

TURNING PROTOTYPES INTO PROCESSES

A Redesign of Boston's Marriage Intention Form

The City of Boston

Summer 2023



Mayor Michelle Wu



Innovation & Technology

coding it forward >

THE TEAM



**MARION
MADANGUIT**

User Research Fellow
Olin College of Engineering



**RYAN
GAJARAWALA**

Product Management Fellow
Harvard University



OLUSEYI YOJOYE

Product Management Fellow
Towson University



JULIA GUTIERREZ

Boston Digital Service
Chief Digital Officer

Goal

*To improve the flow and experience
of the Marriage Intention Form*

7 or Wed Date
imp Not imp
M PCS
Dup/Need Gold/Issue
Reg Cert mailed



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
REGISTRY OF VITAL RECORDS AND STATISTICS

Intention No. _____

NOTICE OF INTENTION OF MARRIAGE

The following notice of intention of marriage is hereby given in compliance with law.

1. _____, 20____

2. TO THE CLERK OF _____, MASSACHUSETTS

PARTY A (Please Print)

3. PRESENT NAME: (First, Middle, Last)

3A. SURNAME TO BE USED AFTER MARRIAGE:

4. DATE OF BIRTH: (Month, Day, Year) 4A. AGE:

5. OCCUPATION:

6. RESIDENCE: _____
(Number and Street)

(City/Town, State/Country, Zip Code)

7. THIS MARRIAGE

7A. Status of last marriage
☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced
☐ Void or annulled by court order
☐ Void, under former GL c.207/§11 or
by operation of law at time of marriage
If void, please provide clerk with evidence (see reverse)

7B. Am/was member of: ☐ Civil Union ☐ Domestic Partnership
(State/Country) _____

7C. If so, dissolved? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. BIRTHPLACE: (City/Town) (State/Country)

9. NAME OF PARENT (First, Middle, Last) (Surname at birth or adoption)

10. NAME OF PARENT (First, Middle, Last) (Surname at birth or adoption)

22. SEX ☐ Male ☐ Female

24. RELATED by blood or marriage to Party B? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, how? _____

PARTY B (Please Print)

11. PRESENT NAME: (First, Middle, Last)

11A. SURNAME TO BE USED AFTER MARRIAGE:

12. DATE OF BIRTH: (Month, Day, Year) 12A. AGE:

13. OCCUPATION:

14. RESIDENCE: _____
(Number and Street)

(City/Town, State/Country, Zip Code)

15. THIS MARRIAGE

15A. Status of last marriage
☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced
☐ Void or annulled by court order
☐ Void, under former GL c.207/§11 or
by operation of law at time of marriage
If void, please provide clerk with evidence (see reverse)

15B. Am/was member of: ☐ Civil Union ☐ Domestic Partnership
(State/Country) _____

15C. If so, dissolved? ☐ Yes ☐ No

16. BIRTHPLACE: (City/Town) (State/Country)

17. NAME OF PARENT (First, Middle, Last) (Surname at birth or adoption)

18. NAME OF PARENT (First, Middle, Last) (Surname at birth or adoption)

23. SEX ☐ Male ☐ Female

25. RELATED by blood or marriage to Party A? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, how? _____

PENALTY: M.G.L. c.207 §32 "whoever falsely swears or affirms in making any statement required...shall be punished by a fine..."
I have reviewed a list of impediments to marriage and hereby state that there is an absence of any legal impediment to this marriage
and do hereby depose and say that all of the statements as set forth in the above notice whereof I could have knowledge are true
and are made under the penalties of perjury (M.G.L. c.4 §6, Rule 6 General Laws).

Party A (Signature) _____

Party B (Signature) _____

Subscribed and sworn to, before me, this _____ day of _____, 20____

Registrar, Clerk, or Assistant Clerk designated to administer oaths: _____

Marriage Certificate Issued: _____, 20____ Not Valid After: _____, 20____
(60 days from date intention is filed, M.G.L. c.207 §30)

The Marriage Intention Form is a
legal document that couples fill
out before receiving an official
marriage license.

WHY REDESIGN THE MARRIAGE INTENTION FORM?

