

Context:

In 2017, the Brigades came together at Brigade Congress and drafted a Mission/Vision/Operating Principles document for review. Since that time, CfA has taken the finalized document off their website. However, this document is useful for a starting point for ACT as it was the last time the network came together to decide values.

The goal of this document is to provide a first pass at what the Vision, Mission and Values are for the **Alliance of Civic Technologists**. Obviously, a lot of this document will change because we're ACT - not CfA but it does serve as a useful starting point.

Vision

The world as we'd like to see it

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.

Mission

How we intend to make our vision real

Alliance of Civic Technologists uses the principles and practices of the digital age to improve how government serves the American public, and how the public improves government.

1. **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.
2. **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.

3. **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 values

What we are like as an organization

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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. [More on cultivate the karass: <http://www.youhavetolearncomputers.com/blog/2015/9/23/saying-goodbye-to-jake-brewer>]

Our operating principles

The ideas that guide the decisions we make

- **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.

- **Make it better with data.** Inform iterations with data about user behavior. Evaluate programs based on statistically-sound ground-truthed data about outcomes.
- **Default to open.** Work in the open and collaborate with the community to help make programs and services better for everyone.
- **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.

*Cuan McCann first spoke about building with, not for at the 2014 CfA Summit