

## 1. OVERALL PROJECT SUMMARY and APPROACH

Two federal regions. Three states. Sixteen counties. 81 cities. 173 towns, townships and villages. 254 jurisdictions. 5,199 square miles of communities ranging from urban cores to rolling farmland. And 2.2 million residents. The Cincinnati OH-KY-IN MSA is demographically, economically, and politically diverse. In our region, transformative GHG reduction requires a multifaceted strategy employing proven reduction measures in our highest emitting sectors implemented by program experts and building upon existing programs to accelerate proven methods. This proposal contains six significant GHG reduction measures that will result in sustained transformative emission reduction: **PLACED** Program transforming homes; **GREEN** Program transforming public places, buildings and facilities; **TRANSIT RIDE** Program transforming SOV commuters; **CLEAN INDUSTRY** Program transforming our highest emitting equipment; **FOOD** Program diverting tons of food loss and waste; and **TREE FOR ME** transforming our regional tree canopy.

### a. DESCRIPTION OF GHG REDUCTION MEASURES

#### **Measure #1 PLACED (Priority and Low –income Affordable, Comfortable, Efficient Dwellings Program)**

The PLACED Program will enhance residential energy efficiency in low income and disadvantaged communities across the region. Residential buildings in the region emit 8,350,108 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually. This program will improve the energy efficiency of households in LIDAC areas as identified by CEJST as well as low- to moderate-income households throughout the MSA. The program aligns with PCAP Measure 3.C: Improve the energy efficiency of residential dwellings in the region. Conducting whole-building energy efficiency upgrades will significantly contribute to the reduction of the emissions and reduce energy burden. PLACED will upgrade 2,000 LIDAC households (400 each year 2025-2029) while developing the local workforce and creating high quality jobs.

OKI will identify a program administrator through a competitive selection program to implement the program. The program administrator will determine retrofit opportunities through energy audits, estimate utility bill savings, provide financial assistance through incentives, increase energy upgrade education, and oversee energy efficiency upgrades with the goal of creating healthier, more affordable, and sustainable homes for LIDAC residents across the region. A list of likely program administrator candidates is under development, so that procurement can begin quickly upon award. Once energy efficiency upgrades are completed, residents will be connected to local organizations implementing the Solar for All program to maximize long term regional GHG reduction.

The program will offer two pathways for participation:

1. **Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)** – The program will work with existing HWAP administrators across the region to ensure that deep energy retrofits can be completed. HWAP administrators will identify clients using existing HWAP guidelines. PLACED will be used to fund energy efficiency measures that are beneficial to the homeowner but may not meet HWAP program guidelines, like appliance and HVAC equipment upgrades. **Transformatively, funds will be used for the repair of pre-existing conditions that prevent a homeowner from participating in HWAP.** Program payments will be made directly to HWAP administrators equal to the labor and materials costs of the qualifying measures installed after the submission of required documentation.
2. **Low- and moderate-income households** – PLACED recognizes that not all homeowners in LIDACs meet the eligibility criteria for HWAP. The program will partner with local community benefits organizations to lead outreach efforts and identify households that could benefit from the program. Interested households will be referred to the program administrator which will provide additional information and access to a free energy assessment to identify potential energy efficiency measures. Participants will receive an assessment report that outlines the recommended improvements as well potential costs after PLACED incentives and other programs such as DOE's HOMES and HEERA rebates are applied. Participants will be connected to a qualified contractor that can provide the required

upgrades. Quality assurance inspections will be performed on a percentage of all completed upgrades. At the completion of the upgrade, PLACED incentive payments will be paid directly to the qualified contractor that completed the upgrades upon the submission of required documentation. This prevents participating households for whom cash is limited from needing to pay for the full cost of upgrades. The program will reduce energy burden while minimizing additional debt to residents.

**Program Risks:** Three key possible risks to the success of the program have been identified:

***Lack of contractors:*** Depending on the qualification criteria and potential pipeline of clients, it may take time to grow the workforce to meet the scale of rising demand. This could reduce the estimated GHG savings for the program or shift them to later years. ■ This will be overcome through workforce training to ensure that there is a qualified workforce available for contractors to hire from. ■

***Inability to leverage other federal programs:*** The low- to moderate-income component of the program will rely on the HOMES and HEERA rebates offered through State Energy Offices. If those programs do not launch in a timely manner or if their funds are expended faster than expected, it would impact the success of the PLACED program. This risk will be overcome by staying in close contact with each State Energy Office to ensure that the program is designed to take advantage of the funds and to monitor fund availability. ■

***Implementation timeline:*** The program will conduct a competitive selection process to identify a program administrator. It is possible that the process of identifying and contracting with a program administrator will take longer than estimated. To speed up the process of selecting a program administrator, the coalition has initiated conversations with a few organizations to understand their offerings and gauge interest should the opportunity arise.

**Program Milestones:** Selection of regional program administrator; Identification and education of community benefits organizations and local governments to assist with outreach efforts; Identification of qualified subcontractors; Launch of program for low- to moderate-income households; Installation of upgrades across 400 dwellings per year on average; Collection of post retrofit performance measures to determine impact and evaluate needed changes ■

## **Measure #2 GREEN (Get Renewables & Energy Efficiency eNhancements for Nonprofits & Local Govts)**

GREEN is a flexible program to fill funding gaps for upgrades to energy efficiency, electrification, streetlights, and solar energy and storage for nonprofits, schools, and local governments. GREEN will include implementation support and readiness work such as energy audits and operational upgrades/remediation to buildings and equipment (including streetlights), with the goals of drastically reducing GHG emissions, minimizing energy use, strengthening community resilience to climate-related impacts, and reducing energy costs and indoor air pollution. The program aligns with PCAP Measure 3.A: Improve the energy efficiency of local governments, schools, and nonprofits. GREEN addresses buildings and equipment which represent the largest source of emissions in our region, with the commercial sector accounting for 16%, or 7 million MT CO<sub>2</sub>e of emissions in the MSA. The GREEN program will retrofit 250 buildings (50 each year 2025-2029) with an assumed average investment of approximately \$100,000 each. This investment is intended to cover the price difference between traditional equipment and high efficiency equipment or to decrease the cost of solar. The investment amount is based on a review of recent retrofit costs for projects in the region.

A program administrator will provide energy assessments to qualifying organizations to identify potential energy saving projects. The organizations will then be invited to participate in an annual competitive selection process administered by OKI with oversight by a program committee to determine the most beneficial grantee subrecipients for that year based on GHG reduction and sustained impacts. The program administrator will assist with grantee project facilitation. In addition to incentives and other forms of assistance, the project will leverage existing programs such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (Green Bank) and the IRS direct pay benefit to reduce project costs.

GREEN will have three components:

1. **Energy assessments** – The program administrator will provide qualifying nonprofits, schools, and local governments with access to free energy assessments. The results would be used to develop an upgrade roadmap for the facility. The assessments will also provide recommendations for low cost operational changes that the facilities could make in order to reduce emissions.
2. **Energy upgrades** – The program will provide incentives to help cover the cost difference between traditional equipment and street lighting and high efficiency equipment and street lighting. The amount of the incentive will vary based on the organization's need and the services it offers to LIDAC communities. The incentives will enable eligible organizations to make energy efficiency investments that reduce emissions in the near term rather than putting them off into the future due to a lack of funding. The incentive will be provided by the program administrator directly to the contractor that completed the work upon submission of the required paperwork.
3. **Solar and storage** – The program will provide bridge loans to cover the cost of the IRS direct pay benefit. These bridge loans will be short in duration, and the funds will be cycled back into the grant funding pool. We estimate the amount of bridge loans will be in excess of \$10M (with the 8.9 MW solar project described below). This enables the program to use these funds twice, which extends the reach and amount of GHG reduced by this program. GREEN will also connect the organization to funders who can leverage GGRF greenbanks to provide low-cost financing.

In addition to these three components, OKI will subaward the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG), a Special Purpose Government Entity as defined by Chapter 65A of Kentucky Revised Statutes, 70% of the funds to construct a 8.9 mega watt (MW) solar array on the upper levels of the airport terminal's two primary parking garages. This immediate investment will reduce approximately 40,000 MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030 at our region's largest transportation sector GHG emitter.

**Program Risks:** Several key potential risks to the success of the program have been identified:

**Lack of diverse list of participating organizations:** While there is sufficient need for energy efficiency improvements amongst nonprofits, local governments, and schools across the region, it is possible that large organizations could be the main beneficiaries of the program due to their size and access to resources. Small nonprofits, local governments, and school districts may not be aware of the program or have access to the capital required to invest in energy efficiency. This can be overcome by leveraging OKI's relationship with local governments to educate them about the benefits the program provides. It will also be critical to work with those local governments to identify nonprofits working in LIDAC communities who could benefit from the program.

**Lack of contractors:** The program relies on a network of qualified contractors that are able to perform audits and installations. As with PLACED, it may take time to grow the workforce to meet the scale of rising demand. This will be overcome through workforce training to ensure that there is a trained workforce available for contractors to hire from.

**Insufficient funding:** The program intends to help nonprofits, local governments, and school districts undertake energy efficiency upgrades and complete solar installations without having to undertake additional debt. The program will focus on the most impactful and affordable energy efficiency measures and connect the qualifying organizations to other programs that can provide assistance such as the Ohio Department of Development or the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

**Lack of utility support:** In many cases Duke Energy owns street lights in local communities. Upgrades to LED lighting are often included in their state approved rate structure and allow them to recover costs. We have engaged with Duke Energy to ensure their willing participation, as well as capacity to facilitate LED lighting upgrades.

