**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Customer Centered Design Challenge**

**Launch of Round 3**

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JENNIFER JACOBS: Again, we want to welcome you to the "The Customer Centered Design Challenge Round 3" webinar. If you haven't done so or if you're just joining us, please introduce yourself in that chat and we'll have a similar chat up throughout today's webinar where you can type in your questions or comments at any point throughout today's webinar.

Now I'd like to turn things over to our moderator today, Virginia Hamilton. She's a region six regional administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor. Virginia?

VIRGINIA HAMILTON: Good morning or good afternoon. I'm so excited to have you all here on the phone. We have almost 700 people registered for this webinar from all over the country – interested in watching all the names of people and places you're from, and it's from everywhere.

This is the third round of the customer-centered design skill building and challenge that the Department of Labor is issuing. We started two years ago with our first challenge. We didn't really know what we were going to get. I thought we were going to end up with 10 or 15 people signing on to take the class; we had 80. In our second round we had 120. And in the last two years we've been able to train over 1,000 people in the workforce system in what we call in this project customer-centered design, but it's known more widely around the county as human centered design.

The reason that I love this work and love the approach to this process is that we in the workforce development system are very mission-driven. We certainly aren't in this profession to make a lot of money and get stock options. We came into this work because we believed in our mission and our purpose in helping people get jobs and get skills and training and help businesses get the talent that they need.

And what I've found – which is really kind of a consequence – is that by going through the human centered design process people feel really almost to a person that they've been connected back to their mission and their purpose, those who are brand new and those who've been working in the system like I have for up to 30 years.

The other thing that I really love about this process is that this is skill building. We often think that people who are innovative are kind of crazy people in white coats in science labs. And the truth is just like Matt (ph), just like learning how to be a case manager, just like figuring out how to work with an MIS, anybody can become more innovative, can become more customer-focused just by learning a process and going through it.

So what we're going to talk about today is an overview of the human centered design – very, very minimal, just the basics. We're going to hear from two teams who won the White House challenge this last year, Contra Costa County and Wisconsin. Then you're going to get to know IDEO just for a few minutes. IDEO is the company that really invented or branded human centered design, and Kate Lydon will talk a little bit about that.

Then we've got Caitlin Docker from Code for America, who's going to talk about what to expect from the actual course, because this webinar today isn't going to teach you about human centered design. It's going to teach you about how to get your team registered to learn about human centered design over the course of the next couple of months. We'll give you some very logistical information about how to register for these challenges and so on, and we hope we'll have time at the end for Q&A.

So at a very high level the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act really spends a lot of time on being customer-focused. The regulations when you look at them mention "customer" over 143 times, and that was the last time I looked. We have new regulations out; it's probably more.

This is really about implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act not by starting with what's in the regulations, how do we need to change our services, what's in the law, but what do our customers need, and then figuring out how to get that to them.

So the first thing I wanted to do actually before we start is to do a little poll and just ask how familiar you are with customer-centered design. If you would answer that poll that would help me and other presenters in terms of how to talk to you today about it. It looks like quite a few newbies coming in; we'll wait just a few more minutes. We have four pros; excellent. It's getting me a little bit of a feel that there's quite a few people who are new to customer-centered design, which is totally great. Terrific.

So before I launch into an overview of human centered design I just want to explain a little bit about how this process works. We're doing our launch webinar today. There's a class, which we'll talk a lot more about, that starts on February 7th. Between now and February 7th you need to put a team together and register; we'll talk again in way more detail. You'll take the class; you'll prototype the task and iterate; and then sometime in June – for those of you who are interested in coming to a celebration and learning exchange in Washington, DC and being recognized as a leader in customer-centered design – you will apply, and then we're planning on having our celebration and learning exchange in DC.

I'll just say to get it out of the way that we have been working with the White House in these last rounds of customer-centered design, and we don't know anybody at the White House yet because they're just getting there, so we're exploring all sorts of different options. We still are planning on having an event in DC. It might be in the White House; might be in the Capitol; might be at the Department of Labor; might be in all three of those places. We have to wait and see on that particular piece – for a few weeks, anyway.

So just a real overview of the human centered design process. For some people it's the three states; some people, five. But essentially you start by getting inspired with the people you're serving and really listening in much deeper ways than we tend to; then identifying patterns and insights based on what we learn when we do research. There's a stage in which we do lots and lots of brainstorming and ideation in order to come up with new ways of thinking about how to serve our customers.

And then there's a whole process of prototyping and testing, prototyping and testing, in order to refine and really understand whether or not what we're coming up with is something that our customers want and need. I'm just going to give you a few examples of each of these stages of the process.

Human centered design always starts with people. In many cases, as I was saying before with WIOA, for example, some people just want to look at what's in the old law, in WIA, what's in the new law, WIOA, and just try to figure out how to reconfigure their services to be compliant with the new law. This is not about that. This is about starting with people and what they need, and then looking at, OK, we need to make sure it's legal in the law – which pretty much any continuous improvement around customer service is. And then, if there's technology involved or other kinds of resources, if something is feasible, but first, starting with people.

We also start with the "how might we" question. "How" assumes that solutions exist. We're not being "can we," "should we," "will we;" we're just saying "how might we." We're assuming we're going to do something.

The word "might" really reduces risk and commitment. We're not saying how can we do this, how will we do this, how should we do this – how might we? It's a question that opens up possibility and allows people to really be imaginative and think out of the box.

And the word "we" is really important because human centered design is about doing something together as a team. Caitlin will talk later about putting your team together – a very diverse team of people who will together create a very robust set of insights and ideas to implement.

So research when you starting the human centered design the first stage is really about building empathy. There are lots and lots of different ways to do this, and in the course you'll get tools and activity sheets and check sheets and so on that you can use.

