

IMPACT REPORT '23



INNOVATION@MCG

AUGUST 2023

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IMPACT SNAPSHOT

85K

People served with behaviorally-designed postcards, buck-slips, and redesigned websites to improve constituent experience.

72.4%

Of the 29 Operations and Administrative departments are involved in the Accelerator Program.

23+

Departments engaged in civic design and Accelerator projects since Jan 2021

90+

Catalyzed and documented **completed improvements** by Accelerators

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AWARDS

Top Influencer in Local Gov Award - Ranked #2, USA

National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards

- Improving Language for Inclusive Hiring
- Adapting Design to Justice Values (DesignxPeople)

PRESENTATIONS

Code for America Summit: People Power + Community

“Iterating community-centered design initiatives: Moving towards shared decision making in local government”

Tableau Conference: Analytics for Everyone

“Dashboarding is Storytelling: Building Narratives Through Data and Design”

Civic Design Conference (Inaugural):

Panelist, “Shifting towards community-centered design”



MEDIA

What Happens When Frontline City Employees Feel Empowered to Make Change | NextCity

Innovator of the Week | Bloomberg Cities

Service Design & Innovation with Anna Chung, MBTA
ELGL Podcast

Relieving Residents' Frustrations and Streamlining Workflows Through Digitizing Forms - US Digital Response

FOREWORD

In 2008, Ms. Castillo lost her home.

The economy crashed.

Systems collapsed.

A critical notice never reached her through a maze of bureaucracy.

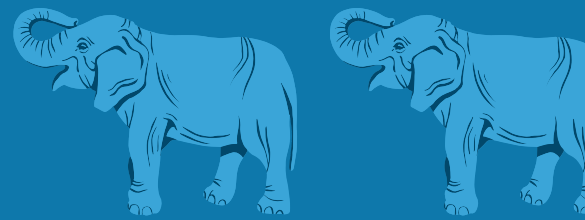
There was a human on the other side of that paperwork, but they never connected. Devastated and without a house, she left Montgomery County Maryland to move back in with her parents in Brownsville, Texas.

In 2022, Berenice, a new office support coordinator at Montgomery County MD's Department of Housing and Community Affairs, looked at their intake process. She saw four separate, complicated forms. She saw families come all they way to an office for services that could be provided online. She saw an opportunity to **make things better: efficient, effective, and equitable**. She listened to clients coming into the office and to her colleagues struggling with a massive workload after years of COVID crisis response. **Centering those humans**, she **recognized her power** – the ability to create change.

And she did. She simplified the process to reduce errors that could cost people their homes. She turned four forms into one simplified form to make it easy to request a service. She translated the form into Spanish. Having previously worked in the 3-1-1 call center, she partnered with her teammates to improve the quality and reduce the number of Knowledge Based Articles used by call takers. This helped make it more likely that people calling for service would **receive complete and accurate information** that was **easy to find and understandable** for staff and callers. She digitized the form to make it easier to fill out and to speed up the data entry process taxing herself and fellow staff. To create space for learning, she developed and launched a client satisfaction survey, organizing a system to gather feedback for continuous improvement. Later she proudly presented her change to the Chief Administrative Officer. Berenice worked **to meet her community's needs** and make sure people like Ms. Castillo could get help when they needed it.

Berenice Castillo is an innovation Accelerator.

This is innovation. Ms. Castillo **acted, informed by experience**. She **started small and is scaling** her impact. **Connected on purpose** through the Accelerator community, she is collaborating across departments to link the data about each customer directly into County systems. She hopes this will **enable services to be delivered in a timely and complete manner** across our government. She connected with the County Executive's new Translation Unit so that forms are **in the languages that people understand**. She is working with the civic design team to further refine the housing intake form and link with the inspectors in the Office of Landlord and Tenant Affairs. Demonstrating what is possible, she is building collective power to create change.



