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Reimagining Federal Service Design and Delivery through Life Experiences

Every interaction between the Government and the public, whether it involves filing taxes or renewing a passport, is an opportunity to deliver the value, service, and efficiency that the public expects and deserves. Imagine if customers of the United States Government interacted with a system of services that worked for them in critical moments — how that experience may begin to rebuild trust in the services and the institutions of our Nation.

The Federal Customer Experience (CX) Team is building a new approach to managing Federal service delivery from a life experience perspective — how humans actually live their lives — rather than a bureaucratic one. *Life experiences* are significant events or transitions that often require interactions and touchpoints with multiple Federal agencies and even levels of government. Adopting a life experience management framework requires a new model of the Federal delivery system working together — within agencies, across agencies, even across levels of government — driven by customer research to identify specific areas for action rather than rely on pre-decided priorities. Other governments around the world have taken similar approaches to organize and improve experiences for their citizens.

Where we are now

The Federal Government is currently integrating life experiences through policy and practice. In Summer 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration's first update to [OMB's Circular A-11 Section 280](#), the policy for managing customer experience and service delivery, included designating a limited number of cross-agency life experiences for collective effort. Building on this, the [President's Management Agenda \(PMA\) Vision released in November 2021](#) identified the improved management of cross-agency life experiences as a strategy to improve Federal service delivery and customer experience. Finally, on December 13th, President Biden signed [Executive Order 14058 on Transforming the Customer Experience and Federal Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#), which includes an entire section devoted to designating life experiences for Government-wide action to improve customer experience. These three policy directives initiated the 2022 life experience effort, which has already begun.

Federal Government leaders worked with President's Management Council (or "PMC," which includes the leader, Deputy Secretary, or equivalent of the 24 largest Federal agencies) to select the priority projects for the 2022 cycle. Through a rigorous selection and vetting process, Federal leaders (including Directors of the National Economic Council and Domestic Policy Council) selected five projects to advance to a discovery phase. The projects include:



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Approaching retirement; Birth and early childhood for low-income mothers and children; Facing a financial shock and becoming newly eligible for critical supports; Navigating transition to civilian life; and Recovering from a disaster.

The five projects' teams will start the discovery phase with a human-centered design (HCD) process that includes in-depth conversations and broad desk research. The primary activity for learning about the life experience is through 30-60-minute semi-structured conversations with individuals to learn about and document their lived experiences. Teams will have similar discussions with subject matter experts and front-line staff across Federal, State, and in some cases, local agencies. Desk research includes scouring administrative data, reviewing existing and historical projects, and doing a substantial literature review. Teams will sort and synthesize the data into patterns, themes, insights, ideas, and possibilities. All teams will also employ a common HCD practice of including customers and stakeholders in the process, leading to co-designed recommendations that prioritize actual needs.

After the initial discovery phase, the teams will share insights and opportunities with Federal leaders and the PMC for input and guidance to advance the project to subsequent stages, such as design, piloting, and implementation. Building on lessons learned from previous pilot projects, key to the success of this effort is a commitment from leadership to empower teams to work differently from the start, expecting that this process will generate recommendations that may implicate the lines of agency responsibilities, nitty-gritty forms work, or even more fundamental questions of program design.

Where we're headed

Unlike near-term improvements from agency-specific actions, the work and output from the cross-agency life experiences will take months and years to achieve — and we plan to stick with it. This work is a transformation in how the Federal Government delivers services. To succeed will require a combination of ongoing leadership from the Executive Office of the President and President's Management Council members, as well as dedicated project teams to drive the work forward. We will continue to learn as we implement and adapt our overall effort management accordingly. Running five similar yet incredibly complex projects across more than ten agencies will yield insights to inform how we can more effectively manage these types of large-scale system-level efforts and even smaller-scale Federal service experience improvements.