

# THE INTERSECTOR INITIATIVE



*Advancing practice, research, and leadership education in multi-sector collaborative governance by deploying the assets of the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, a leading land-grant university inside the Capital Beltway*

## WHO WE ARE

The University of Maryland School of Public Policy formed The Intersector Initiative in 2018 to harness the talents of a community of experts on cross-sector collaboration. Our team members – scholars, practitioners, and teachers – share a passion to advance cross-sector collaboration as a transformative way to solve difficult public policy problems. We are deploying expertise in collaborative governance to an expanding array of issue areas. Our collaborative teams are tackling real-world challenges in cybersecurity and elections infrastructure, sustainable development, budgeting and management, and media coverage of complex, multi-sector policy challenges.

The Intersector Initiative is built on the foundation of The Intersector Project, an independent non-profit organization that worked to empower practitioners across the business, government, and non-profit sectors to work together to solve problems that cannot be solved by one sector alone. The Intersector Initiative is now an integral part of the School of Public Policy, woven seamlessly into the School ethos: To address today's complex challenges, we must make not only government, but also governance, work. The different components of governance – local, state, and federal governments; the private sector; and the philanthropic and non-profit sectors – are each critical, but it is how they come together that is most important.

## WHAT WE DO

**Connect** the growing community of thinkers and doers in cross-sector collaboration

As the premier knowledge hub on cross-sector collaboration, The Intersector Initiative collects, curates, generates, and shares insights and developments across issue areas, touching on a broad array of collaborative approaches. Together, these knowledge products shape the community's collective understanding of this nascent mode of governance. By sharing new knowledge among practitioners in all three sectors, we help break down silos, strengthen ties, and encourage code-switching. Our aim is for each sector to build on the experiences of others to achieve results that are greater than the sum of their parts.

Our monthly *Research Briefing* highlights the latest scholarly research relevant to cross-sector collaboration. The practical takeaways of such scholarly work are examined through our *Research to Practice* series. Our *Researcher Insights* series invites scholars to distill their research for our practitioner audience.

In addition to new insights and developments, The Intersector Initiative also serves as a repository of existing resources for cross-sector collaboration. These include *The Intersector Toolkit*, a guide to help practitioners design and implement successful collaborations; our *Case Library* profiling successful collaborations from across the United States; and our *Resource Library*, a searchable online database of hundreds of reports, tools, cases, and more.

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### **Create** feedback loops between thinkers and doers through on-the-ground projects

The Intersector Initiative seeks to bridge the divide between scholars and practitioners by leading on-the-ground projects that engage these two groups in multi-sector problem-solving. Specifically, we are sponsoring two “green-field” projects that focus on complex, pressing challenges relevant to Maryland and the rest of the United States. The active involvement of scholars in these projects ensures that practitioners benefit from current thinking, and that findings from the projects directly feed into new scholarly work and knowledge.

The two green-field projects underway are:

- ∴ [Resilient Cybersecurity: Protecting America’s Elections](#)
  - ∴ [The Community Resilience Initiative](#)
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### **Close** knowledge gaps on cross-sector collaboration

As a relatively nascent field, there are many unknowns in cross-sector collaboration. Unanswered research questions abound:

- ∴ How can the economic value of intersectoral approaches to problem-solving be understood and assessed?
- ∴ What impacts have past collaborations had, and what should be expected from this more inclusive approach to governance in different issue areas?
- ∴ How should professional education in public policy, business management, journalism, and other relevant fields be reconfigured to meet the needs of practitioners in the rapidly growing arena of collaborative governance?

These and many other topics are catalogued in our *Research Agenda*, a list of questions for the research community that, if answered, would significantly advance the practice of cross-sector collaboration.

The Intersector Initiative also aims to close these knowledge gaps by conducting and publishing cutting-edge research. One such research project is underway:

- ∴ [The Economic Dimensions of Multi-sector Collaborative Governance](#)

**Cultivate** a cadre of professionals in collaborative governance

The Intersector Initiative is professionalizing the practice of collaborative governance through targeted training and education. We believe that by integrating cross-sector collaboration into curricula for policy and business students, training professionals on how to collaborate across sectors, and raising awareness on the value of such collaboration, we are laying a foundation for a cadre of professionals equipped to advance this mode of governance.

One such training effort is underway:

∴ [A Media Education Module on Cross-sector Collaboration](#)