

BRANDAUDIT™

City Gospel Mission & Subsidiaries

PROOF OF CONCEPT



THE SMALL BIZ CMO

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BRANDAUDIT™

City Gospel Mission & Subsidiaries

Cincinnati, Ohio

Prepared by The Small Biz CMO

April 2026

*This report is a **proof-of-concept sample** designed to demonstrate the BrandAudit™ methodology and the type of findings it surfaces, produced entirely from publicly available brand assets and audited financial documents. **The Small Biz CMO has no client relationship with City Gospel Mission and did not engage with the organization, its staff, or its leadership in any capacity to produce this analysis.** All findings are derived from the organization's public-facing website, social media presence, YouTube channel, audited financial statements (FY2022–2023), and Form 990 (FY2021). No proprietary data, internal materials, or staff interviews were used.*

*This document exists to answer a single question: what does a BrandAudit™ look like when it is produced from the outside? The answer, as you are about to read, is this. Now imagine what it would look like with City Gospel Mission's full participation — with access to their donor file composition, their internal strategy documents, their program outcome data, and the founding story told in their own leadership's words. **That version of this report is what a paid BrandAudit™ engagement produces. This sample does not include the implementation work required to execute the recommendations** (e.g., brand identity development, messaging architecture, donor journey rebuild, campaign brand development); it shows how a diagnostic translates into a clear set of next-step interventions.*

OPENING

City Gospel Mission has been breaking the cycle of poverty and despair in Cincinnati, Ohio since 1924. One hundred and one years of uninterrupted service. Four integrated program pillars — food and emergency shelter, residential recovery, workforce development, and youth education — that together constitute one of the most coherent, holistic anti-poverty models operating in the greater Cincinnati market. A founding story that traces directly to James N. Gamble, heir to one of the most consequential business legacies in American industrial history, who chose to invest his resources in Cincinnati's most vulnerable residents at a moment when the city's prosperity was visible and its poverty was not. A financial stewardship record that puts 72 cents of every donated dollar into direct program services. And a donor brand that is not yet built to carry any of it.

That is not a criticism of what City Gospel Mission has built. It is a description of where the organization stands at a specific and unusually consequential moment in its institutional life — a capital expansion underway, a revenue concentration risk that is not yet a crisis but is compounding with every passing grant cycle. In this scenario, the leadership team has identified the strategic imperative: broaden the individual donor base, deepen foundation relationships, and build the revenue architecture that makes the organization's future as durable as its past. The brand is the instrument through which all of that happens. And the brand, as this audit documents, is not yet built for the job.

The Small Biz CMO Methodology

BrandAudit™ begins with a donor-first premise: your brand is not what your staff believes it is, or what your board hopes it communicates. Your brand is what a donor can actually perceive across the moments that matter — the first click, the first scroll, the first ask, the first gift, and the first follow-up. Because those moments determine trust and giving behavior, BrandAudit™ treats the donor experience as the primary source of truth and evaluates it with a consistent rubric applied to the touchpoints donors actually encounter. **In a full BrandAudit™ engagement, we interview leadership** to understand goals, constraints, and the strategic realities the brand must serve — **but we do not design brand expression for internal approval. We design it to activate the donors who will support and sustain the mission.** Internal alignment is valuable when it increases execution speed. It is not a prerequisite for diagnosing brand health, because donor reality does not change based on internal preference.

What follows is a six-section evidence-based assessment of how City Gospel Mission's brand is performing as a fundraising instrument — not as a communications function, not as a design exercise, but as the primary mechanism through which donor trust is earned, giving decisions are made, and long-term donor relationships are built or lost. The findings are specific, the evidence is traceable, and the recommendation is grounded in four stages of scoring across twelve brand dimensions, five donor archetypes, a competitive landscape scan of the greater Cincinnati nonprofit market, and an investment readiness assessment that draws on three years of audited financial data.

The headline finding is this: City Gospel Mission has all the raw materials of a world-class donor brand and has not yet assembled them into one. The Gamble founding story sits dormant. The four-pillar transformation continuum is presented as four separate programs. The 101-year institutional history is a footnote rather than a trust anchor. The capital expansion is proceeding without a capital campaign brand. And the individual donor experience — the giving page, the post-gift sequence, the sustainer architecture — is not built to do what leadership needs it to do. None of these gaps are irreversible. All of them are urgent. This report explains why, and what to do about it.

SECTION 1 — Brand Consistency Review

Brand consistency is the infrastructure of donor trust. It is not, primarily, a design principle — it is a psychological one. Every time a donor encounters an organization's brand at a different touchpoint and finds something that feels like the same organization they met before, a small deposit is made into the trust account that eventually produces a giving decision. Every time they encounter something that feels disconnected — a different visual register, a different voice, a different emotional tone — a small withdrawal is made. Over the arc of a donor's first six to twelve encounters with a nonprofit, those deposits and withdrawals determine whether the relationship deepens or stalls. Brand consistency is not about polish. It is about the cumulative psychological effect of coherence on a person who is deciding whether to trust an organization with their charitable dollar.

City Gospel Mission's brand signal score — the aggregate measure of how coherently and consistently the brand projects its identity across all primary touchpoints — is 5.83 out of 10. That number lands in the Developing band, which means the brand is present and recognizable but not yet operating with the internal coherence that converts consistent donor attention into committed giving relationships. The score is not a failing grade. It is a precise description of an organization whose brand was built organically — layer by layer, campaign by

campaign, program by program — without the unifying strategic architecture that would make all of those layers speak in a single, consistent voice. The brand works at each individual touchpoint. It does not yet work as a system.

