Adapting to Remote Processes: Tips for Improving Digitized Workflows

with Alex Allain, Steve Barlow, Zane Selkirk, and Triana Kalmanoff

April 14, 2021

12:00pm ET/11:00am CT/10:00am MT/9:00am PT

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AMERICA'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK

The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.



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Adapting to Remote Processes

Tips for Improving Digitized Workflows

National Community Action Partnership
April 14, 2021

US DIGITAL RESPONSE

Neighborhood Preservation, Inc.

Agenda for Webinar

01	02	03	04	05
About U.S. Digital Response	Overview of Digitized Processes	Case Study: Memphis Eviction Settlement Fund	Learnings + Takeaways	Next Steps + Q&A

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About U.S. Digital Response

U.S. Digital Response connects governments and organizations with pro bono tech expertise to help better serve the public in times of crisis.

We're nonpartisan, fast, and free.

- **Founded in March 2020** by former U.S. Deputy CTOs and tech industry veterans who led federal open data policies and digital government strategy.
- USDR's team of pro bono experts work with government teams to understand their challenges and meet them where they are to help deliver critical services to the people who need them — all **within a few days to weeks**.
- Our **team has deep expertise** spanning engineering, data science, content strategy, design, logistics and supply chain, and disaster response.

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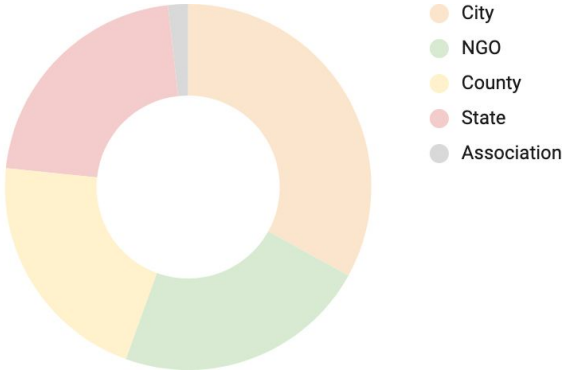
We recruit excellent technologists and focus on what we can build for your communities, right away.

Highly-skilled Talent	Rapid Response	Deliver Results	Scale What Works
Our volunteers and team members have decades of experience and have demonstrated impact in their current or previous roles.	**We respond to incoming partner requests within 24 hours.** We are 100% demand driven.	We focus on tech solutions, get systems up and running, and then **make sure partners have the tools and training you need** to operate them for the long term.	**We help you build from best practices in other states** to meet the needs of your community.

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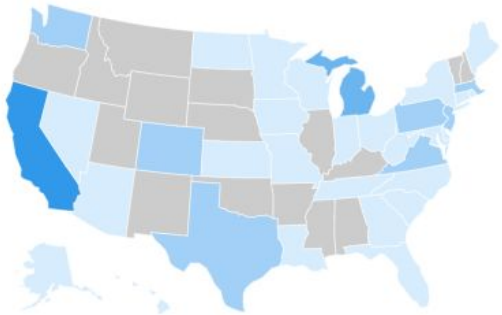
We have experience with your most pressing challenges.

290+ projects with governments and NGOs



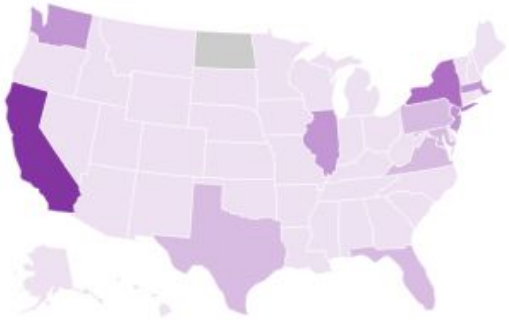
Project Types

36 states and territories across the country



Partner Locations

700+ volunteers deployed (from database of **6,700+**)



Volunteer Database

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We help support the critical needs of the public.

