

# U.S. Digital Response

Sept. 22nd



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# Thank you for being here!



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## AGENDA

**About U.S. Digital Response**

**Volunteer Roles & Projects**

**Impact & Experiences**

**Next Steps**



U.S. Digital Response serves the immediate needs of the public by activating **highly-skilled talent**, leveraging **modern technology** to **quickly deliver critical services and infrastructure**, while **partnering directly** with governments and nonprofits.

# COVID-19 created a cascade of problems; outdated digital infrastructure held governments + nonprofits back from responding effectively

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**People waited up to 6 hours** to cast votes in the 2020 presidential primary.

- [Business Insider](#), March 2020



**Hundreds lined up** to submit unemployment insurance applications in person as Florida attempted to address problems with its website.

- [Washington Post](#), April 2020

# We came together to create U.S. Digital Response

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## U.S. Digital Response (USDR)

a nonprofit, nonpartisan effort that helps governments and organizations respond quickly and efficiently to support the critical needs of the public.

- **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 works 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 **volunteers bring deep expertise** spanning engineering, data science, content strategy, design, logistics and supply chain, and disaster response.

# We build to scale from one community to many others

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Deployed to **5+ cities**

Distributed **>40,000 boxes of fresh produce**

It can be deployed in **under an hour.**

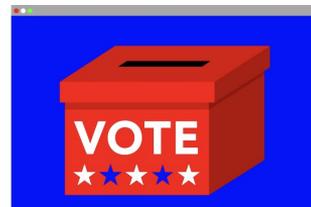


**Nearly 800k free COVID tests** administered in **Seattle.**

Used to launch a Health Program impacting more than **20 partners.**

## The New York Times Election Tech That's Super Simple

The most useful technology doesn't have to involve flying cars. Sometimes, it's really easy.



Election websites deployed to **10 counties in 6 states.**

An election website can now be **spun-up and customized in <2 days.**

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# Volunteer Roles & Model

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## Core Roles

- Engineering
- Designers
- Researchers
- Content Strategists
- Product Managers
- *and many others!*

## Current Focus Areas

- Rapid Response
  - (Crisis, < 8 weeks)
- Economic Stability & Unemployment Insurance
- Health
- Elections
- Digital Service Support

## Scalable Support

- Internal teams of staff, tech-in-residences, & volunteers.
- Onboarding, open documentation & project resources.
- Community events, workshops, focused programs, etc.

# Economic Stability

## Keeping Families in Their Homes by Scaling Workflows: Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Memphis Shelby County Emergency Rental Assistance (MSCERA)

<https://www.usdigitalresponse.org/success-stories/emergency-rental-assistance/>

7,500+

Applications received

5,800+

Applications screened

\$13.7+ M

Assistance distributed

*USDR volunteers continues work today w/ many gov partners in our Economic Stability Program including work on Unemployment Insurance projects.*



# Vaccine Access

## COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment Finders

USDR collaborated with organizations at the federal, state, and local levels to help develop vaccine appointment finders that aggregate and streamline disparate appointment systems to help people access vaccines.

<https://usdr.gitbook.io/vaccine-appointment-finders/>

### Partner Example:

New Jersey originally had a list of statewide vaccine providers, but no way of getting up-to-date availability information from them.

- USDR volunteers & Technologists-in-Residence closely collaborated with them and other partners to help the State develop a solution that aggregates appointment availability information from the state's major vaccine providers, using APIs and web scraping.
- New Jersey's call center personnel have been using their vaccine appointment finder tool daily to book appointments for their inbound residents.

# Immigrant Services Directory

## First-Of-Its-Kind Website Centralizes Services for Over 3 Million Immigrants in LA County

LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA)

[LA County Announcement Article](#)

USDR volunteer developers, content strategists, designers & data scientists partnered w/ OIA & the County Enterprise Geographic Information Systems (eGIS) team to provide [immigrants.lacounty.gov](http://immigrants.lacounty.gov) featuring a new, interactive, map-based immigrant services directory – the first tool of its kind for an immigrant affairs office.

» Search the map using one of the below search boxes. » Use the 'X' button to clear the searches. » Do not leave any spaces after the search keywords. » Use the GPS button next to this panel to find your location. » Buscar en el mapa utilizando una de las cajas de búsqueda. » Utilice el botón "X" para borrar las búsquedas. » No deje espacios después de las palabras clave de búsqueda. » Utilice el botón GPS junto a este panel para encontrar su ubicación. » Para cualquier otra pregunta, llame a la Oficina de Asuntos de Inmigrantes del Condado de Los Ángeles: (800) 593-8222.

