

Quicken Loans Community Fund

Human Centered City Permitting

Detroit, MI

Challenge

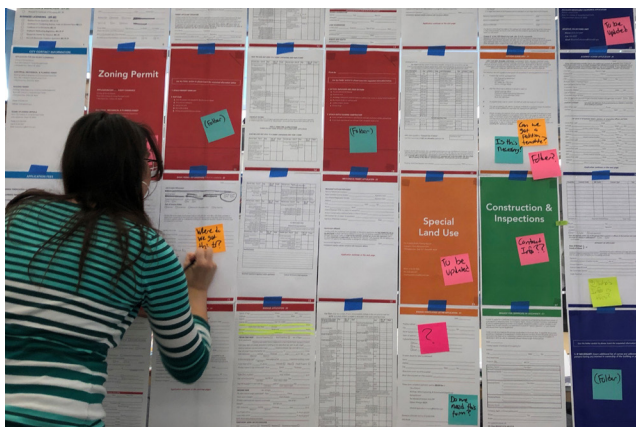
Detroit's economic resurgence is attracting new investment, creating a high volume of applicants interacting with the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED). The process of obtaining the permits needed to open a business in Detroit takes, on average, six months. One of the biggest hurdles for small business owners is obtaining city permits. The City of Detroit and the Quicken Loans Community Fund saw an opportunity to work together to simplify the city's permitting and licensing process.

Innovation

One of the most significant challenges for Detroit entrepreneurs is the process of obtaining the permits and licenses needed to open a business. Before this intervention, entrepreneurs had to complete between 70 and 80 forms, writing their name and address 21 times and often having to go back and redo parts of the process that they got wrong the first time.

Overview

Using human-centered design, a team of city employees, Detroit entrepreneurs, community partners, and designers worked together to create a simple permitting process. Over 18 months, the team redesigned forms, introduced an online permitting system, and overhauled the physical space in City Hall. The new process has reduced the number of forms from 85 to 35 and saved 400 hours of staff time.



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