Announcing the Digital Infrastructure Incubator at Code for Science & Society

**Code for Science & Society** (CS&S) solicits expressions of interest from emerging leaders in the open source ecosystem to participate in a **Digital Infrastructure Incubator**. Applicants should be involved in developing strategy, designing growth, or building community at an open source digital infrastructure project and have interest in questions of sustainability, governance, community health, meaningful diversity, equity, and inclusion, or a related concern. They should have the capacity to engage a cohort of similarly-minded participants and interest in sharing out their experiences. Participants will receive a $5,000 stipend to join a six-month program running October 2021-March 2022. Applicants are not limited by geographic location or primary program language.

**Background**

The health, stability, security, and sustainability of open source digital infrastructure now comprises the subject of a wealth of research recommendations. Reports and white papers have identified the challenges and obstacles unpaid labor poses to the maintenance of digital infrastructure (**Eghbal**; **Geiger, Howard, Irani**; **Russel, Vinsel, Lee**); ethnographic research has pointed to the impasse that the lack of diversity and meaningful inclusion presents to more sustainable growth (**Sinders**; **Dabbish et al., Lindinger et al.**); increasingly, even mainstream media discourses link the precarity of digital infrastructure with wider debates around breakdown and repair across the public ecosystem. And yet open source projects continue to struggle to make meaningful gains implementing flexible, creative solutions. While “digital infrastructure” becomes a more prominent concern among funders, policy makers, and in the media, the instability underpinning it continues.

**Our Approach**

Code for Science and Society provides fiscal sponsorship and management support to research-driven open data science projects. Part of the organization’s mission is to build pathways for success for open source projects and their leaders. The Digital Infrastructure Incubator @CS&S, part of the **Critical Digital Infrastructure cohort**, furthers CS&S’s mission of building community and sustainability in open source by spinning the “incubator” model from its intimacy with venture capital to alternate political horizons that may better serve the public interest.
The Digital Infrastructure Incubator will hold space for and provide material support to emergent leaders as they imagine possibility and design strategy based on research recommendations around sustainability, governance, and community health, or related issues. Over the course of their 6-month tenure in the incubator, projects may:

- Develop organizational frameworks (mission, guidelines, documentation)
- Test and refine organizational literature (codes of conduct with usable, testable enforcement guides; revised governance documentation articulating pathways to leadership)
- Plot collaborations (towards technical interoperability, shared resources, joint advocacy agreements, and/or multi-stakeholder partnerships)

We hope projects may do any of the above or other related work while considering what may be learned from collective action and labor organizing across the tech landscape and beyond; what it might mean to decolonize digital infrastructure; and other histories of power and ideology inflected in this work.

**Eligibility**

Open source digital infrastructure projects come in a range of shapes, sizes, and impacts. We acknowledge the range of associations that “digital infrastructure” conjures -- from concern for its precarity, to enthusiasm for the potential, to critiques of and resistance against the forms of power and domination that it enables. We encourage interested participants to explore how their projects might be considered part of this umbrella term.

Selected participants will have an interest in developing and implementing transparent documentation, strategy, or other visioning around questions of sustainability, governance, and/or community health, or a related question. They need not be project leads but they should be in a position of leadership sufficient to develop and implement the work undertaken. Selected participants will receive a one-time stipend of $5,000USD to compensate for approximately 5-15 hours synchronous and asynchronous time per month for six months. They should have the capacity for this commitment and be willing to share out experiences -- either in virtual/in person events, in individually or collaboratively authored publications, or as informants to the latter.

**Submit**

Expressions of interest submitted [online] will be evaluated on a rolling basis beginning **August 16, 2021**. Positions will remain open until filled.