# **APPLICATION TO JOIN NNIP**

## **COVER LETTER**

**Our letter is attached separately.**

## **ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

Please provide the following:

**• applicant organization(s) name(s):**

* Innovate Memphis

**• organization website:**

* <http://innovatememphis.com/data/>

**• primary contact person for NNIP (Name, title, contact information)**

* Altonio Smith, Community Data Lead, altoniosmith@innovatememphis.com

**• organizational structure (e.g., university, nonprofit)**

* Non-profit

**• current and planned geographic area of focus**

* Metropolitan Memphis, TN-AR-MS

**• current staffing**

o Number of staff or full-time equivalents (FTEs) working in the organization

* 12

o Number of staff or FTEs working on local data intermediary activities (if not the same as above)

* 2.5

o List of key staff members engaged in those activities along with a sentence describing their roles

* Altonio Smith, Community Data Lead - oversees data product quality, executes GIS requests, serves as spokesperson and trainer
* Austin Harrison, Housing Fellow - (.5) serves as housing and neighborhood condition analytics specialist with eyes on national best practices
* Justin Entzminger - (.5) Oversight and project management support. This role will be replaced by a business manager.
* Courtney McNeal - (.25) Outreach and engagement support
* Nadine McLean - (.25) Anthropologist who provides qualitative research support and user experience expertise

• to the best of your ability, please complete the table below for the staff, employees, faculty, paid students, or essential consultants of the ***organization or the center/unit performing local data intermediary activities***. If you or your organization has not previously collected this information, we recommend a brief survey to allow staff to self-identify.

[information redacted]

**• current funding for local data intermediary activities**

o Total funding amount

o Major funders (including sources of general support funding, project funding, and in-kind support)

o Estimated share of total organizational budget that funding for local data intermediaries represents

Innovate Memphis has funding from the following sources for its data intermediary work:

1. Kresge Foundation - $300,000, 2 year grant, second year disbursed early (2019 – 2021)
2. Hyde Family Foundation - $65,000 operating support, decreases to $50,000 in 2021, but the data intermediary work means they can entertain going back up for our next three year agreement. (2018 – 2024)
3. BLDG Memphis - $80,000 for Memphis Metrics, done by early 2021 (2019 – 2021)
4. JP Morgan Chase - $25,000 per year over three years (2020-2023)
5. Robert Wood Johnson Grant - $40,000 over six months (2020)
6. Eviction Settlement Fund - $25,000 over six months (2020)
7. State of Housing - $25,000 over six months (2020)
8. GIS Support for School data at Seeding Success - $20,000 over six months (2020)

**Total**: $515,000 in data-related funding, not counting operational support, representing a little over one third of the total organizational budget.

**• list of board or advisory board members and affiliations**

- Jennifer Oswalt | Board Chair |President and CEO, Downtown Memphis Commission

- Emily Strack | Board Vice Chair & Program Committee Chair | Shareholder, Vice Chair, Emerging Companies Team, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

- Andre Gibson | Secretary and Governance Committee Chair | Independent Consultant

- Landon Williams, CCIM | Board Treasurer & Finance Committee Chair | Vice President, Cushman and Wakefield, Commercial Advisors

- Peter Bunce | Finance Committee | Global VP – Cotton, Indigo Ag

- Rachel Kesselman | Marketing Committee Chair | Communications Advisor, FedEx

- Petya Kirilova-Grady | Governance Committee | Innovation Lead, Service Master / Terminix

- JT Malasri | Program Committee | Owner, Malasri Engineering, PLLC

- Chandell Ryan | Marketing Committee | Deputy Chief Operating Officer, City of Memphis

- Darnell Settles, III | Committee: Marketing | Web Marketing Manager, Baptist Memorial Health Care

- Haley Simmons | Program & Finance Committee | Director of Policy, Seeding Success

**• please complete the table below for the the board of directors (if nonprofit) or center/unit advisory board**

[information redacted]

## **ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND ACTIVITIES**

**Please provide the following:**

*• overall organizational mission and brief history*

*• overview of the current activities and services of your organization that are related to NNIP functions, including the assembly and sharing of neighborhood-level data*

*• if local data intermediary services are only a part of the mission and activities of your organization, a description of how these services and maintaining NNIP functions align with the organization’s overall mission*

*• characteristics of organizations’ engagement and staff members’ work style with partners and clients*

*Please describe your organization’s activities and efforts related to improving equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

Innovate Memphis has a mission to develop initiatives, nurture partnerships and innovate solutions to move Memphis forward and deliver impactful, sustained change. This involves leading innovation projects, and also “seeding” innovation through training, capacity building and support for a partners’ project. Since our founding, two categories can be applied to the majority of our work. One is neighborhood improvement, which includes multiple innovation team projects listed below and our data work. The other is improving public services for the people who need it most, most notably our work with residents who call 911 for access to health care. In our last strategic plan from 2018, the Board and the team decided to pursue a more open, resident-focused approach to our work, shifting from being the Mayor’s innovation team to Memphis’s innovation team.

