The Civic Digital Fellowship

Brought to you by Coding it Forward

About the Fellowship

The Civic Digital Fellowship is a student-led data science and technology internship program in federal agencies, the first of its kind. It is the product of a collaboration between [Coding it Forward](#), the [Harvard Open Data Project](#), former US Deputy CTO and Harvard professor Nick Sinai, and federal agencies such as the United States Census Bureau.

Coding it Forward is dedicated to inspiring and empowering people to use their technology skills for social good. We are excited to be teaming up with these agencies to launch an elite public-sector summer fellowship program for college students interested in data science, technology, and data journalism.

A cohort of eight student fellows will spend ten weeks in Washington, D.C. this summer working with the Census Bureau to help them better serve American citizens. We will provide each fellow a **dedicated mentor** inside the agency. We expect that mentors will propose projects and that fellows will be matched with mentors and projects that match their interests and skills.

This fellowship is targeted to students with both technical and non-technical skills. [We are looking for](#):
- Data scientists/software engineers
- Product managers
- Designers
- Data journalists

Host Agency: the Census Bureau

This summer, we are offering positions with **the United States Census Bureau**. The Census Bureau's mission is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. It has a significant demand for modern technological solutions to make sense of their data and improve their services.

Projects

Projects will be tailored to meet agencies' and mentors' needs as well as fellows' interests and skills. Example projects at the Census Bureau include:

- [**Census CitySDK**](#): API created in 12 weeks to streamline the use of Census datasets.
- [**Commerce Data Usability Project**](#): tutorials on how to use the Commerce Department's tens of thousands of free and open datasets.

- **Visualization:** Develop visualization examples using D3 and other libraries, increasing the ability of the CitySDK product to help journalists create visual stories with data.
- **Smart Cities:** Develop smart city and Internet of things integrations with CitySDK, including a proof of concept that solves a need identified by a city and industry partner.

Open Positions

Data Scientist/Software Engineer

Data science and software engineering fellows will work with some of their host agencies' tens of thousands of large datasets, developing apps from the ground up and deploying them at scale. Fellows will use modern data analysis and visualization tools in languages such as Python, R, or JavaScript.

Applicants should have a strong technical background. Familiarity with data analysis, data visualization, or mobile/web development is a plus. We don't require experience in any particular technology.

Applicants should note the programming languages, libraries, and platforms they have experience with in their resume or personal statement, as described in the ["How to Apply" section](#).

Product Manager

Product Manager fellows will work with data scientists, software engineers, and designers to design, develop, and deploy products for their host agencies. They will work with leaders at the host agencies to identify opportunities to increase citizen engagement and modernize the agencies using available datasets. Then they will lead their team of fellows to release and iterate on a minimum viable product during the summer. Fellows will gain skills in human-centered design, agile development, user research, and working with teams.

We are looking for both technical and non-technical product managers. Applicants should be strong communicators with demonstrated leadership experiences. We encourage anyone with a passion for "hacking the bureaucracy," business, design, or technology to apply.

Applicants with programming knowledge, experience shipping products, or experience working with businesses or governments should note this in their personal statement, as described in the ["How to Apply" section](#).

Designer

Designer fellows will help software engineers and product managers make government websites clear and useful for users ranging from developers to everyday citizens. Fellows will be tasked to help bring government websites out of the 1990s to the level that today's digital consumers demand. Fellows will gain experience in user research, interaction design, UI/UX design, and prototyping.

For examples of excellently-designed government websites, consider vote.gov or data.gov.

Applicants should have an interest in UI/UX design and a passion for making useful, intuitive software. Graphical design skills, including experience with design apps like Sketch and Photoshop, are a plus, but not required.

Data Journalist

Data journalist fellows will write engaging, data-driven articles and develop other materials to showcase the broad variety and potential of their host agency's data. The data journalist fellow will work closely with mentors within the agency to produce content for wide distribution. They can draw inspiration from FiveThirtyEight, which blends political reporting with data analysis to create engaging articles, podcasts, and data visualizations.