IDEO has my favorite example – if you've heard me before, I'm sorry if I always say this, tell the story – IDEO was designing a new kind of pill bottle and went to an older woman who had arthritis and asked how her experience was in opening her bottles, and she said no problem at all. And they thought that was a little odd, so they observed her. What she did was she had a meat slicer in her kitchen, and as soon as she got a pill bottle she would just slice the top of the pill bottle off with the meat slicer and then put her pills into containers that she could use.

Another example that I really love is there was a set of doctors who had designed really, really very effective MRI machines and just observed, hanging around the hospital one day, as proud as this one particular doctor was in his machine that was fancy and beautiful and worked, that children who were trying to go into the MRI machine were literally screaming and running out the door. They did not want to be put in one of those machines. So the hospital in collaboration with the doctor redesigned the MRI machine to look like a pirate ship, or look like a spaceship.

So by observing, people are able to see that sometimes even what people think they do or they experience something isn't the same as what they really do.

Engaging. We had a group in our first round of business services reps; people I've known for years, had a lot of respect for them. They did some focus groups with a set of businesses and asked them a lot of questions about what they needed. One of the business services reps said to me later in sort of an embarrassed way, you know, I've been working with a couple of these businesses for two years. I've been trying to get them to use OJT; we had paid internships; we had recruitment strategies for them; we were offering them all these services. But we actually never bothered to look into them in a deep way. And in fact, several of these businesses said we don't need help in recruiting; we actually need help in retaining our employees.

We also in government – maybe everywhere – tend to have a set of services that we want to go out and offer and sell without ever doing a check about whether our customers really need those kinds of services.

And finally, immersing – really immersing yourself in your environment. It was interesting; many of the people particularly in the round two – I know the team in Wisconsin spent a lot of time just sitting in their lobby watching how people behaved and what they did. We had a group of leaders of nonprofits in Tennessee last round who had a virtual One-Stop, kind of a "no wrong door" One-Stop where a lot of different nonprofits were involved in the process. They felt like they were doing a great job. They got great feedback from their customers. Their customers were getting into school, getting skills, getting jobs.

And one of the nonprofit leaders said that she went to a different nonprofit where people didn't know her and just sat in the lobby for two days and listen to clients talk. And she said on the second day she went home and wept, because what she heard was that people saw the staff and the agency as gatekeepers – gatekeepers of information and gatekeepers of services and not the community partners that they thought they were. So they really spent a lot of time after they had that insight in really redesigning their "how might we" question. Instead of how might we improve our customer service, how might we be seen as partners and helpers in our community and not gatekeepers?

So this first part, of really building empathy and understanding your customer is really important in the first stage of human centered design.

I love this slide. IDEO has worked with us on out-of-school youth. Once you've done your research, then it's time to have insight, to really think about and understand patterns and see things through really a different mental model. I loved this example because – this is David, who said he just copied a friend's résumé because he doesn't know how to make one.

And even though I'm completely obsessed with human centered design, when I saw this quote my first thought was, "Well, we've got lots of résumé writing workshops; we just need to hook David up to one; we need to get him involved in our youth program." And the insight that the team had was that actually David didn't need a résumé writing workshop. He didn't need to learn how to write a résumé. What if we just provided templates for youth so that a young person who had some work experience and graduated from high school, someone who had no work experience, didn't graduate from high school, that people could just take these templates?

So this is a great example of our own mindsets getting in the way of really paying attention and understanding what our customers actually need instead of just offering our own goods and services. Once you have those insights and you have really thought about what you've learned, then you go into the ideation or brainstorming phase. At this point you actually might be refining your "how might we" question.

You might take David inside of that and think about lots and lots of different ways that we could provide résumés for young people. In this case, this one team was saying, how might we design rich and inspiring spaces for jobseekers, even though they started with a question that was more generic. So ideation is important to come up with as many ideas as we can to think about what might work, and then to prioritize those and then start working on prototyping and testing them.

I love this example. This is down in San Diego. Their question was, how might we simplify the invoice process so Gloria can take a vacation? Our staff are humans too and I think this is a very legitimate question for many people in the workforce system – how might we simplify our processes so we can spend more time maybe on vacation but maybe actually working with our customers more than we do now.

Once you have some ideas you want to start prototyping. This slide really appeals to me because it shows the difference between a really rough prototype and a very polished finished product.

This is an IDEO slide. They were asked to design a very precise surgical instrument, and they just threw some stuff together. For those of you who are old enough to remember, that's a film canister in the middle there between the marker and the clip. Is it something like this? And then the doctors would say, yeah, it's something like this, but maybe we need you to add that, something like that; we need you to add this.

People are much more willing to see potential and possibility when something is very rough. As soon as it's polished you start to see flaws. I find that in implementation of WIOA this principle is really important. I've talked to a number of people who I said, so how are you working with your partners? They said, well, we want to get our own act together first and then we'll talk about partners. And that's not what good prototyping is.

Good prototyping is getting together with your partners early and often and saying how might we work together to serve our customers' needs, and then just starting to test some stuff. If you already have something done, people kind of go, well, that was their idea.

One of the unintended consequences of the first two rounds of the customer-centered design project has been how many people have said it's really deepened our relationships with our partner agencies and given us a real new way of working with them that's very productive and very real, not just sort of surface-check off the box.

This is a great example of prototyping. I think this was done in San Bernardino County; can't remember, somewhere in California. The different partner agencies got together and took little figures and prototyped what they felt like their current situation was. Their current situation was that when they went out to talk to employers about hiring their clients, they essentially felt like they were soldiers fighting against each other. The new prototype was really about one team so that one team could go out and work with employers and they weren't fighting with each other any longer.

Once you finish prototyping, then the phase becomes testing and then it's an iterative process of prototype-test, prototype-test. Tests can be simple as this. In government we don't really do prototyping and testing much. We tend to come up with a new policy, send it through clearance, then through clearance, then through clearance, for a very long time; and then we roll something out. We've never done that little iterative testing along the way, which actually could make the difference between a policy working or not.

