

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Kelsey Butz
(518) 442-3983

UAlbany Center for Technology in Government and City of Schenectady Join MetroLab Network

The University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government (CTG) and the City of Schenectady have been accepted into the MetroLab Network, a group of 35 city-university partnerships focused on bringing data, analytics, and innovation to local government. MetroLab Network was launched in September 2015 at the White House as part of the Obama Administration's Smart Cities Initiative.

In a MetroLab city-university partnership, the university serves as a research and development arm, and the city serves as a test-bed for technologies and policies. Members of the network research, develop, and deploy technologies and policy approaches to address challenges facing the nation's urban areas.

MetroLab Network connects city-university partnerships via a national, collaborative platform that will facilitate the sharing of information and the scaling of technology and solutions across the country.

Partnering Locally

The City of Schenectady has been working to incorporate new technology to improve public safety, boost efficiency, cut costs, and provide more information to the public. In January 2016, Mayor Gary McCarthy convened the Schenectady Smart City Advisory Commission to assist in this endeavor, of which CTG Director Theresa Pardo is an active member.

McCarthy and Pardo have been working together since 2011 when CTG led a comprehensive study focusing on the use of code enforcement and property related data as it relates to urban blight. Currently, Schenectady and three other Capital Region cities are partnering with CTG to develop an information sharing platform to address code enforcement information needs and assist cities in fighting urban blight.

"Being part of the MetroLab Network with our partners in Schenectady fast tracks our opportunity to test cutting-edge technologies and practice innovations and in turn, to enhance the network by sharing Schenectady's innovative approaches to community building, problem solving and public value creation," says Pardo.

"Joining the MetroLab Network is a recognition of the success of our collaborations and an opportunity to build upon those achievements with a new expanded network of leaders in education and government," says Mayor McCarthy. "Schenectady has a strong track record of bringing together industry experts, leading academics, city personnel, and community leaders in a collaborative environment to develop best practices in local government and we look forward to seeing even more innovation."

Training Tomorrow's Workforce

An additional component of the MetroLab Network is the student training aspect. Students gain access to real-world laboratories while city officials benefit from fresh perspectives. For example, CTG co-mentored students from UAlbany and Albany Law School to work with city officials to help identify and acquire data needed regarding blighted properties.

MetroLab Network is supported by a \$1 million grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as a research enterprise that uses data and information technologies to better understand how cities work and to improve the urban condition. Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is the fiduciary of MetroLab Network during its incubation period.

"We are thrilled to welcome Schenectady and the Center for Technology in Government at UAlbany to our network," said Ben Levine, Interim Director of MetroLab Network. "Their commitment to becoming a smarter city and combating urban blight through regional information sharing will help drive progress in the cities and regions that are addressing similar issues across the country. Furthermore, their collaboration with our extensive national network of cities and universities will accelerate progress in Schenectady on many of its priorities."

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