For examples of articles that data journalist fellows would write, consider the Census Bureau's press releases and data visualizations.

Applicants interested in this position should be able to communicate and write in an engaging and accessible style. Experience in writing and/or reporting on data, statistics, or other quantitative analyses is a plus.

Fellowship Logistics

The Civic Data Fellowship will offer **full-time, ten-week summer internship positions based in Washington, D.C**. We will send a cohort of **eight students** to the Census Bureau, with all students starting on the same date, tentatively scheduled to be **Monday, June 12, 2017**. The fellowship will therefore conclude on **Friday, August 18, 2017**.

Fellowship Benefits

The Civic Digital Fellowship is a fully-funded internship with competitive benefits. At this time, the Census Bureau expects to provide a **stipend of approximately $3300** to each fellow, as well as housing and reimbursements for travel to and from Washington, DC.

Who is Eligible

Applicants must be current undergraduate or graduate students at an accredited college or university. Due to federal hiring policies, we unfortunately cannot hire students who are not citizens of the United States. All candidates who receive offers will need to pass a lightweight security clearance.

Timeline

Our timeline is rolling, and as such **we strongly recommend applying as soon as possible**. Here are the key dates:

- Applications are open as of **Monday, April 10, 2017.**
- Applications will be accepted on a **rolling basis** until all eight positions are filled, which will be no later than **Friday, April 28, 2017.**
- After you submit your application, you will go through a preliminary round of screening. Selected candidates will be interviewed by mentors starting on **Thursday, April 13, 2017** (again, on a rolling timeline.)
- You will be notified of your offer status shortly after your interview.

Our timeline is subject to change at any time without notice.

How to Apply

Please follow these instructions very carefully. **We will not accept your application unless you follow all the instructions!** All uploaded files should be in PDF format.

1. [Visit the Washington Center's application portal](#) and start an application.
2. After registering as a new user, log in, and click "Internship" under the "Start a New Application" panel on the left.
3. Under the question "Please select the option for which you wish to be considered", select the **"Federal Diversity Internship Initiative."** Wait until the option to select year shows up, then select "2017." Wait until the option to select term shows up, then select "Summer Quarter".
4. In the "How did you hear about this" section, choose "Other" and write **"Civic Digital Fellowship." We will not consider your application unless you type exactly "Civic Digital Fellowship" (without the quotes.)**
5. At the bottom of the "application options" page, choose the checkboxes for "U.S. Census Bureau."
6. The "Proof of Citizenship Document" is optional. (Remember, though, that you must be a US citizen to apply.)

7. For your resume and statement of professional interest, **be sure to hit "Upload"**!
8. In your statement of professional interest, don't follow the instructions on the application. Instead, **please just answer the following questions:**
   a. Which of the positions do you fit best, and why? Again, the positions are data scientist/software engineer, product manager, designer, and data journalist. Refer to the position descriptions for more information. (1-2 sentences)
   b. Describe an exciting software project you've built, a product you've shipped, or something you've written. Include any relevant links! (3-4 sentences)
   c. What are some unique, relevant skills and experiences, technical or otherwise, that you would bring to this internship? (2-3 sentences)
9. You do **not** need to mail in an official transcript (although you can if you like.) Instead, **upload your unofficial transcript to this Dropbox folder**.
10. You do **not** need to submit letters of recommendation. If the system won't let you submit the application without adding references, you can name Neel Mehta (neelmehta@college.harvard.edu) and Chris Kuang (ckuang@college.harvard.edu) as references.
11. Sign up for the mailing list, if you haven't already, because that'll be how we get in touch with you about next steps.

Learn More & Contact

Visit the fellowship's website to learn more, and join the mailing list to get updates about the status of the fellowship and next steps. We recommend joining the Coding it Forward Facebook group to meet other applicants and ask questions in a casual setting!

Contact Chris Kuang at ckuang@college.harvard.edu if you have any other questions!