Montgomery County Government needs more Berenice Castillos in action. In fact, we need thousands more as our organization is going through a massive people transition in the coming years. For too long, Montgomery County Government did not welcome people like Berenice. Job advertisements written by harried hiring managers ‘the way we’ve always done them,’ made it less likely for women to apply for jobs. To meet **the standards of our constituents**, we need to meet the needs of our colleagues. Recruitment staff were too burdened by wasteful paperwork and clunky systems to do what they love – sourcing talent from our communities. Our job application process was so long and lengthy that folks dropped out; not just applicants but hiring managers confused and frustrated about their role, what forms to fill out, and what to expect next. Hiring managers bombarding HR staff with basic questions left HR staff overwhelmed as they provided empathetic, courteous and informative service while drowning in a backlog delayed tasks like manually completing the offer letters for potential new hires before those applicants took jobs elsewhere.

In the face of this challenge, OHR experimented with a different approach. Having supported many staff becoming Accelerators, the Office of Human Resources then invested in adopting **a human-centered design approach** to improving hiring and the employee experience. As part of that investment, Nidhi Singh Rathore joined Innovation@MCG as part of a new team to lead civic design. When she saw the demographic data on job applicants, she made it visible and applied it – quickly designing an [‘equity guide job ad’](#) to increase the diversity of candidates coming in. This rapid prototype made visible the wide variance in how hiring managers understood roles, responsibilities, and next steps for hiring. Working alongside partners in OHR and across MCG, she **did the work to make these invisible challenges visible** and **embrace complexity** as she brought a [Hiring Playbook](#) to life. This playbook serves as a toolkit for hiring teams across MCG, which include the roles of Hiring Managers, Human Resource Liaisons (HR Liaisons) and Interview Panel Members. The Playbook is used by hirings team to develop a shared understanding of the hiring process. Recruiters report a 60% reduction in answering questions since the Playbook launched. HR identified departments rapidly filling jobs with high quality candidates and lifted up these ‘bright spots’ with a How to Hire Guide so others could copy what worked. Across MCG, we are working with people to organize and make things better. Karen Hochberg in HR cut the interview panel training time in half without decreasing quality in order to increase the size of the interview panel pool. Melissa Garner in Transportation made visible who was available to serve on interview panels to reduce the burden on women and people of color who were constantly being asked. Their fellow Accelerator Brian Hawley paired up with another Accelerator, Juan Ye, to automate the manual processing of offer letters to reduce the administrative burden and potential errors in making offers to top candidates. Amanda Ussak led the police department through a design process to improve the applicant experience and make the application process significantly shorter. Michael Baskin brought together departments to digitize processes and bring forms online to simplify the onboarding process. Together, we are changing who government is, how we act, the results we deliver, and the stories of **what government can be**.

CONSTITUENT EXPERIENCE STANDARDS

When we work to improve government services, to what standard do we aspire?

Our constituents set the standards – we worked with our colleagues across the government to develop these standards and we partner with them on projects to improve services to meet these standards. In contrast to the traditional way of writing from government's perspectives and the needs of our organizational silos, these standards are written from the constituent's perspective and are based on their needs.

Everyone we serve will experience a Montgomery County Government where:

- **INFORMATION**

- Information is easy to find, understandable, and in my language.
- Information is complete and accurate.

- **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

- It is easy and quick to get help when I need it.
- Customer service is courteous, empathetic, and informative.

- **SERVICE DELIVERY**

- It is easy to request a service.
- I know what to expect.
- Services are delivered in a timely and complete manner.



TEAM OVERVIEW

[Click here
to learn
more about
the team](#)

Towards a **just, liberating, human** government, the Innovation@MCG Team **works with the people of Montgomery County Government building power and organizing systems to meet our communities' needs.**

We currently act in three areas – be an Accelerator, lead civic design, and open innovation.

Be an Accelerator

PRIORITY: The Accelerator course introduces colleagues to a structured problem-solving approach and a community as they create change.

THEORY OF CHANGE: Build organizational capacity to improve processes and systems.

Lead Civic Design

PRIORITY: Support our colleagues across Montgomery County government to more deeply understand challenges and redesign how government serves people.

THEORY OF CHANGE: Demonstrate what is possible by delivering results through a human centered approach.

Open Innovation

PRIORITY: A space for inclusive, broad-based events, exploring emergent areas, and championing changes to how we work. Currently focused on Change Stories and Innovation Fellows.