The organization's most important consistency strengths are real and worth naming precisely. **The mission-to-brand alignment score of 8 out of 10 is the highest single-dimension score in the audit and reflects something genuinely notable: the connection between what City Gospel Mission does programmatically and what it says publicly is honest, specific, and direct.** The four-pillar program architecture maps cleanly onto the organizational mission — food and shelter address immediate despair, recovery addresses its behavioral roots, workforce development addresses its economic roots, and youth programming addresses its generational roots. That alignment is not accidental, and it is not cosmetic. It reflects an organization that built its programs from its mission rather than reverse-engineering its mission from its programs. The trust architecture — the financials page with its 72-cent efficiency ratio, accessible independent audit, and stewardship-forward framing — also scores well at 7 out of 10, representing a stronger transparency infrastructure than most comparable organizations deploy publicly. And the tagline, "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Despair — One Life at a Time," earns a 7 out of 10 for doing genuine strategic work: naming the enemy, claiming the intervention, and committing to the human scale of the transformation.

The consistency gaps are concentrated in the donor-facing architecture — the places where the brand's transmission system meets the donor experience and, in City Gospel Mission's case, falls short. The most costly gap is in the post-gift experience, which scores a 3 out of 10 across the full touchpoint diagnostic. There is no visible acknowledgment sequence, no sustainer invitation, no community signal, and no relationship continuity for a donor who has just made their first gift. For an organization whose primary strategic imperative is building a durable individual donor base, that is the highest-leverage failure in the entire brand. The second major gap is in brand voice consistency, which scores a 6 out of 10 — not because the individual voice is wrong, but because it is not unified. The Wings of Hope newsletter is warm and personal. The program pages are functional and list-driven. The giving page is transactional. These are not the same voice, and a donor who moves across those touchpoints experiences three different organizations. The third gap is sub-brand fragmentation: Exodus, Whiz Kids, Princesses Ballet, Rising Scholars, and Having the Courage to Change each operate with their own visual identity without visible integration into the master brand architecture. The fragmentation is not catastrophic, but it prevents the brand from telling the integrated transformation story that is its most defensible competitive position.

The critical signal finding for this section is not about any single touchpoint. It is about the distance between what City Gospel Mission's brand assets contain and what its brand system deploys. The raw materials of an extraordinary donor brand — a 101-year founding narrative, a Procter & Gamble heir's investment in Cincinnati's poorest residents, a four-pillar transformation continuum, transformation stories in the newsletter and on YouTube — are present and largely unassembled. **The brand is a warehouse full of exceptional inventory with no storefront. The consistency work required is not creation. It is curation, architecture, and activation of what already exists.**

Exhibit A – Touchpoint Diagnostic Table

Touchpoint	Brand Consistency	Emotional Register	Donor Experience	Trust Signal	Audit Notes
Homepage	6	6	5	6	Functional but not emotionally activating; no transformation narrative above fold
About / Our Story	7	6	5	7	History present; Gamble founding story buried; 101 years underdeployed
Program Pages	6	5	5	6	List-driven; service descriptions rather than transformation narratives
Giving Page	5	4	4	6	Transaction form without impact framing; no suggested amounts with translations
Financials Page	7	4	6	8	Strongest trust page in the brand; emotionally inert but credibly transparent
Facebook	6	7	5	6	Most emotionally alive channel; inconsistent posting cadence
YouTube	6	7	6	6	Strong individual transformation content; not integrated into donor journey
Newsletter (Wings of Hope)	7	8	7	7	Best storytelling vehicle in the brand; only reaches existing file

Email Acquisition	4	4	3	4	No visible lead capture; no content offer; no email welcome sequence
Mobile Experience	5	5	4	5	Responsive but not optimized; giving experience weak on mobile
Sub-Brand Pages	5	6	5	5	Fragmented identities; strong program content; disconnected from master brand
Post-Gift Experience	3	3	3	4	No visible acknowledgment sequence; no sustainer invitation; no relationship signal

Touchpoint Composite: 5.58 out of 10

SECTION 2 — Donor Perception Alignment

The most consequential gap in nonprofit brand strategy is rarely the one organizations think they have. Organizations worry about logo design, tagline language, and color palettes — and those things matter. But the gap that actually costs money is the one between what an organization believes it is communicating and what its target donors are actually receiving. A brand can score adequately on visual consistency and still be projecting the wrong psychological signal to its most valuable potential donors — because the signal is tuned to the wrong emotional frequency. Donor perception alignment is the discipline of closing that gap: ensuring that the psychological identity the brand projects is the identity that activates giving behavior in the specific human beings the organization most needs to reach.

City Gospel Mission's target donor segments — identified through a five-archetype psychographic analysis of the organization's program profile, mission language, and giving channel mix — are the Caregiver as the primary composition archetype and the Everyman as the most accessible secondary segment, with the Sage and Ruler representing the high-capacity growth segments that the organization's stated revenue diversification goal requires. The Caregiver is the most common primary archetype in social services nonprofit donor files, typically

representing 40 to 60 percent of the giving base. **The Caregiver gives to relieve suffering, protect vulnerable populations, and be a faithful steward of community need. They respond to warmth, dignity framing, human specificity, and the feeling that their contribution is making something real happen for a real person. The Everyman gives from civic solidarity — the sense that a healthy community is one that takes care of its own — and responds to local rootedness, historical credibility, and neighbor-helping-neighbor language. Both archetypes are present in the Cincinnati market and directly accessible through City Gospel Mission's existing program and story assets.**

The Caregiver weighted composite score from the donor perception alignment analysis is 6.0 out of 10, landing in the Partial band — which means the brand reaches the Caregiver at a level sufficient to earn initial consideration but fails to convert that consideration into committed giving. The warmth and dignity signals are present: "You don't have to face these challenges alone" is the right emotional register, and the program architecture is genuinely Caregiver-aligned. The brand fails the Caregiver at the retention and community dimensions. There is no architecture that makes a Caregiver donor feel they belong to something larger than a transaction — no monthly giving community, no donor identity framing, no signal that their ongoing participation is what makes the transformation stories in the Wings of Hope newsletter possible. The Caregiver who gives once and receives no community signal will give again only out of habit, not out of identity. Habit is a fragile retention mechanism. Identity is a durable one.

