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URA ANNOUNCES 2016 STEEL CITY CODEFEST NEWS

*Now a week-long event with an expanded Codefest Jr.
Registration now open*

PITTSBURGH, PA (Feb. 16, 2016) The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) announced today that the fourth annual [Steel City Codefest](#) (Codefest) will be a week-long event, with optional evening work sessions and a bigger Codefest Jr. Part of the City's Inclusive Innovation Week, Codefest begins with a kickoff event from 1-3 p.m. on Sat., April 2, at [Alloy 26](#), located at 100 South Commons, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. It concludes with judging, final presentations and awards from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sat., April 9, at [Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Main](#), 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Registration is now open and tickets can be obtained through [Showclix](#). Registration is free and includes admission to the kickoff event, food during work nights and a T-shirt. Due to space constraints, participation is limited to the first 100 people. Each team member must register for a ticket.

"We are extremely proud of the growth and civic impact of the Steel City Codefest," said Tom Link, director of the URA's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. "I want to congratulate all of our partners--and especially the URA's own Jennifer Wilhelm -- who have helped to make Codefest the landmark event it has become. Part of the URA's mission is to improve the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods and this event has done that each and every year by engaging innovators to help solve issues that impact the quality of life throughout Pittsburgh."

Over the last three years, Codefest has had 273 participants on 53 teams with each team creating apps based upon 16 individually sourced challenges from area nonprofit and government agencies. To date, \$173,000 has been raised, through sponsorships and foundation grants helping to pay for the execution of the events and the completion of six software applications. Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania, Pgh.st, 412 Food Rescue, The Salvation Army, Neighborhood Legal Services, Rebuilding Together, along with the people that they serve, are the true winners of Codefest.

"Codefest is a great example of how nonprofits can use innovation and technology to improve the lives of those they serve," said Kate Dewey, president of The Forbes Funds. "We continue to seek out ways to support cross-sector partnerships like those we see in Codefest which are connecting what Pittsburgh is best known for, talent and technology, to the real needs of our communities."

For the second year in a row, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Main will host the Codefest, including Codefest Jr., the youth portion of the event. Open to children in grades K-12, Codefest Jr. was created to get children and teens excited about and familiar with coding. In an effort to aid in increasing digital literacy in underserved populations, including girls and communities of color, this year's Codefest Jr. has expanded and will include participation from community organizations offering STEM programming throughout the City. This is one of the many goals outlined in the City's [Roadmap for Inclusive Innovation](#) and identified in the [My Brother's Keeper's](#) playbook. Codefest Jr.'s offerings will include coding apps, coding games, a robotics challenge, demos, and more.

“Throughout our long history the Library has played an instrumental role in supporting and nurturing innovative development within our communities,” said Mary Frances Cooper, president and director of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. “Codefest Jr. is one of the creative ways our library introduces STEM competencies, such as critical thinking and problem solving, to children. We want to engage young people at an early age to help them to build a strong background in science, engineering and mathematics.”

Taking place during the City of Pittsburgh’s Inclusive Innovation Week, the new extended format opens up the Codefest to a fresh demographic, and will allow for user testing and development that wasn’t possible when it was a 24-hour competition. For final presentations, Chief Innovation and Performance Officer for the City of Pittsburgh Debra Lam will be handing out prizes, awards and bragging rights.

“The Steel City Codefest continues to break new ground in defining how to create opportunities for the community in utilizing data to develop real-world, sustaining and useful applications,” said Lam. “The City is benefiting from a previous winner, [Pgh.st](#), that provides residents information on waste and recycling pick-up notifications, and will continue to provide additional open datasets through the Western PA Regional Data Center. It also is proud to include Codefest as a key part of the Inclusive Innovation Roadmap and week of events. We can't wait to see how this year's ideas and applications are developed.”

While diverse skill sets are welcome, participants with backgrounds in coding and design are especially suited for this hackathon as each collective team will be expected to successfully build an app. Codefest teams can be comprised of 3-6 people with past successful teams being comprised of individuals who collectively have development, design and “pitch” presentation skills.

Created in 2012 through a partnership between the City and [Google Pittsburgh](#), The Steel City Codefest is a civic software application (app) development competition designed to grow the City’s innovation and technology community through the creation of technology infrastructure. Coders, designers and community members are brought together to create technology that benefits nonprofits and government agencies around the region with the ultimate goal of near-term civic impact. Codefest was the first major project generated under the [PowerUp Pittsburgh](#) Initiative with the first Codefest being held in the Google offices located in Bakery Square in the City’s East End. Google continues to be an integral partner in the development and execution of Codefest.

“Google believes that the world's biggest challenges can be overcome by people working together to find creative solutions,” said Google Pittsburgh. “Steel City Codefest invites great people from right here in our community and gives them the resources to turn innovative ideas into reality. We love working on this event!”

Steel City Codefest is coordinated by Jennifer Wilhelm, the URA’s innovation and entrepreneurship strategist. Planning partners include the URA, The Forbes Funds, PowerUp Pittsburgh, City of Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR), University Library System-University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, MAYA Design, and Hack Pittsburgh. Key allies and sponsors include BNY Mellon Foundation, Google, UBER, NetApp, PNC, Remake Learning, Bakery Square, Innovation Works, American Eagle Outfitters, ShowClix, Wall-to-Wall Studios, the Software Engineering Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, UPMC Technology Development Center, and OpenArc.

For more information, log onto <http://www.steelcitycodefest.com>.

The [Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh](#) (URA) is the City of Pittsburgh’s economic development agency, committed to creating jobs, expanding the City’s tax base and improving the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods. The URA achieves this mission by assembling, preparing and conveying sites for major mixed-use developments; and by providing a portfolio of programs that include financing for business location, relocation and expansion, housing construction and rehabilitation, and home purchases and improvements.