

THE 2018 CINCINNATI TECH CENSUS REPORT



THE TRENDS POWERING CINCINNATI'S TECH BOOM

On May 17, 2018, the Powderkeg national innovation network launched a data initiative called The Cincinnati Tech Census. More than 150 tech **founders, employees, investors**, and other Greater Cincinnati tech leaders weighed in on the growing tech community they call home. #WhyCincy

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the Greater Cincinnati tech community.

#STARTUPCINCY

The Cincinnati Tech Census is a collaboration between members of the Greater Cincinnati tech community and our contributing partners.

Community members, thank you for the hours you've spent completing the survey and sharing your honest feedback. We'd also like to give special thanks to Eric Weissmann and rest of the team at Cintrifuse for closely assisting us in completing the census.

The report is presented with little editorializing or commentary from Powderkeg. Rather, it largely consists of intriguing data and opinions straight from the Greater Cincinnati tech community on what makes it special.

We hope the data presented in this report inspires a broader conversation about tech in Cincinnati, and what we're capable of building together as united tech communities.

—The Powderkeg Team



CORPORATE AND LOCAL PARTNERS

cintrifuse



cincytech



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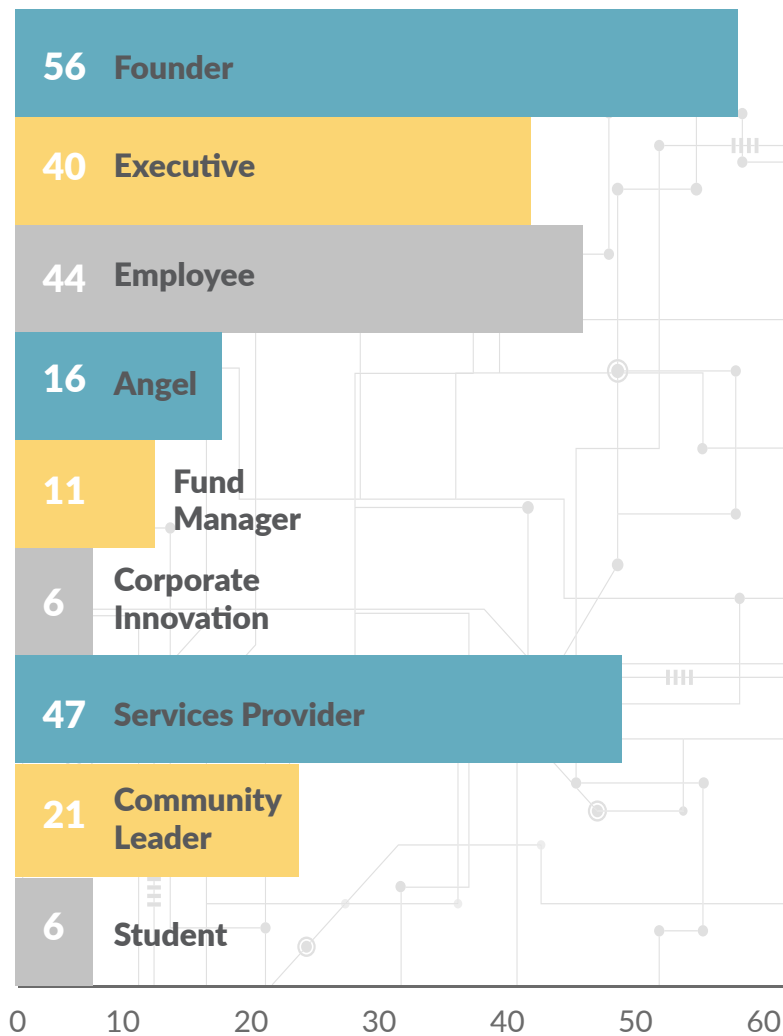
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SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

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RESPONDENT TECH ROLES

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
(one respondent may have multiple roles)RESPONDENT
DEMOGRAPHICS

 Men
75%

 Women
25%

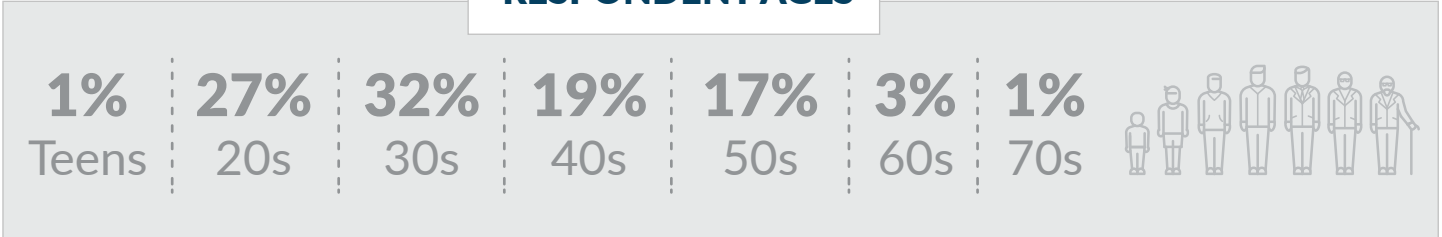
 8% Ethnic
Minority


 3%
LGBT

 28% Identified
as LGBT Allies


RESPONDENT AGES & COMPANY PARTICIPANTS

RESPONDENT AGES



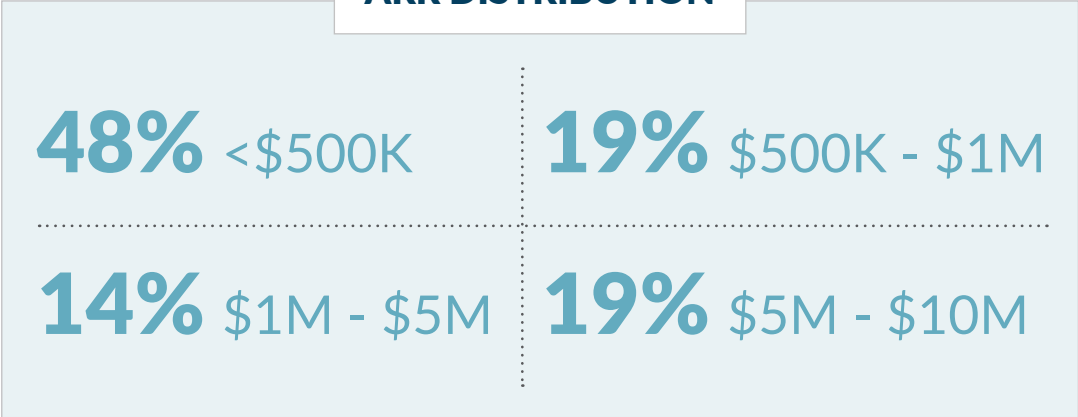
TECH STARTUPS REPRESENTED NUMBER OF COMPANIES

Marketing & Sales Tech	11	
Human Resources Tech	10	
IT & Infrastructure Tech	8	
Ecommerce & Retail Tech	8	
Logistics & Distribution Tech	4	
Healthcare Tech	3	
Energy Tech	2	
Sensors & IOT	2	
Fashion Tech	2	
AI & Data Science Tech	8	

FUN FACT

Cincinnati is named after Quintus Cincinnatus (c. 519 – c. 430 BC), a statesman and military leader of the early Roman Republic who became a legendary figure of Roman civic virtue.

