# Hands-On Workshop on User-Centered Design

Thursday afternoon 1:00 – 2:45 p.m.

User-Centered Design is a product development methodology that incorporates the needs of the user in every stage of the development process. The framework provides several different activities that enable designers to understand and meet user needs instead of a traditional design process which may require users to change their behavior to accommodate the product.

NNIP Partners maintain neighborhood information tools, manage community engagement processes, and create research and analytic reports. Each of these products can benefit from the framework provided by User-Centered Design.

***The purpose of this session is to introduce User-Centered Design principles and provide participants with hands-on exposure to several user centered design activities.***

Following the session, we hope that NNIP Partners will be better equipped to incorporate User-Centered Design techniques into their product development processes.

The workshop will begin with a 5-minute introduction by *Bob Gradeck* (Pittsburgh) in which he will provide an overview of User-Centered Design that addresses:

- What is it?
- Why it is valuable?
- How can different techniques be used at different stages of the design process?

Following Bob's introduction, the workshop facilitators will describe the four hands-on activities that will be offered during the session: developing personas, developing scenarios, card-sorting, and user testing. Everyone at the meeting has been assigned to a group (on the front cover of your meeting packet) and will proceed to the location of their group where they will meet their first facilitator. After 15 minutes, facilitators will switch locations and participants will engage in the next activity.

The example "product" that we will create in the session is a community indicators website. The individual activities will demonstrate the different tools available in applying a User-Centered Design framework.

*Noah Urban* (Detroit) will facilitate an activity where participants will conduct a user interview and **develop personas**. Personas are a set of user archetypes around which additional design activities can be structured. Participants will learn how to ask questions that can identify the needs, context, pain points, and behaviors of particular sets of users. They will also be provided with templates that can be used to develop user personas.

*Bob Gradeck, Liz Monk,* and *Eleanor Tutt* (Pittsburgh) will lead a **scenario development** activity where participants will describe how users will interact with the community indicators website. This storytelling will touch on the user's goals, motivations, tasks, and context. By understanding the stories of the personas, we will identify the features and services that are most-important to users of the website.

*Louise Carter* (Seattle) will facilitate two brief **card sorting** activities – demonstrating a simple way to understand: (a) which features of the product (in our example, the community indicators website) will be most important to users, and (b) how users prefer to organize and access information. Using a set of "features" note cards, Louise will ask participants to rank or group features of the community information website based on their importance to users (as described in the personas). In the second activity, users will toss "topics" cards into paper bags representing a predetermined set of categories. The card-sort technique is designed to capture valuable insights into both the features to include in the product and the most user-friendly ways to organize information.

*Sonja Marziano* and *Denise Linn Riedl* (Smart Chicago Collaborative) will lead the workshop on **user tests**. By watching people use a product, a great deal can be learned about the design of a product or tool. In this activity, they'll demonstrate three different user testing activities, and provide advice based on their own experiences conducting user testing.

After the breakout activities, everyone will reconvene in the Alexander Ballroom to report-out on the most valuable things that were learned. We will wrap-up by providing additional resources so that you can use these techniques back home.

**Discussion:**

- What was the most valuable new thing that you learned?
- How could you apply these types of techniques back home?
- How else could NNIP and peers support you after the session to apply a User-Center Design framework?