The most significant archetype gap in this audit is the Ruler score of 3.78 out of 10 — a Critical Gap rating, the lowest band in the alignment matrix. The Ruler is the archetype that drives transformative gifts: named endowments, capital campaign lead gifts, planned giving commitments, and foundation relationships that extend across multiple grant cycles. The Ruler gives to build something lasting — to be part of an institutional legacy that outlives the gift. City Gospel Mission is in the middle of a capital expansion at the precise moment when Ruler donors make their largest commitments, and the brand has no capital campaign identity, no named giving architecture, no legacy giving program, and no deployment of the single most powerful Ruler activation asset it possesses: the James N. Gamble founding story. A Procter & Gamble heir who invested his personal resources in Cincinnati's most vulnerable residents in 1924, producing 101 years of uninterrupted service, is a legacy narrative of extraordinary depth. It is sitting in an organizational history footnote while the building campaign proceeds without it.

The strategic disconnect for this section is precise: City Gospel Mission is running a capital expansion campaign against a Ruler-blind brand. Every dimension of Ruler signal that would activate a transformative gift — legacy language, named giving opportunities, institutional gravitas, a visible case for support — is either absent or critically underdeveloped. This is not a peripheral gap. It is the central misalignment between where City Gospel Mission needs its fundraising to go and what its brand is currently built to do.

Exhibit B — Donor Perception Alignment Matrix

Archetype	Composite Score	Alignment Band	Primary Gap	Activation Asset
Caregiver	6.0 / 10	Partial	Retention & community belonging	Shelter/recovery transformation stories
Everyman	5.89 / 10	Partial	Neighbor-framing & civic identity	101-year Cincinnati history
Innocent	6.0 / 10	Partial	Transformation evidence deployment	YouTube alumni stories
Sage	5.22 / 10	Gap	Outcome documentation & third-party validation	72-cent efficiency ratio + audit
Ruler	3.78 / 10	Critical Gap	Capital campaign architecture & legacy narrative	Gamble founding story

SECTION 3 — Psychographic Alignment Gap Analysis

The psychographic profile of City Gospel Mission's highest-potential donor segments runs along two parallel tracks that must ultimately be served by the same brand. The first track is the Caregiver-Everyman axis — donors who give from emotional connection, civic solidarity, and community belonging. These donors are typically mid-income, locally rooted, faith-adjacent or faith-aligned, and motivated by the felt conviction that they are personally responsible for the wellbeing of their immediate community. They respond to human-scale storytelling, transparent stewardship, and the social signal of belonging to a community of givers who share their values. They do not need to be persuaded that poverty is a problem. They need to be persuaded that City Gospel Mission is the right vehicle for their care — and that giving to it says something meaningful about who they are. The second track is the Sage-Ruler axis — donors and institutional funders who give from evidence, institutional credibility, and legacy intention. These are the foundation program officers, the board-level

major donor prospects, and the high-net-worth individuals whose single gifts can move an organization's financial picture in ways that thousands of small donors cannot. They require a different brand signal: outcome documentation, governance visibility, strategic clarity, and the sense that this organization has earned the right to steward a significant commitment.

City Gospel Mission's brand currently serves neither track as fully as it needs to. On the Caregiver-Everyman axis, the emotional warmth is present but not sustained — moments of human connection appear in the newsletter and on Facebook but are not integrated into the primary digital donor journey where first-time visitors make their initial giving decisions. The brand does not yet tell the integrated transformation story — the arc of a person who moves from sleeping on the street to holding a steady job and raising their family in stable housing — that would give a Caregiver donor the visceral sense that their contribution changes not just a night but a life. On the Sage-Ruler axis, the brand is more significantly underdeveloped: outcome metrics are not publicly visible, the board composition is not featured, the founding story is not activated, and there is no published case for support connected to the capital expansion — the document that every Sage and Ruler donor expects before making a significant commitment.

The most critical psychographic gap is what the audit identifies as the Donor Identity Mirror failure — scored at 4 out of 10 across the full brand. The brand is entirely program-centric: it tells the story of what City Gospel Mission does for the people it serves. It does not tell the story of what a donor becomes by supporting it. There is no "you are the person who breaks this cycle" narrative, no community-of-givers architecture, no identity invitation that would make a donor feel that giving to City Gospel Mission reflects something meaningful about their own values, priorities, and sense of who they are in their community. **For the Caregiver, this is a retention failure — they never feel they belong. For the Ruler, it is a disqualifying absence — there is no legacy identity to step into. For the Everyman, it is a missed civic solidarity invitation that their psychological profile is specifically primed to accept.**

The psychographic alignment opportunities available to City Gospel Mission are of unusually high quality given the assets already in place. First: the Gamble founding story, activated as a primary brand narrative, would simultaneously close the Ruler gap, deepen Everyman civic identity, and give the Innocent archetype the redemptive historical arc it responds to most powerfully — all without creating a single new content asset. Second: the four-pillar continuum, reframed from four separate programs into one integrated transformation journey, would give Caregiver donors the sustained emotional narrative they need to move from a first gift to a long-term

giving identity. Third: a sustainer program built around the language of ongoing transformation — "you're not just giving a gift, you're maintaining a relationship with someone on the road back" — would close the retention gap for Caregivers and the community belonging gap for Everyman donors simultaneously. These are not tactical additions. They are strategic repositioning moves that use existing assets to close the most costly psychographic gaps in the brand.

