Lend a Paw!
Animal Shelter
Volunteer Signup App

Stephanie Chen
Google UX Design Certificate
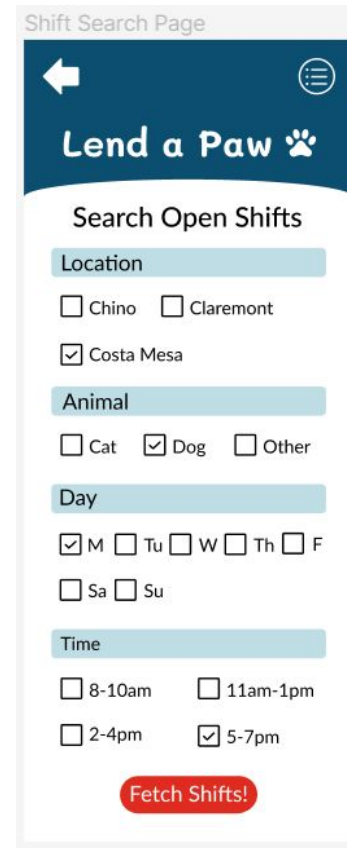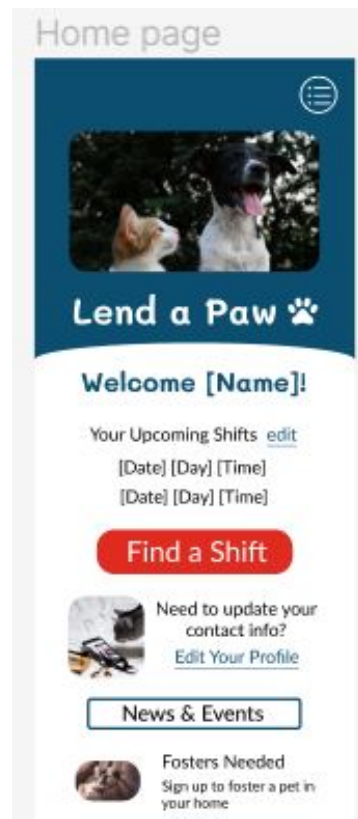October 2022

Project overview

The product:

An app that provides an efficient, personalized scheduling experience for animal shelter volunteers.

Project duration:

June - October 2022

Home page

Lend a Paw 🐾

Welcome [Name]!

Your Upcoming Shifts edit

[Date] [Day] [Time]
[Date] [Day] [Time]

Find a Shift

Need to update your contact info?
Edit Your Profile

News & Events

Fosters Needed
Sign up to foster a pet in your home

Shift Search Page

Lend a Paw 🐾

Search Open Shifts

Location

☐ Chino   ☐ Claremont
☑ Costa Mesa

Animal

☐ Cat   ☑ Dog   ☐ Other

Day

☑ M ☐ Tu ☐ W ☐ Th ☐ F
☐ Sa ☐ Su

Time

☐ 8-10am   ☐ 11am-1pm
☐ 2-4pm   ☑ 5-7pm

Fetch Shifts!

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Project overview

The problem:

Animal shelter volunteers need a simple, efficient scheduling system that accounts for a variety of levels of tech savviness.

The goal:

Our animal care shift scheduling app will provide customized search options for users, which affects the volunteers by saving them time and making the process more personalized.

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Project overview

My role:

UX designer and researcher

Responsibilities:

Wireframing, prototyping, and user research

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

Google

User research: summary

I conducted interviews with volunteers from the animal shelter to understand their needs and experiences in signing up for animal care shifts on the website. A primary user group identified through research was working adults with busy work and social lives.

This user group confirmed initial assumptions about the challenges volunteers face, but also revealed the need for a more enjoyable and personalized process. Accessibility issues may exist for a portion of users in addition to the need for a simplified process and responsive design in an online signup system.

User research: pain points

1

Responsive design

The current page design doesn't adjust to mobile devices where most users sign up.

2

Time Management

Users have busy lives and experience difficulty keeping track of their volunteer obligations.

