



AGENDA REPORT

**TO: DEANNA J. SANTANA
CITY ADMINISTRATOR**

FROM: Scott P. Johnson

SUBJECT: Code for America 2013 Fellowship Program

DATE: June 20, 2012

City Administrator

Date

Approval

6/20/12

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends acceptance of this resolution authorizing the City Administrator to; 1) enter into an agreement with Code for America for the period of January 1 through December 31, 2013, in an amount not to exceed \$180,000 to participate in the Code for America Labs, Inc. 2013 Fellowship Program if selected for the program; 2) waive the competitive Request for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/Q) process.

REASON FOR URGENCY

A signed contract would need to be executed by September 1, 2012, should the City of Oakland be selected for the 2013 Code for America Fellowship program. Selections will be announced in July 2012. There is a \$180,000 participation fee to participate in the Fellowship program, which pays for the year-long assistance of several Code for America fellows as they develop a web based solution to a core problem facing the City of Oakland. The City Administrator is authorized to execute agreements for this type of program participation up to \$300,000 during the summer recess provided she conducts an RFP/Q process. (Oakland Muni. Code § 2.04.020.H and Council Rules of Procedures, Rule 21). An RFP process would be impractical and unavailing in this instance as Code for America offers a unique opportunity for program fellows, who have been identified as top talent in the tech industry, to work with staff and the community to solve a complex citywide issue with technology that will ultimately result in cost savings, increased productivity and increased civic engagement. Therefore, it is recommended that Council waive the RFP/Q process in order for the City to participate in this program if it is fortunate enough to be selected.

OUTCOME

The Code for America fellowship is a unique competitive program where a select few cities are chosen each year to receive three to five fellows who are top computer development and design professionals. These fellows work collaboratively with city hall, residents, community

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organizations and the local technology community to help the city find new solutions to community problems. They first research community needs, then design lightweight technology tools that bring greater openness, efficiency and participation to local government. Through this partnership, Code for America will help the City of Oakland use the power of the participatory web to bring its practices in line with leaders in the private sector.

Given the City of Oakland's commitment to Open Government, transparency and innovation, staff continuously seeks to identify web-based solutions to break down cumbersome bureaucratic processes and emerge with better systems that will help cut costs, increase efficiency and provide better service to the public.

The 2013 Code for America Fellowship program will provide guidance on setting up infrastructure and engaging an organizational culture shift to fully take advantage of Web 2.0—including Open Source applications and agile development methodologies.

Oakland has identified two core processes that would greatly benefit from web-based tools, and the City of Oakland seeks Code for America's support to turn them into a reality. Online applications would benefit these processes and result in decreased costs, a significant boost in productivity and better engagement with citizens.

The City's first goal is to revamp our procurement and contracting process. Redesigning our procurement and contracting processes and allowing vendors to fill out forms online, promises to enhance and expedite this process, resulting in staff time savings, cost savings and improved services for those who want to do business with the City.

The second goal is to develop an online system to better manage, track and respond to the City's public records requests. Through a new system, the City's Open Government initiatives would be enhanced. If every public records request that is answered were contributed to an online knowledge base it would significantly reduce staff time in responding to the requests, and by making the requested materials available to all, it would increase civic engagement and citizen's access to Government.

BACKGROUND

The City of Oakland applied for the Code for America 2013 fellowship in May of 2012. On June 1, 2012, staff members were notified that the application passed initial review and placed on the shortlist of finalists. Final selections for the 2013 fellowship will be announced on July 12, 2012.

Code for America connects forward-thinking cities with the talent from the web industry to develop reusable civic technology. Partnering cities will not only solve a critical problem using technology, but also help cultivate the next generation of tech-savvy, civic leaders.

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Founded in 2009, Code for America held its inaugural fellowship in 2011 with 19 fellows and three cities. Through the fellowship program Code for America provides an opportunity for the web generation to give back by connecting developers and designers with cities to work together to innovate. In 2012, Code for America has grown to connecting 26 fellows and eight cities. The Code for America Accelerator Program, launched in April 2012, will support civic startups, and their Brigade program helps organize developers locally to reuse and deploy civic software. Code for America is reimagining government for the 21st century.

Through the Fellowship program, Code for America is partnering with local governments to help them catch up. The private sector has evolved exponentially over the past decade adopting new technologies and new ways of working, however, local governments, including the City of Oakland, haven't adapted at the same rate, and have fallen behind. Using technology, Code for America helps local governments keep pace with the community they serve by creating and implementing new applications, and by demonstrating new ways of resolving local challenges.

ANALYSIS

The Bay Area is the tech hub of the world, and Oakland is the geographic and creative center of the Bay Area, so it is fitting that the cutting-edge innovations being incubated and launched locally could be applied to local government. The digital divide exists not just between residents of varied incomes, but between the public and private sectors. Ideally, public sector services could benefit from the same innovations that private sector products and services rely on for viability in the marketplace.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

Oakland is a dynamic hub of innovation and visionary thinkers. The City of Oakland is fortunate to have creative, committed and tech-savvy residents and community partners, as well as a new generation of City leadership that is eager for change and committed to leveraging the power of apps, software and the Web to make Oakland a more efficient, transparent and participatory City.

As part of the requirements of the Fellowship program, the Oakland community will need to match the funds that the City will pay in support of this program. The City of Oakland and Code for America will conduct community outreach to form these public private partnerships to raise the required private sector matching investment.