Exhibit C — Brand SWOT

STRENGTHS

- **Gamble founding story** (D11: 7/10): A Procter & Gamble heir investing in Cincinnati's poorest residents in 1924, producing 101 years of uninterrupted service. Activates Ruler legacy psychology, Everyman civic pride, and Innocent redemptive hope simultaneously. No Cincinnati peer organization has a comparable founding narrative. Entirely under-deployed.
- **Four-pillar transformation continuum** (D5: 8/10): Emergency shelter to residential recovery to workforce development to youth programming is a holistic cycle-breaking model that is both intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying. No peer organization in Cincinnati has a comparable integrated program architecture.
- **Financial transparency infrastructure** (D11: 7/10): The 72-cent efficiency ratio, independent audit, and accessible 990 represent a stronger trust architecture than most comparable organizations deploy publicly. A genuine competitive advantage for Sage and Ruler cultivation that is currently on a sub-page rather than in the primary donor journey.

WEAKNESSES

- **Post-gift experience void** (D12: 3/10): No acknowledgment sequence, no sustainer invitation, no community signal, no relationship continuity after a first gift. For an organization building its individual donor base from near-standing start, this is the highest-leverage gap in the entire brand.
- **Donor identity mirror absent** (D9: 4/10): The brand centers organizational programs rather than donor identity. No "you are the person who breaks this cycle" narrative. No community-of-givers architecture. A direct conversion suppressor for both Caregiver and Everyman segments.

- **Capital campaign brand architecture missing** (Ruler: 3.78/10): The organization is actively expanding its physical footprint with no public-facing campaign brand, case for support, named giving opportunities, or major gifts program. The expansion is proceeding without the brand infrastructure required to generate transformative gifts.
- **Sub-brand fragmentation** (D1: 6/10): Exodus, Whiz Kids, Rising Scholars, Princesses Ballet, Having the Courage to Change each operate with their own identity without integration into the master brand, diluting 101 years of organizational equity.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Gamble founding story activation:** Bringing the 1924 founding narrative into the primary brand — homepage, about page, giving page, capital campaign materials — costs nothing in new content and produces outsized impact across all five donor archetypes.
- **Capital campaign as brand construction platform:** The expansion underway is the single best moment in City Gospel Mission's recent history to reintroduce the organization, tell the transformation story at full depth, activate the founding narrative, and launch a major donor cultivation program.
- **Long-arc transformation narrative — unoccupied competitive white space:** No Cincinnati peer organization is telling the multi-year, multi-program story of a person who moves through the full City Gospel Mission continuum. That story is available only to City Gospel Mission and is the most emotionally powerful donor narrative in the Cincinnati market. It is untold.
- **Individual donor base construction:** Leadership's revenue diversification goal is a financial survival imperative given documented grant concentration risk. The brand engagement required to build that base is precisely what a structured brand investment would produce.

THREATS

- **Capital expansion financial exposure:** The organization is funding its expansion primarily through securities liquidation (\$2.87M net drawdown in FY2023) while operating on a thin cash margin. A strong individual donor base would provide the revenue buffer needed to manage this exposure. The brand is not currently built to build that buffer quickly.

- **Competitive intensification:** Shelterhouse and Caracole are operating with sharper brand positioning and stronger digital donor experiences. As the Cincinnati donor market becomes more competitive for mid-level and major gifts, City Gospel Mission's contested positioning creates measurable vulnerability.
- **In-kind erosion compounding:** As in-kind contributions decline, program efficiency ratios will deteriorate. A donor who gave based on the 72-cent signal and encounters a lower ratio in subsequent years — without a proactive explanation — will experience that shift as a trust failure.
- **Grant concentration without donor brand backstop:** The 75% collapse in restricted revenue between FY2022 and FY2023 (\$1.14M to \$290K) signals the likely exit of a single major grant. The organization has not yet built the individual donor brand that would absorb that kind of revenue event without organizational stress.

SECTION 4 — Competitive Positioning Review

The greater Cincinnati nonprofit market for homelessness, poverty, and recovery services is active, credentialed, and — for donor attention purposes — increasingly competitive. City Gospel Mission shares donor market space with organizations that have invested meaningfully in their brand and digital giving infrastructure: **Shelterhouse**, which owns the domestic violence recovery narrative with focused clarity and a strong emotional brand; **Caracole**, which has built an identity-level brand around HIV/AIDS housing support that produces exceptional donor loyalty; **The Salvation Army**, which carries national brand awareness and a trust infrastructure that individual nonprofits cannot easily match; **Strategies to End Homelessness**, which has consolidated emergency homelessness services under a professionally positioned brand; and **Every Child Succeeds**, which has built a sophisticated, evidence-forward brand in the early childhood space. This is not a market where City Gospel Mission competes against underdeveloped peers. It competes against organizations that have made brand investments and show it.

City Gospel Mission's competitive positioning score — the aggregate measure of how distinctively the brand occupies donor-mind territory relative to peer organizations — is 6.2 out of 10, placing it in the Contested band. Contested is the most common competitive position for established nonprofits that have not made a deliberate brand investment: present in the donor market, recognizable to existing donors, insufficiently differentiated to reliably win the attention of a new donor encountering multiple charitable options simultaneously. In the Contested band, giving decisions are made primarily on mission affinity and personal relationship — which means they are vulnerable to

disruption by any competitor that builds a stronger brand signal to the same donor segments. City Gospel Mission has earned its place in the Cincinnati donor market through 101 years of consistent service. That history protects the existing base. It does not, by itself, grow the base.

