



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: **Office of the City Administrator**

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City of Oakland Welcomes Code for America Fellows

Partnership focuses on improving government through innovative technologies

Oakland, CA — Today, Mayor Jean Quan, City Councilmember Libby Schaaf and City Administrator Deanna J. Santana welcomed an excited team of innovative fellows from [Code for America](#) to Oakland.

The fellows will be embedded in the City for the next four weeks while they work with City staff and the community to identify needs, leading to the development of new apps and tools that will bring greater openness, efficiency and participation to local government. Their focus will be on two subject areas which are a common challenge for local governments nationwide: public records requests and contracting/procurement. These projects will make it easier for Oakland citizens to access the information they need and foster a more direct dialogue between residents and City Hall. In March, the fellows will return to Code for America headquarters in San Francisco to develop their ideas for implementation later this year.

The City of Oakland is one of 10 municipalities that will participate in the 2013 national fellowship program. Through a competitive process, Oakland was selected for its commitment to engaging a motivated community, as well as its forward-thinking approach to openness and government transparency.

“When I heard Code for America described as ‘The Peace Corp for Geeks,’ I knew the program would be a good fit in Oakland. With our tech-savvy local workforce, our grassroots creative community and our rich history of activism and civic service, Oakland will prove to be the perfect partner,” said Mayor Jean Quan. “We’re excited to see this collaboration evolve.”

Through the Fellowship program, Code for America is partnering with local governments to help them catch up with technology, to bridge the "digital divide" that has developed between the private and public sectors. The private sector has evolved exponentially over the past decade, adopting new technologies and new ways of working at a dizzying speed. Yet for a variety of factors, governments nationwide—particularly local governments—have not adapted at the same rate and have fallen behind. Code for America collaborates with local governments seeking to keep pace with the community they serve by creating and implementing new applications, and by demonstrating new ways of resolving local challenges.

“Participating in the 2013 Code for America fellowship program will be another huge step in the City of Oakland’s efforts to foster innovation locally,” said Councilmember Schaaf. “Coming just days after the launch of the City’s new [Open Data Platform](#) and while staff and community members are still buoyed by the excitement and collaboration at December’s CityCamp event, the Code for America fellows couldn’t have come at a better time.”

“My vision for the City of Oakland is to be an innovative, well-managed big city, highly valued by its residents and businesses and a fabulous place for employees to make a difference,” said City Administrator Deanna J. Santana. “Code for America presents an opportunity to redesign the way we deliver some services, streamline our processes and harness the power of technology and the Web to be more open, efficient and responsive.”

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“I moved to Oakland this past January and was immediately charmed by the community's beauty and diversity. I so look forward to getting to know my neighbors—the Oakland community—better,” said Sheila Dugan, a 2013 Code for America Fellow. “I'm honored to work with the City of Oakland during this month of February and throughout the year—especially at such a pivotal time in the City's history.”

The nine other government agencies that are participating in the 2013 program include: the City of Kansas City, Kansas/Kansas City, Missouri; the City of Las Vegas; the City of Louisville, Kentucky; New York City; the City and County of San Francisco; the City of San Mateo; the City of South Bend, Indiana; and Summit County, Ohio.

The City of Oakland is grateful to the following foundations and companies for their generous contributions which have made the 2013 fellowship program possible: Akonadi Foundation, The William H. Donner Foundation, The Robert A.D. Schwartz Fund, The Mitchell Kapor Foundation, Accela and Pandora.

About the Fellows

Sheila Dugan

Sheila markets products using digital and social media. Recently, she's worked on broadband infrastructure development and adoption issues at the Center for Innovative Technology and Connect South Carolina. In 2011, Dugan was appointed a Virginia Governor's Fellow and served under the Secretary of Technology in the Office of the Governor. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Brown University and a Masters degree in Public Policy from The College of William and Mary.

Richa Agarwal

Richa is a software developer and lover of technology, civic engagement, and the outdoors. Most recently, she has been working to help re-elect Obama from the campaign headquarters. When she's not coding, you can find her at a local coffee shop or out on the trails. Richa holds a BA in Philosophy and Psychology from Colgate University, and an MS in Computer Science from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Cris Cristina

Cris is a user experience designer originally from New Orleans. Most recently, he held the position of design manager at Cisco, developing next generation collaboration products for mobile and web platforms. He has worked as a design strategist, user researcher, and interaction designer. With a background in biomedical engineering and human factors, he spent six years designing aeronautical interfaces for the U.S. Navy. Cris is passionate about driving innovation through design and makes a mean gumbo.

About Code for America

Founded in 2009, Code for America held its inaugural fellowship in 2011 with 19 fellows and three cities. In 2012, Code for America grew to connecting 26 fellows and eight cities. The Code for America Accelerator Program, launched in April 2012, will support civic startups, and their Brigade program helps organize developers locally to reuse and deploy civic software. Code for America is re-imagining government for the 21st century.

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