ARR DISTRIBUTION



SECTION 2

STARTUP PERFORMANCE

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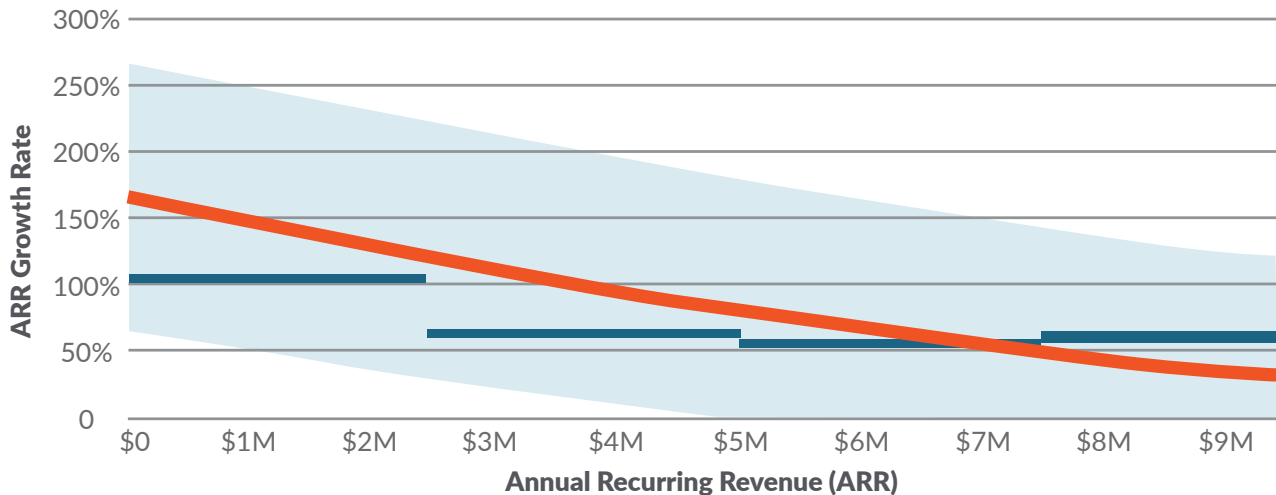
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2017 CINCINNATI STARTUP GROWTH VS. NATIONAL STARTUP GROWTH RATES

- 2017 Cincinnati Software Startup Growth Rates (best fit line regression)*
- 2017 Cincinnati Software Startup Growth Rates 95% Confidence Interval
- Median National Startup Growth Rates From Pacific Crest**



CLICK TO TWEET: Early-stage Cincinnati start-up growth rates outpace the nation. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by @powderkegco #WhyCincy #UNVALLEY



*Cincinnati startup growth rates include responses predominantly from tech startups in Cincinnati that sell subscription-based software products as their primary offering, otherwise known as Software as a Service (SaaS).

**Benchmark data from Pacific Crest (KeyBanc) 2017 Private SaaS Company Survey Results. 73% of companies surveyed by Pacific Crest reside in the United States, with 47% residing in coastal US tech hubs, such as Silicon Valley, New York City, and Boston.

\$1,229,242

Average Annual Recurring Revenue for surveyed Cincinnati startups*

110%

Average ARR Growth Rate for surveyed Cincinnati startups*

*Sample set = 33 companies. Not all tech companies surveyed chose to share detailed financial information.

Cincinnati is going through a renaissance. This is no longer a flyover city, and Ohio is no longer a flyover state when it comes to entrepreneurship and tech.

—BJORN K. SIMMONS
Co-founder, Wyzerr



TWEET THIS QUOTE



CUSTOMER CHURN & STARTUP COSTS



“It’s really affordable to found in Cincy!”

GRIFFIN MORRIS
Founding Head of Growth,
spatial.ai



TWEET THIS QUOTE

STARTUP COSTS



27%* Average Cincinnati software startup revenue spent on sales and marketing.

**Sample set = 33 companies.*

39%* Median SaaS startup revenue spent on sales & marketing per Openview 2017 SaaS Benchmarks Report.

**Startups with less than \$10MM in revenue. Mean not available.*



32%* Average Cincinnati software startup revenue spent on R&D.

**Sample set = 33 companies.*

52%* Median SaaS startup revenue spent on R&D per Openview 2017 SaaS Benchmarks Report.

**Startups with less than \$10MM in revenue. Mean not available.*



CLICK TO TWEET: Cincinnati startups have a lower average customer unit churn than the national benchmarks. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by [@powderkegco](#) [#WhyCincy](#) [#UNVALLEY](#)

9.6% AVERAGE CINCINNATI SOFTWARE STARTUP CUSTOMER UNIT CHURN

VS. 11% Median SaaS Startup Customer Unit Churn per Pacific Crest Survey Results*



**Pacific Crest (Keybank) 2017 Private SaaS Company Survey Results. 47% of companies surveyed by Pacific Crest reside in coastal United States tech hubs, such as Silicon Valley, New York City, and Boston. Mean not available.*

WHY DID YOU FOUND YOUR TECH STARTUP IN CINCINNATI?

- #1 My Social Network Resides Here
- #2 **Affordable** Cost of Living
- #3 **Affordable** Office Space
- #4 **Affordable** Talent
- #5 The local tech culture

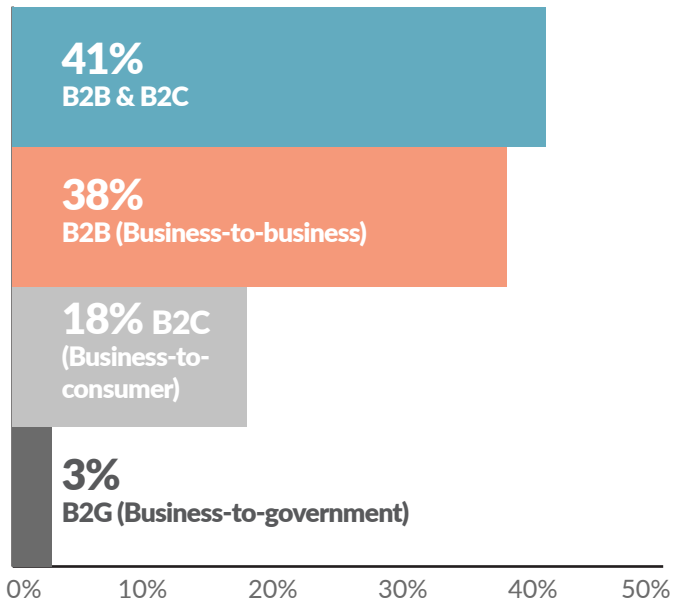


CLICK TO TWEET: Cincinnati Startups are some of the leanest operating startups in the country, per The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by [@powderkegco](#) [#WhyCincy](#) [#UNVALLEY](#)