THEORY OF CHANGE: Shift narratives, broaden engagement, and create space for staff to explore new ways of working

ACCELERATOR

The Accelerator is an introduction to a structured problem-solving course and a community. Too often we think we are stuck in awful process and systems. Accelerators believe those in the processes and in the systems are often best able to make improvements. They recognize their power to create change. Accelerators grow their ability to create change by creating change, learning a repeatable process, and building community with other change-makers. With guidance, coaching, and experiential education, Accelerators use a mix of process improvement, human centered design, and other methods as they work on projects to improve outcomes for Montgomery County. These projects range from making it easier for our constituents to get appointments to automating offer letters for new job candidates. Accelerators have improved permitting processes and contracting systems, interview panels and dental services for unsheltered neighbors. Accelerators come from many positions and many departments – united by a shared commitment to improving our processes and systems.



Interested in learning more about Bernice's story and Accelerator Impact?

Scan this QR code or click here for a short snippet of Accelerator impact on constituents' life. This link link and code works best for Montgomery County account. Get in touch if you are unable to access the link!



Accelerator Highlights

ACCELERATOR LEAD: KORI WENNAN

PROJECT

Improving Collaboration with Alcohol & Beverage Suppliers (ABS)

IMPACT

Enhancing the constituent experience.

Estimated Savings: \$1,200 printing costs annually and \$29,400 staff time over a year.

OUTCOME

ABS collaborated with suppliers to develop sales programs in retail stores. Introducing a streamlined process and form has led to faster decision-making, reduced errors, and increased opportunities for local and minority-owned businesses. The initiative has also fostered beneficial relationships and inspired other accelerator projects.

ACCELERATOR LEAD: ANNA YE

PROJECT

Growing a Citizen Developer Community for Tech Solutions (TEBS)

IMPACT

Fostered a collaborative environment, with staff learning from and inspiring one another.

Year 1 Soft Dollar Savings: \$75,000

OUTCOME

Previously, Montgomery County would spend between \$10,000 and \$30,000 over 3-5 months on third-party software, which sometimes didn't meet needs. Instead of purchasing new software, process owners were trained to use existing tools like Office365 for automation, achieving results in 3-5 weeks at no extra cost. The first year saw three projects:

- Mobile dental project: \$50K annual savings
- File sharing: \$5K annual savings
- Correspondence log: \$20K annual savings

Anna Ye



Accelerator Highlights

ACCELERATOR LEAD: BRIAN HAWLEY

PROJECT

Accelerating Hiring Through Backend Process Automation (OHR)

IMPACT

Quicker hiring and fewer errors in candidate selection.

Estimated Savings: Between \$9,000 and \$12,000 annually in staff time and \$4,000 in technology fees.

OUTCOME

The recruitment tracker app suite was developed to simplify hiring. It replaced manual offer letter updates, reduced errors and delays, and saved \$4,000 annually using standard features instead of new technology.



Brian Hawley
Accelerator

[Click here to learn about dozens of ways our colleagues are improving County Government](#)

CIVIC DESIGN

We lead civic design by supporting our colleagues across Montgomery County government to more deeply understand challenges and redesign how government serves people. Civic design leads work toward a future where (a) experiences with MCG are intuitive, welcoming, transparent, and meet people's needs (b) those most impacted by the problems shape the solutions (c) colleagues practice civic design methods and mindsets that center humans.

Civic design leads work with our colleagues through a human-centered design process to **more deeply understand challenges, explore solutions, and deliver tangible change.** We partnered with Libraries to integrate employee and community voices into a strategic plan, and with Human Resources to develop a Hiring Playbook to smooth hiring. We've helped teams incorporate small business voices to revamp a new Business Center website and test different postcard messages to help taxpayers claim their tax credits. We've worked across departments to put constituent voice at the center in developing Constituent Experience standards, and worked to meet those standards by putting callers and frontline staff at the center of modernizing call centers. With each partnership, we work to both deliver results and to demonstrate what is possible by changing how we approach challenges.



OPEN INNOVATION

We open innovation to all and invite in curiosity, play, and belonging to advance a just, human, liberating County. We open innovation with events, fellowships, storytelling and on-demand facilitation support.

With the **Innovation Showcase** and other **Open Innovation events**, we lift up ‘bright spots’ and **champion change makers** so that ideas that work are copied and applied across government. Our events introduce different tools and ways of working to a broader audience. From new forms of artificial intelligence to new forms of organizational intelligence, we are helping Montgomery County to open itself to the emergent futures and embrace the complexity of a volatile world.

