

Point Park University
Center for Civic & Community Engagement
Strategic Vision Report

POINT PARK
U N I V E R S I T Y

Center for Civic and
Community Engagement



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Executive Summary

The Center for Civic and Community Engagement (CCE) at Point Park University enters its next phase of development with a clear, community-informed roadmap for growth. Over a six-month planning process, the CCE engaged a wide cross section of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and regional partners. This work positions the CCE as a central driver of civic learning, youth engagement, nonprofit capacity building, urban revitalization, and applied research across Downtown Pittsburgh.

The CCE serves as a primary implementation vehicle for Point Park University's Pioneer Vision 2030 Strategic Plan. Through experiential learning, community-immersed partnerships, and Downtown stewardship, the CCE advances the University's core strategic drivers of Program Excellence, Student Experience, and Community Engagement. The initiatives outlined in this plan directly operationalize Pioneer Vision priorities by embedding civic learning across curricula, strengthening student belonging and well-being, and positioning Point Park University as a leading urban anchor institution committed to the vitality of Downtown Pittsburgh.



Challenge

Point Park University is deeply engaged across the region and is well known for its experiential learning model, including engaged course projects, internships, and strong community partnerships. However, much of this engagement has historically been driven at the individual faculty or departmental level rather than coordinated strategically across the institution. As a result, engagement efforts are often siloed, uneven in depth and geographic focus, and not consistently aligned with shared institutional priorities. Community partners have noted that they may interact with as many as eight different points of contact across the University, creating inefficiencies and limiting the potential for long-term, high-impact collaboration. Additionally, data on community engagement has not been consistently tracked or assessed, making impact difficult to prove.

Role of the CCE

The Center for Civic and Community Engagement will serve as a centralized hub and clear “front door” to the University for community partners. Through the CCE, Point Park will be able to intentionally plan engagement efforts, streamline partner communication, formalize and strengthen relationships, and produce consistent reporting that demonstrates collective impact. Achieving this vision will require a shift in institutional culture, with community partnership development, coordination, and reporting intentionally centralized within the CCE to support greater coherence, accountability, and impact. Additionally, the space at 101 Wood Street will become a Third Space for the region, a place for the community to gather and feel a sense of belonging.

Scale of Engagement for the Strategic Visioning Process

To ensure that the plan reflects authentic campus and community priorities, the CCE led a broad and inclusive engagement effort that included more than 350 individuals in the region. This included:

- » More than 50 individual meetings with community partners across youth development, arts and culture, human services, public safety, business, environmental stewardship, and government sectors.
- » Five structured focus groups with over 100 staff, alumni, and doctoral students.
- » Direct engagement with more than 150 undergraduate and graduate students through surveys, listening sessions, and guided conversations inside the CCE space.
- » Benchmarking research of dozens of Community Engagement Centers at Institutions of Higher Education across the country.

Recommended Strategic Vision and Theme

The collective input from these stakeholders identified six strategic themes that represent both Downtown needs and Point Park's core strengths. These include creating a safe, clean, and green Downtown, expanding community partner storytelling and research, strengthening youth engagement and campus integration, increasing arts access, advancing equitable development, and enhancing mental health and wellness. Combining the themes with benchmarking research and University priorities and capacity, leads to the following recommendations:

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission:

Point Park University's Center for Civic and Community Engagement (CCE) serves as a hub to support collaboration and social innovation between the campus and the community. Our mission is to connect Point Park University with Pittsburgh through learning, service, research, activation, and partnerships that create a safer, healthier, and more vibrant region.

Vision:

A thriving Point Park University and Pittsburgh region, anchored by a Center for Civic and Community Engagement where campus and community partners learn, collaborate, and lead meaningful change together.

Values:

- » Meaningful Community Partnership - We build authentic, reciprocal relationships with community partners that are grounded in trust, shared goals, and long-term impact.
- » Inclusion and Belonging - We center inclusion and belonging in all engagement efforts, ensuring that diverse voices shape decisions, programs, and outcomes.
- » Engaging Through Experience - We believe learning is strongest when it is applied, immersive, and connected to real-world challenges and community contexts.
- » Stewardship of Our Downtown - We embrace our responsibility as a downtown anchor institution, contributing to a safe, vibrant, and thriving city through sustained engagement and collaboration.

Recommended Integrated Pillars of Work

To operationalize this work, the CCE will operate within four pillars of work:

1. The **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT** pillar supports service learning, democratic engagement, student leadership, volunteering, creative storytelling, and social innovation. This pillar includes the Bonner Leaders Program, Project Impact Program, and Pioneer Partners Volunteering.
2. The **URBAN IMPACT** pillar advances Point Park's anchor institution role through stewardship, arts activation, youth safety initiatives, and a strategy to develop a Campus District from Market to the Mon. This pillar includes the Campus District initiative.
3. The **COMMUNITY PARTNER SUPPORT** pillar expands research, evaluation, data storytelling, and nonprofit capacity-building services. This pillar includes a research & storytelling hub and Wood Street Communications.
4. The **COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS** pillar integrates basic needs support, trauma-informed practice, mental health initiatives, and public health partnership work. This pillar includes the Pioneer Pantry and Community Garden.

Institutional Opportunities: Initiatives & Strategies

In addition to the four pillars identified above, numerous ideas and opportunities emerged from the listening sessions. The most popular initiatives include development of a Downtown Campus District, a Community Research & Storytelling Hub, a pipeline of youth Civic Engagement from K-Doctorate, convening collegiate basic needs professionals, and leaning into multiple strategies for depth and breadth of engagement.

Initiatives: Signature Programs of the CCE

1. Point Park as the Center of a "Campus District"

Point Park can be the catalyst for activating the Mon River side of downtown Pittsburgh. Currently there is an invisible line after Market Square where engagement stops. Point Park can re-imagine this side of Downtown as an integrated living campus, "The Boulevard District", merging public space, student learning, arts, housing, transit, and community engagement. This model directly supports Pioneer Vision's goal of revitalizing Downtown Pittsburgh through mixed-use activation, arts programming, youth engagement, and community partnership.

2. Community Research & Storytelling Hub

Provide nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations with community-based research education and support, evaluation services, and Wood Street Communications storytelling & media production, leveraging student and faculty talent.

3. Youth Impact: A Pipeline of student civic engagement from K-Doctoral students

Build a structured continuum of youth civic and community engagement that connects K-12 through postsecondary, via K-12 and out of school time partnerships, civic engagement programming including Bonner Leaders and Project Impact, mentorship, summer camps, internships, applied learning, and wraparound support.

4. Collegiate Basic Needs Ecosystem

Create an ecosystem of regional collegiate basic needs professionals to build on research, partnerships and shared services while continuing to support the community's basic needs through an expansion of the Pioneer Pantry and Community Garden.



Strategies: Depth, Reach and Convening: a three-point approach

1. Formalizing Long-Term Collaborations through Anchor Partners

Some organizations repeatedly appear across stakeholder conversations and partnerships. These are ideal Anchor Partners, institutions with which CCE can build formal partnership agreements/MOUs. This will allow the University to build deeper, more meaningful partnerships with organizations that we are closely aligned with and have multiple touchpoints.

2. Multi-Partner Campus-Based Initiatives (One-Point Launch, Multiple Participants)

These are existing or planned Point Park-hosted initiatives that naturally bring together multiple partners, agencies, youth, students, and community stakeholders. They are ideal because the infrastructure lives at PPU. Initiatives like High School Media Day, Project Impact, Rising Brothers & Sisters are excellent examples of the multi-partner campus-based initiative approach.

3. Point Park as a Convener

With our small size, nimble planning ability and central location, Point Park is uniquely positioned to serve as a convener, bringing together diverse stakeholders around shared issues, coordinating resources, and generating collaborative impact that no single actor could deliver alone. This convening function already operates at our institution through initiatives like the Pittsburgh Media Partnership.

The Center

In addition to the programmatic work of the CCE, the physical space at 101 Wood Street (The Center) should be activated as a thriving “Third Space” for the campus and community. A third place describes places that are informal, neutral, and accessible, where people can gather regularly to build relationships, exchange ideas, and foster a sense of belonging. The Center space is designed as a welcoming, accessible hub, which can function as a shared civic commons where students, faculty, staff, and community partners regularly intersect for dialogue, collaboration, and problem-solving.

An analysis of hundreds of creative ideas from faculty, staff and students suggest the Community Center space should be positioned as:

- » A creative civic hub, not an office
- » A living room for campus-community collaboration
- » A platform for student leadership and experimentation
- » A high-visibility convening space downtown
- » A flexible, evolving ecosystem, not a static program suite

The Center for Civic and Community Engagement will serve as a “front door” to the university, supporting the connection between the campus and the community

Sustainability and Institutional Commitment

The CCE's model is grounded in diversified funding that blends institutional support, foundation investment, government grants, earned revenue, corporate sponsorships, and alumni engagement. Advisory councils and anchor partnership agreements will ensure accountability, transparency, and shared ownership. Ongoing assessment, storytelling, and annual impact reporting will keep the work visible and aligned with community needs.

Through this plan, Point Park University affirms its role as a university in the city and a university for the city. The CCE will continue to build meaningful partnerships, expand opportunities for students, and contribute to a safer, healthier, more equitable, and more vibrant Downtown Pittsburgh.

Phased Growth and Long-Term Vision

The plan outlines a multi-year strategy that starts with capacity building, partnership agreements, and pilot activities for the Downtown Campus District. Over time, the CCE will expand staffing, increase paid student roles, scale the Community Research and Storytelling Hub, and establish designated district zones focused on youth engagement, arts, environmental stewardship, and research activity. By 2030, Point Park aims to be recognized as a national leader in urban civic engagement, youth leadership pipelines, community-based research, and arts-driven community activation.



Strategic Vision Report

I. Methodology & Engagement Process

To build an authentic and forward-looking vision for the Center for Civic & Community Engagement, we undertook a **six-month, campus-community engagement process** grounded in listening, collaboration, and broad participation. The goal was to understand Point Park University's current civic footprint, identify emerging needs, and co-design opportunities for deeper impact. Additionally, we performed national benchmarking research to learn how other Centers for Civic and Community Engagement were structured.

Campus Engagement

Across the University, we met with leaders, faculty, and staff from every academic school, as well as with student organizations, advisers, program directors, and key operational units. To ensure broad and meaningful participation, we hosted five structured focus groups with more than 100 participants representing diverse roles and perspectives.

- » Three faculty and staff focus groups (in person & online)
- » One alumni focus group
- » One doctoral student focus group

In addition, the Center directly surveyed **100 undergraduate and graduate students** and invited **another 100 students** into the CCE space for guided conversation, idea generation, and feedback on programming and campus needs.