Data Mapping / Aggregation

Workplace Digitization

Small Business Assistance

Website Development

Streamlined Communications

Content Creation / Strategy

Volunteer Matching

Serving Vulnerable Populations

Food Assistance

Unemployment Insurance

Benefits Eligibility

Vaccination Preparedness

COVID-19 Testing Sites

Responsible Contact Tracing

Eviction and Housing Protection

Police Transparency

Federal Stimulus Tracking

Elections & Voting Support

Workshops & Consensus Building

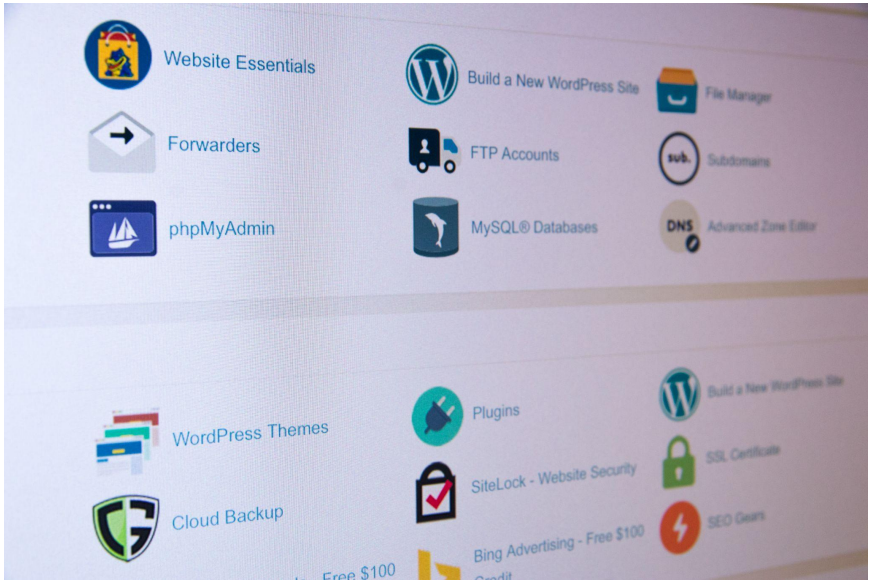
And more...

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Digitized Workflows

COVID-19 has shifted the way we work.





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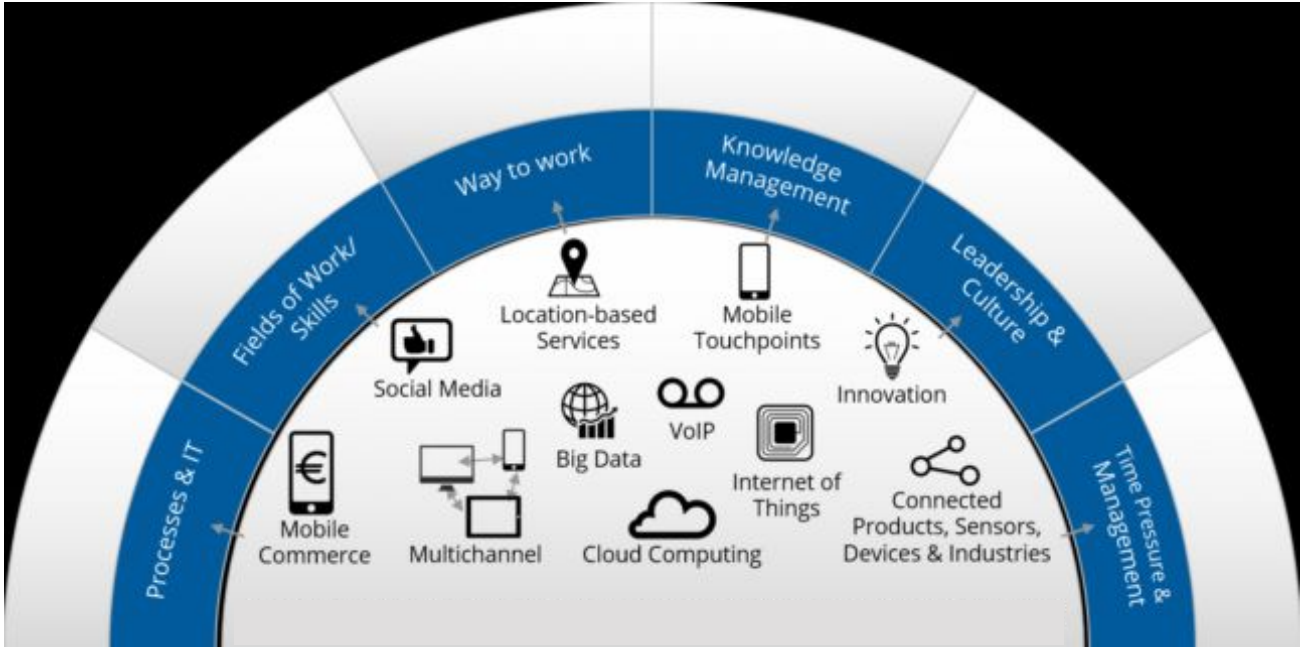
It’s also shifted the ways we engage.





