



## PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

### OUR VISION FOR A BETTER GOVERNMENT

Our reform agenda outlines five foundational reforms to improve government performance, support the federal workforce and rebuild public trust. In these documents, we'll dive deeper into the five priorities.

Read the full agenda at: [bit.ly/3SWWxnd](https://bit.ly/3SWWxnd)

#### PRIORITY 5

## BUILD MODERN, CUSTOMER FRIENDLY SERVICES

The federal government's ability to provide the public with first-rate customer experiences requires agencies to have the best technology, websites and systems available so individuals can quickly and easily access services and know where to go for help.

While the government has pockets of excellence, it falls short of what the public expects and deserves. Negative interactions are a major obstacle to rebuilding public trust in the government.

#### WHAT IS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

Customer service involves direct interactions between an organization and the customer, often focused on providing a specific service, resolving issues, answering questions and offering assistance such as through a call center. Effective customer service ensures that members of the public feel supported and valued, which can significantly enhance their satisfaction and loyalty.

Customer experience (CX) is a broader, more comprehensive concept that encompasses all aspects of a customer's interactions with and perceptions of an organization. CX includes every touchpoint a customer has with an organization. A holistic view of CX considers not only customer engagement and customer service, but service use and simplicity, brand reputation and the overall journey an individual goes through with the organization.

This distinction underscores the importance of attending to both immediate interactions through customer service, and the broader journey through customer experience. It requires a deep understanding of customer needs, preferences and expectations as well as a commitment to delivering seamless and positive experiences across all channels and touchpoints. During the last several decades, members of Congress and presidents of both parties have placed an emphasis on making the government more responsive to its customers—the people it serves.

### Recommendations for Building Better Federal CX



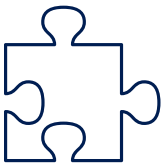
Institutionalize CX with a customer-first approach

#### THE CHALLENGE

Agency efforts to provide a first-rate customer experience—if efforts are being made at all—are often disjointed, underfunded and disconnected from the organization's strategy. Too often, these efforts do not fall under the explicit purview of a dedicated senior leader. This lack of integration across agency programs and service delivery means that agencies often fail to deliver customer-centered services.

#### SOLUTIONS

Agency staff, from the highest levels of leadership to nonpolitical career employees, should be held accountable to provide its customers with first-rate experiences. This needs to be an integral part of strategic planning efforts and it should be an expectation that CX is a priority for both external service delivery and for internal agency customers (such as employees getting IT services). Agencies should identify senior officials to lead the customer experience effort and empower them to work across the enterprise, fund and staff customer experience teams, have dedicated CX offices within agencies and encourage the adoption of best practices.



## Tackle recruitment and hiring challenges

### THE CHALLENGE

The broken federal hiring process makes it difficult to compete with the private sector for top talent and has deprived our government of the employees it needs to keep pace with leading customer experience strategies and technological advancements. It is enormously challenging to cultivate a workforce proficient in CX and technology, and in particular artificial intelligence, when the hiring process is slow, HR offices are under-resourced and job postings have unnecessary degree requirements, complicated descriptions and antiquated titles.

### SOLUTIONS

It is critical for agencies to focus on recruiting and hiring qualified individuals with skills in customer experience, data and technology to drive significant improvements in service delivery. To do that, agencies need to identify the types of skills necessary for this work and consider a skills-first hiring approach, strategically bring talent on board using pooled hiring actions and assessments, and help applicants navigate the complex hiring system by simplifying job descriptions and syncing titles with private sector norms.



## Improve data sharing and collection

### THE CHALLENGE

Government services work best when they are designed with the customer in mind. This should be done by testing products and services with the public and gathering feedback to inform changes. But barriers, such as the Paperwork Reduction Act, make it difficult for agencies to get valuable user feedback unless they go through a slow, convoluted approval process.

### SOLUTIONS

Ensure that legislative and regulatory frameworks encourage and facilitate data sharing within agencies and across government, removing barriers that currently hinder the collection, exchange and utilization of customer feedback. Congress should consider legislation, and agencies should develop processes that will enable the government to more easily collect, exchange and use customer experience data to build better services. Using this data to improve the customer experience, while protecting people's privacy, requires agencies to develop secure and interoperable data-sharing systems—a process that requires both collaboration across the enterprise and funding from Congress.

## CX in Action

These case studies examine customers' experiences with federal services that have a high volume of direct contact with the public. They consider the role of equity in these critical services and examine how to enable a customer-centered lens that improves trust in government.



### **SOCIAL SECURITY WEBSITE REDESIGN**

Using the principles of human-centered design, the Social Security Administration launched a beta website to provide easily understandable information to reduce access barriers.



### **PASSPORT SERVICES**

In early 2022, the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs launched a pilot program for renewing passports online, adding a new channel to what had traditionally been an exclusively paper-based process.



### **INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAMS**

To better reach disaster survivors, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is implementing enhanced applicant services to provide customers with more support as they apply for individual assistance programs.

Learn more about how the federal government is better assisting those facing significant events through its CX [Life Experiences](#) initiative.

## Research and Resources

Find all our CX-related work on the Partnership's [Customer Experience webpage](#).

- [Designing a Government for the People: Collaborative Approaches to Federal Customer Experience](#)
- [The Good Government Connection: Linking the Federal Employee and Customer Experiences](#)
- [Government For the People: Designing for Equitable and Trusted Customer Experiences](#)
- [Leading with Experience: A Framework for Customer-Focused Leadership in Government](#)
- [Behind the Scenes: How Government Mission-Support Services Can Use a Customer Lens to Meet Big Challenges](#)
- [Beyond the Basics: Leading Practices for Improving Customer Experience in Government](#)
- [The Most Important Customer: Improving the Citizen Experience with Government](#)