#### Key Services/ Servicios Claves

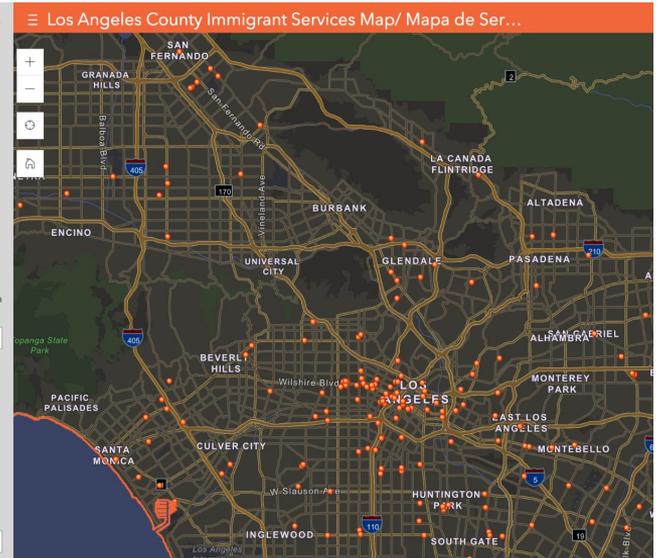
Enter any one key service you require/ Ingrese una frase clave que necesite:

Example/ Ejemplo: Legal or Employment or Immigration/ Legal o Empleo o Inmigración

SEARCH/ BUSCAR X

#### City/ Ciudad

Enter the city in L.A. County you require the services in/ Introduzca la ciudad en el Condado de Los Ángeles en la cual requiere servicios:



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# Our Approach

Deliver value  
in days,  
not months.

Quickly  
demonstrate  
what's possible

Design for  
sustainability  
and usability,  
always with the  
end user in mind

Leverage or  
adapt existing  
tools and  
products  
whenever  
possible

Help partners  
build their  
technical  
capacity and  
deliver services  
on their own

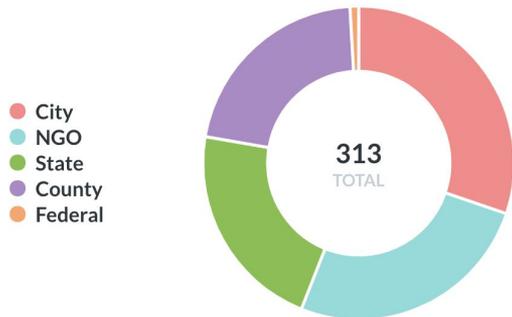
**Volunteers use their honed skills & expertise to create direct impact -- feeling reward from the tangible differences they make in communities they are passionate to serve.**

# Our work has impacted over 42 million people in the last year+

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**310+ projects**

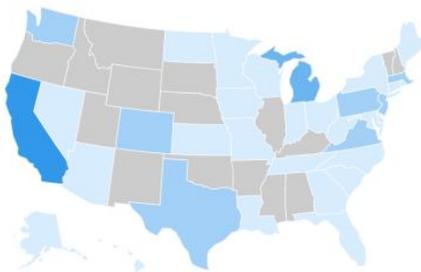
with governments  
and NGOs



Partner types  
from across the country

**36 states and  
territories**

across the country



Partner Locations

**7000+ pro bono  
technologists**

who've raised their hands to  
help

**800+ volunteers placed**  
on projects

**>40% repeat**  
joining more than one project

# Our Volunteers

“**Seeing projects come to fruition brings a real sense of purpose and fulfillment** ... I’ve seen how much small businesses in my neighborhood in Chinatown have struggled, both due to the pandemic itself as well as the anti-Chinese and anti-Asian sentiment that has come with it. Being able to **build something that may help support the people and businesses** that form the bedrock **of the neighborhood I’ve come to love is** something that’s **deeply meaningful** to me, especially in a time like this one.” - *VICKI NIU, Software Engineer & NYC[x] Fellow*

“There is a lot of **value in bringing working professionals** and their experience **to provide better, user centered government services**. The impact is always wide ranging and can be seen immediately.” - *ALEX MENDEZ, Business Intelligence Engineer*

“**Interacting with people** beyond my own neighborhood who are **from some of the hardest-hit communities in the pandemic**, and knowing that my work **might make some small difference in helping them** to get access to healthcare and sign up for the vaccine, makes this work **meaningful to me.**” - *KIM MATS MATS, UX Researcher*

# Takeaways

- Volunteers are...
  - eager to share their skills in impactful ways
  - looking to make a difference in their communities. (at various levels)
  - interested in opportunities to bring & build empathy & new perspectives.
- Experiences that involve unique challenges, common goals, & a sense of urgency can deepen relationships.
- Clear scope, impacts & outcomes bring a sense of fulfillment & motivate volunteers to return & share their experiences w/ others.

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# Let's Chat

**Ask me questions in the lunch breakout session.**

**Contact me: [kristen@usdigitalresponse.org](mailto:kristen@usdigitalresponse.org)**

We'd love to learn more about your ERG & volunteering goals to better understand what opportunities for partnership & support might exist.

## **Share USDR as a volunteering opportunity**

<https://www.usdigitalresponse.org/raising-your-hand/>

- Individuals 'raise their hands' to be called on by filling out our form.
- We interview handraisers before onboarding as USDR Volunteers.
- When a volunteer role request comes in that matches your availability, expertise, and skill sets, we will reach out to schedule an interview.
- Handraisers will be on our newsletter list & keep up-to-date w/ USDR.

— **Thank you!**