

Code for Tampa Bay Brigade

A Local Affiliate of Code for America

About Us

Code for Tampa Bay Brigade is part of an international network of people committed to using their voices and hands, in collaboration with local governments, to make their cities better. Code for Tampa Bay Brigade helps build participatory power in our communities by holding regular civic hack nights and events, advocating for open data, and deploying apps. Brigades celebrate and share their successes with the Brigade network to further the global civic innovation movement.

About Code for America

Code for America is a network of people making government work for the people, by the people, in the 21st century.

How? By working together to create government services that are simple, effective, and easy to use, working at scale to build healthy, prosperous, and safe communities.

CodeforAmerica.org

Code for Tampa Bay

IS

- A not-for-profit Civic Tech volunteer organization
- Affiliated with Code for America and as such,
- Bound by MOU agreement to operate under CfA Mission, Vision and Goals
- Committed to being a Safe Space and adhering to our Code of Conduct
- Dedicated to collaborative project development with local governments and nonprofits

Is NOT

- A tech social group
- Professional networking association (although networking happens organically)

Our History

- **Code for Tampa Bay Brigade was founded in 2012** by Terri Willingham, as part of the development of the HIVE makerspace project at John F. Germany Public Library. It was one of the earliest regional Brigades.
- It was originally called Code for Hillsborough, then we opted for the Tampa Bay identifier so that we could be more inclusive.
- First Core Leadership team consisted of Terri, Chris Willingham, Phil Muino, and John Punzak, and the group met monthly at the HIVE.
- Mike Turtora ran the Brigade from June 2017 to January 2018, with Michael Ritchie who upgraded website, & support from Michael Sunderland, and hosted Zika themed NDCH event in 2017

Our Present

- Current leadership consists of:
 - Terri Willingham – Brigade Leader, by MOU with CFA
 - Michael Bishop
 - Meg Comins
 - Tatyanna Cobb
 - Open
- Meets monthly at Hillsborough Entrepreneur Collaborative Center – 1st Mondays
- Considering monthly Pinellas County meeting as well – 3rd Mondays (?)
- Hosts National Day of Civic Hacking (August 11, this year!)
- Collaborates with local government and other agencies and groups to address community challenges and needs

CFA Vision

- Government can work for the people, by the people, in the digital age.
- Services can be simple, accessible, and easy to use.
- Outcomes can be measurably better.
- Better can cost less.
- We can serve everyone with respect and dignity.
- It would be the biggest source of societal good for a generation. Let's all build it together.

CFA Mission

How Code for America hopes to realize the vision:

- Code for America uses the principles and practices of the digital age to improve how government serves the American public, and how the public improves government.
- To inspire change
- To inspire public servants, people from the tech sector, and community organizers to create change by proving government can do better and showing others how.
- To make change real
- Providing government with access to the resources and digital talent they need so that together we can meaningfully impact some of the world's toughest societal challenges.
- To make change stick
- Connecting and convening people from inside and outside government, and from all over the world to inspire each other, share successes, learn, build, and shape a new culture of public service for the 21st century.
- To do it all at scale, serving those who need it most.

Our Shared Core Values

What we are like as an organization and a community

- Empathy is our operating system. We have a deep empathy for the people we work with. We seek to understand the problems they face and we work tirelessly to serve them.
- No one is coming. It's up to us. We don't wait for the powers that be to ask us; we act. We don't ask for permission; we find a way. We don't talk change; we deliver it.
- Build the movement. No one organization can fulfill this vision; we will succeed through a movement that invites everyone to roll up their sleeves and do their part. In short, cultivate the karass. (*deeply connected network or group*)

Operating Principles

- Solve real problems. We solve problems that real people have, we make sure what we build works for them, and we continuously improve it. We solve real problems instead of creating elegant code and robust systems to solve imagined ones.
- Work with, not for the people we serve. We start with our users, the people affected by the service, and understand and respect their needs throughout the process. We also respect and support public servants, and when we are critical of government outcomes, we blame the system, not the people.
- We build up -- from the user to the system, and from the local to the federal.
- Work lean, iterate quickly. Get a working minimum viable product (MVP) in front of users as early as possible and make continuous improvements based on how they use the service.

Operating Principles – cont'd

- Make it better with data. Inform iterations with data about user behavior. Evaluate programs based on statistically-sound ground-truthed data about outcomes.
- Impact not ideology. Government that works for all people doesn't belong to one party or ideology. We welcome all political and social views that respect the principle that government should work effectively for all Americans with respect and dignity.
- Shape the market, don't capture the market. Government that works for all requires the vendor ecosystem to change to become more responsive to user needs. We have the potential to create the biggest change when our projects seek to shape, rather than capture, the market for government technology.
- Non-partisan, but not neutral. We are an alliance of non-partisan groups, but that non-partisanship does not imply neutrality. This community has a vision for what government should be and will work to bring that vision into reality.
- Default to open. Work in the open and collaborate with the community to help make programs and services better for everyone.

CfTB is a Safe Space

Code for Tampa Bay operates as a Safe Space, a place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability; a place where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly encourages everyone to respect others.” –

Adapted from Advocates for Youth

CfTB Code of Conduct

Code for Tampa Bay Brigade abides by Code for America's Code of Conduct, which expects that Code for America network activities, events, and digital forums:

- Are a safe and respectful environment for all participants.
- Are a place where people are free to fully express their identities.
- Presume the value of others. Everyone's ideas, skills, and contributions have value.
- Don't assume everyone has the same context, and encourage questions.
- Find a way for people to be productive with their skills (technical and not) and energy. Use language such as "yes/and", not "no/but."
- Encourage members and participants to listen as much as they speak.
- Strive to build tools that are open and free technology for public use. Activities that aim to foster public use, not private gain, are prioritized.

CfTB Code of Conduct – cont'd

Code for Tampa Bay Brigade abides by Code for America's Code of Conduct, which expects that Code for America network activities, events, and digital forums:

- Prioritize access for and input from those who are traditionally excluded from the civic process.
- Work to ensure that the community is well-represented in the planning, design, and implementation of civic tech. This includes encouraging participation from women, minorities, and traditionally marginalized groups.
- Actively involve community groups and those with subject matter expertise in the decision-making process.
- Ensure that the relationships and conversations between community members, the local government staff and community partners remain respectful, participatory, and productive.
- Provide an environment where people are free from discrimination or harassment.

Code for America – and Code for Tampa Bay - reserves the right to ask anyone in violation of these policies not to participate in Code for America network activities, events, and digital forums.

CfTB Working Membership

All are always welcome, however it's proposed that CfTB Working Membership shall consist of members who:

- Attend 75% of monthly meetings
- Participate in at least two outreach events during the year (representing at events members are part of or that we put out a call for)
- Participate in at least one National Day event we host (NDCH, Hour of Code, etc)
- Abide by Code of Conduct at all times

Working members will have special CfA related opportunities and other related perks during the year.

Code for Tampa Bay Digital Platforms

- CodeforTampaBay.org
- meetup.com/Code-for-Tampa-Bay-Brigade
- twitter.com/CodeForTampaBay
- facebook.com/CodeforTampaBay
- github.com/code-for-tb
- <https://codefortampabay.slack.com/> (*this will likely migrate to new CfA workspace for Brigades soon*)

Q&A

Ask away!