1

*It was recently highlighted as a **pain point for LGBTQ+ constituents** in research studies done by the City of Boston (CoB) and the US Digital Response (USDR) on gender inclusivity.*

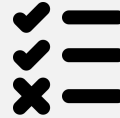
2

*It was quickly moved online at the onset of COVID, and has **never been formally evaluated based on best practices for digital forms.***

THE OPPORTUNITIES



*Turn research findings
into actionable changes*



*Create materials to guide
future forms at the City*

OUR PROCESS

The background of the slide features a photograph of a statue on a pedestal, surrounded by lush green trees. The scene is partially obscured by a semi-transparent blue overlay, which serves as a backdrop for the white text. The statue appears to be of a historical figure, possibly a scholar or leader, standing with a slight turn. The trees are dense and vibrant green, suggesting a park or campus setting. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional, with a focus on the central text.

OUR STAKEHOLDERS

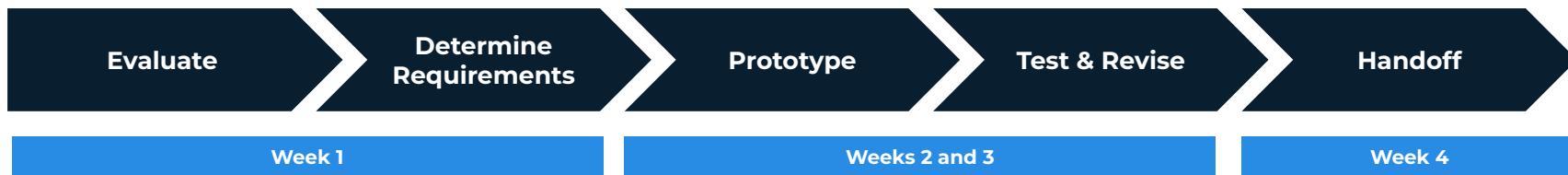


THE REGISTRY



BOSTON DIGITAL SERVICE

OUR PROCESS



OUR PROCESS



SOURCES OF FEEDBACK

SECONDARY RESEARCH

- *Industry best practices*
- *City of Boston focus group findings on the LGBTQ+ experience of being asked about their gender identity*
- *USDR study on the LGBTQ+ experience of the marriage registration process*

FEEDBACK SURVEY

- *Over 300 responses since April 2023*

FORM EVALUATION

**Visibility of
Form Status**

**Respect and
Inclusion**

**User Control
and Freedom**

**Error Prevention
and Recovery**

**Safety and
Privacy**

**Ease of
Progression**

**Help and
Documentation**

**Aesthetic &
Minimalist
Design**

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**Aesthetic &
Minimalist
Design**

THE OPPORTUNITIES



Identified problems in the existing form based on best practices

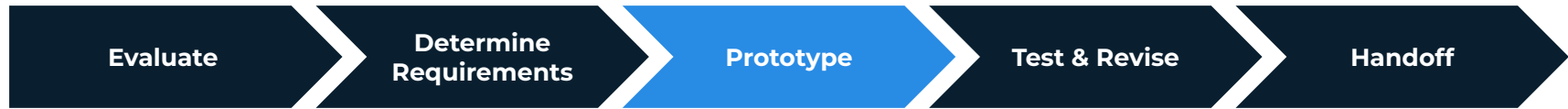


Created a form evaluation for future Registry and City of Boston forms

OUR PROCESS



OUR PROCESS



BUILDING AN INTERACTIVE PROTOTYPE

MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Getting Started

Person 1

Person 2

Contact Info

Review

Submit

Step 2 of 6

Person A

FIRST NAME *Required*

MIDDLE NAME *Required*

Please enter your current middle name, or N/A if you do not have one. You may not list a new middle name.


CURRENT LAST NAME *Required*


LAST NAME TO BE USED AFTER MARRIAGE *Required* ⓘ


You can keep your current last name or use a new last name.

SUFFIX *Required*

SET EXPECTATIONS

 CITY of BOSTON | Mayor Michelle Wu



PAY AND APPLY PUBLIC NOTICES FEEDBACK 

HOME DEPARTMENTS REGISTRY, BIRTH, DEATH, AND MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE INTENTION MARRIAGE INTENTION

MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Step 1 of 6

How to get started

After completing this form, you'll review and finalize your paperwork with the Registry Department at your appointment. Both you and your partner must come to this appointment. You will need to provide us:

- your social security numbers (if you have them)
- your IDs, and
- payment for a \$50 application fee.

We accept cash, credit, or a money order made payable to the "City of Boston". [Visit our website](#) for more information about marriage requirements.

