



University of
Pittsburgh®

Greater Hazelwood
Neighborhood Commitment

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment





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Introduction: Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment



The Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment is an ongoing collaboration between the University of Pittsburgh, local residents, community leaders, and partner organizations focused on advancing equitable development and expanding access to opportunities within the life sciences ecosystem in Greater Hazelwood.



The Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment emerged from a two-year planning process conducted between 2022 and 2024, during which community, university, and systems partners worked together to co-design place-based strategies that support neighborhood priorities and community well-being (Greater Hazelwood | Neighborhood Commitments, 2026). The commitment emphasizes collaborative, community-centered engagement by ensuring that residents and local stakeholders play an active role in shaping strategies, priorities, and implementation efforts. As a result, the initiative serves as both a partnership framework and a long-term investment in equitable neighborhood development.

The University of Pittsburgh has strengthened its role in Greater Hazelwood through long-standing partnerships. Building on over two decades of engagement, Pitt's Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment emphasizes collaborative initiatives in STEM, workforce development, health, and equitable access to opportunities connected to the emerging life sciences industry and projects like Pitt BioForge.

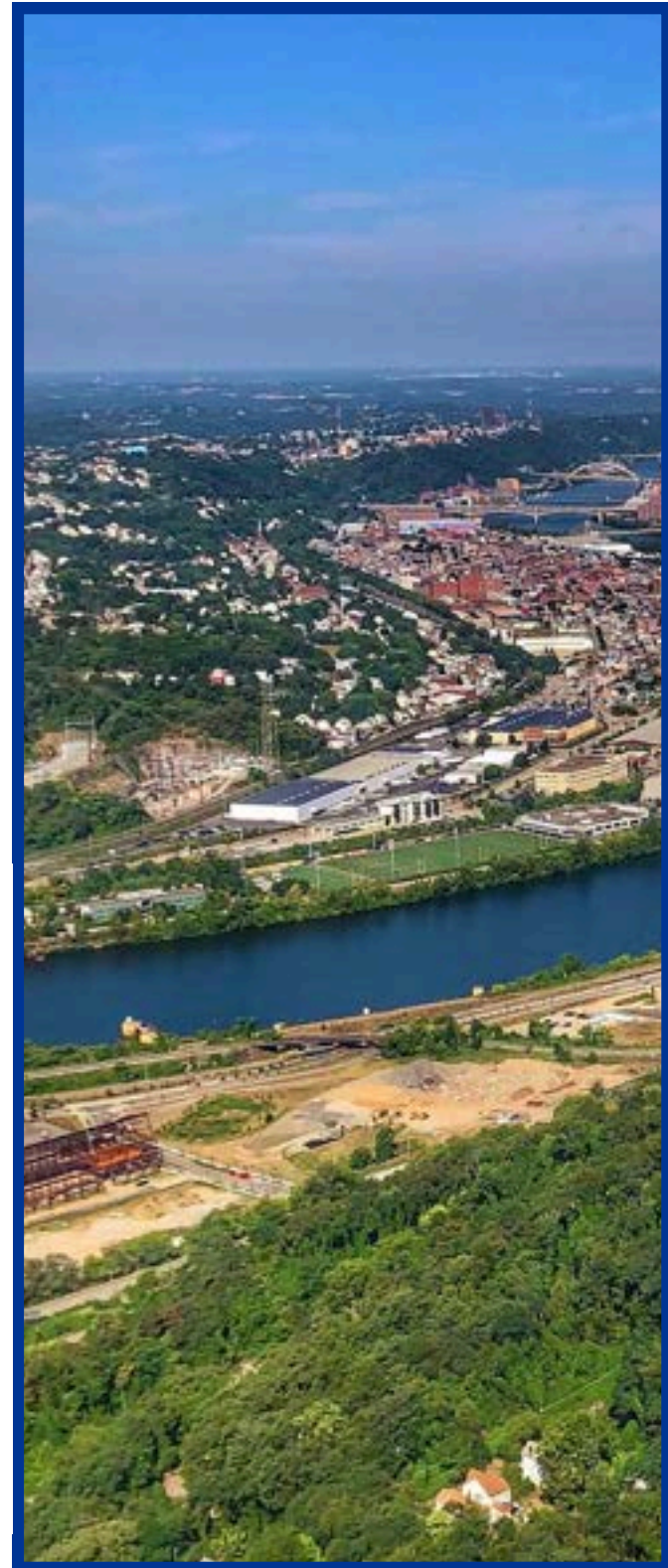
Purpose of the Engagement Document



This Engagement Strategy Document was developed to guide University of Pittsburgh stakeholders—including students, faculty, researchers, staff, and community partners—in engaging effectively with Greater Hazelwood residents and organizations through the Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment. The document provides historical and community context, outlines best practices for engagement, and presents principles that support ethical, collaborative, and sustainable partnerships.