**Implementation timeline:** Like the PLACED program, this program will conduct a competitive selection process to identify a program administrator. We have initiated conversations with a few organizations to understand their offerings and gauge interest should the opportunity arise.

**Program Milestones:** Establish a program committee; Identify program eligibility requirements and qualifying measures; Execute subaward agreement with CVG to pass funds through for solar PV; Select a program administrator; Program Administrator facilitates energy assessments for qualifying participants; Program Committee establishes selection criteria for the subrecipient pool; Initial call for applications is held; Program Committee selects the initial subrecipient pool based on established criteria; Program Committee determines annual funding for submitted improvement plans; Program Administrator assists subrecipients in bidding, implementing, and reporting for funded improvements.

The State of Ohio is including a similar program to this in their CPRG application. The state's program only applies to local governments, not schools or nonprofits. Also, there exists more demand for this funding than both the state's and this program can satisfy. We acknowledge the State of Ohio's program as prime for eligible governments in Ohio, but recognize the need of non-Ohio jurisdictions, schools and nonprofits in the region.

### **Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE - Transforming Regional Transit Service**

This measure will transform how our region uses and perceives transit. Advancing PCAP Measure 1.C.3, providing free transit fare to employees of major employers within the region's most concentrated employment clusters and to students at our region's largest university **within three months of award through 2029**, our regional transit authorities **will create a dynamic shift from single occupant vehicles (SOV) to transit** significantly reducing transportation emissions in key high emission vicinities.

Specifically, this program will serve:

**Uptown:** The Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (Metro/SORTA) will provide free fare to employees and students in Uptown. Uptown is a collection of five Cincinnati neighborhoods that include the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, and many of the region's largest employers including University Hospital, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Veterans Hospital, US EPA Breidenbach Center, and Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. 100,000 employees and students are concentrated in Uptown. **Five Battery Electric Buses (BEB) are included in this program** to enable additional service necessary to accommodate the estimated new rider demand.

**CVG/Hebron:** The Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) will provide free fare to employees in the Greater Cincinnati International Airport (CVG) and Hebron, Kentucky employment zone. This vicinity includes more than 60,000 employees and more than 1,400 employers. 25% of these employers are considered large and employ more than 25 people each. **Five Battery Electric Buses (BEB) are included in this program** to accommodate express service and provide additional crosstown routing necessary to provide access from LIDAC areas of Campbell, Kenton and Boone Counties.

**Program Risks:** Low employee and student participation rates are a risk of this program and will be mitigated by an unprecedented marketing campaign and an immediate and persistent coalition with employers and university leadership. The marketing campaign will employ student ambassadors to generate enthusiasm for the program and social media messaging to create awareness to both student and employee riders.

**Program Milestones:** Execute subaward agreements with Metro and TANK; Prepare purchase orders for BEBs; Develop marketing strategy and action plan for Free Fare programs; Launch Free Fare programs; Employer and university participation solicitation; Monitor ridership increases.

### **Measure #4 – CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program**

By replacing the region's highest GHG emitters with electric-powered equipment, this measure will advance PCAP Measure 4.A.1. to spark a transformation amongst large-scale emitters within our region's

private industrial sector and immediately result in improved air quality in adjacent LIDAC communities. OKI will conduct a regional “Call for Electric Equipment Replacement Proposals” through our competitive, public procurement process using the amount of GHG-reductions/equipment cost and proximity to LIDAC communities as key evaluation criteria to award multiple, one-time, lump-sum payments to private entities for the purchase of new, electric stationary equipment. A minimum 20% non-federal match will be required. This call for projects will occur within six months of award and 100% of the funding for this program will be allocated in 2025 in order to maximize the GHG reduction of equipment replacements by 2030.

Industries serve as pivotal nodes within the regional freight transportation network connecting trucks to trains, barges, air cargo facilities and pipelines, however OKI’s GHG analysis shows that this sector emitted 15,369,534 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2022 – the highest percentage (35%) of regional emissions in comparison to all other sectors.

**Program Risks:** Possible risks associated with this program include U.S. manufacturer’s delay in fulfilling BABA certified, new equipment purchase orders due to supply chain issues and/or additional inflation in equipment prices. OKI notes these two risks and views them as potential interruptions, but not roadblocks to the implementation of this program within five years of CPRG award notification. To mitigate this risk, OKI has a public procurement process already in place that expedites the bidding process and requires order fulfillment timelines as part of RFP submittals. In addition, OKI will require grantees agreement to pay for all cost overages prior to awarding funding.

An added benefit of introducing electric equipment is that industries will improve their efficiency and capacity of terminal operations to support greater movements of freight by two more efficient, lower GHG emitting modes, the Ohio River and rail, and reduce dependence upon truck shipments.

**Program Milestones:** Develop criteria for competitive selection process and publish RFP; Identify recipients and execute award agreements; Purchase and install replacement equipment; Conduct energy audits; Monitor new equipment effectiveness.

#### **Measure #5 FOOD (Food Optimization and Organics Diversion) Program**

A significant goal of our region’s ThriveTogether PCAP is to **Build an environment of collaboration among organizations involved in solid waste, recycling, composting, and food rescue to maximize efficiencies and reduce GHG** (PCAP Measure 5.A). With positive impact in LIADCs as a consideration, this program coalesces public, private and nonprofit organizations to focus on this goal to advance and transformatively grow two critical activities including:

- 1) **Regional Organic Composting Facilities:** Waste generated across the 16 county MSA equals approximately 2.4 million tons per year, with organics accounting for an average of 30% of the waste landfilled, and food waste being approximately half of that percentage. Hamilton County, the central and most urbanized county in the MSA, has procured funding for a study to identify regional composting facility needs and potential sites. Over the next three months this effort will identify sites across the region to build organics processing capacity. Hamilton County Environmental Services will secure a single site or multiple sites with the capacity to accept 50-150 tons/year.
- 2) **Food Rescue Infrastructure:** Food waste accounts for 58% of the methane released at our landfills. Our ThriveTogether team recognizes that when material management considerations are fully taken into account, the GHG generation and impact is well beyond the identified 2% within our GHG methodology.

Nonprofit partners across the region are actively collecting, transforming, and redistributing food with success to LIDACs throughout the MSA. Current barriers to scaling this success include a lack of refrigeration equipment for storage and a lack of refrigerated vehicles to transport the food. This

program will provide funds to organizations rescuing and upcycling food to directly address and solve those barriers through equipment solutions and thus increase their impact in LIDACs. This funding will be awarded by competitive selection within six months of our MSA grant award.

Together, these efforts seek to divert 35% of organic waste from the landfill annually by 2030. The measures support the goals of the Regional PCAP, achieve GHG reductions, and deliver direct social, health and environmental benefits to LIDAC communities.

**Program Risks:** Possible risks associated with these programs would be:

**The size and diversity of the MSA:** Reaching across a 16-county geographic area and ensuring on-going community engagement could be challenging. This risk is mitigated by the lead applicant having a long standing history and success with multi-state, multi-county project management and Hamilton County Environmental Services' commitment to expand professional staff capacity to include a program manager to implement this program.

**No Current Large Scale Composting Site:** The region does not currently have a large-scale compost processing site, which limits the degree to which the scaling up can occur. This can be addressed with a decentralized model which will be more reliant upon medium-sized (50-100 ton capacity) sites and increasing the number of those sites.

**Zoning differences across states and between counties/municipalities:** Differences could affect the ease with which composting operations can be sited and permitted. A decentralized model, utilizing varying size processing, allows for adjustments as needed and nimbleness of approach.

**Odor control.** Some historic organic waste facilities have had difficulty controlling odors and became a focus of community complaints. Odor control technology will need to be considered on the front end of the planning process for any site.

**Program Milestones:** Identification & selection of Hamilton County Environmental Services Program Administrator; Secure compost site(s) meeting Hamilton County plan; Launch competitive selection process for food rescue/transformation funding; Selection of awardees, continued LIDAC engagement and implementation of programs; Annual data collection from all activities to determine tons diverted, LIDAC communities served.

In addition to PCAP 5.A cited above, this measure also advances PCAP **5.C. Work to reduce methane released in the region**, and **6.A. Reduce fertilizer use in agricultural production**.

#### **Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation**

In partnership with Taking Root, Inc, a greater Cincinnati based nonprofit, OKI will employ its Tree For Me community tree distribution platform to distribute 30,000 trees to property owners in low income disadvantaged communities across the 16 county MSA over a 5 year period. Advancing PCAP Measure 7.A.1, each year, 12 different communities will each receive 500 trees each through the program. To select the communities, Taking Root will facilitate a competitive selection process based on criteria including heat island impact and existing tree canopy coverage. Only LIDAC communities will be eligible to receive trees. Tree distributions will be coordinated with leaders of selected communities and occur during spring and fall seasons – the most conducive time for tree planting success. Taking Root will lead community coordination and distribution promotion to selected communities.

**Program Risks:** A risk of this program is not having enough residents reserve trees allotted for the community. This will be mitigated by coordinating with the community's school and park districts to provide them with any surplus trees for planting in these public spaces within the LIDAC community. Another risk is that not enough trees will be available for the program. Growers within the region were consulted about the availability of trees during the project timeframe, and this input was used to set the scope of the project at 30,000 trees. If needed, additional trees can be sourced from outside the region.

Tree For Me was developed in 2021 to aid organizations across the OKI region in their tree distribution programs. Since this time, nearly 1,500 trees have been distributed in over 15 communities. The online tool allows residents to select from available tree species and place it on an aerial image of their property to visualize the tree size at maturity and learn about the tree and its benefits once on their property. The Tree For Me tool won the prestigious national Pinnacle Award for excellence in Digital Innovation and Engagement from the National Association of Government Web Professionals in 2021.

