

CODE *for* AMERICA

# BRIGADE CONGRESS

VIRTUAL OCT 16–18

## First Aid: How Can We Provide Immediate Support to Brigades? (Unconference)

*Tyrek Shepard*

### Session Information

<b>Date</b>	Sunday, October 18
<b>Time</b>	11:00 AM – Pacific Time 12:00 PM – Mountain Time 1:00 PM – Central Time 2:00 PM – Eastern Time
<b>Quick Links</b>	
<b>Slides URL</b>	[To be filled in by presenter]
<b>Recording URL</b>	<a href="https://codeforamerica.zoom.us/rec/play/g9VvecikFhhYjobP6BuoVlY61IRDdRjtbKOGcqcW2YEhy0w59gKLNloQ3sdLiIdftY2fcA-Vo72rYR7O.-g1wQH5P5OyhXEKj">https://codeforamerica.zoom.us/rec/play/g9VvecikFhhYjobP6BuoVlY61IRDdRjtbKOGcqcW2YEhy0w59gKLNloQ3sdLiIdftY2fcA-Vo72rYR7O.-g1wQH5P5OyhXEKj</a>
<b>Discourse URL</b>	[To be filled in by presenter]  <b>Note:</b> This notes document is also available on the Code for America Discourse: <a href="https://discourse.codeforamerica.org/tag/brigadecongress-2020">https://discourse.codeforamerica.org/tag/brigadecongress-2020</a>

### Session Notes

Notetaker(s): Ben, Liani, Diana

Attendees: Omnitom, Ben, Bonnie, Liani, Diana, Tyrek, Dan, Melanie, Jaqueline, Kelly, Heather, Alyx, Kelli, Annie, Emerson

We have put a lot of work into how we run efficient and effective brigades. Advanced infrastructure.

We have also noticed that Brigades struggle today today. Brigades also need to have minimum capacity to have a hack night from week to week.

### **Part 1: What is the experience for brigades right now**

- Pain points
  - Participation is low, so keeping projects going = challenging
  - Melanie has heard from several smaller brigades that have reached out to share that they are struggling and they may not be here
  - General brigade participation unbalanced by lack of leadership (one person pulling all the weight is not sustainable)
    - Leaders leaving / moving
  - Leaders that aren't here probably because they are burnt out
    - Afraid that their brigade is dying
    - Longest time leader drop out / whoever is left is holding the bag for what used to be a whole leadership team
  - Changing professional situations and racial tension impacts capacity to work on brigade organizing
  - Partners leaving (ex: budget instability)
  - Finding partners - convincing them to work with us
  - Technical planning and leadership balance with project and organizational management
  - Strategy issue: conflict over what to prioritize, interpersonal dynamics
  - Implementation: actually completing tasks.
  - Don't know what the commitment and roles are (lack of transparency, clarity)
- Context
  - Coding schools in the city sending in participants and volunteers

### **Part 2: What are some ideas to support each other?**

- Brigade Organizers Playbook Extension Project seeks to find examples from things that are working around the network and what is not working that people need help with. Read details about project here:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1P7HmROzkFYVyu7cFkzirwgO-F4i8v6ijQQ4PF44f5bE/edit>

- Brigades co-hosting hack nights together to work on shared projects, focus on smaller Brigades (ex. Tucson and New Orleans, Savannah and Atlanta, etc.)
- Training seminars to develop skills of Brigade members and upcoming Brigade leaders
- Stronger brigades can lend people power (ex: facilitating project nights) to smaller ones
- Adopt-a-brigade (ex: Orange County, CA wants to create a brigade, but HfLA is providing community space - aka OC joins LA's project nights - while OC gets logistics and sense of community set up)
- Clarity on time commitments - process for securing commitment and supporting it
- Invite a potential partner to present at a project night (three purposes: builds relationship both ways, gets brigade members excited, and low work for core team)
- Collaborating on projects across the network
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### Part 3: Actionable

- Tyrek - providing day-to-day leadership support (project management, hack night logistics, etc.)
- Krystina - meeting with other local/regional Brigades to identify collaboration opportunities
- Brigade members volunteering to mentor and support one another
- NAC to investigate how it can support and develop a proposal/mini-plan for the Network