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## **HUD Bets on Tech Innovation for Opportunity Zones.**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced that it will co-lead an Opportunity Zone-focused workforce challenge of the U.S. Census Bureau's "The Opportunity Project (TOP)" initiative. TOP is an accelerator program that matches tech companies, universities, government, and communities together to create useful digital products for the public.

For this challenge, HUD said that it will collaborate with the private sector so that stakeholders in opportunity zones, including communities and investors, can use technology to strengthen investments in underserved areas.

"HUD is pleased that leading innovators from across the country are directly taking on the challenge of developing products to help people invest in Opportunity Zones," said Ben Carson, Secretary HUD. "We also want to thank the Census Bureau and the other agencies participating in this summer's Opportunity Project. Working together, we collaborate with the private sector to solve some of the most pressing issues facing Americans in economically distressed areas. This project will help ensure that Opportunity Zone stakeholders have access to the best data, innovation, and expertise as investment continues to flow into these underserved areas."

The Census Bureau's Opportunity Project utilizes the expertise of professionals from across government, the technology sector, and private business to focus on a specific challenge during designated 'sprints.' The final products for the summer challenge will be shared in Washington, D.C. in December 2019, HUD said in a statement.

"Government, the technology industry, and the communities that comprise Opportunity Zones all have a significant role to play in establishing new products and services that can benefit the Americans who need them most," said Scott Turner, Executive Director of the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council.

HUD said that the Opportunity Challenge was part of the work being undertaken by Carson as the Chair of the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council. The Council's 16 Federal member agencies and Federal-State partnerships are engaging with governments at all levels—state, local, tribal, and territorial—and the private sector on ways to more effectively use taxpayer dollars to revitalize low-income communities.

### **DS News**

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