The best example that everybody talks about, of course, is Healthcare.gov. They did a lot of work on it but they didn't do enough prototyping and testing. When they launched it, it failed. If they had failed early and often during the prototyping phase, we might not have ended up with what was a real disaster when it actually got rolled out.

So these are some of the outcomes that we've really seen in the teams that have participated in the human centered design challenge process. As I said, services are designed for the people that best meet their needs. We all together have a better understanding of who the customers are. It's a very collaborative process with lots of stakeholders participating.

One of my favorite stories is down in Long Beach. They actually included the security guard in their design team because he saw the customers in the One-Stop more often and more deeply than anyone else did; and his insight was if you want to serve homeless youth you need to find a place for their stuff. So as a result of the insight that he had and his participation in the team, they were able to repurpose a supply closet and put people's stuff in a safe place so that they didn't just turn around and leave because they didn't feel like they had anywhere to put their things.

And I think finally this is that classic teaching-people-to-fish strategy, which is once you have learned human centered design it's like a light switch that doesn't go off. You learned it and then you want to apply it to everything else that you see. And virtually all of the teams that we've talked to over the course of the last year have said that, yes, they did this class and they applied it to the particular challenge that they chose, but in fact they went on and had plans to be doing this work in all sorts of other parts of their program.

So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to turn this over to Donté Blue. Donté works in Contra Costa County in California, and they focus on connecting the formerly incarcerated individuals to the workforce system. So Donté, if you'd unmute your phone, we'll have you just talk for a few minutes.

DONTÉ BLUE: All right. Hello and thanks, Virginia, for that wonderful run-through of human centered design.

You know, in Contra Costa County this is really our first time delving into the human centered design, and what we wanted to look at was – you know, our "how might we" question we ended up getting to was "how might we improve access to resources for formerly incarcerated people"? And truthfully, even that was a process just getting to that question, because we started talking just getting folks into the workforce system, and we realized there might be a number of barriers even between incarceration and actually being ready to engage in the services of the workforce.

So were there other services needed to connect the person to? One thing that we did know is that we want to try to engage in this as quickly as possible because the longer that a person was disengaged from services, the higher likelihood that they would continue to be involved in the justice system or recidivate.

So as we worked through this, what we learned was that – kind of the issue behind like false promises. When you tell a formerly incarcerated person you're going to be there to help and we're going to connect you with all these great things, you want to make sure that those are actually things we can connect people to.

One of the things during our interview process of going through human centered design, we heard that people heard that all these services were out there but they didn't actually know how to navigate them or connect to them. So again, not just letting people know where services were, but how to connect them is going to be important to what we centered on.

So in going through this, another big takeaways that we learned about was the fact that on the one hand we wanted to connect people to services, but there was something else working there; almost this stigmatization of this population in terms of the workforce, and really thinking about things in which we could do to alleviate that. This is the part where employers looking at accomplishments of this population kind of diminishing them because they were fully incarcerated. So were there things that we could do to either teach this population how to overcome that or to work with those employers. This was another insight.

When we finally centered on this how we connect folks to resources, we were thinking later on we're going to need to refine this into how to make that connection a successful connection. Not just, hey, here's the place and here's how you get there, but ensuring that folks actually get the most out of that connection. So that was how we started with that.

The other thing that we learned about was this idea that, what we had been doing in the past was just telling people what the resources were. So if you need housing, here's the five housing providers and here's the phone numbers; go out and get them. We did that a lot through paper communications, but we noticed that – one of the takeaways and insights that we had was that we were dealing with people that had different levels of literacy, different levels of competency in terms of reading and understanding what they were reading; comprehension.

One of the things that we noticed real quickly was that people actually preferred dealing with the human touch. So we wanted to ensure that we had a human touch not only on the inside, but had to be connected on the outside. This is where we started partnering with the sheriff and try to work with them to develop how can we touch people on the inside and then also do that warm handoff to individuals on the outside.

You see on your slide this picture of this paper suit. This was really symbolic. The symbolism here is that you do have situations where people who are going to the jails, sometimes their clothes are taken you as part of evidence, or they weren't appropriate clothing in the first place and don't really properly cover the person. So when you release them they had these white painter suits that you'd get from the hardware store.

Sometimes as you'd drive by the jail you'll see someone at the bus stop in this white suit. The symbolism here was that this kind of marks the person. They're very noticeable from the public, and especially when you go by the jail. You know that they're from the jail. The symbolism here is sometimes how we see these individuals in society and how they're being marked.

So when we presented in DC we brought this paper suit to kind of show that there's a person behind that suit; and what we're trying to do here is really get to that person and try to help them through this system. So it was something that we thought that would really showcase some of the things that we learned about.

So one of the things that really helped us a lot going through this process was having that central lead. Ours was a woman out of the workforce part of our team, (Narama ?) Burch. She really did a lot to try to organize this. She was in constant communication, made sure that we each blocked off some time to work on this on our own and then also brought our information back to a team.

We had regular recurring meetings. She would send out calendar invites so that everybody would be on the same schedule. We'd have call-in numbers if folks needed to call-in. We'd also have opportunity to do some virtual communications on a message board called (Cello ?). We used that a lot to sometimes put some of our ideas together and to organize them. All of these things were things that Narama led, even though some of them were recommended by some of our other teams.

I think that's one of the key pieces as well, is having a diverse team. I was brought in as the re-entry coordinator to be the subject matter expert, but the truth is that we all had different experiences with this population personal and professional and they all came in handy.

You do need to have access to your customers. This is customer-centered design, human centered design, and an important part of this is getting their input. Going through an interview when it's time to do prototyping and testing the prototype. You have to be able to reach out to them. We were luckily – one of our – (inaudible) – was an educator in our county jail, who connected us directly to the sheriff and we were able to get to them – "them" being the customers.

But it wasn't easy. We had to be flexible. We had this huge number that we wanted to talk to; we had to pare it down. And then also, even though – (inaudible) – didn't allow us to make it as robust as we might have wanted it to, but it did allow us to get a prototype together to identify subjects of the population and to test the prototype and come out with some results.