Why This Matters

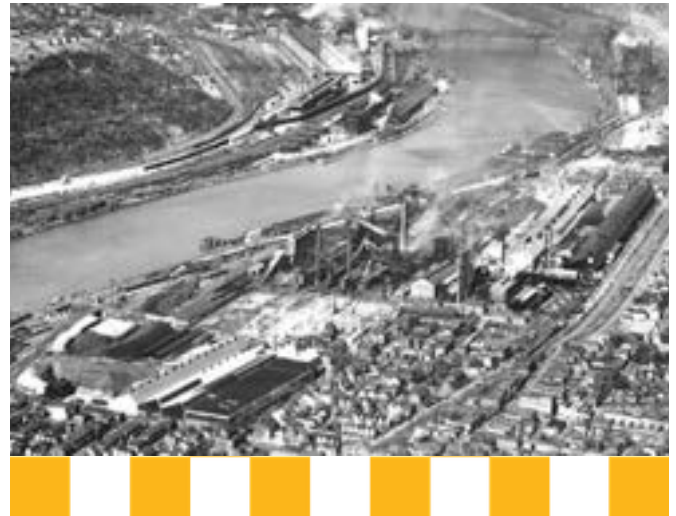
Community engagement is important for building trust, strengthening relationships, and ensuring that focus initiatives align with community priorities. Effective engagement recognizes residents as experts in their own neighborhood and promotes collaboration, transparency, and shared decision-making.



Historical Background of Greater Hazelwood Community History



Greater Hazelwood, located along the Monongahela River about four miles from Downtown Pittsburgh, has a long history rooted in industry, immigration, and community resilience. Hazelwood transformed from a rural residential area to a major industrial center, driven by the growth of Jones & Laughlin Steel Company and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (TARR & PASQUALE, 1982).



These industrial companies attracted thousands of workers, including European immigrants and migrants from other parts of the United States, who contributed to the rapid neighborhood expansion and cultural diversity. By the mid-twentieth century, factors such as industrial decline, population decline, urban renewal efforts, and steel plant closures had greatly impacted the neighborhood. As jobs disappeared, Hazelwood experienced economic difficulties and a declining population (TARR and PASQUALE, 1982).



Today, Greater Hazelwood is experiencing a new period of investment and revitalization, with community organizations, residents, educational institutions, and industry partners collaborating to promote equitable development, create workforce opportunities, enhance environmental conditions, and foster innovation initiatives.

Pitt BioForge: A Catalyst for Community Engagement



Pitt BioForge is a state-of-the-art biomanufacturing facility located at Hazelwood Green through a partnership between the University of Pittsburgh and ElevateBio. As one of the region's largest life sciences investments, BioForge represents a significant opportunity to connect innovation with community development. The growth of the life sciences sector creates opportunities for local residents to participate in and benefit from Hazelwood's economic transformation. Community engagement efforts help connect residents with educational resources, workforce training, and career pathways that support long-term economic mobility.

