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Building an Alpha CA.gov

We're building a multi-disciplinary team to re-imagine CA.gov.

The team will develop an Alpha that prioritizes user needs and illustrates how government can reconfigure its digital real estate to better serve Californians.

The Alpha will work in the open, showcasing an experimental, user-focused approach to developing government services.

This will be a full-time, 12-14-week engagement based in Sacramento. The multi-disciplinary team will be composed of staff from different state agencies and outside subject matter experts in user research and design. The team will be supported with advice from [Public Digital.](https://public.digital/) The Alpha team plans to begin work in November and deliver a public-facing product no later than the end of February.

# Job Descriptions

## Delivery manager

We seek a delivery manager for the CA.gov Alpha effort who will be responsible for building and managing a motivated multidisciplinary team. The delivery manager will set priorities and direction and coach the team in agile and lean techniques. They remove obstacles to their progress, and make sure they collaborate, communicate and focus on what is most important.

* **Setting up the environment a team needs to design, build and iterate a user-centered product - 50 percent:** Sets priorities and direction; nurtures the team and makes sure the team collaborates, communicates and focuses on what is most important. Makes sure there is an iterative plan to work towards. Plans at a higher level, getting into the detail to make things happen when needed. Gives the team a rhythm and momentum
* **Coaching the team and others in agile delivery - 25 percent:** Facilitates continuous improvement and applies the most appropriate agile and lean tools and techniques for their environment. Capable of servant leadership. Enables and empowers the team, so they can become better at autonomously organizing their own work. Able to ensure the team has a situational awareness of what each other is working on
* **Removes blockers and obstacles to the team - 25 percent:** Seeks to understand what is blocking the team from delivering at pace, and leading efforts to remove them - especially where they are tactical or practical. Have experience of managing (out) dependencies to overcome obstacles and get the best value against constraints. Knows how to manage risk, budgets and people. Able to communicate effectively across organizational, technical and political boundaries, understanding the context. Can advocate and communicate what a team does to create trust and authenticity.

## Content Designer

We seek a Content Designer for the CA.gov Alpha effort who will be responsible for designing new content and iteratively improving existing content across digital and non-digital channels to meet user needs and government objectives. The position will be responsible for identifying the best format for displaying information to users - including suggesting new ideas and identifying gaps. This will involve evaluating content based on user research and analytics data and developing style guides and other standards to design high quality content.

* **Designing content to meet user needs - 60 percent**: Work closely with business owners and subject matter experts to take complex language and processes and make them simple to understand. Take the whole user journey and understand what messages should be put where - reflecting the needs of users, rather than what the organization wants to say. This is about more than words. Content designers also understand information architecture and suggest / create content that will help users understand what they need to know and do. That could be videos, tools, data visualization, calculators, calendars: anything that meets the need.
* **Take part in user research - 20 percent**: Participate in user research to gain a deep understanding of user needs and identify how content can improve products. Assist with taking learnings from user research and turning them into good content which improves products based on user needs.
* **Promote user-centered content design across government - 20 percent**: Promote user-centered content design and knowledge of best practices across government. Understand and implement modern web content style and standards. Communicate with stakeholders clearly and regularly, clarifying mutual needs and commitments through consultation and consideration of impacts whilst focusing on user needs. Provide constructive feedback to others and explain decisions and edits clearly.

## User Researcher

We seek a User Researcher for the CA.gov Alpha effort who will be responsible for designing, conducting and analyzing the results of user research and usability testing to help give insights on how products should be designed and iterated. The User Researcher will help the team develop a deep understanding and empathy for users and their needs so that the team can design the product based on user needs and priorities.

* **Plan and organize user research sessions - 50%.** Will plan and run regular field and desk research, using a toolbox of research techniques and methodologies. Test assumptions with real users to improve the quality of the product. Experienced in working with user needs from early guesses through to actual-hard-evidence. Experienced in presenting information to stakeholders, and advocating for users in product design discussions.
* **Develop recommendations based on quantitative and qualitative evidence - 25%** Able to turn research data into clear findings that inform decisions and knows how to involve colleagues in analysis and synthesis to increase consensus and challenge assumptions. Can work with designers and product managers to translate findings and insights into user stories and actions that will allow them to iteratively improve the product for users.
* **Lead the team in practicing user research - 25%.** Can lead and get the whole team involved in research, including senior leaders and those without much/any experience of field research. Will coach less-experienced team members in conducting user research effectively and responsibly.

## Technical Lead

We seek a Technical lead for the CA.gov Alpha effort who will provide technical leadership and architectural design. The technical lead will work hands-on within the full multi-disciplinary team to provide direction and expert domain knowledge. They have extensive hands-on technical background in areas such as software development, DevOps, security, and architecture. Technical leads ensure that the team can set the right balance of product development, and operational reliability, and make sure that the technical design fully supports the highly experimental and iterative nature of the team’s work.

* **Provide hands-on technical leadership in the development, operation and ongoing improvement of the product - 25 percent.** Has a good understanding of a broad range of technologies and can identify appropriate technology and approaches, deciding when software should be written. Optimizing choices to ensure the team can keep their focus on user needs, iteration and experimentation.

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* **Advise senior stakeholders on the development of technical strategy - 25 percent** Ability to converse easily with and translate between non-technical stakeholders and technical practitioners. Ability to work with business and technology stakeholders to translate business problems into technical designs.
* **Work with product owner and delivery manager to solve problems and make decisions, to meet users’ needs - 25 percent.** Able to switch between different problems and responsibilities while directly involved in product delivery. Able to visualize the ideal product, come up with design ideas and possible design approaches
* **Lead the team in adoption of a modern standards based approach - 25 percent** Uses agreed security standards and specifications to design, create, test and document new or amended software.

# Product Designer

We seek a visionary Product designer for the CA.gov Alpha effort, who will be responsible for designing user-focused products and information for government. Able to fundamentally reimagine the way that products work from the ground up, doing work that impacts everyday lives. Works with others to design, prototype and build products: this may involve the creation of — or change to — transactions, products, and content, and may stretch across digital and offline channels provided by different parts of government.

* **Work closely with the product owner to develop a bold design for a new product - 60 percent:** Bold, delivery focused, and can come in with no preconceptions and reimagine what’s possible for the product. Passionate about simplifying products and information, and can help teams simplify their mental models. Approach to design emphasizes usability, inclusivity and accessibility. Able to visualize, articulate, solve complex problems and concepts, and makes disciplined decisions based on available information and research evidence. Able to move from analysis to synthesis and/or design intent.
* **Communicate the vision to senior stakeholders and to the team - 10 percent.** Excellent communicator, communicating with people who aren’t familiar with design, comfortable working alongside clients during the design process, and are excited to work with people on research and testing.
* **Use design practices to bridge the gap between research and final solutions. 10 percent.** Work with users and internal stakeholders to identify, prototype and test the product. Explore the various ways that a product can be delivered, looking for a solution that will best meet the needs of users and the broader organization.
* **Work closely with the product owner and the delivery team to collaboratively develop design ideas. 20 percent** Able to switch between different problems and responsibilities and be directly involved in product delivery. Able to visualize the ideal product, come up with design ideas and possible design approaches. Can help the team visualize the user journeys of the existing product and its pain points.