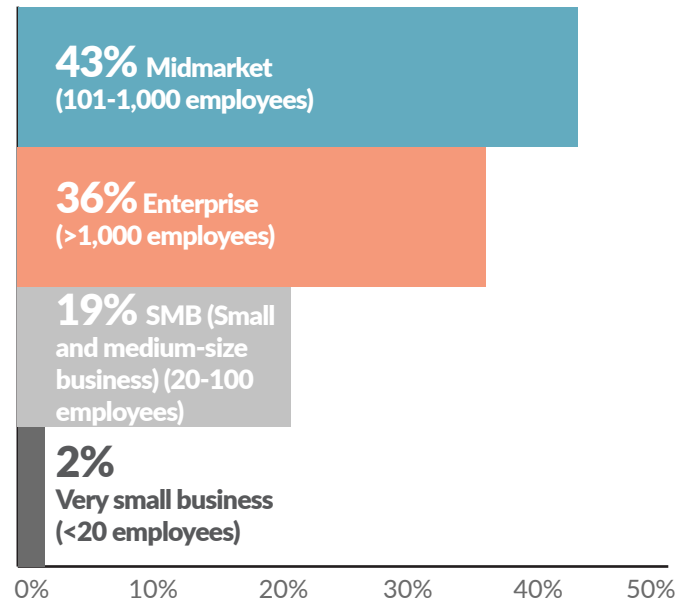


STARTUP CUSTOMERS

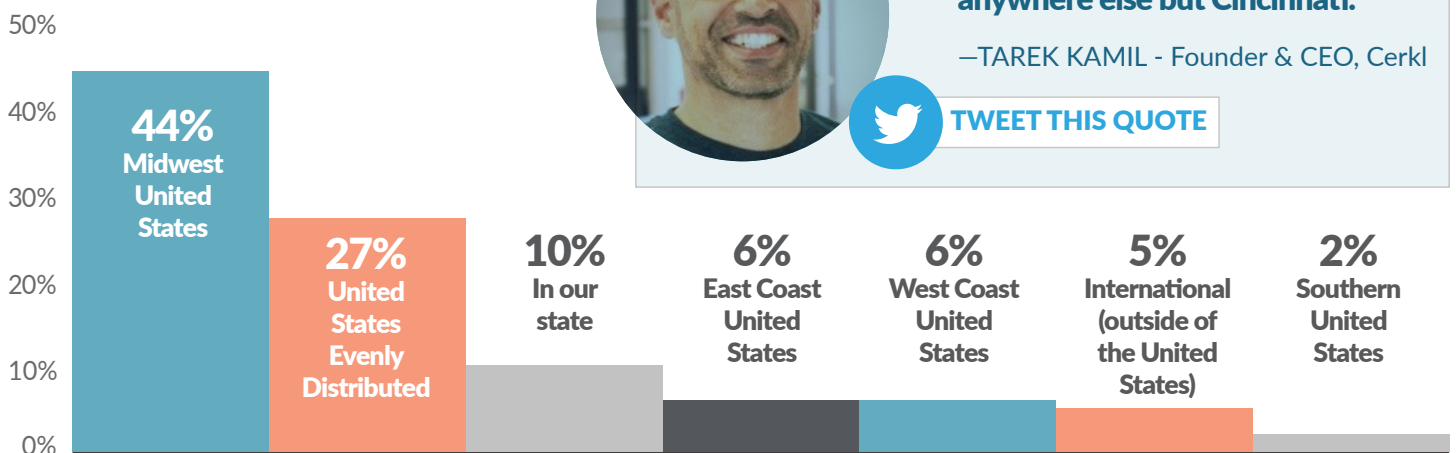
WHAT CATEGORY OF CUSTOMERS DO YOU SERVE?



WHAT SIZE B2B CUSTOMERS DO YOU SERVE?



WHERE ARE THE MAJORITY OF YOUR CUSTOMERS LOCATED?



“ If I were starting from scratch and I was going to build enterprise software, I would not want to be anywhere else but Cincinnati. ”





—TAREK KAMIL - Founder & CEO, Cerkl

[TWEET THIS QUOTE](#)









EXPECTED EXITS & VALUATIONS

IF YOU EXPECT TO SELL YOUR COMPANY, WHAT TIMEFRAME IS REALISTIC? NUMBER OF COMPANIES

1-2 years	7	
3-4 years	11	
5-8 years	15	
Greater than 8 years	3	
I'm not expecting to sell	8	
I'm not sure	7	

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS A REALISTIC EXIT VALUATION REVENUE MULTIPLE FOR YOUR COMPANY? NUMBER OF COMPANIES

<1x revenue	0	
1 to 2x	5	
3 to 4x	9	
5 to 6x	11	
7 to 8x	5	
>8x	11	
I'm not sure	9	

FUN FACT

Cincinnati is home to 10 Fortune 500 companies.



In Cincinnati you have access to very large companies, while maintaining a small town feel. Before long you're networking with huge companies and powerful people. That kind of B2B access is amazing.

—SHWETHA PAI
Co-founder & CEO,
OrgAnalytix



When you look at the Cincinnati ecosystem and what we call StartupCincy, I always like to say that we're going through our third wave of entrepreneurial growth right now. The amazing thing about Cincinnati is that it was a city started by entrepreneurs, the pioneers that drove West back in the 1800s. That first wave of entrepreneurship gave us companies like Kroger, Procter and Gamble, and the Fortune 500s of today.

—DAVE KNOX – Author & Co-founder of Brandery













TWEET THIS QUOTE



TECH STARTUPS TO WATCH

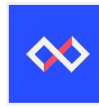









BEST CULTURE

BY POPULAR VOTE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

1		Losant
2		Astronomer
3		Lisnr
4		Cladwell
5		Ahalogy
6		Cloverleaf
7		Cerkl
8		Tilr
9		Spatial
10		Differential

MOST INNOVATIVE

BY POPULAR VOTE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

1		Losant
2		Lisnr
3		Spatial
4		Immersed VR
5		Astronomer
6		Eccrine Systems
7		Cladwell
8		Tilr
9		Ahalogy
10		Cloverleaf



TECH COMMUNITY & CULTURE

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Connecting StartupCincy's doers, dreamers, and disruptors. cintrifuse.com

WHAT IS THE CINCINNATI TECH COMMUNITY'S CORE VALUE?

150 respondents were asked, "What word or phrase best describes the Cincinnati tech community's core value?"



FUN FACT

Cincinnati is home of the second largest Oktoberfest in the world!

CLICK TO TWEET:

The Cincinnati tech community's top 3 values: community, collaboration, hustle. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by [@powderkegco](https://twitter.com/powderkegco) [#WhyCincy](https://twitter.com/WhyCincy) [#UNVALLEY](https://twitter.com/UNVALLEY)



“The most authentic relationships I have formed as an adult are in the Cincinnati tech community. We are doing something really hard and really worthwhile together.”

—KIRSTEN MOOREFIELD
COO & Co-founder,
Cloverleaf



TWEET THIS QUOTE

“Cincinnati’s core value is community. We’re committed to making sure the Cincinnati environment will work for and with startups.”

—VINEET ERASALA
Chief Operations Officer,
Genetesis

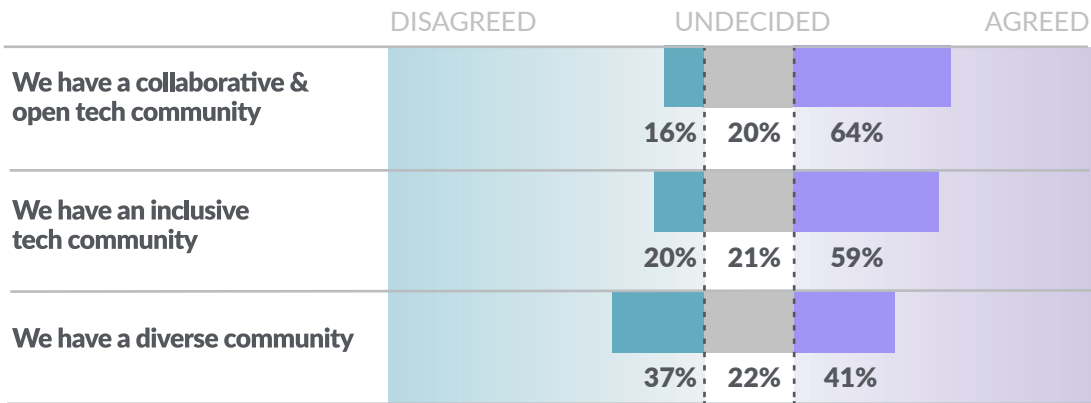


TWEET THIS QUOTE



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?



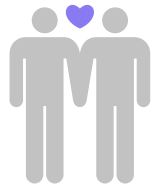
Cincinnati tends to attract a lot of talent from outside of Ohio and internationally. We also have quite a few African American-led startups here. It's turning into a hub for African American innovation.

—SHWETHA PAI
Co-founder & CEO,
OrgAnalytix



70%

of respondents worked at a tech company that was more than 25% female



28%

of respondents identified as an ally of the LGBT community



15%

of respondents worked at a tech company with a staff of more than 25% ethnic minorities



Cincinnati is open. It's not cliquish. There's a great sense of diversity and inclusion. Everyone is open to participate. The #StartupCincy hashtag unites us. The biggest barrier to getting involved is yourself.

—LAWRENCE McCORD
Founder & CEO, Frayt Technologies, Inc.



TWEET THIS QUOTE



TWEET THIS QUOTE



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

WHICH SOCIAL ISSUE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR TECH COMMUNITY MOST IMPACT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?



30%

Diversity & Equality



16%

Quality Education



16%

Health & Well-Being



15%

Poverty & Hunger



5%

Clean Air & Water



5%

Safety & Reduced Violence



5%

Affordable & Renewable Energy



4%

Other



4%

Recycling & Waste Management



In Cincinnati there is a wide awareness that diversity and inclusion is a priority and there's a real willingness from the entire community to be proactive about it.