In addition, the Code for America fellows will be working collaboratively with city hall, residents, community organizations and the local technology community to help the city find new solutions to community problems.

COORDINATION

This report was prepared in coordination with the Office of the City Administrator's Communications Director and Online Engagement Manager and the Department of Information Technology's Interim Director.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The proposed contract cost is in an amount not to exceed \$180,000 for participation in the Code for America Labs, Inc. 2013 Fellowship Program.

Funding for Oakland's contribution is available in the General Purpose Fund (1010) Non-Departmental budget for FY 2012-13.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic:

This program will save the City money by revamping the procurement and contracting process. Save staff time by automating public records searches.

Environmental:

This program will reduce the use of paper record tracking.

Social Equity:

The program will make technology enhancements that will improve accessibility to public records for the disabled.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Nicole Neditch, Online Engagement Manager, Office of the City Administrator, at (510) 238-2105.

Respectfully submitted,



SCOTT P. JOHNSON
Assistant City Administrator

Reviewed by:
Karen Boyd, Citywide Communications Director
Office of the City Administrator

Ken Gordon, Interim Director
Department of Information Technology

Prepared by:
Nicole Neditch, Online Engagement Manager
Office of the City Administrator

Attachment A: Code for America Press Clippings

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CODE *for* AMERICA

CODE FOR AMERICA helps governments work better for everyone with the people and the power of the web. Founded in 2009, Code for America held its inaugural fellowship in 2011 with 19 fellows and three cities. Through the Fellowship program Code for America provides an opportunity for the web generation to give back by connecting developers and designers with cities to work together to innovate. In 2012, Code for America has grown to connecting 26 fellows and eight cities. The Code for America Accelerator, launched April 2012, will support disruptive civic startups, and Brigade helps organize hackers locally to reuse and deploy civic software. Code for America is reimagining government for the 21st century

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In 2012, Code for America is connecting 26 fellows with eight cities: Austin, Chicago, Detroit, Honolulu, Macon, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Santa Cruz.

Find out more: codeforamerica.org

CONTACT: LAUREN REID // LR@CODEFORAMERICA.ORG // 415-200-9468

CODE *for*
AMERICA

2011:

3 CITIES

19 FELLOWS

21 APPLICATIONS BUILT

72 DATASETS LIBERATED

81 CIVIC HACKATHONS

2012:

8 CITIES

26 FELLOWS

The Washington Post

CODE FOR AMERICA: AN ELEGANT SOLUTION TO GOVERNMENT IT PROBLEMS

BY VIVEK WADHWA | DECEMBER 18, 2011

Parents in Boston complained bitterly about the needlessly complex enrollment process for public schools. To sign up their children for school, parents were forced to navigate a Byzantine 28-page pamphlet seemingly designed to confuse. What's more, the process made it difficult for parents to make smart choices about schools based on criteria they considered important, such as proximity and user ratings.

But this year, Joel Mahoney, a Code for America fellow taking a break from a tech career as a chief technology officer and entrepreneur, saw the problem, mapped out a solution and wrote a Web application. Discover BPS, that has a simple, easy-to-use interface and includes all manner of sorting capabilities.

He did this in two months, by himself.

Under normal circumstances, getting something such as that done in the Boston government would take two years, between requests for proposals, procurement rules and bidding processes. But Mahoney's background set him apart, and he was already "procured" by the city. This meant that as soon as the office of Mayor Thomas M. Menino (D) explained the problem to Mahoney, he could get to work, talking to parents and building a prototype. The Boston city government saved tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of dollars in costs for private contractors or man-hours for their own software developers. Most important, the problem was quickly solved to the satisfaction of all parties.

Code for America is the technology world's equivalent of the Peace Corps or Teach for America. The premise is simple and elegant. America's cities need technology help. State, federal and local governments spend hundreds of billions of dollars each year on IT systems and solutions. But a significant percentage of this money is wasted fighting red tape, jumping through bureaucratic hoops or paying-for-poer-execution-by-legacy-government contractors who manage to drag out simple projects and turn them into money pits.

Code for America, a nonprofit group started by Jennifer Pahlka, who formerly ran the Gov 2.0 and Web 2.0 technology shows for conference and publication giant UBM TechWeb, offers an alternative to the old, broken path of government IT. Young technophiles from Google and Microsoft apply to spend a year

of their time working on problems they discover as on-site fellows in cities across the country. They bring fresh blood to the solution process, deliver agile coding and software development skills, and frequently offer new perspectives on the latest technology – something that is often sorely lacking from municipal government IT programs. This is a win-win for cities that need help and for technologists that want to give back and contribute to lower government costs and the delivery of improved government service.

Code for America matches fellows with cities in the program, publicizes their efforts, and monitors their progress. The cities get highly skilled coders – who might make six-figure salaries in the private sector – for free. The citizens get improved government services.

But the benefits go beyond the delivery of a particular project. The code for all projects is open source and made available to any city or government entity. This means state and local governments gain a growing repository of well-written, modern code that, in many cases, will directly address specific programmatic needs common to governments providing services to the public. This is already proving to be a great way to solve problems quickly and at minimal cost.

