Co-creating Government: Innovation by Design

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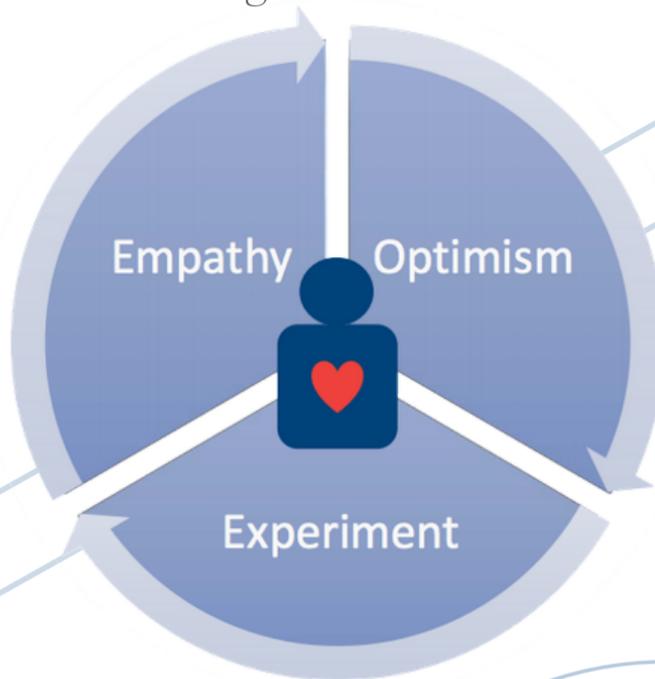**rachel.walch@hennepin.us**

View the Empathy Mapping Handout

Design Process

Fail faster, succeed sooner.

Empathy · Optimism · Experiment

Is the end-user at the center of the process?

View the Mindsets & Methods Handout

Who in the community could you partner with? (Non-profits, organizations, community foundations, etc.)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Why is Prototyping low-cost, should it be low cost?
Fail fast, succeed sooner. Start with a low-cost prototype to make sure it meets your end-users needs before launching. Test services as early as possible to make sure you are on track, this will lead to huge cost savings in the long run.

What was the outcome of the youth housing program?
It is currently in a pilot stage. We partnered with evaluators who are conducting a developmental evaluation and also making adjustments during the process. We are optimistic about the program, but it is still in an early stage.

What is the right size for empathy mapping focus groups?
The sweet spot is 30 or less. If you do have larger groups, try to divide the groups and then compare the results. It helps to have two facilitators during the process.

What does information transparency look like?
During each phase of the process, we capture the information/results and share that knowledge with everyone who has touched the project. We work under the assumption that "it could end up in the local paper", however, we do not redact anything that may be an unfavorable opinion towards the County. From the start, we are open and honest with the participants. Do not be secretive. We also do not own our methods. We train and support folks who want to implement these processes on their own.

Are there any processes in place to make sure people are providing answers in good faith?
Preferably conduct the empathy mapping in a physical presence. We allow a certain level of silliness; having fun while doing the work creates an optimistic mindset. The empathy mapping process is based upon previously collected data. We have not run into any disconnect between the data and the empathy mapping process.

In the workshops, how do you guarantee a diverse set of voices in the room?
We try to create a diverse invite list. Bring in a "why person" to encourage others to stop and think "why do we do it that way". Participants should be in the system and outside of the system. Facilitate your discussion to honor introverts and extroverts by using various group size and engagement styles.

Do you apply this process to any general governmental project or only special projects?
We do not apply to process where an outcome has already been determined. This process is successful when creating or redesigning a process which has an unidentified solution and when community input is central.

ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION
TRANSFORMING LOCAL GOVERNMENT