—PEG RUSCONI
Director of Communications, CincyTech



TWEET THIS QUOTE

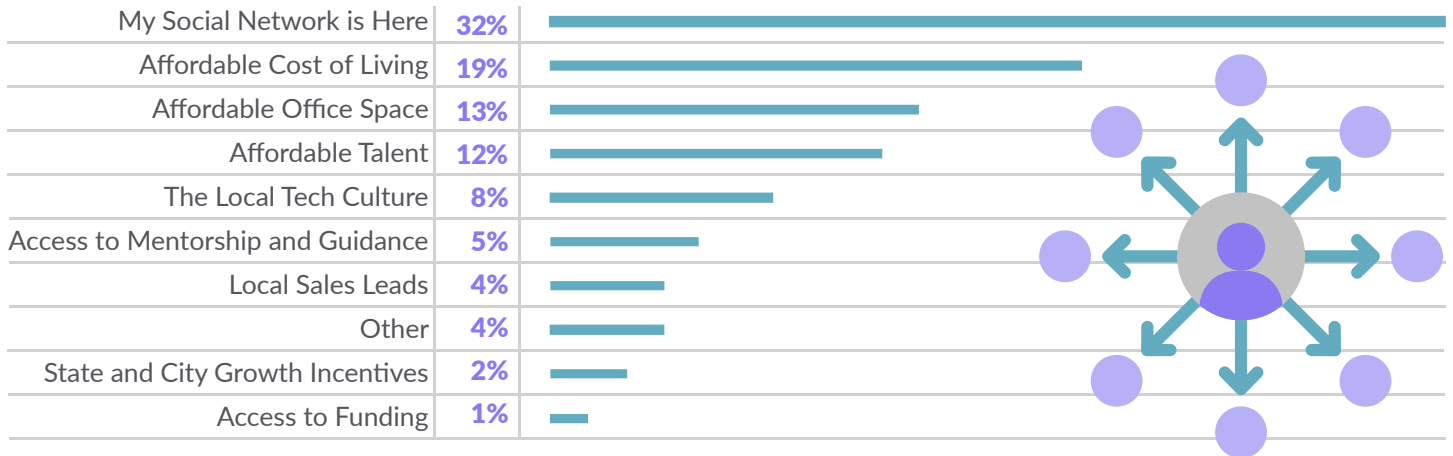


CLICK TO TWEET: The Cincinnati tech community is ready to impact social issues, including diversity and equality, education, and health and well-being. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by [@powderkegco](#) [#WhyCincy](#) [#UNVALLEY](#)



WHY FOUND HERE? #WHYCINCY?

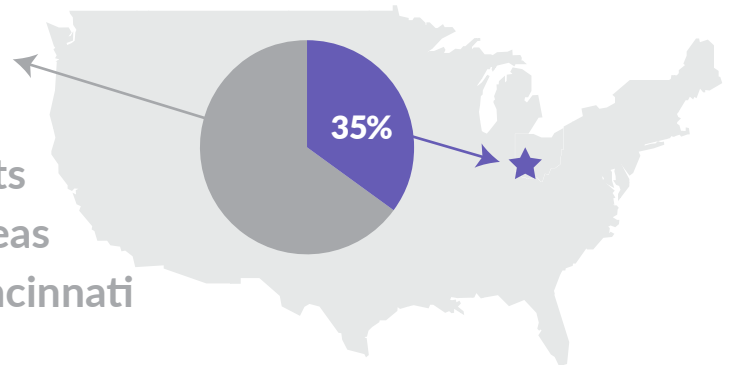
FOR WHAT REASON DID YOU CHOOSE TO LOCATE YOUR TECH COMPANY IN YOUR REGION?



FUN FACT

Cincinnati residents have a love affair with chili. There are more than 140 chili restaurants in Cincinnati.

65%
of respondents
grew up in areas
outside of Cincinnati



“Cincinnati has a lot of programs and accelerators that are available to early-stage companies. There’s a half-dozen really prominent accelerators, as well as incubators, boot camps, and other programs that they can take.”

—TIM METZNER - Founder & Partner, Differential



TWEET THIS QUOTE



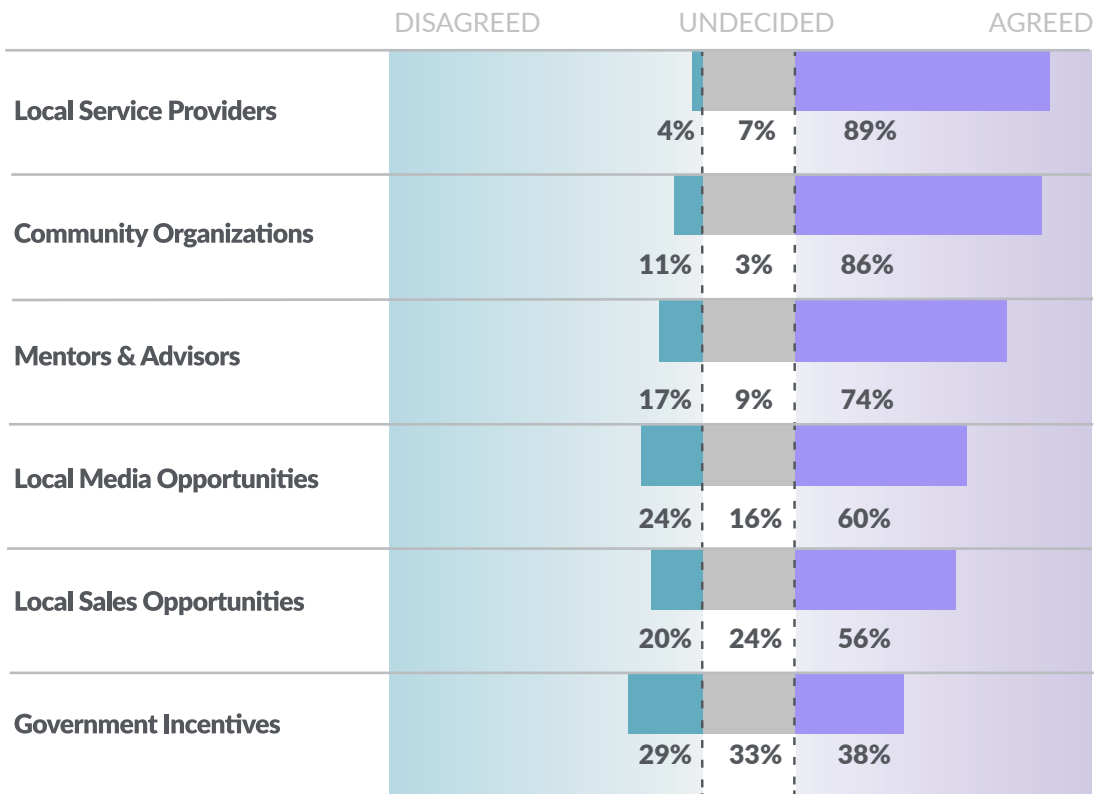
STARTUP RESOURCES

“ Among the benefits of having a strong startup community is the ability for us to move the region forward faster. When we’re all operating in conjunction with each other as opposed to silos, the effect is evident in the execution—we’re able to accelerate each other’s momentum.

—ERIC WEISSMANN
VP Communications, Community & Economic Inclusion, Cintrifuse



IS THERE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO LOCAL STARTUP SUPPORT RESOURCES?



*Answered by 93 Greater Cincinnati technology founders, executives, investors and community leaders.



