

CUSTOMER CENTERED DESIGN: Implementing WIOA with the Customer in the Center

The Opportunity

- WIOA implementation gives us huge opportunity to step back from business as usual and, with the customer in mind, DESIGN services (as opposed to looking at what we do now, and how can we make changes to comply with WIOA that are least disruptive to current system).
- You can develop plans in a different way, NOT with the regulations and law in the middle, but with the customer in the middle.
- The workforce system can innovate and federal agencies won't slap your hands later.
- Customer-centered design will produce better outcomes and higher customer satisfaction.
- There are methods, tools, skills that can be taught and learned. It's a step-by-step process that any organization can do. This project will teach you!

Who can participate?

This is a Team-based initiative. Pick 4 to 8 people who represent a broad range of stakeholders and partners. Ideally, a WIB member, Core partner representatives, and other partners located within the one-stop. Representatives can come from all levels of WIB staff, One-Stop staff, staff from partner agencies including Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, Organized Labor and Community Based Organizations. We want:

- Organizations implementing WIOA
- People who are designing services, writing RFP's, etc.
- Partners who serve a broad range of customers
- State and local workforce agencies who want better outcomes
- All one-stop partner programs

What Outcomes do we want?

- Services are designed for employers and job seekers that better meet their needs.
- WIOA implementation is transformative, not “check-the-box.”
- You and your Team are supported to think outside of what you know, and you will use tools to make sure implementation happens in a new, creative way.
- Federal, State, and local workforce professionals have a much better understanding of who the customer is.
- Service design happens in a collaborative way with all stakeholders participating.
- There is capacity in the system for on-going process improvement, and agencies use design thinking as a regular practice.

How it will work

This initiative consists of FIVE phases:

1. A Launch Webinar.
2. A 7 week Online Class focused on one of three challenges.
3. A 5 week Experiment and Prototype phase. You will also have support in this phase.
4. A Learning Exchange and Celebration at the White House. (Yes, THE White House).
5. Your participation in an on-going peer mentoring effort in your region.

The Design Challenges

1. How might we improve the customer experience and outcomes for our shared One-Stop Customers?
2. How might we put employers in the center of our sector strategies and career pathway work?
3. How might we design services and programs for out of school youth that will engage them and produce great outcomes?

PHASE 1: The Launch

DOL will conduct a Webinar to launch the project on July 29th, 2015. We will include an overview of what Customer Center Design is, stories from peers about how it is currently being used in the workforce and human services

systems, and how other federal agencies are using Design Thinking to innovate services to customers. We will describe the three design challenges and the process that Teams will use. Presenters will include DOL leadership, WIB Directors, One Stop Managers, TANF Tribal Child Welfare managers, and leadership focused on Innovation from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The Launch will be timed to begin several weeks before the next Acumen/IDEO Human Centered Design online class, which will begin August 20th.

PHASE 2: The Class

You will work through a 7 week online course with a group of 4-8 people we will refer to as your “design team.” You will learn the human-centered design process by applying it to one of three design challenges. Each week you will explore the main human-centered design concepts through readings, case studies, and short videos. Then you’ll be expected to meet in-person with your design team to get your hands dirty practicing the relevant human-centered design methods.

Throughout the course you’ll have the opportunity to interact and gain inspiration from design teams around the world taking the course with you and ask questions of experienced human-centered designers when you feel stuck.

You will also have specific support from DOL contractors, who will schedule calls, answer questions, connect you to others working on the same challenge, and serve as your coaches along the way. You will participate in a Community of Practice with your peers.

The seven week online course taught by Acumen and IDEO will:

- Equip you with the mindsets and methods of human-centered design so that you can be more intentional about facing and solving your current challenges
- Let you experiment with the power of human-centered design
- Teach you to identify patterns and opportunities for concept development
- Inspire you to approach challenges differently and experience how human-centered design can add new perspectives to your own work tackling poverty-related challenges
- Give you hands-on experience speaking to, prototyping for, and testing solutions with the people you’re designing for

Your team must register for the course prior to September 3, 2015:

<http://plusacumen.org/courses/hcd-for-social-innovation/>

Additionally, your team must register with ETA through a link which will be made available during the July 29th webinar.

PHASE 3: Experimentation and Prototyping

In this phase, you will work with your Team to apply the ideas you have generated and the insights gained during the class to conduct experiments within your programs and service delivery strategies. You might write a new kind of RFP, change customer flow, reconfigure physical space, redesign how partners interact with each other or customers, try new ways of outreach and recruitment, use new materials for communicating with the community, change processes and forms, or many other ways of producing better customer experience and outcomes.

Throughout this phase, you will be talking to the other teams, being supported by coaches, learning and adjusting, getting feedback from customers, and deciding which innovations to bring to scale. You will also try lots of new things and learn to celebrate early failures. Your work will be documented, so that others can learn from you.

PHASE 4: Learning Exchange and Celebration

At the end of twelve weeks, you will have learned not only the methods of Customer Centered Design, but also a tremendous amount about the needs and experiences of job seekers, employers and out of school youth. We will work with you to design a Learning Exchange, in which you will tell your story and your insights to the other teams, and to leadership in DOL, DOE, HHS, and the White House. We will harvest what you have learned, and celebrate your work in an event at the White House.

Phase 5: Peer Mentoring

Now that your Team is proficient in Customer Centered Design, you will serve as mentors, learning labs, and peer trainers for others who want to produce great outcomes for their customers, and use Design Thinking to implement the provisions of WIOA. We will provide support to connect you to those who want to learn, and ways in which you can be a peer mentor with repeatable, scalable processes.