

2025 Donor Impact Report



2025: A Defining Year

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center had a defining year in 2025. We celebrated our 30th anniversary and unveiled our first new permanent exhibition in 15 years. The Cincinnati community came together for new and signature programs such as our King Legacy Celebration, Juneteenth Jubilee, the Underground Railroad Gathering, the International Freedom Conductor Awards and Fifth Third Community Days. We closed out the year with a premiere of the Freedom Center documentary, "Truth, Trauma, Triumph," in partnership with Very Local and Hearst Productions.

Realizing our mission would not be possible without all of you who make the Freedom Center a thriving presence in our region and world. Read on to see the impact you're making.



Woody Keown, Jr.
President & COO



Dr. Maurice Huey
Senior Director,
Philanthropy

Supporters and community members at the ribbon cutting and opening of *In This Place*, May 2025.



2025 BY THE NUMBERS

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

74,700

GENERAL
ADMISSION VISITORS



7,500+ attendees

across King
Legacy Celebration,
Juneteenth and
International Freedom
Conductor Awards



1,156 visitors

participated in the genealogy
resources offered through
the John Parker Family
Search Library

• 14 volunteers run John Parker
Family Search Library

EDUCATION

3 new initiatives

launched focusing
on education, equity
and innovation

7,100

SCHOOLED ON
FREEDOM GRANT
RECIPIENTS



• Up 5% YoY (6,772 in 2025)



Increased
collections
holdings by
98 items

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PROGRAMS

16

COMMUNITY
DAYS SPONSORED
BY FIFTH THIRD
FOUNDATION



22 programs

WITH

3000+ attendees

**42
community
partners**



Step into the Power of Place

What happened in this place matters.
What happens in this place matters.

Partners, community members, friends, donors, supporters and first-time visitors from near and far came out to a variety of gatherings that moved us forward.



WINTER 2025

King Legacy Celebration ▲

Dr. Wendy Ellis as keynote speaker.

Black History Month programs included a talk on *Jazz Transforming America*, performance by Randall Goosby and Cincinnati Black Theatre's *Lincoln v. Douglass*

SPRING 2025

Faith & (in)Justice exhibit debuts

From the impact of slavery and the struggle for freedom and civil rights, to matters of gender and LGBTQ+ equality, economic parity and environmental justice, *Faith & (in)Justice* traces America's two-and-a-half-century struggle for equity and the role of the country's three largest religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

30th Anniversary Celebration ▼

Community partners and members, supporters, the original Freedom Center founders and more attended our 30th anniversary celebration. We were also proud to welcome Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch and renowned historian David Blight.





SUMMER 2025

NEW! *In This Place* ▲

Immerse yourself in the historic significance of the Freedom Center's location on the banks of the Ohio River.

Juneteenth Jubilee ▶

Our second annual Juneteenth Jubilee transformed our space and Freedom Way into a festival that celebrated freedom.



FALL 2025

International Freedom Conductor Awards ▲

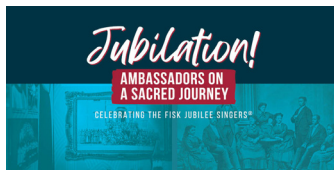
Our International Freedom Conductor Awards kicked off a busy fall season. Presented by Procter & Gamble and hosted by the two-time Emmy® Award-winning Tamron Hall, the IFCA's recognized five modern-day freedom fighters through a once-in-a-generation tribute.

On The Horizon

Looking ahead, the Freedom Center will continue to build on its foundational pillars of courage, cooperation and perseverance—striving to be the preeminent cultural learning center locally, nationally and globally for generations to come.

Check out our programs and events, including Fifth Third Community Days, at freedomcenter.org/calendar.

Stay informed about what's happening by subscribing to our e-news at freedomcenter.org/subscribe.



Jubilation! Ambassadors on a Sacred Journey

January 19 - July 26, 2026

Jubilation! Ambassadors on a Sacred Journey celebrates the history, accomplishments, and legacies of the Fisk Jubilee Singers®. Originating from the National Museum of African American Music in Nashville, Tennessee, this exhibit introduces visitors to the world-renowned ensemble that brought African American spirituals into the world. Made possible with the support of the Lilly Endowment Inc., Fisk University, and the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

Be the Conductor®

YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP LAB

Be The Conductor® Young Changemakers Leadership Lab Pilot

February - May 2026

Designed for young leaders passionate about social justice, the Be the Conductor® program is a cohort-based leadership development program that empowers participants to affect real change and measurable impact.



Opal's Walk for Freedom & Juneteenth Jubilee 2026

June 19, 2026

Cincinnati will be among a select group of cities nationwide and first in the state of Ohio to host the 2026 National Opal's Walk for Freedom. This event is led by Dr. Opal Lee, widely known as the "Grandmother of Juneteenth," due the decades she spent advocating for broader recognition of Juneteenth's significance in America's history. The walk will be incorporated into the Freedom Center's Juneteenth Jubilee program.

Witness to the Journey: Matt Herron and the Mississippi Delta, 1965

September 4 - November 8, 2026

Witness to the Journey: Matt Herron and the Mississippi Delta, 1965 presents the historic Selma to Montgomery March for Voting Rights, which directly led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. By revisiting these images, the exhibition encourages reflection on how far we've come and how far we still must go. This exhibit will be featured in the 2026 FotoFocus Biennial: *The Long View*.



It's Up To Us

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center is committed to creating bold change not just in our region, but in communities across the world.

Your support makes it possible for the Freedom Center to remain a preeminent cultural learning center through best-in-class exhibits and experiential learning opportunities, quality programs and thought leadership.

Thank you for continuing to fuel our mission.





National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

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