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Digitized processes have become the new norm.



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Digitized Processes in Action

Nearly all of USDR's 290+ projects have incorporated digitized processes

How our partners have digitized their workflows:

- Digital tools to help senior citizens locate nearby services in New York City
- Automated texting service to communicate with small business owners in Anchorage, Alaska
- Transforming a local arts festival into a digital event with online exhibitions
- Digitizing HR and finance department functions for the City of San Rafael, CA

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Modernizing the Neighborhood Court in Yolo County, CA

Example of U.S. Digital Response Projects

IMPACT

"The USDR team **innovatively solved one of our most difficult inefficiencies** in running Neighborhood Court, getting in front of those offenders who could participate in the restorative justice program. By **using low cost technology** that engages participants, the DA's office hopes to expand the Neighborhood Court and continue to help victims, participants, and their communities to move forward in a positive direction."

— Jeff Reisig, District Attorney, Yolo County, CA



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Harris County Student Election Clerk Program Applications

Example of U.S. Digital Response Projects

IMPACT

"There is no proper way to articulate the impact that USDR had on our program. Our new system is **easy to use, easy to share, and easy to explain.** And it saved me and my team **days, if not weeks**, of work."

— Kristina Nichols, Office of Harris County Elections Administrator


Young people are trying to save the US election amid dire poll worker shortages


Not old enough to vote, but old enough to help: How teens are helping to avert an election crisis


LOCAL // HOUSTON

Harris County's ambitious election plan calls for 11,000 poll workers; 29,000 people applied

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Key components of digitized processes

Identify the Challenge

Understand the scope of the challenge you're facing

Identify the intended goals of your work

Process + Technology

Understand the entire process and user experience

Dissect what's within and outside of your control

Strike a balance between technology and organizational evolution

Support + Partnerships

Be flexible and collaborative while developing solutions

Consider all sides of the process - leadership, users, clients, etc.

Sustainability

Set a foundation that you can build and improve upon in the future

Clarify the roles of people and technology and create a flow of information between them

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Case Study

Neighborhood Preservation Inc.

Neighborhood Preservation, Inc. is a privately-funded, non-profit organization working to remove systemic barriers to revitalizing Memphis neighborhoods.

- Promotes neighborhood revitalization
  - Reducing blighted properties
  - Improving neighborhood health
  - Revitalizing neighborhoods
- Works to remove systemic barriers to revitalization
- Advocates for legislative and policy innovation for positive neighborhood-level change

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Because of COVID-19, Memphis faced risk of mass evictions

Eviction filings increase amid COVID-19 pandemic

Mass evictions are coming.

Memphis renters, homeowners weeks away from massive eviction crisis as moratorium ends

'Over the cliff': A second eviction moratorium will stall evictions in Memphis. Then what?