While exploring government careers, our fellows have brought fresh ways of working to departments ranging from 311 to Health and Human Services. [Opening a partnership with US Digital Response, we were able to support the Licensing and Regulations team in bringing their processes online in the depths of COVID so businesses could open.](#)

With a new internal **fellowship initiative**, we’re investing more in supporting our colleagues who are ready to scale up their impact in advancing departmental and County goals.

Our **Change Stories** project seeks to amplify the voices of those making government better to help us write collective narratives for the futures we seek.

With facilitation support, we create space for better ways of connecting, ideating, and achieving purpose across silos.

TESTIMONY

“The Accelerator Community has provided a safe and friendly space to learn, to grow, to share ideas and grow my connections within MCG. Feel very grateful to be a part of it!”



Shirley Aceituno
Office of Human Resources

MIALS



Firm beliefs, softly held.

Start, small and scale
Embrace complexity
Act informed by experience
Create space
Center humans
Recognize power
Make the implicit explicit
Pursue justice; seek liberation
Do the work

We experiment with and foster ways of working that **break from the norm**. These ways of working include **capabilities, skills, approaches, norms, cultures, mindsets, and structures**. Beyond adopting from elsewhere, we **adapt tools to public sector justice values**. Our ways of working **challenge “this is how we’ve always done it”** so government can **deliver greater impact together**.

At our core, **Innovation@MCG** believes in the **people of local government improving our own processes and systems to better meet the needs of our communities**. We exist to enable our colleagues' success. We serve as a **resource and advocate for people making things better: effective, efficient, and equitable**.

We seek a government that is **just, liberating, human**.

TESTIMONIALS

“Perhaps more than ever, public entities are being asked to ‘do more with less’. This course is truly for anybody who wants to make things better without having to spend additional resources!”

Anthony Harris

Office of Performance

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

TESTIMONIALS

FROM OUR CHAMPIONS

“Because we analyzed the alcohol license renewal processes right before the pandemic hit, we were well positioned adapt to the needs and opportunities created by the Governor’s Executive Order that dramatically impacted licensure across the state. We quickly implemented the three projects identified through the Accelerator and added several from the brainstorming list. These process changes precipitated several more, and taken together, the revised renewals program ultimately received a NACo award for responsive government.”

Crystal Ruiz | Community Engagement Cluster

“The program has made me more creative and given me time to practice thinking outside the box. My thoughts and actions have changed because of this program. I still talk about the sticky note on the doorbell idea. So small - but it helped!”

Laura Chapman | Office of Human Resources

“Working with the Innovation group has been refreshing and fun. They guide you to reinvent your mindset and create something new in your day-to-day work process. If you want to have breakthroughs in ways you collaborate and engage employees, reach out to them, they are a great resource.”

Sogand Seirafi | Transit Services, Department of Transportation

CIVIC DESIGN

MISSION

We support our colleagues across Montgomery County government to more deeply understand challenges and redesign how government serves people.

VISION

We are working towards an MCG where:

- Experiences with MCG are intuitive, welcoming, transparent, and meet people's needs
- Those most impacted by the problems shape the solutions
- Colleagues apply civic design methods and mindsets that center humans



CIVIC DESIGN

OVERVIEW

Civic design may be a helpful approach to solving challenges in which:

- **The challenge is not fully defined or understood;** the solution is not already clear. Humans—and their motivations, behaviors and needs—are the driving force of the project.
- **The focus goes beyond improving efficiency and efficacy** to providing a better experience.
- **The challenge is complex,** and the solution is not straightforward.
- **The impact would be of real value to the communities you serve.**

Civic Design Leads guide MCG teams through a human-centered design process that involves more deeply understanding the problem, exploring solutions, and ultimately delivering change. They work to ensure the perspectives of those impacted by a service are actively incorporated into the design of the service. When possible, the service owners, service delivery team, and those being served all have power in shaping the new service. Civic Design Leads work to improve the experience of those impacted by the service across the full journey, holding this larger picture in mind as they improve individual service touch points.

Completed in FY23

PROJECT

Streamlining Hiring
Across MCG
Office of Human Resources

PROBLEM

With 15% of County positions vacant, 52% of County staff eligible for retirement in the next four years, and a workforce that does not reflect the communities we serve, improving hiring across MCG is critical.

