

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR and INSTITUTE OF POLITICS**  
present the  
**24<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ELECTED OFFICIALS RETREAT**

**Building Regional Competitiveness and Economic  
Opportunities in Southwestern Pennsylvania**

**November 18, 2021**  
**VIRTUAL EVENT**

**Thursday, November 18, 2021**

**9:00 – 9:30 am**                      **Welcome, Program Overview, and Introductions** by Samantha Balbier,  
(30 minutes)                      Director, Institute of Politics and Elsie Hillman Civic Forum, University of  
Pittsburgh

**9:30 – 10:15 am**                      **Fostering Opportunity for All: Envisioning a Robust Regional Economy** by  
(45 minutes)                      [Alan Berube](#), Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Metropolitan Policy  
Program, The Brookings Institution

Session Description:

Berube will discuss the key policies and practices that metro areas need to foster inclusive economic growth. He will examine the state of southwestern Pennsylvania’s economic competitiveness compared to other U.S. metro areas through economic metrics and trends. Berube will explain the opportunities and challenges that the region will need to address to make itself more competitive in the future. He will also explore the impact of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and potential federal infrastructure funding on the region.

**10:15 – 10:30 am**                      **Open Discussion** with Alan Berube  
(15 minutes)

**10:30 – 10:35 am**                      **Break**  
(5 minutes)

**10:35 – 11:45 am**  
(70 minutes)

**Regional Voices of Southwestern Pennsylvania on Economic Opportunity**  
moderated by [Jen Giovannitti](#), President and Trustee, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation

Panelists:

- [Dennis Davin](#), Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
- [Gene Yaw](#), Member, Pennsylvania Senate; Chair, Pennsylvania Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee; Vice Chair, Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee; Chair, Board of Directors, Center for Rural Pennsylvania
- [Mark Anthony Thomas](#), President, Pittsburgh Regional Alliance

Session Description:

Regional and state policymakers will explore economic opportunity in the Pittsburgh region and Pennsylvania. The panel will also examine important economic mobility trends and policies like maximizing community investment, meeting the needs of Pennsylvania energy demands, and innovative economic development programs from across the region.

**11:45 – 12:15 pm**  
(30 minutes)

**Break/Lunch**

**12:15 – 12:45 pm**  
(30 minutes)

**Building an Inclusive Post-pandemic Economy** by [Mike Kerlin](#), Partner, Philadelphia, McKinsey & Company

Session Description:

Kerlin will present on how metro areas can best address their economic and workforce vulnerabilities and position themselves to compete in the post pandemic economy. He will also examine how through fostering inclusive economic growth among underrepresented communities can catalyze regional growth by addressing critical workforce demand challenges. Kerlin will provide real world examples of American metro areas who have positioned themselves to best compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

**12:45 – 1:15 pm**  
(30 minutes)

**The Post-pandemic Southwestern Pennsylvania Economy** by [Vera Krekanova](#), Chief Strategist and Research Officer, Allegheny Conference on Community development

Session Description:

Krekanova will explore southwestern Pennsylvania economic and workforce

data on the impact by the pandemic and opportunities for the region moving forward.

**1:15 – 1:45 pm**  
(30 minutes)

**Open Discussion** with Mike Kerlin and Vera Krekanova

**1:45 – 2:45 pm**  
(60 minutes)

**On the Ground Models of Economic Opportunity**, moderated by [Carissa Schively Slotterback](#), Dean, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh

Panelists:

- [Sherri Chisholm](#), Director, Leading on Opportunity
- [Brandon Dennison](#), CEO, Coalfield Development

Session Description:

Chisholm and Dennison will share practical strategies for foster economic opportunity in urban and rural areas based on best practice initiatives from across the country. They will discuss how they have addressed social, workforce, and economic development challenges in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and West Virginia through their work. The session will also examine the similarities and differences of fostering economic growth in urban and rural areas.

**2:45 – 2:50 pm**  
(5 minutes)

**Break**

**2:50 – 4:00 pm**  
(70 minutes)

**Regional Voices of Southwestern Pennsylvania on Workforce and Education**, moderated by [Stan Thompson](#), Senior Program Director, Education; Executive Director, Pittsburgh Readiness Institute, The Heinz Endowments

Panelists:

- [Camera Bartolotta](#), Member, Pennsylvania Senate; Chair, Pennsylvania Senate Labor and Industry Committee
- [Quintin Bullock](#), President, Community College of Allegheny County
- [Lindsey Williams](#), Member, Pennsylvania Senate; Democratic Chair, Pennsylvania Senate Education Committee

Session Description:

Regional and state policymakers will examine how the pandemic has impacted workforce development and education across the region and innovative practices that communities can adopt to foster better opportunities for students and better connections between K-12 and

postsecondary institutions and industry partners. Panelists will reflect on recent IOP projects and offer new insights into collaborative efforts at the federal, state, and local levels.

**4:00 – 4:30 pm**  
(30 minutes)

**Closing Segment** by [Patrick Gallagher](#), Chancellor, University of Pittsburgh

Session Description:

Discussion of building regional competitiveness to promote workforce development, technological innovation, and industrial capacity so that Pennsylvania can be a leader in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

**4:30 – 4:50 pm**  
(30 minutes)

**Open Discussion** with Patrick Gallagher

**4:50 – 5:00 pm**  
(10 minutes)

**Closing Remarks** by Mark Nordenberg, Chancellor Emeritus and Chair, Institute of Politics, University of Pittsburgh