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Eviction Settlement Program

01	02	03	04
Check to see if you qualify for the CDC's Eviction Declaration	Submit Eviction Settlement Program application	Monitor email and submit follow-up documentation	For those who qualify, a lawyer will be assigned to your case at no cost

Neighborhood Preservation, Inc.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS

Memphis Area Legal Services

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A need for support + streamlined workflows



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USDR + NPI partnership in action

Identify the Challenge	Process + Technology	Support + Partnerships	Sustainability
Understand the scope of the challenge you're facing	Understand the entire process and user experience	Be flexible and collaborative while developing solutions	Set a foundation that you can build and improve upon in the future
Identify the intended goals of your work	Dissect what's within and outside of your control	Consider all sides of the process - leadership, users, clients, etc.	Clarify the roles of people and technology and create a flow of information between them
	Strike a balance between technology and organizational evolution		

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Understand the scope of the challenge you're facing

Identify the Challenge

Hundreds of applications for assistance were overwhelming NPI clerks

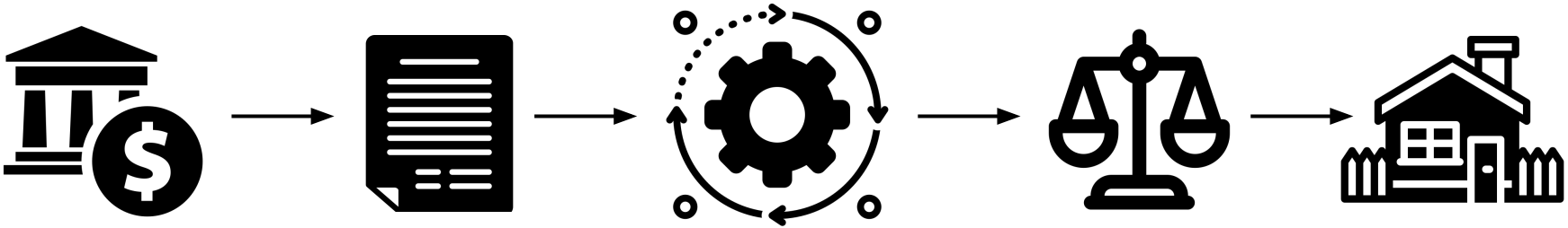
- Review applications
- Collect info, documents and signatures
- Transfer data from documents to software
- Inform applicants of status
- Provide alternative resources
- Upload images sent via email or text
- Organize duplicate applications

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Understand the scope of the challenge you're facing

Identify the Challenge

Develop a scalable process to effectively leverage $2M CARES funds



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Strike a balance between technology and process evolution

Process + Technology

Review applications

Provide alternative resources

Collect info, documents and signatures



Google Forms

JotForm

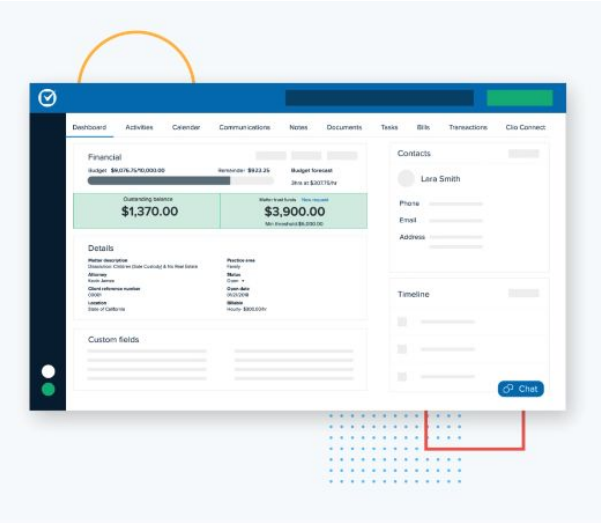
DocuSign

zapier

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Strike a balance between technology and process evolution

Process + Technology



Upload images sent via email or text

Transfer data from documents to software

Inform applicants of status

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Be flexible and collaborative while developing solutions

