

# Introduction



The Lab at OPM is hosting **Spring Design School** in Washington, DC, this March. SDS is a week-long work/learn/engage event for participants eager to experience new ways to understand and apply human-centered design methods in government.

<b>WHEN?</b>	Monday to Friday, March 25–29, 9:30am to 5pm (9am start on Monday)
<b>WHERE?</b>	The Lab at OPM will be the home base, with other sessions at select offsite locations. The Lab is located at 1900 E Street NW, Washington, DC ( <a href="#">map</a> ).
<b>WHY?</b>	Because it is time to experiment with new ways of teaching, learning, and engaging with human-centered design in the public sector.
<b>HOW?</b>	A mix of structured and unstructured offerings: formal and informal content delivery, site visits to non-government innovation hubs, studio work time, as well as space for collaboration and networking.
<b>WHO?</b>	Open to government employees and those interested in applying design in the public sector. While all skill levels are welcome, the workshop is designed for those with light to medium exposure to human-centered design or design thinking.
<b>HOW MUCH?</b>	Registration is \$3,500 for the week.
	Register at <a href="https://lab.opm.gov/class-sign-up">lab.opm.gov/class-sign-up</a> .

# Frequently Asked Questions



## What is the goal of Design School?

Our goal is to engage government employees in a new way of learning human-centered design, using both unstructured and structured formats, to support them in navigating uncertainty.

## What's the history behind Design School?

The Lab launched its first week-long workshop in the summer of 2017 to 48 students representing 19 government agencies. With a focus on systems thinking, qualitative research, behavioral science, and storytelling, Summer Design School 2017 offered space, time, and support for each participant to develop customized, targeted approaches to their own challenges and interests. Building on the principles of human-centered design, we pushed participants to explore new ways of collective learning and understanding human-centered design holistically.



## What are the rules for engagement?

**Come with an open mind.** There will be times when it may not be clear in what direction you should go. We ask that you trust us, as our goal is to provide you with an adequate amount of resources and support; you will be responsible for connecting the dots as we coach you through it. There are no right or wrong answers, but there can be different approaches.

**Bring a challenge, big or small.** Our job is to help you narrow or broaden the focus. Prior to the workshop, we will offer a series of webinars to help you scope out your focus. On the first day, we will formulate groups based on similarities and differences between your challenges.

**Don't expect to solve the challenge.** Rather, expect to have a new perspective on it and how to apply design to it.

**Don't expect to be an expert in human-centered design by the end of the week.** Instead, expect to start developing your design point of view. It takes time and practice to understand how to approach a challenge and with what tools or methods. It is like muscle building; it doesn't take a day or even a week, but months and years to get in the shape you want. Still, the week will help you understand human-centered design, how it can be applied, and why it matters. More importantly, it will provide you with tangible skills to begin to develop your own design practice. So, we ask that you absorb and enjoy the experience, but also use the time

## Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)



to think about what elements might help you when you return to your office and use design in your work.

### **How is Design School different from the Fundamentals of Human-Centered Design? Which should I take?**

We highly recommend both Fundamentals and Design School to strengthen your ability to apply human-centered design methods to the important issues you face working in the government. Each participant will bring their own problems to Design School, spending time working on that challenge. Our Fundamentals course walks through the design process using a general challenge related to the National Mall. Design School also provides a holistic view of design and how it can be applied in a variety of ways. The Fundamentals course guides you through one way of applying human-centered design to a particular challenge. Participating in both will show you the breadth and depth of the design practice and its application in government.

### **Who can participate in Design School?**

Design School is open to all federal employees at any GS level, regardless of previous experience with design. It is also open to others interested in applying design in the public sector because we believe the most dynamic design teams have different types of stakeholders and skill sets involved.

→ [Get more info about our Fundamentals of Human-Centered Design course and other offerings.](#)






### **Is there a dress code?**

It's as casual as you want to make it. We want everyone to be as comfortable as possible.

### **Should I bring my laptop?**

This is your choice. It is highly unlikely that you will need it for the week, except to conduct secondary research online related to your problem. We will encourage you to work in an analog mode as much as possible through the week as you are developing your points of view around your challenge. We at The Lab work with rudimentary materials as we begin our designs because it is the fastest, easiest way to design and to experiment.

# Schedule

	Monday 3/25	Tuesday 3/26	Wednesday 3/27	Thursday 3/28	Friday 3/29
9–9:30am	<b>Introductions &amp; Kickoff</b>  <b>Elaine Thomas</b> & The Lab at OPM team				
9:30–10am		Reflect & connect			
10am–12pm	<b>Panel: Why Design Matters</b>	<b>Qualitative Research and Ethnography</b>  <b>Dr. Alison Montgomery,</b> Millennium Challenge Corporation	<b>Behavioral Economics</b>  <b>The Lab @ DC,</b> DC Mayor's Office	<b>Complexity Science</b>  <b>Garth Jensen,</b> Navy Carderock	To be determined
12–1pm	Lunch				
1–3pm	 <b>Wall of Problems</b> Facilitated by <b>Ana Monroe</b> and <b>Ariel Yardeni</b> , The Lab at OPM	<b>Studio Session</b> Facilitated by design professionals and Lab alumni	<b>Studio Session</b> Facilitated by design professionals and Lab alumni	<b>Studio Session</b> Facilitated by design professionals and Lab alumni	Final presentation preparation and travel time
3–3:30pm	Setup and participant travel				
3:30–5pm	<b>Practical Problem Framing</b>  <b>Matthew Dingee</b> and <b>Mina Jafarpoor</b> , The Lab at OPM	<b>Gathering Compelling Qualitative Data</b>  Sarah Hughes, The Lab at OPM, and Jamie Lee Marks  	<b>The Unmet Need</b> UMD Academy for Innovation & Entrepreneurship  <i>or...</i> <b>Behavioral Science for Policy: Lessons from the World Bank</b> The World Bank's Mind, Behavior, and Development Unit	<b>Site Visit</b> International Monetary Fund (IMF)	<b>Final Presentations</b> 

**Note:**  
Schedule subject to change.