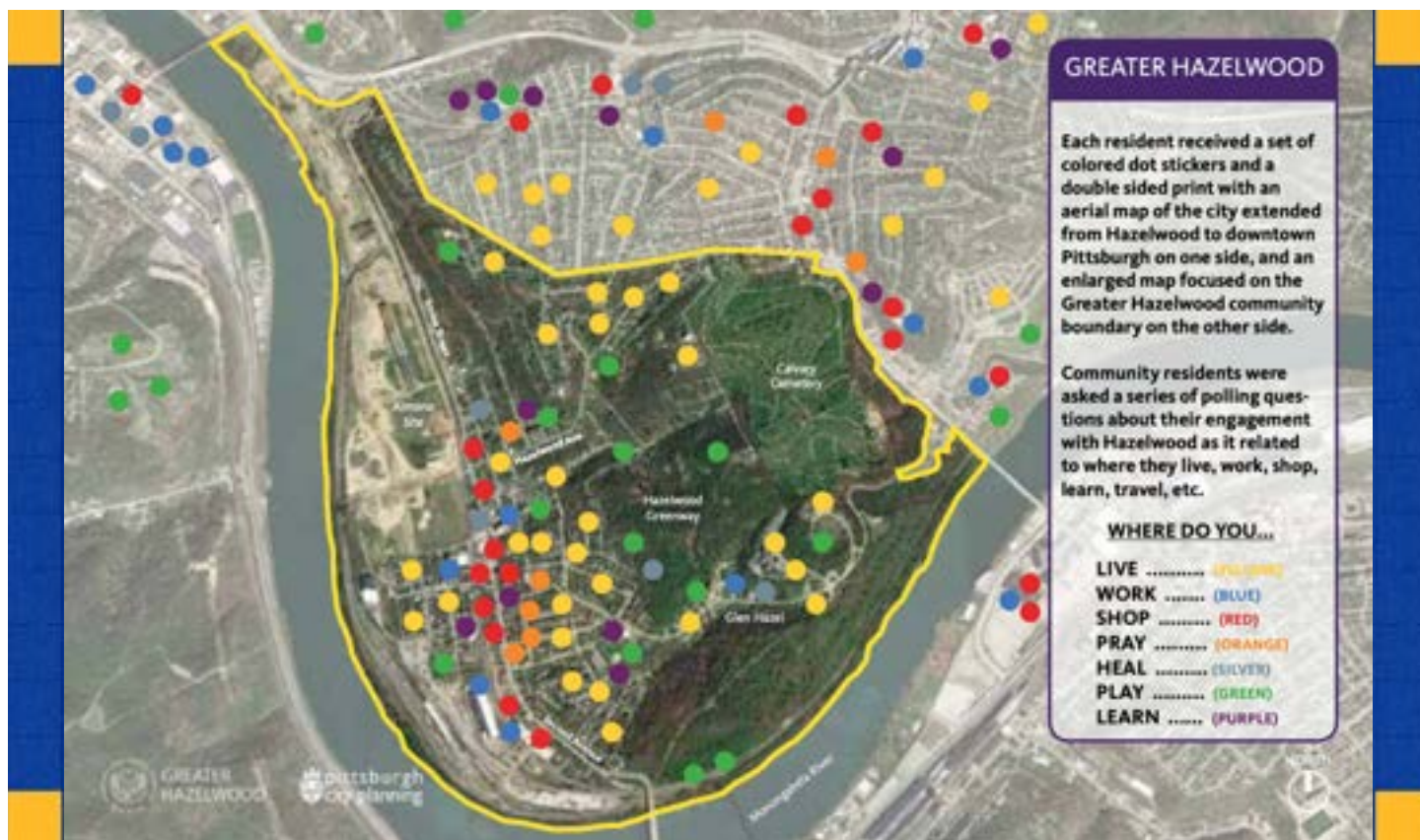
Life Sciences Bridge Program

To support local workforce development, the Life Sciences Bridge Program offers a paid 55-hour skills training program for individuals ages 18–24 who do not have a college degree and face employment barriers. The program prepares participants for entry-level careers in the life sciences industry while creating pathways to future employment.

University–Community Partnership

The partnership between the University of Pittsburgh and ElevateBio demonstrates how economic investment can be paired with intentional community engagement. By connecting innovation, education, and workforce development, Pitt BioForge contributes to a future where Greater Hazelwood residents have greater access to emerging career opportunities.