For example, in Boston, one of three cities in the program last year, another fellow, Erik Michaels-Ober, started thinking about the city's several thousand fire hydrants, which have to be dug out of the snow every winter. Michaels-Ober believed that residents living near the hydrants might be willing to dig them out. So he crafted a simple Web application to encourage Bostonians to claim a hydrant using a simple map interface on their desktop or mobile browser. To drive usage, he added game dynamics, allowing citizens to name their hydrants or "steal" other players' hydrants if they failed to dig them out in a timely fashion. The "crowd-sourced" game, Adopt-a-Hydrant, has saved Bostonians a significant amount of government spending and made the city a safer place.

Eight months later and nearly 6,000 miles away, the City of Honolulu IT director, Forest Frizzell, found the Adopt-a-Hydrant project on Code for America's public code repository. He thought

the app could quickly be rescripted to encourage Honolulu residents to maintain the tsunami sirens on the beach. These sirens are rendered inoperable when thieves steal the batteries. Instead of increasing the frequency of city maintenance crews monitoring, which would raise costs to the city, Frizzell is letting any citizen with a smartphone or a Web browser check for batteries and record their findings. In an era of diminished state and local taxes, it might, indeed, take a village – and an army of benevolent coders – to keep the lights on, the potholes patched, the sirens blaring and the hydrants flowing.

Code for America is expanding to eight cities in 2012. Let's hope this expansion foretells a government technology revolution that is long overdue. The status quo of bloated, inefficient technology management for government is no longer acceptable.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-innovations/code-for-america-an-elegant-solution-for-government-it-problems/2011/12/16/giQAXrlu2O_story.html

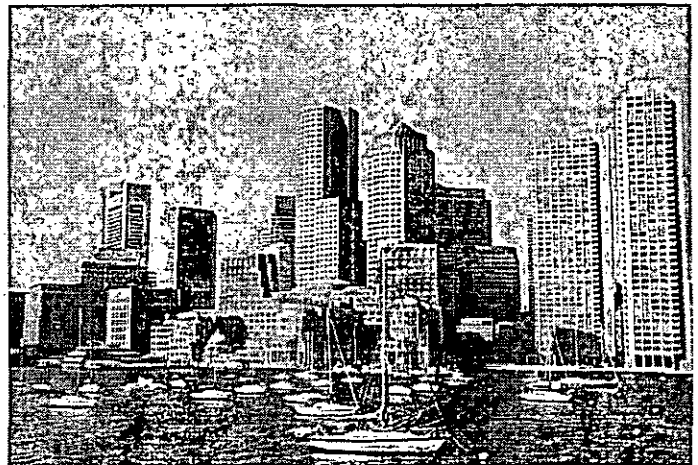
The first day in Boston, our fellows expected to dive in with our city partners and start interviewing teachers, administrators, and students for our education-focused project. Turns out, they spent that day in the Mayor's Response Center, answering calls during one of the largest snowstorms in the city's history. The city was in crisis, so they rolled up their sleeves to help.

Throughout the year, in fact, the Boston team had to adapt to changing environments. Initially, we had hoped the fellows would be able to create a datahub for all of the public schools' student information, enabling developers to build apps for education. But when the fellows went in and tried to get the data, they found that it was often off limits, unusable, or inaccessible. Faced with these challenges, the team decided to take a different approach: instead of a single focus on a one-stop datahub, they employed a more agile, broad, and experimental strategy.

First, they focused on apps they could turnaround quickly that demonstrated the value of opening data (Where's My School Bus). Second, they used a strategy of having students, teachers, and administrators use a private, third-party system (ClassTalk & DiscoverBPS). And finally, the fellows created tools to facilitate the sharing of any kind of civic data in a way that collaboratively engaged the community (DataWorks & DataCouch).

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THE HUFFINGTON POST

2011'S ULTIMATE GAME CHANGERS: JENNIFER PAHLKA

BY ARIANA HUFFINGTON | OCTOBER 21, 2011

Last month we announced HuffPost's 2011 Game Changers -- 100 innovators, visionaries, and leaders who are changing the way we look at the world and the way we live in it. And we asked you to weigh in on who the Ultimate Game Changer is in each of our 12 categories: Politics, Green, Media, Style, Food/Travel, Entertainment, Culture, Business/Technology, Sports, World, Impact/Education, and Healthy Living.

The response was tremendous. Thank you! Now it's time to reveal your picks for the Ultimate 12.

They are an eclectic mix of those accustomed to the spotlight and those who have been working under the radar.

So click through the slideshow below to see who the HuffPost community selected as the Ultimate Game Changers.

And congratulations again to all 100 of our 2011 Game Changers. There has seldom been a moment in history in which such people have been more essential. If we're going to overcome the many problems the world is facing, we are going to need all the Game Changers we can find. And those of us in the media will have to do a better job of turning the spotlight on those who are charting the way forward, and inspiring others in their communities to follow suit.

P.S. Check out these videos and photos from last week's Game Changers event -- from the red carpet to the podium and all around the party.

Business and Tech: Jennifer Pahlka

"It's like a Teach for America for geeks." That's how founder and executive director Jennifer Pahlka describes Code for America, which fields city projects that need web based solutions, and unites government organizations with the open source tech community. The results have been ingenious and vast -- from

Adopt a Hydrant, where individuals sign up to keep a hydrant clear of snow and debris so that firefighters can better access them in emergencies, to ClassTalk, which, according to the Code for America website, "empowers teachers to communicate instantly with their classes through SMS and email keeping school subjects and class deadlines at the top of a student's mind."

