita investment ranks 42nd of 50 largest cities—we're dramatically underfunding an economic engine.

We can fix roads AND invest in culture—in fact, strong creative economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for roads. This isn't either/or, it's smart economic development.

2. Won't tourism in West Louisville just lead to gentrification and displacement like we've seen downtown?

Answer: This is a critical concern—and exactly why Dave's policy includes Anti-Displacement Protections as a core component (building on Affordable Housing).

Specific protections:

1. **Community Land Trust Expansion:** All Ali Heritage District development includes CLT land ownership, preventing speculation and keeping housing affordable (see)
2. **Tenant Protections:** Just Cause eviction requirements, rent stabilization, right to legal counsel in eviction cases (see)
3. **Business Displacement Prevention:** Commercial anti-displacement fund (\$2M annually) providing grants to long-standing West Louisville businesses threatened by rising rents—ensuring Black-owned businesses benefit from tourism growth, not displaced by it
4. **Local Hiring Requirements:** 30% of jobs in tourism businesses receiving city support must go to West Louisville residents—ensuring jobs benefit community members
5. **Community Control:** West Louisville residents lead Ali Heritage District governance

board with approval authority over development—no outsiders dictating what happens in the neighborhood

The goal is **equitable development**, not gentrification. We're investing in tourism infrastructure in West Louisville while simultaneously protecting residents and businesses from displacement. Memphis Soulsville and New Orleans Treme provide models where heritage tourism has benefited origin communities without mass displacement—through proactive anti-displacement policies like Dave is proposing.

3. How do we know city funding for artists won't just subsidize hobbyists instead of serious professionals?

Answer: Dave's policy includes professional standards to ensure funding supports career artists, not casual hobbyists:

Artist Verification Requirements:

- **Portfolio Review:** Artists must submit portfolio demonstrating professional-level work and regular creative practice
- **50-Hour Rule:** Artists must spend minimum 50 hours/month on creative practice (verified through artist statements and work samples)
- **Income Test:** Artist housing and health insurance limited to artists earning majority of income from creative work or demonstrating commitment to creative career
- **Peer Review:** Artist grant applications reviewed by panels of working artists who can assess professional quality and career trajectory

This is how peer cities do it: Austin, Providence, and Indianapolis all use similar verification systems—and research shows 91% of funding goes to artists who remain in creative careers long-term (not hobbyists).

Additionally, data shows investment in professional artists has multiplicative effects: every artist supported creates 0.3 additional creative jobs through collaboration, commissioning other artists, and supporting creative businesses. Supporting professional artists grows entire creative economy.

4. Louisville already has the Kentucky Center, the Speed Museum, and Actors Theatre—why do we need more arts funding?

Answer: Those are world-class institutions—but 82% of Louisville residents live more than 3 miles from them, and only 18% attend regularly. Having great downtown institutions doesn't mean neighborhoods have arts access.

The problem:

- 14 of 26 neighborhoods have ZERO arts venues or organizations
- Average ticket to major institution costs \$47—unaffordable for families earning median

income

- 73% of major cultural venues not accessible via TARC without transfers
- Programming at major institutions doesn't reflect Louisville's diversity (89% curated by white decision-makers)

Dave's policy funds **community arts**—neighborhood-based programming, public art, community cultural centers in places where people live. It's about decentralizing culture.

International research from Australia, Canada, and UK shows cities need BOTH flagship institutions (Kentucky Center) AND distributed neighborhood arts infrastructure to achieve equity and high participation rates. Louisville has invested in the former but neglected the latter for decades.

Also, Dave's policy will help major institutions reach new audiences through partnerships with neighborhood organizations—expanding their impact while supporting community-based arts.

5. Won't this policy just create low-wage service jobs in tourism, not real careers?

Answer: Not under Dave's plan—that's precisely why 12% of this policy's budget (\$3M) goes specifically to **Tourism Workforce Development** to ensure tourism creates career pathways, not just low-wage jobs.

How we'll change tourism jobs:

1. **Hospitality Career Academy:** Free training for culinary, hotel management, event management careers starting at \$16-18/hour (vs. current median \$11.85)
2. **Registered Apprenticeships:** Earn-while-you-learn programs with wage progression from \$15/hour to \$22/hour over 2 years—creating clear pathway to middle-class wages
3. **Advancement Support:** Tuition assistance and supervisory training for current hospitality workers to move into management (targeting 35% advancement rate vs. current 8%)
4. **Living Wage Incentives:** Businesses committing to \$15+ minimum wage receive wage subsidies and preferential treatment for city contracts—creating market pressure to raise wages
5. **Full-Time Conversion:** Incentives for businesses to convert part-time positions to full-time with benefits

San Francisco's hospitality training program demonstrates this works: 5,200+ graduates since 2006 with average starting wage \$18.50 and 82% still employed after 2 years. Tourism CAN be pathway to middle class—if we invest in workforce development, not just industry growth.

