Big Data Big Ideas
The Opportunity Project

Nesreen Khashan

Data Dissemination Specialist

U.S. Census Bureau

The Opportunity Project (TOP)

What is The Opportunity Project?

The Opportunity Project is unleashing the power of data and technology to expand economic opportunity in communities nationwide. Together, we are creating tools that help families, local leaders, and businesses access information about the resources they need to succeed.

Empowering people

New digital solutions helping families, community leaders, and local officials solve challenges in their everyday lives.

Making government data accessible

A curated combination of federal and local data that is easily transformed into meaningful tools.

Facilitating collaboration

By working together, Federal and local governments, technologists and advocates are catalyzing new solutions to some of our nation's toughest challenges.

TOP Goals

1. Facilitating development collaborations among the tech sector, government, and communities, to advance solutions to our greatest challenges.

2. Making government data sets readily accessible, user friendly, and easily transformed into meaningful tools that help people solve challenges in their everyday lives.

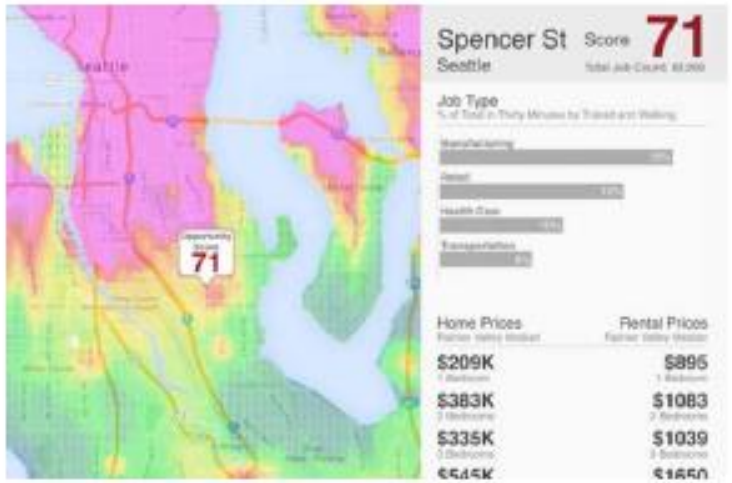
3. Helping people use information about local resources, like quality housing, schools, jobs, transit options, safe streets, and parks, to improve their wellbeing.

Accomplishments

Select tools built through the Opportunity Project

Over 40 digital tools have already been built by teams including Redfin, Zillow, Map Box, Airbnb, Fitbit, Pairin, mySidewalk, and the University of Oregon, and this number is growing. View more projects at opportunity.census.gov.

Pathfinder



Opportunity Score

2017 U.S. Census Bureau Problem Statement

Create digital tools that enable individuals and communities to see and experience the value of the Census in order to increase participation in the Census.

What is the problem?

Our goal is to conduct a complete and accurate census, but there are massive challenges ahead.

Historically, certain groups have been undercounted at disproportionately high rates, including:

- Young, mobile people
- Rural communities
- Children
- People experiencing homelessness

