Kolt Codner

Chief Operating Officer, Allegheny Conference on Community Development



Kolt Codner is a collaborative leader with nearly two decades of experience spanning organizational operations, industry engagement, and regional economic development. He serves as the Chief Operating Officer for the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, where he drives operational excellence and connects strategy to execution. In this capacity, Kolt directs core institutional functions, leading Investor Relations, Communications, and Human Resources, while providing critical support to Organizational Governance to advance the Conference's mission across the region.

Throughout his career, Kolt has been instrumental in securing half a billion dollars in funding and external investments to support mission-driven initiatives. Previously, he was the Executive Director of the Corporate Engagement Center at Case Western Reserve University, aligning academic research with industry needs. His leadership background also includes over seven years at the Community College of Beaver County as Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff, where he managed key operational functions, emergency management, and funding campaigns.

Kolt holds both an MBA and a BSBA from Youngstown State University. Outside of his professional work, he is an avid runner, outdoorsman, and a lifelong fan of Pittsburgh sports. He resides in the region with his wife, Tristan, and their son, Andrew.

Vera Krekanova

Chief Strategy and Research Officer, Allegheny Conference on Community Development



Vera Krekanova is the chief strategy and research officer for the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. She serves as a member of the leadership team, playing a key role in the development of economic development strategies and interventions. Vera is directly responsible for developing and evaluating regional economic development agendas. She leads the organization's think tank, the PA Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh, which generates strategic insights for the board and internal C-leveldecision-makers and provides thought leadership on regional economic development issues.

Vera has 20+ years of experience in capacity building, workforce and economic development, and has worked in the U.S., Europe and South America.

Since 2010, Vera has served as an adjunct faculty at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs. She chairs the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland – Pittsburgh Branch board and also serves on the boards of the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens and the Pittsburgh Regional Health Initiative.

Vera holds a B.A. in social work from Charles University in Prague, an M.S. in management from Robert Morris University and a Ph.D. in social and comparative analysis in public policy from the University of Pittsburgh.

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William (Willy) D. McKain CPA

Chief Financial Officer, Allegheny Conference on Community Development



Willy serves as Chief Financial Officer of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, a position he assumed in 2024. In this role, McKain leads the organization's financial strategy and stewardship, including budgeting and forecasting, financial reporting, accounting and audit activities, cash management, grants and insurances to support the Conference's work plan and priorities. In addition, he oversees Information Technology and Facilities Management. McKain previously served as Chief Operating Officer, overseeing internal operations including Human Resources and Investor Relations.

Prior to joining the Conference, McKain served as Allegheny County Manager for more than a decade. He was responsible for the day-to-day operations of Allegheny County's 20 departments, more than 5,000 employees and a total budget exceeding $3 billion, the second-largest county budget in Pennsylvania. A certified public accountant (CPA), McKain also has experience in budgeting, financial statements and grant compliance reporting requirements for local, state and federal governments.

Under McKain's leadership, Allegheny County held the line on property taxes, increased its fund balance and received its highest bond rating in four decades. McKain oversaw the launch of the Park Rangers program and redeployment of county police to impact teams to serve communities in need better, directed the creation of three departments (Facilities Management, Information Technology and Children's Initiatives) along with the transformation of a fourth department (Equity and Inclusion) and managed the courthouse roof project, transforming the courthouse and the downtown area.

As the county's chief administrator, McKain focused on increasing the transparency of county government by making data and information available to the public. He also expanded the use of technology across an array of initiatives from implementation of comprehensive integrated budget software and paperless contracting to leveraging Allegheny Alerts to communicate with residents and partnering on a purchasing consortium to allow municipalities to serve their communities better.
During his tenure as county manager, McKain ensured funding and scheduling for several strategically important public works projects including the Sister Bridges rehabilitation, renovation of the former US Airways Service Center, the relocation of Allegheny County Emergency Services and the transition of the Kane Regional Centers to Kane Community Living Centers which offer a broader range of services to better meet the needs of residents.

Prior to his appointment as County Manager in July 2012, Willy served as the assistant to the superintendent for finance and operations for the Baldwin-Whitehall School District, beginning in October of 2009. He was also the finance director for the Municipality of Mt. Lebanon for seven years and worked in various capacities, including financial statement preparer, internal audit manager, and assistant budget director for Allegheny County government.

A member of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), McKain earned two bachelor's degrees at Robert Morris College (University) in accounting and business management.

Willy and his wife, Francine, live in Mt. Lebanon and have two wonderful sons, Connor and Bryce.

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Stefani Pashman

Chief Executive Officer, Allegheny Conference on Community Development



Stefani Pashman is the chief executive officer of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and its affiliates – the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh, LLC and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance. For nearly 80 years, the Conference, one of the United States' foremost civic leadership organizations, has been bringing together public and private sector leaders to improve the economic future and quality of life in the 10-county Pittsburgh region. Since she assumed the role on October 2, 2017, Stefani has repositioned and restructured the organization to advance the creation of a next generation economy for all.