6. How will you prevent arts funding from being cut when budget gets tight, like has happened in the past?

Answer: Dave's policy creates **dedicated, sustainable funding streams** that won't fluctuate with annual budget politics:

Dedicated Revenue:

1. **Tourism Development Fee Expansion:** \$8M annually from \$2/room/night fee on hotels—directly tied to tourism activity, grows as tourism grows
2. **LVCC Restructuring:** \$12M annually from Louisville Visitors & Convention Commission redirection—permanent reallocation of existing tourism tax revenue
3. **Percent-for-Art:** \$1M+ annually automatically generated from capital projects—doesn't require annual appropriation

Total: \$21M of \$26M budget (81%) comes from dedicated sources, not subject to annual General Fund cuts

Legal Protection:

- **Ordinance Requirement:** Metro Council ordinance requiring minimum arts funding levels—can only be changed by council vote, not administrative decision
- **Trust Fund Structure:** Creative Communities Fund established as trust fund that can only be used for arts/culture, preventing raids for other purposes

Precedent:

- **Seattle:** Arts funding dedicated through 1% admissions tax has remained stable for 25 years despite multiple budget crises
- **San Francisco:** Arts ballot measure requiring minimum per capita funding has protected arts even in recession years

Dave will work with Metro Council to pass ordinance in Year 1 establishing minimum funding floors and dedicated revenue streams—ensuring arts investment survives beyond his administration.

7. What about suburban and rural parts of Louisville Metro—does this policy help them or just downtown and West Louisville?

Answer: This policy is designed to serve ALL 26 neighborhoods in Louisville Metro, including suburban and rural areas:

Suburban/Rural Benefits:

1. **Geographic Distribution Requirements:** Creative Communities Fund requires geographic diversity—no more than 30% of funding to any single area, ensuring Middletown, Shively, Fairdale, Jeffersontown, Fern Creek, etc. all receive arts funding
2. **Neighborhood Arts Organization Support:** Any neighborhood can apply for \$50,000-\$200,000 grants to support local arts organizations—whether that’s Middletown’s community theater, J-town’s arts council, or Fern Creek’s music programs
3. **Public Art for Every Neighborhood:** 40 murals and 10 sculptures annually distributed across all council districts—suburban areas will receive public art installations in commercial corridors, parks, and public spaces
4. **Cultural District Flexibility:** Cultural districts can be established anywhere—could include Middletown’s downtown area, Jeffersontown’s historic district, Shively’s commercial corridor
5. **Artist Housing Throughout Metro:** Artist housing will be scattered citywide, including suburban adaptive reuse opportunities (old schools, industrial buildings, etc.)

No neighborhood left behind: While the policy prioritizes correcting historic underinvestment in West Louisville and lower-income areas, suburban neighborhoods will see significant new arts resources. In fact, many suburban areas currently have as little arts infrastructure as West Louisville—they’ll benefit equally from neighborhood-focused approach.

8. Why should Louisville compete with Nashville and Austin—shouldn’t we focus on our own unique identity instead of copying other cities?

Answer: Dave’s policy is precisely about leveraging Louisville’s UNIQUE assets—bourbon, bluegrass, Muhammad Ali, Derby, African American heritage, Ohio River—not copying Nashville.

What makes Louisville's culture unique:

- **Bourbon Heritage:** Only city in the world with Urban Bourbon Trail, craft distillery concentration, bourbon history and culture
- **Muhammad Ali:** Hometown of "The Greatest," with unparalleled sports and civil rights legacy
- **Derby & Horse Racing:** 150-year tradition and cultural phenomenon recognized worldwide
- **Bluegrass Music:** Geographic center of bluegrass tradition with legendary venues and musicians
- **African American Heritage:** Rich culture from Underground Railroad to West Louisville's historic role in Black business and arts
- **River City Culture:** Ohio River history, steamboat era, Falls of the Ohio

The Nashville/Austin comparison is about INVESTMENT LEVEL, not copying their culture. Those cities invest \$20-24 per capita in arts vs. Louisville's \$4.20. If we invested in OUR unique culture at their level, we'd see similar economic results—but with authentically Louisville identity.

Dave's policy funds Muhammad Ali Heritage District, bourbon cultural tourism, bluegrass preservation, African American heritage tourism—distinctly Louisville assets. We're not trying to become Nashville, we're trying to fully leverage what makes us different.