OUTCOME

We worked with the Office of Human Resources to build a comprehensive playbook that guides hiring teams across MCG through the entire hiring process with required steps, best practices, checklists, and tips on how to mitigate bias while interviewing and selecting a candidate. Now in use, this guide adds clarity and reduces the administrative burden of each person involved in the hiring process.

PROJECT

Designing HHS Call Centers
Around User Experience
**Department of Health and
Human Services**

PROBLEM

DHHS serves tens of thousands of Montgomery County residents. Many of these customers have multiple needs that straddle different DHHS offices. DHHS needs comprehensive systems for customers to make contact with, and navigate between, DHHS departments and programs, to ensure a cohesive and satisfactory experience for customers regardless of entry point.

OUTCOME

Working with DHHS frontline staff, we mapped the caller journey to understand the personnel and technology requirements necessary to build a smooth caller experience. As a result, the two highest-volume DHHS contact centers will be getting upgraded systems that allow for self-navigation, language-based routing, and increased data capture to continually improve performance.

Completed in FY23

PROJECT

Helping Homeowners Keep
Their Tax Credit

Department of Finance

PROBLEM

~81,000 Montgomery County homeowners need to sign up for a State tax credit. Without doing so, they will not receive the dollars from a County tax credit.

OUTCOME

We supported the Finance Department in developing and implementing a communication strategy that involved designing postcards, updating a webpage, and analyzing the effectiveness of different types of language to make future communications more effective.

PROJECT

Supporting Local
Businesses through a
Better Business Website
Office of County Executive

PROBLEM

In preparation for the new Chief Digital Officer onboarding, we wanted to build momentum and show what was possible using a human-centered, Agile approach to website development.

OUTCOME

In a collaboration with CEX (Business Center team), TEBS, Innovation@MCG, and a number of business owners, we built a new Business Center website. Small business owners tried out live mock-ups and their feedback guided rapid improvements. Since launch, feedback received from business owners on the website has been very positive. [Explore at montgomerycountymd.gov/business](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/business) This demonstrated what is possible for digital interactions that meet the CX Standards in the future, while meeting small business user needs today.

Completed in FY23

PROJECT

Improving the Experience
of Interacting with
Government
Office of County Executive

PROBLEM

Montgomery County has many front doors but no enterprise-wide approach to understanding, benchmarking, and improving the customer experience. This body of work seeks to center community members in defining the County-wide standard of service, and support departments in measuring and improving the experiences they provide.

OUTCOME

We conducted user-centered research to understand expectations of Montgomery County residents. Based on that research, and in collaboration with key customer-facing departments across MCG, the Civic Design team led the development of Customer Experience Standards for Montgomery County Government. These standards will be used by service owners, customer-facing employees, and County leaders to improve the experience of their customers and to identify service areas that are working well to lift up and celebrate.

PROJECT

A New Strategic Framework
for Public Libraries
**Montgomery County Public
Libraries**

PROBLEM

MCPL needed a new strategic framework that reflected the needs of residents and staff and which would guide its work and decision-making through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

OUTCOME

We solicited input from customers on their current and desired use of libraries through vision boards at all branches, an online survey, and five focus groups in multiple languages, totaling nearly 300 responses. We then facilitated workshops with library staff at each branch and the Central office to analyze customer feedback and define the needs of library staff. This process resulted in a new strategic plan with an updated mission, vision, core values, goals and strategic priorities for the next three years.



Hear in Michael's words how we moved from job advertisements to a hiring process playbook. Scan this QR code or [click here for a short snippet](#) of our journey. This link and QR code work best for Montgomery County account holders. Get in touch if you are unable to access the link!



TESTIMONY

“The Hiring Process Playbook is probably the most effective single guidance document I have seen in my career. The content is excellent but the way the document is designed and the hyperlinks to additional resources, etc... makes it very easy and effective to use. It certainly gives me a lot of additional ideas and inspiration...”

Rafael Pumarejo Murphy

Director, Office of Grants Management

CHALLENGES

“Your efforts to assist the team in understanding their individual motivations and being able to openly share experiences and issues encountered in their work provides profound and meaningful insights. By helping them to define the challenges they encounter in their work, you have put them on the path to developing sound and practical solutions.”