SECTION 4

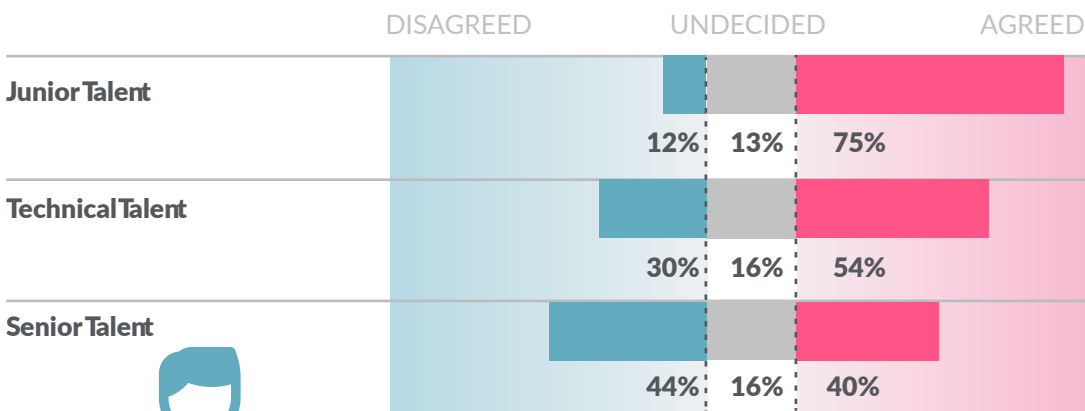
TECH STARTUP TALENT

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IS THERE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO STARTUP TALENT IN GREATER CINCINNATI?



**Answered by 93 Greater Cincinnati technology founders, executives, investors and community leaders.*

Are you an engineer or senior leader with startup experience? Cincinnati's tech community has a great job for you.



There's great talent all around us in Cincinnati and the best startups in town can easily attract it.

—Ry Walker, CEO, Astronomer



TWEET THIS QUOTE



Executives that are able to come into a startup in order to help move it forward. We still lack a little bit of that experience in Cincinnati, but we're starting to see some executive boomerangs. These people are going out to the coasts, getting experience, and then coming back to work here.

—CHARLIE KEY
Co-founder & CEO, Losant



TWEET THIS QUOTE



SALARIES & HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

TECH STARTUP EMPLOYEE RESPONDENT STATISTICS:

WHAT IS YOUR APPROXIMATE ANNUAL SALARY (INCLUDING DISTRIBUTIONS AND BONUSES)?



WHAT ARE YOUR APPROXIMATE ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES?



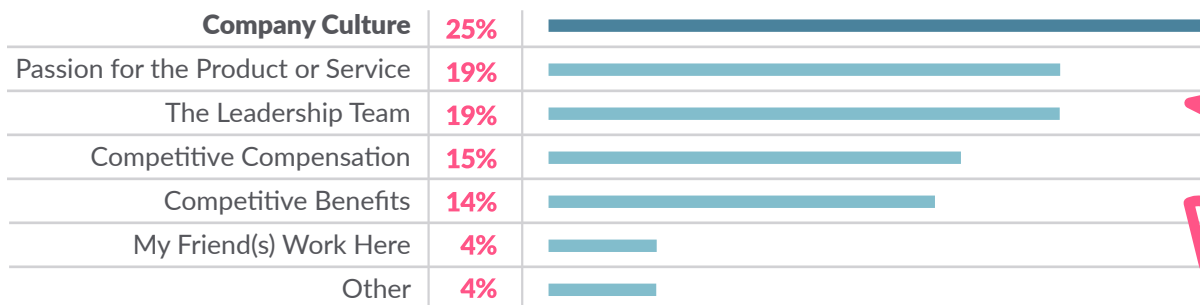
FUN FACT

One of America's early boomtowns, Cincinnati expanded rapidly in the early 19th century to become the first major inland city in the country.



CLICK TO TWEET: The majority of tech employees surveyed in Cincinnati make more than \$80k, and the majority of employees surveyed have annual household expenses of less than \$50k. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by @powderkegco #WhyCincy #UNVALLEY

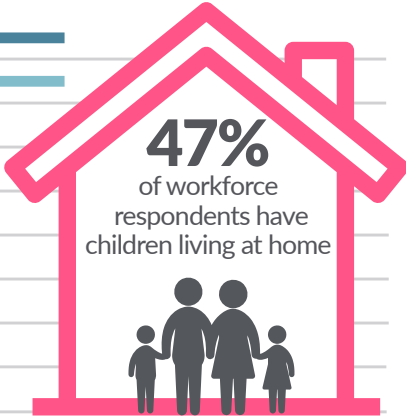
WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO WORK AT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER?



WHY WORK HERE? #WHYCINCY?

WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO WORK IN YOUR REGION?

Affordable Cost of Living	23%
My Social Network is Here	23%
I Grew Up Here	15%
I Went to College Here	13%
Career and Income Growth Opportunity	12%
Our Tech Community and Its Culture	10%
Access to Mentorship	2%
Sports & Entertainment Options	1%
Other	1%

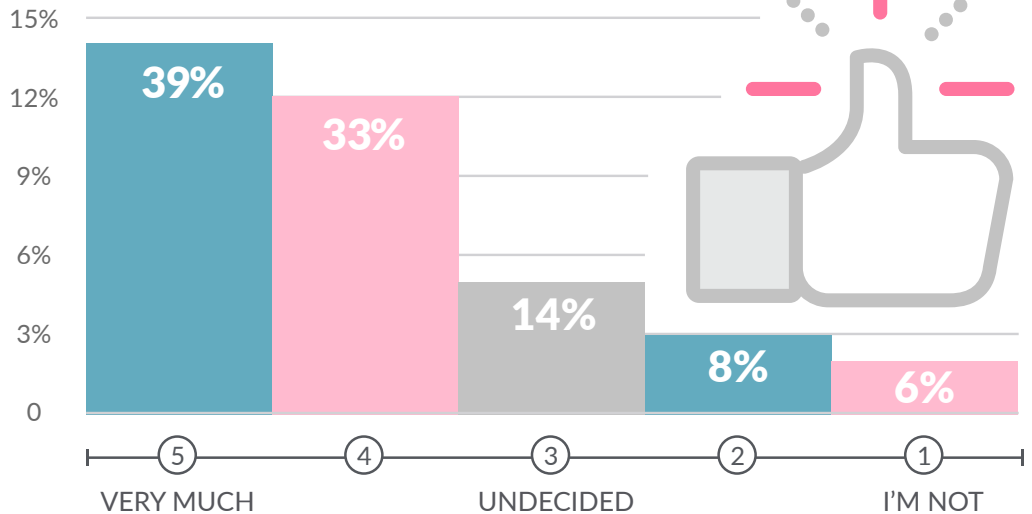


Cincinnati has some of the hardest working people I've ever had the experience of knowing. When you get down to it, there are people here that can create products and businesses that compete anywhere in the world.

—CHARLIE KEY
Co-Founder & CEO, Losant



HOW MUCH ARE YOU ENJOYING YOUR JOURNEY AS A TECH PROFESSIONAL IN YOUR REGION?



COLLEGES & RECRUITING

WHAT UNIVERSITY DO YOU RECRUIT THE MOST FROM?

48% University of  **CINCINNATI**

- Miami University 18%
- Northern Kentucky University 10%
- Ohio University.....5%
- Xavier University2%
- Other..... 17%



“ We should not be apologetic for being from the Midwest. We grow up thinking we’ve got to get out of Ohio or get out of the Midwest and get to the big city.

Well, I did that and I boomeranged right back.

—SUMMER CRENSHAW
COO/CMO & Co-Founder, tlr



“ We have really strong colleges and universities, but I think Cincinnati is also doing a great job of becoming an attractive city to people outside of Cincy. As we do this, we’re getting more and more talent coming to the area, and that’s a big help.

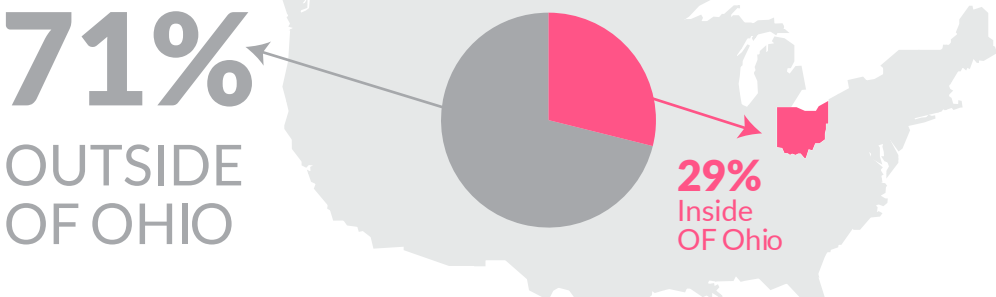
—FERNANDA HORNER - Marketing Activator, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber



FUN FACT

The Cincinnati Reds were America’s first professional baseball team,formerly named the Cincinnati Red Stockings.

