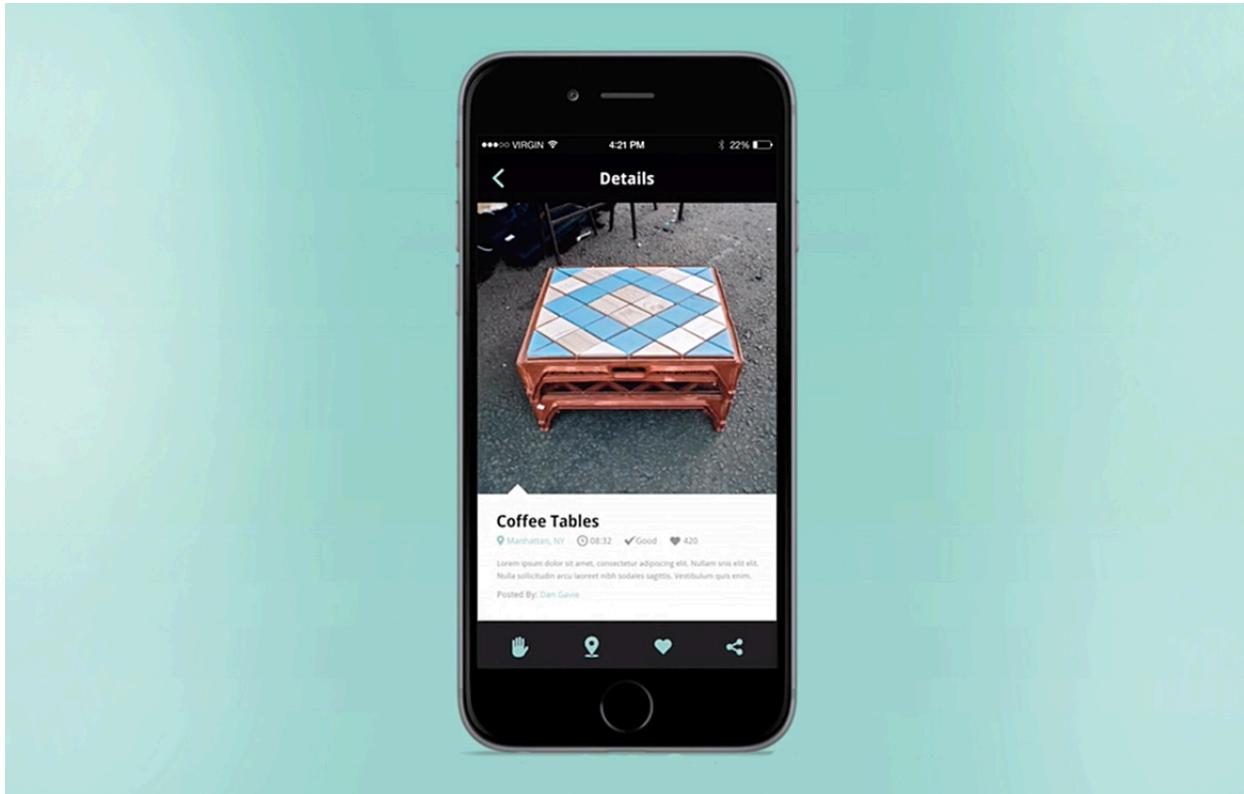


This Week in Civic Tech: NYC Announces BigApps Challenge Winners, California Seeks to Reshape Child Welfare System

Jason Shueh | December 3, 2015



This Week in Civic Tech presents a line up of notable events in the space that connects citizens to government services. Topics cover latest startups, hackathons, open data initiatives and other influencers. Check back each week for updates.

NYC BigApps Challenge Winners Announced

On Dec. 3, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and Maria Torres-Springer, president of the city's Economic Development Corporation, announced winners for the [BigApps Challenge](#), the city's civic innovation contest that's described as the largest in the nation. Challenge contestants answered four urban challenges identified in the mayor's One New York plan ([OneNYC](#)): affordable housing, zero waste, connectivity and civic engagement.