Mary Gentry

Department of Housing & Community Affairs

Completed in FY23

PROJECT

Shifting Property Owners to Paying Their Property Tax Online

Department of Finance

PROBLEM

The majority of property owners pay their property tax by mail, which is problematic for Finance staff and provides an inferior customer experience for property owners. The Dept. of Finance has invested considerable resources into the online payment system and wants more property owners to utilize it.

OUTCOME

Our team worked with Finance staff to design a new buckslip (the flyer in the envelope with the property tax bill) and update the online property tax payment webpages. Based on these improvements, we anticipate that more property tax owners will pay online, saving themselves and staff time, and leading to a better experience for all.

PROJECT

Optimizing Police Recruiting
Montgomery County Police Department

PROBLEM

Montgomery County Police Department Academy classes are the smallest in years. MCPD needs more qualified applicants to apply, complete the application process, and accept a position with MCPD.

OUTCOME

Together with MCPD, we shortened the application process by 1-3 months by consolidating assessments, moving forms online, and reducing administrative burden for applicants and recruiters. We also piloted a strategic recruitment planning workshop to improve candidate sourcing and outreach. Our partnership resulted in almost double the number of applicants from the previous cycle, and seating an academy class of more than 50% women, up from 23%.

Completed in FY23

PROJECT

Bringing MCGEO Union Leaders and County Offices to The Table
Office of County Executive

PROBLEM

Union leaders and varied County departments are often in tense environments, leading to a continual lack of generative spaces. The Office of the County Executive wanted to change that and create a space where different stakeholders come together to identify opportunity spaces.

OUTCOME

To gather different perspectives and relationships, we facilitated a structured space where MCGEO, OHR, and OLR came together as thought partners to gain understanding of current gaps in gathering feedback from employees and their experiences. This space was designed for idea generation—not for commitments, bargaining issues, or proposals. OHR utilized this space to learn about employee challenges, and MCGEO Union Leaders felt seen and heard.

PROJECT

Understanding the staff experience
Office of Landlord & Tenant Affairs

PROBLEM

OLTA sought to understand challenges staff face that impact the ability to provide services.

OUTCOME

We facilitated a Challenge Definition & Root Cause Analysis Workshop which identified core barriers to staff working efficiently. Staff then designed a more equitable case assignment process and procedures for when and how a case gets expedited.

TOUCHPOINTS

We seek to organize services and systems to be intuitive, welcoming, and transparent. We want Montgomery County's services to meet people's needs.

A constituent journey is the path that a person takes to meet their needs. It is a series of touchpoints or interactions that a person has with the government organization. We help our partners put the constituent at the center and design a service journey that exceeds their expectations.

For example, let's imagine a constituent journey for someone who wants to apply for a building permit. *Let's call them Bob DeBuilder.* Bob's journey might include touchpoints such as searching for information on the local government website, submitting an online application, receiving an email confirmation, scheduling an inspection via a phone call, engaging with an inspector, submitting payment, and receiving a permit. Each of these touchpoints should be designed to meet Bob's needs and expectations, such as providing clear and concise information, allowing for easy submission of the application, and providing timely and accurate updates on the status of the permit application. A journey is the sum of all the touchpoints along the way. We work to simplify unnecessary or confusing touchpoints to create a better journey and interaction for the constituent.

Each touchpoint represents just the tip of the iceberg, or the 'front stage', where the interaction happens, as well as the full iceberg, including the 'back stage,' that floats below the surface. For example, when a constituent calls 3-1-1, they have a conversation with a government representative. This conversation is the front stage. Behind the scenes or 'back stage', there is a whole system supporting that call including technology (a phone system, a few databases), information infrastructure (Knowledge Based Articles, informal connections of 'who to call'), and human infrastructure (including support processes and management). As we seek to improve each touchpoint, we work to ensure everything behind that touchpoint works, too. There is no great constituent experience without a great colleague experience.

We work with our colleagues re-organizing systems to meet our communities' needs, and building their power to continue to adapt to emergent futures.

Coaching Design Skills in FY23

Our constituents often struggle with forms and communications that are difficult to understand or complete. Practice with foundational design and plain language skills can ensure our government better meets constituent expectations.