Hazelwood on the Map

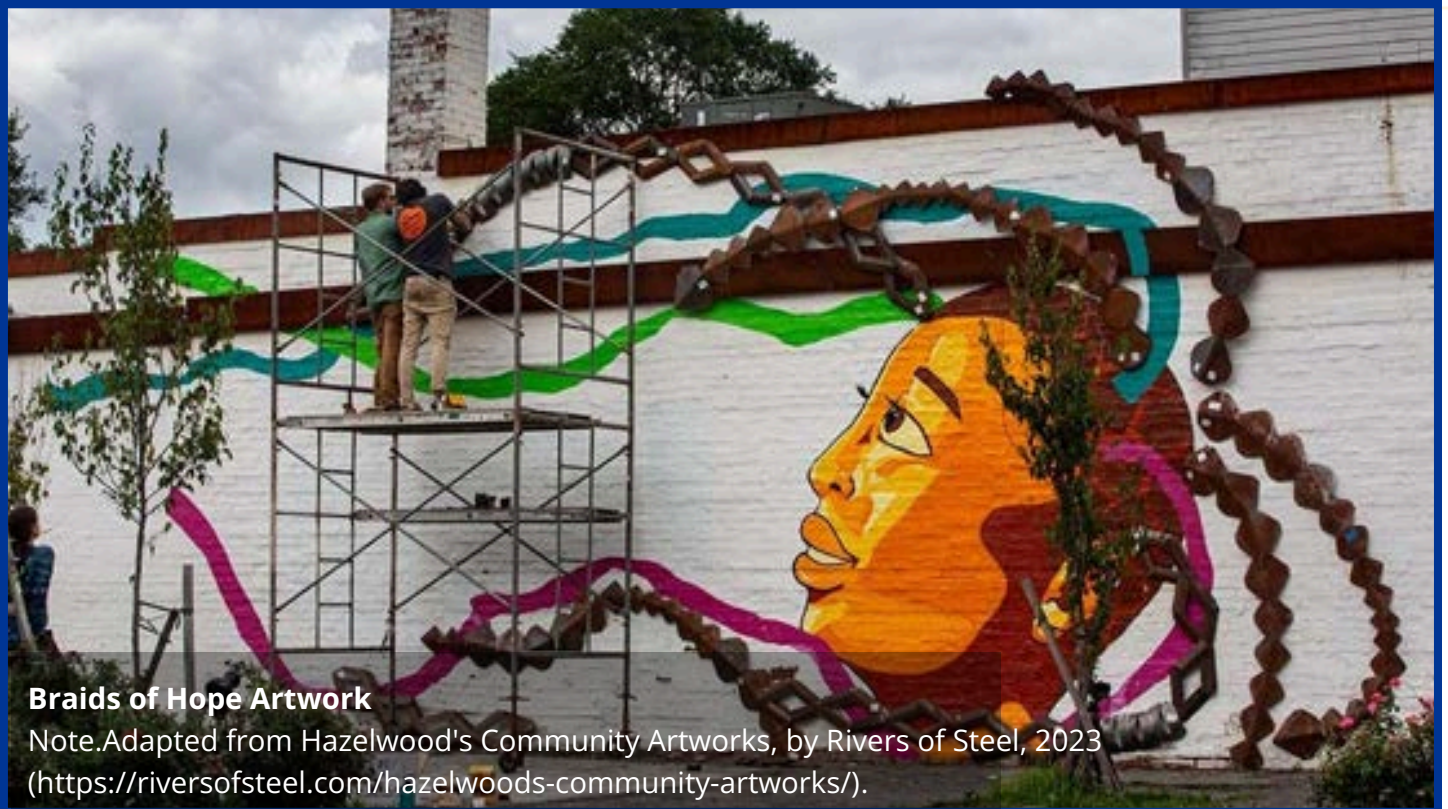


Greater Hazelwood includes both the Hazelwood and Glen Hazel neighborhoods. Although they are separate census tracts, they are commonly referred to together as "Hazelwood." This map highlights both neighborhoods to reflect the full Greater Hazelwood community.

Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan. (2019). EngagePgh.

<https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/greater-hazelwood-neighborhood-plan>

Community Strengths



Braids of Hope Artwork

Note. Adapted from Hazelwood's Community Artworks, by Rivers of Steel, 2023 (<https://riversofsteel.com/hazelwoods-community-artworks/>).

The Hazelwood community is recognized for its strengths, which contribute to its resilience and growth. A key asset is its residents, whose leadership and commitment to improvement shape community planning. The Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan (2019) highlights resident involvement as crucial for the neighborhood's future.

With a rich industrial and cultural history, Hazelwood fosters pride through historic landmarks, local traditions, public art, and community storytelling. The neighborhood also benefits from a network of organizations and educational partners that provide programs and support. Collaborations with entities like the University of Pittsburgh have expanded access to education, workforce development, and health initiatives.



Hazelwood Assets

- Strong resident leadership and civic engagement
- Rich cultural, industrial, and historical heritage
- Active community organizations and neighborhood partnerships
- Long-term investment through Pitt's Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment
- Green spaces, community gardens, and environmental initiatives
- Diverse, intergenerational, and welcoming community with strong neighborhood identity

Hazelwood Community Garden

Note. Adapted from Hazelwood's Community Artworks, by Rivers of Steel, 2023

<https://riversofsteel.com/hazelwoods-community-artworks/>

Local Organizations



Greater Hazelwood Community Collaborative



A coalition of community organizations, residents, businesses, faith-based groups, and local institutions working together to improve the Greater Hazelwood neighborhood (Hazelwood and Glen Hazel) in Pittsburgh. GHCC coordinates resources and partnerships to promote equitable community development, economic opportunity, affordable housing, education, public safety, and resident well-being while ensuring that neighborhood revitalization benefits existing residents and minimizes displacement.