After you finalize your paperwork at your appointment, we will issue your marriage license and put in the mail three days later. It will be sent to the address listed under Person A. Your license will expire 60 days from the date of your appointment.

Please Note:

Both persons must be over age 18 and be free to marry.

You must have a valid marriage license and be married in Massachusetts by a person eligible to perform weddings in Massachusetts.

START

Questions? Email the Registry Department at marriage@boston.gov.

Original

MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Getting Started Person 1 Person 2 Contact Info Review Submit

Step 1 of 6

How to Get Started

This form will take approximately **15 minutes** if you have all the information ready.

This form will ask for the following information:

- Legal names and post-marriage last names
- Birthdates and birthplaces
- Current residences
- Parents' names (including their last names at birth) and their marital status at your birth
- Previous marriages, if any, and number of marriages
- Civil union or domestic partnership history


Note: This form does not auto-save. To save as you go, complete required fields and click "Next".


START


Questions? Email the Registry Department at marriage@boston.gov.

Version 1

CHANGED GETTING STARTED PAGE

 **CITY of BOSTON** | Mayor Michelle Wu



PAY AND APPLY | PUBLIC NOTICES | FEEDBACK 

HOME | DEPARTMENTS | REGISTRY, BIRTH, DEATH, AND MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE INTENTION | **MARRIAGE INTENTION**

MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Step 1 of 6

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START


Questions? Email the Registry Department at marriage@boston.gov.


New navigation!

Version 1

CHANGED GETTING STARTED PAGE

 CITY of BOSTON | Mayor Michelle Wu



PAY AND APPLY PUBLIC NOTICES FEEDBACK 

HOME DEPARTMENTS REGISTRY, BIRTH, DEATH, AND MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE INTENTION MARRIAGE INTENTION

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- your IDs, and
- payment for a \$50 application fee.

We accept cash, credit, or a money order made payable to the "City of Boston". [Visit our website](#) for more information about marriage requirements.

After you finalize your paperwork at your appointment, we will issue your marriage license and put in the mail three days later. It will be sent to the address listed under Person A. Your license will expire 60 days from the date of your appointment.

Please Note:

Both persons must be over age 18 and be free to marry.

You must have a valid marriage license and be married in Massachusetts by a person eligible to perform weddings in Massachusetts.

START

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Original

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Getting Started Person 1 Person 2 Contact Info Review Submit

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- Current residences
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- Previous marriages, if any, and number of marriages
- Civil union or domestic partnership history

Note: This form does not auto-save. To save as you go, complete required fields and click "Next".

Text about what to expect

START

Questions? Email the Registry Department at marriage@boston.gov.

Version 1

CHANGED QUESTION GROUPINGS

*New sections to better
group questions*

Person A
Date of Birth
Birthplace
Residence
Parents



Person A
Place and Date of Birth
Residence
Marriage
Parents

Original

Version 1

INTRODUCED REQUIRED TAGS AND HELPER TEXT

Residence

SELECT COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE

THIS MARRIAGE IS YOUR ...

Were you ever a member of a ...

☐ Does Not Apply

☐ Civil Unions

☐ Domestic Partnership

Original



Marriage

ARE YOU RELATED BY BLOOD OR MARRIAGE TO YOUR FUTURE SPOUSE? **Required** ⓘ

☐ No

☐ Yes

THIS MARRIAGE IS YOUR... **Required** ⓘ

WERE YOU EVER A MEMBER OF A CIVIL UNION OR DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP? **Required** ⓘ

☐ No

☐ Yes, a civil union

☐ Yes, a domestic partnership

This information is collected to ensure the marriage abides by Massachusetts State Law Chapter 207 Sections 1-8.

Introduced required and optional tags

Version 1

INTRODUCED REQUIRED TAGS AND HELPER TEXT

Residence

SELECT COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE

THIS MARRIAGE IS YOUR ...

Were you ever a member of a ...

☐ Does Not Apply

☐ Civil Unions

☐ Domestic Partnership

Original



Marriage

ARE YOU RELATED BY BLOOD OR MARRIAGE TO YOUR FUTURE SPOUSE? *Required* ⓘ

☐ No

☐ Yes

THIS MARRIAGE IS YOUR... *Required* ⓘ

WERE YOU EVER A MEMBER OF A CIVIL UNION OR DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP? *Required* ⓘ

☐ No

☐ Yes, a civil union

☐ Yes, a domestic partnership

This information is collected to ensure the marriage abides by Massachusetts State Law Chapter 207 Sections 1-8.