OUTCOME

- 195 MCG employees joined workshops to be introduced to principles of visual design, plain language, or improving government forms.
- Ten MCG employees participated in coached, two week sprints and delivered improved products for their constituents.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP





FOOD ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

To submit a referral form to get help obtaining food:
Scan this code or call 311 and ask for the Food Access Call Center



To view the calendar of food distributions around the County:
Scan this code to see the listings or call 311 for assistance



To get help completing a SNAP application:

- 240-777-1003 - Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- 301-818-3614 - Food Council SNAP Outreach Program
- 866-821-5552 - Maryland Hunger Solutions
- 301-453-5560 - Catholic Charities/ Spanish Catholic Center

The Service Consolidation Hubs assist residents in need with food, diapers, case management and referrals. Please contact the Hub closest to you.

- Upcounty, Germantown: 240-912-1077.
- Seneca Creek Community Church, Gaithersburg: 301-793-3321.
- Interfaith Works, Twinbrook/Rockville: 301-848-4427.
- Harvest Intercontinental Church, Olney: 301-588-8099.
- Oak Chapel United Methodist Church, Silver Spring 20906: 301-501-5804.
- Hughes United Methodist Church, Wheaton/Glenmont: 301-949-8383.
- Clifton Park Baptist Church, Silver Spring/Takoma: 301-434-2456.
- Kingdom Fellowship AME Church, Silver Spring/East County: 301-589-0866.

To pick up food from Manna, call 301-424-1130 or 311

Visit the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Food Assistance page for a full listing of resources

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19-food>

AFTER THE WORKSHOP



Food Assistance Resources

For information on food distributions throughout Montgomery County, call 240-777-0311 and ask for the Food Access Call Center.

Service Consolidation Hubs assist residents in need with food, diapers, case management and referrals. Please contact the Hub closest to you.			
East County	Kingdom Global Community Dev. Corp.	12101 Tech Rd.	301-589-0866
Gaithersburg	Seneca Creek Community Church	13 Firstfield Rd.	301-793-3321
Germantown	UpCounty Hub	12900 Middlebrook Rd.	240-912-1077
Olney	Harvest Intercontinental Church	16227 Batchellors Forest Rd.	301-588-8099
Rockville	Interfaith Works	751 Twinbrook Pkwy.	301-848-4427
Silver Spring	Clifton Park Baptist Church	8818 Piney Branch Rd.	301-434-2456
Silver Spring (20906)	Oak Chapel United Methodist Church	14500 Layhill Rd.	301-501-5804
Wheaton	Hughes United Methodist Church	19700 Georgia Ave.	301-949-8383

To pick up food from Manna, call 301-424-1130 or 240-777-0311



Scan to see a calendar of food distributions



Scan to request food assistance

For help completing SNAP applications call:

Montgomery County DHHS	240-777-1003
Food Council SNAP Outreach Program	301-818-3614
Maryland Hunger Solutions	866-821-5552
Catholic Charities/Spanish Catholic Center	301-453-5560

Visit Montgomery County's Dept. of Health & Human Services Food Assistance page for a full listing of resources:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19-food>




Finishing in FY24

PROJECT

Recruitment & Retention of
Election Judges
Board of Elections

PROBLEM

There is an insufficient number and political affiliation diversity of Election Judges (EJs) to staff polling locations and support necessary election processes beyond election day.

OUTCOME IN PROGRESS

Board of Elections requested Civic Design support them in identifying challenges and developing solutions to recruit, train, and retain Election Judges (EJ)s. Initial work is focused on the points of contact between interest and training. We are engaging previous EJs and those who have never served in key populations in the exploration of solutions.

PROJECT

Increasing Equity in County
Information and Services
Through Language
Accessibility
Translation Unit

PROBLEM

Despite mandates, funding, and desire, County information is often not in the languages people understand. Understanding of language access, plain English, and consideration for audience needs & and comprehension levels is low. This results in last-minute requests for translation or missing the opportunity for translation altogether.

OUTCOME IN PROGRESS

In the first phase of this work, we will focus on understanding departmental user needs related to Translation Unit services and Language Access more broadly. Translation Unit staff have conducted user research interviews with departmental liaisons to improve the workflow from departments to the unit and back. This effort coincides with the forthcoming Language Access Executive Order.

