USA.gov Elected Officials Project

Mentor: David Stenger

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CIVIC DIGITAL FELLOWSHIP

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Jacob Cuomo & Charlie Liu

2021 Civic Digital Fellowship

About Us

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The Problem

- **How can I look up my elected officials?**
  - Google!
  - USA.gov?
- **The current website is informative, but like a directory**
  - Provides a list of links to various different sites
  - In other words: DIY (do it yourself)
- **So, how can the website be improved?**
  - Why should someone use USA.gov to find their elected officials?

The Research

- **The team's research shows that users want to:**
  - Learn more about their elected officials on all levels
    - Local, state, and federal
  - Contact their elected officials
    - With help on how to compose a message
  - Do all of this in an easy way
    - One single interface on USA.gov

The Solution

- **Just type in your address, and that's it!**
  - The website will automatically find your elected officials
    - Searches across all levels: local, state, and federal
  - Includes as much relevant information as possible
    - Ex. party affiliation, email, phone number, address, and social media
  - Also provides a contact form template
    - Generates a ready-to-send email based on user responses

Live Demo!

Want to view the source code and try it yourself?

github.com/usagov/usagov-elected-officials

Before and After

Current Site

How to Contact Your Elected Officials

Learn how to contact your federal, state, and local elected leaders.

Federal Elected Officials

- Contact President Joe Biden online, or call the White House switchboard at 202-456-1414 or the comments line at 202-456-1111 during business hours.
- Locate your U.S. senators' contact information.
- Find your U.S. representative's website and contact information.

State Elected Officials

- Get in touch with your state governor.
- Find the names and current activities of your state legislators.

Local Elected Officials

- Locate your mayor by name, city, or population size.
- Find your county executive (the head of the executive branch of government in your county) by map search or your ZIP Code. The county executive may be an elected or an appointed position.
- Get contact information for your city, county, and town officials.

Our Project

Elected Officials

Get the names and contact information for the people who represent you on the federal, state, and local levels.

Enter your address to find your elected officials.

All form elements below are required and are marked with a (*) symbol.

*Street Address

Enter a location

*City

*State

*ZIP Code

We will never sell your personal information.
Learn how USA.gov protects your privacy.

Find My Elected Officials!

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Project Features

- **Why should someone use USA.gov to find their elected officials?**
  - Simple and intuitive interface
    - Just type in your address – that's it!
  - Aggregates reliable information in one place
    - No need to individually search and evaluate various sites
  - Completely accessible to all users
    - Native support for screen readers, keyboard-based navigation, and more

How We Did It

- **Started with user feedback and a Sketch mockup**
  - Used these resources to scope the project and set a working timeline
- **Researched potential APIs and chose to use the Google Civic Information API**
  - Allows up to 25,000 requests daily for free
  - Database is updated regularly and has near-complete coverage of all areas
- **Built the website as a client-side web application**
  - Lightweight structure allows for straightforward integration with the rest of USA.gov
- **Prioritized a simple design centered around user accessibility**
  - Conducted accessibility reviews to ensure compliance with relevant standards

Next Steps

- **How can I look up my elected officials?**
  - USA.gov!
- **Will be used by 750,000+ visitors annually**
  - New features and enhanced SEO could significantly drive up traffic
- **Future deployment to the official USA.gov site**
  - Keep an eye out at: usa.gov/elected-officials

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Special Thanks To:

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The Coding It Forward Team

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