CASE STUDY

Reimagining Global Entry:
Designing seamless border experiences for officers and 14M+ travelers

I worked on an end-to-end service redesign for a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Trusted Traveler Program.

Overview

BACKGROUND

As part of the CBP Experience (CBPX) Division, I partnered with the agencies Technology and Front-line Operations teams to **redesign the Global Entry program**, using human-centered thinking and design to create a more customer-focused, streamlined, and secure experience for stakeholders.

PROJECT GOALS

- Improve program experiences through voice-of-the-customer feedback
- Optimize systems, services, and tools supporting internal and external operations
- Reduce the manual burden of internal administrative processing
- Align program experience improvements with Federal priorities and directorates

ROLE

UX Designer
User Research,
User Personas,
Service Blueprinting,
Journey Mapping,
Workshop Facilitation,
Visual Design (Figma)

TIMELINE

2024 - Ongoing

The Process

To ensure the future state of the program was shaped by customer feedback, our team utilized a Lean UX approach. We incorporated key phases of Discovery, Define, Design, and Implementation to understand the program's current state, identify service enhancement opportunities, and embed customer experience improvements into the program's future design.

Research & Discovery

2 Field Visits | **20 User Interviews** | **20 Documents Analyzed**

Our team employed multiple research methods to inform a holistic understanding of the end-to-end Global Entry experience. **Field visit** at airport provided firsthand insights to stakeholder environments, **user interviews** revealed the pain points, needs, and expectations of officers and travelers, and **document analysis** further contextualized qualitative research with data-driven operational insights.

User Interviews

I facilitated in-person and remote interviews to understand the unique journeys, pains, and expectations of officers and travelers, which was critical for defining and driving the service redesign strategy.

I feel like a VIP being in the program. I don't have to wait in any of those crazy lines.

If we had better tools and less paperwork, I would be able to focus on traveler interviews.

User Personas

To ensure the redesign reflects the needs of all Global Entry stakeholders, I supported the creation of **8 user personas**, based on qualitative engagements, representing the program's primary user groups. These personas captured unique goals, frustrations, and expectations, providing a shared understanding of the program's audience and prioritized areas of improvement.

Current State Mapping

I championed mapping the full Global Entry process to be used as a single source of truth, capturing traveler, officer, and system actions, time to complete tasks, and identified process bottlenecks. This blueprint assisted our team communicate process inefficiencies and guided the ideation of digital transformation improvement to simplifying complex workflows in the program's core processes:

- **Enrollment** — Application submission, background check, membership interview.
- **Re-entry** — Arrival, portal or mobile app, office verification.
- **Renewal** — Renewal application, conditional approval, remote interview.

Synthesis & Insights

Through these discovery engagements, our team uncovered **5 key insights** — supported by context codes and stakeholder quotes — that captured the program from the perspectives of both officers and travelers. These insights were used to identify **21 opportunities** to enhance customer experience as persona groups engaged with the program.

1. **Ease of Use vs. Access** — Program benefits are simple to use, but difficult to obtain.
2. **Growth vs. Backlog** — Program growth is limited by enrollment delays.
3. **Speed vs. Security** — Encourage efficiency, confirm with careful officer review.
4. **Communication Gap** — Travelers want updates; CBP expects self-tracking.
5. **Low Mobile Value** — The mobile app adds little benefit for travelers and officers.

Co-Creation & Workshops

Transitioning from research to design, I helped plan and facilitate an in-person workshop with **30+ participants,** including CBP leadership, officers, and traveler representatives. The goal was to align on the current state of the program and uncover opportunities to drive critical service improvements.

Using activities like card sorting, dot voting, and multi-persona journey mapping, participants prioritized and identified **119 actionable recommendations** that reflected both user needs and organizational realities to build towards the program's future state.

Future State Vision

Leveraging the co-created recommendations, I supported the development of a **future-state journey map** centered around a traveler named Jasmine. The map visually follows Jasmine, a parent traveler, as she navigates through a reimagined Global Entry — broken down by traveler, officer, and system actions with digital and service improvements woven throughout to reduce friction and streamline interactions.

Tracking & Implementation

To ensure the proactive implementation of service improvements, I **facilitated monthly check-in meetings** with leadership and developed an **Excel tracker** to monitor the status of each future state recommendation including:

- Service Recommendation Owner (POC)
- Status (on-hold, in-progress, blocked, or completed)
- Next Steps for Implementation
- Limitations or Resource Dependencies
- Quantified Impact on Customer Experience

This tracker became a definitive record for leadership, ensuring transparency into the implementation process and surfacing potential risks early.

Impact & Outcomes

Through this project, my team laid the foundation for service-wide improvements to the Global Entry program. I directly contributed to designing solutions that streamlined officer workflows through automation, reduced traveler confusion through increased communication, and informed the development of user-valued mobile app and portal features. These efforts positioned CBP to deliver a user-centered program, reflective of customer needs and expectations, that made both security and compliance easier for officers and millions of travelers.

KEY OUTCOMES

- **Reduced Burden:** Lowered costs and labor associated with conducting or participating in program tasks for officers and travelers.
- **Increased Transparency:** Improved communications around program steps and membership, supporting efficient operations that built travelers trust.
- **Time Returned:** Freed up time for officers to focus on mission-critical tasks and allowed travelers to move through processes faster.
- **Modernized Technology:** Contributed to simplified, upgraded systems that ease compliance for travelers and reduce officer workload.
- **Increased Security:** Enabled CBP to capture more applicant data and maintain the integrity of the Trusted Traveler program.
- **Cost Savings:** Identified efficiency gains that help CBP avoid millions in annual costs tied to inquiries and manual processing.