You do need to be flexible but you also need to be creative in how do you accommodate tight schedules with so many individuals. And the one thing I would say, you have to trust the process. It's not going to be a success every single step of the way, but each even non-success is a success in itself, in it shows you that, OK, this didn't work.

One of the big pieces about this is the iteration. So as things don't work you try something new and it gets you closer and closer to that ideal answer. And I'm thinking that's one of the things that we really learned and benefited from.

MS. HAMILTON: Thank you so much, Donté. I really appreciate it. They did have a fabulous team, and appreciate all of your work.

So now we're going to move to Waukesha County, Wisconsin with Andrzej Walz-Chojnacki and Sarah Kohlein. Take it away, Anjay and Sarah.

ANDRZEJ WALZ-CHOJNACKI: Thank you so much, and bravo with that name. It's not an easy one. And good to hear from you, Donté. It was great to meet you out in DC and good to hear from you again. I'm just going to say a few words about our work and some of the insights that we had.

We were trying to figure out how to design something that would help bring more younger individuals into our One-Stop workforce development center, and one thing that we settled on was that we were going to really need to change the look and feel of the One-Stop, from something that was institutional and like a government building into something that was much more inviting.

So what we did was picked out some institutions and organizations and businesses in our community that are known for their inviting atmosphere. There's a healthcare software company in Wisconsin that one of our team members went to visit, and then we also reached out to a hotel that's known for their customer service and the inviting environment that they create; and also other places like coffee shops. So gathering information there – how is it that they make their environments more inviting?

So then we took that information and brought it back to our team and tried to figure out, OK, how can we make our environment reflect that? That was the in-person/phsyical space of the workforce development center.

The other thing that we recognized pretty early on was that younger jobseekers who we were looking to attract to the workforce development center may not be as inclined to visit the workforce development center in person; so the obvious question became how can we improve the look of our virtual presence as well. We took some steps. There was already a website redesign in process, and some of the feedback that we gathered from younger jobseekers was incorporated into the new website.

And then we also revitalized our social media outreach, including our Facebook presence; and we established a Twitter handle, which we hadn't even had to that point. So that was an easy starting point.

The way that we – some of the insights that we had. We consulted a large both number and array of different customers and experts in the area. We talked with somebody who was – it's her job to design user experiences, and she helped us understand that the social media outreach was really going to need to be authentic in order to resonate with younger jobseekers; that anything that felt at all contrived was going to be a turn-off. She encouraged us to show rather than tell; use customer stories rather than statistics.

And then we consulted with a nationally and internationally recognized futurist, who encouraged us to design for the future because the people who are under 30 – the jobseekers we were trying to reach – they were going to be living in a world that we probably wouldn't even recognize. So really to the extent that we could, reject the assumptions that we had had, which is what the IDEO process encourages as well. So that was nice to have that reinforcement.

And then as I've mentioned, we needed to really integrate and revitalize our digital footprint. I'm going to let Sarah address the next slide.

SARAH KOHLEIN: All right. So I think this process for me personally, and even from my teammates, I think we pretty much agreed that it's a process that really encourages a lot of self-reflection, especially about what your own assumptions and values are.

I know for me when we started this process I thought we had to have some big huge life-changing idea, and we ended up adding some furniture and sprucing up our social media accounts, which doesn't seem like all that much. But it's kind of the small things that really can make the bigger impact, and I think the process – going through customer-centered design, it really forces you to focus on the small minute details that you would probably regularly ignore; and really taking it one step at a time.

There's a lot of times where you might want to kind of jump ahead, and a lot of times I was thinking of different solutions but then coupling barriers with it right away. This process really encourages you to throw out any barriers that you might think of and really focus on just your ideas; not necessarily the details, but what can you think of.

That kind of goes with discussing your assumptions, but then not being afraid to fail because every idea isn't necessarily a successful idea but it's an idea that's worth looking into more. I think this process really allows you to put your thinking cap on and keep it there, rather than just jumping to what are we doing next.

Andrzej, if you want to talk a little bit about some of the specific tips then for the process itself?

MR. WALZ-CHOJNACKI: Yeah. I think the thing that I recognized – I had the opportunity to participate actually in a couple of different projects in conjunction with this call for proposals, and I found that the more that we adhered to the process in the one project that I worked on, the better our results were.

The other project that I was involved with, I think we were kind of seduced by the temptation to jump to our conclusions in the way that Sarah described. I think really resisting those conclusions – even though, to be perfectly frank, sometimes the process can seem a little bit cumbersome and a little bit redundant – like, well, why are we brainstorming again; didn't we already brainstorm all our solutions?

But really taking a step back and then (steaming ?) those observations and insights and then asking new questions really was productive. So I definitely would encourage people to adhere to the process as best they can and really trust that process.

And I guess lastly, the thing that people should kind of keep in mind is that while the process is time-consuming, at the other end you really are an expert in a very useful tool.

As Virginia mentioned, this is something that when I am confronted with a new problem it's the first tool in my box that I go for. I really try to say, OK, well before I get on my high horse and try to figure out what I think is the best result, I really flip the problem around and try to figure out, OK, what is the person who I'm trying to help, what is their experience going to be like? Even if I don't engage with the entire process, it's still a fantastic thought experiment and it does teach you a new way of thinking and ultimately a more effective way of designing solutions.

MS. HAMILTON: Thank you so much, Andrzej and Sarah. I really appreciate it. They made some terrific improvements in their center, that's been around for 27 years, something like that. So appreciate you being on the call.

Next we're going to hear from Kate Lydon. Kate works for IDEO, and IDEO really marked this whole project when we started working here in region six with them almost four years ago. So Kate, why don't you talk a little bit about who IDEO is and how you've been involved?

KATE LYDON: Sure. Hi, everyone. It's incredibly inspiring to be on the phone with all of these people who are going to do amazing things, much as the last two teams have shared.