Finishing in FY24

PROJECT

Staff and Customer
Experience Improvements
(Germantown Pilot)
**Office of Eligibility and
Support Services**

PROBLEM

OESS in MCG is showing up to serve low-income families and individuals in our County, even when they do not control all parts of the system. While customer service challenges are gaining more visibility, they are a symptom of underlying issues such as systemic barriers created by State and Federal government, interpersonal challenges due to employee burnout, and lack of resources and on-site infrastructural support to bridge gaps in customer care.

OUTCOME IN PROGRESS

Improved Constituent Experience: Clients coming to OESS at the Germantown location experience welcoming, transparent services that meet their needs.
Improved Employee Experience: Staff are in and contributing to a functional workspace where they are able to fulfill their mission of meeting customer needs. Management is actively breaking down barriers to employee success with repeatable adaptive processes.

PROJECT

Ride On Organizational
Culture Change
Transit Services

PROBLEM

Low morale among staff appears to be a significant cause of attrition, hurting services provided to riders. How might we understand and address the challenges contributing to low morale?

OUTCOME IN PROGRESS

RideOn staff have ways (and power and authority) to both raise and address problems in the work environment, thereby improving morale and retention.

COACHING DESIGN SKILLS IN FY24

Staff and customers are interconnected. As we focused on building a more customer-centered and more human government, we realized that to deliver effective services our government needs direct service staff to be more collaborative, feel confident in their roles, and understand the challenges they experience more deeply. Presently, we are working with a handful of departments to ask, what are the most effective ways of surfacing, more profoundly understanding, and addressing organizational challenges that affect staff morale? **We are looking at various human-centered design structures, tools, and conditions that enable honest feedback from staff about their needs so that they can focus on root causes and not their symptoms. As a result, our design skill coaching spans across the fundamentals of observing, ideating, prototyping, and testing solutions.**

OUTCOME

So far, in FY24, we have engaged approximately 250 individuals from the Office of Eligibility and Support Services, Ride On Transit Services, and Translation Unit. While these individuals are learning human-centered design practices while solving their challenges, we imagine engaging with at least seven more departments to continue supporting our staff in delivering more effective, efficient, and equitable services.

TARGET FOR FY 24

Civic Design aims to work on over 60 efforts, with at least 10 departments, to improve user experiences and services through FY24.

Civic Design aims to engage over 1200 individuals closest to the problems to shape solutions; with 100% of our projects engaging those most impacted by the problems.

500 MCG colleagues engage with Civic Design methods, with at least 50 applying these methods on their own.

TESTIMONY

"The Hiring Process Playbook offers a tremendous toolkit of knowledge and resources to empower hiring teams in our organization. By documenting standard operating procedures throughout the hiring process and communicating them in a human-centric and results-oriented way, the playbook encourages more modern, consistent, collaborative, and equitable hiring practices across MCG."

KD Kasunic
HR Specialist,
OHR Communications & Strategic Planning

MIALS

“My participation in the Accelerator program helped give me the tools to understand, communicate, map out the problem and process and better brainstorm solutions with my team and the business community we serve in a way that we all felt engaged in the solution. It’s a continuous process.”

Barbara Fonseca

Department of Environmental Protection

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PARTNERS WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE

Alcohol and Beverage Services
Board of Elections
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Finance
Department of Transportation
Montgomery County Police Department
Montgomery County Public Libraries
Office of Community Partnerships
Office of Consumer Protection
Office of County Executive
Office of Eligibility and Support Services
Office of Human Resources
Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Office of Procurement

PEOPLE WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE

Amanda Ussak
Evan Chan
James Hawkins
Kate Sullivan Frades
Mallory Johnson
Mary Keane
Michael Baskin
Nidhi Singh Rathore

CONNECT WITH US

Interested in working with us?

If you are a Montgomery County Government employee who is:

- Interested in participating in the Accelerator course: subscribe to our [newsletter](#) for updates on future Accelerator cohorts.
- Interested in pursuing a project with the Civic Design Team: please fill out our [short intake form](#). If you're not quite sure how to articulate your challenge, no problem! Do your best and we can hash it out together.

Want to stay connected?

Subscribe to our [newsletter](#)! If you have any questions, don't hesitate to send us an email at innovation@montgomerycountymd.gov.