Center of Life



COL is a community-based nonprofit organization in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood that empowers youth and families through education, arts, workforce development, and community engagement. Founded in 2001, COL provides free after-school and summer programs, leadership development, family support, and community resources to help residents build stronger futures and contribute to the revitalization of Hazelwood.

JADA House International



JADA House International is a nonprofit organization based in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood that empowers youth, families, seniors, and caregivers through education, mentorship, human service navigation, and community support. Its mission is to strengthen communities by promoting justice, dignity, advocacy, and opportunity while creating a safe, supportive environment where individuals and families can thrive. Founded in 2014 by Hazelwood native Terri Shields.

Pitt's History with Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood



The University of Pittsburgh has partnered with Greater Hazelwood for the past 25 years, supporting community development, education, health initiatives, and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Pitt's involvement in Greater Hazelwood began with the work of university researcher Joan Miller, who documented Hazelwood's early development as an industrial community and led to the foundation of community partnership in the 1990s, with Pitt's School of Social Work implementing student interns in Greater Hazelwood for community engagement and supporting non-profit organizations.

After Pitt received a federal Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the 2000s, both partnerships strengthened collaboration to support neighborhood revitalization, community planning, health and wellness initiatives, workforce development, and educational opportunities. Pitt's relationship with Greater Hazelwood has evolved from academic research and student internships into a long-term, community-centered partnership focused on education, economic opportunity, public health, and neighborhood revitalization. The collaboration continues to support resident-led efforts while also preparing the community for future growth.



(Pitt's History in Greater Hazelwood | Neighborhood Commitments 2020)

Pitt Research and Data Conducted in Greater Hazelwood



Title	Summary	Date	Author	Link or PDF
Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan	The Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan provides a roadmap for future development while prioritizing the needs of current residents.	2019	City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning and Hazelwood Stakeholders	https://www.pittsburghpa.gov/Business-Development/City-Planning/Master-Neighborhood-Plans/Greater-Hazelwood-Neighborhood-Plan
Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Profile Report	This Profile Report provides an overview of the demographic, economic, and social conditions of Greater Hazelwood using 2020 Census data.	2020	Pitt Office of Engagement and Community Affairs	https://www.cec.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/assets/GH%20Resources%20Page%20Reports/GreaterHazelwood%20NeighborhoodProfileReport%202020%20(1)-compressed.pdf
Report: Accessible Employment and Job Training Opportunities in the SWPA Life Sciences sector	This report explores ways to make Southwestern Pennsylvania's growing life of sciences industry more accessible to local residents, especially those without college degrees.	2024	Pitt Office of Engagement and Community Affairs	https://www.cec.pitt.edu/greaterhazelwood/report-accessible-employment-and-job-training-opportunities-swpa-life-sciences

Articles, Reviews, and Dissertations mentioning Greater Hazelwood



Title	Summary	Date	Author	Link or PDF
Community Members and Pitt Partners Work Together to Plan How the Field of Life Sciences Can Benefit Greater Hazelwood	The article discusses collaboration between Pitt and Greater Hazelwood residents to ensure that life sciences growth at Hazelwood Green creates opportunities for local residents through education, workforce development, and community investment.	March 5, 2024	Sarah Boden	https://www.pittwire.pitt.edu/pittwire/features-articles/hazelwood-green-life-sciences-summit-2024
From sensors to stories: Enabling community-driven actionable data collection for air quality advocacy Dissertation	This Dissertation demonstrates how community-led air quality monitoring and data storytelling can empower Pittsburgh residents to collect environmental data, advocate for cleaner air, and advance environmental justice.	2024	Abhishek Viswanathan	https://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/concern/etds/1277aa6c-2b29-4b98-afee-88d051d431f2?parent_query=Greater%20Hazelwood&highlight=true
PittWire article: Biomanufacturing, workforce development and community partnerships improve life and lives in Greater Hazelwood	The article describes efforts to ensure Greater Hazelwood residents benefit from new jobs and opportunities created by Pitt BioForge and neighborhood redevelopment.	June 12, 2026	Nick France	https://www.pittwire.pitt.edu/features-articles/2026/06/02/greater-hazelwood-neighborhood-commitment-bioforge

Community and Programs

Current Community Engagement Examples



Greater Hazelwood Kaleidoscope Summit

Pitt's Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment included the Kaleidoscope Summit, a major community engagement event that focused on resident input regarding the future of life sciences in the area.



