



CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

**Council Committee of the Whole
January 20, 2026
6:00 PM
City Hall – Executive Conference Room**

Agenda

- 1) Call to Order/Roll Call**
- 2) Legislative Review/Caucus (30 min)**
- 3) ARPA Update (15 min)**
- 4) CDBG Presentation (15 min)**
- 5) 2026 Council Legislative Initiatives (20 min)**
- 6) Heights Music Hop 2025 Report/2026 Proposal (10 min)**
 - a. 2025 Heights Music Hop Report
 - b. 2026 Heights Music Hop Proposal
- 7) Other**
- 8) Adjourn**



Community Development Corporation



Heights Music Hop - 2025 report

Prepared by Brenda Bailey, Chief Operating Officer, FutureHeights

Overall goals

The Heights Music Hop is a free annual music festival produced by FutureHeights. Located throughout Cleveland Heights, this 12th year continued the tradition of bringing abundant local talent together with our exceptional and unique local business community. The Hop's primary mission is small business support. The event was held September 19th-21st, 2025.

We had three new goals for this year's Hop:

- Increase participation opportunities for businesses who don't typically operate during the traditional evening hours of the Hop. We accomplished this goal by adding daytime performance opportunities for coffee shops and bakeries, and gained four first-time venues.
- Seek and secure outside sponsorships to provide additional financial relief for businesses. Progress happens in small steps. We had a local company donate 100 kazooes and a local music school sponsor a street stage. One Lee Road business, Boss Dog Brewing, also paid an additional fee to be included on marketing as an event cosponsor.
- Create more community partnerships. We worked with the Heights Bicycle Coalition to organize a Bike to the Hop campaign, the three Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) to customize the event to align with the unique flavor of each district, and the community group Noble Neighbors to provide live music at the Noble Road library on Saturday morning.

With all three goals in mind, we formed a partnership with Church of the Saviour to provide their large outdoor space for the first ever Heights Kids Hop on Saturday afternoon, featuring live music and kid-friendly craft activities.

Outcomes

From Friday through Sunday, the event featured:

- 88 musical performances
- 46 unique venues
- 43 genres of music

There was folk among the foliage of a newly opened plant store. There was blues in the dairy aisle of a supermarket. Surf tunes in a winery. Kora music at the cheese monger's, and flamenco guitar at a world languages bookstore. With the recently legislated DORA district on Lee Road, we were able to expand our event literally into the streets with dozens of folks dancing to an 80s tribute band.

Fabulous weather contributed to our success. We also partnered with the Cedar Fairmount, Coventry and Cedar Lee SIDs; brought aboard an intern who helped us with various marketing functions; garnered increased media attention through our marketing and public relations efforts; and added increased signage, especially the street banner across Lee Road.

The \$7,500 presenting sponsorship from the city of Cleveland Heights allowed FutureHeights to leverage these dollars into a \$25,000 event budget. The city's investment boosted local businesses and increased tourism to the community; offered a platform to showcase local musicians and artists; provided volunteer opportunities for local community members; and offered diverse entertainment options for city residents and visitors.

As sponsorship perks, the city was offered prominent placement of the city of Cleveland Heights logo on all promotional materials, including posters, banners and digital media. The city was also recognized in press releases, in social media campaigns, and by local media outlets covering the event. In summary, sponsoring the 2025 Heights Music Hop was an opportunity for the City of Cleveland Heights to enhance its cultural landscape, support local businesses, and engage with the community. This investment yielded significant returns in economic growth, community cohesion, and cultural enrichment. By allocating funds to this celebrated event, the city reaffirmed its commitment to fostering a vibrant, dynamic, and inclusive community.

Media coverage

- Cleveland Jewish News
- Gather Well Cleveland Heights podcast
- Cleveland13News
- FreshWater Cleveland
- Cool Cleveland

- The Land
- Scene Magazine
- Channel 5 News
- Cleveland Arts and Events online calendar

Community feedback (a small selection)

“Best hop ever!” – Interim Mayor Tony Cuda

“Thanks, Brenda! That was Cleveland Heights at its finest” - Joe DeWitt Foy, council person elect and Heights Bicycle Coalition

“Incredible feedback from businesses and attendees ... great vibes everywhere” – Caroline Barni, executive director, Cedar Lee SID

“Wonderful Cleveland Heights vibe” - Susanna Niermann

“How can we do this more often?! What an incredible night/weekend!” - Jessica Cohen, council member elect

“We love the Music Hop and this year it was the smoothest and best organized I have ever seen in the nine years we have been participating. I’m so grateful for organizations like FutureHeights and all they do for our community!” - Destiny Burns, CLE Urban Winery

“A hell of a party for our city!” - Eileen Ramerman, community activist

“Brenda, just wanted to write and say THANK YOU for including us in this year’s Heights Music Hop! We had a blast playing at CLE Urban Winery, and met lots of great people (including you!) who share our love for local music. Congratulations on an awesome event and thanks again for allowing us to be a part of it!” - Jenny and Pip, Harmony Star, one of the participating bands

Heights Music Hop Budget

Income

Source	Amount
Cuyahoga Arts and Culture	\$4,700
Ohio Arts Council	\$3,386
City of Cleveland Heights	\$7,500