She said it: "There is a certain generation who have grown up being able to mash up, to tinker with, every system they've ever encountered," she said, speaking on the phone from her Bay Area office. "So they are meeting their relationship with government in a new way, with a new assumption: We can fix it. It really signals a new relationship between government and the technology community, but it is also about the government being useful to you in your daily life and engaging you in your daily life."





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 19, 2012
RELEASED BY: MAYOR'S OFFICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
MAYOR'S PRESS OFFICE
PRESS.OFFICE@CITYOFBOSTON.GOV

MAYOR MENINO INVITES RESIDENTS TO "ADOPT-A-HYDRANT" THIS WINTER

NEW WEBSITE ENCOURAGES VOLUNTEERS TO HELP THE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND THEIR NEIGHBORS BY SHOVELING OUT SNOWED-IN HYDRANTS AFTER SNOWSTORMS

From shoveling out cars to building snowmen, Boston residents know that the challenges and joys of winter are best handled when people work together. Today, Mayor Thomas M. Menino launched the Adopt-A-Hydrant program, a first-of-its-kind effort, designed to tap into this community spirit. The program provides a website (boston.adoptahydrant.org) where residents can volunteer to shovel out specific hydrants in their neighborhoods.

"Whether you are coaching little league or helping to maintain a park, volunteers provide the foundation for strong neighborhoods in Boston," said Mayor Thomas M. Menino. "The Adopt-A-Hydrant program is the newest opportunity for our residents to show the great sense of volunteerism that shines in Boston all year, and it's a great example of how we can use technology to build community and keep neighborhoods safe."

The Boston Fire Department will continue to lead the effort to shovel out the City's hydrants. Given, however, that there are more than 13,000 hydrants in the City, volunteers can help ensure that those hydrants are cleared of snow even faster. Last year, the Boston Fire Department responded to 5,653 fires.

"While our firefighters will always be the City's first and last line of defense, Adopt-A-Hydrant provides an easy way for residents interested in lending a hand to improve neighborhood safety," said Boston Fire Commissioner Rod Fraser. "As the nation's first fire department, we are always looking for innovative ways to improve fire prevention and response."

Adopt-A-Hydrant is the most recent addition in the City's portfolio of volunteer programs. Other signature volunteer programs include Boston Shines, which supports local groups conducting neighborhood clean-ups; the Boston Medical Reserve Corps, which facilitates medical professionals assisting in public health emergencies; and the Community Emergency Response Team program, which trains residents to help neighborhoods weather other emergencies.

To adopt one of the 13,000 public hydrants, residents go to the website, enter an address, and choose the hydrant(s) they would like to volunteer to shovel out from the selected geographic area. Adopters, who have the opportunity to name their adopted hydrants, will be reminded during winter snowstorms of appropriate snow shoveling protocols.

"Informed and engaged residents are key to the City's ability to respond to any emergency - big or small," said Don McGough, the City's Director of Emergency Management. "Adopt-A-Hydrant offers a new format for engaging residents in the wake of some of our toughest storms."

The Adopt-A-Hydrant application was developed by Erik Michaels-Ober, a Code for America fellow, who served with the City of Boston in 2011. The City is piloting the application this year. If successful, the City will explore how this application could be used to encourage adoption of other streetscape features, such as catch basins or trees. The app also is available for other places to use and, to-date, three cities - Chicago, Honolulu, and Buenos Aires - already have all expressed an interest in adapting it for use by their residents.

"We were pleased to be one of the first cities to partner with Code for America and excited about the possibility of Adopt-A-Hydrant," said Bill Oates, Boston's Chief Information Officer. "The innovative applications that came from this partnership are allowing us to provide new services to Boston residents and share new software and ideas with other cities."

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Adopt A Hydrant is a project of the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics and the Boston Fire Department. Mayor Menino's Office of New Urban Mechanics focuses on piloting transformative City services that spark civic engagement and leverage new technology.

GOOD

PART PEACE CORPS, PART VENTURE CAPITAL: CODE FOR AMERICA'S PLAN FOR PUBLIC INNOVATION

BY ALEX GOLDMARK | MAY 11, 2012

Solving Uncle Sam's tech dilemmas is big business, but if your company wants a government contract, you'll need to understand the bureaucratic beast—both to secure the deal and deliver on it. It helps if you've got public-sector experience, and ideally a few close friends still inside signing the contracts.

That can be major handicap for young companies and entrepreneurs who lack connections but still want to bring game-changing ideas into the civic space. Code For America hopes to change that dynamic by sparking civic startups and giving them a map to navigate the bureaucracy. The group is piloting a business accelerator program (applications close June 1) to help small businesses with big ideas get into public service. The potential payoff is huge. Government information technology spending is estimated to be a \$174 billion market in 2014.

"The scrappy entrepreneur who's trying to change something in the world generally doesn't understand how government works," says Jennifer Pahlka, founder of CFA. "If they want to sell to government they're going to need a lot of help."

CfA launched in 2009 as what Pahlka calls a "Peace Corps for geeks." It matches up hackers and programmers with government agencies to work on difficult data problems for a year at a time. In the first two classes of fellows, CfA participants built a real-time system for Philadelphia residents to contribute to the city's strategic plan with their cell phones. In Santa Cruz, California, they've helped streamline the process for starting a business. There are other projects in a dozen cities.

