Reimagining independent living

THE PROBLEM
The Illinois Department of Human Services engaged the Institute of Design to bridge the gap between policy makers and their constituents, people with disabilities.

GOAL
Design services that make home services program more centered around the needs of its users.

TEAM
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PROCESS
• Value web based on 10 stakeholder interviews
• Ethnographic interviews with 13 program participants, customers and caregivers
• Mapped our insights (and ultimately ideas) against a user-centric system diagram we developed based on five key themes
• Co-creation workshop which included: insights gallery tour, scenarios, and round robin exercises

SKILLS DEPLOYED
• Led field research and insights development
• Created an experience for stakeholders to feel insights, complete with gallery and a Story Booth where they could listen to users’ words
• Designed and facilitated the co-creation session
INSIGHTS
• The current home services program limits a participant’s lifestyle to the home environment, which may lead to perceived isolation from the outside world.
• Participants find new ways to repurpose everyday objects to improve the efficiency of their routine; this knowledge and resourcefulness goes untapped.
• Participants are forced to choose between training new caregivers and getting the services they need.
RECOMMENDATIONS
Developed eight ideas to address our system map (right), three of which are highlighted below
• Task Based Evaluation of Need: a more holistic assessment of customer need addresses life outside of the home and shifts the incentive for the caregiver to perform a job effectively
• Universal Design Lab: an open source platform that enables DHS to leverage participants’ workaround insights to develop new products
• Training in a Box: an integrated bundle of training resources that help providers and customers navigate the home services program with ease from the start