**Program Milestones:** Procure and execute tree and tree guard contract(s); Prepare and launch promotional campaign announcing program; Publish request for proposals from eligible LIDAC communities; Activate Tree For Me campaign for individual communities; Promotion of program within awarded participating communities.

#### **b. DEMONSTRATION OF FUNDING NEED**

**Measure #1 PLACED Program:** National studies indicate low-income residents of the Cincinnati MSA face one of the highest rates of energy burden in the country (1 in 4 households) due to aging buildings, extreme temperatures, and under-resourced energy efficiency efforts. The Home Weatherization Assistance Programs (HWAP) and Electric Partnership Plan (EPP) funds for energy efficiency and weatherization are helpful, but insufficient to meet the needs of the region. There are large gaps between those eligible and those in need of energy efficiency upgrade services. Additional funding is required to address these gaps affecting LIDAC populations unserved by these programs. Other related funding sources that are pending include: EPA Solar for All, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, and Community Change as well as IRA HWAP Expansion to reach more households with the same model. Funds in the exploration stage include HOMES, HEERA, and other federal and state incentives and programs that will be available late 2024/early 2025. OKI and partners will continue to look for additional funding opportunities that could apply.

**Measure #2 GREEN Program:** 254 local government jurisdictions, over 100 school districts, and more than 14,000 nonprofit organizations operate in the greater Cincinnati metro area with human service organizations and religious institutions accounting for over 3,000 organizations. Not all organizations own or occupy buildings, but those that do typically occupy aging buildings. Nonprofits serving LIDAC communities typically rely on grant funds for capital improvement projects and utilize the majority of their budgets toward administering programs. Facility operations and maintenance costs have a significant impact on organizations' budgets. There are few federal programs available to these organizations to reduce the costs of energy efficiency.

Other funding sources pursued include applications to the EPA's National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF) portion of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and will seek to leverage those funds to help organizations finance improvements. In addition, the program will use bridge loans to help organizations cover the value of the IRS Elective Pay benefit so they do not need to finance those costs.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky offers the least opportunity for solar array incentives of the three states in our MSA. This grant provides our international airport with funding to proceed on their project unavailable to them by any existing incentive program.

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE:** The transit authorities' budgets rely on user fares to cover system overhead and operational expenses. The Federal Transit Administration provides significant supplement to system and operational expense needs, however, fare supplement has historically been restricted despite being shown to increase ridership. To increase ridership in the most transformational way, significant resources are needed to brand and promote this program to attract every targeted employee and student in each zone. This funding will also support the collection and analysis of transit pass usage data to understand ridership patterns and behavior to inform a long-term funding plan for sustaining free transit fares in partnership with our employer partners and universities.



FTA Low or No Emissions Grant Program 5339(c) provides funding to transit authorities for Battery Electric Buses (BEB), however, this program is dramatically oversubscribed. For 2023, FTA made 130 awards totalling about \$1.7 billion after receiving 475 eligible projects (3.5x oversubscribed) totaling more than \$8.7 billion (5x oversubscribed).

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program:** Through OKI's conversations, we have learned that many industries want to align their operations with modern environmental standards and undertake critical infrastructure replacements to remove outdated equipment and transition to greener, more efficient operations, thereby significantly reducing GHG emissions at their facilities. However, the cost of new equipment makes this goal cost prohibitive. Instead, the current practice is to purchase used equipment, usually seven to 15 years old, with the knowledge that such equipment should remain in operation for another 10 to 15 years. CPRG funds are needed to "fill the gap" and overcome this missed opportunity for a large reduction of GHGs within the OKI Region's industrial sector.

We are not aware of any other applicable funding and no other funding sources have been pursued for this measure to reduce GHG industrial emissions.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program:** Food rescue/transformation and composting activities are often labor and infrastructure intensive. To date, the efforts to divert organics within this MSA have been led by government (yard waste collections in some municipalities of the 16-county region) and nonprofit entities (food waste rescue, transformation & sharing) and businesses (food waste donation, composting hauling and creation). Efforts have shown good results, but achieving EPA goals of 50% food waste reduction by 2030 will require investment in infrastructure and operational support to reach scale. Despite the enormous carbon footprint of food production and food waste, funding opportunities for organic waste diversion have been limited. The region has aggressively pursued all opportunities in this space, with moderate success.

Other funding sources pursued include USDA Food Waste Diversion grants, private foundation grants, and market innovation grants. This measure directly leverages two USDA grants recently awarded to Hamilton County ReSource and the City of Cincinnati for Food Waste Diversion/Compost Creation to provide the ability to scale those solutions across the region. A partnership between the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County was successful in attracting private funding to support a biochar processor to process woody organic matter. The magnitude of the organic waste challenge/opportunity has not been met with the needed funding for solutions.

**Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation:** LIDAC areas are planting the fewest number of new trees despite having the greatest needs for reducing heat island indexes and quality of life benefits. Although national statistics show growth in nursery stock sales, the vast majority of people purchasing trees to plant on their property are high wage earners. As individuals and as neighborhoods, the wealthy are enjoying the benefits of trees considerably more than those living in poverty. A New York Times article from 2021 quoted data from a study by American Forests, a conservation organization, about the inequality of tree canopy in urban environments. In the "Tree Equity Score" report, American Forests analyzed tree canopy in 486 metro areas. The study found that "neighborhoods with a *majority* of people in poverty have 25 percent less tree canopy on average than those with a *minority* of people in poverty, according to an analysis of income, employment, age, ethnicity, health and surface temperature. In the most extreme cases, wealthy areas have 65 percent more tree canopy than communities where nine out of 10 people live below the poverty line.

USFS and state forestry departments occasionally provide funding for tree plantings which our region has benefited from including a \$50,000 grant in 2024 for LIDAC tree plantings. This funding provides dozens to hundreds of trees which doesn't begin to generate the GHG impact of this transformational proposal.



### c. TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

**Measure #1 PLACED Program:** In Cincinnati, approximately 1 in 4 households experience energy burden, meaning they are spending more than 6% of their monthly income on utilities. In 2016, Cincinnati was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> highest of the top 100 municipalities in the US for energy burden faced by low-income renters. Meanwhile, 9 out of 10 homes in the US are under-insulated and could instead be experiencing annual energy cost savings of 15% through standard energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades. Much of the housing stock in Cincinnati MSA LIDACs is older which provides a greater potential for energy savings and GHG reductions. With 19% of the region's greenhouse gas emissions coming from the residential sector, prioritizing and targeting those who are the most impacted by energy costs with this program can create transformational change both environmentally and economically. This program will not only focus on the actual upgrades, but also the education around energy efficiency and the support of expansion of the local workforce. In addition, this program will allow HWAP administrators to more fully address their referral lists rather than having to pass them off when the resources of the household or the needs of the dwelling extend beyond the scope of existing weatherization programs. Energy that is saved through energy efficiency measures improves emissions, household finances, housing stock, occupant health, and more - a truly transformative program on multiple fronts.

**Measure #2 GREEN Program:** This program will have a transformative impact on the region not only through the significant GHG emissions reductions, but also through the more sustainable financial trajectory on which it will place the most vulnerable non-profit organizations. Recent inflation has significantly impacted the operating costs of non-profits, schools, and local governments as their revenue sources have not kept pace. The energy-saving improvements funded with this program will have significant positive impacts to these organizations' ability to operate and serve their communities. These transformational benefits will be sustained with the leveraging of the IRS elective pay reimbursements through a revolving loan program used to fund additional projects across the region. For many of our LIDAC households, nonprofits serve an important role through food, childcare, and social programming. Region-wide, 21% of residents live in a LIDAC identified census tract (462,495 LIDAC residents out of 2.2 million total). Nearly one third of the residents of Hamilton County, the region's most populous county live in LIDAC tracts, while two thirds of residents in Grant, Bracken, and Gallatin counties live in LIDAC tracts. In many cases, residents in these LIDACs rely on services provided by nonprofits, schools, and local governments. This program would transform the ability of the region to expand services that LIDAC households rely on through cost savings of the organizations that administer those services.

The CVG 8.9MW array will showcase a massive solar installation on governmental property in the state with the most restrictive solar permitting and least solar incentives of our region's three states.

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE:** Transit ridership relies on human behavior. This program will be the catalyst to transform behavior of single occupancy vehicle (SOV) commuters in the most concentrated employment zones of the MSA. Significant reductions in SOV usage will dramatically reduce GHG while also reducing significant needs for surface parking areas also contributing to heat island impacts. Introducing the benefits of reliable and convenient transit usage to our university student population will influence the behavior of young adults making each of them more likely to continue to use transit throughout their lives. Many of the students at the University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati State live off campus and currently pay daily for parking on or near campus. Given that 20 to 30% of college students are estimated to be food insecure, reducing travel expenses will have an important impact on their financial status and educational experience.