9. What happens to this program if federal arts funding gets cut or tourism declines in a recession?

Answer: Dave's policy is designed to be **resilient to external shocks** through diverse funding and countercyclical benefits:

Recession Resilience:

1. **Diverse Funding:** Only 8% of funding from federal sources (most from city tourism taxes, General Fund, fees)—federal cuts wouldn't devastate program
2. **Tourism Development Fee:** While tourism spending might decline 10-20% in recession, fee revenue (\$8M baseline) has cushion to absorb moderate decline
3. **General Fund Commitment:** \$6M in General Fund allocation provides stable baseline even if tourism revenue fluctuates
4. **Countercyclical Benefits:** Arts funding is MOST valuable in recessions when artists

struggle and creative businesses fail—maintaining investment during downturns prevents losing cultural infrastructure that takes decades to rebuild

Evidence from 2008-2010 Recession:

- Cities that maintained arts funding (Seattle, Portland, Austin) saw faster creative economy recovery
- Louisville cut arts funding 34% (inflation-adjusted)—still hasn't recovered creative jobs lost
- Research shows arts funding has 4-7x multiplier even in recessions—high-ROI investment when budgets are tight

Budget Priority: Dave commits to treating arts funding as essential infrastructure, not discretionary spending to cut in tough times. Just as we don't eliminate police or fire departments in recessions, we won't eliminate arts infrastructure that drives long-term economic growth.

10. How will you measure if this policy actually achieves equity and doesn't just repeat patterns of white institutions getting most funding?

Answer: Dave's policy includes rigorous **equity metrics and accountability mechanisms** to ensure funding reaches historically underserved communities:

Equity Requirements:

1. **50% Funding to Underserved Communities:** Creative Communities Fund requires minimum 50% of funding (\$4M) go to West Louisville, Russell, Portland, Parkland, Smoketown, and other historically disinvested neighborhoods—tracked and reported publicly quarterly
2. **Grantee Demographics:** Track race, ethnicity, gender of organization leaders and artists receiving funding—publish annual reports showing demographic distribution vs. city population
3. **Board Diversity Requirements:** Organizations receiving \$100K+ must have boards with minimum 35% people of color (matching city demographics)—or submit diversity improvement plans
4. **Community Control:** West Louisville residents have majority representation on Ali Heritage District governance board, with approval authority over all projects—preventing outside control

5. **Geographic Equity:** Map funding distribution by zip code and neighborhood—ensure no neighborhoods excluded

Accountability:

1. **Public Dashboard:** Real-time dashboard at arts.louisvilleky.gov showing funding by neighborhood, demographics, metrics—full transparency
2. **Independent Evaluation:** Year 2 and Year 4 independent evaluations by university researchers specifically assessing equity outcomes
3. **Community Oversight Commission:** 15-member Arts & Culture Advisory Commission with majority from underserved communities has authority to approve funding allocations
4. **Consequence for Missing Equity Goals:** If Year 2 evaluation shows less than 40% of funding reaching underserved communities (target is 50%), Mayor must present corrective action plan to Metro Council

This is how you prevent repeating past patterns: Explicit equity targets, transparent tracking, community control, and consequences for failing to meet goals. Not just good intentions, but enforceable accountability.

CONCLUSION: CULTURE AS COMMON WEALTH

For too long, Louisville has treated arts and culture as luxuries to fund after everything else—as amenities for wealthy neighborhoods rather than economic engines for everyone. Meanwhile, the communities that created Louisville’s culture—West Louisville, Smoketown, Russell—have been systematically excluded from arts funding and tourism prosperity.

Dave’s Arts, Culture & Tourism policy flips this upside down.

It recognizes that:

- Arts and culture are infrastructure with 4-7x return on investment
- Creative economy drives 21st-century prosperity and attracts talent
- Tourism should benefit the communities that created our culture
- Artists deserve sustainable careers, not poverty wages

- Every neighborhood deserves access to world-class cultural programming

The choice is clear:

Continue Louisville's trajectory—underfunding arts at 1/5th the peer city level, losing creative talent to Nashville and Austin, watching tourism billions bypass West Louisville, letting cultural infrastructure crumble—and falling further behind cities that invest in creative economy.

Or triple arts investment, create 500 affordable artist housing units, spread tourism prosperity to every neighborhood, fund 55 community arts organizations, install 200 public artworks, ensure artists can thrive here, and build a creative economy that drives equitable growth.

This is about more than murals and museums. It's about economic justice—ensuring the communities that created Louisville's culture share in the prosperity that culture generates. It's about retaining talent and attracting investment. It's about giving every child access to arts programming that research proves improves educational outcomes. It's about Louisville competing with peer cities instead of falling further behind.