3

Complex process

The current sign up process is not specific to the shelter branch and involves many clicks to complete.

4

Enjoyable design

The current landing page is not very welcoming or encouraging in its text or features.

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Persona: **Dawn**

Problem statement:

Dawn is a tech-savvy volunteer who needs a quick and efficient way to sign up for dog walking shifts so signing up takes less time and effort.

Quote: Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated. - Confucius

Goals

- Wants to learn how to fix poor design choices that she sees in everyday life
- To sign up for volunteer shifts quickly and efficiently each week
- Easily manage her life on her phone

Frustrations

- "The signup sheet pages don't fit on the screen."
- "Why can't I just see the shifts for the shelter near me?"
- "I don't want another app on my phone."

Dawn

Age:	40
Education:	Master's degree
Hometown:	Anaheim, CA
Family:	1 dog
Occupation:	Technical Support

Dawn has been volunteering at the animal shelter for about six months. She has a 4 yr old rescue dog named Cinnamon. She works a full-time job and has a partner in another city, so she is on the go a lot. Her job in tech support means that Dawn sees the results of bugs and bad design in her work all the time. She loves walking the dogs, but feels like it takes too much time to sign up for volunteer shifts online. She uses her phone for all kinds of tasks, including keeping her schedule and signing up to volunteer.

Google

Persona: **Anne**

Problem statement:

Anne is a volunteer dog-walker with impairments who needs an easy way to sign up for shifts because the process is challenging and deters her from signing up.

Quote: Love is a four-legged word.

Goals
- Keep busy in retirement
- To easily sign up for shelter shifts
- To use the internet without needing help from her busy children

Frustrations
- "The print is so small and hard to read"
- "My hand isn't steady and it's hard to click on the right date"
- "So many clicks to get my shifts set up."

Anne

Age:	65
Education:	Bachelor's degree
Hometown:	Fountain Valley, CA
Family:	Dog and cat
Occupation:	Retired

Anne has been volunteering at the animal shelter for about a year. She can walk there from her home, and usually goes in Tuesday and Thursday mornings every week. She is retired and has a lot of spare time. Anne does everything on a computer because using a phone is difficult with her arthritis and bad eyesight. Sometimes she just goes in without signing up, but the shelter needs records of all volunteer shifts. Anne wishes it was easier to navigate on the web and sometimes gets her daughter to help her.

Google

User journey map

Anne's struggles with accessibility bring a different perspective on why it's important to have a simple, inclusive signup process so that volunteers aren't deterred from using the site.

Persona: Anne

Goal: Sign up for volunteer shifts on her computer with visual and motor impairments

ACTION	Access volunteer page	Access signup calendar	Find open shifts	Sign up
TASK LIST	Tasks A. Turn on computer B. Navigate to animal shelter page C. Arrive on landing page	Tasks A. Click through menus to volunteer shift page B. Scroll calendar to current week	Tasks A. Check personal calendar B. Click on desired location and day C. Scroll popup to look for open shift	Tasks A. Click Sign Up B. Confirm information in popup C. Click sign up button D. Repeat for other days if necessary
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Eagerness Impatient	Discomfort	Frustration Annoyed	Excited Tedious
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES		Shorten path to shift page Allow user to save favorite shelter location Consider responsive design for mobile	Change font and colors for accessibility Space shifts further apart for easier clicking Filter shifts to only desired location Show only open shifts	Display upcoming confirmed shifts on the landing/home page Display open shifts at desired location on landing page Allow to edit confirmed shifts from home page

Google

Starting the design

- Paper wireframes
- Digital wireframes
- Low-fidelity prototype
- Usability studies

