Public Sector Innovation Labs and Design Thinking Training Course



23 - 27 Nov 2026

Boston

7500 € (Per Person)

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Course Introduction / Overview:

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of how Design Thinking principles and Innovation Labs can revolutionize public service delivery and policy-making. In an era of increasing citizen expectations and complex societal challenges, traditional government processes often fall short. This program provides a structured framework for public sector professionals to adopt a human-centered approach, ensuring that services are not only efficient but also genuinely meet the needs of the people they serve. Drawing on the foundational work of pioneers like Tim Brown, author of "Change by Design," we will deconstruct the core phases of the design thinking process—Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test—and adapt them to the unique context of government operations. Participants will learn to move beyond conventional problem-solving to co-create innovative solutions with citizens and stakeholders. BIG BEN Training Center has designed this immersive experience to equip leaders with the practical skills to establish and manage innovation labs, fostering a sustainable culture of creativity, experimentation, and continuous improvement within their organizations to generate tangible public value.

Target Audience / This training course is suitable for:

- Public Sector Managers and Directors.
- Policy Advisors and Analysts.
- Service Delivery Managers.
- Digital Transformation and IT Professionals.
- Project and Program Managers.
- Urban Planners and Community Development Officers.
- Strategic Planning and Performance Improvement Teams.
- Anyone involved in public service reform and innovation.

Target Sectors and Industries:

- Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies.
- Public Healthcare and Social Services.
- Public Education and Administration.
- Law Enforcement and Public Safety.
- Public Transportation and Utilities.
- Non-Profit Organizations and NGOs working with government.
- Regulatory Bodies and Public Corporations.

Target Organizations Departments:

- Strategy and Policy Development.
- Service Delivery and Operations.
- Information Technology and Digital Services.
- Human Resources and Organizational Development.
- Customer Experience and Citizen Engagement.
- Communications and Public Relations.
- Finance and Procurement.
- Research and Development.

Course Offerings:

By the end of this course, the participants will have able to:

- Apply the core principles of human-centered design to public sector challenges.
- Develop and manage an end-to-end design thinking project cycle.
- Conduct effective user research and map citizen journeys to identify pain points.
- Facilitate collaborative ideation sessions to generate innovative solutions.
- Create and test low-fidelity and high-fidelity prototypes for new services and policies.
- Analyze feedback and iterate on solutions based on user testing.
- Develop a strategic plan for establishing an innovation lab within a government entity.
- Champion a culture of experimentation and continuous improvement in their teams.
- Measure the impact and public value of innovation initiatives.
- Navigate the organizational barriers to implementing innovative solutions in the public sector.

Course Methodology:

The training methodology at BIG BEN Training Center is designed to be highly interactive, experiential, and directly applicable to the participant's work environment. This course moves beyond theoretical lectures to immerse attendees in a hands-on, learning-by-doing experience. A cornerstone of the program is the use of real-world public sector case studies, allowing participants to analyze and deconstruct successful innovation projects from around the globe. The training is structured around a central team-based project where participants will work in small groups to tackle a simulated public sector challenge from discovery to prototype. This collaborative approach fosters peer learning and mirrors the cross-departmental teamwork required for genuine innovation. Sessions will include interactive workshops, guided brainstorming exercises, prototyping labs, and role-playing scenarios to build practical skills and confidence. Our expert facilitators provide continuous coaching and personalized feedback, ensuring that each participant can translate the concepts learned into actionable strategies for their own organization. The emphasis is on practical application, ensuring attendees leave with not just knowledge, but also the tools and a clear roadmap for driving change.

Course Agenda (Course Units):

Unit One: Foundations of Public Sector Innovation

- Introduction to Design Thinking and Human-Centered Design.
- The unique challenges and opportunities for innovation in government.
- Understanding the role and function of public sector innovation labs.
- Core principles of citizen-centric service design.
- Contrasting traditional problem-solving with the design thinking mindset.
- Global case studies of successful government innovation.
- The ethics of public sector design and experimentation.

Unit Two: Empathize and Define: Understanding the Citizen

- Techniques for conducting ethnographic research and user interviews.
- Developing detailed citizen personas and empathy maps.
- Mastering the art of stakeholder mapping and analysis.
- Crafting insightful "How Might We" problem statements.
- Mapping the end-to-end citizen journey to identify critical touchpoints.
- Synthesizing research data to uncover unmet needs and deep insights.
- Defining the project scope and success metrics for public value.

Unit Three: Ideate and Prototype: Generating and Visualizing Solutions

- Facilitating structured brainstorming and ideation workshops.
- Creative techniques for generating a high volume of diverse ideas.
- Prioritizing ideas based on impact, feasibility, and desirability.
- Introduction to prototyping: from paper sketches to digital mockups.
- Developing low-fidelity prototypes for services, policies, and processes.
- Techniques for storyboarding and creating service blueprints.
- Building interactive prototypes to simulate the user experience.

Unit Four: Test and Iterate: Learning from Failure and Success

- Planning and conducting effective user testing sessions with citizens.
- Methods for gathering and analyzing qualitative and quantitative feedback.
- Learning to embrace and learn from failure in a public sector context.
- Iterating on prototypes based on user insights and testing results.
- Developing a pilot program for a new service or initiative.
- Strategies for presenting and communicating innovative concepts to leadership.
- Navigating the procurement and regulatory hurdles for implementation.

Unit Five: Scaling Innovation and Leading Change

- Developing a business case and roadmap for an internal innovation lab.
- Strategies for fostering a sustainable culture of innovation and psychological safety.
- Measuring the impact and return on investment of innovation projects.
- Techniques for scaling successful pilots across the organization.
- The role of leadership in sponsoring and protecting innovation.
- Managing change and overcoming resistance to new ways of working.
- Building a community of practice for innovation within the public sector.

FAQ:

Qualifications required for registering to this course?

There are no requirements.

How long is each daily session, and what is the total number of training hours for the course?

This training course spans five days, with daily sessions ranging between 4 to 5 hours, including breaks and interactive activities, bringing the total duration to 20 - 25 training hours.

Something to think about:

How can public sector organizations balance the need for rapid, iterative innovation with the inherent requirements for accountability, transparency, and regulatory compliance?

What unique qualities does this course offer compared to other courses?

This course distinguishes itself by moving beyond generic design thinking theory to focus exclusively on its application within the complex and nuanced environment of the public sector. Unlike other programs that may offer a one-size-fits-all approach, our curriculum is meticulously tailored to address the specific challenges faced by government professionals, such as navigating bureaucratic structures, managing risk aversion, and aligning innovation with public value and policy mandates. We emphasize practical, actionable strategies for implementing human-centered design within the constraints of public administration, rather than just teaching abstract concepts. The course content is enriched with case studies drawn directly from successful government innovation units and public service redesigns globally, providing relevant and inspiring examples. Furthermore, the program places a strong emphasis on building a sustainable culture of innovation. It equips participants not only with the tools to run a single project but also with the leadership and change management skills needed to establish and champion an innovation lab or team, ensuring that the methodologies learned can be embedded and scaled for long-term organizational transformation and improved citizen outcomes.