



AIR TIME

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Applied Information Resources is a non-profit, public policy research and community information organization dedicated to:

- Citizen education on public issues.
- Assisting human service organizations in evaluating their programs, and
- Providing the best possible information to decision makers responding to changing human and urban needs.

AIR TIME is published quarterly-Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall

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AIR PROJECT HELPED BUILD SUPPORT FOR THE CITY'S FUNDING OF HUMAN SERVICES

AIR helped build support for City Council's funding of human services last fall. AIR edited and then released the findings of a telephone survey that showed overwhelming public approval of the City of Cincinnati's long-standing policy of financial support for human services. It then orchestrated a press conference on the steps of City Hall and a community forum that drew public attention to the survey's results.

strongly favor). Conducted by the University of Cincinnati's Institute for Policy Research, these sur-



Press conference on Human Services: F. Row Lto R, Kathy Helmbock, Ed Burdell, W. Woods, Margaret Fox. Second Row. Lto R, Steve Johns, Rina Saperstein, Alice Schneider, Rousseau O'Neal
 Photo: Courtesy of Cincinnati Herald

Ninety-four percent of the city residents who took part in the survey said that it is "very important" or "somewhat important" that the City provides funding for these services (70.9% very important). In addition, eighty-seven percent of the survey participants favor the practice of spending a portion of the City's general revenue on human services either "strongly" or "somewhat" (53.4%

cil has cut the percentage of dollars traditionally allocated for human services (1.5% of the general budget), and the

question arose whether residents cared about city government's funding of these services and whether they were aware of the City's reduction of support.

though the survey showed overwhelming support for the City's funding of human services, only 36% of the residents surveyed said they had heard "a great deal" or "some" about the budget cuts. Over 34% said they had heard "not much" about the human service funding reductions, and 29% reported no knowledge of this change. These percentages indicate that a majority of residents possess scant to no information about the City's policy of supporting them with tax dollars. Beginning with the submission of the 2005 City budget, Coun-

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Bob Edgar, President of Common Cause, to Speak at AIR Dinner

Bob Edgar, president and CEO of Common Cause, will speak at AIR's annual dinner on Thursday, April 24, 2008.

Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization founded in 1970 by John Gardner as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest.

Now with more than 300,000 members and supporters and 36 state organizations, Common Cause remains committed to honest, open and accountable government, as well as encouraging citizen participation in democracy.

Bob arrived at Common Cause in 2007 with a long history of leadership and public service that included 12 years in Congress. He was the general secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA for

seven years immediately before becoming Common Cause President. Elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974 to represent the Seventh Congressional District of Penn-



Bob Edgar

sylvania, outside of Philadelphia, Bob was part of the congressional class nicknamed "the Watergate babies," those elected in the wake of the Watergate scandal and who led sweep-

ing reforms of Congress.

Under Bob's leadership, Common Cause is championing a number of critical issues and reforms, including the public funding of political campaigns at all levels, election reforms that make voting more accurate, secure and accessible, improved ethics at all levels of government and a diverse and open media. One of Bob's first actions as president of Common Cause was to call for the resignation and then impeachment of former Attorney General Alberto Gonzales for politicizing the Justice Department and failing to serve the public interest.

Bob is the author of "Middle Church," a call to progressive people of faith to take back the moral high ground from the right-wing extremists and make America a better and less divided country.

Article from Common Cause website

Applied Information Resources Adds a New Website-queencityforum.com

QCFMag.com, short for QueenCityForum.com magazine, is AIR, Inc.'s newest arm. It was added to the roster of Civic-engagement projects late last year, the online news magazine is aimed at producing new and original coverage of the region's civic news.

Since coming under AIR's auspices, QueenCityForum continues

to be edited by Michael Altman, its founder, while the rest of AIR's staff learns potentials of this new adventure.

QCFMag.com has benefited in recent months from help from three "terrific" interns. With their efforts, QCFMag.com has produced news copy and even news video packages with reports on the 2007 city council election, several local issues, and the most recent election, on March 4.

A journalism program, QCFMag.com is working with the journalism department at the University of Cincinnati to give interns the chance to write for a news publication, in addition to cultivating more programs for sharpening reporters' skills as the year continues.

(Human Services, Continued from page 1)

tion about the City's shift in policy. Nevertheless, 62% of the survey respondents who indicated that they had heard "some" or "a great deal" about the reductions declared their strong support that a portion of the City's general revenue go to human services. A more

detailed review of the answers to the human service questions includes specific information about the diverse Cincinnati residents who participated in the survey and the different responses according to age, race, gender, education, and income. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation provided a grant to pay for the cost of the human service

question component of the Greater Cincinnati Survey, and Applied Information Resources received the grant and worked with the Institute of Policy Research and human service representatives to refine the questions and promote this research.

AIR Moves Forward on Projects

Homelessness

AIR, in conjunction with the Homeless Coalition of Greater Cincinnati, is initiating a new study of homelessness. AIR's last study was completed in 2000-2001. It included a major focus on health related issues, and AIR intends to update much of that material. One important aspect of that study found that more than 60% of the homeless men worked! Therefore, the new study expects to place considerable emphasis on the connected elements of education and work experiences.

This will be a major undertaking requiring significant support and resources. A proposal has been submitted to the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. If granted, this would supply about a quarter of the needed funds. Other applications are in various stages of development and submission to the Health Foundation, SC Ministries and KnowledgeWorks. Anyone interested in helping with this work can make contributions to AIR, Inc. or the Homeless Coalition specifically for this research.

Campaign Finance Reform and Other Political and Election Reforms

The recent elections established new records for collecting and spending money. The stage is set for launching a new educational initiative stressing the need for further campaign reforms. Included in the original Charter Amendment passed in 2001, the public financing of campaigns was rescinded by Cincinnati voters in 2002. However, with the backdrop of 2006 campaign spending, public financing emerges as one of the few vehicles designed to return ownership of elections back to average citizens. Other issues for the Fair Elections Coalition to review are the lack of campaign finance regulations for Ohio counties and for local and state initiatives and amendments.

In order to carry forward political reform at the state level, AIR will work with Common Cause/Ohio this spring and summer to educate diverse citizens about needed and potential changes in the campaign and election process. A grant from the Joyce Foundation will support this effort.

Citizen's Voice

We know that the ability of our community to effectively address the many challenges that it faces depends upon gaining insight, direction and support from the citizenry. However, citizens are often left out of the process or called upon merely to ratify new plans or policies. To rectify this all too common pattern, AIR is in search of new ways for the citizens' voice to be heard. You will hear more about this initiative in coming newsletters.

CONTRIBUTIONS HELP AIR, INC. WITH COMMUNITY WORK

AIR depends on individual contributions to support our work. We are a charitable 501(c)(3) organization and your contributions help fund such projects as campaign finance reform, and studies in racism and homelessness in Cincinnati. We invite you to assist us as AIR takes on community issues and challenges.

\$25

\$50

\$100

\$500

Make your tax-deductible checks payable to: **AIR, Inc.** and send to

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