

For People by People: Better connecting residents to city services through design

"It's been SO nice to work with you and your team on this. Impressive work to be sure!" - Kylie Rolf, Mayor's Director of Major Initiatives; "Many, many thanks to you and the team for doing such an incredible job with this. I know from our little group here at City Light we think this work is a game changer and will help and support you in whatever way we can." - Kelly Enright, Customer Care Director - Seattle City Light; "Personally, I really appreciate, and I am impressed by the work and caring heart of your team!" - Chinese Information and Service Center

THE NEED

In November 2017, Mayor Jenny Durkan signed Executive Order 2017-12 and directed City departments to address the increased cost of living in Seattle through, among other actions, the creation of a common affordability portal and exploration of opportunities to streamline and coordinate activities across benefit programs.

The objectives of this project were to 1) increase understanding of City benefit programs and the experience of staff administering them and residents accessing them, 2) identify new opportunities to increase access and utilization of City benefit programs, and 3) co-create and envision possible solutions using design thinking, a collaborative, human-centered problem-solving process.

OUR APPROACH

Innovation & Performance ("IP") created a research plan, carried out research activities, facilitated workshops to generate ideas, and developed recommendations using design thinking methodologies which are anchored on insights about the experiences of those affected by services. Throughout the process, we engaged with City staff from 14 departments, service providers, and residents of Seattle to understand the issue and co-create solutions.

THE RESULTS

Our research resulted in the proposed implementation of three workstreams and their associated initiatives to achieve Mayor Durkan's vision and address the challenges that residents face in accessing City supports. These recommendations were informed directly by Seattle residents and the people that serve them.

- **Affordability Portal:** Develop a website that connects residents with City benefits by centralizing City benefits to make them easy to find and by streamlining the application process to make it easier to receive assistance.
- **Outreach & Marketing:** Provide targeted information to residents and community groups about a portal and the benefit programs themselves through intentional outreach and marketing.
- **Program Performance:** Streamline access to individual benefit programs and across the full portfolio of programs through process improvements.

OUR ROLE

Functional Capabilities

- Project Management
- Meeting Facilitation
- Coordination across government

Specialized skillsets

- Design Thinking
- Process Improvement
- Fiscal Analysis

DEPARTMENT

PARTNER

Mayor's Office
City Budget Office

PROJECT

DURATION

January - March 2018

IMPACT

Innovation & Performance promoted the use and application of design thinking by departments through the facilitation of an Innovation Lab. The Lab was a one-day session which brought together City staff, community based organizations, and residents to brainstorm new ideas to increase access to City programs.

KEY DEPARTMENT

CONTACTS

- Mike Fong, Senior Deputy Mayor
- Kylie Rolf, Mayor's Director of Major Initiatives
- Saroja Reddy, City Budget Office

FOR MORE

INFORMATION

CONTACT

- Rodrigo Sanchez (IP)



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