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program:** The transformative opportunity of this program is that it would enable multiple industries to apply and compete for funding to purchase new, electric equipment immediately. The upgrades and modernizations enabled by CPRG Implementation

Grant funding will serve as a catalyst for tangible greenhouse gas reductions and a model for sustainable practices within the maritime, rail and trucking industries. Without this public injection of funds, industries will continue to follow the same equipment replacement process, which means 10-15 years from now, they will purchase 10-15 year old “cleaner/greener” equipment. OKI’s program has the advantage of “speeding up the process” by 10-15 years. The requested grant funding is more than just an investment in machinery and technology; it is a commitment to a future where economic activities harmonize with our collective environmental responsibilities. OKI stands at the crossroads of innovation and tradition, poised with our private industry partners across the region to demonstrate that significant environmental gains can be achieved alongside enhanced economic outcomes. We are ready to amplify the impact of EPA’s foresight and foster a legacy of sustainability for generations to come.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program:** This program will be transformative in scaling organic waste diversion across the region. Hamilton County is home to the largest landfill in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, receiving more waste than any other solid waste district. Organic waste is a primary source of methane emissions. Successful organic waste diversion strategies have the ability to reshape the waste stream across the tri-state. The investment in infrastructure is key to unlocking market solutions. Development of many small and medium scale food scrap composting facilities reduces transportation of the food scraps and decentralizes our waste system. Decentralizing composting will ensure benefits accrue to LIDACs and other community members by keeping programs local. In addition to reducing GHG emissions by cutting landfill pollution, composting also increases carbon sequestration, curtails carbon-intensive fertilizers, and limits transport for hauling, all of which have additional GHG reduction impacts.

Food rescue has transformative impacts in LIDAC communities and has proven a successful strategy for decreasing food insecurity and promoting climate equity and justice. Each pound of food rescued to feed hungry people has a significant social and environmental impact.

**Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation:** Each tree has a transformational impact to the location it is placed. 30,000 trees will transform over 60 LIDAC communities by increasing shade canopy where it currently doesn’t exist, sequestering over 206 million pounds of carbon dioxide, and filtering 187,600 pounds of air pollutants from the region’s skies by 2050.

Each of the 30,000 recipients will learn the enormous value of trees in terms of energy savings, carbon sequestration, and air filtration. Taking Root’s mission to inspire and empower all to conserve and improve our region’s unique and threatened tree canopy will be impressed on at least 30,000 households, as well as the local communities during the promotion campaign and plantings at local school and parks developing generational transformational tree canopy stewardship lessons.

## **Section 2:IMPACT of GHG REDUCTION MEASURES**

### **a. MAGNITUDE of GHG REDUCTIONS 2025 - 2030**

The total GHG reduction from 2025-2030 = 843,995 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e

**Measure #1 PLACED Program:** A reduction of 9,981 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e will result from this program’s investment in 2,000 homes across our MSA. These reductions will begin in Year 1 and significantly increase each year as approximately 400 homes are served annually through 2029. The durability of the upgrades and efficiency improvements will be lasting and continue well beyond the 5 year period resulting in additional cumulative reductions through the lifetime of the efficiency improvement.

**Measure #2 GREEN Program:** A reduction of 137,305 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e will be made by investments of this program by 2029 in approximately 15 million square feet of buildings and facilities across our MSA. Reductions begin in year 1 (2%) with more significant gains in year 2 (10%) and continue to increase each subsequent year – year 3 by 20%, year 4 by 30%, and year 5 by an additional 38%. Building upgrades account for a reduction of 500,692.5 mmBTU. Solar panels installed by this program

include 14,900 kW and will generate 19,345,677 kWh annually for a 5 year production of nearly 100,000,000 kWh. Approximately 4,500 streetlights will be replaced with LED bulbs resulting in: 13,206 MT of CO<sub>2</sub> reduced; 1.25 MT of CH<sub>4</sub> reduced; 0.18 MT of N<sub>2</sub>O reduced - for a total of 13,292 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e reduction.

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE:** Replacing 10 diesel buses with battery electric buses and implementing fare-free programs for workers and students in the uptown and CVG/Hebron transit regions is estimated to reduce GHG emissions by 16,608 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e.

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program:** Between 2025 and 2030 the GHG reduction is 5,769 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, .32 MT CH<sub>4</sub>, and .22 MT N<sub>2</sub>O, for a total reduction of 5,841 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e. This is based on the average GHG reduction from a sampling of the five pieces of equipment considered and the amount of equipment the program budget will support which is estimated to be a minimum of 25 pieces of new electrically-powered equipment. For full details, see the **Technical Appendix**. According to industry partners, the equipment life cycles vary within this program, however, all exceed 5 years resulting in 100% durability of these reductions improving in time as electricity production shifts to renewable sources.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program:** By 2030, successful diversion of 20% of the organic waste stream will result in 391,610 US tons of food waste, diverted from the landfill. There will be a reduction of 668,513 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e between 2025 and 2030.

**Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation:** By 2030, this program will result in 30,000 1"+ caliper (5 gallon container) trees planted across the 16 county region. There will be 5,748 metric tons of carbon dioxide sequestered and avoided. This includes the reduction from 1.5 million kWh of electricity saved. These numbers include a 3% loss in trees planted, however, we are confident that this is a conservative estimate based upon delivery of trees to homeowners choosing to participate and demonstrating a strong desire for the tree being provided along with the unique one-on-one planting and care instructions provided to recipients of this program.

#### **b. MAGNITUDE of GHG REDUCTIONS 2025 - 2050**

The total GHG reduction from 2025 to 2050 = 6,204,783 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e

**Measure #1 PLACED Program:** A reduction of 76,519 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e will be made by investments of this program in 2,000 homes across our MSA. The durability of the upgrades and efficiency improvements will be lasting and continue through 2050 and beyond.

**Measure #2 GREEN Program:** A reduction of 1,106,994 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e will be made by 2050 in buildings and facilities across our MSA. Reductions average 43,089.36 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e each year 2030-2050. Building upgrades will account for 4,005,540 reductions in mmBTU 2030-2050. Solar panels installed by this program include 14,900 kW and will generate 19,345,677 kWh annually for a 25 year production of over 400,000,000 kWh. Approximately 4,500 streetlights will be replaced with LED bulbs resulting in: 101,246 MT of CO<sub>2</sub> reduced; 9.62 MT of CH<sub>4</sub> reduced; 1.4 MT of N<sub>2</sub>O reduced - for a total of 101,903 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e reduction.

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE:** The replacement of 10 diesel transit buses with battery electric buses and implementing fare-free programs are expected to result in a GHG reduction of 81,228 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e between 2026 and 2050.

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program:** Between 2025 and 2050 the GHG reduction is 35,043 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e. The equipment life cycles vary within this program, however, the commercial equipment generally yields over 20 years based on consultation with industry representatives proving extremely durable through 2050. OKI will require as a clause in the CPRG Clean Industry subgrantee contract that should any replacement of the CPRG-funded equipment be required before 2050, the replacement equipment must operate at or above emission

standards of the CPRG-funded equipment. This will ensure that OKI's GHG calculations remain accurate through 2050, if not better. Specific reductions by 2050 include, 34,611 MT CO<sub>2</sub>; 1.29 metric tons NO<sub>2</sub>; and 1.9 metric tons CF<sub>4</sub>.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program:** By 2050, 2,929,826 US tons of food will be diverted from landfills. This will eliminate 4,823,502 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e of cumulative emissions.

**Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation:** By 2050, with an estimated annual mortality rate of 3%, the maturing trees will have sequestered or prevented 81,497 metric tons of carbon dioxide. This includes the reduction from 24 million kWh of electricity saved. Twenty-five years is less than half the life expectancy for the tree species distributed by this program. As these trees continue to mature, tens of thousands of metric tons of carbon will continue to be sequestered and millions more kWh will be saved.

### c. COST EFFECTIVENESS of GHG REDUCTIONS

The total cost effectiveness of GHG reductions 2025-2030 is \$214 per MT CO<sub>2</sub>e reduced. We were appropriately conservative in estimating the GHG reductions. However, Measures #2 GREEN and #4 Clean Industry employs a competitive selection process for awarding funding. These selection rubrics will in part prioritize projects that are superior in reducing GHG emissions, and as a whole will be more cost effective at lowering emissions than the typical average of those interventions. In these areas we expect the actual performance to exceed our estimates.

Some of the risks discussed in Section 1 may have a negative impact on the overall cost effectiveness of the collective measures. Most notable of these risks are not attracting the expected numbers of participants (measures #1 PLACED, #2 GREEN, and #4 Clean Industry) or the expected ridership for measure #3 Transit Ride. Since the Transit Ride program reimburses fares, lower than expected ridership would also lower costs, but would increase the proportion of overall funds spent on fixed costs like marketing and administration.

### d. DOCUMENTATION of GHG REDUCTION ASSUMPTIONS

Detailed documentation of the methods, data, and sources used to estimate the GHG emissions reduced, avoided, or removed for each measure is located in our **TECHNICAL APPENDIX**. The methodologies used strictly follow available US EPA guidance with individual assumptions clearly cited.

## 3. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS - OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES, and PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### a. EXPECTED OUTPUTS and OUTCOMES

#### Measure #1 PLACED Program

Output:

- 2,000 LIDAC dwellings with completed energy upgrades by the end of 2029.

Outcomes:

- *GHG Emission Reductions:* Annual GHG reduction by 2029 is estimated at 3,327 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e. Estimated reduction of 9,981 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2030 and 76,519 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2050.
- *Reduced energy costs for LIDAC residents:* Using average electricity<sup>1</sup> and natural gas costs<sup>2</sup> by state, we estimate that the average customer with electric heat will save \$315 per year and the estimated total utility cost reduction for the average customer with gas heat will be \$362/ year.
- *Energy savings:* Annual energy savings by 2029 are estimated to be 16,000 mmBTU natural gas and 3,075,000 kWh of electricity.

#### Measure #2 GREEN Program

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm\\_table\\_grapher.php?t=epmt\\_5\\_6\\_a](https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.php?t=epmt_5_6_a)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng\\_pri\\_sum\\_a\\_EPG0\\_PRS\\_DMcf\\_a.htm](https://www.eia.gov/dnav/ng/ng_pri_sum_a_EPG0_PRS_DMcf_a.htm)

Outputs:

- 250 nonprofits in the region with complete energy assessments and recommended upgrades by the end of 2029.
- 14,900 kW of solar installations supported.
- 4,500 LED street lights installed.
- 50 individuals from LIDAC communities trained for employment in energy efficiency, electrification, and/or solar installation.