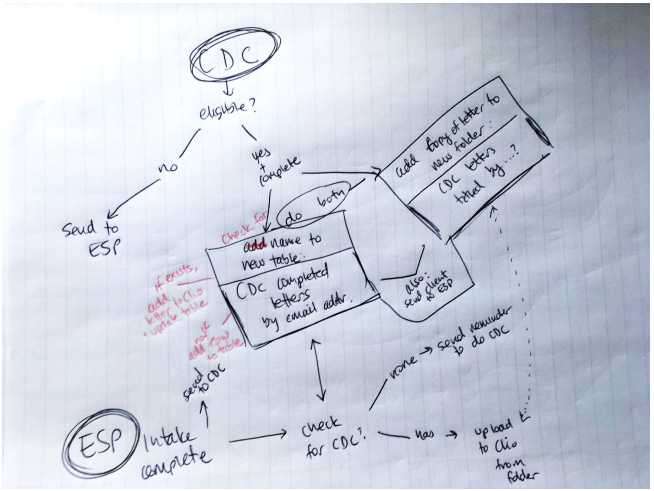
Support + Partnerships

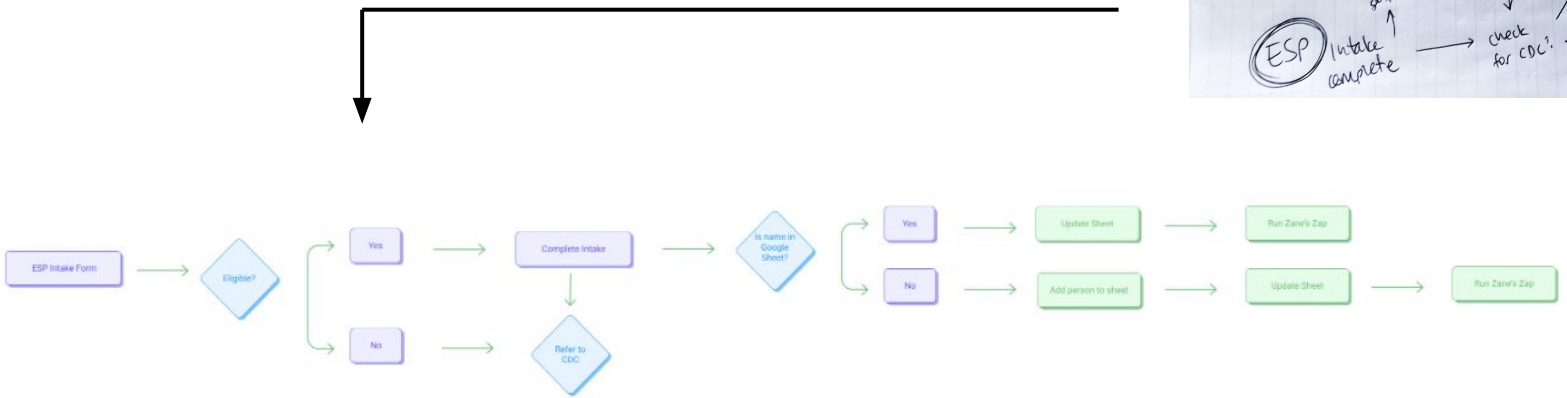
- Consider all sides of the challenge - process, technology, finances, etc.
- Alignment and support from organizational leadership
- Flexibility in terms of technology and process
- Partnerships that are based on education and support over profit and procedure
- Seek creative alternatives for cost savings and sustainability

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Be flexible and collaborative while developing solutions

Support + Partnerships





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Eviction Settlement Program Impact

Eviction Settlement Program pairs attorneys with tenants dealing with COVID-19 financial challenges

Renters impacted by COVID-19 can apply for eviction settlement program

Legal group says CARES Act funds saved 1,100 Shelby County households from eviction

Shelby County Eviction Settlement Fund: Who qualifies and how does it work?