Memphis was one of the first five Pioneer Cities to implement the Bloomberg Philanthropies innovation team model. In 2011, we formed the Mayor’s Innovation Delivery team to support local government to innovate solutions in the Mayor’s selected priority areas. The model is now active in more than 30 cities around the globe, but we’re the only team that operates outside City Hall. As a separate nonprofit entity, we have the ability to further social innovation, take risks and take action to move forward on the larger goals of the community, outside of the bureaucracy of government. We still work closely with government as partners to support change city-wide, but we have also expanded our work to a range of numerous priority areas where we work across sectors with change agents and organizations striving to address a variety of challenges to improve our communities. We connect the dots between public and private sectors, create tactical strategies and collaborative opportunities, and seek ways to improve communities and neighborhoods throughout the city.

From 2015-2018, Innovate Memphis partnered with Center for Applied Earth Sciences and Engineering Research (CAESER) and Neighborhood Preservation, Inc. (NPI) to deliver the Bluff City Snapshot, CleanSTAT, and Neighborhood DIY surveys, all data-collection activities. Additionally, in 2015, Innovate Memphis partnered with CAESER to launch the Memphis Property Hub, a parcel-by-parcel online resource for place-based organizations and policy makers. Lastly, in 2019, Innovate Memphis launched the Civic Data Forum to convene local neighborhood data stakeholders and partners, to change the culture of ad-hoc and seemingly “one-off” data sharing commitments from local leaders into a sustainable and long-term data-sharing culture that celebrates open data and efforts to improve data. We will discuss this in greater detail under the sustainability section. All efforts continue.

In our 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, Innovate Memphis identified that there was value to expanding our community support role and our “seeding” work with nonprofits, CDCs and place-based organizations. This involved new public/private partnerships in transportation and mobility, parks and public spaces, and a parallel focus on better data for place-based organizations: data that’s more accessible, more actionable and helps to seed change. We believe that with human-centered design principles and the right data, any organization can make impactful change that responds to what residents need.

We have worked hard to diversify our Board and leadership structure. To further our equity and inclusion work, we began a six-month training curriculum with Beloved Communities that went from August 2019 to February 2020 and have established an Equity at Work Action Plan which is under review. Our three areas of focus in that action plan are Belongingness, Shared Voice/Shared Power, and Governance. Once implemented, we will work through the Action Plan and then take another Equity Audit in 18-24 months.

## **SELECTED PROJECTS**

Please describe three to five past or current projects that demonstrate

• the facilitation and promotion of the use of neighborhood data by local actors in community building and local policymaking; and

• an emphasis on using information to build the capacities of institutions and residents to advance equity and well-being across neighborhoods.

1. [State of Memphis Housing Report](http://www.memphishcd.org/summit/files/Housing-Report-V8.1.pdf)

This report used the 2008 Subprime Mortgage Crisis as a lens to examine how Memphis can proactively and collaboratively respond to COVID housing impacts already underway and possibly on the horizon. Specifically, we examined Housing Mortgage Act Disclosure data, Federal Housing Finance Agency’s Housing Price Index, US Postal Service Vacancy at the tract level, and a number of locally sourced property level datasets from 2000 to 2020. The report was commissioned by City of Memphis’ Division of Housing and Community Development as a precursor to their 2020 State of Memphis Housing conference.

The conference took place in October of 2020 and had over 900 attendees from 6 different continents, with majority representing Memphis-based community leaders, neighborhood leaders, developers, bankers, government leaders, and many others. The conference also benefited from the NNIP network by having a session on Neighborhood Data featuring a connection made through New Orleans’ Data Center, Andreanica Morris, who discussed HousingNOLA’s data work to share best practices with the Memphis context.