Community Partner Engagement

Externally, we conducted over **50 individual meetings** with community partners across Pittsburgh's nonprofit, education, arts, government, and business sectors. These conversations explored:

- » Our current collaborations
- » Their organizational needs
- » Shared challenges in the Downtown ecosystem
- » New ideas for partnership, research, storytelling, and student engagement

Partners were asked to articulate both immediate needs and long-term visions, allowing us to map trends across youth development, public health, arts and culture, nonprofit capacity-building, mental health, housing insecurity, and equitable development.

National Benchmarking

To guide the development of the CCE, we reviewed the organizational structures, portfolios, and signature programs of community engagement centers at universities nationwide. This analysis included Campus Compact institutions, Carnegie Community Engagement designees, and anchor-institution leaders across urban, suburban, and rural contexts.

The following pillars reflect common areas of responsibility and programmatic focus shared across these centers, synthesizing national best practices with approaches most relevant to Point Park's mission and downtown urban environment:

1. Academic Service Learning & Community Engaged Courses
2. Co-Curricular Service & Volunteering Programs
3. Community Partnerships & Campus-Community Relationships
4. Community-Based Research (CBR) & Participatory Action Research (PAR)
5. Democratic Engagement, Dialogue, and Civic Learning
6. Student Leadership, Training & Development
7. Basic Needs / Student Support
8. Community Hubs, Events & Signature Initiatives
9. Outreach, Communications & Storytelling
10. Social Innovation
11. Public Health & Wellbeing Initiatives
12. Arts Activation & Creative Placemaking
13. Evaluation, Reporting & Institutional Strategy

Detailed information about each of these pillars and example universities are included in the Appendices.

Outcomes of the Engagement Process

This extensive listening effort generated:

- » A comprehensive ecosystem map of Downtown needs and opportunities
- » More than 300 actionable ideas
- » A clear set of shared priorities across campus and community stakeholders
- » The six strategic themes that anchor this report

Throughout this process, our goal was to center **partnership, transparency, co-creation, and equity**, ensuring that the strategic vision reflects the lived experiences of those we serve and collaborate with every day.

Downtown-Centered Inquiry Approach ("Pittsburgh is Our Campus")

- » Centering the lived experiences of those who occupy Downtown every day. We focused on residents, youth, workers, nonprofits, arts organizations, and public agencies who interact with Downtown's opportunities and challenges in real time. Their insights framed our understanding of safety, public space, environmental conditions, mobility, and belonging.
- » Viewing the University as part of a larger civic ecosystem. Rather than treating community engagement as an external activity, we examined how Point Park's classrooms, theaters, residence halls, offices, and public spaces are interconnected with the neighborhood around us. This approach highlights how student learning and community well-being are tightly linked.
- » Prioritizing issues that directly impact students and the broader community. From youth safety and mental health to arts access and equitable development, we elevated areas where the University's strengths align with the most pressing needs of Downtown Pittsburgh.
- » Using Downtown as a living laboratory for experiential learning. This approach positions the city as an active learning environment, one where students conduct research, explore creative projects, participate in civic life, and collaborate with local organizations to solve real problems.
- » Recognizing our responsibility as a Downtown anchor institution. Our inquiry emphasized stewardship, partnership, and shared investment. We listened with the understanding that our actions shape the future of the community we call home.

By grounding this strategic vision in a Downtown-centered inquiry approach, the CCE ensures that our programs, partnerships, and priorities not only strengthen Point Park University, but also contribute to a safer, cleaner, more equitable, and more vibrant Downtown Pittsburgh for everyone.

II. Capacity and Need: The Current Point Park and Pittsburgh Landscape

In order to understand and contextualize the findings of the listening and research process, it was important to know the capacity and history of both Point Park University and Downtown Pittsburgh

Point Park University: History and Capacity

Point Park has been woven into the fabric of Downtown Pittsburgh for more than six decades. Founded in 1960 as Point Park Junior College, the institution grew rapidly into Point Park College in 1966 and achieved university status in 2003. Throughout this evolution, Point Park has remained committed to providing hands-on, career-focused education rooted in the real-world dynamics of an urban environment.

Located in the center of Downtown Pittsburgh, Point Park has long integrated experiential learning, civic partnerships, and community engagement into its academic identity. The University's programs have historically leveraged the city as a living laboratory, allowing students to learn not just from textbooks, but from the neighborhoods, organizations, and people who shape the region.

Over time, this approach expanded into a wide range of community-engaged initiatives across academic programs and campus units, including:

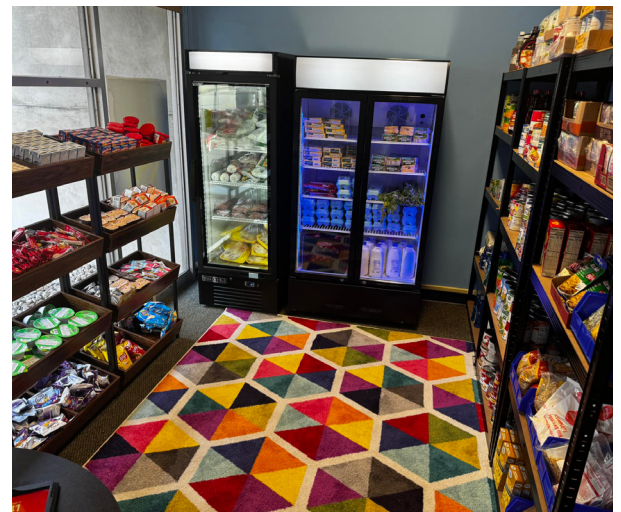
- **School of Communication & the Center for Media Innovation (CMI)**
The CMI has engaged local organizations through media production, documentary storytelling, community journalism, and collaborative projects that amplify community voices and support nonprofit communication needs.
- **School of Education**
Education students and faculty have partnered with Pittsburgh Public Schools, afterschool programs, and youth-serving nonprofits through field placements, tutoring, literacy support, and service-learning initiatives.
- **School of Arts & Sciences**
Psychology students and faculty have partnered with homeless serving organizations to launch the Mobile Thriving Respite, which brings joy and quality of life to unhoused individuals in our community.
- **Rowland School of Business**
Rowland School of Business has a long-standing tradition of working in the community including the impactful Rising Brothers & Sisters Program, which provides workshops and videos to help high school students who plan on attending college, as well as undergraduate students who need academic and social support.
- **Pioneer Pantry & Basic Needs Initiatives**
The University's commitment to student well-being includes the Pioneer Pantry, campus garden, Break Box program, and emergency supports, all of which mobilize campus and community collaboration to meet essential needs.
- **Conservatory of Performing Arts & Pittsburgh Playhouse**
The Playhouse has served as a major cultural anchor for decades, partnering with schools, community arts organizations, and youth programs to offer performances, workshops, festivals, and behind-the-scenes experiences.
- **School of Continuing and Professional Studies**
The SCPS help to create degree complete degree completion and certificate programs through workforce development and community partnerships.



Point Park University's vision is to be one of the most dynamic, urban universities in America.

- **Department of Community Engagement & Leadership/Ph.D. in Community Engagement**

Serving as an academic and civic hub, this department has led applied research, service-learning courses, community leadership programs, and faculty-community partnerships for more than a decade. Launched as one of the first programs of its kind nationally, the Ph.D. in Community Engagement has elevated Point Park's leadership in civic scholarship, community-based research, participatory methods, and social impact. Doctoral students partner with nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations to conduct applied research that addresses regional challenges and advances equity. This program laid essential groundwork for the creation of the CCE by establishing Point Park as a center of excellence in community-engaged scholarship.



- **Campus Volunteerism & Civic Events**

Point Park students regularly participate in citywide service projects and community events including the Out of the Darkness Walk, Play It Forward Pittsburgh, Downtown cleanups, arts festivals, and collaborative community days.

Across these efforts, several patterns emerged that paved the way for a centralized Center for Civic & Community Engagement:

- » a strong student interest in hands-on service, civic learning, and applied research.
- » a model for youth civic & community engagement that begins in K-12 and continues through doctoral work
- » longstanding faculty partnerships with organizations across Pittsburgh.
- » the University's nationally unique Ph.D. program in community engagement.
- » deep institutional ties to the arts, media, youth development, and public service sectors.
- » increasing demand from community partners for research, storytelling, and student capacity.
- » Point Park's identity as a Downtown anchor with responsibilities to its surrounding neighborhood.
- » the need for coordinated structures, communication, and strategic direction.

The creation of the CCE represents the next chapter in Point Park's civic evolution, bringing together decades of community-focused work into a unified, strategic, and forward-looking center. Building on this legacy, the CCE positions Point Park University to lead boldly in civic engagement, public scholarship, and community transformation across Downtown Pittsburgh and beyond.



Downtown Pittsburgh: Trends, Challenges, Opportunities

Downtown Pittsburgh is a neighborhood in transition, rich with cultural assets, growing youth presence, and strong institutional partners, yet facing complex social, economic, and public safety challenges. As the home of Point Park University, the Playhouse, and thousands of students, Downtown functions as both our campus environment and our extended community. Understanding current trends and emerging needs is critical to shaping the CCE's strategic direction.

Key Trends

- **Increasing youth presence -**
Thousands of middle school, high school, and transition-age youth travel through Downtown daily, relying on transit hubs, afterschool sites, and informal gathering spaces. Their presence provides both vibrancy and an urgent call for structured engagement, safety, and support.
- **Growing arts and cultural momentum -**
The Cultural District, Pittsburgh Playhouse, August Wilson Center, and numerous cultural organizations continue to attract visitors and shape Downtown as a regional creative hub, offering major opportunities for student learning and partnership.
- **Expanding nonprofit and service ecosystems -**
Downtown is home to a dense network of human service organizations serving individuals experiencing homelessness, housing instability, mental health needs, and economic hardship. Collaboration among these organizations is strong, but resources remain stretched.
- **Shifts in workforce and economic patterns -**
Hybrid work models and changing office occupancy have transformed Downtown's daytime population, affecting businesses, foot traffic, transit usage, and perceptions of public space.



Challenges

- **Public safety and perception -**
Concerns about youth safety, substance use, environmental conditions, and street harassment shape how students, families, and visitors experience Downtown. Partners consistently cited the need for coordinated responses and more positive activity in public spaces.
- **Cleanliness and environmental stewardship -**
Litter, illegal dumping, and inconsistent maintenance impact the neighborhood's vibrancy and sense of pride. These issues were repeatedly highlighted across community meetings, environmental partners, and City leadership.
- **Mental health and social services capacity -**
The concentration of human service providers Downtown reflects significant community need. Rising mental health crises, trauma histories, and resource gaps affect both youth and adults, and influence how students navigate the area around campus.
- **Lack of "third places" -**
Limited youth-friendly, safe, and accessible gathering spaces create challenges for teens who rely on Downtown as a transit and social hub. Stakeholders emphasized the opportunity for PPU to help fill this void.

