OpenAustin
Civic Innovation Proposal
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Summary

OpenAustin requests that Austin City Council allocate $320K in FY2012-13 budget to create a new *Civic Innovation* program. These funds would provide for two FTEs (an Innovation Officer and a Programmer/Analyst/Administrator), and would support programs such as app contests and micro-grants to drive local development.

Civic innovation harnesses new technologies and methods to make government more efficient, effective and responsive -- as well as increase citizen engagement. In 2012, Austin made its initial moves towards civic innovation with actions such as deploying an open data portal (data.austintexas.gov) and initiating a fellowship with Code for America (www.codeforamerica.org).

This year, Austin should take the next step and embrace a sustainable civic innovation effort, and create a Civic Innovation Office.

Scope

Proposed scope for the Civic Innovation Office:

- Public engagement and relationship building in support of innovation. Engage the local community and identify partners to help develop, support and advocate civic innovation projects. Targets include:
  - Local businesses and professionals
  - Local non-profits and community organizations
  - Local open government advocates, civic hackers and developers, social media enthusiasts and such

- Open data advocacy and outreach:
  - Develop targets and implement strategy for public data portfolio
  - Collaborate with city department staff to build support and develop resources to meet open data goals
  - Work with city departments to identify potential high-value datasets
  - Work with public to identify data needs and opportunities
  - Prioritize datasets to maximize public benefit and internal cost savings
  - Envision and advocate opportunities, such as new apps, enabled by available datasets

- Other civic innovation activities:
  - Identify and implement best practices for civic innovation.
  - Support meet-ups, hackathons, micro-grants and app contests to solve public problems
  - Acquire and maintain relations, knowledge, applications from exiting Code for America Fellows

Outcomes

Anticipated outcomes include:

- New, exciting public services such as:
  - "See Click Fix" brings 311 services into the mobile age
  - prepared.ly addresses need for preparation to mitigate threat from wildfires (and possibly other disaster scenarios)
- Reduced costs such as:
  - Publication of open data to reduce cost of *public information requests*
  - Reduced staff demand due to availability of services online
- Increased public engagement:
  - Public feels government is more responsive, acts in their interests
  - Development of public-private partnerships in the innovation process
- In the first year, initiate programs for up to five new applications or services, developed by the community or via public/private partnerships.

Proposal

Provide funding in FY2012-13 budget for two FTEs and initial program funding, to bootstrap the innovation office to:

- Develop strategic innovation plan in consultation with senior city management, city council, and the community.
- Develop targets and success metrics for open data portal, establish prioritization process for datasets based on public value and cost savings, work with city staff to develop resources to meet goals.
- Implement transition plan for the end of the Code for America Fellowship, to ensure results and benefits of the 2012 fellowship are captured, and can be the basis for further innovation efforts.

Position One: Innovation Officer (est. $122K salary, $15K benefits)

The ideal candidate has a deep understanding of and passion for innovation and creativity with proven experience bringing ideas from conception to completion. The Innovation

Officer will lead and facilitate innovation by harnessing the creative energies of employees, residents and business partners to create new economic opportunities and to find new ways to improve service delivery and reduce costs. The Innovation Officer will have deep experience generating passion for success, as well as understanding and managing for risk. The Innovation Officer will be the most visible advocate, within the city and to the public, for the city's innovation effort.

Position Two: Programmer/Analyst/Administrator (est. $64K salary, $15K benefits)

This ideal candidate will have have two key skill sets. One is experience administering programs and activity, with strong organizational and project management skills. The other skill set is knowledge of common Internet-enabled and mobile technologies, and experience deploying and administering web applications.

Program Funding (est. $114K)

Program funding would be used for the following purposes:

- National networking and engagement (est. $8K) -- The Innovation Office should tap into the emerging national network of leaders and resources for open government and civic innovation. This includes conference participation and travel.
- Community events (est. $6K) -- Funding provided to conduct community events such as meet-ups, workshops.
- Development funding (est. $100K) -- Drive the eco-culture for apps and other civic innovations by the use of innovative funding mechanisms such as app contests and micro-grants. The estimated amount provides for five projects at approximately $20K apiece.