As Virginia shared, I work at IDEO. I've been here for more than eight and a half years. I'm a designer by background, but at IDEO I focus on our government work. That means working with organizations like the Department of Labor to think about across government – you know, whether it's Social Security or the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau or with the city of Gainesville, Florida, or sometimes actually working with Code for America, too, we're working with all sorts of different public agencies and organizations and nonprofits to think about how in each case they can serve their customers or their end users – and in many users, basically their citizens and taxpayers – better; how our public services can be more simple and accessible and really intuitive for customers to navigate.

So I can tell you a little bit about IDEO. We are a design and innovation firm. We've been around for 30-plus years. Our goal in all of the work we do is to create positive impact through design.

Our work actually stretches across most sectors, ranging from literally working on food design to working with healthcare organizations; and as I mentioned in my work, working with government. But across all of these the goal is to have positive impact.

One of the ways – I would say one of the things that ties all of this very diverse work together is our methodology. You've heard a lot about that from Virginia as well as the two teams. I'll just tell you a very little bit about it.

One of the things that I think you guys will all be doing – much as we do at IDEO – is creating interdisciplinary teams. There are engineers, researchers, writers, artists, brand folks, design thinkers, all sorts of essentially types of designers at IDEO. Our teams are always made up of a group of people with different backgrounds, because we believe when you bring people together with different perspectives you arrive much more quicker at groundbreaking thoughts or new ideas for those brainstorms that you're doing over and over, etc.

Just to give you an idea of the some of the work that we do in the public sector, this is just a range of it. On the top left is work that we – that's actually an image from research, from work that we were doing with the Wounded Warrior organization to rethink housing for returning service members. It ranges to the bottom right; that's work we actually with USCIS to make the immigration process more simple to navigate and more human centered.

And then on the bottom left is a big project we did with the San Francisco Unified School District to redesign school lunch, to make the lunch system both much, much better for kids – many of whom it's their main square meal of the day – and to make it a system that actually works financially and from a business perspective. So that's a bit of what we do.

And then I'll share a little bit about the kinds of work we've been doing with Virginia and her team at the Department of Labor. These are other examples of what it looks like to actually use this customer-centered design process.

We've done projects with Virginia focused on designing for and understanding the specific challenges of the long-term unemployed. You met David in an image that Virginia shared from a project that we did her around youth unemployment. We've also done work really recently in the last couple months around thinking about how to tailor employment services very specifically to the needs of returning service members.

One of the things we're most excited about overall is work like this one, where it's really about empowering more and more of your agency with customer-centered design skills. What you see here is I would say a good image that kind of shows a little bit of the tone and the messiness and the collaboration hopefully all of you will be able to build on each of your teams.

This is from one of the initial workshops we did with one of Virginia's groups out here in San Francisco. You can see that it's a really, really hands-on workshop. There's tons and tons of Post-Its; lots of ideas; and it's really focused on – in this case it was a full day of working together – actually I think it was two days – working together. It can be really messy but I think what we find is that can also be really freeing and can help people arrive at really new ideas.

So just two examples of the kinds of insights and discoveries and a-ha moments that this really deep process of listening and talking with your customers can lead to. This is a framework, I would say, of some of the mindsets that we found were common in the long-term unemployed. What this charts or this visual is designed to do is to help the folks who are on the front lines of serving the long-term unemployed actually understand the mindset of the person who just walked in the door.

And rather than just sort of saying, here's a list of our programs, to actually say, wait a second, where is this person, how are they feeling emotionally today? Do they feel stalled? Are they discouraged? Are they panicked? Because if they're panicked, maybe the thing isn't to say, let me tell you about our résumé writing workshop; but maybe if they're panicked the thing is to say, let me get you over to a support service that can help you with your overdue rent so you don't get kicked out of your house.

Or are they elated or are they exploring; and are they really ready and open to hear about new options? So this framework, again, comes directly from talking to people and understanding how can we treat them as specific individuals.

The slide you're looking at now is another real a-ha moment, similar to the one with David Virginia talked about. This is from our work a couple months ago with a Camo To Commerce program. It shows one of the service member profiles. This is Matt, one of the people that we talked to. This was a real a-ha that he said – choosing a path based on what I've been good at or what I'm good at is not important because I know I can learn anything.

And the insight here was really understanding that for returning service members like Matt it's not necessarily about saying, what are the things you know how to do and I'll find you a job just like that. Actually what he was saying was a part of being in the military for me was learning many, many, many things all the time, and that facility to be a learner is really probably the most applicable skill, thinking about what are the ways that he could move forward as he's returning to civilian life.

So these are just again examples of what it actually looks like and the kinds of ideas and insights you arrive at that might be the foundation for really new design ideas in terms of how you're serving your customers. And I'm excited to answer any questions going forward.

MS. HAMILTON: Great. Thank you so much, Kate. You've been just such a wonderful partner with us at IDEO, and we'll talk a little bit more in a bit about some possible contributions they can make to people winning the challenge.

The pleasure of this work, frankly, has been these amazing people that we get to work with, and Caitlin Docker works for Code for America and she'll tell you who Code for America is and then a lot of logistics about how to get started in this process if you've been sitting on this phone still interested in participating in our customer-centered design challenges.

CAITLIN DOCKER: Great. Thanks for the introduction, Virginia.

Hi, everyone. My name is Caitlin Docker and I work at a nonprofit called Code for America. Code for America believes that government can work better in the 21st century, so we're redesigning services for the workforce system.

For us it starts with user research. Last year when I took the course, I think one of the first questions that I had answered for us was, so what's the difference between user research, customer-centered design, human centered design, and design thinking? Well, you'll hear these terms used interchangeably throughout, but they all represent the same concept.

So let's talk a little bit about how to get ready for February 7th, the official start date. I've been some questions come through about what's the ideal number of team members. First, we recommend working with a team of four to eight people. You can have more than eight people on a team, but scheduling can get tough, and we'll come back to that in just a few minutes.

