

When We CONNECT...



Report to the Region 2019-23
Celebrating 15 years of CONNECT!

CONNECT 
CONGRESS OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES



...we evolve with and for our neighbors.

"From 2019-2023, our board of officers committed to strategic planning, and we enter 2024 with engaged leaders across more member communities than ever before. CONNECT started as a shared desire for a "cooperation, communication and sharing" initiative between local government officials and regional governance researcher and

former city manager, Dr. David Young Miller. Our shared successes have made waves regionally and nationally. Over the last 15 years, CONNECT has been featured in several textbooks for regional governance innovation and the subject of countless presentations, media articles, and research projects. I am honored to have led the latest

evolution by significantly growing our funded project portfolio and our staff of program and policy innovation superstars by 300% while embracing new tech. Our table keeps getting bigger while our relationships grow stronger and I'm so very optimistic for our region."

— Lydia Morin, Executive Director



...we grow and uplift regional leadership.

Past and Present Officers and their CONNECT terms

Rich Fitzgerald: Allegheny County Executive (2012-2023)

JR Henry: Chair, Vice Chair, Mayor of West View (2017-2019)

Brittany Reno: Chair, Vice Chair, Sharpsburg (2018-2020)

Dr. Patty DeMarco: Chair, Forest Hills (2020-2021)

Andrew Flynn: Chair, Vice Chair, Mt Lebanon (2020-Present)

Dr. Shawn Alfonso-Wells: Vice Chair, Swissvale (2021-Present)

Mary Ellen Ramage: Secretary/Treasurer Etna (2011-Present)

Marita Garrett: Chair, Mayor of Wilkinsburg (2017-2018)

Bill Peduto: City of Pittsburgh Mayor (2014-2021)

Ed Gainey: City of Pittsburgh Mayor (2022-Present)

George Zboyovsky: Manager Representative, Brentwood (2021-Present)

Steve Beuter: Manager Representative, Carnegie (2017-2021)

Bill Stout: Vice Chair, Millvale (2018-2019)

...we create community.

CONNECT members are municipalities, not individuals. Each member municipality designates 1-3 elected and appointed officials to be representatives of the municipality to CONNECT.

Allegheny County
Aspinwall Borough
Baldwin Borough
Baldwin Township
Bellevue Borough
Ben Avon Borough
Blawnox Borough
Brentwood Borough
Carnegie Borough
Castle Shannon Borough
Churchill Borough
City of Clairton
Crafton Borough

Dormont Borough
City of Duquesne
Edgewood Borough
Etna Borough
Forest Hills Borough
Green Tree Borough
Homestead Borough
Ingram Borough
McKees Rocks Borough
Millvale Borough
Mt. Lebanon Township
Mt. Oliver Borough
Munhall Borough

Oakmont Borough
City of Pittsburgh
Reserve Township
Ross Township
Shaler Township
Sharpsburg Borough
Stowe Township
Swissvale Borough
West Homestead Borough
West Mifflin Borough
West View Borough
Whitehall Borough
Wilkinsburg Borough



Scan the QR code to view our interactive map!





...we learn from each other.

"Through CONNECT, Etna has addressed policy issues that we may not have had the capacity to tackle on our own. We are proud to be part of an organization that is affecting real change in the region."

— Mary Ellen Ramage, Manager, Etna Borough

"CONNECT has an excellent platform to address issues on a regional level, as opposed to municipalities attempting to tackle projects alone. They provide validity to the framework, and the resources necessary for member municipalities to model and adapt, to meet the needs of the community. I am happy that Oakmont is a member of CONNECT."

— Phyllis J. Anderson, MPPM, Assistant Borough Manager of Oakmont



...we share our experiences.

"I think Dave Miller would be impressed with where we're progressing. As municipalities are growing, CONNECT is growing, and CONNECT helps us reach out to our citizens."

— Dan Davis, Councilmember, West Mifflin

"Because of CONNECT, the conversation has changed. We have municipalities who want to work together, CONNECT provides that infrastructure that allows us to work together, and it's uplifting. It has helped every community look at things in a new way."

— Michael Lamb, Former Pittsburgh City Controller

Our founder, Dave Miller, won a Keystone ASPA Lifetime Achievement Award

CONNECT held a virtual memorial for Dave Miller (1948-2020)



2022

GET Solar CONNECT, Digital Equity Capstone, and Regional Climate Action Plan engagement survey, were all completed, and our Climate Action Plan passed

First Future of Fire Summit, and released our report, Building Collaborative Capacity — 2022 Needs Assessment

LEAD Policy Coordinating Group (PCG) convenes higher-level county and city stakeholders to guide the program, working together to address barriers monthly

CONNECT co-wrote an RFP with the county for case management



2021

CONNECT presents Future of Fire research at ALOM

Co-created and led the Strategic Network Leadership Training with partners

First multi-municipal Greenhouse Gas Inventory in Allegheny County passed resolutions to implement the LEAD program

2023

CONNECT received national and philanthropic grants for a regional compost pilot with the City of Pittsburgh

Presented at the International City/County Management Association Co-hosted a Fire Forum and formed a steering committee and subcommittee for Future of Fire

CONNECT graduated from Pitt to become its own 501c3 with support from The Community Foundation for the Alleghenies

...and we have, for the past 15 years!