The most significant positioning risk is the program breadth problem — the organizational strength that simultaneously functions as a brand liability. An organization that feeds the homeless, runs ballet classes for 500 girls, operates men's and women's residential recovery programs, runs a jobs van, tutors underserved children, and provides Hispanic outreach is not projecting a single clear psychological identity. It is projecting a community service enterprise. That breadth is real and valuable and genuinely impressive. But in a donor market where Shelterhouse owns one thing with fierce clarity and Caracole owns another with identity-level commitment, an organization that does everything for everyone is paradoxically harder to love — harder to put on a giving list and keep there year after year — than an organization that does one thing brilliantly. City Gospel Mission's breadth is its greatest programmatic asset and its most significant positioning challenge.

The positioning white space available to City Gospel Mission is entirely uncontested and uniquely ownable: the long-arc transformation narrative. No peer organization in Cincinnati is telling the multi-year, multi-program story of what a life looks like when someone moves through emergency shelter, into residential recovery, into job placement, and into sustained independence — and what that journey means for their family across a generation. Every other organization in the competitive set owns a single moment in that arc. Only City Gospel Mission has the program architecture to tell the full story. The founding narrative provides the historical anchor — James Gamble's 1924 conviction that poverty could be broken one life at a time is still the model the organization operates from — and the four-pillar continuum provides the contemporary evidence. No competitor can replicate this story, approximate its depth, or contest its credibility. It is available exclusively to City Gospel Mission. It is not being told.

Exhibit D – Competitive Landscape Scan

Organization	Mission Focus	Archetype Signal	Visual Tier	Donor Brand Clarity	Differentiation	Emotional Resonance
City Gospel Mission	Holistic poverty/recovery/youth	Caregiver (diffuse)	Tier 2	6 / 10	6 / 10	6 / 10
Caracole	HIV/AIDS housing & support	Lover/Caregiver	Tier 3	8 / 10	9 / 10	8 / 10
Shelterhouse	Domestic violence shelter	Hero/Caregiver	Tier 2-3	9 / 10	9 / 10	9 / 10
Strategies to End Homelessness	Emergency homeless services	Everyman	Tier 2	6 / 10	5 / 10	6 / 10
The Salvation Army (Cincinnati)	Broad social services	Caregiver/Ruler	Tier 3	7 / 10	6 / 10	7 / 10
Every Child Succeeds	Early childhood home visiting	Innocent/Sage	Tier 3	8 / 10	8 / 10	7 / 10

Competitive Positioning Score: 6.2 / 10 – Contested

SECTION 5 — Investment Readiness Assessment

Investment readiness, in the context of brand strategy, is not simply a question of whether an organization has the budget for a brand engagement. It is a question of whether the organization has the strategic clarity, asset base, organizational capacity, and leadership alignment to absorb a brand investment and convert it into fundraising outcomes within a reasonable operational window. A brand engagement delivered to an organization without strategic direction produces beautiful work that goes nowhere. A brand engagement delivered to an organization with clear direction, strong asset inventory, and genuine urgency produces a fundraising instrument that pays for itself within the first campaign cycle. The difference is readiness. And readiness is measurable.

City Gospel Mission's composite investment readiness score is 7.0 out of 10 — the Investment Ready band. That score is produced by five dimensions: strategic clarity at 7 out of 10, brand asset inventory at 8 out of 10, organizational capacity at 6 out of 10, financial readiness for brand investment at 7 out of 10, and leadership alignment at 7 out of 10. Each dimension matters, but the financial readiness finding deserves particular attention because it runs counter to the intuitive read. An organization operating on a thin cash margin, funding a capital expansion through securities liquidation, and carrying documented grant concentration risk might appear to be a poor candidate for a brand investment. The analysis produces the opposite conclusion. City Gospel Mission's financial exposure is *caused* by its underdeveloped individual donor brand. Every month the brand investment is deferred is a month in which a single grant non-renewal — a scenario the FY2023 financials suggest has already occurred once, with restricted revenue collapsing 75% year over year from \$1.14M to \$290K — can produce an organizational crisis rather than a manageable revenue adjustment. The capital expansion creates additional urgency: organizations in active physical growth campaigns have natural permission to invest in brand and fundraising infrastructure simultaneously, and that permission window closes when the expansion is complete.

The two most important investment readiness signals driving the score upward are the brand asset inventory and the strategic clarity dimensions. The asset inventory is exceptional — the Gamble founding story, the four-pillar continuum, the Wings of Hope newsletter infrastructure, the YouTube transformation content, the 101-year institutional history, and the capital expansion as a natural reintroduction platform are all present and available. A brand engagement does not need to create these assets. It needs to organize, activate, and deploy them. That dramatically reduces the time and cost required to produce a high-impact brand system and accelerates the organization's time to

fundraising outcomes. The strategic clarity is equally strong: leadership has identified the revenue diversification imperative, and the brand engagement has a clear brief to work from. There is no ambiguity about where the organization needs to go — only about how the brand needs to be built to get there. The primary drag on the readiness score is organizational capacity in the digital infrastructure layer — the giving page, mobile experience, and email acquisition gaps suggest that digital giving infrastructure has not been a strategic priority, which means the brand engagement must include digital experience alongside brand identity to produce the outcomes the organization needs.

The investment readiness verdict for City Gospel Mission is unambiguous: this organization is positioned to act now, and the timing argument for action is stronger than the timing argument for deferral. The capital expansion, the revenue diversification imperative, the grant concentration risk, and the competitive intensification in the Cincinnati donor market are not separate reasons to consider a brand investment. They are four simultaneous converging pressures that collectively produce a single conclusion — the brand engagement that would address all four of them is available, the raw materials for it are already in place, and the window in which the capital expansion creates maximum brand construction leverage is open and will close.