So we call your team of four to eight people your design team, because by the end of the course everyone will be a design thinker. Your team should represent your core WIOA partners, like folks from One-Stop operators, community organizations, TANF, workforce development boards, SNAP/E&T programs, and beyond.

And by having a diverse team you'll be able to look beyond the compliance and really apply customer-centered design to one of seven core challenges, or "how might we" questions, which we'll come back to in just a few minutes.

Each week we recommend reserving about five to seven hours to take the course. The course is an online self-paced class where you'll explore reading, case studies, videos and other activities in the field. We recommend that each member of your team take the course at a similar pace and work on core assignments together.

The seven-week curriculum will introduce you to the concept of human centered design and how this approach can be used to create innovative, effective, and sustainable solutions. And we know that WIOA implementation is underway, but this course will help you step back from business as usual, as the team from Wisconsin mentioned, and really help you redesign services for your customer while producing stronger outcomes.

You'll be able to better emphasize that jobseekers, employers who need skilled workers, out-of-school youth, and beyond to design more personalized services to help them get the skills, workers, and jobs that they need.

For me the hardest part about the course was to test the process, which was brand new to me, and not to rush to a solution in the first or second week. The user research or design thinking really allows you to take some risks and design a solution that meets your customers' needs, but also allows you to check some of your assumptions as well.

So as I mentioned, the course begins on February 7th and it runs through April 11th. It has three core phases; inspiration, ideation, and implementation. During the inspiration phase you'll identify your "how might we" question, your design team, and your customer and start getting into the field to talk with them. As Virginia mentioned, it could be as simple as sitting in your One-Stop to observe someone's first experience in the center, or perhaps talking with the security guard.

I know my team took it a step further and we went out to find what's called an analogous environment, like a kindergarten classroom. We watched kindergarteners as they walked into a friendly warm room with a lot of color, the teacher knew them by their name, and then the experience was personalized for each student. So the course will show you how to turn that inspiration into a potential solution for your job center, and that's what we call prototyping. You can see here that prototyping happens later in the course, so as the Wisconsin team mentioned, there's a lot of brainstorming, but that's OK.

You've already been introduced to a variety of names – IDEO, Acumen, NovoEd. To clarify a a few of these items, the course was designed by IDEO.org, so case organization, alongside of Acumen. Acumen has a lot of experience in online training. The platform that you'll be taking the course in is called NovoEd. We'll cover these names again in a few weeks, but again, know that these terms have been confusing for past participants. So just want – (inaudible) – that you'll be hearing from a variety of people throughout, and we'll help you make sure that you don't miss any important communications or resources along the way.

So speaking of which, here's an overall timeline for the course and the corresponding events. Good news is that you've already achieved the first item, and that's participating in today's webinar. This month you should form your design team and identify the challenge or "how might we" question that you're going to tackle.

Now, you have until February 21st to register for the course, again, which concludes on April 11th. Now, you're not in this alone. There'll be an army of coaches to help provide one-on-one feedback and answer your feedback, and I'll be helping provide biweekly webinars throughout to talk through challenges that teams may be facing and provide opportunities for you all to share your work.

Now, once the course officially concludes on April 11th, each team will have time to implement their prototype throughout May. And when we say implement your prototype, what we mean is getting your prototype out into the field; sharing your solution with your audience; get feedback and making small continuous improvement. As Donté mentioned, user-centered design is never finished; it's an ongoing process.

And then in June we'll host another webinar similar to today's where we'll share an application to go participate in a celebration and learning exchange in Washington, DC, which will likely take place in July. Now, we know there are going to be a lot of questions about the White House celebration and learning exchange, so don't worry. There'll be more information coming in the next few weeks.

All right. So let's get down to the nitty-gritty. First, you need to design your own team. A participant asks what role can I play in initiating or joining a design centered team? Well, first we want to identify again at least eight members from four organizations of your required WIOA partners. This can include those working on TANF, SNAP/E&T, adult education, literacy programs, YouthBuild, Job Corps, and the list goes on. But don't forget to include frontline staff.

We'll talk about how to register your design team, but know that if your design team is too small you may lose benefits of having an array of opinions. But if your group is too big it may be hard to get everyone around in the room for a conversation or brainstorming session.

Now, we talked a little bit about a challenge or "how might we" question that Virginia introduced at the beginning of today's webinar, so I'm going to turn things over to her to talk through seven challenges you can choose from.

MS. HAMILTON: Thanks, Caitlin.

So the first round that we did this project we had these three challenges. One focused on One-Stop customers, one focused on employers, and one focused on out-of-school youth. In the second round we added three more challenges. We added formerly incarcerated individuals, individuals with disabilities, and English language learners. We're going to keep all of those, and then we've added a seventh because we've had some conversations lately with various people around the country about how we can really design and accelerate the kind of leadership that you really need for a workforce program.

If you're running a One-Stop you have a certain set of partners. If you're a WIB director you have a much larger set of partners. If you're focused on the whole community you may have more. So this question about designing and accelerating cross-sector leadership we thought might be interesting for some of the teams to choose. A team is welcome to choose any one of these challenges to start your process and then you'll find that you'll be – as all of our speakers have talked about – refining them as you go through your process.

Caitlin, do you want to take this back?

MS. DOCKER: Yeah. So once you've identified your design team, pick your "how might we" question or core challenge. Then comes the actual registration for the course.

So tomorrow you'll receive a link to a Google form to help you with registration, and that needs to be completed no later than February 21st. In this form you'll need to do a few things. One, pick a team name. The team from Wisconsin I believe their name was "WOW." It can be something fun and creative or perhaps represent the name of your board.

From there you'll want to identify a team lead and an alternate lead. Now, these two people will be the go-to points of contact for the Department of Labor, the team of coaches, and myself. You'll need to provide the name and email addresses of everyone on your team, so again, up to eight people. And again, at least four of these should include your WIOA partners. This course will give you a new way of working with your partners so you're not just checking the compliance boxes along the way.