...we make good ideas possible...

2009-2013

Founded with first slate of Officers & established at GSPIA Center for Metropolitan Studies

2014-2018
Sewer Regionalization
Implementation Committee
(SRC) convenes

Bylaws developed and adopted,
Partnership with 3 Rivers Wet
Weather begins

Two Utility Summits to begin
infrastructure coordination
work; Second Executive Director
transition

EMS funding crisis evaluated by
CONNECT & City Controller
Sun Shot DOE Grant with
PennFuture developing model
zoning for rooftop solar

Health Working Group convenes to
work on opioid/heroin epidemic,
CONNECT co-creates
Coordinate PA with PA One Call

CONNECT Community Paramedic
Program work begins

Transit-Oriented Development
Zoning Project begins

Funded partnership with County
Health Department on opioid/
heroin response



2019

Transit Oriented Development
Zoning Toolkits released with
Pittsburgh Regional Transit

Released our first Climate Action
Plan, and held a Utilities Summit

2020
CONNECT helped members
navigate the new virtual meeting
landscape to Zoom — we were
the first organization to bring
government meetings online!



Released first Regional Recycling
Report, and supported 4 GSPIA
Capstone projects

Finished getting Narcan policies
with EMS

CONNECT received an endowment
of \$1 million housed at the
Pittsburgh Foundation

Launched Infrastructure and
Utilities; Public Safety, Health and
Human Resources; and
Environmental and Economic
Development Working Groups



...we develop shared projects in Infrastructure & Resilience.

CONNECT and partners seek to reduce risk, save taxpayer dollars, and improve our communities as our region changes. The CONNECT Climate Action Plan, developed in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, aims to support our members' existing

plans, coordinate additional meaningful action, and build on the efforts we're already working on together. CONNECT has helped dozens of communities weigh their options, apply for funding, and start projects together; including over 20 individual successes in EV charging, transportation policies, energy efficiency, and climate planning since

2022. In 2022, a partnership with PA Solar Center launched GET Solar CONNECT, providing over \$150,000 in bulk consulting services to 13 governments and authorities for free, resulting in an assessed solar potential of 7MW over 37 public facilities, and unique joint financing offerings for our members.



...we innovate in Public Safety & Wellbeing.

LEAD (Law-Enforcement Assisted Diversion) is a community-based program we launched in 2022, to divert people with unmet behavioral health needs and substance use disorder away from arrests or citations and into comprehensive community-based care. LEAD expanded into 13 communities, including the City of Pittsburgh. Over

140 people have been referred to LEAD since 2022, connecting them with services such as housing support, GED training, parenting classes, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, conflict resolution, and more. The Future of Fire program was developed in 2019 to support nonprofit volunteer fire departments and municipal officials by building

collaborative capacity within Allegheny County. Throughout 2023, building off of our Building Collaborative Capacity and Needs Assessment report, our Future of Fire Consultant, Anthony Terrace, engaged with various municipal officials and fire department chiefs.



...we collaborate in Communications & Technology.

CONNECT works hard to improve the communications and technology of our member municipalities, as well as to serve as a model for best communications practices. Our members provided important feedback as part of our broader strategic planning about what would best serve them on a new CONNECT website.

The Communications & Technology Working Group was formed to advise this process and discuss the broader communications needs of our members, and provide comments for the State Digital Equity Plan. Working with the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, capstone Pitt students and CONNECT

interns produced several reports on the topic: "Digital Governance in Municipal Governments: Equity, Access, and the Digital Divide" (Fall 2022), "Digital Governance in Municipal Governments: Improving Digital Access and Safety for Municipalities" (Fall 2023).



...we develop local government research.

CONNECT's longstanding relationship with the region's academic institutions has allowed us to produce cutting edge research in the public policy sphere. Capstone classes at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs conducted research on volunteer fire service, digital equity and governance, climate

emissions, and diversion programs, all of which became CONNECT priorities spearheaded by our members and staff. CONNECT will continue this relationship by convening a group of academic and subject experts as part of the CONNECT Research Council.

You can view all of our research reports from stormwater, to LEAD, to Future of Fire, by looking at our website at <https://connectgovs.org/>.



...we have fun!







...we grow a team of our members' municipal champions.

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