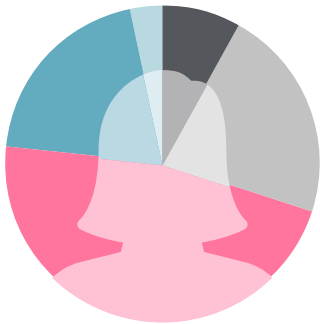
GEOGRAPHICALLY, WHERE DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE?



CLICK TO TWEET: Cincy is a magnet for tech talent. 71% of tech startup employees surveyed in Cincinnati went to college outside of Ohio. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by [@powderkegco](#) [#WhyCincy?](#) [#UNVALLEY](#)

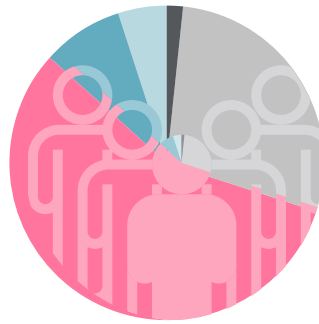
WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR WORKFORCE IS FEMALE?



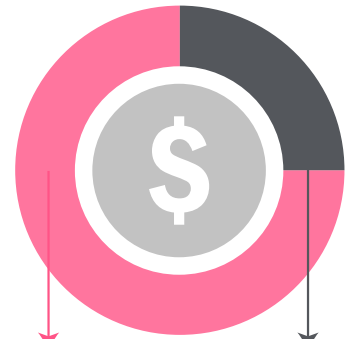
0%	8.33%
1% to 25%	21.67%
26% to 50%	46.67%
51% to 75%	20.00%
76% or More	3.33%

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR WORKFORCE IS AN ETHNIC MINORITY?

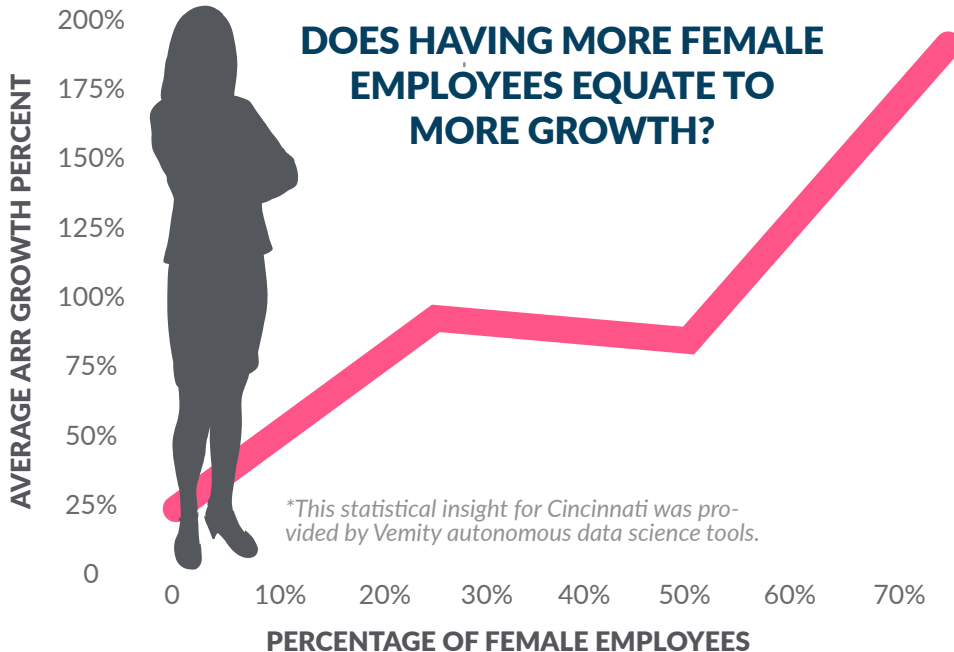


0%	28.33%
1% to 25%	56.67%
26% to 50%	8.33%
51% to 75%	5.00%
76% or More	1.67%

DO YOU HAVE AN EQUITY/ OWNERSHIP PLAN FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES?



75% YES | **25% NO**



CLICK TO TWEET: Having a higher percentage of female employees is positively correlated with revenue growth in Cincinnati. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by @powderkegco #WhyCincy #UNVALLEY



TECH STARTUP FUNDRAISING

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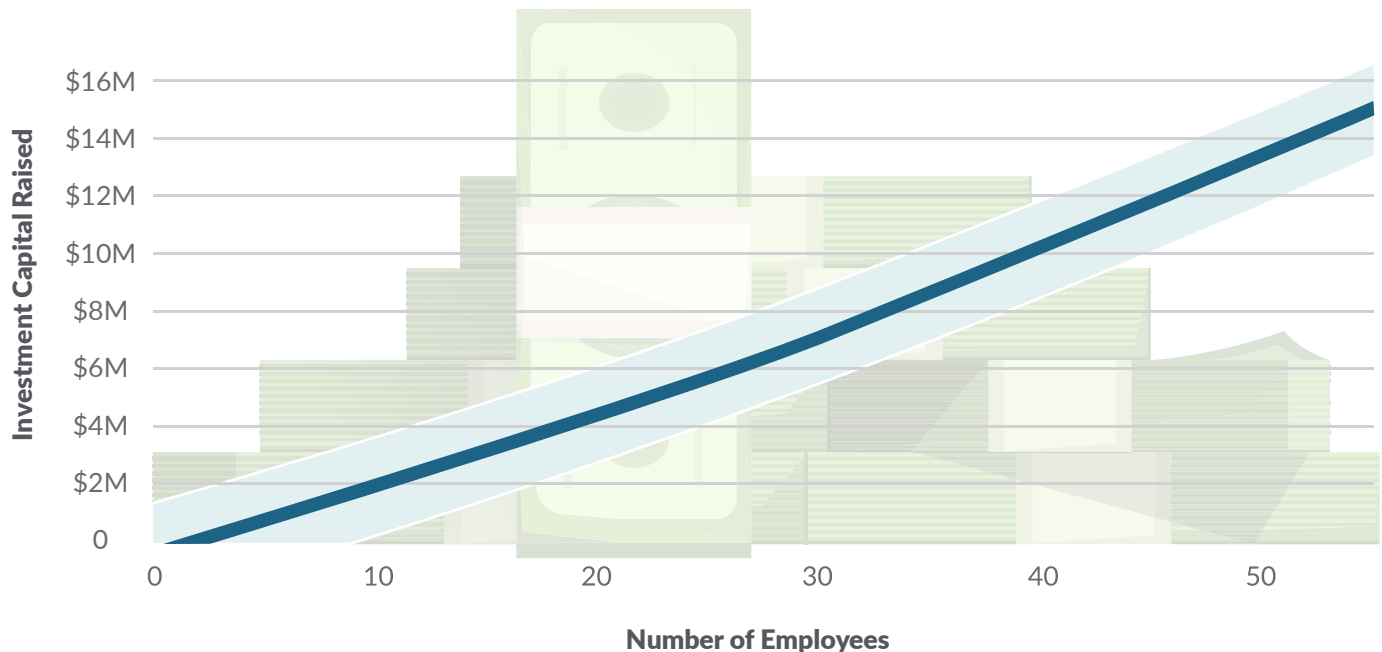


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CINCINNATI TECH STARTUP FOUNDER RESPONDENTS

TOTAL INVESTMENT CAPITAL RAISED FOR YOUR CINCINNATI TECH STARTUP

- Average Cincinnati Startup Capital Raised (best fit line)
- Cincinnati Startup Capital Raised 95% Confidence Interval



Since 2007, CincyTech has invested in over 70 companies, so about eight a year on average. We're on our fourth fund. It's a \$30,000,000 fund. We've invested about \$51,000,000 out of our funds. Those companies have now imported about \$850,000,000 of venture capital into the region.