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Creating digital tools that strengthen American economic opportunity
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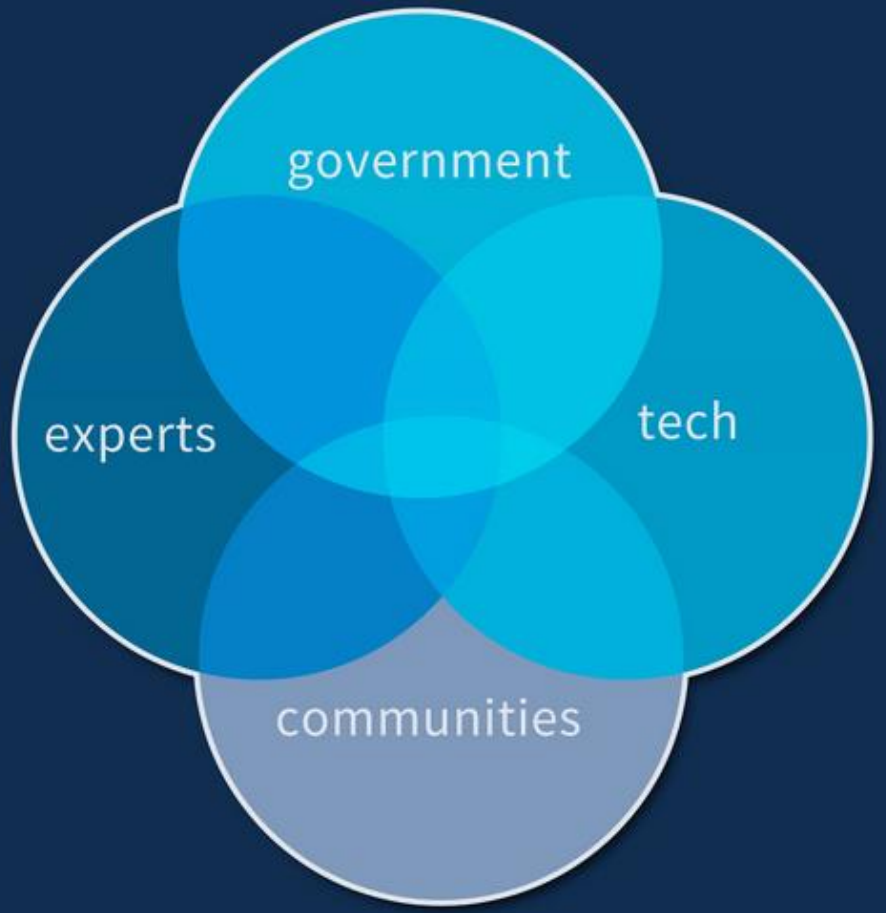


Technologists, local leaders, and government are working together to increase economic opportunity across the country

Learn more

What's been happening?

The Opportunity Project catalyzes the creation of new digital tools that use federal and local data to provide families, local leaders, and businesses with information about critical resources, such as jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and transportation. By providing easy access to curated federal and local datasets at opportunity.census.gov, and facilitating collaboration between technologists, issue experts, and local leaders, the Opportunity Project is transforming government data into digital tools that create more thriving communities and help people solve problems in their everyday lives.

Since its inception, the Opportunity Project has yielded dozens of new digital tools that help solve local problems like helping familes find affordable housing near jobs and transportation, helping local leaders create economic opportunity in their neighborhoods and regions, and helping communities and businesses make data-driven investments.

Through the Opportunity Project, technologists, local governments, and communities across the country are answering the President's call to harness 21st century technology and innovation to expand access to opportunity for all Americans.

Read our Fact Sheets to find out about accomplishments and commitments from tech companies, government, universities and more.

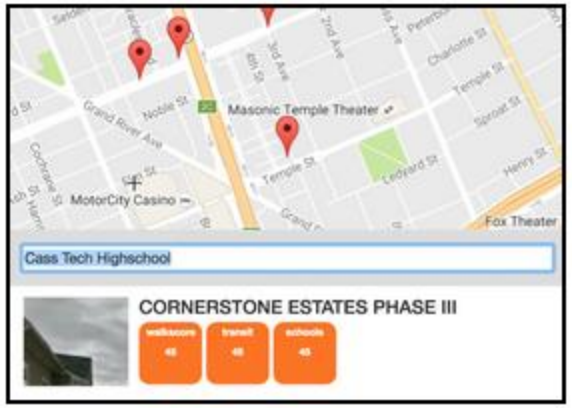
Featured Projects

Learn about featured tools built through The Opportunity Project and browse all of the tools below.

Gallery

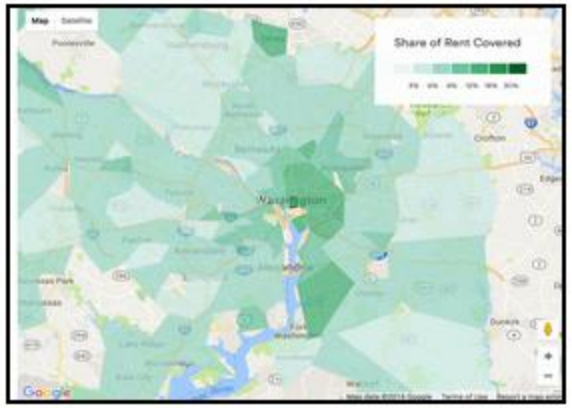
Show All | Housing | Education | Health | Transportation | Employment | Rural