Created helper boxes with additional legal information

Version 1

INTRODUCED LANGUAGE CHANGES

Removed gendered language

Parents

Name of Parent 1/Mother

PARENT 1/MOTHER - FIRST MIDDLE LAST

PARENT 1/MOTHER - MAIDEN NAME/SURNAME AT BIRTH OR ADOPTION

This should be your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption.

Name of Parent 2/Father

PARENT 2/FATHER - FIRST MIDDLE LAST

PARENT 2/FATHER - MAIDEN NAME/SURNAME AT BIRTH OR ADOPTION

This should be your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption.

Original

Parents

PARENT 1 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST Required

Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 1 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION Required

Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST Required

Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION Required

Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

WERE YOUR PARENTS MARRIED AT THE TIME OF YOUR BIRTH? Required

No

Yes

Version 1

INTRODUCED LANGUAGE CHANGES

Added instructions for
different levels of
parental information

Parents

Name of Parent 1/Mother

PARENT 1/MOTHER - FIRST MIDDLE LAST

PARENT 1/MOTHER - MAIDEN NAME/SURNAME AT BIRTH OR ADOPTION

This should be your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption.

Name of Parent 2/Father

PARENT 2/FATHER - FIRST MIDDLE LAST

PARENT 2/FATHER - MAIDEN NAME/SURNAME AT BIRTH OR ADOPTION

This should be your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption.

Original



Parents

PARENT 1 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST Required

Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 1 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION Required

Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST Required

Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION Required

Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

WERE YOUR PARENTS MARRIED AT THE TIME OF YOUR BIRTH? Required

☐ No

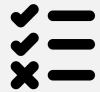
☐ Yes

Version 1

THE OPPORTUNITIES



Created interactive prototype reflecting actionable changes from initial evaluation



Built a suite of reusable Figma components for other City form redesigns

OUR PROCESS



What's the experience of people who are filling out the Marriage Intention form?

What is currently working well, and what is not working well?

How easy is it for people to progress through and complete the form?

Do people feel as if this is a safe and affirming process?

THREE 1-1 INTERVIEWS

- 1 LGBTQ+ participant

INSIGHTS

- *Users are concerned about screwing up their information on legal documents, especially when there is inconsistency among their documents*
- *Users had trouble seeing the distinction between headings and questions*
- *Users did not interact with helper boxes*

BETTER SET EXPECTATIONS

MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Getting Started

Person 1

Person 2

Contact Info

Review

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Step 1 of 6

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Note: This form does not auto-save. To save as you go, complete required fields and click "Next".

START

Questions? Email the Registry Department at marriage@boston.gov.



MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Getting Started

Person 1

Person 2

Contact Info

Review

Submit

Step 1 of 6

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

The information you provide in this application will help us complete the marriage intention form, which is a legal document that is important for the marriage license. During your appointment, we will review and finalize the information you share here and make sure everything's set before it is printed onto your marriage intention form.

It should take about **15 minutes** to finish this application if you have all the information below. We recommend that you and your partner fill this out together.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU AND YOUR PARTNER

- Legal names and last names you'll use after marriage
- Birthdates and birthplaces
- Residential addresses
- If you've been married before, how many times and the status of your last marriage
- If you've been in a civil union or domestic partnership before, its location and status
- Parents' names (including their family names) and whether they were married when you were born

DOCUMENTS THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL

- A government-issued ID
- A birth certificate

Reworked Getting Started page

START

Questions? Email us at marriage@boston.gov. We're here to help!

Version 1

Version 2

FURTHER DISTINGUISHED HEADERS

MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Getting Started > **Person 1** > Person 2 > Contact Info > Review > Submit

Step 2 of 6

Person A

FIRST NAME *Required*

MIDDLE NAME *Required*

Please enter your current middle name, or N/A if you do not have one. You may not list a new middle name.

CURRENT LAST NAME *Required*

LAST NAME TO BE USED AFTER MARRIAGE *Required* ⓘ

You can keep your current last name or use a new last name.