Sometimes these projects result in new software products that require someone to manage them indefinitely—a whole new business, or more precisely, what Pahlka calls a "civic startup."

"It's any company that is either going to work with government, or without government, but to change the social landscape through technology," she says.

To cultivate these civic startups and help them compete against behemoth contractors, CfA is taking a page from venture capital accelerator programs like Y Combinator, which help entrepreneurs build their skills and tap into human capital networks to find funding and potential collaborators.

CfA will mix that business development model with the Peace Corps-style fellowships to create a social enterprise aimed at building a 21st-century government. "If you look at the last 15 to 20 years, the biggest changes we've seen in how society works have come from disruptive new businesses," Pahlka says.

CFA will choose five companies for a four-month training program on how to work with, or within, the public sector; improve their business models; and build connections to tap the expertise of CFA's tech advisors. With more than 50 applications already submitted, the CFA accelerator plans to take on more than five companies at a time.

The lucky civic-minded geeks chosen will receive \$25,000 to grow their business, along with the training and entree to Uncle Sam's IT procurement experts. The hope is to build an enlarged ecosystem of smaller, more nimble startups to keep entrenched IT contractors on their toes, taxpayer money better spent, and democracy better served.



CELEBRATING OUR VETERANS WITH “APPS FOR HEROES”

POSTED BY ANEESH CHOPRA AND PETER LEVIN ON JANUARY 23, 2012 AT 09:21 AM ES

Last Wednesday, we joined Dr Jill Biden at the Code for America headquarters, a non-profit startup that has attracted dozens of civic-minded software developers spending a year building new products and services – powered, in part, by open government data – to improve the lives of everyday Americans.

Dr Biden celebrated the converging efforts of Code and 10 apps developed by the private sector to improve the employment prospects for our Nation's heroes – from apps that help veterans build new skills or a professional network, to a personalized list of open job postings. We observed the results of LinkedIn's "Veterans Hackday" – two of the 44 apps built over a weekend; a collaboration between two tech companies that had never worked together before – Jibe and KMS Software – to deliver an almost-paperless approach to qualify for eligible tax credits; and the impressive work of a veteran entrepreneur, Fidelis, focused on the military to civilian transition.

We saw these and other "Apps for Heroes" because Code for America made a commitment last August in response to the President's call to action. We joined Code on this mission and engaged a broader voluntary collaborative of tech firms already active in the employment and training online market. They didn't ask us for money. Rather, we brainstormed how government data, if released in a people-and-computer-friendly format, could serve as "rocket fuel" for their apps.

And then we went to work.

Inspired by President Obama's Open Government Initiative and guided by the U.S. National Action Plan, we identified at least three areas where we might open up data that had previously been either in an inaccessible format, organized in a fragmented way, or largely unknown to the developer community:

Military Service Information: Veterans today collect a form – the DD-214 – that captures their military "resume"; while it can be electronically accessed, the data within the form is protected and in a form that isn't accessible for a computer to read. Building on the momentum of VA's initiative, Dr. Levin expanded their "Blue Button" service – which enables a veteran to safely and securely download their personal health data in computer-friendly form – to include a veteran's service history, training, and credentials. Launched just in the beginning of December, over 60,000 veterans have already downloaded a "Blue Button" file that can be shared with the products and service as they see fit – like the apps for heroes we saw last week.

Military Skills Translator: The Department of Labor actively supports a non-profit the O*Net center to maintain a growing portfolio of tools and data sets that are freely available to developers or anyone for that matter. The problem was that very few of the developers we engaged over the past several months were even aware of this resource. When we showed them what we had they immediately went to work on "translating" military experience into skills that are relevant for their existing products and services.

Job Postings from Employers Seeking Veterans: President Obama launched the "Veterans Job Bank" last November, which provides access to hundreds of thousands of job postings from employers actively committed to hiring veterans. Built on an open standard, the "JobPosting" schema – endorsed by a coalition of search engines (Google, Microsoft, Yahoo) through the schema.org community – empowers any employer to ensure its job postings are discoverable by the Job Bank. The big idea is that instead of requiring every employer to update a centralized database, we can dynamically "search" for veteran-committed jobs. Its faster, cheaper, and more reliable way to connect employers to talent. The Job Bank itself is accessible at the National Resource Directory and its search widget, built in an effort to support developers has offered an API that delivers search results straight to the app.

Finally, I thought to share the power of Open Innovation @ Internet speed. At a Summer Jobs + event last Tuesday, Twilio CEO, Jeff Lawson challenged the Twilio developer community to build an "App for Heroes." In about an hour – from concept to go-live – developer Tony Webster built HeroJobs.org, a text messaging app that sends job alerts to veterans every morning based on their preferences, experience, and zip code.

We were humbled and honored that so many innovative firms volunteered their time and effort to incorporate these – and other open government data sets – as an important ingredient for their innovate employment or training support service. Our visit inspired us to push even harder to release government data, celebrate its use, and to engage our veterans directly to ensure they have the support they need in this important life transition.

Aneesh Chopra is U.S. Chief Technology Officer and Peter Levin is Chief Technology Officer and Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs.



the Atlantic

TECHIES EMBED IN CITY HALL

BY NATE BERG | OCTOBER 21, 2011

The increasingly wired world has inevitably met the notoriously slow-moving gears of city government. City websites, apps and online tools are becoming an integral part of local government. Or at least they're starting to. While some cities like San Francisco and New York have been leaders in developing a software side of the city, others simply don't have the time or resources to upgrade to Government 2.0. A program entering its second year is on a mission to help those cities get there, and so far it has produced some promising results.