Under her leadership, the Conference navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, serving as an indispensable resource for information about public health and state and federal programs designed to stabilize the region's employers, setting a post-pandemic trajectory for inclusive growth. The strategy included a focus on building key economic clusters with the potential to power the regional economy into the future. The Conference has also implemented a framework for accelerating decarbonization, investment and inclusive growth in the Pittsburgh region. Stefani was instrumental in convening an 11-county coalition that received a $62.7 million Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant to create a robotics and autonomy cluster, one of only 21 applicants to receive funding, recognized by The Brookings Institution as being among the "most equitable" proposals for its strategy to connect emerging opportunity to urban and rural areas. The award represents the first federal grant award in Allegheny Conference history.

Stefani has reinvigorated the Conference's focus on regional and demographic equity, appointing the organization's first chief equity officer in 2021, and advancing accessible and equitable opportunity for all people and all communities across southwestern Pennsylvania through implementation of Inclusive Growth Principles to assure that diversity, equity and inclusion guide decision-making.

During her tenure, the Conference has brought to fruition such long-standing priorities as the reduction of Pennsylvania's corporate net income tax to improve the competitiveness of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a phase down started in 2023, and celebrated the opening of Shell Polymers Monaca. The multi-billion-dollar polyethylene manufacturing complex capped a decade of work by the Conference and affiliates, providing a foundation for the development of carbon capture and underground storage and hydrogen solutions critical to the economic future and quality of life of the region.

Before joining the Conference, Stefani served as CEO of Partner4Work and its predecessor, the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (3RWIB) – a complex nonprofit organization that educates the region on labor market dynamics, funds public and private workforce programs and connects local employers with qualified talent. Stefani transformed the organization from a $1.5 million research-based organization into an almost $20 million public-private system that relies on research and analytics to make change in the community.

Prior to entering the workforce field, Stefani spent many years in healthcare, in both policy and strategy roles, serving in Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell's administration for almost seven years at the PA Department of Human Services as director of policy and as special assistant to the secretary, leading policy changes in human service programs, primarily Medicaid. She has also worked in private consulting at Avalere Health and Navigant and as an analyst in the White House Office of Management and Budget.

Stefani holds an MBA and a master's in health administration from the University of Michigan and a B.A. from Washington University in St. Louis.

She is active in numerous national and local organizations, having served on the Federal Reserve Board of Cleveland, Pittsburgh Board. Her current board service includes Vibrant Pittsburgh and the Heinz History Center. Stefani and her husband reside in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh and are parents to three children.

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Matt Smith

Chief Growth Officer, Allegheny Conference on Community Development



Matt Smith serves as Chief Growth Officer of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, a position he assumed on January 1, 2023. In this role, Smith leads the Conference's economic development efforts with a focus on growth of the regional economy through the attraction and retention of business investment and talent. Smith is also responsible for the organization's local, state and federal policy and advocacy efforts, which are strategically oriented toward increasing economic competitiveness and accelerating growth opportunities regionwide.

In his most recent role, Smith served as president of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, an affiliate of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development since June 2015. The Chamber advocates at the local, state and federal levels to improve the economy and the quality of life for all who live, work and do business in the 10-county Pittsburgh region.

Prior to joining the Chamber, Smith represented the 37th Senatorial District serving in the Pennsylvania State Senate. While in the Senate, Smith served as the minority chairman of the Banking and Insurance Committee and of the State Government Committee. He also served on the Aging and Youth Committee, Appropriations Committee, Judiciary Committee and Transportation Committee.

Before being elected to the Senate, Smith served three terms in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He sat on the Appropriations Committee during his entire tenure and spent his final House term as the minority Subcommittee Chair on Economic Impact and Infrastructure. He also served on the House Finance Committee as the minority Vice Chair, as well as on the Insurance, Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committees.

Born and raised in Bethel Park, Smith is a graduate of Bethel Park High School. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, and holds a law degree from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he was a member of the Duquesne Law Review.

Prior to serving in elected office, Smith worked as an attorney for the law firm of Babst Calland in Pittsburgh, where he specialized in employment law.

Smith is a recipient of the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce 2014 Chamber and Community Champion Award and of the Airport Corridor Transportation Association 2014 Community Partner Award; both awards recognized Smith and fellow legislators for their bipartisan achievements.

Smith's service to the region was recognized by Pittsburgh Magazine and the Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project (PUMP) as a 2010 Pittsburgh '40 Under 40' award winner. In January 2023, he was named to the Pittsburgh Business Times Power 100 list and the City & State PA's Pittsburgh Power 100 list, both of which recognize influential power players throughout the Pittsburgh region.

Smith served as chair of the Shapiro-Davis Transition Advisory Committee for Economic Development. In this role, he led a committee made up of economic development policy experts, business and labor leaders and rural stakeholders – who were tasked by Governor Shapiro to play a critical role in advising the Shapiro-Davis transition on making Pennsylvania more competitive for business investment and talent.

Smith currently serves on the boards of the Allegheny County Airport Authority and the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry.

He lives in Mount Lebanon with his wife Eileen, their daughters Delaney and Emerson and son Jameson.