SECTION 6 — Package Recommendation

The recommendation that follows demonstrates how BrandAudit™ findings translate into an implementation roadmap. It is the logical conclusion of a four-stage diagnostic that scored City Gospel Mission's brand across twelve signal dimensions, five donor archetypes, a competitive landscape of six peer organizations, and a financial intelligence analysis drawn from three years of audited financial statements. A diagnosis this specific produces a prescription this specific. The prescription is not a preference. It is what the findings require.

The recommended engagement is BrandLaunch™, with a capital campaign brand module.

BrandMark™ — the visual identity and brand standards engagement — would address the fragmentation and visual consistency gaps identified in Section 1. It would not address the donor identity failure, the Ruler-blind capital campaign, the post-gift experience void, the impact translation gap, or the individual donor base construction infrastructure that City Gospel Mission's revenue diversification strategy requires.

BrandVoice™ — the messaging and narrative architecture engagement — would address the voice inconsistency and donor identity gaps. It would not produce the full digital giving experience, the sustainer program architecture, or the capital campaign identity that the expansion

and major donor cultivation goals require. BrandLaunch™ addresses all of it: the visual system, the voice architecture, the donor journey, the giving experience, the sustainer program framework, and the capital campaign brand — in a single, integrated engagement that produces a brand system, not a collection of improved assets. It is the right intervention because it is the only intervention that matches the full scope of what the findings require.

What BrandLaunch™ addresses for City Gospel Mission, specifically, is the distance between the brand City Gospel Mission currently has and the brand its fundraising strategy requires it to have. It activates the Gamble founding story as a primary brand narrative and deploys it across the homepage, the about experience, the capital campaign materials, and the major donor cultivation system. It reframes the four-pillar program architecture as a single integrated transformation continuum — the long-arc narrative that is the most powerful and exclusively ownable story in the Cincinnati donor market. It builds the donor identity architecture that makes a Caregiver feel they belong and an Everyman feel they are part of Cincinnati's civic responsibility. It constructs the capital campaign brand — the identity, the case for support, the named giving architecture, and the legacy giving entry points — that the expansion requires to generate the transformative gifts that are currently not accessible to the organization. And it rebuilds the digital giving experience — the giving page, the post-gift sequence, the sustainer program framework, the mobile experience — into a system that converts donor attention into committed giving relationships at the rate the revenue diversification strategy requires.

The stakes of not addressing these findings are not abstract. City Gospel Mission is operating with a 75% collapse in restricted revenue year over year, a capital expansion funded primarily through securities liquidation, a fundraising cost ratio of 31% that a foundation program officer will scrutinize before making a significant commitment, and an individual donor base that has not yet been built to function as the revenue backstop that the organization's grant concentration risk demands. The brand is the mechanism through which that donor base gets built — or doesn't. Every month that passes without a donor identity architecture is a month in which first-time donors who gave from mission affinity lapse without being retained. Every month that passes without a capital campaign brand is a month in which the expansion proceeds without the major gift infrastructure that would reduce the securities drawdown required to fund it. Every month that passes without Sage-grade trust architecture — outcome documentation, governance visibility, a Candid Gold Seal or equivalent third-party validation — is a month in which foundation cultivation conversations happen at a disadvantage that the organization's 101-year track record and genuine program quality should not impose.

On the other side of BrandLaunch™, City Gospel Mission has a brand that tells the complete story of what it is and what it does — from James Gamble's founding conviction in 1924 to the transformation story of the person who graduated from Exodus last quarter and is now holding a job and raising their children in a stable home. It has a capital campaign identity that can activate Ruler-archetype lead gift conversations at the five- and six-figure level. It has a digital giving experience that converts casual website visitors into first-time donors and first-time donors into monthly sustainers. It has a trust architecture that survives foundation due diligence at the major grant level. And it has a brand that finally carries the weight of 101 years of uninterrupted community investment — not as institutional history, but as the most compelling live argument for why Cincinnati's most vulnerable residents deserve exactly this organization, doing exactly this work, with exactly the support that a well-told brand story can now finally ask for with confidence.

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BrandAudit™ is a proprietary methodology of The Small Biz CMO. All findings in this report are based on publicly available brand assets and audited financial documents reviewed in April 2026.

DOES ANY OF THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

A brand that works hard but doesn't convert at the level your mission deserves. Campaigns that produce warmth but not commitments. A giving experience that loses momentum at the exact moment donors are ready to say yes. A major donor conversation you're not quite ready to have — not because the work isn't there, but because the brand isn't carrying its weight.

City Gospel Mission's story is not unusual. It is, in fact, the story of most nonprofits doing genuinely important work in competitive donor markets. The brand was built organically — layer by layer, campaign by campaign — without the strategic architecture underneath it that converts attention into trust, trust into commitment, and commitment into a giving relationship that lasts.

That gap is the most expensive thing most nonprofits aren't measuring.

What We Can Do for Your Organization

The BrandAudit™ you just read is not a showcase document. It is a representative example of what every BrandAudit™ engagement produces — a precise, evidence-based diagnostic of how your brand is performing as a fundraising instrument, where it is suppressing donor confidence, and what specific interventions would close the gap.

How it works: BrandAudit™ (diagnostic) → BrandMark™ (visual identity system) / BrandVoice™ (messaging & narrative system) → BrandLaunch™ (integrated identity + voice + donor journey + digital giving experience). The audit clarifies which path matches your current condition and fundraising goals.

Your organization has its own archetype signal. Its own donor perception alignment score. Its own competitive positioning story — and its own white space that no competitor is currently occupying. The BrandAudit™ finds all of it.

