

Federal Agencies Call for Aid at National Day of Civic Hacking

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What do honey bees, criminal records, Lyme disease and landfills all have in common? Typically nothing, but on June 4 these relatively disparate topics will be put in the spotlight as civic hackers converge for the fourth annual [National Day of Civic Hacking](#). The White House, along with civic tech group Code for America, are leading this year's event to spur citizens, technologists and governments to solve societal problems. More than 100 hacker spaces are set to pop up for a day, with some turning into weekend hackathons and local app competitions.

Federal agencies have asked technologists to help solve 16 different challenges facing communities (see below for a full listing) and the work furthers President Obama's [call to action](#) he made back in March when attending the arts and tech trade show SXSW. His message at the time requested the tech industry to contribute its time and resources to improving their communities.

In an opening Friday blog post, Cecilia Muñoz, assistant to the president and director of the [Domestic Policy Council](#), said the day would also build upon the [Opportunity](#)

[Project](#), an initiative released in conjunction with the president's SXSW message, that is meant to be an online hub to engage citizens around federal and regional open data apps.

"The president likes to say that the most important word in the Constitution — that document that starts with 'We the people...' — is that first word: 'We,'" Muñoz said in a video post. "What he means by that, is that we have the capacity to make the kinds of changes we want to see around the country, that's what this event is all about."

Alongside Muñoz, U.S. Technology Officer and ex-Google vice president Megan Smith underscored the president's efforts to release more than 200,000 government data sets since he took office. She encouraged participants to leverage the resources, data that can be found on U.S. open data portal Data.gov.

"We have data from the Department of Labor, from the Department of Education, [the U.S.] Census, that people can build incredible tools on top of, both to see better — where the problems and challenges are — as well as to solve problems," Smith said.

Below is a list of the National Day of Civic Hacking's 18 current challenges. More details about the challenges and events can be found at the [event page](#) at Code for America.

1. Challenge: Applying for Food Stamps

Help us make it easier for residents to get the help they need to buy food.

2. Challenge: Applying for Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is important, but not easy to apply for — let's see how we can improve the process.

3. Challenge: Applying for Your Criminal Record

People have a right to their criminal record, but it's not always easy to get. Let's fix this.

4. Challenge: Applying for Victim Compensation

The last thing people need after being a victim of a crime is a big complex process to get the help they need. Let's make this easier.

5. Challenge: Applying for a Business License

Starting a business means new jobs and better neighborhoods. Let's see how hard it is to do that and improve it.

6. Challenge: Data Visualization for Obama Administration's Promise Zones

Use data visualization to help tell the story of Promise Zones

7. Challenge: Combating Zika and Future Threats

Think boldly about new and transformative ways to prevent, detect, and respond to the Zika virus and future global health threats.

8. Challenge: Open Foreign Assistance

How can data on foreign assistance be combined with other data sets to tell the story of U.S. investment and diplomacy overseas?

9. Challenge: Ready to Work En Español

We're challenging volunteers to build products and prototypes that help connect Spanish speaking job seekers to training that will teach them skills to get jobs.

10. Challenge: The Opportunity Project

Use the Opportunity Project data found on Opportunity.Census.gov as a starting point. Then create data visualizations or begin the design of a digital tool.

11. Challenge: Honey, I'm home!

Create an app to map honey bees in your backyard

12. Challenge: Visualizing What's Wasted

Create a data visualization to tell the story of waste

13. Challenge & Event: Lyme Innovation

Think boldly, collaborate, and innovate for Lyme disease solutions.

14. Challenge: Developing a Community Needs Platform/Solution

Developing a community needs platform or solution for the California Health and Human Services Agency.

15. Challenge: Designing solutions to address Food Insecurity issues

Harness data to build solutions that empower communities to access available resources and better tackle food insecurity challenges?

16. Challenge: #DataAtWork Workforce Data Initiative

We're challenging volunteers to use the University of Chicago's employment data application programming interface to help build products and prototypes that aid in workforce training and development.

17. Challenge: Accessibility

Make it easier to find jobs, transportation and access to education opportunities.

<http://www.govtech.com/Federal-Agencies-Call-for-Aid-at-National-Day-of-Civic-Hacking.html>