THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT
UNIVERSITY

The Opportunity Project (TOP) brings together technologists, government, and communities to rapidly prototype digital products – powered by federal open data – that tackle real-world problems for people across the country.

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

How TOP Works

1 Identify challenges
Federal agencies identify high-priority challenges facing the public.

Team up 2
Teams sign on to create data-driven, digital products in collaboration with community leaders, data and policy experts.

3 Create
Teams build digital products during a 10 week virtual sprint that includes user research, data exploration, and product development.

Showcase 4
Digital products are showcased at a public event.

5 Reach communities
After the sprint, participants work to ensure products reach relevant communities

Who's Involved

Tech Teams

Tech teams are groups who build digital products in the sprints. They design, create, own, and maintain the products after the sprint. The role of teams includes:

→ Design and create digital products with federal open data

→ Collaborate with other sprint participants including government data experts to explore and use available data sets, user advocates to understand community needs, and advisors to develop a post-sprint strategy for the product

→ Conduct community research to ensure projects address community needs and resonate with the public

→ Join virtual "milestone" calls during the sprint to share progress, ask questions and provide feedback to other teams

→ Own and maintain the products after the sprint, or develop a strategy for handoff

Government

Federal agencies, state/local agencies, and NGOs will define challenges that the teams will address. During the 10-week sprint, they will provide feedback and assistance to participating teams.

User Advocates

User advocates are community leaders, advocates, and people with direct lived experience in the target challenges. Their role is to guide teams in designing solutions that are realistic and useful for communities.

Product Advisors/Mentors

Advisors are technology experts outside of government who consult teams on how to develop viable products that can be maintained after the sprint.

Benefits for Universities

Mission and Social Purpose
→ Work on issues you're passionate about and build solutions that create real impact for communities
→ Learn about key national challenges from experts in the field and people with lived experience

Team Work and Real-World Application
→ Hone skills of working in a team, designating tasks, meeting deadlines, and presenting progress

Data Exploration and Product Feedback
→ Gain access to curated federal open data sets, Q&A sessions with experts from federal agencies, and shared Slack channel with federal data stewards
→ Receive guidance and feedback from product, government agencies, and user advocates/subject matter experts

Human-Centered Design Principles
→ Put human-centered design principles into practice by connecting with potential end users and community leaders, conducting user/community research, and soliciting feedback throughout the sprint

Relationships and Partnerships
→ Build relationships with government experts, user groups, subject matter experts, and tech companies
→ Form partnerships with organizations that can help deploy digital tools to communities and support students in the future

Product
→ Own resulting IP
→ Benefit from visibility and press