What you walk away with is not a brand opinion. It is a diagnosis that identifies the systemic constraints suppressing donor confidence and conversion — and a specific prescription for what to do next. **This is not a design problem that can be solved with isolated tweaks.** It is a strategic problem: how the organization's story, signals, and donor experience function together (or fail to) as a fundraising instrument. The

deliverable is client-ready and board-ready — built to create clarity, alignment, and momentum toward the right intervention, executed as an integrated system.

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Ready to See What Your Brand Is Actually Saying?

Start with a BrandAudit™ — \$3,000

A complete, evidence-based assessment of your nonprofit's brand as a fundraising instrument. Twelve-dimensional brand signal scoring. Psychographic donor alignment analysis across your primary giving segments. Competitive positioning review. Investment readiness assessment. And a specific package recommendation grounded in your organization's actual condition — not a generic consulting prescription.

Delivered as a polished, client-facing report within **15 business days** of intake completion.

One More Thing Worth Knowing

If your BrandAudit™ leads to a BrandMark™, BrandVoice™, or BrandLaunch™ engagement, 50% of your \$3,000 audit fee — \$1,500 — is credited toward that engagement, provided you engage within 60 days of your audit delivery date.

The audit is not a loss leader. It is a serious strategic deliverable that stands on its own. But if the findings point toward a larger intervention — and they often do — you should know that half of the investment you made in understanding your brand problem goes directly toward solving it. The 60-day window exists because the findings are most actionable when the momentum is fresh. Organizations that move quickly get more from the engagement. This is our way of rewarding that instinct.

The Small Biz CMO works exclusively with nonprofits and small businesses that are serious about using brand as a fundraising instrument. If that's where you are, we'd like to talk.

[\[Schedule a Conversation\]](#)

APPENDICES

BrandAudit™ Supplemental Scorecards

City Gospel Mission & Subsidiaries

Cincinnati, Ohio

Prepared by The Small Biz CMO

April 2026

These appendices are designed to accompany the completed BrandAudit™ report for City Gospel Mission & Subsidiaries. They present the underlying scored outputs in a client-facing format intended to strengthen the report's evidentiary weight without interrupting the narrative flow of the main document.

Appendix A

Brand Signal Scorecard

The Brand Signal Scorecard evaluates how consistently and credibly the City Gospel Mission brand performs across twelve dimensions that shape donor trust, clarity, and conversion readiness. The composite Brand Signal Score is **5.83 out of 10**, placing the brand in the **Developing** band.

Dimension	Score	Rating	Client-Facing Rationale
D1 — Visual Consistency	6.0 / 10	Developing	The core identity is recognizable across touchpoints, but sub-brands and secondary assets weaken cohesion and make the organization feel more fragmented than it is.
D2 — Voice Clarity	6.0 / 10	Developing	A general tone is present, but the website, newsletter, and giving experience do not consistently sound like the same organization speaking with one governing voice.
D3 — Message Hierarchy	6.0 / 10	Developing	A motivated visitor can understand the organization, but the most compelling story is not foregrounded quickly enough for first-time donor conversion.
D4 — Archetype Signal Clarity	6.0 / 10	Developing	The brand broadly signals Caregiver energy, but not with the singular clarity required to create a strong psychological identity in the donor's mind.
D5 — Ask Credibility by Giving Band	5.0 / 10	Developing	The brand can support lower-band and transactional giving, but it creates friction for major donor, foundation, and capital campaign cultivation.
D6 — Emotional Register	6.0 / 10	Developing	Emotional warmth appears in select channels, especially storytelling environments, but it is not consistent enough to shape the full donor journey.
D7 — Mission Clarity	8.0 / 10	Strong	The organization's mission is unusually clear and programmatically coherent, with a four-pillar structure that communicates real substance and logic.
D8 — Call-to-Action Coherence	5.0 / 10	Developing	Donation pathways exist, but the transition from story and mission into action feels more transactional than strategically earned.

D9 — Donor Identity Mirror	4.0 / 10	Critical Gap	The brand centers the organization and its programs far more than the donor's role, limiting emotional ownership and suppressing identity-based giving.
D10 — Relationship Signal	4.0 / 10	Critical Gap	There is little evidence that the brand treats giving as the beginning of a long-term relationship rather than a one-time transaction.
D11 — Impact Legibility	6.0 / 10	Developing	The organization communicates meaningful work, but donor-level impact is not translated clearly enough for a prospective giver to see what their gift specifically makes possible.
D12 — Trust Architecture	7.0 / 10	Strong	Financial transparency and stewardship signals are stronger than average, but they are not yet deployed strategically enough across the full donor journey.

Brand Signal Summary

City Gospel Mission's strongest dimensions are **Mission Clarity**, **Trust Architecture**, and the broader coherence between programs and purpose. Its weakest dimensions are the donor-facing relationship layers — especially **Donor Identity Mirror** and **Relationship Signal** — where the brand underperforms not because the mission is weak, but because the donor's role in that mission is not yet being framed clearly or consistently.

Appendix B

Donor Perception Alignment Matrix

The Donor Perception Alignment Matrix scores how the brand reads through the psychological lens of the five donor archetypes most relevant to City Gospel Mission's fundraising future. The table below presents all nine sub-dimensions for each archetype, along with the weighted composite and alignment band.

Caregiver

Sub-Dimension	Score
Perception	6
Attention	6
Persuasion	6
Brand Equity	7
Motivation	6
Emotional Resonance	7
Comprehension	6
Shareability	5
Intent to Act	6
Weighted Composite	6.0 / 10
Alignment Band	Partial

Client-facing read: The brand reaches the Caregiver with enough warmth and mission logic to earn consideration, but it does not yet convert that emotional affinity into durable donor identity or long-term commitment.

