COMMUNITY OVERVIEW
The Challenge and Prize Community of Practice, hosted by the General Services Administration, brings together US government staff interested in crowdsourcing public input to help solve complex problems. Started in 2010 and hosted by the Challenge.Gov program, this inter-agency community engages approximately 800 civil servants from federal, tribal, state, and local governments. The community offers a peer-support network for members, all of whom are at various stages of launching or running projects that involve crowdsourcing solutions from engaged public audiences. Experienced challenge and prize organizers share their best practices and lessons learned, and members newer to the work have opportunities to ask questions and work through use cases.

Website: Challenge.Gov

COMMUNITY BASICS
800
Through various engagements, the CoP connects around 800 people at any given time

39%
Mostly online with some in-person events*

26%
Partly Open - The CoP is open to federal, tribal, state, and local government

*all activities were online during the COVID-19 pandemic

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE
Community Management
Community management is provided by the Director of Challenge.Gov (.5 FTE) who also manages the central hub of federally sponsored prize competitions. Contractors are hired for other responsibilities (2.5 FTE total).

Community members lead CoPs and special interest groups within their own agencies.

Members

15%
Experienced (have managed or led 3+ challenges or prize competitions)

39%
Interested in challenges and prize competitions, but have not led any at this time

20%
Some experience (managed or led 1-3 challenges or prize competitions)

26%
Challenge administrators (support challenges and prize competitions in an agency)

Community Configuration

Director

Onboards new CoP members
Approves messages and moderates
Listserv & Onboarding Manager

Answer seekers present questions
Events Manager

Speakers are experienced challenge leads

Toolkit & Knowledge Product Manager

Discovery with CoP members

Newsletter

Experiential learning activity

KEYWORDS
Paradigms
- OPEN INNOVATION
- PARTICIPATORY DESIGN
- PRIZES AND CHALLENGES

Disciplines / skills
- INTERDISCIPLINARY
- DISCOVERY
- DESIGN
- IMPACT ASSESSMENT
- INNOVATION SOURCING
- TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Programming and goals
- KNOWLEDGE GENERATION
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- MENTORING
- OUTREACH AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

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PROGRAMMING
In this community, programming includes a monthly newsletter and regular events each month including office hours, spotlight chats, deep-dive experiential learning sessions, and as-requested thematic forums. Community members may also engage at-will via an email listserv.

convey/consume  contribute  collaborate  co-create

- newsletter
- listserv
- contact community manager directly
- submit newsletter content
- ask questions in a webinar / post in the chat
- write a guest blog post
- share a resource
- email a listserv
- fill in a survey
- contact one another directly
- meet in small groups (led by community manager)
- design activities with community manager
- participate in working groups or special interest groups (led by community members)
- organize events together

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS
This community does not currently have a formal champions program. Members act as informal champions in the following ways:

CHAMPIONS take on additional activities to support or advance the community. They are sometimes described as emergent leaders.

MAINTAIN
- host events for the community

GROW
- reshare the newsletter
- recruit new members

EVLOLVE
- participate in a focus group or other means of in-depth feedback

COMMUNITY TOOLBOX
Communications
Listserv

Productivity
Qualtrics
Mural

Community platform
N/A
OUTPUTS & EVALUATION
Success looks like community members being supported in their endeavor to build skill sets for prize competition development; creating relationships and avenues for knowledge sharing among peers; and collectively advancing and maturing the use of challenges and prize competitions in federal government.

Successes over the last year
The CoP’s focus on tailoring goals and objectives to personas has allowed them to see opportunities that are more specific rather than general goals. As an example, they have been able to bring inexperienced but interested members into the toolkit development process.

- **Growth** - launched new program or project
- **Growth** - added new members
- **Engagement** - increased activity of members
- **Engagement** - more members acted as champions
- **Activities** - created community outputs together
- **Activities** - an in-person or virtual event
- **Value** - members expressed recognition of the community’s value

Evaluation and Reporting
- Reports for community team
- Community member interviews
- Post-event evaluation through surveys or polls

Opportunities
One of the primary goals of this community is to actively engage more members to participate. They want to hear more voices and encourage an atmosphere of collaboration and sharing.

- **Growth** - launch new program or project
- **Growth** - add new members
- **Engagement** - increase member activity
- **Engagement** - more members acting as champions
- **Activities** - create community outputs together
- **Activities** - tailor events specific to sub-sets of the community
- **Value** - more members expressing recognition of the community's value

Challenges
Federal-wide access to digital tools that allow for community engagement is a major challenge for engaging the CoP.

- Low activity from community members
- Lack of clarity about community goals
- Member turnover

FUNDING
100% Parent organization

**Funding Streams**
- 100% funding from Challenge. Gov

The Challenge and Prize Community of Practice does not currently offer funding opportunities for members.

ABOUT THIS PROFILE
This profile is part of a research project conducted by the Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement (CSCCE) in collaboration with the Science and Technology Innovation Program at the Wilson Center. You can find out more about the project, and view more community profiles, on the CSCCE website.

Information for this profile was submitted by Jarah Meador, Director of Open Innovation at the General Services Administration.

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