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*Manager, Service Design Studio*

New York City Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

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Government UX Summit

**Embedding Service Design in New York City Government: Lessons Learned**

May 15, 2019

1 Who are we? What do we care about?

2 What is Civic Service Design?

3 How are we embedding design in the City of New York?

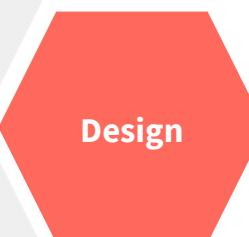
4 What have we learned?

5 Q + A

# **1. Who are we? What do we care about?**



Mayor's Office for  
Economic Opportunity



Design

A red hexagonal shape containing the word "Design" in white, sans-serif font.

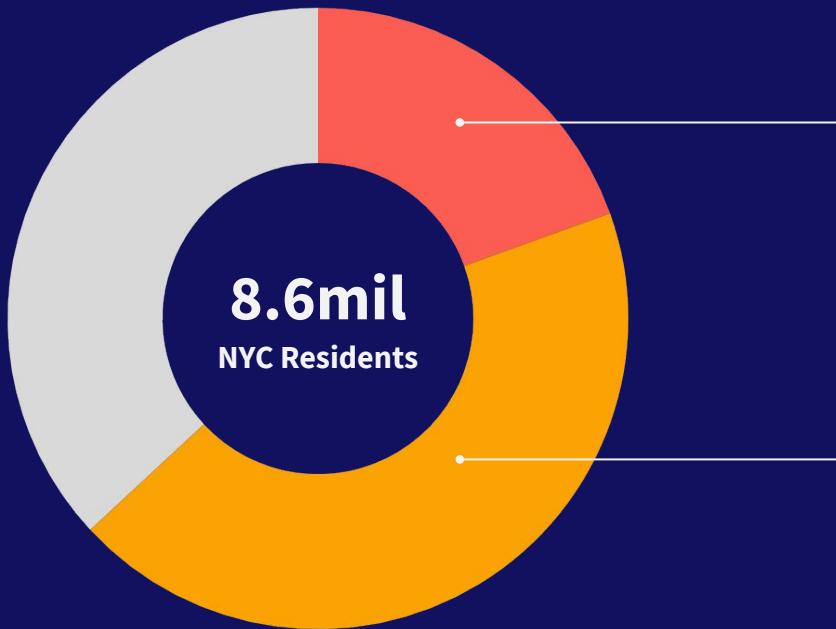
We are rooted in the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, which creates evidence-based programs and innovative methods to reduce poverty and increase equity.



**Mayor's Office for  
Economic Opportunity**



## New York City residents in poverty or near poverty



**19.5%**

New Yorkers who live in poverty

**43.5%**

New Yorkers who live in near poverty,  
below 150% of the poverty line

Source: New York City Government Poverty Measure 2005–2016,  
NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, <https://on.nyc.gov/2X2dM7F>

**What “services” are we  
talking about?**

**Trash Collection  
Food & Cash Assistance  
Road Infrastructure  
Shelters  
Job Readiness Programs  
Law Enforcement**

**Trash Collection  
Food & Cash Assistance**

**Road Infrastructure**

**Shelters**

**Job Readiness Programs**

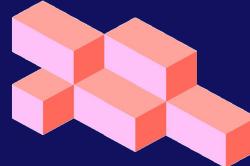
**Law Enforcement**

We believe that if you improve  
experience, you also improve  
efficiency.

We've observed that public servants can feel like they are **encumbered** by processes and regulation, rather than **enabled** by them.

## 2. What is Civic Service Design?

# Civic Service Design



# Civic Service Design

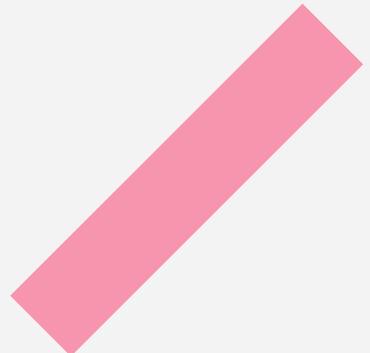
The practice of understanding  
the real, lived experiences of  
the people who use + deliver  
government programs to inform our  
decisions about the policies, processes and  
systems that affect those experiences.