In this registration form you'll also check your "how might we" question that your team is planning to address, just so we have a sense of who's working on what throughout the course. Now, once you submit this registration form you'll receive an email from Acumen on how to access the platform, how to change your password, how to find where your team is, and where all of the assignments are.

This link for registration will also be posted on the WorkforceGPS website page tomorrow as well. We know there may be some questions around registration, so at the end of today's webinar there's an email address where you can send those questions to.

OK. Now for the fun part, that we've finished through many of the logistics for the course. You're not in this alone and you're going to be supported at every step along the way. You have Virginia Hamilton, the design thinking evangelist with Department of Labor. You'll also be assigned a coach to help answer your questions, troubleshoot challenges, and brainstorm with; and myself. I'll be hosting biweekly webinars so we can share learnings and insights with each other; talk about failure, risk; and of course, share other resources to help support you along the way.

So a little bit more information about the coaching support and peer sharing. We've heard from previous participants that it's really helpful to have weekly communication with coaches to help answer questions or brainstorm, tips on how to facilitate meetings with your team, or the right technology to use. The team from Wisconsin, for example, mentioned that they had conference calls, in-person meetings, and video calls over Skype.

We'll also use your coaching support to help share best practices and innovative tools others have used, and also support you in any technical challenges you may have with the platform itself. I know for me it was the first online learning or training that I've ever done before, so it took me a few times in the platform to really get used to it. So again, don't worry; we're in this together. You have a team of folks here to support you.

Now, as you're getting ready to take the course, we recommend a few supplies. You can have Post-It notes or scrap paper, pens, pencils, markers – really, anything that's going to help your team brainstorm. You'll see a picture here on the right of a team that used trains, toy soldiers, Mickey Mouse, cardboard boxes to really begin to prototype their solution.

The idea here is to keep it fun. For me it felt like I was in a fifth grade arts and crafts class, for example. So really, taking a step out of your day-to-day work and really getting creative and moving things around.

We also recommend mobile phones or cameras to document your work along the way. You'd be surprised how helpful it is to take pictures and really document your process. Plus it's a fun way to share updates with us but also your other team members' organizations who may be curious what you're up to.

MS. HAMILTON: So I'm going to take it back and answer a couple questions that have come in.

One question was there might not be people who are on this call; how would I connect with other partners? First, as Jen said at the very beginning, this webinar is going to be archived and will be up on the WorkforceGPS website in a couple of days. So you can go back and listen to this again and again. You can point your partners to it; have them listen in.

The second thing is Caitlin said that in order to put together your team you want to make sure you've got the core partners of WIOA. That really is only if you want to be part of the challenge that will allow you to be selected as one of the winners of the trip to Washington, DC.

The truth of the matter is – and there have been some teams or a set of nonprofits or other organizations and local communities – that want to take this class and participate in this even if they don't have exactly the right partners. That's fine. What we're interested in, really, is the workforce development system learning this skill, building this muscle, and becoming very customer-focused.

So yes, there's some criteria if you want to come to the learning exchange and celebration in DC, but our goal – and my personal goal – is to have everybody in the world understand and practice design thinking.

I want to make sure that it's clear that this is free. There is no cost to this. The class is free. It's a larger online class. Thousands and thousands of people around the world are going to be taking it at the same time you are. But what we've done with Acumen is to create a great partnership with them, and they will create for us a separate space on this platform for workforce professionals to go and talk to each other, upload information, upload pictures of what you're doing and so on.

So we'll have our own space on this larger MOOC – for those of you familiar with that term. It's a very large class and it is free, and DOL is also providing coaches for free to work with you. So it's such a deal. You can't not do this.

So I just want to kind of move back and then we'll have a little time for questions. I think we've said this all along the way, that for customers the experience of participating in our programs or coming into our One-Stop is not just a service that we're providing; it's everything.

I talked to a woman a few months ago who went into a One-Stop kind of as a mystery shopper. She watched a guy on a computer working on his résumé or maybe on a job search website or something; he's clearly very involved in it. And at some point he got up and he went over to the wall to plug his cell phone and someone came over and said, sir, you can't plug your phone in. And he said, well, I left my kids at home, I came here to use the computer and I'm trying to get this thing done; my battery's about to die. The guy said, sir, you can't plug your phone in.

So that's like what Sarah was saying. That's a tiny little interaction, but that probably soured the experience in the One-Stop for that guy. The lesson from me out of that is every One-Stop should have poles like they do in airports where people can plug in their cell phones. But for customers it's paying attention to every tiny little thing we do. I love Waukesha County; one of the things they did was they took some pictures of their office before, and it's just covered in flyers and papers. It looks like a government office.

They took all of that out and they put all of the information that they wanted to share on iPads that were up on the wall that people could look at. So every single thing we're doing makes a big difference in terms of people's experience, and that's part of what this customer-centered design process, is really just starting to pay attention to all of this.

And the second is – and I've mentioned this before – that this is a really tangible way to bring partners together. When you're in a room together with your vocational rehabilitation, TANF, adult ed, you are – and talking about a shared customer and you could do to improve their experience, then you're starting in the right place.

I've talked to some people when they're starting to implement WIOA who literally just went to their welfare department and said you're a mandatory partner and you have to give me money and participate in the One-Stop system. That's not a successful approach. A more successful approach might be, hey, guess what, we're going to start to really design for our shared customers; why don't you join our design team? And let's spend the next seven weeks together learning ways that we can work together to make sure that our customers are successful.

And the last, it's really a shift from a mindset of compliance to focus on customer outcomes. The theory – which I think has been proven over and over again – is if customers really get what they need their outcomes will improve; that in some sense this project is about improving customer experience, which we're going to be measuring in customer satisfaction in WIOA. And when you've improved customers' experience you generally can also improve your outcomes, better meeting your performance standards.