Outcomes:

- *GHG Emission Reductions:* Estimated reduction of 138,134 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2030 and 1,113,633 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2050.
- *Reduced energy costs:* Improving energy efficiency in public buildings will result in an average savings of \$310 per 1000 square feet per year (based on expected reductions in electricity and natural gas consumption and average prices) allowing for greater operational stability and redirection of organizational resources to deepen mission-related programming
- *Energy savings:* Annual energy savings by 2029 are estimated to be 80,111 mmBTU natural gas and 35,209 kWh of electricity due to energy efficient upgrades in buildings.

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE**

Outputs:

- 10 Battery Electric Buses added to transit fleets.
- Distribution of 120,000 - 160,000 free transit passes to students and employees of target regions.

Outcomes:

- *GHG Emissions Reduction:* Estimated reduction of 16,608 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2030 and 81,228 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2050.
- Reduced transportation cost burden for employees and students. Free transit reduces the cost of 40 rides per month by \$40 for students and \$80 for commuters. The reduction from paying for gasoline for a personal vehicle is at least \$80 per month, varying by commute length and parking costs.

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program**

Outputs: Minimum of 25 pieces of new electric industrial equipment brought into operation.

Outcome:

- *GHG Emissions Reduction:* An estimated reduction of 5,769 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2030 and 34,611 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2050.
- Improved operational efficiency and reduced energy consumption across terminal operations through fuel savings of 7,612,320 gallons of diesel fuel through 2050.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program**

Outputs:

- Current rescue/transformation organizations will increase donations to LIDAC members by 5% annually.
- Starting in 2025 food rescue will increase 2% to 3% annually until capacity for 10% above current capacity is achieved. By 2029, an estimated 36,260 US tons of food waste will be diverted from landfill by food rescue operations supported by this grant.
- Starting in 2025 composting capacity will increase by 5% annually until capacity for 25% compost above current capacity is achieved. By 2029 this will divert 90,651 US tons of food waste from landfills.

Outcomes:

- *GHG Emissions Reduction:* An estimated reduction of 668,513 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2030 and 4,825,502 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2050. Of this, we estimate that 13,315 MT of CH<sub>4</sub> is avoided through 2030 and 99,614 MT of CH<sub>4</sub> is avoided through 2050.
- By 2029 an estimated 60 million meals or equivalent will be provided to communities in the 16-county region from food rescue/transform organizations using the USDA standard of 1.2 lbs per meal, improving food security for LIDAC communities.

#### **Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation**

Outputs:

- 30,000 trees planted between 2025 and 2029 in LIDAC communities.

Outcomes:

- *GHG Emissions Reduction:* An estimated reduction of 5,748 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2030 and 81,496 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e through 2050. Additional reductions in CAP emissions are estimated in the table.

	O3 (kg)	NO2 (kg)	SO2 (kg)	VOC (kg)	PM2.5 (kg)
2025-2030	1,753	1,163	22,523	113	323
2025-2050	29,214	16,945	302,395	1,490	5,554

- Reduction in urban heat islands as measured by the number of trees planted in urban LIDAC communities.
- Community engagement and education as measured by participation in online and in-person events and social media engagement.

#### **b. PERFORMANCE MEASURES and PLAN**

**Measure #1 PLACED Program:** In OKI's sub-awardee CPRG contract for PLACED, the competitively selected program administrator will be required to provide an annual report that includes the following performance measures: Number of energy audits performed (#); Number of dwellings receiving weatherization upgrades (#); Number of energy efficient, electric appliances installed by type (#); Number of people trained for jobs (#); Total electricity saved (KwH); Total gas saved (BTUs); Average cost savings per household per year (\$); Total costs saved by LIDAC residents (\$); and, Total of other funding leveraged outside of CPRG (\$).

**Measure #2 GREEN Program:** In OKI's sub-awardee CPRG contract for GREEN, the competitively selected program administrator will be required to provide an annual report that includes the following performance measures: Number of energy audits performed (#); Number of buildings receiving energy efficiency upgrades (#); Number of buildings installing on-site solar (#); Number of trainees working on a GREEN project (#); Total electricity saved (KwH); Total gas saved (BTUs); Average cost savings per organization per year (\$); Total costs saved by nonprofit organizations combined (\$); Total project cost (\$); and, Total of other funding leveraged outside of CPRG (\$).

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE:** Metro/SORTA and TANK will track and provide annual reporting for the following metrics through the duration of this program: Number of employers participating (#); Number of employee riders (#); Number of University/Colleges participating (#); Number of student riders (#); Transit miles served (#); and, Transit trips provided (#).

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program:** In OKI's sub-awardee CPRG contract, it will be stated that companies must provide an annual report that includes the following performance measures. The company's reporting period will be upon commencement of the newly purchased equipment's operations and each subsequent year thereafter.

- **Contact, Business, Location of Equipment** if different than above, Annual Vehicle Volume (number of trucks, rail cars, river barges) arriving and departing facility; Number of employees (noting part- and full time positions), average annual salaries, and home zip codes, and, Number of noise complaints received and explanation of remedies provided

- **Old/replaced equipment** (this is a one time/first year performance measure): Annual (last 12 months) total fuel consumed (fuel type and gallons); Annual (last 12 months) Hours in Use; Annual GHG emissions (last 12 months) (CO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, CF<sub>4</sub>); Date and Method of Decommission
- **CPRG Purchased Equipment**
  - One Time/First Year Performance Measures: Year/Make/Model – equipment description; Cost (break down by funding source); Date new equipment began operation; Expected lifespan of new equipment
  - Annual Performance Measures: Status of Equipment (report any repairs, parts replaced, or problems associated with the equipment that occur outside normal maintenance); Remaining lifespan of equipment; Current value of equipment; Wattage and Annual Hours of Use.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program:** The plan for effectively tracking, measuring progress, and reporting on this measure will include analysis and aggregation of the annual waste reports required to be completed by each Solid Waste District, and aggregated reporting from food rescue organizations. The specific metrics that will be tracked include: Diversion educational campaign metrics to include number of social media impressions, number of meetings and training sessions, number of residents participating, and number of Lbs/tons of FW diverted; Number of meals provided to people in need (#); Tons of food rescued (#); Number of partner organizations receiving product (meals and /or compost) (#); Tons GHG eliminated (#); Total number of jobs created (#); Total number of jobs created in LIDACs (#); Number of new composting sites created (#); and, Number of organizations receiving funding through Solid Waste District opportunities (#).

**Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation:** OKI will track and report the following metrics through the program: 1) Quantity of trees reserved will be monitored and reported following each distribution and cumulated for the program, 2) Property owner participation rate will be monitored and reported following each distribution and cumulated for the program, 3) Community promotion activities through the promotion period for each distribution and include various marketing measures including social media impressions.

### c. **AUTHORITIES, IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE, and MILESTONES**

#### **Measure #1 PLACED Program**

**Responsible Parties & Roles:** OKI, as the prime recipient, will be the facilitator of procurement for regional program administration, the fiduciary of funds and the coordinator of data collection and reporting. The contracted regional program administrator will be the facilitator of the program with responsibilities including targeted outreach to LIDAC building owners, coordination of subcontractors to conduct audits and install upgrades, coordinate permitting, collect and analyze program data, and work with OKI to improve program impact over grant period.

OKI and partners consulted with a number of likely candidates that could serve as regional program administrator in formation of this proposal including the existing regional HWAP provider as well as regional and national entities already doing this type of work in other geographies including Elevate, Slipstream, and BlocPower. The competitively procured regional program administrator will lead program and pipeline development, outreach, and formalized contracts with installers. The hired installers will assess and implement prioritized upgrades in partnership with the building owner and residents. Building owners will be responsible for collaborating with the program administrator and the installers to accomplish needed deep energy retrofits by providing access and approving identified upgrades. Residents/tenants will need to allow access to living spaces for audits and upgrades, communicate with contractors and provide feedback on program improvements and impact for reporting needs.

**Timeline & Milestones:** Bidding and procurement for regional program administrator - Summer/Fall 2024; Program & pipeline development including quality assurance plans - Winter 2024/Spring 2025;



Regional program administrator launches program publicly - Summer 2025; Implementation of upgrades - Summer 2025-2029; Ongoing data collection and monitoring - Summer 2025-2029; Reporting - twice annually by program administrator through OKI to EPA - Summer 2025-2029

### **Measure #2 GREEN Program**

**Responsible Parties & Roles:** OKI, as the prime recipient, will be the facilitator of procurement for regional program administration, the fiduciary of funds and the coordinator of data collection and reporting. The contracted regional program administrator will be the facilitator of the program with responsibilities including targeted outreach to building owners, coordination of subcontractors to conduct audits and install upgrades, coordinate permitting, collect and analyze program data, and work with OKI to improve program impact over grant period.

OKI and partners consulted with a number of likely candidates that could serve as regional program administrator in formation of this proposal including regional and national entities already doing this type of work in other geographies including Elevate, Slipstream, and BlocPower. Likely linked with the PLACED Program, the competitively procured regional program administrator will lead program and pipeline development, outreach, and formalized contracts with installers. The hired installers will assess and implement prioritized upgrades in partnership with the building owner and other key stakeholders as relevant. Building owners will be responsible for collaborating with the program administrator, installers, and other stakeholders to accomplish needed deep energy retrofits by providing access and approving identified upgrades.

