



University of
Pittsburgh

Center for Metropolitan Studies
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs



What is the mission of the Center for Metropolitan Studies?

In most areas of the United States and other developed countries, the primary policy actors — local governments, civic institutions, private interests, and citizen groups — need to work across boundaries, with each other and with state and national entities in order to deal with a vast array of complex social, environmental, and economic problems that can only be addressed at the local level. The skills and strategies necessary to operate across these boundaries are still in their infancy. At the Center for Metropolitan Studies (CMS), we are committed to hastening their development. Learn more at

<https://www.gspia.pitt.edu/CentersandInstitutes/Centers/CenterforMetropolitanStudies>

CMS is a national leader in studying RIGOs – Regional Intergovernmental Organizations. The RIGO project originated with a simple question: How are policies coordinated across local jurisdictional boundaries in American regions? Learn more at <https://www.rigos.pitt.edu/>

What is CONNECT?

The Congress of Neighboring Communities (CONNECT) is the flagship initiative of GSPIA's Center for Metropolitan Studies.

CONNECT is a nonpartisan initiative that convenes neighboring municipalities, including the city of Pittsburgh, that share borders, challenges, and opportunities in Allegheny County, PA. We provide resources, research, relationships, and opportunities to work together. The CONNECT network serves as both a policy think tank and membership organization, housed by the Center for Metropolitan Studies based in the University of Pittsburgh's nationally-ranked policy school, the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs.

Why CONNECT?

Southwestern Pennsylvania is a very fragmented region; we have the country's most local governments per capita. Immersed in the latest best practices and cutting-edge research for governments, we collaborate across sectors and political boundaries in public and private partnerships to co-develop well-informed models and decision-making processes built on strong relationships and trust.

What does CONNECT do?

CONNECT incubates and pilots policies and programs such as the CONNECT Community Paramedic Program and Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion. Meanwhile, staff also represents the members of CONNECT in multiple policy-oriented working groups convened by both our

members and our partners throughout the region. We also engage graduate students to participate in, contribute to, and learn from all facets of the work. We work extensively with them to develop strategies and conduct research concerning policy issues, translating them into action and solutions.

Working Groups

CONNECT engages in policy areas that member municipalities identify as most pressing. These naturally change over time depending on current political climate, global and local events, and member, partner, and CONNECT's capacity. The top priorities of members are housed in one of our three working groups. Each working group focuses on two or three issues that we are actively engaging the region to address.

- Infrastructure & Utilities Coordination Working Group: Stormwater regionalization & governance; Implementing Coordinate PA software.
- Economic & Economic Development Working Group: Recycling Coordination, Transit-Oriented Development, Reduction of Community Carbon Dioxide Emissions.
- Public Safety, Health, & Human Resources Working Group: Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, Volunteer Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Lead Safety.

Since March 2020, we have also developed a virtual Skill Share series on topics such as the municipal revenue crisis due to COVID-19, census outreach while social distancing, and anti-racism for more equitable communities.

CONNECT and GSPIA

We eagerly welcome all GSPIA students. Students are able to intern with us either for their required 300-hour internship or just informally if you would like to become involved. Volunteering with CONNECT is a great way to make connections in local government and help pursue your career. Students are welcome to attend our Executive Committee and working group meetings if you are curious to see cross-boundary discussion in action.

Learn more about our upcoming meetings and events, working groups, who we are, and more at www.connect.pitt.edu