Opportunities for Point Park in Downtown

- **A leading role for Point Park as a Downtown anchor and Center of Downtown Campus District -**
Partners across sectors view the University as central to shaping Downtown's future, through student engagement, arts activation, research, and collaborative problem solving.
- **Strong alignment around youth engagement -**
Schools, nonprofits, and public agencies are eager to partner with PPU on mentoring, workshops, arts integration, afterschool programs, and career pathways.
- **A powerful arts ecosystem -**
With the Playhouse, COPA, and nearby cultural institutions, Point Park is well positioned to serve as a bridge between youth, residents, and Pittsburgh's creative sector.
- **Growing demand for community-based research and storytelling -**
Nonprofits and public agencies see Point Park students as potential partners in data collection, evaluation, media production, and narrative change, critical gaps across the nonprofit landscape.
- **Momentum toward urban development -**
City Council, planners, cultural organizations, and residents are exploring new possibilities for housing, public space design, community benefits agreements, and neighborhood revitalization, areas ready for student and faculty contribution.

In sum, Downtown Pittsburgh is a dynamic civic laboratory, one that presents significant challenges but equally powerful opportunities for Point Park University and the CCE to lead, innovate, and collaborate in service to the community.



III. Overview of Key Findings

High Level Insights

Over the course of six months of intensive engagement, with more than 50 community partners, six focus groups, multiple academic units, and 200+ students, several clear and consistent findings emerged. Together, they paint a unified picture of Point Park University's unique role in Downtown Pittsburgh and the opportunities ahead for the CCE. Some high-level insights from the listening included the following:

- *Point Park is uniquely positioned, and expected, to serve as a Downtown anchor.*

Across partners, there is a strong belief that the University is central to the health, vitality, and future of Downtown. Stakeholders consistently emphasized that Point Park's location, students, arts ecosystem, and community connections place it in a leadership role on issues of safety, cleanliness, youth engagement, and urban revitalization. This makes the soil fertile for establishing a Downtown Campus District from 'Market to the Mon'.

- *Downtown could benefit from additional coordinated support in safety, cleanliness, environmental stewardship, and public activation.*

Police, city leaders, nonprofits, residents, and youth organizations all identified safety and cleanliness as major concerns. There is a clear use for university-led volunteer engagement, research, public space activation, and collaborative response efforts that contribute to a safer, cleaner, greener Downtown. Our ability to be a convener of diverse stakeholders is perfectly suited to this effort.



- *Nonprofits and public agencies need research, storytelling, and student capacity.*

The most consistent request from community partners was for help with data collection, evaluation, storytelling, digital media, communication, and research support. Organizations want applied student teams and long-term research partnerships that help them measure impact, communicate outcomes, and build capacity. Our established doctoral research programs and media expertise is a perfect fit to fill this need.

- *Youth are central to Downtown, and need structured pathways, safety, supports, and belonging.*

Across meetings with the Boys & Girls Club, YouthPlaces, 412 Youth Zone, Department of Human Services, Pittsburgh Police, and city officials, one message was clear: thousands of youth move through Downtown daily, and they need safe spaces, pro-social opportunities, mentorship, and pathways to college and careers. Partners view Point Park as a natural destination for youth programming and integration. Our strong existing relationships with K-12 institutions and out of school time organizations perfectly suits us to engage in this work.



- The arts are a powerful connector between campus and community.*

From the Pittsburgh Playhouse to the Cultural Trust, August Wilson African American Cultural Center, Quantum Theatre, and numerous creative partners, the arts emerged as a major strength of both Point Park and Downtown. Stakeholders see the arts as a gateway for youth engagement, access, storytelling, and cultural activation. Our national reputation in the arts will allow us to build stronger connections across the region.
- Community development and urban policy are emerging priorities across sectors.*

City Council, BOMA, residents, and community organizations highlighted the need for research and student involvement in issues such as third places, housing, mobility, public space redesign, community benefits agreements, and Downtown revitalization. There is strong interest in Point Park contributing scholarship, design thinking, and civic innovation to these conversations. Our community engagement PhD program has been a social lab studying these issues for over a decade.

- Health and wellness are urgent needs for both community members and college students.*

Partners across the ecosystem including youth, public safety, health, education, and nonprofits, identified rising mental health concerns, trauma, substance use, and gaps in wellness support. Both campus and community partners expressed the need for trauma-informed practices, peer educators, harm reduction strategies, and accessible mental-health programming. Our strong psychology program in addition to our well-respected collegiate basic needs initiatives will prove integral to this work.

- There is widespread enthusiasm to work with Point Park, paired with a desire for clearer pathways to engagement.*

Partners praised their existing relationships with the University but expressed the need for a centralized entry point, more consistent communication, an easier process for hosting students, and clearer shared goals. Internally, faculty also expressed interest in coordinated support for community-based learning.

The six-month listening process revealed a remarkable level of alignment: Point Park University is seen as an essential civic partner, especially in the Downtown environment. The findings point to significant opportunities for the CCE to lead in multiple interconnected areas including safety and stewardship, community-based research, youth engagement, arts access, equitable development, and mental health, while strengthening the campus culture of civic learning and public good.

Drilling Down: Insights from POINT PARK FOCUS GROUPS

Shared Priorities & Space Activation

Among the questions asked at the focus groups were “What issues at Point Park or in Pittsburgh are you most concerned about/interested in addressing?”

The number one answer from Faculty and Staff was **Safety**, while students listed **Housing/Homelessness** as their main concern. **Community well-being across campus and city contexts** was the main common thread among responses.

Top 3 Core Shared Priorities

1. **Safety (on campus and downtown)**
 - Students: 35.7% of students listed this
 - Faculty/Staff: Frequently cited in both campus and downtown contexts.
 - **Safety is the clearest cross-constituency concern and the most defensible entry point for joint initiatives.**
2. **Housing / Homelessness (instability and affordable housing)**
 - Students: 59.5% of students listed this (top issue)
 - Faculty/Staff: Top-tier concern, especially downtown
 - **Students are already thinking systemically; faculty/staff reinforce this as a structural priority.**
3. **Environment / Sustainability (cleanliness and quality of place)**
 - Students: 38.1% of students listed this
 - Faculty/Staff: Strong downtown emphasis (cleanliness, pollution, green space)
 - **This is a natural bridge between student interest and applied, place-based work.**

Students also listed mental health, student life and belonging, diversity and inclusion and campus facilities and space among their responses, while faculty and staff added transportation and youth programming to their areas of interest.



Community Center Space Activation

The Center at 101 Wood Street has the opportunity to become a thriving Third Space for the region. By hosting public programs, community-based research, youth engagement, and cross-sector convenings, the Center can normalize sustained interaction between campus and city, strengthening trust and reciprocity. As a third space, it positions Point Park not only as a place of learning, but as an active, visible partner in the everyday civic life of Downtown Pittsburgh.

Students, faculty and staff were asked for ideas on how we can activate the Community Center space on Wood Street. The exercise yielded hundreds of possible ideas, which we have grouped into the following themes:

1. Arts & Creative Expression (Top Theme) -

The Center is widely imagined as a cultural engine and creative commons, not just a meeting room. For example: Rotating art exhibits, murals, student film screenings, Open mic nights, performances, gallery walls, Creative vending machines, sidewalk art, multimedia displays

2. Events & Convenings -

People want the Center to be active, visible, and regularly programmed. For example: Lunch & Learns, forums, debates, resource fairs, Alumni happy hours, block parties, conferences, Community engagement summits and showcases

3. Student Engagement & Belonging -

This space is seen as a home base for student connection, not just programming delivery. For example: Hangout space, student-led events, showcases, Mentorship, clubs, interdisciplinary connection, feeling welcoming, fun, accessible, and “alive”

4. Community Partnerships -

Respondents strongly see the Center as a bridge between campus and city. For example: Nonprofit showcases, Alumni and donor engagement, Downtown organizations, advisory boards, Cross-sector collaborations

5. Flexible / Activated Space -

Flexibility matters more than permanence. The space should adapt constantly. For example: Modular, movable furniture, Rotating themes and exhibits, Multi-use design for classes, events, performances, Acoustic improvements, lighting, plants

6. Learning & Skill Building -

Engagement is not just volunteering. It is applied learning. For example: Grant writing, Financial literacy, Entrepreneurship and social impact, Civic education and research skills

7. Wellness & Mental Health -

Wellness is embedded in how people imagine using the space, not a separate function. For example: Yoga, meditation, quiet thinking space, Cozy seating, tea/coffee, plants, Safe and calming environment

8. Research & Thought Leadership -

There is an appetite for the Center to become a thought leader, not just a service unit. For example: Point Park community engagement model, Hosting interviews, focus groups, Conferences and national visibility

9. Civic Engagement & Democracy -

Democracy and civic learning are core, but people want them integrated into creative and social formats. For example: Voting, elections, policy discussions, Civic forums, public dialogue, Youth civic pipelines

10. Food & Hospitality -

Food is viewed as an engagement accelerator, not a side detail. For example: Coffee house vibe, Food drives, dinners, markets, Snacks as engagement incentives

Taken together, these themes suggest the Center should be positioned as:

- » A creative civic hub, not an office
- » A living room for campus-community collaboration
- » A platform for student leadership and experimentation
- » A high-visibility convening space downtown
- » A flexible, evolving ecosystem, not a static program suite

A full list of ideas is located in the Appendices.

Drilling Down: Insights from COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Summary of Six Strategic Themes

In addition to the findings identified above, specific interests/needs/opportunities were identified for the CCE. Through six months of deep engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and more than fifty community partners, six strategic themes emerged that can guide the work of the CCE. These themes reflect both the needs of Downtown Pittsburgh and the strengths of Point Park University as a Downtown anchor institution. Together, they form a cohesive framework for advancing civic learning, community partnership, and student success.

1. Safe, Clean, and Green Downtown

Creating a Downtown environment where students, families, residents, and youth feel safe, welcome, and connected. This includes collaborative efforts in public safety, environmental stewardship, beautification, and activation of public spaces.

2. Community Partner Storytelling + Research

Supporting nonprofits, public agencies, and community groups through data collection, research, evaluation, and narrative storytelling. This theme anchors Point Park as a hub for community-based research and applied learning that strengthens organizational capacity.

3. Youth Civic Engagement & Integration with Campus

Positioning our campus as a home base for middle school, high school, and transition-age youth. This includes mentorship, workshops, festivals, workforce pathways, and safe third-space programming that link youth to college and career opportunities. Developing a model for civic engagement from middle school through doctoral work is key to this theme.

4. Arts Integration & Access

Leveraging Point Park's rich arts ecosystem, including the Pittsburgh Playhouse, COPA, and Downtown cultural institutions, to expand access to arts experiences, support creative youth development, and build arts-based civic engagement and workforce pipelines.