**Timeline & Milestones:** Program Setup Phase late 2024-early 2025: 1) Issue RFP for and select program administrator; convene program committee to assist in program design and determine applicant pool selection criteria 2) With program committee, determine competitive selection criteria for selection of project applications for funding; 3) Select via bidding process energy assessment contractor(s) for program; Implementation Phase (annually 2025-2029): 1) Publicize program and collect applications for organizations to be selected for the applicant pool; 2) Program committee selects approximately 50 organizations to form the applicant pool; 3) Program administrator schedules and oversees an energy assessment for each member of the applicant pool; 4) Using the energy assessment, each member of the applicant pool develops and submits an application for funding; 5) OKI&P score the applications based on established criteria and program committee selects projects for funding; 6) Program administrator works with each applicant to bid their funded projects and select contractors to perform the work; 7) Energy upgrades installed/constructed; 8) Data collection from utility bills and partner organizations; 9) Feedback from nonprofits and contractors; 10) Adjust program to address gaps.

### **Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE**

**Responsible Parties & Roles:** Metro/SORTA and TANK are regional transit authorities with control of fixed route service and their associated fare programs. This measure has been developed with extensive consultation with each of these transit agencies and each has committed to employing the programs described immediately upon award. The role of Metro/SORTA as well as TANK will be to technically implement the accessibility to the free fare service, determine eligibility and offer the benefits to the eligible riders. Refer to **Letter of Commitment Attachment**.

**Timeline & Milestones:** Timeline – immediate launch through 2029 calendar year. Milestones: Secure employer and university/college partnerships; Determine eligibility criteria; Review and confirm technical requirements for offering free fares and pass production; Promotion plan development; Active promotion; Establish tracking and monitoring surveys/systems; Data collection; Partner and user feedback; Adjustment to promotion techniques.

### **Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program**

**Responsible Parties & Roles:** OKI will facilitate a competitive selection process to identify the private sector companies to be selected for award. Partners such as the Central Ohio River Business Association will assist OKI with outreach to the private sector. OKI will contract with each in the form of a subaward agreement including all Federal requirements for the transaction of funding and securing of equipment. The private companies will be required to own the equipment subject to title liens, where applicable, held by OKI through the useful life benefit of the equipment. OKI will monitor use of equipment to ensure it fulfills its intended purpose.

**Timeline & Milestones:** OKI's CPRG Clean Industry Project Manager will conduct a public Request for "Industrial Equipment Replacement" Proposals (RFP) within 90 days of CPRG award notification using OKI's standard public RFP process; Private industries selected through OKI's public RFP process will enter into a subgrantee contract with OKI within 60 days of the RFP deadline; OKI's CPRG Clean Industry Project Manager will work with each subgrantee to implement OKI's RFP process to secure public bid proposals for the purchase of their equipment within 90 days of executing their OKI subgrantee contract; Factoring in current (2024) lead times, private industries will procure and begin operations within 18-24 months for delivered, ready to use, electric-powered equipment replacements and within 60 months (5 years) for fixed, industrial equipment requiring on-site installation; OKI's CPRG Clean Industry Project Manager will monitor each subgrantee progress through quarterly status reports until the new equipment is in operation. At which time the annual performance measure reporting will commence.

#### **Measure #5 FOOD Program**

**Responsible Parties & Roles:** Hamilton County Environmental Services (HCES) will evaluate the best composting projects for their district with at least 40% of the benefits going directly to LIDAC communities. For rescue/transformation of wasted food, HCES will create a competitive application process, and make awards within 6 months.

**Timeline & Milestones:** Hire program manager fall of 2024; Secure compost site(s) consistent with Hamilton County plan; Launch competitive selection process for food rescue/transformation funding; Selection of awardees, continued LIDAC engagement and implementation of programs; Annual data collection from all activities to determine tons diverted, LIDAC communities served.

#### **Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation**

**Responsible Parties & Roles:** Taking Root will lead program promotion efforts, community engagement, a competitive selection process for LIDAC community selection, and tree distribution events. OKI will manage and maintain the Tree For Me online reservation platform for each community distribution.

**Timeline & Milestones:** Hire program manager fall of 2024; Conduct annual competitive selection to identify 6 participating communities; Prepare tailored community promotion plan with leaders of each community; Launch Tree For Me for each community and designate tree pick up event dates/locations.

### **4. BENEFITS and COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

#### **a. COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

Each of the six GHG reduction measures have been developed to deliver significant benefit to LIDACs across our MSA. Measures **#1 PLACED** and **#6 TREE FOR ME** programs are exclusively developed for LIDACs using this designation as a prerequisite for program eligibility and **#5 FOOD** Food Rescue aspect of Measure 5 primarily benefits LIDACs as the recipients of these efforts.

**Measure #1 PLACED Program** directly benefits LIDAC communities in terms of resilience, health and safety, reduced energy costs, and improved housing stability and comfort. The Program indirectly benefits the broader community due to increased resilience to extreme weather and decreased energy demand leading to fewer GHG and other co-pollutant emissions. The most direct benefit to LIDAC communities will be utility cost savings estimated at \$315 per year for households with electric heat and

\$362 per year for households with gas heat. Weatherization and installation of energy efficient appliances are the most cost effective ways to significantly reduce energy burden. Reduced energy burden of LIDAC households leads to a myriad of indirect benefits including greater economic mobility, housing stability, safety, and overall well-being. In addition, replacement of gas appliances with electric will result in indoor air quality improvements that will improve respiratory health and reduce hospital utilization. Weatherized homes are more comfortable and safe in extreme weather events. A final co-benefit is the increase in quality job pathways for residents to enter the green construction field. Disbenefits to the community of PLACED are minimal but do include the risks of over tightening a home increasing the possibility for mold or poor indoor air quality due to other contaminants. This risk can be mitigated by a thorough energy assessment and attention to ventilation in the upgrade process. Other disbenefits could include a temporary inconvenience to residents due to contractors in the home and the potential for high electricity costs during cold snaps. This disbenefit can be addressed by utility payment support programs, and dual fuel systems.

In alignment with current mandated HWAP processes for assessment and reporting of the program to and with the community, the selected PLACED Program provider will be tasked with ongoing communication and feedback mechanisms with individual building owners, tenants, and community leaders as a standing part of the contract.

**Measure #2 GREEN Program** indirectly benefits LIDACs with energy cost savings to government, school districts, and nonprofits that serve them by taking advantage of expanded services or reduced tax burden offered as a result of those cost savings. In some instances, buildings will be set up as resilience hubs during climate-influenced adverse weather events or power outages, providing a safe place to find shelter and services with consistent electricity delivered through on-site solar and storage infrastructure. Buildings that reduce or remove natural gas from their premises will directly benefit the health of any LIDAC community members who work or utilize the space through improved indoor air quality (many of our LIDAC households experience increased asthma rates, per the CEJST tool) or who live in the area through a reduction in localized emissions from natural gas combustion. Surveys of utility bills to analyze cost savings and natural gas reduction will be conducted along with a qualitative survey of program expansion and investment in mission due to the cost savings and retrofit improvements of the facility at the 1-year post-retrofit mark. Surveys will also capture feedback from participating non-profits and contractors around the project process and potential for improvements. Disbenefits to the LIDAC community include temporary closure of some spaces that serve them while energy upgrades are implemented.

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE Program** will benefit LIDAC communities in a number of ways. LEHD data shows that nearly 20% of uptown employees and 29% of employees in the CVG/Hebron area live in LIDAC tracts. Each employee will have the opportunity to take transit fare-free. For both SORTA and TANK, bus routes cut through many LIDAC tracts as do the typical commuting routes. Fare-free service will increase transit accessibility, reduce cost burden of transportation, and mitigate traffic congestion in LIDAC communities. These tracts will see air quality and emissions improvements due to fewer single occupancy vehicles.

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program** benefits industrial areas that have historically been positioned along the region's key -- river, rail and roadway -- industrial freight transportation corridors. These corridors are home to several of the Cincinnati MSA's LIDAC communities. Ten of the twelve railyards in the region are located within one mile of a LIDAC tract, as are 8 out of 14 asphalt companies.

Direct benefits of this program to LIDACs include: The proposed upgrades not only shrink the carbon footprint of industries, but also enhance air quality in surrounding low-income communities which can lead to improved public health from the reduction of co-pollutants; Electric industrial equipment

replacement will have the added benefit of reducing engine noise pollution to surrounding communities; Significant job creation potential is projected as a result of these activities as they drive toward growth in industrial operations. The ability to perform more efficiently will make these industries more attractive to customers and increase operations, thereby creating the need to hire more staff to fulfill customer demand. Average salaries in the industrial sector range from \$35,000 to \$50,000 plus benefits and entry level jobs, requiring a High School Diploma or GED and providing on the job training, provide a pathway for promotions and long-term employment stability.

Performance measures including, but not limited to the following will be collected before project implementation and annually for five years after implementation to continually assess, quantify and report benefits and avoided disbenefits to surrounding communities: Annual fuel consumption compared with current annual rate; Annual Vehicle Volume (number of trucks, rail cars, etc.) – arriving/departing the facility; Number of employees (noting part-time and full time positions), salaries, and home zip codes; Number of noise complaints received and remedies provided.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program** offers direct benefits to community members. Food rescued from the waste stream feeds hungry people to help address food insecurity. Food waste prevention education can substantially benefit LIDACs by directly saving families significant amounts of money. On average, a family of four wastes food that amounts to between \$1,800 and \$2,100 annually. Decentralizing organic waste management systems and establishing community compost contributes to keeping these programs and related jobs local. This approach not only enhances access for communities and urban agriculture operations but also leverages the produced compost to improve soil health. Implementing best practices to minimize or eliminate odors is essential. By strengthening local partnerships and fostering community engagement, these measures not only support the goals of carbon pollution reduction and public health but also contribute to the broader objectives of advancing equity and justice within communities.

**Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation provides direct benefits to LIDAC communities.**

Crime: Numerous studies have been conducted that link increased crime with underserved neighborhoods. According to the Brookings Institute, evidence shows that “urban greening and tree canopy programs in urban neighborhoods—reduce violent crime, particularly adolescent gun violence.” Increasing health equality between affluent and underserved neighborhoods is another goal of the Tree For Me proposal. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources states that, “Benefits include, but are not limited to, removing pollutants and particles from the air, providing natural sunblock that reduces the chances of sunburn, alleviating mental fatigue, and reducing stressful noises. These tree benefits enhance the quality of our lives.” Their complete list of benefits include: Trees help reduce skin cancer; Trees decrease mental stress; Trees reduce heat stroke and heat exhaustion; Trees keep the air clean.

Expected reductions in energy and fuel use will save LIDAC communities approximately \$565,509 from 2025-2030 and \$8,719,041 from 2025-2050 based on estimates from the i-Tree tool. Reductions in ground-level ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and PM 2.5 will also improve resident health.

**b. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

OKI along with partners Green Umbrella, Southwest Ohio Air Quality Agency, Indiana University Environmental Resiliency Institute, and Northern Kentucky Area Development District have organized the ThriveTogether brand used for engaging the public, local government representatives, regional stakeholders, and private sector industries in the development of our regional climate action plan. This brand will continue to be the primary tool to ensure meaningful and thorough engagement for all aspects of our six implementation measures.

The ThriveTogether engagement process has been and will continue to be driven by three central strategies: 1) Greater Cincinnati Climate Action Hub, 2) Steering Committee and Subcommittees, and 3) In-person and Virtual Engagement Sessions.

**Greater Cincinnati Climate Action Hub:** The ThriveTogether team is using Citizen Lab to host a virtual hub for public engagement for the Regional Sustainability Playbook for Greater Cincinnati. The ThriveTogether team uses the site to share information about the Plan, as well as collecting, organizing, and analyzing public feedback about issues and areas of policy. Most importantly, the site was designed to make the engagement process as transparent as possible. The hub facilitated the grass-roots method of soliciting ideas for implementation measures and projects. Over the course of two months, 105 separate ideas were gathered from across the region using the hub. These ideas were vetted with regional experts and industry leaders to arrive at the most feasible, immediately actionable, and regionally transformative projects.

**Steering Committee and Subcommittees:** To ensure a regional and diverse perspective throughout the planning process, ThriveTogether is convening a Steering Committee to provide guidance and input at key moments in the plan development process, as well as a regional submission for implementation funds. The Steering Committee met December 12, 2023 and again February 7, 2024. The Equity and Engagement Subcommittee ensures ThriveTogether engagement is equitable, transparent, and accountable, and centers underserved and disproportionately impacted communities such as our region's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), disabled, immigrants and refugees, linguistically-isolated, low-wealth, rural, senior, and youth populations. The Subcommittee first met January 31, 2024 and continues to meet quarterly.

**In-person and Virtual Engagement Sessions:** Over the next year, the ThriveTogether planning team is committed to hosting in-person and virtual events to create new climate action engagement spaces in Greater Cincinnati, as well as activating existing networks to support the development of the preliminary and comprehensive climate action plans.

Unique engagement specific to our Measures, include:

**Measure #1 PLACED Program:** We have engaged with the administrators of the two largest Home Weatherization Assistance Programs (HWAP) - People Working Cooperatively and Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission - in the region to help tailor the design of this program to enhance their capabilities to serve existing or interested clients more fully and quickly as well as to serve additional clients. Based on local, community-based research, utility data, and resident input during local climate action planning processes, the burden of high utility costs on LIDAC community residents is indisputable. The demand for current weatherization programs and energy conservation programs are high - waiting lists stretching years in some cases - confirming community need for more resources in this space. Going forward, Green Umbrella will support engagement on this program in particular to: Promote availability of the program through regional climate collaborative communications; engage business members in understanding the program and share opportunities to participate in procurement processes; engage CBOs and local governments in understanding the program and support them in sharing the opportunities with their constituents; help design and implement informational sessions to be hosted across the region to raise awareness about the program and recruit residents to participate; and, to share findings from EPA STAR grant to inform best practices on energy upgrades in low income residences and to inform detailed program design that addresses stakeholders' concerns around developing programs for LIDAC retrofits.

**Measure #2 GREEN Program:** We leveraged the input of the over 60 member Cincinnati MSA CPRG Plan Steering Committee. The vast majority of the membership on this committee is held by county and local government, university, and nonprofit organizations, including organizations dedicated to serve the

needs and interests of LIDAC and minority communities. This engagement, as well as engagement during previous climate action planning and GHG reduction projects in the region, provides us with a solid understanding of the needs and demand within the government and nonprofit sector for this type of investment. Going forward, Green Umbrella will support engagement on this program in particular to: promote availability of the program through regional climate collaborative communications; engage business members in understanding the program and share opportunities to participate in procurement processes; engage nonprofits and local governments in understanding the program and recruit applicants with high-impact projects; help design and lead informational sessions to be hosted across the region to raise awareness about the program; and, to serve as the primary point of contact and coordination for faith communities seeking support.

**Measure #3 TRANSIT RIDE Program:** The promotion of the free fare programs will be developed and implemented by each transit authority for their respective geographic target areas to best engage with potential riders and their employer/school. Student ambassadors will be employed to directly communicate benefits of the program to colleagues. Green Umbrella will provide outreach to their members and the 2030 District building members to encourage uptake of the program, through direct outreach and communications channels. Northern Kentucky Area Development District will provide a dedicated staff member to provide employers in our three Kentucky counties served by TANK with information and guidance about the program. This assistance will include program promotion and technical assistance to ensure maximum participation by eligible program participants through 2029. Indiana University Environmental Resilience Institute provide two student Fellows to this program to provide program promotional and analytical information conducive to meaningful engagement with LIDAC and university communities.

**Measure #4 CLEAN INDUSTRY Equipment Replacement Program:** The Central Ohio River Business Association (CORBA) is a trade association representing local businesses conducting commerce primarily along the Ohio River in the Cincinnati MSA. CORBA's membership consists of barge tow companies, terminal operators, barge fleet companies, utilities, and other related maritime support companies. Over a dozen CORBA members spoke with OKI staff and shared their companies' desires to align their industrial operations with modern environmental standards through infrastructure replacements and more efficient operations, thereby significantly reducing GHG emissions at their facilities. Their input has been key to identifying the specific need and program structure to efficiently address it.

**Measure #5 FOOD Program:** Both the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan and the Hamilton County Solid Waste Plan employed intentional and intensive community engagement. More than 40 public meetings were held, with paid community engagement in prioritized vulnerable communities. This community input was the foundation for the 35% Food Waste diversion goal and identification of composting and food rescue/upcycling as key actions.

Public engagement in the development of the CPRG PCAP also showed intense community interest in food rescue and composting. Hamilton County is engaged in three studies related to Food Waste diversion that involve multiple stakeholder/cross sector listening sessions to inform the regional approach to composting in the years ahead. Food rescue/Upcycling organizations are routinely involved with LIDAC engagement as they collaborate with local food pantries, distribution sites and identify culturally appropriate foods to provide. Green Umbrella will promote adoption of food waste strategies implemented through this program among their members through advocacy and education provided by the Food Policy Council.

**Measure #6 Tree For Me - Regional Afforestation:** Our partner Taking Root will directly engage with community leaders for each community distribution to determine the specific promotional campaign time period; the date, time and location of tree pick-up events in the community; and the most effective methods for communicating with constituents in the community. Constituent communication will

include social media, newsletters, flyers and will be customized for each community based on direction and input from community leaders. Outreach to assist owners in selecting appropriate trees for their property and educating owners on maintenance and care of their new trees will be provided electronically using OKI's Tree for Me online tool.

## **5. JOB QUALITY**

OKI and its partners (OKI&P) are committed to utilizing this federal investment to ensure that high-quality, living-wage jobs are created, employers have the tools to attract and retain workers, and people from disadvantaged communities have equitable access to training opportunities. A quality workforce is necessary for the successful implementation of the programs proposed in this application and for the execution of the region's climate action plan as a whole. The development of this workforce is also a key co-benefit of this climate action effort. These actions represent an important opportunity to expand the number of stable, attractive jobs in the region and to develop a highly qualified, skilled workforce to fill these roles.

**Engagement:** Engagement around workforce development has been a key pillar of the Cincinnati MSA's response to CPRG from day one. There are several slots on the region's CPRG Plan Steering Committee held by workforce investment boards, universities, youth action organizations, and chambers of commerce – including minority business chambers. Specific targets and goals related to workforce development and job quality will be developed and expressed in the CCAP document. These targets and the conversations leading up to them will also influence the criteria and actions relating to job quality to be established in the implementation programs, including any funded because of this application.