—MIKE VENERABLE -
President, CincyTech USA



TWEET THIS QUOTE



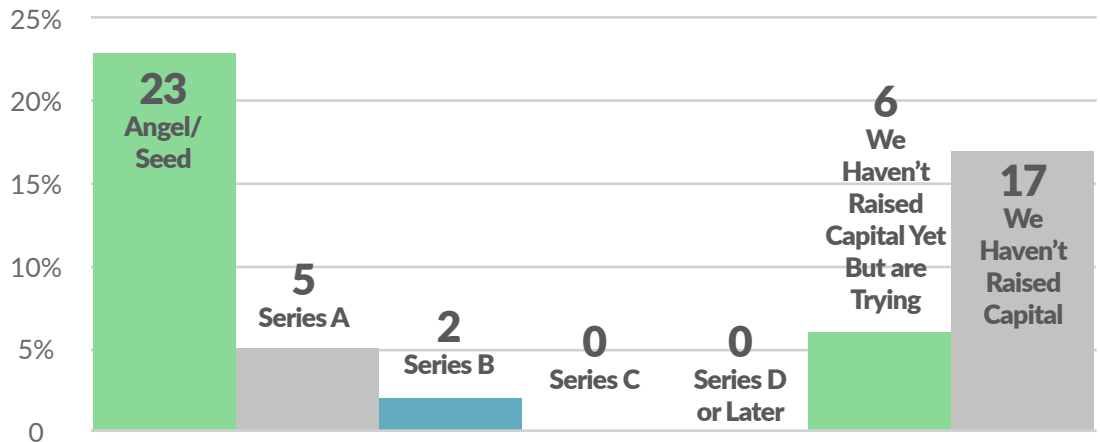
TECH STARTUP FUNDRAISING

FUN FACT

Three former U.S. presidents were born in the Greater Cincinnati area, including Benjamin Harrison, Ulysses S. Grant, and William Howard Taft.

WHAT SERIES WAS YOUR LAST FUNDING ROUND?

NUMBER OF COMPANIES

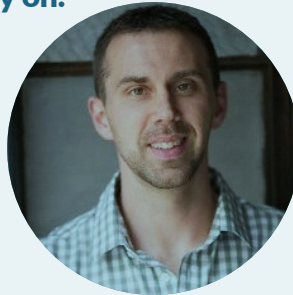


“My advice to an entrepreneur raising capital in Cincinnati is to start early, well before they need it. I encourage taking early meetings and asking for advice, not money, early on.”

—TIM METZNER
Founder & Partner,
Differential



TWEET THIS QUOTE

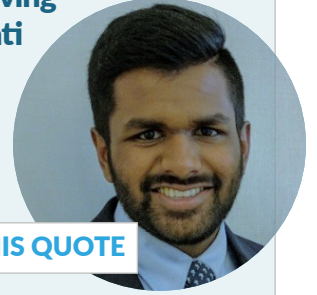


“Cincinnati is good for early stage rounds. For later stage rounds it needs some improvement though. Most of our A round was funded locally. For series B and beyond we’re really having to look outside of Cincinnati for access to capital.”

—VINEET ERASALA
Chief Operations Officer,
Genetesis



TWEET THIS QUOTE



“My favorite form of financing is revenue. When Cintrifuse facilitates pilots with big names such as Children’s Hospital, Procter & Gamble, and Kroger, that not only has a major impact on the startup, but the entire region.”

—TAREK KAMIL
Founder & CEO, Cerkl



TWEET THIS QUOTE



STARTUP GROWTH RESOURCES



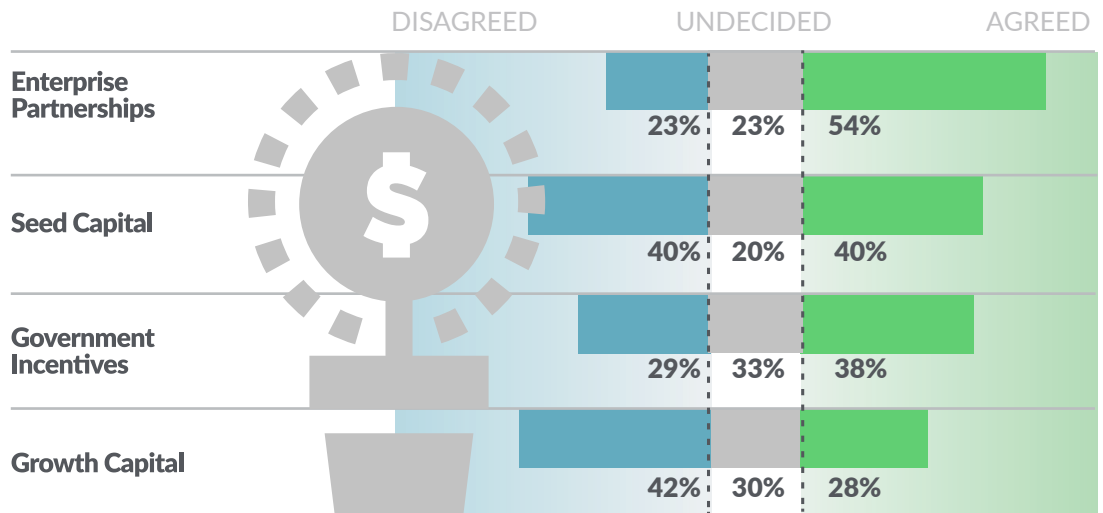
We measure, very definitively, the paid pilots between startups and BigCos in Greater Cincinnati. Over the last few years we've had over 100 of these partnerships. We hope that transaction revenue will likely go towards hiring someone at the startup—that's where we get net new jobs for the region.

—WENDY LEA
CEO, Cintrifuse



TWEET THIS QUOTE

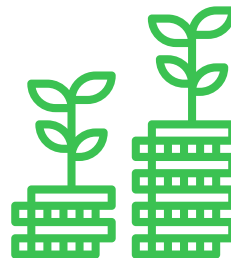
IS THERE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO INVESTMENT CAPITAL, PARTNERSHIPS, AND GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES IN GREATER CINCINNATI?



*Answered by 86 Greater Cincinnati technology founders, investors, and community leaders.

28%

of surveyed founders have state or local growth incentives



76%

of surveyed founders struggled to raise capital in Greater Cincinnati



CLICK TO TWEET: The working relationship between enterprises (or BigCos) and startups in Cincinnati is unprecedented in any other tech hub Powderkeg has reviewed so far. See The 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census Report by @powderkegco #WhyCincy #UNVALLEY

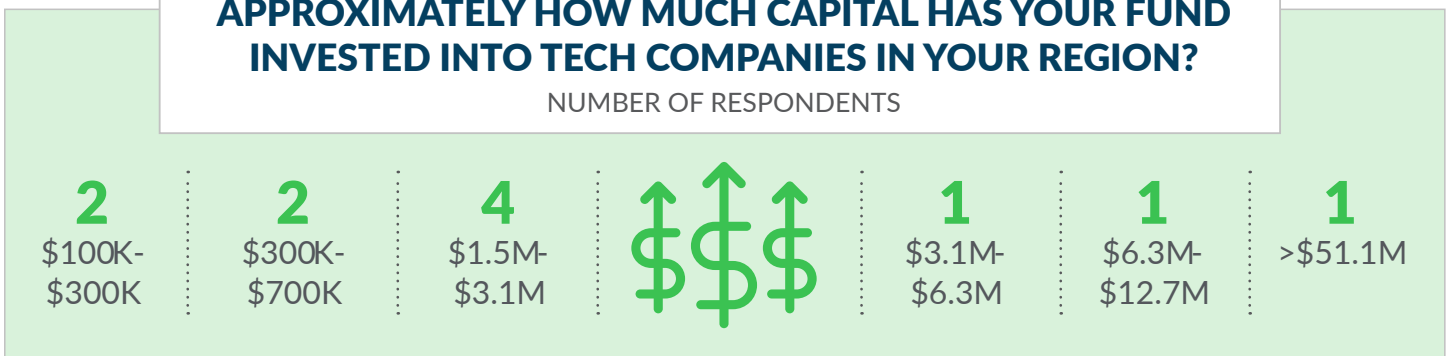


INVESTMENT FUND STATS

CINCINNATI FUND MANAGER RESPONDENTS

APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH CAPITAL HAS YOUR FUND INVESTED INTO TECH COMPANIES IN YOUR REGION?