5. Equitable Development

Advancing inclusive growth and community-informed urban development through policy research, partnerships, and student engagement. This includes work on community benefits agreements, housing and third places, Downtown revitalization, and public realm improvements.

6. Health, Wellness & Community Care

Building a trauma-informed campus and strengthening connections to public health and mental health systems across the city. This includes peer education, harm reduction, wellness initiatives, and mental health integration across programs, youth partnerships, and community collaborations.

Together, these themes position the CCE as a catalyst for student learning, community impact, and Downtown transformation, ensuring that Point Park University remains a university for the city and a leader in civic and community engagement.



Point Park's Role as a Downtown Anchor Institution

Point Park University is uniquely positioned at the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh, geographically, culturally, and civically. As a Downtown anchor institution, we have both the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to the vitality, safety, and resilience of the urban core. Our location places us at the intersection of higher education, youth development, arts and culture, community health, and economic activity. Through the work of the CCE, we can leverage this position to strengthen our city while expanding experiential learning for our students. In addition to traditional anchor-institution efforts, Point Park is positioned to activate the Mon River side of the city with arts, culture, community spaces, and more as part of a Campus District to match the Cultural District on the Allegheny River side of the City.

Point Park's anchor role is grounded in several commitments:

- **Stewarding Downtown as a safe, clean, and welcoming environment** for the thousands of residents, workers, students, families, and young people who move through the neighborhood every day;
- **Activating the Mon-River Campus District**, making this side of town a place to visit for arts, learning, third spaces, education and vibrant engagement.
- **Serving as a hub for youth engagement**, providing access to programs, resources, mentorship, and pathways that connect middle and high school students to college and careers;
- **Strengthening the nonprofit and public sectors** through community-based research, storytelling, applied learning, and student engagement that builds capacity and meets real community needs;

- **Expanding access to arts and culture**, positioning our campus and Playhouse as gateways to Pittsburgh's vibrant cultural landscape;
- **Advancing equitable development**, ensuring that Downtown's future is shaped by inclusive growth, community voice, and the needs of residents and youth; and
- **Supporting health and well-being**, partnering with public health, mental health, and human service organizations to improve outcomes on campus and in the community.

As an anchor institution, Point Park's influence extends far beyond our academic offerings. Through the CCE, we commit to deep, reciprocal partnerships and a shared vision of a Downtown where students and community members can learn, create, thrive, and belong.

This strategic
vision solidifies
our role not only
as a university
IN the city,
but as a university
FOR the city.

IV. Recommendations

CCE Mission, Vision & Values

The mission and values of the CCE directly reflect Pioneer Vision's commitment to inclusiveness, innovation, excellence, and integrity. By emphasizing experiential learning, community partnership, youth engagement, and arts integration, the CCE advances the University's vision to be one of the most dynamic urban universities in America, grounded in real-world learning and civic responsibility.

Mission

To connect Point Park University with Pittsburgh through learning, service, research, activation, and partnerships that create a safer, healthier, and more vibrant region.

Vision

A thriving Point Park University and Pittsburgh region where campus and community learn, collaborate, and lead meaningful change together.

Values

1. Community Partnership -

We believe that meaningful change happens through deep, reciprocal relationships. We value collaboration that uplifts community voices, centers local expertise, and builds long-term trust between the University and our partners

2. Inclusion & Belonging -

We are committed to advancing fairness, inclusion, and justice across campus and throughout the region. We strive to create spaces, physical and relational, where all people feel safe, welcome, and valued.

3. Engaging Through Experience -

We champion experiential learning as a powerful tool for personal growth and social impact. Our work bridges classrooms with neighborhoods, enabling students to learn by doing, reflecting, and engaging with real community needs.

4. Stewardship of Our Downtown -

We embrace our responsibility as a Downtown anchor institution. We work to foster a safe, clean, and green urban environment, one that reflects shared pride, strengthens economic vitality, and enhances the quality of life for all who live, learn, and work here.

Role of the CCE

The six-month listening process revealed overwhelming alignment among students, faculty, staff, alumni, community partners, public agencies, and civic leaders: Point Park University is expected to play a central role in shaping the future of Downtown Pittsburgh.

In order to serve the needs of both the University and the community, the CCE must operate as both an “Internal Connector” model, engaging within the University to support faculty, staff, students and alumni and track and assess partnerships, as well as a “Business to Consumer” model with direct communication with community partners, acting as the “front door” to the University. Additionally, the CCE will both support, track and assess University-wide community engagement efforts, (such as social impact grants to other departments) while also “owning” some initiatives within the Center (such as the Bonner Leaders Program).

This plan seeks to capture both a University-wide strategy for Engagement as well as specific goals for the CCE itself.

Pillars of Work

When considering the work that will shape the CCE, the following four pillars of work are recommended, which combine the 12 common areas of work among other University Community Engagement Centers and the six identified themes from our local research and listening sessions:

CCE Pillar 1 - CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This pillar strengthens civic learning and democratic practice across the University, embedding service-learning, leadership development, civic identity, and applied social innovation into the student experience.

CCE Pillar 2 - URBAN IMPACT

This pillar recognizes Point Park's responsibilities as a downtown anchor institution, leading stewardship, public activation, youth safety initiatives, arts-based engagement, and policy research that strengthens Downtown Pittsburgh.

CCE Pillar 3 - COMMUNITY PARTNER SUPPORT

This pillar responds directly to partners' top request: capacity-building support through research, evaluation, storytelling, media, data, and long-term partnerships.

CCE Pillar 4 - COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLES

This pillar recognizes that students cannot fully participate in civic and community engagement when their basic needs are unmet. It integrates campus basic needs programs with trauma-informed care, wellness partnerships, and public health collaboration.



Institutional Initiatives for Community Engagement Growth

Within the four pillars identified above, numerous ideas and opportunities emerged from the listening sessions. Within each pillar, the CCE will have a signature initiative shown below. These ideas are recommended for immediate implementation/growth.

1. **Civic Engagement Pillar: Youth Engagement Pipeline** - Build a structured continuum of youth civic and community engagement that connects K-12 through postsecondary, via student-centered programs, mentorship, summer camps, internships, applied learning, and wraparound support.
2. **Urban Impact Pillar: Downtown Campus District** - Re-imagine this side of Downtown + campus as an integrated living campus district, the “Boulevard District” merging public space, student learning, arts, housing, transit, and community engagement.
3. **Community Partner Support Pillar: Community Research & Storytelling Hub** - Provide nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations with research support, evaluation services, storytelling & media production, leveraging student and faculty talent.
4. **Community Health & Wellness Pillar: Collegiate Basic Needs Ecosystem** - Create an ecosystem / community of practice of collegiate basic needs professionals to build on research, partnerships and shared services while continue to support the community’s basic needs through an expansion of the Pioneer Pantry and Community Garden.

INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROWTH

Within the four pillars identified above, numerous ideas and opportunities emerged from the listening sessions. Within each pillar, the CCE will have a signature initiative shown below. These ideas are recommended for immediately implementation/growth.



Civic Engagement Pillar Youth Engagement Pipeline

- Build a structured continuum of youth civic and community engagement that connects K-12 through postsecondary, via **student-centered programs, mentorship, summer camps, internships, applied learning**, and wraparound support.



Urban Impact Pillar Downtown Campus District

- Re-imagine this side of Downtown + campus as an **integrated “living campus”**, merging **public space**, student learning, arts, housing, transit, and community engagement.



Community Partner Support Pillar Community Research & Storytelling Hub

- Provide nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations with **research support**, evaluation services, storytelling & media production, leveraging student and faculty talent.



Community Health & Wellness Pillar Collegiate Basic Needs Ecosystem

- Create an ecosystem of collegiate basic needs professionals to build on research, partnerships and shared services while continue to support the community’s basic needs through an expansion of the Pioneer Pantry and Community Garden.

These Big Ideas define the long-term horizon for CCE. They align with multiple strategic themes, offer high visibility, bring campus and community together, and create space for sustainable growth, student opportunity, and civic impact. Additional “big ideas” are available in the appendices.

STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Depth, Reach and Convening:

A three-point approach

Point Park is well-positioned to deepen its partnerships with community organizations and to expand its impact through large-scale, multi-partner initiatives. As a downtown institution with strong civic and industry connections, Point Park can uniquely convene stakeholders from across sectors to address shared challenges, spark innovation, and build collective capacity.

1. Formalizing Long-Term Collaborations through Anchor Partners

Some organizations repeatedly appear across stakeholder conversations and partnerships. These are ideal **Anchor Partners**, institutions with which CCE can build formal partnership agreements / MOUs.

Potential Anchor Partners:

- » Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania (youth services, afterschool, teen centers)
- » Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (downtown activation, clean & safe, volunteer coordination, economic development)
- » Pittsburgh Cultural Trust (arts & culture, theaters, youth arts access, festivals)
- » Allegheny County Department of Human Services (social services, homelessness, mental health, reentry, youth support)
- » Wood Street Commons / Red Door Ministry (housing, supportive services, shelter, basic needs)
- » Local public safety partners (e.g., City Police, public safety offices), for safety, youth diversion, public health work

What a formal Anchor Partnership Agreement might include:

- » Long-term shared goals and metrics (youth outcomes, safety, arts access, service-learning, etc.)
- » Defined shared roles/responsibilities (student internships, data/research support, volunteer coordination)
- » Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) for recurring programs (after-school, arts programs, clean-ups, summer youth engagement)
- » Agreements on resource sharing: use of campus space, public venues, transit supports, arts venues, community centers
- » Regular review, data sharing, impact reporting, and co-governance

Formal anchor partnerships will provide the stability, accountability, and mutual commitment needed for long-term systemic impact, avoiding ad hoc or sporadic collaborations, and creating sustainable pathways for student and community engagement.



2. Multi-Partner Campus-Based Initiatives (One-Point Launch, Multiple Participants)

These are existing or planned Point Park-hosted initiatives that naturally bring together multiple partners, agencies, youth, students, and community stakeholders. They are ideal for early wins because the infrastructure lives at PPU.

Example Initiatives:

- » Rising Brothers & Sisters, youth leadership & mentoring program that connects high school youth with campus resources and community partners.
- » Bonner Leaders Program, service-learning leadership program for students, tied to community and nonprofit partners across sectors.
- » Student Impact Alliance (SIA) / Project Impact, project-based, community-engaged student work, often involving local school districts, nonprofits, or community partners.
- » Newsapalooza (or similar media/storytelling events), a campus-based event that brings journalists, media students, nonprofit partners, community members together for storytelling, reporting, and collaboration.