Everyman

Sub-Dimension	Score
Perception	6
Attention	6
Persuasion	6
Brand Equity	6
Motivation	6
Emotional Resonance	6
Comprehension	6
Shareability	5
Intent to Act	6
Weighted Composite	5.89 / 10
Alignment Band	Partial

Client-facing read: The brand contains the raw materials for strong Everyman appeal through local rootedness and community service, but it does not yet fully translate those strengths into a vivid civic-belonging signal.

Sub-Dimension	Score
Perception	6
Attention	6
Persuasion	6
Brand Equity	6
Motivation	6
Emotional Resonance	6
Comprehension	6
Shareability	6
Intent to Act	6
Weighted Composite	6.0 / 10
Alignment Band	Partial

Client-facing read: The brand offers real hope and human transformation, but it does not consistently simplify or frame those stories in the optimistic, redemptive terms this segment responds to most strongly.

Sage

Sub-Dimension	Score
Perception	5
Attention	5
Persuasion	5
Brand Equity	6
Motivation	5
Emotional Resonance	5
Comprehension	6
Shareability	5
Intent to Act	5
Weighted Composite	5.22 / 10
Alignment Band	Gap

Client-facing read: The brand communicates enough seriousness to avoid dismissal, but not enough strategic evidence, outcome logic, or intellectual authority to unlock significant Sage confidence.

Ruler

Sub-Dimension	Score
Perception	4
Attention	4
Persuasion	3
Brand Equity	4
Motivation	3
Emotional Resonance	3
Comprehension	4
Shareability	4
Intent to Act	3
Weighted Composite	3.78 / 10
Alignment Band	Critical Gap

Client-facing read: The brand currently fails to project the institutional gravitas, legacy architecture, and campaign readiness required to activate transformative Ruler-level giving.

Alignment Summary

Across the five archetypes, the brand performs in the **Partial** range with its more accessible donor segments and falls into a more meaningful **Gap** with its high-capacity growth segments. The most important finding is not that the brand has no donor appeal; it is that the brand's strongest growth opportunity — major donor and campaign-aligned giving — is the area where its current signal is weakest.

Appendix C

Competitive Landscape Scan

The Competitive Landscape Scan compares City Gospel Mission's current donor-facing position against key peer organizations operating in the greater Cincinnati nonprofit market.

Organization	Mission Focus	Archetype Signal	Visual Tier	Donor Brand Clarity	Differentiation	Emotional Resonance
City Gospel Mission	Holistic poverty / recovery / youth	Caregiver (diffuse)	Tier 2	6 / 10	6 / 10	6 / 10
Caracole	HIV/AIDS housing & support	Lover / Caregiver	Tier 3	8 / 10	9 / 10	8 / 10
Shelterhouse	Domestic violence shelter	Hero / Caregiver	Tier 2-3	9 / 10	9 / 10	9 / 10
Strategies to End Homelessness	Emergency homeless services	Everyman	Tier 2	6 / 10	5 / 10	6 / 10
The Salvation Army (Cincinnati)	Broad social services	Caregiver / Ruler	Tier 3	7 / 10	6 / 10	7 / 10
Every Child Succeeds	Early childhood home visiting	Innocent / Sage	Tier 3	8 / 10	8 / 10	7 / 10

Competitive Positioning Score: 6.2 / 10

Strategic Position Band: Contested

Positioning White Space Narrative

City Gospel Mission's most defensible white space is the **long-arc transformation narrative**: the multi-stage story of how a person can move from crisis to recovery to work to sustained stability within one organizational ecosystem. No peer in the competitive set owns this territory with clarity because most competitors occupy only one point on that journey — emergency intervention, housing, recovery, or family support — rather than the full continuum. City Gospel Mission can credibly claim this space because its four-pillar structure gives it a program reality that competitors cannot imitate and because its 101-year history provides a trust anchor that deepens the claim. To own this territory, the brand would need to stop presenting the organization as a collection of programs and begin presenting it as one integrated transformation engine. If claimed with clarity, this positioning would reduce direct competition by shifting donor comparison away from category overlap and toward a story only City Gospel Mission can tell.

Appendix D

Investment Readiness Scorecard

The Investment Readiness Scorecard evaluates whether City Gospel Mission is positioned to act on the findings of the BrandAudit™ now, and whether the surrounding conditions make strategic delay more costly than strategic action.

Dimension	Score	Rating	Brief Rationale
Strategic Clarity	7.0 / 10	Strong	The organization's need to diversify revenue, deepen donor relationships, and support larger fundraising goals is sufficiently clear to support a focused brand investment.
Brand Asset Inventory	8.0 / 10	Strong	The Gamble founding story, four-pillar continuum, newsletter storytelling, long institutional history, and campaign moment provide unusually rich raw material for brand development.

Organizational Capacity	6.0 / 10	Developing	The organization appears capable of acting on strategic findings, though its donor-facing digital systems suggest execution capacity is not yet optimized.
Financial Readiness	7.0 / 10	Strong	While the financial picture includes pressure points, those same pressures increase the strategic case for investing in a stronger donor brand rather than delaying it.
Leadership Alignment	7.0 / 10	Strong	The organization's fundraising direction and urgency signals suggest a brand engagement would likely be absorbed in service of real institutional priorities.
Composite Score	7.0 / 10	Investment Ready	The organization is positioned to act now, with timing and strategic conditions favoring action over deferral.

Investment Readiness Verdict

City Gospel Mission is investment-ready not because conditions are easy, but because they are consequential. The combination of capital expansion, revenue concentration risk, a need for stronger donor diversification, and a rich but underdeployed brand asset base creates a strong case for action. In practical terms, the organization already has the strategic ingredients required for a successful brand engagement; what it does not yet have is the brand system capable of converting those ingredients into fundraising leverage.