1. JP Morgan Chase PRO Neighborhoods Evaluation

As the local Evaluator for JP Morgan Chase’s (JPMC) PRO Neighborhoods program, we are analyzing and measuring the Memphis Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Network’s grant program. The 4 year program provides direct capital to CDFI lenders but also improves the capacity of Memphis CDFIs to collaborate and create similar lending intake processes and measurement tools to produce. The aim is to form a closer network with a place-based approach supporting two systemically disinvested communities: Frayser and Whitehaven. JPMC wants to see financial education, business lending and technical assistance, down payment assistance, and in light of COVID-19 the CDFI network partners are providing COVID relief funding as well, all to improve low-income residents’ access to quality housing and neighborhoods. The team will evaluate how these programs impact the community and how the CDFI network is growing and maturing. The audience for this evaluation will primarily be the local CDFI network but also the broader Memphis community development ecosystem, as the community development sector is still understanding how best to leverage Memphis’ growing CDFI presence. We have annual and bi-annual deliverables that include data reporting and a white paper each year and one large report at the end of the project in 2024.

1. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Using Data to Inform Local Decisions on COVID-19 Response & Recovery

Working with the COMMONS, a coalition of eight place-based community organizations across Memphis in primarily African American neighborhoods, we are providing rapid-response data using a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and analysis of data on property ownership, tax status, utility cutoffs, eviction filings, and neighborhood conditions. Community members will drive the process, providing feedback on what meaningful data and interventions look like to them. Secondary audiences include nonprofits and the University of Memphis School of Law, which Innovate Memphis is supporting on a joint city/county eviction settlement program. These groups will receive relevant reports and updates over the next six months that will inform city and county housing policies and near-term interventions.

Furthermore, this project provides the opportunity for Innovate Memphis in the early days of its data intermediary work, to show how data could be leveraged at the community level to create collective advocacy for city-wide or even state policy change. Our mixed-methodology approach shows the people-centered manner by which community data are central in orchestrating this effort.

1. Memphis Property Hub and Bluff City Snapshot:

In 2015, Innovate Memphis worked with government, neighborhood and university representatives to complete a parcel-by-parcel windshield survey for residential properties in Memphis. The collected data formed the foundation by which we could add other public and place-based data layers, including code enforcement violations, construction permits pulled, ownership, tax delinquency, utility cut-offs and more. This larger database became the Memphis Property Hub, which is now accessed by 100+ users through the LandGrid platform. Another Bluff City Snapshot will wrap up in 2020, in a partnership between the University of Memphis and Code Enforcement, with support from Innovate Memphis and NPI.

These users represent three major stakeholder groups:

1. Community Development Corporation staff and leadership. Our goal is to provide accurate and up-to-date neighborhood data so these groups can spend their time doing the hard work of rebuilding their communities equitably. This could include everything from identifying acquirable public property, organizing a neighborhood property survey to asses property condition, or track private equity ownership of single-family rentals in their community.

2. Local government staff and elected officials. Often, these leaders only have access to the data their government body collects. Memphis and Shelby County’s housing and development departments are especially fragmented and the Property Hub has been one of the few unifying forces in that realm for years now.

3. The third and final group are neighborhood associations, civic groups, or grassroot activism organizations that leverage these data for policy advocacy, harnessing necessary public information, or holding problem property owners accountable.

For each of these three groups, Innovate Memphis has trained representatives in the Property Hub and property surveying best practices. Some of these are large format trainings, and some are one-on-one “Help Desk” style support. The team has been pleased to see growth in engagement, with hands-on training and support, in the third category of stakeholders.

1. Seeding Success Geospatial Analysis Project

Memphis’ local StriveTogether organization, Seeding Success is a Memphis cradle to career backbone organization that seeks to ensure every child has the support and resources they need to succeed. COVID-19 and remote learning complicated that matter significantly. The school system and Seeding Success both do not have the internal expertise to adequately map their students. Seeding Success engaged Innovate Memphis’ data team to provide geospatial elements to their Shelby County Schools (SCS). Innovate connected student level data on internet technology (hotspots and devices received), school attended, neighborhood lived in, and much other neighborhood level socioeconomic data to tell a richer and more complete story about the COVID education realities. This project also serves as one of our most robust direct forays into education work, expanding from Innovates similar work in the past as it relates to health outcomes, crime safety, neighborhood conditions, and housing challenges.