What these initiatives offer:

- » Low barrier to entry, infrastructure is already on campus
- » Cross-sector collaboration: students, youth, nonprofits, public agencies, arts orgs, schools
- » Opportunity for high visibility and community impact without needing full program development
- » Launching pads for larger Big Ideas (e.g., District Model, Youth Pipeline, Research Hub)
- » Immediate engagement and momentum to build credibility and relationships



3. Point Park as a Convener

Point Park is uniquely positioned to serve as a convener, bringing together diverse stakeholders around shared issues, coordinating resources, and generating collaborative impact that no single actor could deliver alone. The following section describes how this convening function already operates at our institution and how it can serve as a strategic model moving forward.

- » Convening multi-stakeholder collaboratives for community challenges: public health, housing, youth development, arts & culture, economic opportunity, environmental justice, etc.
- » Using the university as a neutral “backbone organization” to sustain long-term stakeholder engagement, resource sharing, data and research capacity, and coordinated program delivery (rather than ad-hoc or siloed responses).
- » Creating cross-sector “living labs” or innovation labs that bring together students, faculty, community partners, nonprofits, business, and local government, enabling design thinking / social innovation approaches to civic problems.
- » Offering convening space and facilitation infrastructure: leveraging downtown location and existing facilities (labs, studios, hub spaces) to host forums, dialogues, collaborative planning sessions, incubators, or coalition meetings.
- » Providing student experiential learning opportunities while meeting community and civic needs, e.g., student-led research, arts-based community engagement, media and storytelling support, technical assistance, evaluation, etc.

Example Initiatives:

- » The Pittsburgh Media Partnership (PMP) was launched within the university's Center for Media Innovation (CMI) to "support and promote local journalism across the region for the public's benefit." The PMP currently brings together 33 media outlets across the greater Pittsburgh area
- » Mayoral Candidate Debates: The forum brought together citywide political leadership, media (journalists/moderators), civic organizations (via a voting coalition), and the public, acting as a neutral civic convening space for democratic engagement and public deliberation.
- » C.A.R.E.S. Wellness Symposium convened not just university faculty and students, but K-12 educators, mental-health advocates, arts practitioners, and other community stakeholders. That aligns with the "multi-stakeholder, cross-sector convening" model we discussed earlier.

ORGANIATIONAL CHARTS

Current Structure

The CCE currently operates with a small, high-impact team responsible for service-learning, community partnerships, youth programming, volunteer coordination, basic needs support, and campus-wide civic initiatives. The current structure includes:

- » Managing Director, CCE
- » Bonner Leaders Coordinator (part-time)
- » Project Impact Coordinator (part-time)
- » Graduate Assistants & Student Staff (variable year to year)

This structure has allowed the CCE to launch foundational programs; however, capacity limitations restrict the Center's ability to scale partnerships, deliver research support, respond to community needs, and develop district-wide initiatives.

Proposed Growth Structure (3-5 Years)

To support the strategic plan's four pillars of work, six themes and the Downtown Campus District Model, a phased organizational structure is recommended:

- » **Managing Director of CCE** - overall leadership, strategy, anchor partnerships, fundraising
- » **Assistant Director for Community Partner Support** - leads research hub, Wood Street Communications
- » **Assistant Director for Youth & Civic Engagement** - manages Project Impact, Bonner Leaders program, volunteer pathways
- » **Assistant Director for Community Health** - oversees basic needs Initiatives including pantry/garden
- » **Community Partnerships Manager** - anchor partner coordination, partnership agreements, tracker
- » **Graduate Assistants & Paid Student Leaders** - embedded across programs

This expanded structure positions Point Park as a leading Downtown anchor, supporting sustained growth in youth programming, research capacity, and multi-sector partnerships.



V. Oversight & Engagement

Advisory Councils

A robust advisory structure strengthens the CCE's accountability, community alignment, and strategic direction:

1. *CCE Community Advisory Council*

Composed of nonprofit leaders, youth-serving organizations, public sector representatives, and arts leaders.

- Provide guidance on community needs and priorities
- Shape youth engagement, Downtown activation, arts partnerships
- Review impact data and help refine programming
- Strengthen alignment with City and County priorities

2. *Campus Advisory Council*

Council will be made of up faculty, staff and 2 students from the Student Leadership Council. Additionally, develop a Faculty Fellow program with affiliated faculty from diverse schools. Fellows will lead a Campus Advisory Council made up of faculty from each school, student affairs leaders, DEI, basic needs staff, and academic program directors.

- Integrate civic engagement across the curriculum
- Review partnership opportunities
- Support faculty development and research initiatives
- Serve as liaisons between departments and the CCE

3. *Student Leadership Council*

The Student Leadership Council will include representatives from PhD Community Engagement Doctoral students, Bonner Leaders, Student Impact Alliance (SIA), CCE student workers, and other student leadership roles connected to civic engagement, arts, wellness, and community partnerships.

- Advise on student experience
- Shape the CCE's identity as a student-centered space
- Provide feedback on events, volunteerism, arts access, mental health initiatives

Each of these proposed Councils seeks to have ambassadors who feel aligned to the Center and can act as a champion and help guide the work.

It is possible that one shared Advisory group could be created instead, that includes representation from each group.



Student Leadership Pathways

Students are central to the CCE's mission. To deepen engagement and professional development, the CCE will expand structured leadership pathways:

Paid Civic Leadership Pathways

- » Bonner Leaders (high-impact community service and leadership roles)
- » CCE Student Fellows (research, storytelling, design, evaluation, partnership coordination)
- » Youth Program Mentors (Project Impact, SIA, Rising Brothers/Sisters)
- » Storytelling Fellows (CMI partnerships, internships, workshops)
- » Arts & Culture Fellows (Playhouse partnerships, cultural events, youth workshops)
- » Basic Needs & Volunteer Coordinators (Pantry, Break Boxes, service events)

Academic Pathways

- » Internships with nonprofits, arts organizations, and city agencies
- » Practicums with CCE-led research and partner capacity-building
- » Graduate assistantships tied to youth programming, evaluation, or storytelling
- » Integrations with the Ph.D. in Community Engagement, including research apprenticeships

Alumni Engagement Strategy

Alumni represent a major untapped strength for the CCE. Many are working in nonprofits, schools, media organizations, arts institutions, and public agencies, making them ideal ambassadors, mentors, and collaborators.

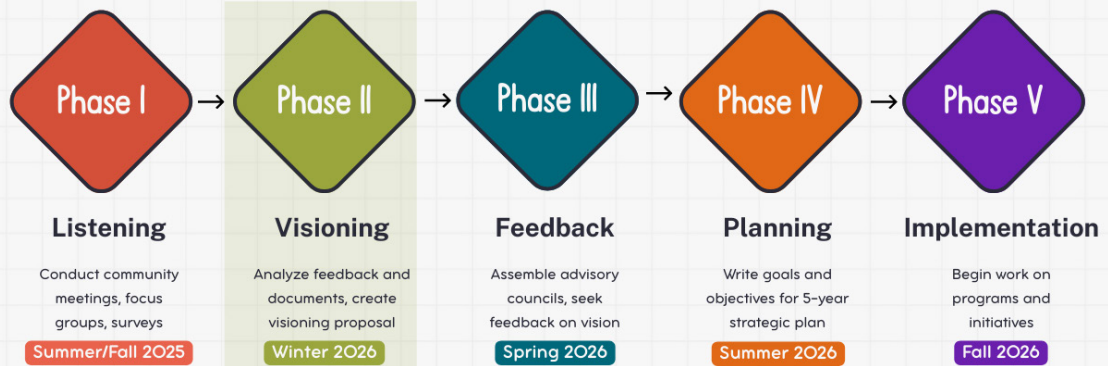
Goals

- » Build lifelong civic connection between alumni and Point Park
- » Strengthen student pipelines into community and creative careers
- » Leverage alumni expertise for mentorship, storytelling, and partnership-building

Possible Engagement Strategies

- » **Alumni Civic Mentorship Network -**
Pair alumni with Bonner Leaders, SIA students, arts fellows, and student researchers.
- » **Community Partner-Alumni Directory -**
Map alumni working in nonprofits, government agencies, arts organizations, and youth programs.
- » **Alumni Speakers & Skill Workshops -**
Highlight alumni expertise in storytelling, media, arts, leadership, entrepreneurship, education, and social services.
- » **Alumni-Led Community Projects -**
Invite alumni to propose collaboration ideas, sponsor youth initiatives, or partner on research.
- » **Annual CCE Alumni Convening -**
A gathering for alumni, partners, students, and faculty to celebrate civic impact and build connections.
- » **Giving & Sponsorship Opportunities -**
Develop pathways for alumni to support scholarships, storytelling labs, arts access, youth programs, and Downtown initiatives.

CCE TIMELINE



VI. Timeline of Growth

Year 1 Priorities (2025-2026)

- » **Goal:** Establish foundation, build a culture of engagement, strengthen structures, activate campus space, deliver visible impact.

Years 2-3 Scaling Initiatives (2026-2029)

- » **Goal:** Expand reach, deepen partnerships, increase staffing and funding.

Years 4-5 Institutionalization (2029-2030)

- » **Goal:** Embed CCE deeply into campus structures and regional systems.

Long-Term Vision (2030+)

- » **Goal:** Establish Point Park University as a national model for urban civic engagement.

A sample detailed strategic plan is listed in the Appendices. The CCE will work on developing a detailed five-year strategic plan during the spring and summer 2026.



VII. Funding & Sustainability

For CCE to thrive, a diversified and stable financial structure is essential.

Funding Strategy

1. Diversified Revenue Streams -

A balance of:

- Institutional investment (institutional budget + student activity fee)
- Multi-year foundation grants
- Earned revenue (space use, research + storytelling hub)
- Government grants
- Corporate sponsorships
- Alumni and donor support

2. Endowed Funds -

Create permanent funding for:

- Student fellows
- Youth program stipends
- Research and storytelling initiatives

3. Multi-Year Anchor Partnerships -

Formal agreements with shared resource commitments (staffing, placements, event support, data-sharing).

4. Scalable Staffing Structure -

Staffing aligned with growth phases ensures sustainability even as programs expand.

5. Campus Integration -

Embedding civic engagement across the curriculum and student life ensures that CCE becomes an institutional priority, not a standalone initiative.

6. Annual Impact Reporting -

Produce a transparent annual report demonstrating:

- student impact
- partner outcomes
- community stories
- Downtown district improvements
- ROI for funders, donors, and stakeholders

7. National Visibility & Recognition -

Build national relationships through:

- networks like Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities (CUMU), the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC), and the Pittsburgh Council of Higher Education (PCHE)
- conferences, publications, and presentations
- regional convenings hosted by Point Park

As visibility increases, so does access to funding, talent, and partnership opportunities.

VIII. Carnegie Classification

The Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement is an elective designation awarded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to colleges and universities that demonstrate institutional commitment to reciprocal, mutually beneficial partnerships with communities.