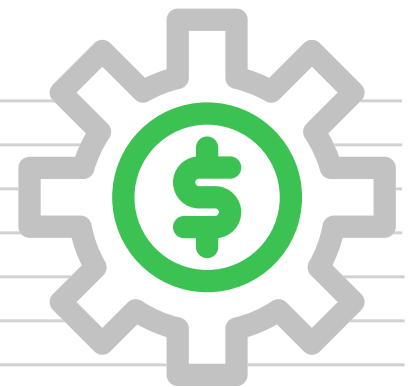
NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS



WHICH OF THE BELOW COMPANY CATEGORIES DOES YOUR FUND HAVE THE MOST INVESTMENTS IN?

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Information Technology & Infrastructure	3	
Marketing & Sales Tech	3	
Biomedical Tech	1	
Ecommerce and Retail Tech	1	
Human Resources Tech	1	
Life Sciences	1	
Other	1	



FUN FACT

In 1880 Cincinnati became the first and only city to build and own a major railroad.



TWEET THIS QUOTE



The best types of startups to think about launching in Cincinnati are still predominantly going to B2B SaaS companies. These are organizations that can take advantage of the great existing BigCos we have in our area as potential clients.

—TIM METZNER
Founder & Partner, Differential



ANGEL INVESTOR STATS

CINCINNATI ANGEL INVESTOR RESPONDENTS

APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH CAPITAL HAVE YOU PERSONALLY INVESTED INTO TECH COMPANIES IN YOUR REGION? NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS



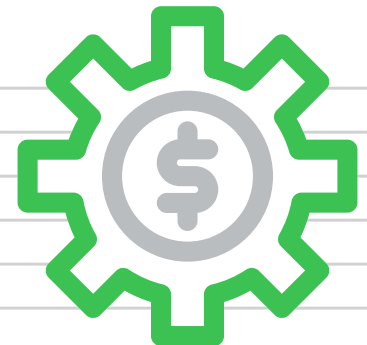
FUN FACT

In 1880 Cincinnati became the first U.S. city in which a woman, Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, began and operated a large manufacturing operation called Rookwood Pottery.

WHICH OF THE BELOW COMPANY CATEGORIES DO YOU PERSONALLY HAVE THE MOST INVESTMENTS IN?

 NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Information Technology & Infrastructure	4	████████████████████
Biomedical	4	████████████████████
Life Sciences	3	████████████████
Ecommerce and Retail Tech	2	██████████
Marketing & Sales Tech	2	██████████
Sensors	1	██████



Greater Cincinnati has a massive amount of intelligent, high net-worth individuals that can truly affect their return as opposed to just putting that money into the stock market. Because of their personal connections, industry experience and network, it's a huge advantage to both them and the companies they invest in.

—PATRICK HENSHAW
VP of Growth, Startups & Technology, Cintrifuse



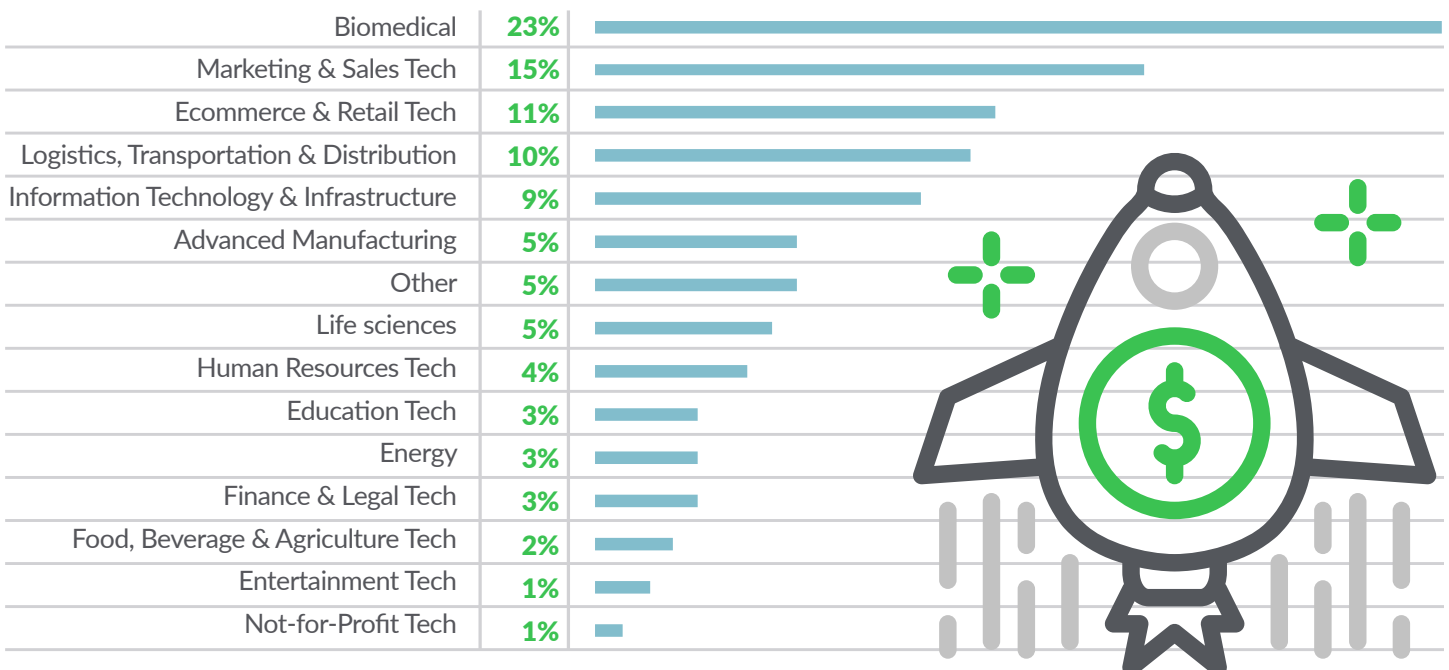
TWEET THIS QUOTE



GROWING TECH INDUSTRIES

ALL CINCINNATI RESPONDENTS

WHAT INDUSTRY DO YOU SEE GROWING THE MOST IN GREATER CINCINNATI OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS?



My hope for the StartupCincy tech ecosystem is that we continue to grow, and that we're not afraid to innovate and embrace the people who are coming. Those young people who are in college now, and those minority and female professionals. Let's have a conversation now about how we raise up the next generation of leadership who five years from now are the ones who will be starting companies and hiring people.

—LAUREN TIFFAN

Program Manager, Air Force Research Laboratory Transition Accelerator;
The Entrepreneur Center



CONCLUSION

“The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

- ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Technology is integral to how humans shape the future. Moore’s Law supports the concept that technology is accelerating at an exponential rate. Therefore, technologists are shaping the future at an unprecedented pace.

Ninety-two percent of Cincinnati Tech Census respondents expect the Cincinnati tech community to grow materially over the next five years. Data from the 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census shows that Cincinnati has made significant investments to realize that growth.

As Cincinnati matures into a national hub for tech, it is earning the right to help shape the future of humanity with its technology. Cincinnati faces similar social challenges as the rest of the nation, but it also has considerable opportunities for prosperity and growth.

The Powderkeg network looks forward to working hand in hand with Cincinnati’s tech community and startups to ensure they have the resources necessary to fulfill their visions. We all can amplify that effort by helping tech professionals and investors around the country and world see the insights from this report.

Please take a moment to share the 2018 Cincinnati Tech Census on social media.

Thank you!

#WHYCINCY #UNVALLEY

