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News, updates, and announcements from Code for Asheville

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**Traffic Stop Data Update**

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**Upcoming events**

**Monthly Community Meetup**

Our next monthly community meetup will be at 5:30pm on May 11th at the Stephens Lee Recreation center. We'll post details on [Meetup](#) as soon as they are available. [RSVP on Meetup](#).

## Monthly Planning Meetup

Our next brigade planning meeting is tonight, May 2, at 5:30pm on April 25th at the Battery Park Book Exchange. RSVP [here](#). The next one will be [Tuesday, May 23, 2017](#).

## About Asheville's Government

Asheville's government, while it shapes the lives of everyone in the city, can often be dauntingly opaque to locals looking to get involved. So local reporter David Forbes of the Asheville Blade is offering a presentation, [About Asheville's Government](#) at 2 p.m. May 13 at the Block off Biltmore in downtown. Drawing from over a decade of experience covering City Hall, David will discuss how local government works and what some major current issues are, answer questions and lay out some of the most effective ways for locals to get involved. If you can't make this event, there will be two more sessions, on May 21, at 2pm at Firestorm Books and a date still to be announced. Check it out [here](#).

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## Traffic Stop Data Update

Core team member & former co-captain Patrick Conant has been working with Ian Mance, an attorney at the [Southern Coalition for Social Justice \(SCSJ\)](#), and Dee Williams, chair of the criminal justice committee of the Asheville chapter of the NAACP, to investigate racial disparities in traffic stop data.

Using the [opendatapolicing.com](#) website, which aggregates and tracks traffic stop data required by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), Mance, Conant, and Williams are working to reform policy in Asheville. Some of the statistics tell a particularly troubling story:

- The likelihood of a black driver being searched for a speed limit violation is 234% greater than for white drivers.
- Black drivers are searched around 33% of the time, despite only representing 13% of the Asheville population.
- The contraband "hit-rate" for black drivers (meaning the number of times illicit substances are found) is 28%, compared to 29% for white drivers.

The team has brought this information to the attention of City Staff and City Council to push for more equitable traffic patrolling, and a reduction in regulatory stops in Asheville. Their work culminated recently in a presentation before the full City Council, as reported by the Asheville Citizen Times: [Council members: Asheville race, traffic stop data warrant urgent action](#).

This work is an example of the kind of significant impact possible using publicly available data and existing tools. The team and their efforts have received significant coverage from a number of media outlets. A January story in the Citizen-Times, [Advocacy group uses data to police the police on race](#), provides further background and context to these efforts.

This work is also a great example of collaboration between members of the Asheville community and open data enthusiasts in other cities. [Opendatapolicing.com](#) was produced by a partnership between [Code for Durham](#) and the [SCSJ](#). Code for Durham provided the technical skills to extract and aggregate the statistics from the SBI, while the SCSJ provided a legal perspective to ensure that the way the information was synthesized and displayed to the end user is accurate and easy to understand.

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## News from the network

### Hack for LA Featured on CNN Money

[Hack for LA](#) was featured recently on [CNN Money](#) for their work on [Food Oasis LA](#) (FOLA), a mapping platform similar to Yelp, which simplifies complex data, like where to find the nearest food bank, farmers market or community garden.

To quote Code for America Brigade Program Manager Christopher Whitaker, "Woooooo!"

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## Help wanted

We have a bunch of new opportunities coming out of the last Community Night and our recent planning conversations. They include:

- Help end homelessness by helping the Homeless Coalition and the Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee identify and set up better collaboration and communication tools.
- Improve the Code for Asheville website by bringing fresh eyes and ideas.
- Contribute to this semi-weekly newsletter by taking or sharing responsibility for one or more sections.
- Join Code for NC's effort to build a statewide reentry resources website along the lines of the [Buncombe County Reentry Resources Hub](#).

Get more details on our [Help Wanted page](#) and email us at [code4asheville@gmail.com](mailto:code4asheville@gmail.com) if you are interested.

Join the CfA Discussion on Slack

(It may take a moment for the form to load)



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