FindHome



Helping low income families overcome the stress of finding affordable housing

Housing Calculator



Uses HUD rental data to identify areas that present a high-opportunity for

Segregated Opportunity

Uses data from HUD to interactively explore the relationship between

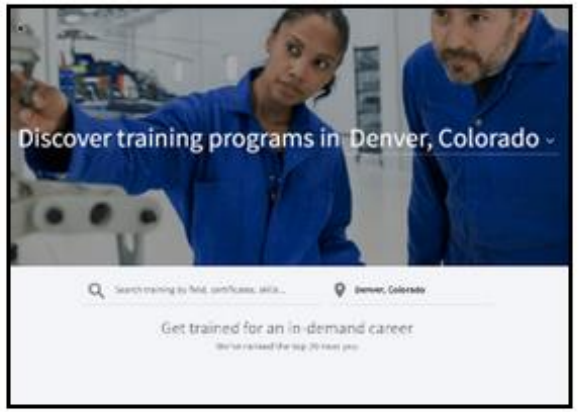
Show All | Housing | Education | Health | Transportation | Employment | Rural

Opportunity Dashboard

Great Schools and Education Cities' uses college readiness data to measure gaps in access to educational opportunities across student groups to help advocates increase equity.

Learn More

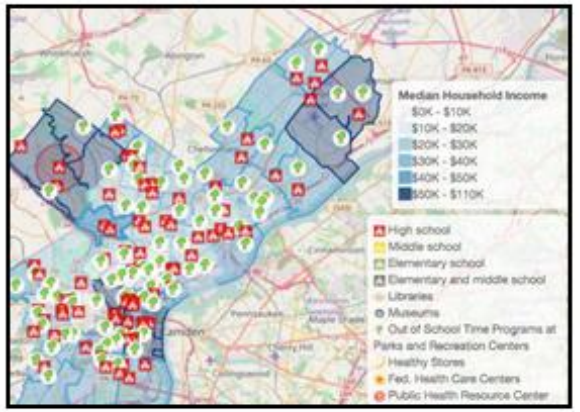
Training Finder



Uses data from eligible training provider lists (ETPL) to surface education options that lead to in-demand careers for job seekers.