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Eviction Settlement Program Impact

1,155+

Households Served

4,000+

People Supported

$1.7M

Paid in back rent to landlords

2,775

Applicants Processed

75%

Reduction in time for legal clerks to prepare a case

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“What I love about my relationship with USDR is they are willing to jump in with their tech expertise and solve problems we didn’t even know we had, let alone how to hire for. Within 3 weeks we launched a fully automated intake process that allows our clerks to focus on helping clients instead of on data collection. I’m so encouraged and I’ve learned so much. Now when we run into problems we know there is a better way to solve it.

— Steve Barlow, President, Neighborhood Preservation Inc.

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Set a foundation that you can build and improve upon in the future

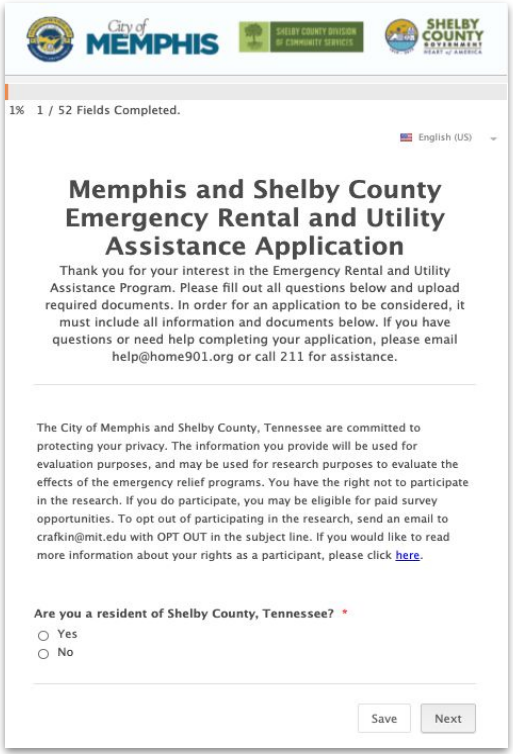
Sustainability

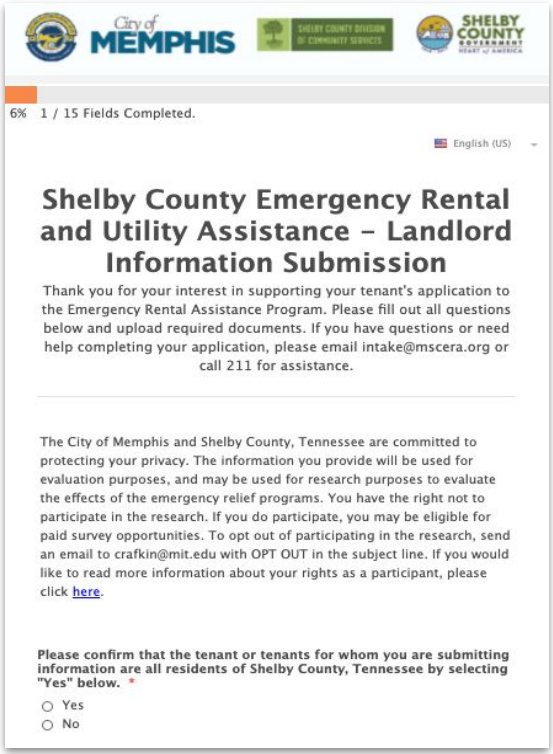


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Set a foundation that you can build and improve upon in the future

Sustainability





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Learnings & Takeaways

Key Learnings

- Develop a wide-lens view of what a process is trying to achieve by stepping outside of the status quo and determining what's within and outside of your control
- Strike a balance between technological solutions and organizational evolution
- Put together a collaborative team that can be flexible on both sides of the process, from the organizational and the technical sides
- Consider creative solutions rather than all-in-one fixes, which can be expensive and inflexible
- Identify opportunities for people to own a task, technology to own a task, and a database or connection point to share information between all involved

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Take Action

Identify the Challenge → **Process + Technology** → **Support + Partnerships** → **Sustainability**

