Reimagining the Illinois Home Services Program

Design Planning Workshop, Fall 2016

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The Background

In Illinois, the Department of Human Services (DHS) contracts with thousands of people as home service workers for those with physical/developmental disabilities under the Home Services Program. Home service providers are independent contractors represented by Service Employees International Union (SEIU). These are low wage positions yet provide their customers the ability to lead independent lives outside of institutions. The customer population is distributed across Illinois and are often in lower income brackets and are eligible for Medicaid services.

The goal of the project is to better understand the challenges, perspectives, and meaningful moments of customers and service providers within the Home Services Program and to propose opportunities to improve the program experience for all.
The Challenge

A challenge facing the DHS is how to broadly support the needs of diverse stakeholders under the constraints faced by the State of Illinois. With the growth of the Home Services Program, how might we re-shape the program to provide better customer experiences, and improve the well-being of all that are involved with the system?
The Approach

Mapping the stakeholders and value web

We used our stakeholder interviews to develop a value web, showing the relationships between key players and reinforcing the current exchange of value throughout the HSP process.

My Role: worked in a team of three students, led the interviews with two stakeholders and two customers. Responsible for the development of the stakeholder map and value web.

Primary research approach

In meeting with HSP customers, providers, State employees, ACCESS Living representatives, RIC therapists, and the SEIU, we have aimed to experience the program through the diverse perspectives within it.
The Process

Analysis & Synthesis

Qualitative research data were captured and collected during interviews and observation, which later structured the development of our insights. Insights were then clustered into the ten key themes, which informed our main design principles and opportunity areas.

For example: one insight we derived from our research findings is that the current HSP limits a customer’s lifestyle to the home environment, which may lead to isolation from the outside world. This insight then leads to a design principle ("empower the independence of the whole customer beyond the confines of the home environment") that will inform future concept development.
Co-creation Workshop

During the co-creation workshop, State and SEIU representatives were invited to an exhibit sharing of research findings and insights. We presented the customer/service provider journey maps showing how they enter and remain in the Home Services Program system. The co-creation workshop also included a round robin concept generation exercise where participants designed concepts based on four identified common scenarios in the program.

**My Role:** led the development of user journey map and presented to State and SEIU representatives. Participated and facilitated in the round robin concept generation exercise.
Eight opportunity areas were developed and shared at the final presentation with the DHS. Each opportunity area include concepts that have potential for further exploration. For example, **Self-Advancement Support** concept presents opportunities for DHS to partner with educational institutions and foster personal and professional development for both customers and service providers.

**Opportunity Areas**

**My Role:** led the design of the presentation deck and final concept posters. Presented opportunity concepts at the final presentation.