Code for America connects selected fellows with cities that need their services. It's based on the Teach for America model, where recent graduates are sent to school districts with few resources. Like underperforming schools, there are plenty of cities that can use all the help they can get.

In its first year, the program has built a variety of applications and tools for cities, including a website that helps Boston parents find schools for their kids, an app that calculates the solar potential of rooftops, and tools that help residents interact with city 311 systems for non-emergency services.

Code for America just announced the next group of focus cities that will receive teams of fellows. For 2012, the organization has upped its load to eight cities. From a pool of more than 20 applicants, the selected cities are Austin, Chicago, Detroit, Honolulu, New Orleans, Santa Cruz, and Macon, Georgia. Philadelphia will also spend a second year in the program.

Unlike the rest of the cities in the program, Macon represents a new approach for the program, mainly because the city of 91,000 has different needs than a Philadelphia or Boston.

"Comparatively, we're teeny tiny," says Amanda Deaton, the project lead for the city of Macon.

And that may be why a program like this is needed there so much. Deaton says her city lacks the resources to build some of the more basic websites and tools that could help improve the way the city works for its citizens. She says a big issue in Macon is citizen engagement.

"There are some people in the community that don't have any

interaction with their government," says Deaton. "An engaged public is a public that takes ownership of their community and makes their community a better place."

She's hoping the way the public interacts with the city – and how the city responds to the needs of citizens – will be improved by the program. She says the current system lets both sides down.

"Yes, you can call customer service, but there's no real way to follow up to make sure something gets done. If it does, hooray, if it doesn't it doesn't," Deaton says. "We need better ways for the community to communicate with us, and also to hold us accountable."

The work will begin when teams of three fellows arrive in host cities in February. But before they arrive, they'll spend their first month preparing to work in the unique and sometimes challenging field of local government. Code for America aims to help the programmers and developers and marketers involved understand the culture of city government, giving them a crash course on how to navigate the city, according to Alissa Black, government relations director. She says a big part of the training is simply encouraging the fellows to be observant of how their cities work and to listen to their needs.

"What we want to do is base our work on user feedback," Black says. "That means going into the cities, talking with officials, meeting with different departments and gathering as much information as the fellows can about what's going on."

But she says after eight years of experience working in local government, it can be difficult to get officials to open up about the problems they face.

"Cities have a really hard time one, admitting that they need help, and two, articulating that problem to an audience," says Black.

But with 2011's cities, Black and the Code for America fellows have been able to develop communication channels with their host cities, and to help break down some of the silos that tend

to keep co-dependent parts of local governments apart.

While the goal for each host city is to improve local problems, Code for America is also looking beyond borders. They specifically look for cities with what Black calls repeatable problems.

"When you address one city's problem, you can imagine you're solving another city's problem, too," says Black.

And that's already occurring. Black points to one project developed for Boston that gets locals to "adopt" fire hydrants to make sure they are visible to firefighters after heavy snows. She says officials in Honolulu have adopted a similar program to get locals to look out for and maintain tsunami sirens.

"The functionality can cross jurisdictions," says Black. "That's what we're looking for."

Cities pay to be involved in the program, though the fees are apparently much less than those charged by commercial vendors. Some are able to participate through foundation support, like

Macon, whose roughly \$300,000 in program fees are handled by the Knight Foundation.

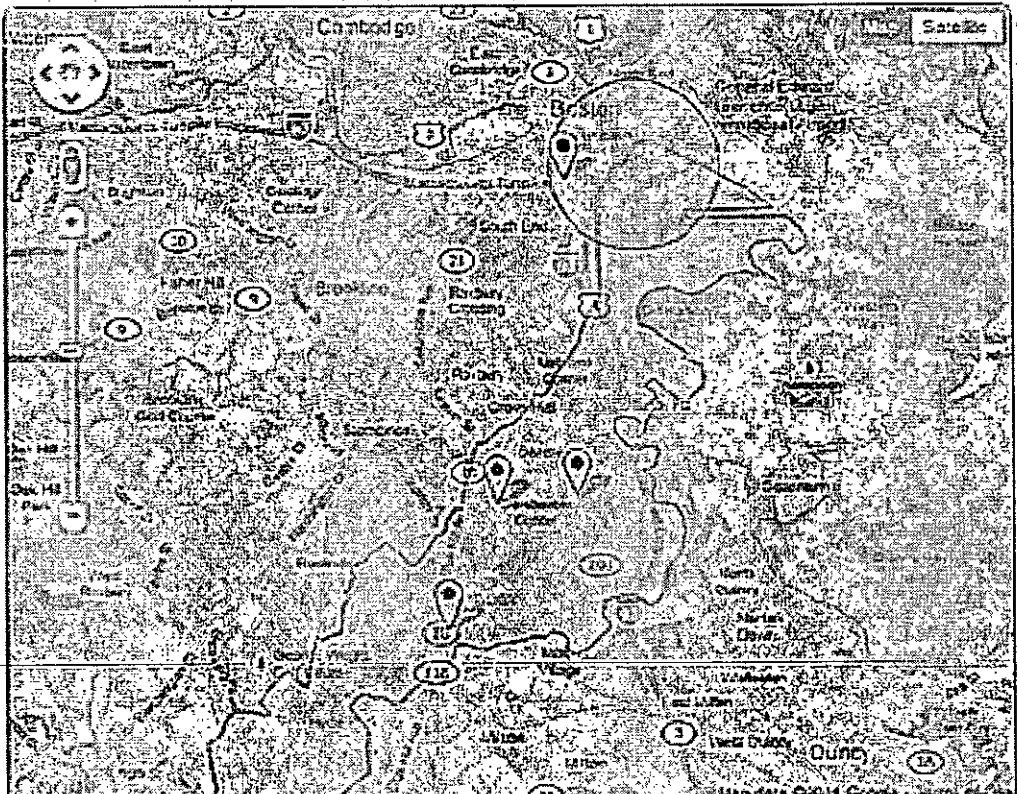
For Deaton, the potential impact of the program on the city is exciting. She says the potential of Code for America can create a sea-change in Macon, where public engagement in local government is low. Engagement she says, but also fulfillment

