

Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative Annual Report 2024

The Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative (PFC) exists to make the *Pittsburgh region the best region in the world as measured by safety and thriving of every resident.*

We do this by supporting the leaders of our critical organizations to create systems that enable every resident to live to their fullest potential.

Seeking a Safe, Welcoming and Thriving Region

At the Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative, we have been asking community members the question ***“what would make our region so great that people and businesses clamor to be here?”*** In response, people have told us that they want three things for themselves and their families and friends, to:

1. Be safe wherever they go.
2. Be able to develop themselves to thrive, in large part by engaging in meaningful work that pays enough to meet all their immediate needs and build wealth to meet future demands of their families.
3. Feel included and welcomed in all neighborhoods - where they live and wherever they go for work, social interactions, and entertainment.

In short, a great region is one where every individual can live to their full potential and thrive. The Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative is a non-profit dedicated to making Southwestern Pennsylvania the first region in the world where this is true for everyone. Inspired by our mentor, Paul O’Neill Sr., who led some of the great organizational transformations of the 20th century, we seek to apply the principles of root cause problem solving and habitual excellence to advance this vision.

We believe in vision, and hard-nosed, practical problem solving to achieve excellent results with the abundance of resources our systems can create. Any problem can be solved. But it will take the same things that Paul taught us:

- An unarguable, values-based goal - ideally the goal of perfect safety - that all of our leaders and teams can rally around and learn together to achieve.
- System diagnosis and design skills that are rare, but easy to learn and use when taught in real life problem solving.
- A common “way” to solve problems using universal principles.
- A safe environment to practice and learn.

Partners

PFCs key word is “ENABLE” – enable leaders to agree on goals and way, enable partners to work across silos to solve customer’s real problems, enable partners to use system principles to solve seemingly insoluble problems, and enable families and individuals to live to their fullest potential. Because of this, we only succeed through the successes of these same partners. Our current partners are:

- City of Pittsburgh – Advisory Partner
- Pittsburgh Water – Advisory Partner
- 2 Improve Collective – Violence elimination collective with Hilltop partners
- A+ Schools – Partner in education work
- All Children Thrive – Cincinnati improvement network with similar goals.
- Empowering Teens to Thrive - Partner in Hilltop violence elimination work.
- One Northside/Buhl Foundation – Partner in North Side based thrive work.
- Pittsburgh ACTES – Partner in Hilltop violence elimination work.
- The Pittsburgh Study – Partner in two research grants.
- University of Pittsburgh - Partner in two national research grants.

Team

The Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative has a working board who does voluntary work, and also does paid contracted work using both Board members and other advisors with decades of experience driving Habitual Excellence in organizations. In 2024 the following people did paid work with PFC:

- Lisa Beckwith
- Christina Dixon
- Gerald Harris
- Anthony Pepe
- Geoff Webster

In 2025 we plan to continue to grow the team as needed to advance our mission, and also to develop people in the community with Habitual Excellence leadership and advisory skills so that Pittsburgh can become a place operating through Habitual Excellence in more and more vital community functions.

Resources

No organization can function and grow without resources. The Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative operates on a fee-for-advisory service basis, charging our partners \$1,600 per professional day of work and paying our advisors \$1,110 per professional day of service. This enables the organization to net \$500 per professional day for operating expenses and growth, a 31% gross margin.

In 2024 PFC started the year with \$41,400. We served the City of Pittsburgh with 90 days of advisory services for a gross income of \$144,000.

In Q4 2024 we also served Pittsburgh Water with 13 days of service for an additional \$20,800 in gross income, for a total of \$164,800 in gross income, and \$51,500 in net income.

With PFC's mission to enable public sector and non-profit organizations in the Pittsburgh region, **we have made a commitment to never seek philanthropic funding from local sources so we are never in competition with local organizations for resources.** Our partners are, of course, welcome to seek funding from any sources they choose, and a portion of our 2022 funding came through our partners from foundations. Part of our strategy is to develop models of service with our partners that mitigate the problem of our partners competing with each other which inhibits effective system development for people in our region.