Dave's vision: A Louisville where culture isn't concentrated in a 2-square-mile downtown corridor but flourishes in every neighborhood. Where artists earn sustainable livings. Where tourists visit West Louisville and spend money that benefits residents. Where public art isn't a luxury but a right. Where bourbon, bluegrass, Ali, and Derby heritage drive billions in economic activity that flows to communities, not just corporations.

A creative city for everyone.

That's democracy that works for everyone. That's the Louisville we'll build together.

For more information:

- **Full policy details:** rundaverun.org/policy/arts-culture-tourism
- **Voter education glossary:** rundaverun.org/glossary
- **Get involved:** rundaverun.org/volunteer
- **Contact campaign:** info@rundaverun.org

Dave Biggers for Louisville Mayor

Democracy that works for everyone.

This policy document is part of Dave Biggers' comprehensive policy platform addressing Louisville's most pressing challenges through evidence-based solutions and community-driven governance. See also: Public Safety (), Criminal Justice Reform (), Health & Human Services (),

Budget & Financial Management (), Affordable Housing (), Education & Youth Development (), Environmental Justice (), Economic Development & Jobs (), Infrastructure & Transportation (), and forthcoming policies on Technology & Innovation, Public Health & Wellness, Neighborhood Development, Senior Services, Disability Rights & Accessibility, and Food Systems & Urban Agriculture.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy works in coordination with these related initiatives:

- **[Economic Development & Jobs](#)**: Arts and tourism generate \$5B economic impact annually, creating thousands of jobs in Louisville's creative economy.
- **[Neighborhood Development](#)**: Cultural tourism equity initiative spreads economic benefits to West Louisville neighborhoods bypassed by current tourism.
- **[Education & Youth Development](#)**: Arts education and cultural programming provide youth development opportunities and creative career pathways.
- **[Technology & Innovation](#)**: Technology and creative sectors intersect in digital media, design, and the innovation economy.

Explore all 16 comprehensive policies at [Dave's Complete Policy Platform](#).

What Louisville Residents Say

What This Means for YOUR Neighborhood

Every Louisville neighborhood is unique. Enter your ZIP code to see how this

policy directly impacts your community:

Find Your Mini Substation

Enter your ZIP code to see when your neighborhood will receive a community police substation.

Find My Substation

63 ZIP code areas across Louisville will receive mini substations over 4 years.

Part of Dave Biggers' comprehensive public safety plan.

[See the Budget Impact](#)

Explore how this policy fits into Dave's comprehensive \$1.2 billion budget plan:

How Does Dave's Budget Affect You?

See your personalized impact - zero tax increase, real benefits

☐ Household Income \$50,000

☐ Children in JCPS

☐ Your ZIP Code

Your Personal Impact

How we calculate: Benefits based on average family savings from wellness center access (\$800/year), youth program value (after-school + summer jobs), and your specific mini substation timeline. All benefits come from the same \$1.2B budget - zero tax increase.

Share your results with friends and family:

☐ Share My Results

Compare This Policy

See how Dave's approach differs from current administration policies:

Policy Comparison: Real Change vs. Status Quo

See the clear differences between Dave Biggers' transformative vision for Louisville and the current mayor's approach. The choice is yours.

[Share This Comparison](#) [Print Comparison](#)
[Public Safety](#) [Wellness](#) [Youth](#) [Economy](#) [Housing](#) [Transparency](#)

Public Safety & Policing

Current Mayor

Traditional policing model

Approach

- Centralized police response
- Reactive approach to crime
- Limited community engagement
- Focus on patrol units

Timeline Ongoing

Budget Status quo funding

Impact Response times: 15-20 minutes average

Dave Biggers

Community-based mini substations

Approach

- 63 mini substations across Louisville (4-year deployment)
- Officers living and working in communities they serve
- Preventative community policing model
- Year 1: 12 substations in highest-need areas

Timeline Year 1-4 phased rollout
Budget Revenue-neutral through property tax restructuring
Impact Response times: 3-5 minutes (neighborhood-based)



Mental Health & Wellness

Current Mayor

Limited wellness infrastructure

Approach

- Reliance on existing healthcare facilities
- No dedicated community wellness centers
- Fragmented mental health services
- Emergency-room dependent model

Timeline No expansion planned
Budget Minimal dedicated funding
Impact Long wait times, limited access in underserved areas

Dave Biggers

Regional wellness centers network

Approach

- 18 wellness centers across 6 regions
- Mental health counseling, addiction support
- Youth programs, family services
- 3 centers per region for accessibility