She has a lot of ideas about how the incoming fellows will be able to help and change the city, but she also wants to defer to their judgment and technological expertise.

"We don't want to tell them what to work on," Deaton says. "We're going to let them come here, let them see what we have and let them tell us where they think they can make the biggest impact"

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TechCrunch

CFA RECEIVES \$1.5M GRANT FROM GOOGLE TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT HARNESS TECH

BY LEENA RAO | DECEMBER 14, 2011

Code for America, a non-profit which tries to bring the people and the power of the internet into government, has received a \$1.5 million grant from Google.

Code for America, which was founded by Jennifer Pahlka, launched this year to help governments become more transparent, connected, and efficient by connecting web developers with people who deliver city services. Earlier this year, Code for America debuted its inaugural fellowship program, which pairs technologists with leading cities to help them innovate.

In 2011, 19 fellows worked with 3 cities to develop over 21 applications, which are now being reused across the country and around the world. And the non-profit has also brought on Greylock Partner and former Mozilla CEO John Lilly and Tumblr VP and former White House and Google staffer Andrew McLaughlin to its Board of Directors. Other backers include the John S and James L Knight Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Open Society Foundation.

With the new funding, the organization is also launching two new programs (a Civic Startup Incubator and a Volunteer Engagement Platform). The seed accelerator, which has raised initial funding from Kauffman Foundation, will launch in the Spring of 2012 to help foster sustainable businesses that can become the next generation of government vendors.

In 2012, Code for America will also roll out an online platform to connect civic hackers and others with each other locally, and to reuse and remix civic apps in their cities.

The image is a screenshot of a TechCrunch article page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'HOME', 'STARTUPS', 'MOBILE', and 'GADGETS'. Below this is a large 'ENCORE' badge. A secondary navigation bar includes 'HOT TOPICS', 'EDITOR'S PICKS', 'APPLE', 'FACEBOOK', 'GOOGLE', 'CES 2012', and 'CRUNCHIES AWARDS'. A link below this bar reads 'Click Here Now For Live CES Coverage, Roaming the Convention Floor With Video Info'. The main article headline is 'Code For America Receives \$1.5M Grant From Google To Help The Government Harness Technology'. The author is 'LEENA RAO' and the date is 'Wednesday, December 14th, 2011'. There are '9 Comments' listed. The article text is partially visible, starting with 'Code for America, a non-profit which tries to bring the pe...' and 'and the power of the internet into government, has receo... \$1.5 million grant from Google.' Below the text is the 'CODE for AMERICA' logo.

The Boston Globe

APPLIED BRAINPOWER

BY DC DENISON | MARCH 1, 2011

On a Friday in the middle of February, Michael Hughes, director of the Boston Public Schools Transportation Department met with seven visiting fellows from Code for America, a new non-profit organization that matches teams of young technologists with city governments for 11 months at a time.

"They were coming up with ideas even before they got through the door," he recalled.

The computer program developers, who are in the midst of their nearly yearlong commitment to help the city better communicate with residents, wanted to explore improvements in the ways parents track their children's school buses.

After brainstorming with Hughes, the team repaired to its space in Boston City Hall. By Monday morning, it had developed the prototype for a bus-tracking iPhone app for parents called "Where's My Bus?"

"These kids are amazingly quick, and very excitable," Hughes said.

Now in its first year of operation, Code for America is a kind of City Year for techies. The team of seven developers assigned to Boston will live and work in San Francisco; but first the members spent the month of February canvassing city government looking for problems to solve.



The meeting with Hughes was one of 113 interviews the team had with city agencies and officials.

After a month of data gathering, the team is still sorting out exactly what products and services it will build for Boston. Contributions could range from online databases to mobile phone apps. The young programmers, many of whom turned down high-paying technology jobs to work for Code for America's \$35,000 stipend, want to use technology to improve how Boston is run.

"Up till now, there really hasn't been a way for computer coders to give back," said Erik Michaels-Ober, a Boston Code for America fellow. "Teachers have Teach for America, physicians have Doctors without Borders, This is our opportunity."

Five cities are hosting young developers from Code for America. Each host city, including Boston, contributed \$225,000 to the nonprofit to sponsor a team. That entitles the city to whatever technology is developed.

For its inaugural effort, the organization sent teams to Boston; Boulder, Colo.; the District of Columbia; Philadelphia; and Seattle.

