**Mapping Your Civic Tech and Data Ecosystem**

Friday morning, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Many organizations in NNIP cities are producing and disseminating community data and technology, including consultants, libraries, universities, nonprofit organizations, civic hacking groups, and local and regional governments. What if all of this civic tech and data could be applied systematically to our most pressing local problems? Communities would be able to identify and understand problems sooner, assemble the relevant players more quickly, and ultimately have broader community engagement and better-informed policy and programs.

What would it take for this to happen, especially for people and communities that have been historically marginalized? Institutionalizing relationships among these organizations and navigating varying missions and operational structures takes an investment of time. Often, challenges arise around getting players in a community around the same table and ensuring traditionally disempowered populations are represented. We propose that a well-connected network of players who know each other’s skill sets can more productively work together towards common goals and contribute to different aspects of community change. In a healthy ecosystem, the framework of relationships and resources can be activated over time to address multiple community challenges.

Living Cities, Code for America, and NNIP, three national networks with extensive experience in local community action, recognize the value in strengthening civic tech and data ecosystems. We have joined together with seven cities to form the [Civic Tech and Data Collaborative](http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/activities/projects/civic-tech-and-data-collaborative) and advance the state of the field. Through the project, we will improve our understanding of the civic tech and data components and connections in different contexts. The insights drawn from the local experiences will suggest ways that cities can work together to overcome process and implementation challenges in improving opportunities for low-income families and neighborhoods.

***The purpose of this panel is to share insights from the overall project and two local collaboratives so that all partners can begin mapping their own ecosystems and consider developments in the civic tech and data worlds as they develop their organizational strategies.***

In this session, we will hear from representatives from the national, St. Louis, and Boston civic data and tech teams on the future of this work.

After an introduction to the topic by the moderator April Urban from Case Western University, we will have 25 minutes of panel discussion followed by 30 minutes of discussion.

* Tamir Novotny from Living Cities will provide a national overview of Living Cities’ work in cultivating civic tech and data ecosystems and outline the activities for the next two years of the Collaborative.
* Eleanor Tutt will discuss Rise St. Louis’s plans and challenges in cultivating the relationships needed to use open data and user-friendly technology to improve the county’s complicated criminal justice system.
* Jessie Partridge will share the Metropolitan Area Planning Council’s experience in developing partnerships with the city and Code for Boston to implement an innovative system to simplify the application process for youth seeking summer employment.

**Discussion:**

* How can NNIP partners act as catalysts in their cities to bring civic tech groups and government agencies together to improve social and economic outcomes?
* What is missing to make these partnerships come together if they don’t already exist?
* What could improve relationships that do exist?
* What are some ways to make institutional relationships sustainable despite staff turnover and shifting political contexts?
* How do the organizations in a civic tech and data system ensure that those who should be included in conversations about community change are always considered? How can they engage disempowered groups or residents of historically disadvantaged neighborhoods?