The BigApps Challenge awarded winners from a purse of \$125,000: Each category winner received \$25,000, two judges' choice awards winners received \$10,000; and \$5,000 already was awarded at a product pitch competition in November. Since the

challenge's first iteration in 2009, officials report that the event has inspired more than 500 apps and engaged more than 500,000 city residents. The winners are:

Affordable Housing Grand Prize (\$25,000): [JustFix.nyc](#) is a tool for renters to organize and take action in getting repairs made in their apartments.

Zero Waste Grand Prize (\$25,000): [Treasures](#) is a mobile app that allows users to share objects with others in their community, reusing and recycling items rather than throwing them out.

Connected Cities Grand Prize (\$25,000): The [CityCharge](#) solar-powered charging station for public spaces uses Bluetooth and beacon technology to gather environmental data, and acts as a Wi-Fi hotspot.

Civic Engagement Grand Prize (\$25,000): The [Benefit Kitchen](#) screening tool allows low-income families to learn about the public benefits for which they are eligible.

Judge's Choice (\$10,000): [Addicaid](#) is a digital support network that helps individuals struggling with substance disorders enter and stay in recovery.

Judge's Choice (\$10,000): [IssueVoter](#) is a nonpartisan, end-to-end constituent engagement tool for Americans to weigh in on important policy questions and monitor their representatives' records.

California, Code for America, 18F Reshape \$449 Million RFP

The civic tech group Code for America (CfA) is celebrating what it sees as a potential game changer for California's Child Welfare System.

CfA Content Director Dan Hon shared information about a collaboration between CfA and the California Department of Social Services to rethink the system that each year manages more than 500,000 incident reports of potentially vulnerable children. Hon wrote in a [blog](#) that the contract had all the red flags of a traditional procurement: missed deadlines, being over budget and an inefficient product overall.

Instead, CfA pulled in the technical help of former U.S. Chief Technology Officer Todd Park, 18F and other government innovators to reshape this \$449 million contract into a series of RFPs that will be published in January. Hon's [blog post](#) serves as an ongoing case study for how to apply agile procurement to a major statewide procurement.

Federal Sites Show Visitor Locations and Downloads

On Dec. 2, a major upgrade the U.S. transparency site [Analytics.usa.gov](#) — that includes new federal Web traffic data — went live. In a [blog post](#), federal digital service

18F wrote that the site, which is operated under the U.S. Digital Analytics Program, was outfitted with new features to find anonymized location and download data from agency websites.

For location data, two charts on the dashboard track which cities are sending the most visitors and deliver a breakdown of U.S. vs. international traffic. At present, the site reports Washington, D.C., New York City and Los Angeles as providing the most traffic at 3.4 percent, 3.2 percent and 1.5 percent respectively for all agency sites.

International traffic represents 14.8 percent, and Mexico is the top traffic driver at 2.1 percent. 18F made sure to stress that it went to special lengths to anonymize the data from citizens “at the earliest possible point.” While they could have used a computer’s IP address — which would have given a near exact location — coders at 18F opted to use network domains and service providers for location data. This tactic isn’t as exact, and determine a relative location.

“As a result, people visiting [an agency website] from a suburb may appear as visiting from the closest city,” according to the 18F blog.

With downloads, current stats indicate a significant interest in cybersecurity and immigration. The top two most downloaded documents are letters from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management about cybersecurity measures undertaken after its major cyber attack this year. The third and fourth most popular downloads are the Application for Naturalization, a form to request U.S. citizenship; and Petition for Alien Relative, an application for the immigration of family members.

<http://www.govtech.com/computing/This-Week-in-Civic-Tech-NYC-Announces-BigApps-Challenge-Winners-California-Seeks-to-Reshape-Child-Welfare-System.html>