Code for America also receives significant funding from technology companies such as Microsoft Corp., Google Inc., and O'Reilly Media Inc., as well as the Knight Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, and Omidyar Network, established by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar.

"It's an incredible deal for Boston," said Bill Oates, the city's chief information officer. "Seven energetic technologists for a year. That kind of talent should cost four times that amount, at least."

Last week, the Code for America fellows made a presentation at the Parkmah House, the historic Beacon Hill mansion, to show just what they could give to the city. On a portable screen set up next to an antique china cabinet the young programmers took turns presenting ideas to 30 City Hall staffers and representatives from city agencies.

The first project: to create an online platform that facilitates communication between the city's 56,000 public school



students, their parents, their teachers, the many after-school programs, and school administrators.

"The original idea is that we can help connect the many overlapping ways that the entire school community communicates," said Max Ogden, a fellow from Portland, Ore.

The program is designed to incorporate smaller initiatives and unexpected events. Like snow.

Four of the seven fellows are from the West Coast. After working a shift on the city's 24-hour telephone help line during one of the early February storms, a few of the fellows were inspired to start work on an Adopt a Hydrant iPhone application for Boston that would allow residents to help firefighters by agreeing to shovel out nearby fire hydrants after snowstorms.

Melissa Dodd, chief information officer for the Boston Public Schools, was one of the many city officials interviewed by the Code for America team.

"The cool thing is that they are thinking about problems we think about every day, but just haven't been able to get to," she said. "They don't have to deal with the day-to-day technology issues we deal with, so they will be able to solely focus on the issues they've identified."

Although final products are not due until November, City Hall is expecting to see early versions of the group's work within a few months.

"We'll start seeing alpha products as soon as April," said Chris Osgood, a technology adviser to Mayor Thomas M. Menino who

worked with the team members during their stay in Boston.

"I expect we'll see some kind of platform that will help pull information together from a variety of platforms, and at least one app for each of the groups they talked to: parents, teachers, students, and administrators."

But Karla Macedo, a Code for America fellow from California, said the number of apps is likely to be much higher than that.

"We'll probably end up creating dozens of apps," she said. "We can bang out an app a day."

Macedo added that once the group gets settled in California, the challenge won't be productivity, it will be priority.

"Our problem won't be what we can do," she said, "but what we will do first."

2012 JUN 28 PM 5:05 **OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL**

Resolution No. _____ C.M.S.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO 1) ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH CODE FOR AMERICA FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2013, FOR THE PAYMENT OF PROGRAM FEES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$180,000 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CODE FOR AMERICA LABS, INC. 2013 FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IF SELECTED, AND 2) WAIVE THE COMPETITIVE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS/QUALIFICATIONS (RFP/Q) PROCESS

WHEREAS, the Code for America fellowship is a unique competitive program where a select few cities are chosen each year to receive three to five top computer development and design professionals to work collaboratively with city hall, residents, community organizations and the local technology community to help the city find new solutions to community problems;

WHEREAS, Code for America Fellows research community needs, then design lightweight technology tools that bring greater openness, efficiency and participation to local government helping the City of Oakland use the power of the participatory web to bring its practices in line with leaders in the private sector;

WHEREAS, given the City of Oakland's commitment to Open Government, transparency and innovation, staff seek to identify web-based solutions to break down cumbersome bureaucratic processes and emerge with better systems that will help cut costs, increase efficiency and provide better service to the public;

WHEREAS, the 2013 Code for America Fellowship program will provide guidance on setting up infrastructure and engaging an organizational culture shift to fully take advantage of Web 2.0—including Open Source applications and agile development methodologies;

WHEREAS, Oakland has identified two core processes that would greatly benefit from web-based tools, and the City of Oakland seeks Code for America's support to turn them into a reality;

WHEREAS, online applications would benefit these processes and result in decreased costs, a significant boost in productivity and better engagement with citizens; and

WHEREAS, there is a fee of \$180,000 to participate in the 2013 Code for America Fellowship program; and

WHEREAS, the City Administrator is authorized to enter into an agreement for the payment of the full amount of these program fees under the summer recess purchasing authority (Oakland Muni. Code § 2.04.020.H and Council Rules of Procedures, Rule 21), however, the City Administrator is required to conduct an RFP/Q process for the selection of programs unless the City Council finds that it is in the City's best interests to waive the process; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 Code for America Fellowship program offers the unique opportunity for the City of Oakland to receive year-long assistance from several Code America fellows as they help the City solve complex issue with technology, resulting in decreased costs, increased productivity and increased civic engagement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: that the Oakland City Council hereby authorizes the City Administrator to, if selected for the program, enter into an agreement with Code for America for the period of January 1 through December 31, 2013, for the payment of program fees in an amount not to exceed \$180,000 to participate in the Code for America Labs, Inc. 2013 Fellowship Program; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: that, pursuant to Oakland Municipal Code § 2.04.051.B and for the reasons stated above and in the City Administrator's report accompanying this Resolution, the Oakland City Council hereby finds that h is in the City's best interests to waive the RFP/Q process and so waives the process for participation in the 2013 Code for America Fellowship.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, _____

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES – BROOKS, BRUNNER, KERNIGHAN, NADEL, SCHAAF, DE LA FUENTE, KAPLAN, AND
PRESIDENT REID

NOES -

ABSENT -

ABSTENTION -

ATTEST: _____
LaTonda Simmons
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
of the City of Oakland, California