Community Engagement in Action

Floriated Interpretation

This is a community-centered native plant nursery and landscape design business founded by local entrepreneur Elaine Price. The organization provides native plants, landscaping services, and plant maintenance throughout the Hazelwood community.



Offered Programs in Greater Hazelwood



The Greater Hazelwood Commitment offers programs that connect residents with educational, health, professional, and community opportunities, supporting growth and engagement.



Gismondi Neighborhood Education Program

A youth-engaged community program with the Center of Life's after-school FUSION program. This program features Biotechnology in partnership with the Smithsonian Science Education Center. It facilitates classes that explore the life sciences through food, medicine, manufacturing, and more.



Offroute Art Biotechnology Fellowship

A fellowship that enables artists to consider communicating topics around the Life Sciences in collaboration with Offroute Art. Each fellowship has a unique goal, and it's either developing individual or collaborative pieces of artwork.



Social Medicine Fellows Program

This program, in collaboration with the Pittsburgh School of Medicine, works alongside communities to better understand local needs and support efforts that promote long-term health and overall well-being in Greater Hazelwood.

Programs Continued. . .



Sip of Science at Hazel Grove Brewing

This program offers members of the Biomedical Graduate Student Association the opportunity to practice communication skills in a hyper-local, community-based setting. This is done in partnership with Hazel Grove Brewing to provide a relaxing and welcoming space for graduate students to present their research areas.

Life Sciences Bridge Program



The Pitt's Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Commitment launched a brand-new Life Sciences bridge program, which is a 50-hour work experience to build skills designed to prepare 18–24-year-olds without a college degree who are facing employment barriers and provide an entry-level career in the life sciences.



Resources for Hazelwood Towers

Monthly health outreach at Hazelwood Towers, offering screenings, health education, and seasonal community support.



CELIWE JONES

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAREER COUNSELOR

With 11 years of experience in the field of social work and 9+ years of experience in career advising and workforce development, Celiwe is well-equipped to help you get connected with opportunities at the University of Pittsburgh and provide resources to aid you in your career journey.



Pitt's own workforce development career counselor, Celiwe Jones, at the Greater Hazelwood Family Center, provides resume feedback and interview preparation for people seeking employment at the University of Pittsburgh.

Location: 5006 Second Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15207

Contact Information: CRJ44@pitt.edu

Services Include:

- Career Counseling
- Resume & Cover Letter support
- Employment workshops



Guiding Principles for Community Engagement in Greater Hazelwood



Principle	Description
Mutual Respect & Cultural Humility	Recognize residents as experts in their lived experience. Respect the community's history, cultures, diversity, and perspectives while engaging with humility.
Trust & Relationship Building	Build authentic, long-term relationships by being present, listening first, and working alongside formal and informal community leaders.
Collaboration	Partner with residents as equal decision-makers, recognizing their right to identify priorities and guide solutions that affect their community.
Transparency & Accountability	Clearly communicate goals, roles, expectations, and outcomes while remaining accountable to community partners throughout the engagement process.
Commitment & Flexibility	Commit to sustained partnerships, adapt to evolving community priorities, and be willing to share decision-making and leadership with the community.

Adapted from the CDC's Principles of Community Engagement, these guiding principles support respectful, equitable, and sustainable partnerships between the University of Pittsburgh and Greater Hazelwood residents, organizations, and stakeholders.





The following practices are intended to help stakeholders engage with the Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood. These practices support the core principles outlined in this document and provide guidance for engagement activities before, during, and after community engagement.

Before Engagement

- Learn the history (including reviewing the Greater Hazelwood Neighborhood Plan), assets, and priorities of the neighborhood community
- Identify community stakeholders and organizations
- Clarify the purpose and expected outcomes of engagement

During Engagement

- Use active listening and allow stakeholders to be heard
- Use clean, jargon-free language
- Be transparent about goals, limitations, and decision-making
- Encourage two-way dialogue

After Engagement

- Continue building relationships beyond a single project or meeting
- Maintain communication even when engagement is done
- Identify lessons learned for future collaborations

Additional Practices

- Approach engagement with curiosity and openness
- Adapt engagement approaches to community preferences and needs
- Prioritize sustained mutually beneficial relationships over one-time interactions



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