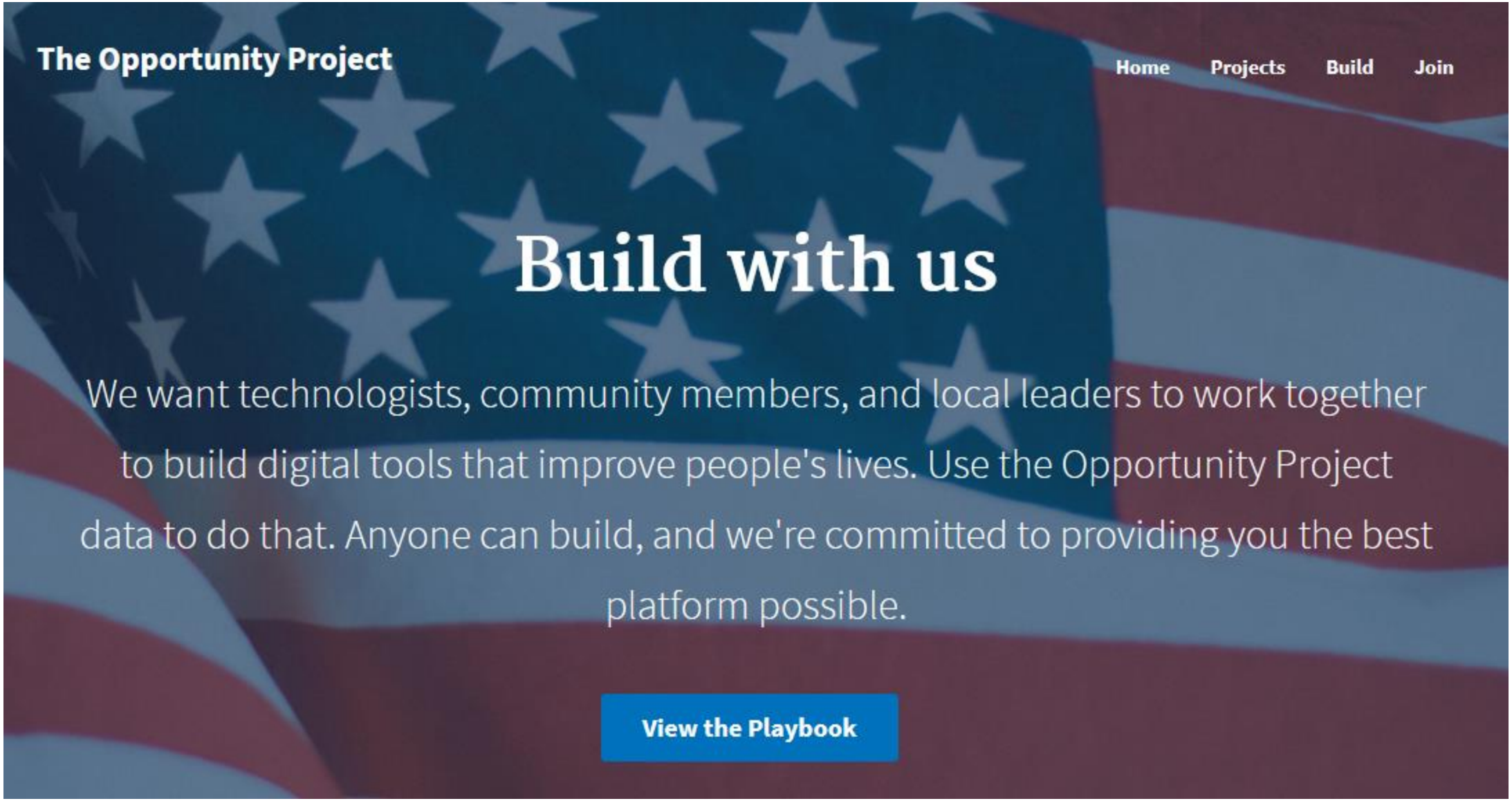
Learn More

School ResourceMapper



Brings together economic, health center, and community institution data to help school leaders find and develop community partnerships.

Learn More


The Opportunity Project
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Build with us
We want technologists, community members, and local leaders to work together to build digital tools that improve people's lives. Use the Opportunity Project data to do that. Anyone can build, and we're committed to providing you the best platform possible.
View the Playbook

The Opportunity Project Playbook

The Opportunity Project uses federal data to catalyze the creation of new digital tools that increase American economic opportunity. By facilitating collaboration between tech companies, government agencies, and local communities, we are transforming data into digital tools that meet local needs. Tools created through the Opportunity Project have helped military spouses find jobs that match their skills, unemployed Americans find housing near job opportunities, and local leaders to use data to better target their investments.

The Opportunity Project Team created this playbook as a guide for anyone who wants to use our process, which may include teachers hoping to acquaint their students with government data, local governments who want to use data to address the needs of residents, and community groups looking to partner with tech talent to advance their missions.

The Opportunity Project process is not one-size-fits-all, and will look different depending on who you are and what big challenges you want to solve. The steps below reflect lessons we've learned, but you should adapt it to your needs, and share back with us what did or did not worked for you.

What can my organization do?

Think creatively about how to get involved. Here are some suggestions.

Tech Companies, Startups, Civic Tech Teams	Communities, Local, and State Governments	Universities and Coding Schools	User Advocates	Federal Agencies
Visualize data	Define challenges	Convene stakeholders	Define a problem	Identify agency priorities in need of a tech solution
Identify digital solutions	Engage local residents	Incorporate Opportunity data into your curricula	Contribute expertise to inform design of tools	Contribute agency open data
Build a tool	Share your local expertise	Engage students across disciplines to design and build tools	Connect with users to provide feedback	Answer data questions
Add new feature or new data to existing platform	Test and help improve tools			Gain insight to improve your data

PLAY 5

Build iteratively and collaboratively

Once you identify a problem to tackle, the end users your tool will serve, and the data you will use, start building and sharing your experience with the Opportunity Project community! Work collaboratively to build a software product, including many voices and seeking feedback as much as possible. You can use a sprint process to organize your time, like a semester, training program, or a software development sprint. For example, the Opportunity Project started with an eight-week software development sprint. Tech developers, experts, community leaders, people from federal and local government and others came together, chose problems to work on, and formed teams. These groups talked regularly on Slack, and all came together in web hangouts every two weeks to demo their works in progress, ask questions, and share feedback. After eight weeks, they all launched their products together at the White House and have continued to improve them over time.