- Follow the "Challenge → Process → Partnerships → Sustainability" model
- Mix and match affordable, accessible tools
- Tap into existing sources of support (like USDR)

zapier

JotForm

DocuSign

Figma

miro

Google Sheets

SlickText

Airtable

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Connect with USDR

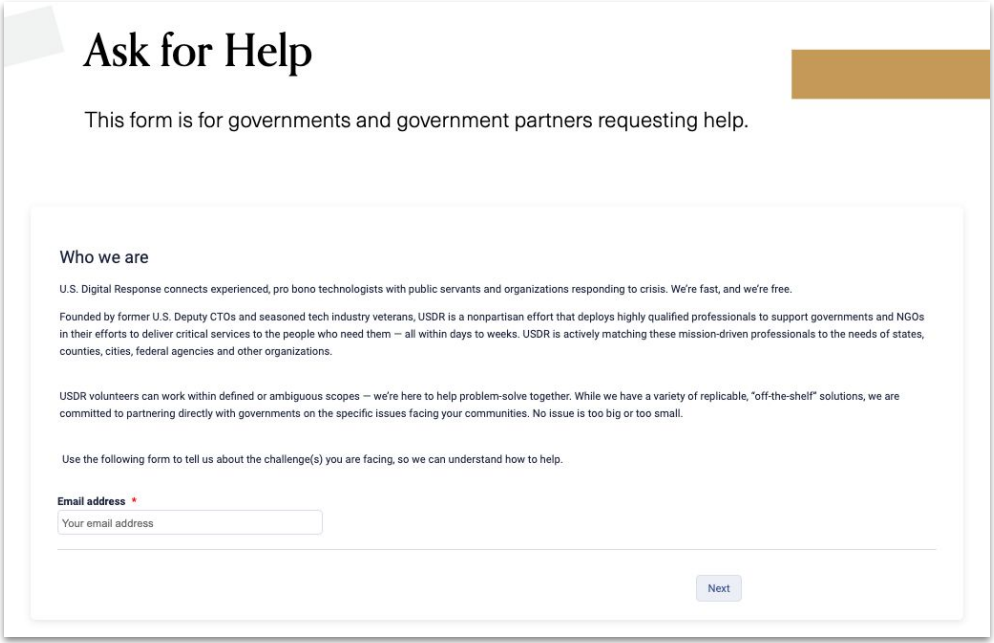
Get in touch with us. We can help.

USDR volunteers can work within defined or ambiguous scopes — we're here to help problem-solve together.

No issue is too big or too small.

Submit a request form to get started:
www.usdigitalresponse.org/request-help

Follow USDR:
Twitter - @USDResponse
LinkedIn - www.linkedin.com/company/usdr



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Questions?

Save The Date

Disaster Recovery and Agency Continuity Planning

Resilience Toolkit and Webinar Series #3
with Melanie Lockwood Herman, Nonprofit Risk Management Center

April 15, 2021
2:00 ET/1:00 CT/12:00 MT/11:00 PT

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Save The Date

The Pandemic Continues-Supporting Our Organizations' Recoveries

with Anna Tekippe, Center for Work Education and Employment

May 5, 2021
12:00 ET/11:00 CT/10:00 MT/9:00 PT

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Save The Date

Crisis Management and Crisis Communications

Resilience Toolkit and Webinar Series #4
with Melanie Lockwood Herman,
Nonprofit Risk Management Center

May 20, 2021
11:00 ET/10:00 CT/9:00 MT/8:00 PT

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Save The Date

Ready. . . or Not? Creating Practical, Action-Oriented Readiness Plans

Resilience Toolkit and Webinar Series #5
with Melanie Lockwood Herman,
Nonprofit Risk Management Center

June 17, 2021
2:00 ET/1:00 CT/12:00 MT/11:00 PT

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Save The Date



Registration: bit.ly/equitysummittickets

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For More Info

For more information or questions contact the HCCT CARES Project Team:

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