THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

TOP ADVISOR NETWORK

Product Advisor

ROLE OVERVIEW

TOP is a sprint-based innovation program that brings together technologists, government, and communities to rapidly prototype digital products—powered by federal open data—that solve real-world problems for people across the country. More than **200 digital products** have been created through TOP to address problems like disaster response, youth and veteran homelessness, reducing ocean plastics, COVID-19, rural economic development and more.

Product Advisors are technology product experts from outside of government with experience on the business side of technology, such as product management, product strategy, business development, marketing and funding. They help teams develop product growth plans to ensure both the products and teams that built them are successful long after the sprint.

→   Read this document to learn more about how it works.

See past products from TOP at opportunity.census.gov/showcase

How It Works

01 — IDENTIFY CHALLENGES

Federal agencies identify high-priority challenges facing the public.

02 — TEAM UP

Product teams from industry and universities sign on to create data-driven, digital products in collaboration with end users, data and policy experts.

03 — BUILD

During virtual product development sprints, agencies and stakeholders collaborate with product teams and other sprint participants to create new digital products such as mapping tools, apps, websites, games, AI algorithms, network visualizations, and more. Sprints typically include user research, data exploration, and product development.

04 — LAUNCH

Products are showcased at Census Open Innovation Summit, which is an open press event.

05 — REACH END USERS

After the sprint, participants work to ensure products reach end users and move the needle on national challenges. Certain years, teams have the option to apply for a financial prize to continue their work.

→ Your Role

PRODUCT ADVISOR

Product advisors come with the strategic mindset and outside perspective to think critically about the big picture of the product to ensure that it reaches its intended end users and achieves impact in communities.

A product advisor's role supports teams as they:

→ Research market dynamics, developing strong use cases, and identifying a product niche.

→ Align product type with company/organizational characteristics and goals

→ Secure funding & developing strategic partnerships

→ Plan marketing, pitch development, product adoption, and audience building

→ Develop a go-to-market, maintenance or growth strategy

→ Answer questions on user needs to ensure products solve real problems

→ Provide ongoing feedback to product teams on their products throughout the sprint

→ Connect with tech teams periodically for ad hoc advising

→ Participate in product strategy workshops, held 2-3 times per year, in which you'll be asked to speak briefly and/or be paired with 2-3 teams for speed mentoring.

Product Advisors serve a critical role helping product teams, federal agencies, and other partners understand the everyday people and communities The Opportunity Project seeks to empower.

Why Participate?

01 **Build relationships and partnerships**

Create strategic relationships in government and develop partnerships with product companies and nonprofits.

02 **Shape solutions to improve long-term success**

Your advice will help tech teams tackle critical national challenges like homelessness, economic development, climate change, and more.Speak on behalf of your community to have a real impact on the challenges that are tackled and the products, solutions, technology that are created.

03 **Share your insights**

Contribute to knowledge sharing between product teams, end users, and federal agencies.

Other Roles

GOVERNMENT

Federal agencies & local governments define major challenges facing the public within their mission areas. During the 12-14-week sprint, policy experts and data stewards from each agency provide feedback to the participating teams and assistance working with federal open data.

USER ADVOCATES

User advocates are community leaders, advocates, and people with direct lived experience in the target challenges (e.g. state and local government, non-profits, service providers, or individual experts). Their role is to guide product teams in designing solutions that are realistic and useful for the target end users.

PRODUCT/TECH TEAMS

Tech teams are the companies, universities, non-profits, and students who build digital products in the sprints. They design, develop, and launch the solutions they build, and typically own and maintain the products and associated IP after the sprints.