## **FUTURE PLANS AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The organizational aspirations and financial viability are part of the consideration when accepting new NNIP partners. Please describe the following:

• your plans related to future local data intermediary activities (this may include broad goals, outreach activities, new services you plan to offer, new projects or topic areas being developed, data acquisition plans)

• your two-year outlook on the sustainability of the local data intermediary services you provide now and those you would like to expand

Over the next two years, Innovate Memphis will strengthen its GIS and place-based data capabilities, and seek to further solidify our position as the go-to source for non-profits and funders for help with neighborhood data and public sector data. The Community Foundation has indicated that, for any of their donors or non-profits, we will be the referral for public data and neighborhood data. That means that their donors and partner organizations will come to us for data-related efforts. It also means that they are able to fund us, as a local intermediary, and provide operating support.

To increase the volume of outreach calls and requests for service, Innovate Memphis will leverage the existing Civic Data Forum (CDF) to build trust and relationships with place-based organizations and non-profits. In its current iteration, the Civic Data Forum is comprised primarily of data providers in administrative government roles, with funders and non-profits making up about 40 percent of the group (see Appendix for ecosystem maps). We would like to flip that 60/40 balance in favor of place-based and non-profit organizations. Additionally, we are building marketing plans for making our work more public, first, by (hopefully) announcing our inclusion as an NNIP partner, and second, a roll-out of the Inclusive Economic Indicators work. To support the potential growth in volume, we are exploring different training and support models, including a possible relationship with the University of Memphis to add training capacity.

The next three topic areas we will likely branch into are a) economic development, b) community health, and c) criminal justice. The economic work is currently focused on our participation in the Brookings Inclusive Economic Indicators (IEI) Lab. This represents a new partnership between the Economic Development sector, represented by the Greater Memphis Chamber, and the Community Development sector, represented by CDC support agency BLDG Memphis. The community health work is grounded in the analysis we supply the City of Memphis Emergency Medical Services team and the partnership we built with the Shelby County Health Department in the beginning months of the pandemic. This will take a heavier lift because a lack of funding has limited the County’s staff, reducing their ability to work with hospitals and provide robust data that is useful and actionable. The criminal justice work will have similar constraints with court data, both civil and criminal. The Courts do not have the willingness or capacity to make the data open and useable. The data are scrapable, and we are working to develop a process to access what we can.

We have more than eighteen months of operating revenue now, covering rent, staff, data storage and supplies, and anticipate that the Community Foundation, Hyde Family Foundation and Kresge Foundation will all continue to provide operating support. In addition, we’ve garnered more than $100,000 of funded work in the first 9 months of the year, and anticipate that will continue at the same level or higher.

We anticipate additional funding will come to us to support the next phase of the Inclusive Economic Indicators Lab work, marketing the dashboard and then using the dashboard to drive policy and change. We have one potential funder who might help with the public health work, locally, but can also look to national resources to expand that work.

**LOCAL ENVIRONMENT FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION**

The questions below about the applicant’s connections to local government and other community information actors help shed light on the context in which you operate and potential factors affecting the sustainability of your services.

• Please describe your organization’s relationship with city or county agency staff and elected officials around the use and application of neighborhood data (e.g., recent projects or collaborations, briefings, requests for input or advice). Please exclude relationships only related to obtaining administrative data.

• If a college or university, please describe the relationship and history of the institution overall and your center specifically with residents and community organizations in the surrounding neighborhoods.

• Please list other entities in your region that perform major local data intermediary activities, including a sentence or two about their role in the community information system. Describe any current or past activities you have collaborated on with them.

Innovate Memphis works with multiple City government agencies on neighborhood data. Our organization founded and incubated the Office of Performance Management and maintains an ongoing relationship with them for best practice sharing, resource sharing and to provide support on neighborhood-based or program evaluation projects. In addition, the Memphis Property Hub and Bluff City Snapshot projects are a partnership with Code Enforcement, who has now set up a fund to continuously support the work. Innovate Memphis supports the joint City/County/non-profit Eviction Settlement Fund with weekly and monthly data reports, primarily serving Housing and Community Development. Lastly, we have an embedded health data specialist working with Emergency Medical Services’ Healthcare Navigators programs, working on data collection and analysis for non-emergent patient pilot programs. While this work isn’t directly connected to our data intermediary work, this is yet another example of how Innovate Memphis’ leverages their project driven work to support and help the data intermediary grow as well.