**Design is about how  
things ~~look~~ work.**

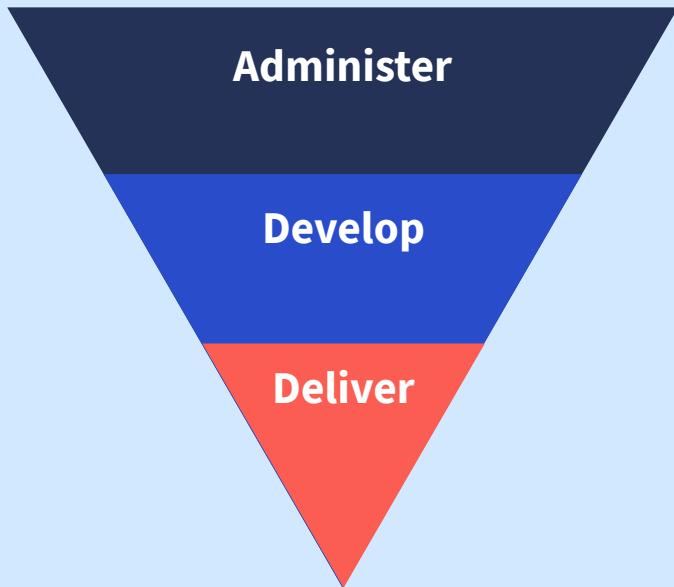


# But visuals are important too!

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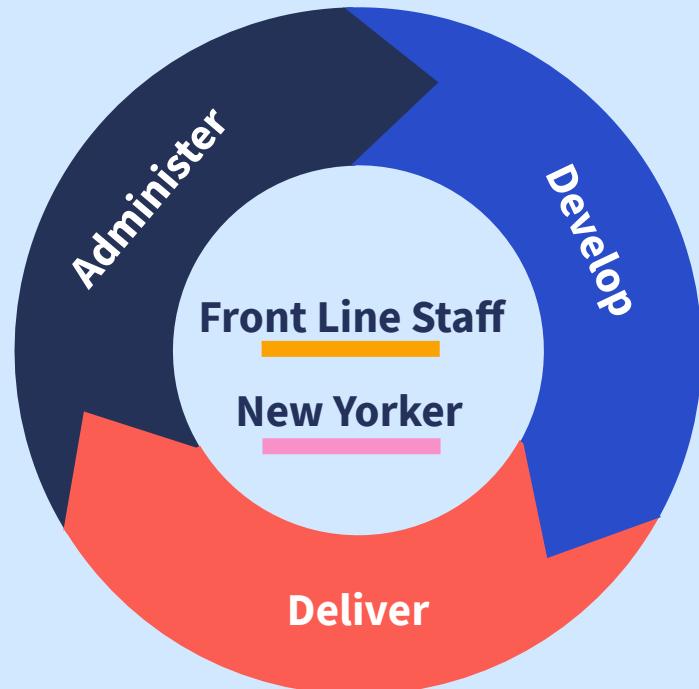
## Traditional Program Development



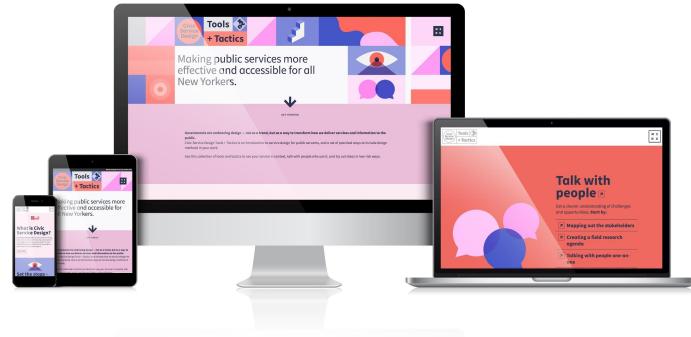
**Front Line Staff**  
—

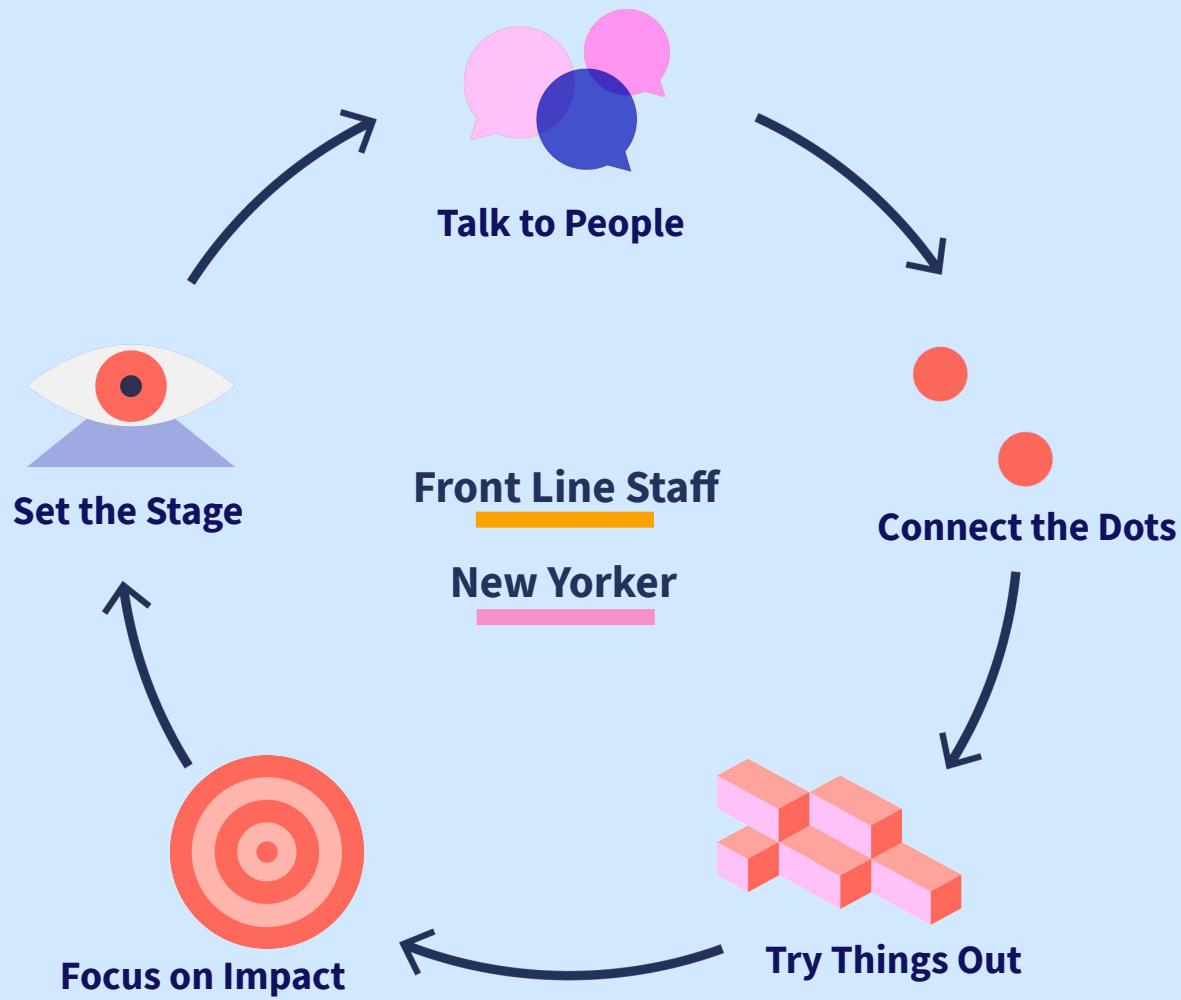
**New Yorker**  
—

## Civic Service Design



# Civic Service Design Tools + Tactics





# We believe government services should be



**Created with the people who use and deliver them**

**Accessible to all**

**Prototyped and tested for usability**

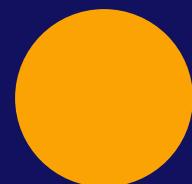
**Equitably distributed**

**Rigorously tested and evaluated for effectiveness and impact**



**8.5mil**

Residents



**300,000+**

Public Servants

**125+**

NYC Agencies + Offices

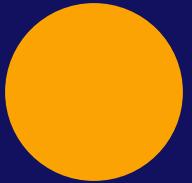


Service  
Design  
Studio



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• ← 8  
of us!

Service  
Design  
Studio

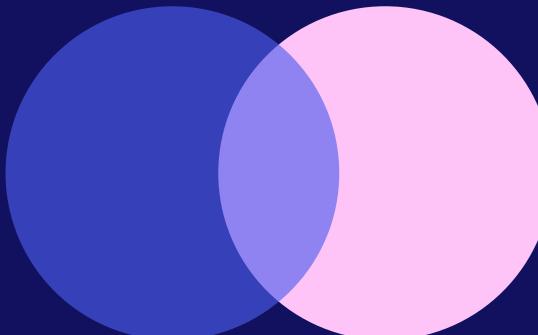
# **Super Simplified + UNOFFICIAL Organogram**



### **3. How are we embedding design in the City of New York?**



**Build  
Capacity**



**Build  
Capacity**

**Do the  
Work**

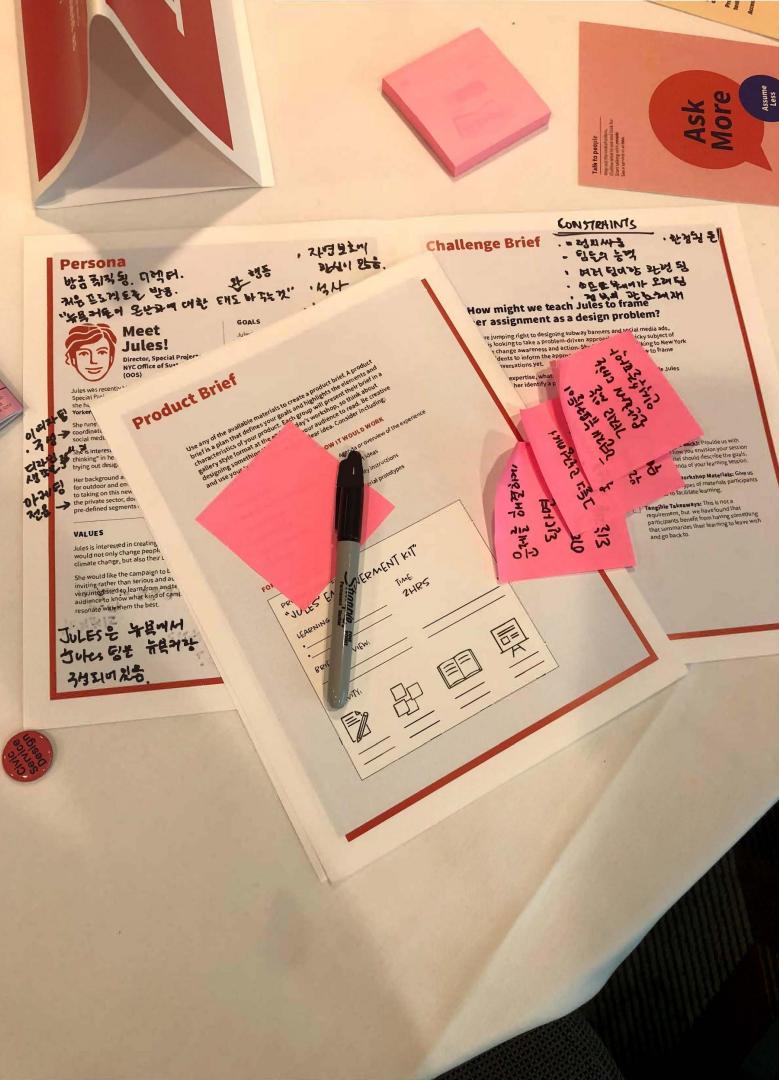
Civic  
Service  
Design

Tools + Tactics

in Action



WORKSHOP





**Civic  
Service  
Design**

# **Civic Design Forum**

"A design system is a set of interconnected patterns and shared practices coherently organized to achieve the purpose of digital products."

Design Systems: A practical guide to creating design languages for digital products

"A design system is a set of interconnected patterns and shared practices coherently organized to achieve the purpose of digital products."

Alla Kholmatova

Design Systems: A practical guide to creating design languages for digital products



Civic  
Service  
Design

Office



Hours

BOOK YOUR  
APPOINTMENT TODAY



Civic  
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# Designing for Opportunity

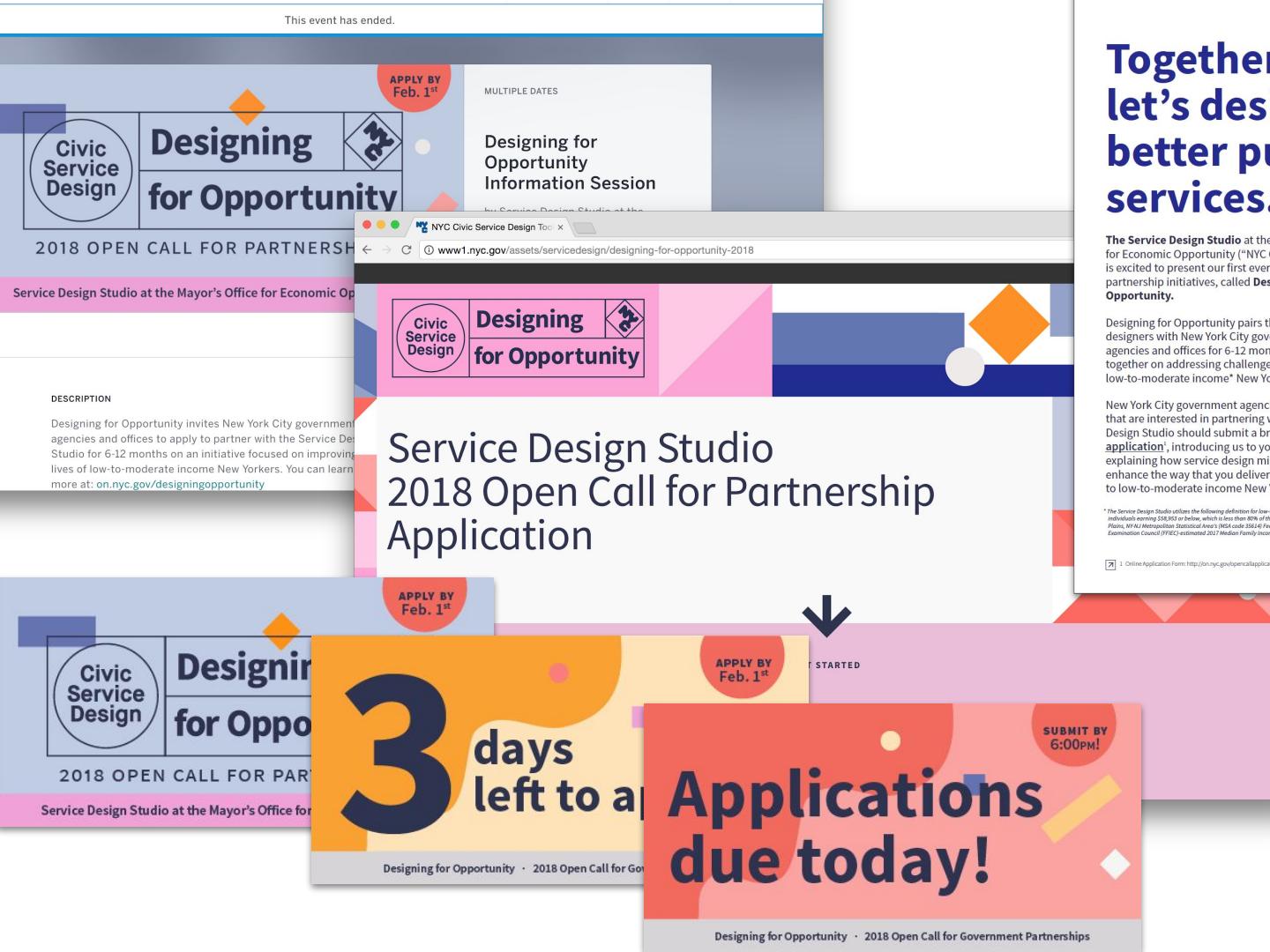




# **Shelter Enhancements**

Department of Homeless Services

**How might we identify shelter practices that unintentionally create or reinforce trauma in families?**



# Together, let's design better public services.

**The Service Design Studio** at the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity ("NYC Opportunity") is excited to present our first ever open call for partnership initiatives, called **Designing for Opportunity**.

What's Ins

- [02 About the Studio](#)
  - [03 Partnering with the Studio](#)
  - [04 Your Team](#)
  - [05 Your Initiative](#)
  - [06 Application Process](#)
  - [08 Application Questions](#)
  - [10 Evaluation Rubric](#)

APPLICATIONS DUE:  
**February 1, 2018**

• <http://en.poc.gov/designinopportunities>

Page 1 of 1

Set the Stage

Develop a deep understanding of

how your program  
is currently being

is currently being delivered.

For more information about the study, please contact Dr. Michael J. Hwang at (319) 356-4530 or via email at [mhwang@uiowa.edu](mailto:mhwang@uiowa.edu).

MONTH 1

— 1 —

100% of the time, the system worked as intended.

2 Tools + Tactics: <http://www.nyc.gov>

— 5 — Home Office Circular No. 100

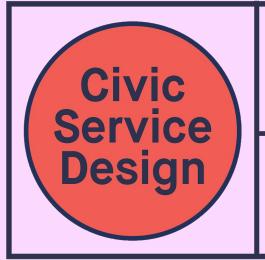
ANSWER



# Pathways to Prevention

Administration for Children's Services

**How might we make the process of matching families to child welfare services accessible and dignified?**



# Designing for Opportunity



## Women in Rikers: Reentry

Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Office of the First Lady

**How might we plan for women to  
re-enter their communities after jail  
time in a strong and stable way?**

## 4. What have we learned so far?

# 1

## Service design energizes City employees

People describe our Office Hours like therapy sessions.

Our project partners have reported a notable increase in job satisfaction, stating that this process “*reconnects us with what we really care about, which is serving our clients rather than tackling bureaucracy.*”

# 2

## Follow that energy

We take the time to listen and reflect on what we learn during Office Hours and throughout projects, and we tailor our offerings to fit those needs.

Measure early and check in often.

Celebrate your colleagues that are embracing design.

# Office Hours



**185**

Office Hours

**>28%**

NYC Agencies  
(36 unique agencies)

**323**

Employees

**26**

Other Govt's

**Alaska, Arizona,  
California, Canada,  
Colorado, Illinois,  
Massachusetts,  
Mexico, Michigan,  
Minnesota,  
New York, Palau,  
Pennsylvania, Rhode  
Island, S. Korea,  
Taiwan, Texas, United  
Kingdom, Virginia,  
Washington DC**



# Office Hours: Common themes

**Testing a program, service, or design concept**

**Creating enhancements that scale existing programs and services**

**Streamlining department processes and facilitating new ways of working**

**Planning communications campaigns for behavioral change**

**Building toolkits and guides that are useful to people**

**Building new digital products**

**Expanding capabilities and use cases for existing digital products**

**Co-designing trainings and workshops**

We are so quick to think that an app will solve everything, but during my time with the Service Design Studio, I realized that technology can materialize in a number of ways. Good old paper can be technology too.



If you're designing with a team be the first person in the room to sketch out ideas. It sounds silly and people may make fun of you (I know from experience) but this simple approach will help align your team.



I am lucky enough to have leaders within the Division of Prevention and CBS that do not just support integrating service design into our work but are also striving to make it a standard practice for how ACS supports families.



...there is an incredible array of design pattern resources available online from city and even federal sources! You can start small, by integrating it into your work little by little. There is a generous community of practice growing in city government right now.



**When I learned about service design, I was excited about using a strategy to surface the assumptions we make in our work, identifying and learning from perspectives we're missing, and using new insights to offer better public service.**



Service design is the act of finding the best way to tackle a problem right now by listening to those who know the problem best, by being creative about solving for the end goals,

After seeing how [Service Design Tools + Tactics] helped us understand the complexities of homelessness and service delivery, I realized how important it was to incorporate them into our daily work.



My advice to government colleagues is to always keep your "yes...and" hat on



I think service design offers an approach in which we can go out and talk to people with the goal of developing insights that will help us serve people better. If people feel heard, they'll feel included and more invested in continuing to be part of the conversation with the public.

# 3

## Swag is effective

We spend a lot of time thinking about our visual presence, and it has been extraordinarily helpful in recruiting people to participate in our offerings.

# Civic Service Design Tools + Tactics



600

Field Guides

150

Toolkit Binders

# 4

## Toolkits aren't enough

Toolkits lack the ability to provide one-on-one coaching and hand holding. We're working to make our toolkit more actionable and better connect with our offerings.

For best results, supplement with individual attention!

# 5

## Gov time vs. design time

Designers have to balance adapting to the realities of government speed while demonstrating the benefits of working in different ways.

# 6

## Design is a collaborative sport

It's invaluable to have someone inside a partner agency that can leverage their institutional knowledge and experience to help you understand and navigate subject matter, bureaucratic, political, and legal complexities.

# 7

## Experience is the best teacher

Helping public servants build their design capacity means modeling best-practices and processes while providing opportunities to learn by doing.

This helps people adopt and refine new skill sets, get comfortable with new processes, and grow into new roles.

# 8

## Research respectfully

Soliciting experiences with social services must be done in a trauma informed way.

People appreciate being asked for feedback rather than feeling marketed to.

**PROGRAM DIRECTOR**  
Pathways to  
Prevention project

**“Our families do not hear enough that they are agents of change, and your conversations with them were a place where such energy starts.”**

# 9

## Big problems, smaller scope

Government services are designed and delivered by a collection of related but distinct teams, divisions, and agencies.

This means that you will surface pains points and opportunities outside of your scope of work, and you must prioritize and focus.

# 10

## Hand off is hard!

For a government agency to reap the greatest benefits of a design process, our projects cannot have strict cut offs: the process must continue to grow and evolve in an iterative way.

Our position allows for this to happen easily, but it also makes it hard for us to know when to stop.

# Thank you! Questions?

Learn more

**nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Email

**cbauer@nycopportunity.nyc.gov**

Twitter

**@NYCOportunity**

Apprenticeships, Fellowships + Jobs

**buildwithnyc.github.io**