Timeline Year 1-4 phased rollout
Budget Integrated with public safety restructuring
Impact Accessible care within every neighborhood, preventative focus



Youth Development

Current Mayor

Standard recreation programs

Approach

- Traditional rec centers
- Limited after-school programming
- Seasonal sports leagues
- Minimal job training for youth

Timeline Status quo

Budget Existing recreation budget

Impact Serves fraction of Louisville youth

Dave Biggers

Comprehensive youth investment

Approach

- After-school programs at all substations
- Job training and mentorship
- Arts, sports, and STEM programs
- Youth advisory councils
- Summer employment pathways

Timeline Immediate implementation with substation rollout

Budget \$1,200 value per child annually

Impact Accessible programs in every neighborhood

□

Economic Development**Current Mayor**

Corporate incentives focus

Approach

- Tax breaks for large corporations
- Downtown-centric development
- Limited support for small business
- Gentrification without displacement protection

Timeline Ongoing

Budget Millions in corporate subsidies

Impact Benefits concentrated in select areas

Dave Biggers

Community wealth building

Approach

- Small business incubators at substations
- Local hiring requirements for city contracts
- Neighborhood-based economic zones
- Affordable housing protection
- Living wage standards

Timeline Immediate policy changes, 4-year infrastructure build

Budget Redirected from corporate subsidies

Impact Jobs and wealth stay in neighborhoods



Housing & Affordability

Current Mayor

Market-driven housing

Approach

- Minimal affordable housing requirements
- Limited tenant protections
- Rising rents in many neighborhoods
- Displacement from development

Timeline No comprehensive plan

Budget Minimal housing trust fund

Impact Affordability crisis worsening

Dave Biggers

Housing as a human right

Approach

- Expanded affordable housing trust fund
- Strong tenant protections
- Community land trusts
- Rent stabilization measures

- Anti-displacement policies for existing residents

Timeline Immediate policy changes

Budget Increased trust fund through property tax reform

Impact Protects residents, prevents displacement



Government Transparency

Current Mayor

Standard reporting

Approach

- Annual budget reports
- Limited real-time data
- Reactive public engagement
- Closed-door development deals

Timeline Status quo

Budget Minimal transparency infrastructure

Impact Limited public accountability

Dave Biggers

Radical transparency

Approach

- Real-time budget dashboard
- Public data portal for all city metrics
- Community advisory boards with veto power
- Open contracting process
- Regular town halls in all neighborhoods

Timeline Immediate implementation

Budget Low-cost digital infrastructure

Impact Citizens empowered with information and decision-making power

The Choice is Clear

Louisville deserves transformative change, not more of the same. Join us in building a city that works for everyone.

[Join the Campaign Read Full Policy Platform](#)

▢ What Louisville Residents Say

▢ Community Endorsements

Share This Policy

Help spread the word about Dave’s vision for Louisville:

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▢ Make Your Voice Heard

Register to Vote

Register to Vote

Make your voice heard! Register to vote and participate in our democracy.



[Register to Vote](#) ✓ [Check Registration](#)

Important Deadlines

- **Registration Deadline:** Typically 30 days before election day
- **Early Voting:** Check your state's early voting schedule
- **Absentee Ballot:** Request absentee ballots early
- **Election Day:** Polls typically open 6 AM - 6 PM

Note: Deadlines vary by state. Check your local election office for specific dates.

Find Your Polling Place

Find Your Polling Location

Enter your address to find your polling place and get directions.

Your Address

City

State

ZIP Code

Find My Polling Place

You can also call **1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)** for assistance finding your polling location.

Stay Updated on This Policy

Get notified when this policy is updated or when Dave speaks about this issue in YOUR neighborhood.

* indicates a required field

Email Signup Information

Fax Number (Leave blank)

Name *

Email * We'll send you updates about the campaign

Zip Code 5-digit zip code (optional)

☐ I'm interested in volunteering! We'll send you information about volunteer opportunities
[Sign Up](#)

☐ Have Ideas to Improve This Policy?

This is YOUR city. If you have suggestions for how we can make this policy better for Louisville, please share them. Every idea is reviewed.

Suggest an Improvement for Louisville

Have an idea for improving Louisville? Share your policy suggestion below. Your voice matters in shaping our city's future.

Policy Title *

Description *

0/2000 characters

Category ▼

Your Name *

Your Email *

ZIP Code (Optional)

☐ I agree that my suggestion may be reviewed and potentially incorporated into campaign policy. My email will only be used to notify me about the status of my suggestion.

[Submit Suggestion](#)

NOT ME, WE.

Together, we make Louisville better for everyone.