While Point Park is not seeking the Classification at this time, the framework provided for it can be a roadmap to our work. The Classification considers the following:

1. Institutional Identity & Commitment
2. Institutional Infrastructure
3. Curricular Engagement
4. Outreach & Partnerships
5. Assessment & Impact
6. Faculty Roles & Rewards

IX. Assessment of Work

Impact Metrics

Metrics will combine quantitative evidence, qualitative stories, and system-level indicators.

Student and Faculty/Staff Metrics

- » Number of students/faculty/staff engaged in CCE programs
- » Number of paid student leadership positions
- » Number of service-learning & research hours
- » Leadership competency growth (pre/post surveys)
- » Student reflections, creative work, and story outputs
- » Number of faculty fellows/social impact grants

Community Partner Metric

- » Number of partners served annually
- » Number of research/storytelling projects completed
- » Partner satisfaction scores
- » Documented improvements to partner capacity (communications, evaluation, outreach)

Youth Ecosystem Metrics

- » Number of youth participating in campus programs
- » Number of youth served through partner collaborations
- » Youth pathway indicators (participation, retention, transition to college/careers)
- » Transit + Downtown safety indicators for youth
- » Youth feedback and qualitative stories

Downtown District Metrics

- » Number of Clean & Green events
- » Number of district activation events
- » Environmental indicators (litter counts, beautification metrics)
- » Safety & perception survey indicators
- » Use of district spaces for arts and youth programming



Dashboards & Reporting Schedule

The CCE may create interactive Dashboards in partnership with Point Park IT/Institutional Research to visualize:

- » Student engagement
- » Community partner collaborations
- » Youth participation and pathways
- » Downtown Campus District indicators
- » Arts & cultural engagement
- » Research/storytelling project outputs

Dashboards could be accessible to:

- » CCE staff
- » Anchor Partners
- » University leadership
- » Advisory Councils

Recommended Reporting Schedule

- » Semester Impact Updates, for faculty, deans, and student affairs
- » Annual CCE Impact Report, shared publicly
- » Five-Year External Evaluation (2030), measure district-wide influence

CENTER FOR CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Supports service learning, democratic engagement, student leadership, volunteering, creative storytelling, and social innovation.

Signature Initiatives

- CE Courses/Service Learning
- Bonner Leaders Program
- Project Impact Program
- Pioneer Partners Volunteering



URBAN IMPACT

Advances Point Park's anchor institution role through stewardship, arts activation, youth safety initiatives, and a strategy to develop a Campus District from Market to the Mon.

Signature Initiatives

- Campus District Initiative
- Urban Issue Research
- TEDx Point Park



COMMUNITY PARTNER SUPPORT

Expands research, evaluation, data storytelling, and nonprofit capacity-building services

Signature Initiatives

- Community-Based Research Hub
- Wood Street Communications
- Anchor Partners



COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS

Integrates basic needs support, trauma-informed practice, mental health initiatives, and public health partnership work.

Signature Initiatives

- Pioneer Pantry and Garden
- Mental Health & Housing Outreach

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

Long-Term
Anchor
Partnerships

Multi-Partner
Campus-Based
Initiatives

Point Park as
a Convener

THE CENTER AT 101 WOOD STREET

"Third Space" shared civic commons where students, faculty, staff, and community partners regularly intersect for dialogue, collaboration, and problem-solving.

CONTINUOUS SUPPORT, TRACKING, ASSESSMENT: Point Park as a Convener, Point Park as a Convener Grants, CE Awards

Appendix A

Community, Government, and Nonprofit Partners Consulted

Youth Development & Education

- » Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania
- » YouthPlaces
- » 412 Youth Zone
- » Café Momentum
- » Homeless Children's Education Fund
- » Pittsburgh Scholar House
- » Local middle and high schools
- » After-school and enrichment program providers

Housing, Homelessness & Human Services

- » Red Door Ministry
- » Wood Street Commons
- » Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS)
- » County Jail leadership and reentry services
- » Mental health and crisis response providers (PAAR, Resolve, ACHA clinics)

Arts, Culture & Creative Economy

- » Pittsburgh Cultural Trust
- » August Wilson African American Cultural Center
- » Quantum Theatre
- » New Sun Rising
- » Local artists, filmmakers, and cultural organizers

Civic, Government & Public Safety

- » Pittsburgh Bureau of Police
- » City Council members
- » Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP)
- » BOMA Pittsburgh
- » Port Authority / PRT
- » Downtown Neighbor Association (DNA)

Health & Wellness

- » Point Park Health Center
- » Substance-use prevention and harm-reduction partners
- » Wellness and sexual health organizations

Environmental, Clean & Green Partners

- » Allegheny Cleanways / Immaculate Collection
- » Tree Pittsburgh and local green infrastructure leaders
- » Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy
- » State Department of Conservation and Natural Resource (DCNR)
- » Environmental stewardship and community clean-up organizations

Nonprofit Capacity-Building & Regional Networks

- » Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership (GPNP)
- » New Sun Rising
- » Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management
- » Local philanthropic partners

Business, Economic & Workforce Development

- » Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP)
- » URA
- » Local employers and business leaders
- » Workforce development partners (Partner4Work, youth employment programs)
- » Commercial property owners and managers

Across these sectors, partners expressed enthusiasm for deeper collaboration with Point Park University and strong alignment around the six strategic themes detailed in this plan. Their insights form the foundation of the CCE's strategic direction and highlight the University's vital role as a Downtown anchor institution.

Appendix B

National Benchmarking - Pillars of Work at University Civic and Community Engagement Centers

1. Academic Service Learning & Community-Engaged Courses

- » Faculty development for service-learning pedagogy
- » Course design + integration of community-based projects
- » Syllabi consultation and community partner matching
- » Reflection tools, assessment, civic learning outcomes
- » Mini-grants for course redesign
- » Faculty fellows / cohort programs

This is often the backbone of campus civic learning and creates structured, scalable pathways for student impact.

- » Tulane University – Center for Public Service (National model for required service learning)
- » Portland State University – Center for Academic Excellence (Pioneered community-based curriculum)
- » University of San Diego – Mulvaney Center (Strong faculty development model)
- » DePaul University – Steans Center (High-volume community-engaged courses)

2. Co-Curricular Service & Volunteering programs

- » Student-led service clubs and interest groups
- » Service fairs, onboarding, transportation to sites
- » Civic engagement workshops + training
- » One-day service events (MLK Day, Days of Service)

Builds a culture of service outside the classroom and is often the most visible form of engagement.

- » University of Michigan – Ginsberg Center (Large-scale student engagement infrastructure)
- » Georgetown University – Center for Social Justice (Student teams + co-curricular leadership)

- » Villanova University – Center for Faith & Learning (National Days of Service model)
- » University of Wisconsin-Madison – Morgridge Center (Longstanding volunteer programs and service fairs)

3. Community Partnerships & Campus-Community Relationships

- » Partnership development + stewardship
- » Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)
- » Partner capacity building
- » Community advisory Councils
- » Strategic relationship management
- » Strengthening “town-gown” relationships

Sustainable, equitable partnerships are the foundation of all other engagement work.

- » Drexel University – Lindy Center for Civic Engagement (National anchor institution model in West Philly)
- » Rutgers-Newark – Office of University-Community Partnerships (Comprehensive town-gown strategy)
- » University of Pennsylvania – Netter Center (40+ years of partnership models)
- » Cleveland State University – Office of Civic Engagement (Deep neighborhood partnership networks)

4. Community-Based Research (CBR) & Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- » Matching faculty/students with partner research needs
- » Running research hubs or applied research labs
- » Training on ethical and reciprocal research practices
- » IRB support for community-engaged research
- » Dissemination, data storytelling, annual reports

Helps communities solve real problems while building academic rigor and student research experience.

- » Carnegie Mellon University – Metro21 Smart Cities Lab (CBR + data-driven public problem solving)
- » University of Pittsburgh – Center for Social & Urban Research (UCSUR) (Community-requested research)
- » York College of Pennsylvania – Center for Community Engagement (Excellent undergraduate CBR model)
- » University of Massachusetts Amherst – Center for Research on Families (Community-engaged evaluation)

5. Democratic Engagement, Dialogue, and Civic Learning

- » Voter engagement (Ask Every Student, ALL IN, NSLVE)
- » Host candidate forums + public issues forums
- » Dialogue facilitation training (Deliberative Dialogue, Braver Angels, etc.)
- » Constitution Day, civic holidays, issue education events
- » Building civic identity and democratic skills

Universities are increasingly charged with supporting democracy education and student civic habit-building.

- » Tufts University – Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life (Gold standard for civic learning)
- » Arizona State University – Public Service Academy (Civic leadership pipeline)
- » James Madison University – Ethical Reasoning & Deliberative Dialogue (campus-wide dialogue)
- » Miami Dade College – Institute for Civic Engagement (Large-scale voter engagement)

6. Student Leadership, Training & Development

- » Bonner Leaders & similar multi-year leadership programs
- » Peer mentors, service ambassadors, civic scholars
- » Leadership workshops, retreats, micro-credentials
- » Team-based youth programs (Project Impact, SIA-style programs)
- » Career readiness pathways connected to civic professions

These programs develop deep civic agency and long-term engagement habits.

- » Berea College – Bonner Scholars Program (Bonner flagship site)
- » Oberlin College – Bonner Center (Deep leadership programming)
- » Stanford Haas Center for Public Service (Leadership + civic professionalism)
- » University of Richmond – Bonner Center (Vertically sequenced leadership development)

7. Basic Needs / Student Support

- » Food pantries
- » Benefits access + basic needs navigation
- » Emergency funds
- » Transportation support
- » Community resource integration

Student wellbeing is now directly tied to academic persistence and community-engaged success.

- » California State University System – Basic Needs Initiative (Nationally recognized structure)
- » George Mason University – Patriot Pantry + Student Support Office (Integrated model)
- » Temple University – Cherry Pantry (Large urban model)
- » University of California, Irvine – FRESH Hub (Comprehensive services + research integration)

8. Community Hubs, Events & Signature Initiatives

- » Public forums and speaker series
- » Neighborhood-based projects (gardens, clean-ups, murals)
- » •Cultural or interfaith events
- » Civic innovation labs or social impact incubators
- » Youth workshops, summer camps, pipeline programs

These position the university as an anchor institution and a convener.

- » University of Memphis – Engaged Communities Initiative (Neighborhood revitalization model)

- » University of Denver – Center for Community Engagement to advance Scholarship & Learning (CCESL) (Community organizing + anchor work)
- » Loyola University Chicago – Center for Civic Learning & Community Action (Public health and justice)
- » Portland State University – University Studies / Capstones (Citywide engagement model)

9. Outreach, Communications & Storytelling

- » Website + newsletter
- » Social media highlighting student impact
- » Partner resource guides
- » Annual impact magazines or reports
- » Student storytelling and digital portfolios

Storytelling builds a culture of engagement and demonstrates return on investment for partners and funders.

