Civic Innovators Program FAQ

What is Civic Innovators?
Civic Innovators is a collaborative program leveraging the natural partnership between businesses and cities to solve specific challenges in Baltimore City. City agencies often have insufficient capacity and resources to take on important projects that could have a dramatic impact on the economy and health of our city. Businesses are uniquely positioned to contribute the technical expertise of their employees to respond to city challenges. Partnering with city agencies, pro bono business volunteers apply their technical knowledge on strategic projects leading to innovative solutions to critical issues. Over the past thirty years, similar public-private partnerships have delivered measurable results for cities across the U.S, including Chicago, San Francisco, and New York.

Why Civic Innovators in Baltimore?
The Mayor's Office, Baltimore Corps and the T Rowe Price Foundation launched a Baltimore Civic Innovator program in Fall of 2019. Participating businesses have the opportunity to make Baltimore an even better city to live and work in. Pro bono volunteers leverage their professional expertise to deliver measurable results for Baltimore City.

What types of projects fit in the Civic Innovator model?
The partner must be a City Agency with a clearly specified challenge that contributes to a systemic issue. The project should be designed to clearly benefit from professional and technical expertise from pro bono volunteers in local corporations. For a list of project parameters, click here.

What is the timeframe for projects?
Projects run for 3-4 months and City agency and pro bono volunteers commit at least 4 hours a week for the duration of the project. The pro bono work is conducted during regular business hours.

The inaugural class of Civic Innovators (Fall 2019-March 2020)
Nine Baltimore-based businesses committed fifteen individuals to the inaugural Civic Innovators program, investing over 1000 hours of expertise. The nine participating companies included Comcast, BGE, T. Rowe Price, Under Armour, Kaiser Permanente, Whiting Turner, Ravens, Exelon and M & T Bank.
Pro bono volunteers worked closely with City employees collecting and analyzing data, conducting focus groups and determining process changes on collaborative teams within one of four areas of focus.

Pilot Project: **Transforming the police department’s fleet management practices**
Civic Innovator's pilot project worked with the Baltimore Police Department in conjunction with the Department of General Services to transform its fleet management practices. The police department was seeking to strengthen the processes and administrative policies to ensure that fleet assets are properly utilized. This initial project was selected because we believe that a strong fleet management program has the potential to make long-term, foundational change to Baltimore’s public safety landscape.

**Project Impact: Delivering on Public Safety**
Public-private sector teams focused on reducing fleet cost and increasing accountability within the Baltimore Police Department and the Department of General Services to help save millions of dollars over the long-term. Research and recommendations were developed to optimize fleet utilization and further promote public safety and reduce violence by reinvesting in other areas such as hiring more officers and improving technology. The broader city impact was to build public trust by demonstrating good management practices, improve morale with consistent vehicle assignment, reduce crime with visible use of take-home vehicles, and incentivize officers to live in the city.

**Civic Innovators 2.0 Project: DPW Online Dashboard- Creating Transparent, Efficient and Equitable Public Services (Feb-June 2021)**
Baltimore City Department of Public Works (DPW) had no centralized way to effectively and transparently share information both internally and with Baltimore’s citizens about its community improvement impact. This project helped to create a Dashboard as a centralized location to view and analyze data to increase data integrity, inform strategic decision making, and lead to external transparency and increased public trust.

**For each project** participating companies and volunteers invested in addressing a technical challenge for the City agency and have pioneered a new type of City-Private partnership.