OKI&P will leverage the workforce-related representation on our steering committee, along with the specific regional resources listed below to convene a workshop on workforce development and job quality. This workshop will refine the methods in which the implementation of the measures in the Climate Action Plan, including those potentially funded because of this application, can influence job quality. The outputs of this workshop will be a set of guidelines and best practices that will be implemented in the projects of this application. There are organizations and resources already developed in our region that will serve as the foundation for the workshop and job quality portion of our CPRG efforts. These are:

- The **Talent Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati** (TCGC) is a regional tri-state workforce development initiative that joined the [National Fund for Workforce Solutions](#) network of 34 communities across the U.S. seeking to improve workforce outcomes. The National Fund offers leading-edge resources, best practices, and thought leadership to help benchmark and accelerate efforts, with an emphasis on equity and inclusion. The TCGC was founded by the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, the Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, The Workforce Innovation Center at the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, The Health Collaborative, and Brighton Center. The Collaborative serves individual employees and job seekers, talent and workforce partner organizations, industry sector partnerships, and employers toward a vision where the Cincinnati region excels at creating opportunities for people to advance their lives through obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in jobs and careers that enable their individual and family success while also fostering the success of employers with high-quality employment practices to the benefit of their business and the economic growth of the entire region.
- **Co-op Cincy** is an organization whose mission is to create an economy that works for all. They were recently awarded a planning grant from the Department of Labor (DOL) to ensure that green construction and climate-resilient jobs are as transformational as possible. They have recently formed a coalition, Good Green Jobs Steering Committee of Greater Cincinnati, working towards



creating good jobs in clean energy & sustainable construction in Greater Cincinnati. One of their grant objectives is to address four Good Jobs Principles: diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), empowerment and representation, organization and culture, and pay.

- **The Women’s Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation** has also conducted beneficial research over the years to help bring attention to pay equity and the cliff effect. They also created an [employer toolkit](#) which is a collection of over 60 workplace policies that can help support, stabilize, and retain lower-wage employees.
- The **Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council** is part of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO), a federation of 60 national and international labor unions that represents over 13 million working women and men.

Leveraging the collective experience and existing resources listed above along with the Department of Labor’s Good Jobs Toolkit and Good Jobs Principles framework will allow OKI&P to efficiently establish best practices for job quality within the criteria and implementation of the projects. At this point, we see the following mechanisms as key to implementing these job quality principles in the projects:

- **Program Materials:** Communication materials for each of the projects will include language clearly identifying our commitment to the Department of Labor’s Good Jobs Principles and how those principles will be implemented through the administration, eligibility, and criteria of each project.
- **Procurement:** Criteria related to job quality will be established for each aspect of a project where professional services or materials and equipment will be procured. The criteria would be related to pay/benefits, equity and inclusion, and organization and culture. These criteria could take the form of eligibility requirements or established as points within a competitive selection process.
- **Scoring of Competitive Subawards:** There are four projects in this grant application (#1 - PLACED, #2 – GREEN, #4 – Clean Industry, and #5 – FOOD) where a competitive selection of subawards would include criteria related to job quality principles currently upheld by applicants. Points would be dedicated to quality job principles within the application scoring rubric and applicants would be required to provide relevant information in their applications.
- **Providing supportive services:** Partnering with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Temporary Assistance for Needed Families (TANF) funded organizations will be utilized and leveraged to provide support services to remove barriers from employment such as child care and transportation assistance for those in need.
- **Use of Registered Apprenticeship labor to expand the pool of highly skilled workers:** OKI&P are connected to the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services regional representatives from ApprenticeOhio and can connect employers to establish registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships to help increase the labor pool.

## 6: **PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY and PAST PERFORMANCE**

### a. **PAST PERFORMANCE**

#### **List of OKI Federally Funded Assistance Agreements**

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Assistance Agreement Number</b>	<b>Federal or Non-Federal Funding Agency and Assistance Listing Number</b>	<b>Brief Description of the Agreement</b>	<b>Funding Organization Contact &amp; Discussion of Applicant's Successful Completion &amp; Management</b>

1	OKI 5310 Projects FY23	OH-2023-043-00	FTA – 20513 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)	This Federal grant is the latest of a series of Federal 5310 grants that OKI has received and is responsible for reporting. This grant includes \$2,442,034 of funding subawarded to 11 agencies spanning 2 states and 7 counties for mobility management, new vehicle acquisition and preventative maintenance needs.	Stewart McKenzie, Director, Financial Management & Program Oversight, Federal Transit Administration, 200 West Adams Street, Suite 320, Chicago, Illinois 60606 stewart.mckenzie@dot.gov OKI is currently managing 6 FTA grants for a cumulative total of \$8,244,808. Due to OKI staff financial and project management experience, all six grants are on schedule and budget.
2	OKI ARPA Projects FY22	OH-2022-041-01	FTA – 20513 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)	This Federal grant is a pass-through to the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI). OKI awarded funds to this subrecipient and oversees expenditures providing transit travel training to blind individuals by this organization.	Stewart McKenzie, Director, Financial Management & Program Oversight stewart.mckenzie@dot.gov In January 2024, FTA concluded an audit of funding drawdowns from the COVID-19 ReliefECHO for this project and congratulated OKI for finding no deficiencies.
3	OKI CRRSAA Project FY21	OH-2021-057-01	FTA – 20513 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)	This Federal grant is a pass-through to two agencies: the Transit Alliance of Butler County, and BAWAC. OKI awarded funds to these subrecipients and oversees expenditures.	Stewart McKenzie, Director, Financial Management & Program Oversight stewart.mckenzie@dot.gov In January 2024, FTA concluded an audit of funding drawdowns from the COVID-19 ReliefECHO for this project and congratulated our agency for finding no deficiencies.
4	Enhancing Safe and Efficient Freight Rail/Barge Modal Connections Project	69A365-2140 2610-CRISOH	FRA - FY 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant	A \$1,235,500 (50/50) pass-through Federal grant to Cincinnati Bulk Terminals, a private freight terminal operator, which provided the entire 50% non-federal amount. The agreement funded the construction of an electrically powered, overhead, bi-directional conveyor system to facilitate bulk materials transfer.	Jamie Helander, Project Manager, Midwest US   50.2 Strategy & Coordination Team, Federal Railroad Administration Jamie.Helander@dot.gov Due to OKI's performance as Grantee and Project Manager, the project's Period of Performance end date (06/30/23) was over one full year ahead of schedule. This was OKI's first FRA grant award.
5	Benchmark River and Rail Terminal – Highway/Rail Grade Crossing	69A365-23420 010-CRISOH	FRA - FY 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant	A \$1,083,015 (80/20) pass-through Federal grant from OKI (Grantee) to Benchmark River and Rail Terminals, LLC., a private freight terminal operator, which provided the entire 20% non-federal amount. The FRA Grant Agreement funds the installation of active grade crossing devices and a new traffic signal.	Eric Perez, Project Manager, Midwest Division, Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Railroad Development eric.perez@dot.gov Due to OKI's prior successful CRISI grant experience the project received FRA's approval of FD and has now advanced to Construction.

See **Attached List of Subawardee Partners' Federally Funded Assistance Agreements** for additional team experience.

#### **b. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- A. OKI 5310 Projects FY23: OKI prepares and submits Milestone Progress Reports (MPR) and Federal Financial Reports (FFR) quarterly using FTA TrAMS. All reporting is current for this award.

Since OKI began in 2010 a lapse in reporting has never occurred. OKI ensures awards are fully expended and only for activities described within each requiring detailed reviews of subrecipient invoicing.

- B. OKI ARPA Projects FY22: All reporting is current for this award. OKI prepares and submits MPR and FFR annually using FTA TrAMS and monitors expenditures ensuring funds used for eligible expenses.
- C. OKI ARPA Projects FY21: OKI prepares and submits MPR and FFR annually using FTA TrAMS. All reporting is current for this award. OKI monitors expenditures ensuring eligibility.
- D. Enhancing Safe and Efficient Freight Rail/Barge Modal Connections Project: OKI prepared and submitted a total of 10 Quarterly PPRs and FFRs (FFY 2021 Q2 to FFY 2023 Q3) using GrantSolutions. Benchmark River and Rail Terminal – Highway/Rail Grade Crossing. OKI ensures funds are only used for eligible expenses. OKI administers our public procurement process working closely with subrecipients to develop RFP bid specifications and RFQ scopes of work.

### **c. STAFF EXPERTISE**

OKI has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization and Council of Governments for the Cincinnati MSA since 1964. As the MPO, OKI has final authority over the prioritization and investment of all federally funded surface transportation in the region. Annually, staff award approximately \$58 million in new projects and manage another \$400 million in funded projects. As an agency of 32 employees, we are well versed in the management of projects and programs ranging from under \$100,000 to over \$200 million investments.

The OKI CPRG Project Team represents a subset of the agency's exceptional talents with a combined 127 years of experience working in their fields of expertise – project management, transportation planning, regional planning, finance, data analysis, demographics, and communications/public outreach. Every CPRG measure presented in this application was tailored to the OKI Project Team's skills and experience working on similar projects and programs. It is due to the OKI Team's prior success, that we are 100% certain that every proposed CPRG project goal and GHG reduction measure will be achieved – in full, on-time and on-budget. Please refer to **attached Team Biographies** for a detailed list of skills, experience and education for each of the 10 OKI Project Team members.

## **7. BUDGET**

### **a. BUDGET DETAIL**

Refer to **attached Budget Narrative** and **Budget Spreadsheet**. OKI's Fringe/Indirect Agreement is included in the Budget Narrative for the fringe and indirect rates used in the Budget Spreadsheet.

### **b. EXPENDITURE OF AWARDED FUNDS**

All grant funds will be expended in a timely and efficient manner. The activities and deliverables described in this proposal for each of our 6 Measures have been developed in extensive consultation with our partner agencies and with the guidance and recommendation of experts working in the respective fields. Every expenditure within this proposal is for an action or deliverable that is currently needed and will be made by the organization in our region most capable to perform the work and already committed to follow-through on the work. The **Letters of Commitment attachment** includes statements by each of these organizations.

### **c. REASONABLENESS OF COSTS**

Over 99% of our proposed budget is for direct program expenses. Refer to the attached Budget Narrative for itemized breakdowns for each expense and any assumptions made regarding estimates used. The fringe and indirect rates used.