Research: Modern Technical Leadership in Government
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About this project:

Governments have made significant investments in recruiting and hiring technical expertise and advisors at the state and federal level but little has been done to increase the technical capacity of existing civil servants who are key to improving public services and implementing new technologies. New programs are emerging in the non-profit and academic sectors, but have not yet scaled to meet demand.

For this work, we have assembled a research team to interview executive leaders, technical teams, and training institutions about their projects and methods. Our research will look across government, academia, and the non-profit sectors to help define what modern technical leadership is and what conditions foster successful government projects. Interviews will focus on the characteristics, education, and environmental factors that develop successful leaders. A research report will be published in late spring of 2023.

This effort is separate but complementary to other programs to recruit and hire technical talent into government roles such as the Tech Talent Project, U.S. Digital Service (USDS), 18F, U.S. Digital Response (USDR), Coding it Forward, the Digital Corps, and Teaching Public Service in the Digital Age.

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About Service Design Collective:

Service Design Collective is a public benefit company founded & run by alumni of the United States Digital Service. We focus on ways in which government programs & policies prevent people from successfully accessing critical services. We develop methods & tools to help governments keep pace with public needs, legislative changes & modern technologies. We empower our partners with knowledge & skills to continue their work long after we have completed a project.

Shelly Smith is a Human-centered design lead at Service Design Collective. She has a background in UX design and research and has worked on multiple technology projects at the local, state, and federal levels.