We finished the year with \$92,500 in reserve, adequate to continue to grow in 2025 to serve more key organizations and develop the regional tables and infrastructure to further advance our mission and vision.

Results

Processes, policies and philosophy are critical to success, but the Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative believes that results are all that actually matter to residents. There are proven and repeatable methods to help leaders aim their organizations toward perfect results in everything they do and then enable their people to make rapid progress at unprecedented rates. The sign that habitual excellence is beginning to take hold is measurable improvements of 30-50% year over year on a variety of measures unrelated to each other, with financial benefits that follow. Examples from the City so far include:

- **Worker Safety** – Paul Sr. taught us that worker safety rates are the single best indicator of system excellence. Consider that 25 years ago the worker harm rate for the City was more than 20 times worse than Alcoa. The City's workers' compensation costs were higher than Alcoa's despite the City having more than 30

times fewer employees! In contrast, Mayor Gainey set a goal of zero harm for city workers, and **in just two years the worker harm rates have gone down by a staggering 51% in the pilot department (DPW) and 26% across the entire City workforce. This means roughly 80 fewer City workers are being hurt each year**, showing respect, leaving more people to perform city services, and saving pain and cost. We NEVER do this work for the financial impact, but like Alcoa the City has saved millions of dollars. **The paid worker's compensation claims went from \$8.15 million in 2022 to \$3.3 million in 2023 and \$3.19 million in 2024 – almost \$10 million in two years to spend on value instead of waste.**

- **Violence Reduction** – From day one the aim has been to eliminate violence, and the Plan for Peace has taken a root cause approach, aiming to get upstream and interrupt violence before it occurs. Violence has been decreasing in the nation as a whole, **but in Pittsburgh the rates have plummeted, down 42% in the last 2 years versus 25% nationally.** The administration's work through REACH and Operation Better Block, along with the visionary work of 2 Improve Collaborative to individually assess families in the South Side Hilltop and assure violence prevention needs are met, promise even better results toward the elimination of violence in the future.
- **Safe Transit** – Before 2022 the City literally had no way to ensure important sections of sidewalk were walkable because individual property owners own their own sidewalks. It took the administration just three months to create a pilot across five City departments to work with property owners to repair whole sections of sidewalk. **This process has led to 4 miles of sidewalk repair in the last two years around schools and public transit** that have led to measurable improvements in safety and student absenteeism. This is part of a much larger "Vision Zero" initiative, setting goals at zero harm and making rapid progress through innovation.
- **Affordable Housing** – The Pittsburgh Land Bank was formed in 2016 and had transferred zero properties by the time Mayor Gainey took office. In the last year with the contributions of many close partners, **more than 150 properties have been freed for development.**

A Region of Habitual Excellence

Our vision does not stop with the City. Every key solution to enable universal thriving takes additional partners who agree on the goal and the way. Housing insecurity, mental health, violence elimination, and zero traffic harm require the County. Health and brain development requires Pittsburgh Water safeguarding clean water. Developing skills for social and economic success requires the schools and universities. And ensuring

economic thriving and good health requires our private sector to support healthy air, food and water, and our health systems to help us prevent disease and treat our illnesses effectively and without error and waste. For 2025 our resolution is to create forums where leaders can set common goals and learn and deploy principles to work across our silos to make this the first Region of Habitual Excellence.

To learn more about the Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative, please contact Geoff Webster at gwebster@pghfutures.org.

You can hear more about Habitual Excellence through the Pittsburgh Futures Collaborative at the City on the podcast: <https://creators.spotify.com/pod/show/value-capture/episodes/Journey-Towards-Habitual-Excellence-Lessons-with-Ed-Gainey-e2hsgju/a-ab4l49o>

Our Vision for a Habitually Excellent Pittsburgh:

