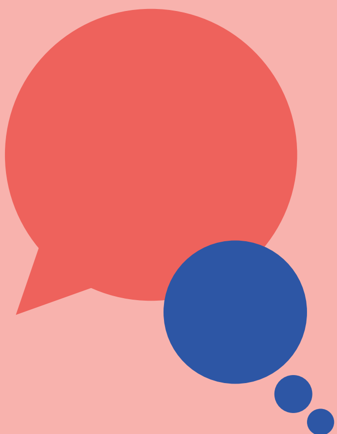
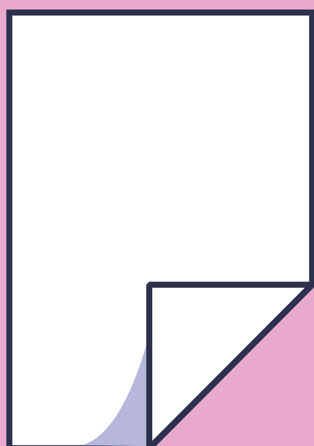
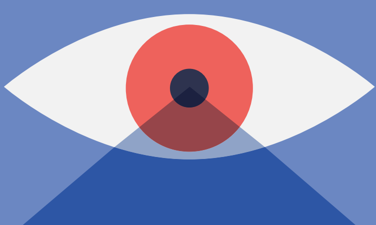
Civic Service Design

Tools + Tactics







Making public services more effective and accessible for all New Yorkers.

Governments are embracing design—not as a trend about aesthetics, but as a way to transform how we deliver services to our residents. *Civic Service Design Tools + Tactics* is an introduction to service design for public servants, and a set of practical ways to include design methods in your work.

Use this collection of tools + tactics to see your service in context, talk with people who use it, and try out new ideas in low-risk ways.

As you explore, check out our templates and see examples of the tools + tactics at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**.

Version 2
October 2017

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What is Civic Service Design?

"Service design" refers to the practice of creating, better understanding, and improving upon programs at any stage; we use "civic service design" to mean applying the tools and methods of service design to government-run or funded programs.

Too often, in the public sector and elsewhere, "design" is mistaken for "how it looks." As a result, design is dismissed as ancillary to an initiative, something extra to be added in the rare event of spare time or budget. In reality, design is "how it works." For a program, product, policy or service to be effective, many factors come into play: the context in which it operates; the value that potential clients perceive to their lives; daily processes and workflows; staff skills and perspectives; clarity of communications; and, physical environments, among them.

"Civic service design" is a discipline to develop solutions that are rooted in insights about the holistic experiences of those affected by public services. It considers people, processes, communications and technology as part of the solution. As described in this guide, service design methods can be applied to setting the stage, talking with people, seeing services in action, connecting the dots, trying things out, and focusing on impact.

Service design has emerged worldwide and there are a broad range of resources, networks, and academic centers devoted to it.

Our aim with this civic service design guide is to provide specific, tangible tools of the trade, tailored to complement and support the expertise of the people who develop and deliver New York City government programs.

Many government agencies already apply these practices, whether or not they are called by the same names. This is a living guide, and we'll be drawing from the actual work in New York City to update it with more examples and templates over time.

We believe government services should be:

Created with the people who use and deliver them

Want to know what makes for a truly useful and meaningful service? Ask the people who use and deliver them.

Prototyped and tested for usability

Gathering feedback early on helps mitigate risk and makes an idea more resilient in the end.

Accessible to all

Lowering the barriers to entry helps everyone take advantage of opportunities and resources meant for them.

Equitably distributed

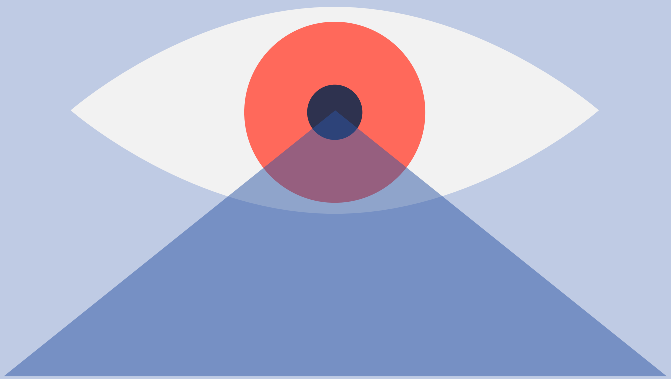
Public resources are more fairly delivered when they reach the people who need them most.

Rigorously tested and evaluated for impact and effectiveness

Continuously improving performance based on client needs and feedback and carefully assessing what works leads to better outcomes for residents.

Set the Stage

As you begin to consider creating a new service, or if you're looking to better understand or enhance an existing service, it's helpful to gather precedents. This includes research, case studies, and other evidence for similar or related services. This will help you better see your proposed or existing service within a greater context, and will illuminate already existing efforts and learnings that you can use to better inform your own approach and understanding.



Reviewing evidence

TIME 1-5 hours
SUPPLIES Excel, Word

Reviewing existing evidence related to your service early on will help ground your work in proven and promising approaches. You should keep your evidence scan broad at the outset, recognizing that you will likely need to revisit it later on to explore new avenues of inquiry based on unexpected insights and new service ideas. You will also likely find this research useful to revisit once you are ready to implement and evaluate a new idea.

Evidence can come in many forms, including both quantitative and qualitative assessments. Look for published evaluation or research reports as well as publicly released outcomes data on services and programs. Know that randomized control trials—studies in which participants are randomly assigned to a treatment group (which receives a service) and a control group (which does not)—tend to produce the strongest causation evidence.

In addition to finding relevant evidence specifically on your service, you may also find it useful to research the population it serves, or the problem it seeks to address. For example, City agencies designing services to address poverty and related issues will find NYC's annual *Poverty Measure Report* to be a useful resource that provides detailed insights into the scope of poverty across the city.

Scanning the landscape

TIME 1-5 hours
SUPPLIES Excel, Word

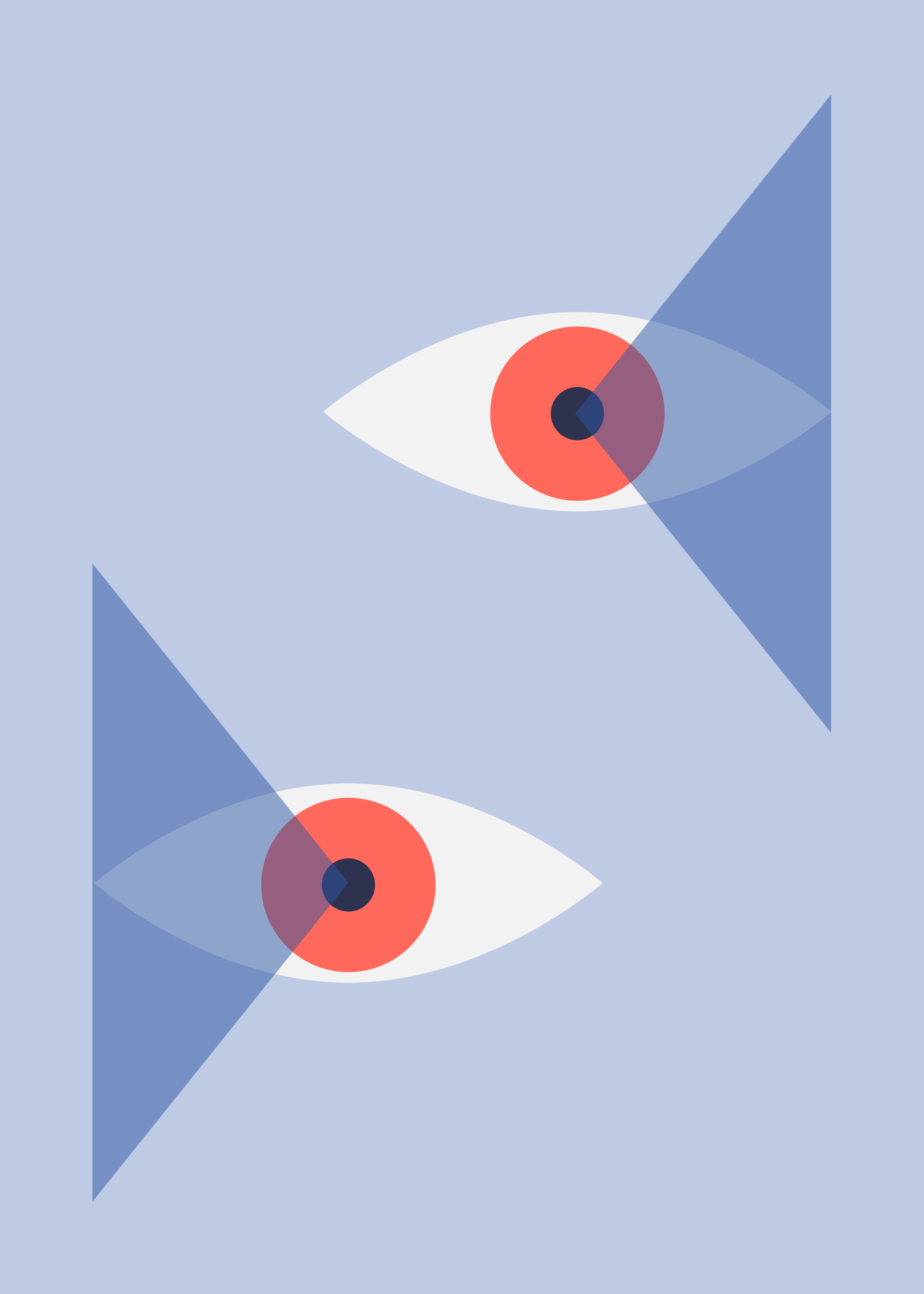
When you're starting your research, it's important to get grounded in what's already out there and see your service in a wider context. To do this, you can "scan the landscape", a.k.a. look at the field as a whole to see where the opportunities, needs, and gaps are. Scans can be as simple or as complex as you'd like them to be, but taking even just an hour to see what's out there will help get you started in the right direction.

This is all about understanding the context of your challenge. So when you're scanning, you're looking to understand both past history and recent innovations.

- **What are known best practices?**
- **What are similar cities doing, or what have they tried?**
- **Which organizations are pushing the edge?**
- **What's failed in the past, and why?**
- **What are general opportunities in the field moving forward?**
- **Is anyone working in this space outside of government?**

This will all serve as a foundation for your designs and design research.

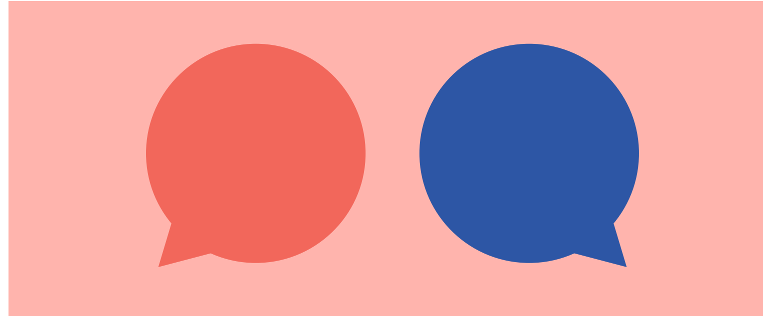
You should document your findings as you conduct your scan in a format you can easily return to and edit in the future. You can do so in the program that works best for you. However, working in Excel will give you some additional functionality to organize, sort, and expand upon your research as you go.



Talk With People

Taking time to talk one-on-one or in groups with the people who use, deliver, and govern your service is possibly the most crucial step you can take towards improvement. Engaging with stakeholders can happen at any point in the service delivery process: before a request for proposals is released, after a new service begins, or during a service for continued feedback and iteration on what already exists.

You're talking with people to find out not just what's working and what isn't, but to better understand their fears, aspirations, and goals—things you'll never fully unearth in a survey. You can choose to lead focus groups to speak to more people at once, or individual interviews that allow you to gain deeper insights. The number of people participating will adjust the number of questions and how specific you can get in your conversation.



Mapping out the stakeholders

TIME 30-60 minutes
SUPPLIES Paper, whiteboard, or Excel

Listing out the breadth of stakeholders who interact with your service is the first step to better understanding it. It's also a great starting point for interviews.

It's important to note that in service design, stakeholders can also be people who are adjacent to the service you're considering: researchers, academics, nonprofit staff, government officials from other cities, and other experts. All of these people are relevant stakeholders to map.

Mapping stakeholders will help you get a handle on the different elements within this service, and how they are connected and affected by one another. Who are all the different people that interact with the service? Include providers and partners, the people who use it, and policymakers who govern it. Know that you may not end up talking with everyone on your map, so don't let that be a limiting factor—it's still important to be aware of all stakeholders.

See examples of stakeholder mapping and download a template at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Creating a field research agenda

Organizing an Outreach Plan

TIME 1-3 hours
SUPPLIES Word or Google Docs

Coordinating efficient and effective conversations with different stakeholders requires making an explicit plan. The goal here is to help the team stay on task with outreach efforts and your overall research goals by standardizing and streamlining your approach. The plan should include examples of how you will invite participants, the schedule and structure for interviews, and follow-ups for after the interview.

See examples of an outreach plan and download a template at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Creating Research & Discussion Guides

TIME 30 minutes - 1 hour
SUPPLIES Word or Google Docs

First, it's important that your team is on the same page about what you're trying to understand through your research, and creating a research guide together will help you stay focused on that goal.
Start by listing out the big things you'd like to answer. Is it something specific, like how people hear about a service? Or is it more general, like what's working now, and what could be improved? Write these research goals down, review them together, and finalize. This will guide the heart of your research.

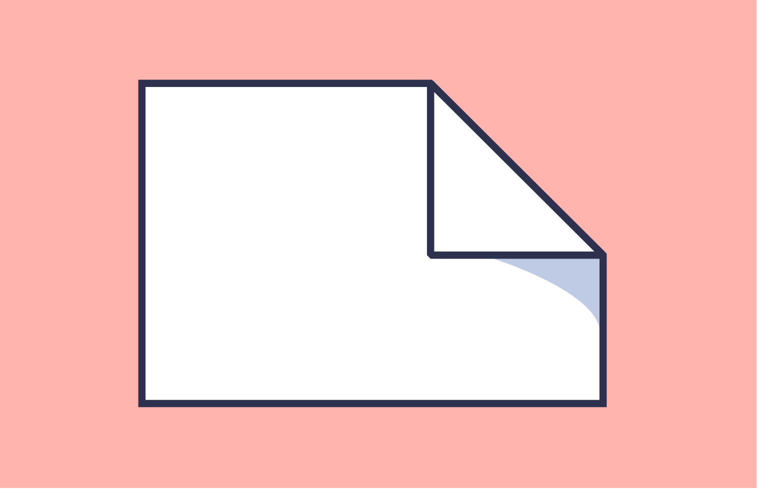
Next, think about questions to ask your stakeholders to learn more about your research goals. It's best to think of this more as a casual conversation and less like a formal interview, and to script your questions accordingly.

Go from general to specific: start with easy get-to-know you questions like what neighborhood they live in, how they got started in their work, or what they do for fun. Then start to transition to more specific topics. Pose open-ended questions that elicit stories rather than single word answers. Try starting with lead-ins like, "Tell me a time when…" or "Can you think of an example when that happened?"

PRO TIP

Make sure you print out a copy of the discussion guide for all team members to have on hand during the interview. Know you can go off script whenever necessary, but make sure you're returning to questions and conversations related to your overall research goals.

Download a research and discussion guide template and see examples at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**



Talking with People One-on-One

TIME Days-Weeks
SUPPLIES Pen and paper, or laptop and Word or Google Docs

To lead a great interview, you need to make your interviewee feel comfortable and relaxed—less like they're being interviewed and more like they're just having a conversation. So everyone on the 2-3 person interviewing team should have a role: one person leads the interview, and 1-2 people take notes.

Interview leader:
The job of the lead interviewer is not just to ask questions—it's also to listen intently. Always remember that you are talking with an expert (especially if this is a user of your service), and that you are there to learn from them. Be curious, attentive, and friendly. Let the discussion guide give you direction, but also let the conversation unfold naturally. Uncovering the unexpected is why you're here!

Note taker(s):
This is a really important and mentally demanding job that's all about active listening. It's okay for the notetaker to ask follow-up questions, but they should try to remain focused on taking notes as close to verbatim as possible. Pay special attention to capturing compelling quotes, since these help tell the story of your project to others. Notes can be captured digitally or on paper during the interview, but it's best to digitize any paper notes after the interview so they can easily be shared across the team.

PRO TIP

If you're conducting multiple interviews, any role can get exhausting. It's good to switch throughout the day.

Talk With People

PRO TIP

When interviewing people who are not City employees, be sure to have your interviewee sign a consent form so that you have permission to use their insights, and if applicable photo or recording. While this may feel like an informal conversation, we are often asking people about sensitive and sometimes emotional things.

A consent form can also spell out a confidentiality policy. Sometimes it's important we guarantee the interviewees' confidentiality up front both to create a space of trust as well as to protect their identities.

Download your own sample consent form language at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Talking with People in Groups

Focus groups can be an effective way to engage many stakeholders at once. Focus groups are really big group interviews, and they're a great way to quickly get the lay of the land. Keep in mind that you probably won't be able to go really deep with a group interview, but you will be able to get a more general sense of what a community is thinking. Since you'll be asking about similar experiences, it's usually best to group similar stakeholders together, such as all non-profit providers of a service, or all executive leadership. As you get more comfortable in facilitating focus groups, you can consider mixing different types, which can lead to unexpected dialogue and a mix of perspectives across stakeholders.

You will also want to consider group size. It's important to help participants feel comfortable and ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. Usually groups no larger than 10 people are ideal. You can also break a bigger group into smaller groups for part of the session and have time for a share out with the big group at the end.

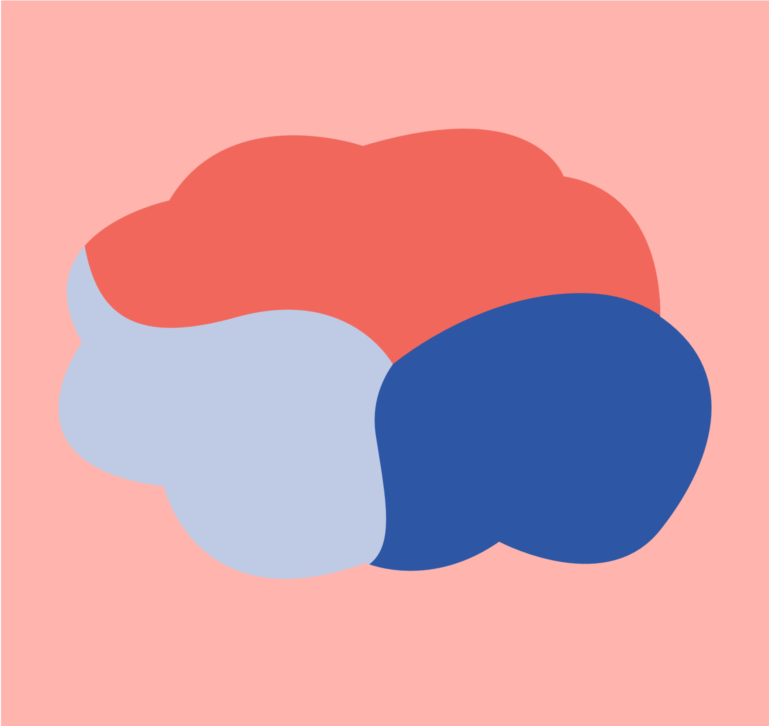
The roles for leading a focus group are similar to interviews: you're going to have one person be the primary facilitator who asks the questions, listens intently, moves the conversation forward and lets everyone know that there are no right or wrong answers or opinions. Additionally, you'll want 1-2 people to take notes. If you have additional team members, you can also assign roles such as attendance, timekeeper, and photographer or videographer.

The main facilitator should make sure everyone has space to talk, and that one person doesn't dominate the conversation. It's also good practice for the facilitator to ask for other's reactions to what a group member has said, and to build on the conversation that is naturally unfolding.

Talk With People

PRO TIP

Be aware of herd mentality within a focus group conversation. It's generally easier for people to agree than to disagree; often people don't want to seem impolite or contrarian if they feel differently, especially around their bosses or around peers they don't yet know. Try and ask for differing opinions to give a clear space for dissent, and to manage that part of the conversation with care.



Seeing a Service in Action

Setting up Visits

TIME 10-15 minutes
SUPPLIES Email

This isn't undercover work—in fact, it's the opposite: Partnering with all kinds of stakeholders to help improve the experience for everyone often starts with the people who are working hard to deliver services themselves. It's essential that you gain permission before showing up in someone's space as it lets people know who you are and what you're doing there.

The goal here is to identify moments when people are having a difficult time doing something, or when they are succeeding, as well as what the atmosphere feels like. These observations can all become inspirations for design.

Here's a checklist of who you might contact and how you might communicate with them about your goals:

Who to contact

- City program director or manager
- Provider program director or manager
- Center director or manager

Include in your ask

- Who you are
- Why you'd like to visit
- When and for how long you'd like to visit

Being an Effective Observer

TIME Days-Weeks
SUPPLIES Pen and paper, camera if applicable

Sometimes just watching how people interact with and use a service can show you a lot about what's working and what's not. If you go into an office, observe how people enter the space:

- **If they are a customer or client, do they seem to know where to go first, and what to do next?**
- **What are they doing as they wait?**
- **What is their body language saying?**
- **Engage your five senses: What is the space like? What is the atmosphere like? What's the mood?**
- **What about the people working in the space: What are they doing, and how?**

Spend enough time to get a general sense of the experience, then return a few times to see how or if those observations change. Take notes and share them with your team to see differences and similarities in perception.

Connect the Dots

Making sense of what you've seen, heard, and learned is a crucial part of the service design process. Following these few techniques will help you distill your findings, unearth insights, and decide on the biggest opportunities moving forward. It will also help communicate the rationale for your decisions and actions if you decide to make your thinking transparent to stakeholders—both the ones you've engaged directly, and others who want to know more about your thinking.

Revisiting Your Interview Notes

TIME 30 minutes - 2 hours
SUPPLIES Word or highlighter and printed notes or sticky notes and markers

Remember those great notes you took during the interview? Now is the time to go back and review what you heard. To do this, open up your notes and get a bunch of sticky notes and markers. Highlight or pull out compelling thoughts, ideas, and quotes. Whether you're doing this on the computer or on sticky notes does not matter—just make sure the big ideas are pulled out or highlighted so everyone can clearly see them. Do this for each person you interviewed, as it will give you a more edited version of those conversations to work with later.

Note that at this point the people for whom the idea is attributed is less relevant, as the goal here is to begin to see larger patterns across the research.

Sorting into Themes and Patterns

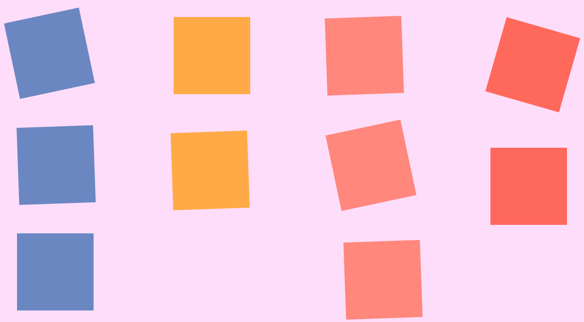
TIME 1-2 hours
SUPPLIES Pen and paper or whiteboard and sticky notes

Once you've revisited your interview notes you're ready to really reflect on what you heard. Look across the highlights from the different interviews: What stands out as important? What similarities are emerging, and what themes and patterns do you see? Name these clusters to reflect that theme. It could be one word, like "Housing" or it could be more detailed like "Residents seek housing near their jobs." Summarize your theme, but still try and account for all of the smaller ideas that sit within it.

See examples and download your own insights matrix at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

The Real Reason for Sticky Notes

You’ll often see sticky notes and markers in design studios—but why? Sticky notes are small, and that makes them the perfect tool to capture just one idea. And the markers? They just make it easier for everyone to see what’s written on them. And because stickys are sticky, you can move them around easily when you’re doing things like *Sorting into Themes and Patterns*. They can seem silly at first, but when used effectively at the right moments, sticky notes are a versatile and valuable tool.



Turning Observations into Insights

TIME 1 hour
SUPPLIES Word or Google Docs

Once you’ve revisited your notes and begun to sort into themes and patterns, you’re already on your way to documenting insights. The difference between observations and insights is an important one. Observations are just raw data: things you saw and heard—what you recorded without judgment. Insights, however, are a deeper interpretation and understanding of what you are seeing and hearing. Insights make sense and meaning out of your observations.

To create insights, look back at your collection of themes and patterns. Take your themes and create a statement out of each one. Do some pair work with one another to create a new perspective or possibility. Rewrite and/or recombine your insight statements until they feel surprising or new. These insights will help guide you towards new challenges, opportunities, and solutions.

Example:
When speaking with some youth for Queensbridge Connected, the Service Design Studio observed that the young people were quite tech savvy but when asked how they would begin to find information about a field of work they’re interested in, they got stuck.

The Service Design Studio captured this insight as “There is a general lack of understanding among youth we talked to about how the Internet can be used as a resource.”

Mapping the User Journey

TIME 1 hour to get started, then follow-up iterations
SUPPLIES Pen and paper

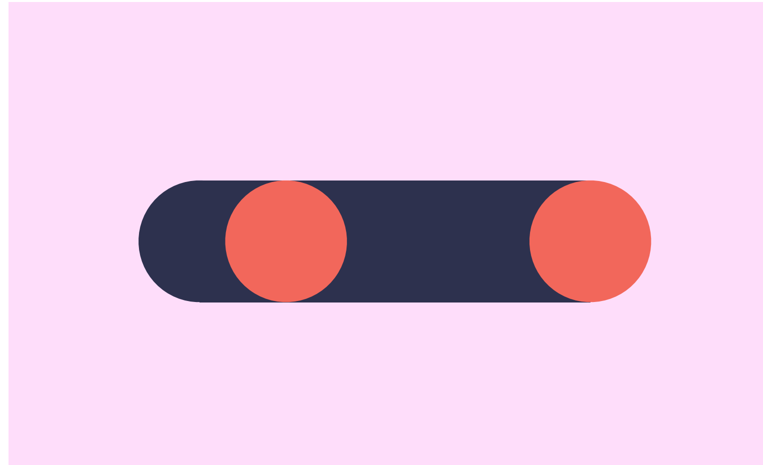
Most New Yorkers interact with one or more government service fairly regularly, whether that's public schools, the Department of Sanitation, the Department of Social Services, or any of the other hundreds of City programs and resources. As government employees, we have one view of those services—and that's usually from the perspective of our own agency. But as New Yorkers, we have a totally different view of City services since we are interacting across several if not many programs and products all at once. This perspective—from the experience of the service user—is what this exercise reveals.

This tool is often called the user journey. Understanding the user journey helps us better design each of the steps within the service experience. The user journey can be highly customized or basic, but at minimum should consider what happens along five points (which are sometimes called The 5 E's): Entice, Enter, Engage, Exit, and Extend. You can do this for both services that already exist and new ones that you're creating.

Download your own journey map and see examples at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

PRO TIP

It's important that you inform the journey through your research so as to capture the experience across stakeholders and users rather than rely on assumptions. It will also help you map where and when different stakeholders interact with each other.



New or Existing Service:

Entice = How do people hear about this and what gets them interested in checking it out further?

Enter = What's the experience like when they first enter (into a space, conversation, app, kiosk, website, etc.)?

Engage = What are all of the steps of engaging with the service? How will you keep them engaged and moving through the experience?

Exit = Once they are finished with that engagement, what does it feel like to leave that experience? How do they know they are finished?

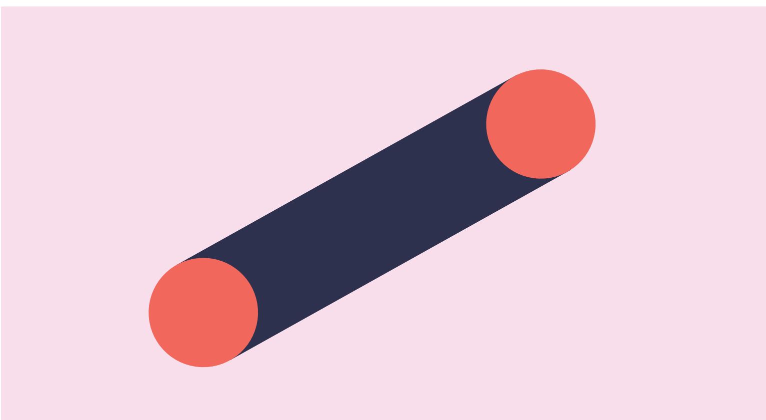
Extend = How might they tell others about it, or best share their experience? What would you like them to be saying about that experience to others? Where/through which channels?
Does the City follow up with the users?

Defining a Theory of Change

TIME A few hours
SUPPLIES Paper and pencil, Word

Defining a theory of change will help you to be explicit about how you expect the impact of a program or service to be achieved. It should specify the full set of needed service components and their delivery strategy, along with the budget and the metrics by which progress will be measured.

There is a broad literature about how to complete a theory of change exercise (often written with a nonprofit organization in mind as the audience), and instructions vary. To our mind, there is no one right way to articulate a theory of change; what is important is that you identify the need you are attempting to address and link resources and service activities to intended impact through a cause-and-effect relationship. It's often helpful to draw a diagram that relates each of these pieces to each other.



You may find your diagram is linear, or contains loops showing that certain activities contribute to others. Try to keep things simple.

To prompt your thinking, ask questions like:

- **What specific problem is the program designed to address?**
- **What are the core aspects of the program that will address the problem?**
- **What benefit will ensue for the user or client from the service?**
- **How will you be able to observe this benefit?**

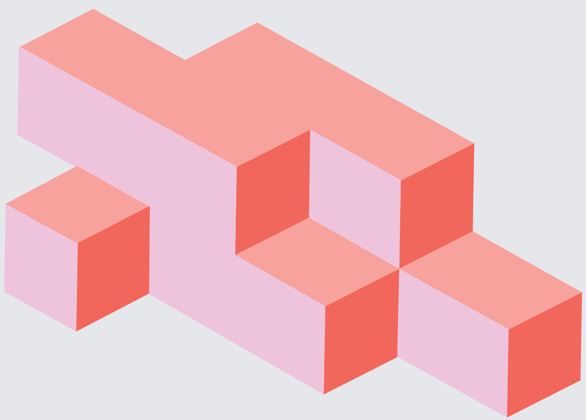
You should revisit research into the evidence base to help shape your theory of change. What does the research indicate has been effective? Are there standard performance or outcome metrics to draw on?

You can also review the new directions that emerged through brainstorming and prototyping, and the characteristics, resources, and needs of the target population that you uncovered.

Check out some examples of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity's key performance metrics at **nyc.gov/opportunity**

Try Things Out

After listening intently and turning observations into insights, it's now time to brainstorm new ideas and put them into action. Prototyping allows you to try out ideas and test them with users in a low-risk way before making a larger commitment. Many people think of prototyping when it comes to digital services, but the prototyping approach can be used just as easily for paper-based and in-person services as well.



Brainstorming New Possibilities

Brainstorms are great ways to get a bunch of ideas quickly. But have you ever been in a brainstorm that falls flat? Sometimes brainstorms don't succeed because there's a bit of an art in finding the right-sized question to brainstorm. If the question is too big, you can feel paralyzed by all of the possibilities. Too small and you can feel overly confined. So the question should be big enough to generate lots of ideas, but succinct and contained enough to help you feel focused.

To get there, try asking the question in a way that's both bigger and smaller. Which one feels the most productive and focused?

For instance...

Too big: How might we improve this service for mothers?

Too small: How might we try and get more mothers to visit during Saturday afternoons and during their lunch breaks?

Just right: How might we let mothers know this service exists? OR How might we incentivize mothers to come back?

Remember you can do more than one brainstorm if you want more ideas.

PRO TIP

Start brainstorm questions with "How might we" instead of "How will we" or "How would we." This tiny shift in wording helps free our thinking from known or perceived limits, and instead allows us to more fully embrace possibility—which is, of course, the point of a brainstorm.

Prioritizing Results

TIME 30 minutes - 1 hour
SUPPLIES Sticky notes, paper, voting stickers

Once you've brainstormed, you will likely have lots of ideas. How do you know which ones to move ahead with?

Voting:
Like any good democracy, you can vote for your favorites. Give each person 3 - 5 votes (these can be small sticker dots or checks added to an idea) to use however she or he likes: you could put all 5 on one if you'd like, or spread them out. Once everyone has voted, look to see where the heat is.

Roadmapping:
Look at the different ideas: Which ones could happen tomorrow? Next year? Or sometime in the distant future? Rearrange the ideas along this timeline. If you're looking for near term solutions, stick with ideas on that end of the spectrum. If you have more time, look further down the line.

Feasibility Rating:
Having an idea is one thing, but making it real is something else altogether. Think about what skills, resources, capabilities and capital you as a team have access to: all of these things together make something possible or feasible. Now consider each of the ideas in front of you. Based on the resources you have (or will have), which of these ideas seems most feasible? Give each one a rating, with 5 being the most feasible, 1 being the least.

Once you've prioritized, notice whether the winning ideas are similar or different to one another. Is there a way to combine them? If you can leave a brainstorm with a few focused ideas people are excited about, you'll have a great foundation from which to start.

Try Things Out

Prototyping Your Ideas

Prototyping allows you to try out ideas and test them with users in a low-risk way before making a larger commitment. Many people think of prototyping when it comes to digital services, but the prototyping approach can be used just as easily for paper-based and in-person services as well.

Prototyping by Storyboarding

TIME 1-3 hours
SUPPLIES Paper and markers

You don't need to be a professional artist to draw out ideas for how a service might work—in service design, stick figures are your friends! Think of your service unfolding in comic book-like windows or like a storyboard. This is a great tool to build upon your journey map by illustrating key steps. Focus on capturing the interaction and the key "touchpoints"—a computer screen, a pamphlet, a sign, or the way a space is laid out. The goal here is to suggest how a service might unfold or act, rather that nailing exactly how something might look.

Sketching can be a great way to tell the story of your service. You're likely to discover connections that you wouldn't find by writing out a narrative. The sketches also become a tool for sharing your ideas back with your team.

Download a prototyping by storyboarding template, and see an example of prototyping by storyboarding in action at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Prototyping with Words

TIME 1-3 hours
SUPPLIES Paper and markers

As government service providers, a lot of what we do comes down to human interaction. So how do we prototype this?

One simple way is with words. What's the scenario you're interested in exploring? What might a script look like and sound like for that interaction? Write it out as a dialog between two people, or like a play with multiple characters. You can act it out for someone and get their reaction, or have them improv a response as one of the characters, or you can have them read the story and explain what they'd change or add.

Another way to approach prototyping with words is to ask your users to describe in their own words how the service works. Listen actively for where their understanding is different from yours and what kinds of words they use to describe your service. Could you use similar words? Use your conversation to explore ways of describing your service and notice what resonates most with your users.

See an example of prototyping with words at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Prototyping with Paper

TIME 1-5 hours
SUPPLIES Paper and markers

You don't need a bunch of fancy supplies to make a prototype—you really can prototype with anything, and paper is a good place to start. A prototype communicates the basic idea of something: what it could feel like, sound like, look like. Starting out on paper is a great way to get started with the new digital tool or pamphlet or ad campaign (really anything!) that might be part of your service.

You don't have to be an artist or designer to do this—in fact, sometimes it's an advantage not to have great drawing skills. That's because the rougher and less refined a prototype looks, the more the person you're sharing it with will feel like they have something to contribute. Think about how you feel when you see a rendering of a building created by a computer program versus a simple napkin sketch. Paper prototypes are meant to be quick and disposable and to get a gut reaction, so go ahead and make a bunch of different ones to share.

See an example of prototyping with paper at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Prototyping with Simple Digital Tools

TIME Prototyping can be as quick or as long as you'd like. But a good rule of thumb is an hour to make it, and an hour to share and get feedback on it.
SUPPLIES Paper and markers or digital tools

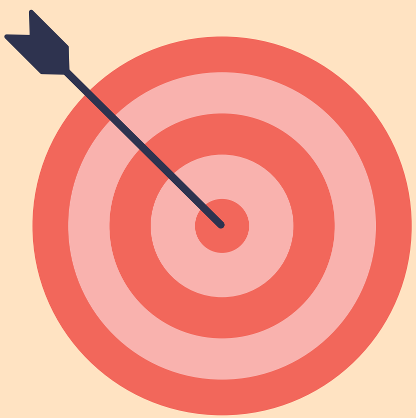
There are many free and really simple prototyping tools out there intended for use by everyone—not just designers. If you want to create a prototype of a mobile app, for instance, you could do it on paper or you could use a digital tool that allows you to test your idea without code. Easy tools include Powerpoint, Invision, Marvel, and Axure.

See examples of prototyping with simple digital tools at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Try Things Out

Focus on Impact

Now that you've talked with people, reviewed relevant evidence, and tested some ideas, you have no doubt created a clearer sense of what your team should truly implement, or where improvements might be made. Your solutions may be wide-ranging, such as a single in-person service or a suite of digital tools, or a new communications campaign or policy changes. Once your solutions are implemented, evaluating them for effectiveness can give you ongoing feedback and build evidence around what's working, and how to improve.



Developing Solutions

The design process often yields many ideas. And after prototyping comes the need for program or policy development. The approach can vary depending on the type of service and solution you're putting in place, but will frequently involve revisiting relevant evidence, setting performance goals, and establishing strategy.

Some solutions may be low-to no-cost to implement, and others may need funding and additional support.

Developing Services or Programs

Your solution may be an update to an existing service or an entirely new service. As you prototype ideas, you're likely to need to define a theory of change and set measures of success. You will want to figure out the appropriate scale to start with, and test and iterate from there.

See a service case study at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Developing Policy

A piece of legislation or policy may need to be set or updated in response to solutions coming out of the service design process. Sometimes these can be simple things that can be altered at a program level, and other times need to be an ask on another agency or level of government. The service design process can help build the case for the change through direct stakeholder feedback, and then can be paired with additional data and leadership to support driving the policy forward.

See a policy case study at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Developing Communications

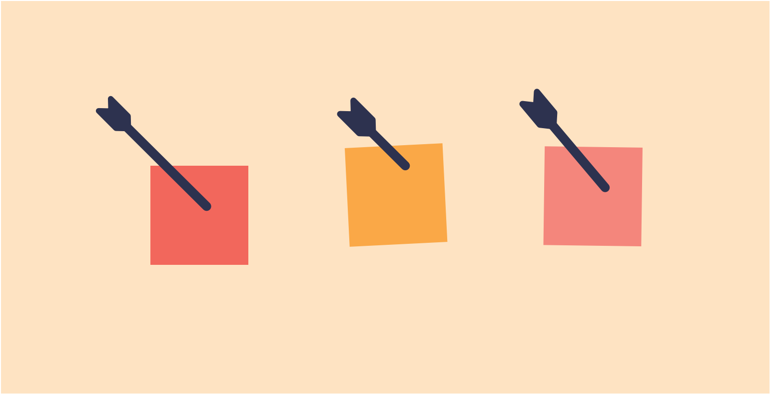
A new logo, messaging, printed materials, etc. can all be part of a new service or an enhancement onto something that already exists. Well designed communications materials help to clearly articulate and guide users through your service.

Check out some communications case studies at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

Developing Digital Products

If your service is primarily delivered online, the main solution may be a digital product. In-person services can also be supported by digital solutions, such as an informational website, metrics dashboard, case management system, apps, etc.

Check out some digital product case studies at **nyc.gov/servicedesign**



Setting Measures of Success

TIME Brainstorming potential metrics can be quick, but choosing and defining final indicators with input from relevant stakeholders can include hours of research and several meetings
SUPPLIES Excel, Word and calculator

Based on the identified goals of your service, key performance metrics and targets should be set. The most compelling performance metrics focus on outcomes rather than solely on program inputs and outputs. The specific data collected will depend on the population being served, intended results and expected interim steps toward those results, as well as data availability. Even if you want and are able to collect a range of different kind of data, it helps to prioritize a small number of key performance indicators that everyone understands as the most important. Examples of key performance metrics from the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity's portfolio can be found at **nyc.gov/opportunity**

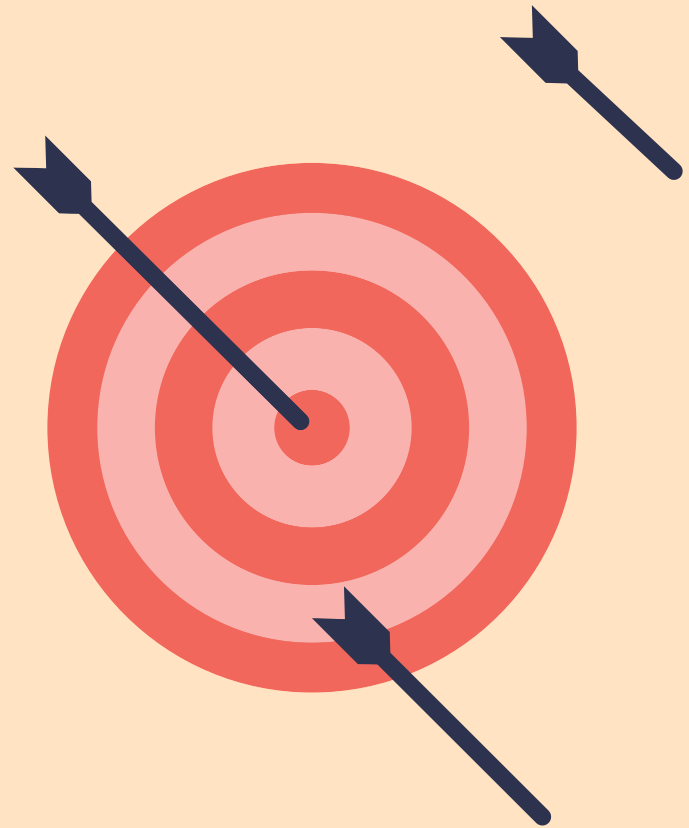
As you set up your data tracking process, keep in mind that metrics require clear definitions so that all partners clearly understand what is being tracked. Where possible, align your metrics and demographic categories with those being tracked in other similar programs, to better allow program comparisons in the future. Tracking participant demographic data is also important to better understanding what works, and for whom.

To know if key performance numbers are good or bad, they need to be compared to a benchmark or target. In developing program benchmarks, you will need to appropriately balance the need for accountability and the need for ongoing flexibility, while addressing the needs of users. Targets should be set in partnership with relevant partners and reflect the level of investment, the past performance of the program and/or evidence for the strategy, and the surrounding policy and economic context.

Targets should be re-assessed annually to ensure they stay relevant and accurate. Lastly, targets should factor in the stage of the program's development. For example, performance in the first year is likely to be significantly lower than in future years.

Key performance indicators also need to be put in the context of anticipated costs to begin to estimate and assess the expected return on investment of your strategy. You should calculate your anticipated cost per participant from the outset, but the much more meaningful number is the cost per successful outcome of the service delivered. (Consider the analogy of buying car tires. A cheap set might have a low cost-per-tire, but if the treads wear out quickly and the tires need to be replaced, then they could have a very high cost-per-mile used.)

Performance data can help provide feedback about how a service is doing in real time, and point to the need to make adjustments along the way. In some cases, implementing new program models will require support and technical assistance investments to help achieve better results. Agency staff or external technical assistance providers can assist in a range of ways, from promoting needed culture change within an organization to do its work differently, to building particular technical skills of staff in new strategies and issue areas.



Evaluating Solutions

If you have applied other service design methods, you have already been asking some of the questions and using some of the tools typical of program and policy evaluation.

Every evaluation asks and seeks to answer a key programmatic or policy question. This question usually goes beyond “Does the idea work?” to delve deeper into the nuances of the specific strategy—how it was implemented, who benefitted, and the like. You can begin compiling and brainstorming research questions by returning to your review of existing evidence, themes from user research, and insights generated from your observations.

You will need to further refine, prioritize, and narrow research questions by engaging with relevant stakeholders. Evaluation projects should not only generate findings that are interesting and informative, but also useful to program designers and policy makers.

Each evaluation is distinct, but general considerations include:

- identified goals for the intervention
- the availability of existing data and ability to collect additional data
- implementation status/stage and the timing of expected outcomes level of investment and available resources
- existing evidence

The combination of these factors will help to determine the most appropriate evaluation plan for your chosen strategy. It is worthwhile to conduct multiple evaluations of a strategy over time, with each building on the previous study’s findings.

Focus on Impact

Qualitative Strategies

Qualitative strategies include conducting a combination of surveys, focus groups, interviews, and observations to examine implementation, assess outcomes, or identify best practices for continuous improvement.

Quantitative Strategies

TIME 6 months - 1 year or more
SUPPLIES Word

Quantitative strategies include analysis of outcomes, comparison studies, randomized control trials, and cost or cost-benefit analyses to explore factors contributing to successful outcomes, assess impact, and determine cost-effectiveness.

You should also consider mixing qualitative and quantitative strategies to tackle a question from multiple angles.

Engaging an Evaluation Firm or Research Partner

Working with an independent evaluation firm will provide independent and objective analysis, though some qualitative and quantitative evaluation activities may alternatively be conducted internally if engaging a firm is not feasible or if an agency has its own internal capacity. Evaluation partners with expertise in particular methodologies and issue areas help to ensure that evaluation findings will be accurate, informative, and relevant. The same goes for partnerships with academic researchers.

The Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity is a resource for City agencies interested in evaluating strategies tackling poverty and related issues. Partner agencies can leverage the office’s expertise in designing and managing evaluations of City initiatives. The office’s master contract with independent evaluation firms can serve as a further resource to procure evaluation services.

Get More Help

While there are many parts of the service design process you and your team can tackle, you don't always have the capacity to go it alone. Luckily, the City has been taking steps to make adding design help to agencies much easier. Initiatives like the **Design Master Contracts** make procurement for outside design services streamlined, and the creation of the **Service Design Studio at the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity** and the **NYC Gov Lab & Studio at the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications**, means we now also have expert service design capability inside city government.

Procuring Design Services via the Design Master Contracts

The **Government x Design Master Contracts (GxD)** are a new procurement tool for hiring and working with outside design firms. The **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunication (DoITT)** and the **Mayor's Office** are developing the contracts, which will allow City agencies to more easily create and deliver effective, efficient, and equitable public services.

DoITT, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) in 2017 which will call for submissions showing expertise in digital design, communication design, and/or service design. Master Contracts will be awarded to designers or firms for each discipline as well as those that can provide services in all three categories. DoITT will manage the contracts for the life of the agreement.

Find out the latest on the Design Master Contracts at **nyc.gov/xdesign**

Partnering with the Service Design Studio at the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

The **Service Design Studio** is an internal resource available to New York City government agencies. Our team is made up designers with backgrounds in policy and planning and who understand the real constraints and culture of government. We can function as advisers and collaborators to you and your team, and we can also take on select design projects. You can call on us at any moment in a project and we can help advise new approaches and possible next steps. To work with the team, your project must be focused on reducing poverty and expanding opportunity for low-to-moderate-income New Yorkers.

Get in touch with questions, ideas, and exploring how we can work together at **design@nycopportunity.nyc.gov**

Partnering with NYC Gov Lab & Studio at the Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications (DoITT)

Design that Delivers: DoITT's NYC Gov Lab & Studio provides flexible and scalable User Experience (UX) and Human Centered Design (HCD) engagements plus training for Citywide programs and initiatives. Its UX and Web front-end development teams, in coordination with DoITT's full suite of contract and technology services, are uniquely positioned to provide end-to-end and targeted customer-centric solutions. This includes customer research, user interface and interaction design, prototyping, development, and usability testing that take ideas from concept through delivery.

Get More Help

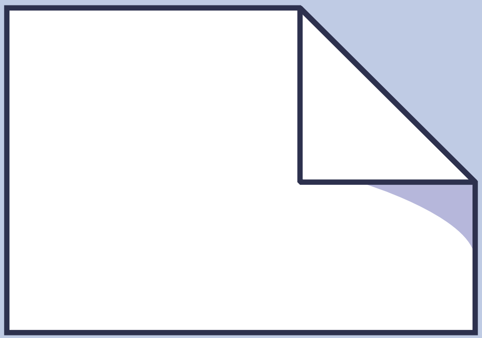
In an effort to enhance this collaboration with our clients and end-users in 2017, DoITT will be creating a purposeful physical space set up for activities such as HCD workshops, project team sprints, and City designer meet-ups, which, whenever scheduling allows, will also be open for other agencies to host events.

Work with the NYC Gov Lab & Studio by contacting: **hcd@doitt.nyc.gov** or DoITT's Agency Relations Managers at **AgencyRelations@doitt.nyc.gov**

Hiring Design Staff

More agencies are hiring public servants who are full time designers. Sometimes they work with a communications or digital team, and other times they are within a business or policy team. When recruiting designers, it's important to capture the right skills by using their language to describe the work. Many creative professionals don't yet realize the outstanding roles that are available in government, so it's important to get your postings to where they already are such as design schools and organizations, events and social media.

Check out **nyc.gov/servicedesign** for more



Resources

To learn more about the vast design resources available online, in our city, and across the globe visit the resources section on **nyc.gov/servicedesign**

City Resources and Policies

Classes and Events

Design Guides and Resources

Evidence and Research

Design Organizations

Posters

About

Our goal for service design is to make public services as effective and accessible as possible for all New Yorkers.

Civic Service Design Tools + Tactics provides a central resource for best practices in service design to support public servants and help spread service design methods across New York City government.

It was produced by the Service Design Studio at the NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity. We used the service design process to create this resource in its entirety. And in true service design fashion, it will continue to grow and evolve with feedback and use.

NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity
design@nycopportunity.nyc.gov

citi CitiCommunityDevelopment.com

We thank our Founding Partner Citi Community Development for their generous support.

MAYOR'S FUND TO ADVANCE NEW YORK CITY

We are grateful for the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City's partnership.

Civic Service Design

Tools +Tactics

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