

# THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT



## Tech Team

### 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.

**Tech Teams** are the companies, universities, non-profits, and students who build digital products in the sprints. They design, develop, and launch the products they build, and typically own and maintain the products after the sprints. Teams may also explore developing non-digital products, such as toolkits, policy interventions, social interventions, communication/outreach campaigns and more!

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

See past products from TOP at [opportunity.census.gov/showcase](https://opportunity.census.gov/showcase)

# How It Works

## 01 – IDENTIFY CHALLENGES

Federal agencies identify high-priority challenges facing the public.

## 02 – TEAM UP

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

## 03 – BUILD

During virtual tech development sprints, agencies collaborate with teams and other sprint participants to create new digital products such as mapping tools, apps, websites, games, AI algorithms, network visualizations, and more. Teams may also create non-digital solutions such as toolkits, policy interventions and more.

## 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

### TECH TEAM

The role of tech team includes:

- Design and build a digital product or non-digital solution that uses federal open data
- Collaborate with other sprint participants including government data experts to explore and use available data sets, user advocates to understand user needs, and product advisors to develop a post-sprint product/solution strategy
- Conduct user research to ensure products/solutions are solving for real user needs
- Join virtual “milestone” calls during the sprint to share progress, ask questions and provide feedback to other teams
- Attend Summit to present final products
- Own and maintain the product/solution after the sprint, or develop a strategy for handoff
- Optional: apply for a financial prize at the end of the sprint

# Why Participate?

## 01 Advance Your Mission

Work on a problem statement that aligns with your mission or CSR interests. Leverage sprint timeline and project management to advance internal lab or development projects.

## 02 Develop Business Channels

Develop sample use cases and prototypes that demonstrate internal tech capabilities. Leverage sprint timeline and project management to advance internal lab or development projects.

## 03 Gain Access to Cross-Sector Experts

Access to federal data and policy experts for real time Q&A. Access to end users for testing and feedback.

## 04 Build Relationships & Partnerships

Build relationships in government, and develop partnerships with user groups and other companies.

## 05 Media Spotlight and Public Relations

Gain visibility and press from Summit and beyond.

## 06 Provide Creative Opportunity

Designers, developers, and engineers from your organization have the opportunity to drive the design and build of the product.

# Other Roles

## GOVERNMENT

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

## PRODUCT ADVISORS

Product advisors are technology product experts from outside of government who consult product teams on how to develop viable products that can be maintained and implemented after the sprint.

## 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.

# FAQs

## How do I determine what problem to focus on?

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You can choose to focus on one to two of the sprint problem statements.

## What is the time commitment?

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The amount of time you dedicate to this process is up to you! Participation in the sprint is part time and can be done completely remotely. We ask that you generally keep up with the pace of our weekly milestones, but otherwise you can determine how your team works.

## Who should be involved with my company/organization?

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The team is up to you, but we find that teams usually include 3–5 main participants who are engineers, data scientists, designers, and often a project manager or product owner. We encourage teams to continue to develop and refine their products after the sprint, but each team should have capacity to complete a functioning MVP by the end of the sprint.

## What am I committing to do if I join the sprint?

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Your main commitment in the sprint is to build a digital product or non-digital solution that uses federal open data (in addition to any state, local, and private data you have access to), and to join virtual sprint milestones during the sprint including a user research session, data Q&A, concept pitch, beta demo, product sustainability discussion, and MVP demo.

## What do I build?

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That's up to you! The only requirements are to build a solution that addresses one or more problem statements and uses federal open data. Solutions can be new, or built within existing tech or platforms, e.g. a new feature or use case, or incorporating new data sets.

## What happens after the sprint?

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- Teams maintain products/solutions: Post-sprint strategy varies for each team, and can include open sourcing, incorporating into existing business channels, or handing off the product. We encourage you to make your product as widely accessible to the public as possible
- Share the product/solution: A large open press Summit helps us to share completed projects from the sprints. Your sprint product can also be featured on [opportunity.census.gov](https://opportunity.census.gov) and The Opportunity Project blog.
- Track impact: We ask teams to share periodic updates on reach, effectiveness, and utilization so that we can communicate about your impact on end users.
- Optional prize application and post-sprint communities: Certain years, teams can apply for funding to support product sustainability.