And when we talk to people about this, over and over again we hear the question, well, is this going to be OK? I mean, the regulations – or the OIG might come – really? This is about making our services work better for the American worker, for people who are unemployed who want to participate in the economy.

And there's nothing in the law or regulations that would prevent you from doing this work. Yeah, there might be a set of services that you may have to figure out how to work with, and you have an MIS and reporting requirements and so on. But in large this work can be done really thinking about what our customers need and not what the compliance issues are.

And we have another question which says, "If I'm unable to put together a team, what's the name of the MOOC course?" So if you just Google "IDEO + Acumen human centered design" the course will come up. It starts February 7th. As Caitlin said, we're giving our teams a little extra time to actually all register, and it is a course that you don't have to sit down on Tuesday at 10:00 and be ready to go. You can take the class any time during the week.

You don't want to wait too long to get started because it is a lot of work. People have said that it takes between four and seven hours a week for seven weeks. I'd also say – one of the managers down in San Diego gave a great talk on their engagement with this process. He said his staff came to him after hearing a launch webinar like this and said they wanted to participate in this class, that it was going to take four to seven hours a week, and they wanted permission to do it.

And he said, well, what's the outcome going to be? And they said, well, we don't know; that's the whole point. We know what question we're going to be working on but we don't know what our outcome's going to be until we go through it. And he reluctantly said yes and said that he's now – you know those people who used to smoke and now they don't so they're real anti-smoker? He's now a total convert to human centered design because he watched his team go through this process and the improvements that were made and the skills that they learned through this process as well.

We have a couple other questions here. "What's the average time a person spends in a One-Stop?" I don't know, but maybe that would be a good question for people to look at as they go through this process.

"Is there a place for those without a team to connect and form a team together?" You know, I would suggest – it's very difficult to do this work if you're not in the same community, because a lot of the work that you're doing is focused on the actual service delivery in your community. If you feel like you don't have anybody, please go ahead.

We'll show you at the end, we now have an email set up for questions for the customer-centered design project. We have a set of consultants we've just hired with a company called High Impact Performance and they will be our wonderful coaches and will be able to answer questions. So if you don't have a team and you want to see if you can find one, feel free to email the email address we'll show you in a minute. They might be able to help you; they might not.

The other thing you can do is if you want to build your skills and learn this and you may not be able to address one of these challenges, you can take this class. Acumen actually has a set of little pre-made challenges that can be used to go through the classes. We're encouraging – and DOL is investing in this – because we want to improve the workforce system, so we would hope that you would use the workforce challenges in order to make this happen.

"If you participated in previous challenges, can a group participate again?" Absolutely. In fact we had one team I think who came to the White House who had done another challenge. It was a different challenge. They did maybe One-Stop the first time and out-of-school youth the second time. But absolutely, and it's a great way to continue to deepen building your skill.

"How does a partner or stakeholder find out which workforce boards in our region are pursuing this and let them know we want to be involved?" Again, I would send your question into this – and we'll go to it right now – this is the email address. Email to this email address (ccd@hipimpact.com) and ask the question. We won't be able to know right away but we'll be able to learn as we go through the process if we can hook you up with someone else.

"Can you have a specific program team or does it have to be multiple partners?" I mean, I think the answer to that question is kind of what Kate talked about earlier and I did as well. The more diverse your team, the better your outcomes are going to be. I mean, at IDEO – and Kate, you can jump in here – they have anthropologists and salesmen and people who know design, people who work in banks. They include a very broad range of people because the more diverse your team is, the more kind of divergent thinking you're going to have and the more creative you'll be able to be.

"Have any of the previous participants hired external facilitators to help at various times in the process?" I don't know the answer to that question. We can certainly ask our folks. There are some facilitators out in the world who are now doing human centered design work.

Kate talked about the project that they did with ex-military. That's actually the PacMtn Workforce Board in the state of Washington. We had funded a Camo To Commerce project for them to work with, people coming out of the military. And they actually hired IDEO to come in and help them target very much more specifically how they could provide good services.

Kate, did you want to jump back in and talk about, if you're still on the phone, a possible bonus for people who win the challenge? She may not be on the phone

IDEO loved this project, because they've seen the work that they've done – create this framework – really grow and spread across the United States in a way that's really helping people. It's not inventing a new pill bottle. It's really helping people find jobs and helping businesses find talent.

So Kate is in negotiation with IDEO to offer teams who win this particular challenge some additional training for a number of the teams. It's a value of about $5,000. It's a set of online courses that IDEO teaches themselves that takes the curriculum that's in this IDEO+Acumen class and really goes much deeper and involves coaching from IDEO. So that may be another possible prize for people who need challenges.

Do we have other – Caitlin, anything else you want to add, and/or are there any other questions from people out in the viewing land?

MS. DOCKER: OK. One thing I would add to the question around hiring external facilitators to help with the course. We'll walk through some facilitation techniques during our biweekly webinars, so you'll have that support throughout the course.

The other thing I would mention as well is you all know the right people that you need to have in the room to help address the "how might we" question. I think both Donté and the Wisconsin team alluded to that earlier, that it was a great opportunity for them to bring together people they don't work with in a collaborative way on a day-to-day basis but more around the compliance. So it's a nice opportunity to reset some relationships and work collaboratively together perhaps for the first time.

MS. HAMILTON: And the other thing that many of the teams was they included participants in their teams as well. We had a number of teams who worked on the out-of-school youth challenge and included young people in their teams. A number of teams who were focused on the business community had business owners who were also part of the process.

Well, without hearing any other questions – I don't see them – we are just so excited to be launching this third round. We hope that lots of you who are on the phone today will put together a team and jump on the process. And we look forward to working with you.

MS. DOCKER: Thank you all so much for joining today's webinar. Again, we know that there was a lot of information covered today. So again, this webinar will be made available for all of the participants. And please use the email address on the screen – ccd@hipimpact.com – to send in any other questions and we'll be sure to get back to you this week.

MS. HAMILTON: Thank you all.

(END)