- If you're interested in replicating the Opportunity Project sprint process and timeline, here's what it looks like week-by-week:
  - Before kickoff: Identify your team and create a listserv and/or an online slack channel or other community where everyone can chat.
  - Week 1: Choose problem statements.
  - Week 2: Dig into the data and start designing and building.
  - Week 3: Perform alpha demo of the tool to get early feedback from a diverse audience of end users, subject matter experts, government employees, and others. Early demos of Minimum Viable Products are part of the lean start-up methodology and lead to faster value delivered to users.
  - Week 4: Continue building based on feedback received from alpha demo.
  - Week 5: Do another demo and share improved version of the tool. Get more feedback, particularly from end users of the tool.
  - Week 6: Keep building and perform interactive user testing sessions.
  - Week 7: Get ready to share the tools with the world. De-bug. Plan how to share the final products.
  - Week 8: Get everyone involved in the process together to launch final products.
  - Week 9 and beyond: Continue to improve the tools, get the word out, share the product with the target end users, and measure your impact.

Start here:

1. Access the data

2. Choose a problem to solve

3. Work with end-users to co-create digital solutions

Data Inventory

Use curated data related to opportunity from across federal and local governments.

We believe that using open data, we can work together to build thriving communities and create economic opportunities for all. To help you use that information, we pulled together some of the best federal and local open data sets with information on access to opportunity.

Data Inventory

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- Click on Federal data to find information for the whole nation on poverty, employment, school equity, transit safety, and much more.
- Click on Local data to find neighborhood level information on things like homelessness, parks, crime, and healthy corner stores.

Find more information on the data sets here. You can find thousands more government data sets at data.gov. See a data set with information on access to opportunity that's missing? Join us on GitHub and add new suggestions!

Federal

Main data site: https://data.gov

Curator	Description
BLS	Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages
Census	American Community Survey (ACS)
	CitySDK - American Community Survey (ACS)
	LEHD Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES)
	Other Developer Resources
DHS	Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data (HIFLD)
DOT/HUD	Location Affordability Index
ED	Civil Rights Data Collection

Baltimore −

Baltimore

Main data site: https://data.baltimorecity.gov

Topic	Description
311	311 service requests
	City services
Code enforcement	Environmental code violations
Crime	Public safety data sets
Parcels and addresses	Arrests
Permits	Housing permits

User Scenarios

The Opportunity Project is about creating digital solutions to help individuals and communities to thrive. This starts with identifying real problems faced by real people in their everyday lives.

- ○ Work together with others in your community, experts or advocates to identify a need.

  OR

- ○ Use the below user scenarios that were carefully developed to describe real, complex challenges in communities. Want to add a scenario? Join us on GitHub.

Barb — Neighborhood leader needing data for effective advocacy and planning +

Gerald — Formerly Incarcerated Person reentering society +

James — Neighborhood leader needing data for effective advocacy and planning +

Jen — Military spouse searching for jobs after moving +

CitySDK

You can get started using Opportunity Project data quickly with CitySDK, a JavaScript toolbox that makes the data developer friendly, user friendly, and collaboration friendly. Check out the data sets above and then visit CitySDK when you're ready to build. Use the scenarios to help you identify a problem to solve, or design in partnership with your target end users.

Want to help us build the next version of the Opportunity Project?

Join Us!

The Opportunity Project

Data Protection and Privacy Policy

http://opportunity.census.gov

Visit on GitHub

Questions or Feedback?

Please feel free to contact me!

Nesreen Khashan

Data Dissemination Specialist

U.S. Census Bureau

nesreen.khashan@census.gov

202-510-6403