- » University of Southern California – Storytelling & Social Change Lab (Narrative change)
- » Northeastern University – Civic Sustainability Lab (Communication + civic tech)
- » University of Pennsylvania – Netter Center (Longstanding impact reporting)
- » Georgetown University – CSJ Media & Storytelling (Student-driven storytelling)

10. Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- » Incubators + design challenges
- » Social venture accelerators
- » Human-centered design labs
- » Solutions journalism collaborations

For universities, social innovation positions the institution as a catalyst for regional economic and civic vitality.

- » Babson College – Social Innovation Lab (Entrepreneurship + civic impact)
- » University of Utah – Sorenson Impact Center (Impact measurement + innovation)
- » Santa Clara University – Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship (Global social enterprise model)
- » Arizona State University – Changemaker Central (Large-scale civic innovation)

11. Public Health & Wellbeing Initiatives

- » Mental health collaborations
- » Youth development or trauma-informed programming
- » Health equity projects

This work strengthens community trust, enhances student support networks, and helps universities respond to urgent public health needs, especially in urban environments where disparities are most concentrated.

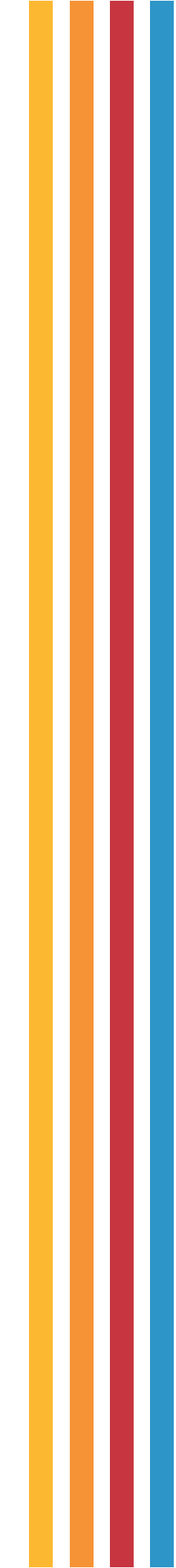
- » Johns Hopkins University – Urban Health Institute (Urban health + community partnerships)
- » University of Illinois Chicago – Community Engagement & Health Equity Office (Health justice model)
- » UNC Chapel Hill – Partnerships in Community Health (Applied student health projects)
- » Drexel University – Dornsife Center for Neighborhood Partnerships (Interdisciplinary health initiatives)

12. Arts, Culture & Creative Placemaking

- » Public art projects
- » Creative districts, festivals, maker spaces

For universities, the arts provide a powerful, adaptable tool for civic learning, youth development, and community revitalization.

- » Arizona State University – Herberger Institute + Design Studio for Community Solutions (Arts + placemaking)
- » Rhode Island School of Design – Community Partnerships (Arts-based community design)
- » University of Chicago – Arts + Public Life Initiative (Urban cultural innovation)
- » University of Florida – Center for Arts in Medicine (Arts, health, and community engagement)



13. Evaluation, Reporting & Institutional Strategy

- » Annual community engagement reports
- » Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement
- » Community impact dashboards
- » Grant writing for civic programs
- » University-wide civic strategy + anchor initiatives

Creates institutional accountability and supports visibility/funding.

- » IUPUI – Office for Community Engagement (Model for assessment + reporting)
- » University of Minnesota – Office for Public Engagement (Comprehensive impact assessment)
- » Cleveland State University – Anchor dashboards (Anchor-institution measurements)
- » Brown University – Swearer Center (Carnegie Classification leadership)

Appendix C

Strategic Pillars Defined

CCE Pillar 1 - CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This pillar strengthens civic learning and democratic practice across the University, embedding service-learning, leadership development, civic identity, and applied social innovation into the student experience.

National Pillars Included:

- » Academic Service Learning & Community-Engaged Courses
- » Co-Curricular Service & Volunteering
- » Democratic Engagement & Dialogue
- » Student Leadership & Development
- » Outreach, Communications & Storytelling
- » Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Themes Integrated into This Pillar:

- » Youth Engagement & Integration: Students serve as mentors, facilitators, workshop leaders, and project collaborators with youth serving organizations.
- » Arts Integration & Access: Civic engagement courses and service projects incorporate arts-based storytelling, performance, media, and creative activism.
- » Community Partner Storytelling + Research: Civic engagement students support narrative change, communications, and media-based capacity building.
- » Health, Wellness & Community Care: Peer educators, trauma-informed practices, civic wellness campaigns, and mental health programming are integrated into civic pathways.

CCE Pillar 2 - URBAN IMPACT

This pillar recognizes Point Park's responsibilities as a downtown anchor institution, leading stewardship, public activation, youth safety initiatives, arts-based engagement, and policy research that strengthens Downtown Pittsburgh.

National Pillars Included:

- » Community Partnerships & Campus-Community Relationships
- » Community Hubs, Events & Signature Initiatives
- » Arts, Culture & Creative Placemaking
- » Evaluation, Reporting & Institutional Strategy

Themes Integrated into This Pillar:

- » Safe, Clean & Green Downtown: Student volunteers, partner collaborations, civic design labs, environmental stewardship programs, BOMA cleanups, and public space activation.
- » Youth Engagement & Integration with Campus: Downtown becomes an extended learning campus; PPU emerges as a safe, structured destination for youth programming.
- » Arts Integration & Access: The Playhouse, COPA, CMI, and cultural partners activate public spaces and expand arts access to youth and residents.
- » Equitable Development: Students and faculty contribute to policy conversations on housing, mobility, third places, community benefits agreements, and urban redesign.

CCE Pillar 3 – COMMUNITY PARTNER SUPPORT

This pillar responds directly to partners' top request: capacity-building support through research, evaluation, storytelling, media, data, and long-term partnerships.

National Pillars Included:

- » Community-Based Research (CBR) & Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- » Outreach, Communications & Storytelling (dual role with Civic Engagement)
- » Evaluation, Reporting & Strategy (dual role with Urban Impact)

Themes Integrated Into This Pillar:

- » Community Partner Storytelling + Research: Student teams support data collection, evaluation plans, impact reports, GIS mapping, and digital storytelling.
- » Equitable Development: Students conduct policy studies, needs assessments, and community-engaged research that informs urban planning and equity initiatives.
- » Youth Engagement: Youth-focused organizations receive support for program evaluation, communication tools, and pathway development.
- » Health, Wellness & Community Care: Nonprofits working in mental health, trauma, harm reduction, and wellness receive research and communications capacity.

CCE Pillar 4 – COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLESS

This pillar recognizes that students cannot fully participate in civic and community engagement when their basic needs are unmet. It integrates campus basic needs programs with trauma-informed care, wellness partnerships, and public health collaboration.

National Pillars Included:

- » Basic Needs / Student Support
- » Public Health & Wellness Initiatives

Themes Integrated into This Pillar:

- » Health, Wellness & Community Care: Peer-support models, mental health workshops, wellness campaigns, public health partnerships, trauma-informed training.
- » Safe, Clean & Green Downtown: Basic needs supports help stabilize students who move through Downtown and interact with community services.
- » Youth Engagement: Youth programming incorporates wellness, harm reduction, and trauma-informed practices.
- » Community Partner Storytelling + Research: Students support research into basic needs trends, food security, public health barriers, and mental health outcomes.

Appendix D

Additional Big Ideas

Other Big Idea / Initiative

Community-Based Evaluation & Impact Reporting

Arts Access, Cultural Activation & Student Arts Pass

Civic Engagement Curriculum Integration & Faculty Fellows Program

Paid Student Civic & Community Employment Pathways

Signature Multi-Sector Events & Festivals

Clean & Green / Environmental Stewardship Initiatives

What It Offers / Why It Matters

Help community partners (nonprofits, social services, agencies) track outcomes, measure impact, and improve transparency, increasing long-term sustainability of community initiatives.

Leverage the Playhouse, COPA, Cultural Trust, and arts partners to expand access to arts for students, youth, and community, using arts as a vehicle for civic engagement.

Embed service learning, community-engaged research, participatory design, and civic outcomes across curricula; support faculty to lead applied civic scholarship.

Create stipended roles for students (internships, work-study, practicums) tied to community engagement, storytelling, youth programming, data collection, arts, mental health, etc.

Host large-scale events, community festivals, youth arts nights, civic design summits, downtown cleanups, cultural celebrations, bringing together students, residents, nonprofits, arts orgs, and city agencies.

Mobilize students + volunteers for litter cleanup, "adopt-a-block," green infrastructure, environmental justice research, improving Downtown's safety, aesthetics, and livability.

Appendix E

Ideas for Activating Community Center Space

This appendix consolidates all submitted ideas across stakeholder groups. Duplicate ideas have been merged, and content is organized by theme to minimize space.

Theme

Consolidated Idea

Events & Programming

Art shows, artist talks, and rotating exhibitions; Open mic nights and casual performance space; Lunch & Learn sessions; Student, alumni, and community showcases; Community forums, debates, and info sessions; Yoga, meditation, and wellness activities (including cat yoga); Film screenings and multimedia events; Block parties, mixers, and social gatherings; Voting and civic engagement events; Resource fairs and nonprofit showcases

Arts, Culture & Creative Expression

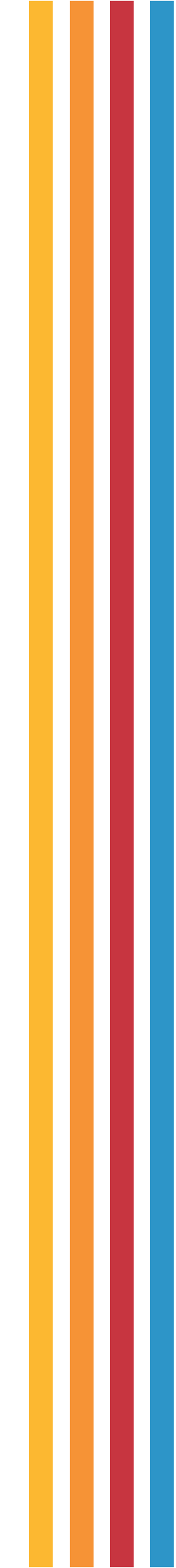
Student, alumni, and community art displays; Murals, interactive maps, and storytelling walls; Photography, design, and writing exhibitions; Sidewalk art, urban art, and night markets; Music performances and first-show opportunities; Art vending machines supporting nonprofits

Space Design & Physical Activation

Plain, modular design adaptable for partners; Movable and flexible décor; Acoustic panels and sound improvements; Warmer and layered lighting; Plants, living elements, and native plant spaces; Cozy and accessible seating areas; Projection walls and multimedia displays; Gallery-style walls and hanging poster systems