SUFFIX *Required*

Version 1

MARRIAGE INTENTION APPLICATION

Getting Started > **Person 1** > Person 2 > Contact Info > Review > Submit

Step 2 of 6

PERSON 1

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please enter your legal name as it appears on official documents. You cannot list a new middle name. If you wish to change your last name, you can indicate this after providing your legal name.

FIRST NAME *Required*

MIDDLE NAME *Optional*

Please enter your middle name if you have one. You cannot list a new middle name.

LAST NAME *Required*

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE YOUR LAST NAME? *Required*

☐ Yes

☐ No

CHIEF / Optional

New section
headers!

Version 2

CLARIFIED LANGUAGE FOR CONFUSING QUESTIONS

Removed helper boxes and replaced with clarifying text

Person A

FIRST NAME Required

MIDDLE NAME Required

Please enter your current middle name, or N/A if you do not have one. You may not list a new middle name.

PERSON 1

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please enter your legal name as it appears on official documents. You cannot list a new middle name. If you wish to change your last name, you can indicate this after providing your legal name.

FIRST NAME Required

MIDDLE NAME Optional

Parents

PARENT 1 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST Required

Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 1 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION Required

Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST Required

Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION Required

Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

PARENTS

Please enter the full names of your parent(s) as they appear on your birth certificate. It's important to note that marriage licenses contain details about your parents and are accessible as public records, but they cannot be searched for by the general public.

PARENT 1 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST NAME Required

PARENT 1 - FAMILY NAME / LAST NAME AT THE TIME OF THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION Required

This information might be found on your birth certificate.

DO YOU HAVE A SECOND PARENT? Required

☐ Yes

☐ No

WERE YOUR PARENTS MARRIED AT THE TIME OF YOUR BIRTH? Required

This information might be found on your birth certificate.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Version 1

Version 2

CLARIFIED LANGUAGE FOR CONFUSING QUESTIONS

Person A

FIRST NAME *Required*

MIDDLE NAME *Required*
Please enter your current middle name, or N/A if you do not have one. You may not list a new middle name.

PERSON 1

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please enter your legal name as it appears on official documents. You cannot list a new middle name. If you wish to change your last name, you can indicate this after providing your legal name.

FIRST NAME *Required*

MIDDLE NAME *Optional*

Parents

PARENT 1 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST *Required*
Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 1 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION *Required*
Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST *Required*
Please enter your parent's name, or N/A if unknown.

PARENT 2 - LAST NAME AT THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION *Required*
Please enter your parent's last name at the time of their birth or adoption, or N/A if unknown.

PARENTS

Please enter the full names of your parent(s) as they appear on your birth certificate. It's important to note that marriage licenses contain details about your parents and are accessible as public records, but they cannot be searched for by the general public.

PARENT 1 - FIRST MIDDLE LAST NAME *Required*

PARENT 1 - FAMILY NAME / LAST NAME AT THE TIME OF THEIR BIRTH OR ADOPTION *Required*
This information might be found on your birth certificate.

DO YOU HAVE A SECOND PARENT? *Required*

☐ Yes

☐ No

WERE YOUR PARENTS MARRIED AT THE TIME OF YOUR BIRTH? *Required*
This information might be found on your birth certificate.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Changed N/A to
radio buttons

Version 1

Version 2

OUR PROCESS



THE OPPORTUNITIES



Made list of changes and side-by-side comparison to guide implementation



Developed shared suite of resources for CoB digital form redesign

OUR LEARNINGS

The background image is a photograph of a university campus. In the center, a large, leafy tree stands in front of a building. To the right, a statue of a man in a long coat stands on a pedestal. The building has arched windows and a classical architectural style. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

OUR LEARNINGS

1

How to design a successful handoff

2

How to institutionalize a process

3

The value of an engaged stakeholder

OUR GRATITUDE

We could not have done it without your support



CODING IT FORWARD

- Rachel Dodell (she/her)
- Ariana Soto (she/her)
- Yuyang Zhong (he/him)

BOSTON DIGITAL SERVICE

- Julia Gutierrez (she/her)
- Stephanie Cariello (she/her)
- Alejandro Jimenez Jaramillo (he/they)
- Casey Brown (he/they)

REGISTRY DEPARTMENT

- Paul Chong (he/him)
- Jessica Joyce (she/her)

USDR VOLUNTEERS

- Sunita Ram (she/her)
- Christine Brydges (she/her)
- Claire Crinion (she/her)

Thank you!

We welcome your questions, comments, and feedback.