ABA Coalition on Racial & Ethnic Justice (COREJ) has launched a new project titled the “Digital Justice Initiative: Police & Communities of Color Building Alliances.” After a series of high-profile fatal shootings and killings of African-American men by police officers eroded the public confidence in the police, particularly in communities of color, the entire country was confounded by the lack of solutions to resolve the problems through traditional means - studies, meetings, conferences and public forums.

Goals

COREJ’s “DJI Police & Communities of Color Project (Project)” brings together communities of color, the legal sector, law enforcement and the technology and innovation industry from a new perspective. The goal of the DJI Project is to bring these groups together to resolve the conflicts between communities of color and law enforcement through technology. COREJ will: (1) collect and analyze national, state and local data to determine the core issues underlying the tensions between communities of color and their police forces;(2) hold public dialogues through the Hackathons that propose solutions and concrete strategies that develop action plans and practical ways to resolve the issues with the assistance of the key stakeholders; and (3) develop a collaborative initiative that utilizes the talents, resources and knowledge of the communities of color, technology communities, and law enforcement entities.

Why Hackathons?

The centerpiece of the project are two social justice Hackathons in Miami and New York. A social justice hackathon is any event of any duration where people come together to solve problems. A Hackathon solution can come in many forms. Solutions can be mobile apps, and new and/or streamlined processes and procedures. This innovative project will leverage data, technology, communities of color, and law enforcement with legal insights through the ABA. A positive way of viewing “Hackathons” is to look at them as creative problem solving events.

The principal goal of the hackathon series is to increase awareness of and identify challenges to bringing the community and law enforcement together through technology. This innovative project addresses issues of immediate and critical interest to the public and the legal profession by providing concrete strategies to develop practical ways to save and prevent the loss of life from fatal shootings by law enforcement. Ultimately, through this series of activities, this project seeks to promote a sense of empowerment in the community and facilitate engagement with partners and stakeholders that may not be currently aligned.
“JusticeHack Miami”

“Justice Hack Miami” was the first Hackathon to be held by COREJ’s DJI project. Over 200 plus diverse participants attended this dynamic and highly successful all-day event that was held on February 4, 2017, during the ABA MidYear Meeting in Miami at Venture Café Miami.

A brief videotape of the Hackathon will be available in mid-April, 2017. The videotape will highlight key segments of the all-day Hackathon. One important segment that will be highlighted is the presentations of the three groups that won certificates for the creation of their excellent apps. All of the apps were created to assist community groups in developing stronger ties with their area law enforcement entities. An article regarding the Number One winning app appropriately titled Juvo is attached to this summary.


Additional photos and information on “JusticeHack Miami” are available on COREJ’s website www.ambar.org/corej

In addition to the videotape, a Preliminary Report will be published in April, 2017 with the solutions and recommendations of the break-out groups regarding how technology can be utilized to strengthen the relationships between communities of color and law enforcement.

Upcoming “JusticeHack New York City” (Tentative date August 12, 2017 in conjunction with the ABA Annual Meeting, Location TBD)

This dynamic and interactive Hackathon promises to attract at least 250-300 diverse participants from communities throughout the city, and lawyers from across the country. Participants at this event will include community leaders, industry leaders, and experts from the law enforcement and legal communities. COREJ anticipates that this event will focus on the key issue of “resolving conflicts/friction between communities of color and law enforcement.” The goals of this Hackathon will be the development of prototyped apps for future development, a repository of sample technology-based resources, ongoing relationships with the participants and the concrete implementation of solutions to address the crucial challenges and issues. This event will be videotaped and made available to the public.

After the “JusticeHack New York” has been held, COREJ will issue a Report with Recommendations regarding the findings, solutions, and available apps that were created and designed at each of the Hackathons. The final Report will provide an assessment and evaluation of the Hackathons and whether additional Hackathons are needed in other parts of the country.

*COREJ’s DJI is a part of the ABA Pathways to the Profession Goal III Working Diversity Group. It seeks to collaborate and obtain input and feedback of all the ABA diversity entities with the implementation of these critical initiatives. In addition, DJI will seek to work with all interested entities that have an interest in sponsoring, volunteering, contributing and participating in these worthwhile initiatives.

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