Student Engagement & Learning

Student research presentations and poster sessions; Meeting space for student clubs and organizations; Mentorship and alumni-student interaction; Student-designed events; Hang-out and informal collaboration space; Student civic and community engagement pipeline



Theme

Consolidated Idea

Academic & Course Integration

Embedded community engagement projects in courses; Grant writing and participatory research courses; Interdisciplinary collaboration across departments; Applied learning with nonprofits and K-12 partners; Showcasing course-based student work

Community Partnerships
& Cross-Sector Work

Nonprofit and corporate collaboration events; Downtown advisory boards and stakeholder meetings; Shared meeting and planning space for partners; Arts, sports, and cultural sector collaboration; Youth and senior community engagement programs

Research & Evaluation

Community-based research projects; Qualitative interviews and focus groups; Downtown revitalization and homelessness research; Participatory and applied research initiatives

Virtual & Hybrid Engagement

Webinars and virtual panels; Virtual tutoring and mentoring; Online resource hubs and directories; Recorded events and digital storytelling

Revenue, Fundraising & Big-Idea Concepts

Ticket access and cultural equity programs; Fundraisers, auctions, and raffles; Portable outreach units (bus or trailer); Merchandise and creative fundraising models; Micro-grants for community partners

Appendix F

Sources Summary

Foundations Most Closely Aligned

- » Benedum
- » Heinz Endowments
- » Staunton Farm
- » Pittsburgh Foundation
- » Hillman Foundation
- » Buhl Foundation
- » McCune Foundation
- » Mellon Foundation
- » National foundations (NEA, NEH, NSF, AmeriCorps)

Corporations Most Closely Aligned

- » PNC, UPMC, Highmark
- » Duquesne Light, EQT, PPG
- » Peoples Gas, Dick's Sporting Goods
- » Cultural District business sponsors

Government Opportunities

- » DHS, Youth Services
- » City of Pittsburgh
- » Department of Education
- » NSF / HUD / SAMHSA / AmeriCorps

Earned Revenue Ready

- » Research & evaluation services
- » Media/storytelling production
- » Trainings & workshops
- » Youth arts intensives
- » Professional development programs

Funding Ideas by Theme

THEME 1 - Safe, Clean & Green Downtown

Initiative	Funding Sources	Type	Notes
Clean & Green Student Teams	Hillman, Heinz, Benedum, PNC	FND / CORP	Strong alignment with Downtown revitalization priorities.
Public Space Activation (arts, lighting, seating)	Cultural Trust, Buhl Foundation, NEA	FND / GOV	Good match for placemaking grants.
Litter League / Volunteer Events	PDP, BOMA, Highmark, EQT	P3 / CORP	Corporate volunteerism + sponsorship opportunities.
Downtown Youth Safety Programming	DHS, Staunton Farm	GOV / FND	Strong tie to youth wellness & prevention.

THEME 2 - Community Partner Storytelling + Research

Initiative	Funding Sources	Type	Notes
Community Research & Evaluation Hub	Heinz, Pittsburgh Foundation, McCune, national foundations	FND	High demand; ideal for multi-year grants.
Storytelling Lab (media, documentary, nonprofit comms)	CMI partners, corporate media sponsors	CORP / FND	Great visibility; good for corporate storytelling sponsors.
Impact Reports + Data DashCouncils	Foundations supporting capacity building	FND / ER	Could evolve into fee-for-service model.

THEME 3 - Youth Engagement & Campus Integration

Initiative	Funding Sources	Type	Notes
Project Impact / SIA	Benedum, Buhl, Heinz	FND	Regionally aligned; high youth leadership interest.
Rising Brothers & Sisters	DHS, PPS, local philanthropic partners	GOV / FND	Strong youth-mentoring fit.
K-16 Leadership Pipeline	US Dept of Education, AmeriCorps	GOV	Could be multi-site grant with schools.
Youth Hub (District Zone)	City of Pittsburgh, foundations, corporate partners	P3 / FND	Ideal for co-funded partnership.

THEME 4 - Arts Integration & Access

Initiative	Funding Sources	Type	Notes
Arts Pass Program	Cultural Trust, Playhouse sponsors	P3 / CORP	Great for sponsorship / naming.
Youth Arts Workshops & Festivals	NEA, Heinz, Mellon Foundation	GOV / FND	Highly competitive but high visibility.
Playhouse Community Events	Corporate arts sponsors	CORP	Seasonal sponsorship package opportunities.
Arts-Based Research / Storytelling	NEA/NEH, CMC	GOV / FND	Ideal for interdisciplinary funding.

THEME 5 - Equitable Development

Initiative	Funding Sources	Type	Notes
Public Realm Research + Policy Labs	Hillman Foundation	FND	Aligns with Downtown revitalization research.
Housing + CBA Research	NSF, HUD, foundations	GOV / FND	Multi-year opportunities.
Walking Ethnographies + Community Mapping	Buhl, Heinz	FND	Strong for community-informed data.
Community Workshops on Development	PDP, local developers	P3	Could be partially fee-for-service.

THEME 6 - Health, Wellness & Community Care

Initiative	Funding Sources	Type	Notes
Trauma-Informed Youth Engagement Training	Staunton Farm, SAMHSA	FND / GOV	High probability of funding.
Mental Health Peer Ambassador Program	UPMC, Highmark, Staunton Farm	CORP / FND	Corporate health sponsors ideal.
Campus-Community Wellness Initiatives	DHS, County Health Dept	GOV	Strong alignment with county priorities.
Youth Mental Health Workshops (SIA/Project Impact)	Staunton Farm Staunton Farm	FND	Perfect match with mission.

CROSS-CUTTING OPPORTUNITIES (Multiple Themes)

Initiative	Funding Sources	Type	Notes
Downtown Campus District Model	City of Pittsburgh, Hillman, PDP, BOMA	P3 / FND	Best suited for multi-sector partnerships.
CCE Student Fellows Program	Endowments, named gifts	PHIL / INT	Could be endowed long-term.
Annual Impact Report	Foundations, corporate sponsors	ER / CORP	Potential recurring revenue.
Design Thinking Labs	Foundation innovation funds	FND	Good for equitable development + youth.

Appendix G

Potential Strategic Plan

Year 1 Priorities (2025-2026)

Goal: Establish foundation, strengthen structures, activate campus space, deliver visible impact.

A. Build Core Infrastructure

- » Formalize the CCE as the University's hub for Downtown partnership management
- » Launch partnership intake system and tracking database
- » Formalize 3-5 Anchor Partnership Agreements (PDP, Cultural Trust, Boys & Girls Club, etc.)
- » Establish CCE Advisory Council, Campus Advisory Council and Student Leadership Council
- » Develop CCE brand identity, website, and communication systems
- » Activate the Center space with multiple events/convenings per week
- » Write detailed strategic plan for next five years

B. Strengthen High-Impact Programs Already in Motion

- » Launch Downtown Campus District pilot (small-scale clean & green, arts activations, walking ethnographies)
- » Expand Project Impact/SIA youth leadership pipeline with additional schools and initiatives
- » Strengthen Bonner Leaders program with additional funding, activities and curriculum
- » Expand basic needs programs & volunteer pathways (Break Boxes, Pantry operations)
- » Relaunch Wood Street Communications storytelling initiative in partnership with CMI
- » Continue the Social Impact Grants program with goal of expansion next year
- » Launch community of practice for regional collegiate basic needs

C. Develop Capacity-Building Tools

- » Seek funding for the Community Research & Storytelling Hub (initial projects with nonprofits)
- » Research and plan arts access initiatives (student arts pass, cultural engagement nights)
- » Seek funding for Youth Engagement convening group
- » Sketch out partner engagement with curriculum including nonprofit fair, arts organization integration

Years 2-3 Scaling Initiatives (2026-2029)

Goal: Expand reach, deepen partnerships, increase staffing and funding.

A. Staffing & Leadership Growth

- » Hire Assistant Directors for 4 CCE Pillars
- » Grow student fellowships, research assistants, and paid pathway roles

B. Expansion of Programs & Partnerships

- » Scale the Downtown Campus District into a multi-block initiative (public art, green infrastructure, youth activation zones)
- » Expand collaborations with DHS, Youth Zone, PPS, and city agencies through anchor partner strategy
- » Grow K-D civic pipeline and Bonner Program with more schools, partners, summer programs, and mentorship labs
- » Develop new civic learning modules integrated across academic programs
- » Grow collegiate basic needs support and partnerships

C. Research, Evaluation & Storytelling

- » Produce annual regional impact report with partner data
- » Offer research/evaluation services to 10+ nonprofits annually
- » Provide community storytelling support and festivals/documentary showings

D. Institutional Commitment & Funding

- » Establish multi-year funding strategies with foundations and corporate partners
- » Seek grant support for youth mental health, storytelling, research, arts engagement, and equitable development initiatives

Years 4-5 Institutionalization (2029-2030)

Goal: Embed CCE deeply into campus structures and regional systems.

A. Structural Embedding

- » Integrate civic engagement outcomes into the curriculum across all schools
- » Institutionalize CCE fellows and GA positions across multiple departments
- » Continuously track and assess community partnerships

B. Downtown Campus District Maturity

- » Establish designated District Zones:
- » Youth Hub, Arts Corridor, Green & Clean Zone, Campus-Community Research Core
- » Coordinate annual “Downtown Civic Week” as a major regional event

C. Regional Role & Reputation

- » Position CCE as a convener for citywide youth initiatives, equitable development roundtables, and arts access coalitions
- » Expand community-based research hub to become regional training center for nonprofits
- » Expand Youth Engagement pipeline to be national model of K-D engagement

D. Long-Term Partnerships & Co-Investment

- » Secure co-funded initiatives with foundations, PDP, DHS, and cultural partners
- » Establish endowed funds for student fellowships and community storytelling

Long-Term Vision (2030+)

Goal: Establish Point Park University as a national model for urban civic engagement.

By 2030, CCE will be:

- » A leading anchor institution driving Downtown revitalization
- » A national model for youth leadership pipelines and trauma-informed practice
- » A regional hub for nonprofit research, storytelling, and capacity building
- » A creative civic laboratory, where arts, education, public service, and community leadership converge
- » A central connector between students, community partners, city government, and cultural organizations

Signature Outcomes by 2030

- » Fully developed Downtown Campus District recognized by City of Pittsburgh
- » A multi-tiered student workforce that prepares hundreds for civic and community-based careers
- » A nationally recognized pipeline of civic engagement among youth
- » A sustainable network of 20+ Anchor Partners
- » A nationally recognized research and storytelling lab supporting 50+ nonprofits annually
- » Host of major youth-centered arts and civic festivals drawing thousands to campus