Beyond Innovate Memphis, three other agencies serve a broad swath of partners with data support:

* Community Foundation of Greater Memphis provides data to donors on non-profits and their work;
* Seeding Success is working with Blue Meridian consultants and the Ballmer group to fund a data infrastructure for a partnership with Innovate Memphis, United Way and two place-based organizations with robust data capacity; and,
* United Way collects a good bit of partner organization data and seeks to bring more awareness of common tools and data to the sectors they serve. It does not feel that they should own the data interoperability or data infrastructure associated with the Driving the Dream approach and is weaving its work into the partnership mentioned above.

Our data stakeholder maps (draft form) included in the Appendix are attempts to visualize how all of these groups are working together. Though there are many actors, the roles and responsibilities are crystalizing in ways that promote meaningful and progressive collaboration in the future.

## **POTENTIAL RELATIONSHIP TO NNIP**

• How do you expect NNIP membership would benefit your organization?

• What distinctive perspective, experience, or expertise can you contribute to the NNIP peer-learning network?

The NNIP membership would greatly impact the work in Memphis by providing technical assistance, credibility and the multiple benefits of a peer network. The technical assistance provided online and through direct support from Kathy Pettit, Leah Hendey and Jake Cowan has guided us through business modeling considerations, hiring strategies, and product development. While we know that the hands-on support will not continue at such a high level, we look forward to expanding our learning with peer cities. The network has already provided us great resources to explore new data analysis projects for Memphis, and we know Memphis will benefit from the ongoing sharing of new work and best practices.

Innovate Memphis will center our data intermediary work in the context of innovation and design principles. First, a core part of the work of an innovation team is human-centered design. As the City’s “i-team,” Innovate Memphis has multiple team members trained in human-centered design, including an in-house anthropologist. This will inform the community engagement and user experience work necessary to building trust with community members and stakeholders.

Secondly, Innovate Memphis builds business modeling into its process. For any program that succeeds, a sustainable funding strategy must be developed. Innovate Memphis has developed new non-profits (Bloom, 901 B.L.O.C. Squad), transitioned programs to partner organizations where the mission fit was appropriate (MEMFix, MEMShop, Housing Policy Briefings, Safe Summer), and embedded new offices within government (Office of Performance Management). A key aspect of our innovation playbook is an assessment of the sustainability of a successful pilot or prototype and identifying and providing areas for ongoing support.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS FOR APPLICANTS IN CITIES THAT WERE FORMERLY IN THE NNIP NETWORK**

• If the former NNIP partner organization still exists, what is the relationship between the new organization and NNIP-related staff and the former organization and NNIP-related staff?

* Very amicable relationship between former CBANA Director Phyllis Betts and current Innovate Data Intermediary staff. She has been supportive and given feedback on past iterations of our thinking and approach to building from what she started.

• If relevant, what are the plans for transferring data and other assets (e.g., websites)?

* Existing data will be transferred using external hard drive to take Property Hub and other public data away from University of Memphis servers and onto IM’s cloud warehouse.

• Do you see a need for an explicit communications plan related to the transition?

* No

• There may have been challenges with sustainability for local data intermediary activities in the previous NNIP home organization. How has the political, institutional or funding context changed since the closing of the former partner?

* The two-term “Metric Mayor” and data-driven philanthropy have created a different context since CBANA closed. CBANA was ahead of its time for Memphis. Brian Waldon and Nate Ron-Ferguson from an applied data center at the University of Memphis attended NNIP events for several years and worked with Urban and D3 on organizational planning through the HHS Community Health Data Project Services grant. Local stakeholders ran into serious barriers when working within the university financial/grant structures, which are not within the center's control to change. Innovate Memphis, as a small non-profit, can more easily hire, add contract support, and execute data sharing agreements than the University. This nimbleness allows us to charge much less than the 40 percent overhead charge from the University. We have a continued collaborative relationship with Brian and his team for data gathering, cleaning and analysis and are also pursuing a data literacy partnership.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Paul Young - Director, City of Memphis Div. of Housing & Community Development |
   1. State of Housing
   2. Internal Data Systems
2. Lauren Taylor - Vice President of Programs, Hyde Foundation
   1. CDFI Intermediary Research
3. Doug McGowen - Chief Operating Officer, City of Memphis
   1. City Contract
4. Amy Schaftlein - Executive Director, United Housing
   1. JPMC Pro Neighborhoods project
5. Sutton Mora Hayes - Exec. VP & Chief Operating Officer, Community Foundation of Greater Memphis

Appendices

A.1. Civic Data Forum: Data Sectors Map Exercise

A.2. Data Sharing Map