Venue sponsors	\$9,450
Merchandise	\$805
Marketing (banner)	\$350
 TOTAL	 \$26,191

Expenses

Musicians	\$16,900
Musicians for Coventry	\$3,000
Licensing	\$531
Merchandise	\$1,455.70
Marketing	\$1,464.77
 TOTAL EXPENSE	 \$23,351.47
 NET INCOME/OPERATIONS	 \$2,389.53



Community Development Corporation

2026 Heights Music Hop Proposal - City of Cleveland Heights

Background

The Heights Music Hop is a free annual music festival that promotes local music, celebrates the diversity of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, and supports local businesses in our commercial districts. Launched in 2013, the festival has evolved into a premier celebration of the community's diversity and authenticity. In 2026, we will continue our tradition of showcasing abundant local talent and supporting local businesses while adding new elements that aim to make the event more accessible to our entire community.

The overarching goal of the Heights Music Hop is to hire local artists to provide live music that drives visitor traffic to our local businesses, thereby enhancing the economic vitality of the area. Picture coffee shops, restaurants, bookstores, retail shops, libraries and other venues filled with eclectic, diverse musical acts and you get the idea. The event celebrates this historically diverse community, which was a leader in resisting segregation in the 1960s and continues that proud heritage today. It brings together patrons from all walks of life, economic backgrounds, races and ethnicities in order to commune over live music amidst the creative scene of local businesses.

Request

FutureHeights is requesting a \$30,000 sponsorship from the city of Cleveland Heights to expand the Heights Music Hop so that it features five city business districts over a five month period. In order to make this series of events possible, it is imperative that we hire a Heights Music Hop assistant in order to help execute on our plan. Our 2025 administrative cost was approximately \$8,100; additional funding would allow us to add staff support in the form of an intern or assistant Hop manager.

Traditionally, this event has included:

- Hiring dozens of live musical acts to play at businesses and venues in the Cedar-Fairmount, Noble Road, Cedar-Lee and Coventry neighborhoods during the third weekend of September

- A partnership with special improvement districts (SIDs) in Cedar-Lee, Cedar-Fairmount and Coventry to promote the event to local businesses
- Working with other nonprofits in the area such as Heights Arts and Lake Erie Ink to showcase the diverse artistic talent in our community through art shows and performances
- Prioritizing hiring local artists who live in the Heights community and represent the diversity and independent artistry for which the area has become well known

In 2026, in addition to retaining these already successful elements, we are proposing significant changes to the event:

- Creating a five-part Music Hop series, running monthly from May through September, with evening and/or daytime performances
- Featuring live music performances in five business districts (one per month): Cedar Fairmount, Coventry, Cedar Lee, Cedar Taylor and Noble Road
- Tailoring each event to the distinct personality of each commercial district and working closely with local businesses and community members to promote the events

These changes would incorporate feedback from merchants who stated that the Heights Music Hop would better serve the community if it took place during the late spring and summer months when patio weather is at its finest. Additionally, the event would better serve all of Cleveland Heights, instead of just focusing on the three largest and best-supported commercial districts. Further, these changes to the event would foster greater diversity of musical acts and attendees. Finally, spreading the event over five months would ensure that FutureHeights staffing and city staffing resources are optimally utilized and are not stretched too thin over a single weekend.

Planning Timeline

- January - February 2025: Initial planning meetings; formation of committees for various aspects of the event (e.g., music selection, logistics, sponsorship); determine schedule for May-September events.
- March - April 2025: June 2026 event outreach to potential sponsors and partners; confirmation of key venues; artist and vendor confirmation; volunteer recruitment and training; detailed logistics planning in partnership with the city of Cleveland Heights (security and transportation); marketing and promotion; final preparations and walkthroughs; execution of the event.
- Repeat monthly for July, August, September, and October events.

Sponsor Benefits

There are numerous benefits to having Cleveland Heights as a sponsor of the Heights Music Hop.

Economic Impact

- Boost to local businesses: Increased foot traffic to local businesses, including restaurants, bars, and retail stores.
- Tourism: Attracting visitors from neighboring cities and states, enhancing the city's profile as a cultural hub.

Community Engagement

- Local talent showcase: Providing a platform for local musicians and artists to gain exposure and connect with broader audiences.
- Volunteer opportunities: Engaging community members through volunteerism, fostering a sense of unity and pride.

Cultural Enrichment

- Diverse entertainment: Offering residents access to a wide range of musical performances and cultural experiences.
- Educational workshops: Hosting music and arts workshops for all age groups, promoting lifelong learning and appreciation for the arts.

Sponsorship Perks

- Visibility: Prominent placement of the City of Cleveland Heights' logo on all promotional materials, including posters, banners, and digital media.
- Media coverage: Recognition in press releases, social media campaigns, and local media outlets covering the event.
- Presenting sponsor: Recognition as a presenting sponsor, with opportunities to host a table and speak at the event, providing a platform for the city to engage directly with attendees.

Sponsoring the 2026 Heights Music Hop is an invaluable opportunity for the City of Cleveland Heights to enhance its cultural landscape, support local businesses, and engage with the community. This investment will yield significant returns in economic growth, community cohesion, and cultural enrichment. By allocating funds to this celebrated event, the city reaffirms its commitment to fostering a vibrant, dynamic, and inclusive community.