



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Allegheny County, City of Pittsburgh and University of Pittsburgh to Build Joint Information Infrastructure with Assistance from Richard King Mellon Foundation**

*Open Data efforts will make local government services more efficient, and include unique partnership with Pitt and Carnegie Mellon University*

**PITTSBURGH** – Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh -- working in conjunction with the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University -- will build joint technology infrastructure that will provide leaders and citizens with data-driven tools to improve the effectiveness of local government.

The Richard King Mellon Foundation has awarded \$1.8 million to fund the first 18 months of the effort, supporting three major initiatives.

The city and county will create a Government Solutions Engineering team of data experts to seek ways to spur local government modernization and supply data-driven management tools to government leaders. The team will work on ways to make government more efficient and customer-friendly for residents; standardize data formats; better track public spending via performance-based budgeting; and synthesize data on tax delinquency and code enforcement to better track problem property owners.

A Regional Data Center maintained by the University of Pittsburgh Center for Social and Urban Research will provide an open data portal that can host information from any local government, nonprofit and civic organization, and academic institution to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation, enhance citizen engagement, and improve research opportunities. The Regional Data Center will also rely on experts at the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University to provide advice on its records management, design, data visualization and security. It will be the first government data portal in the world to include universities as a major partner.

Funding is also included for Pittsburgh to host three Code for America fellows through 2015 who will study ways to improve City systems for buying and contracting with vendors. Improving this procurement system and opening it to the public will save money for the City and taxpayers; create more contracting

opportunities to women and minority owned businesses; and open more government contracts to startups and other small businesses.

“This is our first joint initiative working collaboratively with the City of Pittsburgh,” said County Executive Fitzgerald. “We are building this to not just house what we have today, but also for the future. It’s our ultimate goal that this portal would be available and open to all municipalities as a ‘one stop shop’ for government data. This would provide constituencies throughout our region and beyond with the information that they need to make data driven decisions.”

Mayor Peduto said, “My administration’s number one priority is modernizing city government, and making it better, quicker, and more cost-effective for residents for decades to come. This effort is the backbone for that promise. To get there, and become a model for 21st Century government, Pittsburgh is blessed to have partners from the County Executive to R.K. Mellon to CMU and Pitt, and so many others who will engaged to help us”

Both the city and county have been improving their public technology efforts, from the creation this year of the city’s Department of Innovation & Performance to ongoing development of the integrated data warehouse within the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. But much government information remains on paper or spreadsheets with little accessibility or accountability to the public. By creating shared data systems the city and county will provide for better collaboration by government units; allow civic-minded developers to help make government more efficient and transparent; and make Allegheny County and Pittsburgh a model for community engagement, research and decision-making.

The Regional Data Resource Center will launch a beta web-portal in early 2015 complete with pilot datasets from the City of Pittsburgh. The Regional Data Resource Center, the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County will all be hiring to fill positions associated with these programs in early 2015 and work will begin as soon as staff is in place.

A presentation on the initiative [is available here](#).

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