Google

Paper wireframes

Search Screen

- Goal is to create a simple, easy to use search function with some personalization
- Filter could be check boxes or dropdown menus
- Filter embedded in the page or in an overlay?
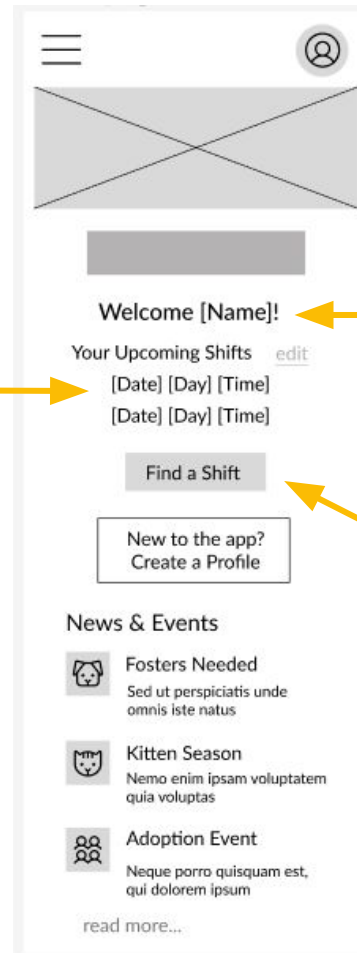- Option to use saved search preferences

Google
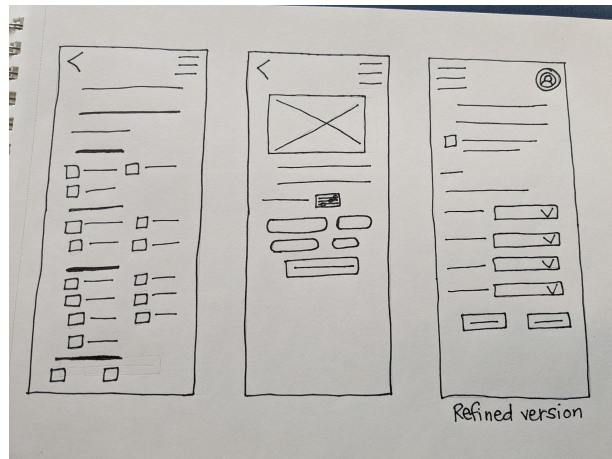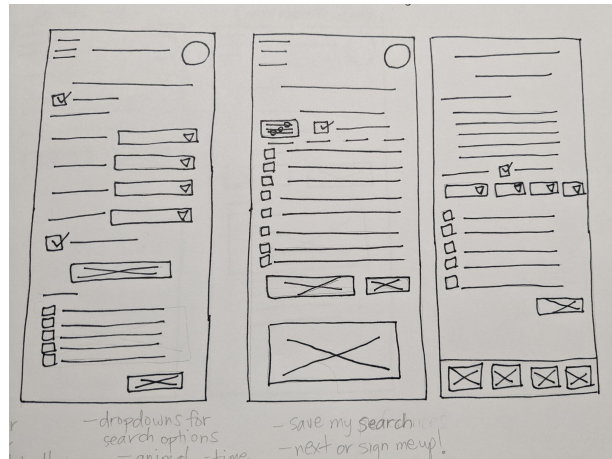
Digital wireframes

Home Page

- Goal is to simplify signup process and create an engaging user experience
- Reduce number of clicks to start process
- Create value by recognizing user and providing easy-to-find shift reminder

Upcoming shifts listed on home page with edit option

Personalized and welcoming experience

Start search on home page with one click

Welcome [Name]!

Your Upcoming Shifts   edit
[Date] [Day] [Time]
[Date] [Day] [Time]

Find a Shift

New to the app?
Create a Profile

News & Events

Fosters Needed
Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus

Kitten Season
Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas

Adoption Event
Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum

read more...

Google

Digital wireframes

Search Page

- Goal is to customize the user experience to save time and effort
- Set search to bring up available shifts by certain criteria instead of all shifts on each day (current process)

Can use search process to limit results by open shifts and by animal/day/time/location

User can pre-fill search fields with preferences created on Profile page

Search Open Shifts

☐ Use saved preferences?
Create preferences

or

Search All Shifts:

Location: Chino ⌄
Animal: Dog ⌄
Day: Tuesday ⌄
Time: 8-10am ⌄

Back   Fetch Shifts!

Google

Low-fidelity prototype
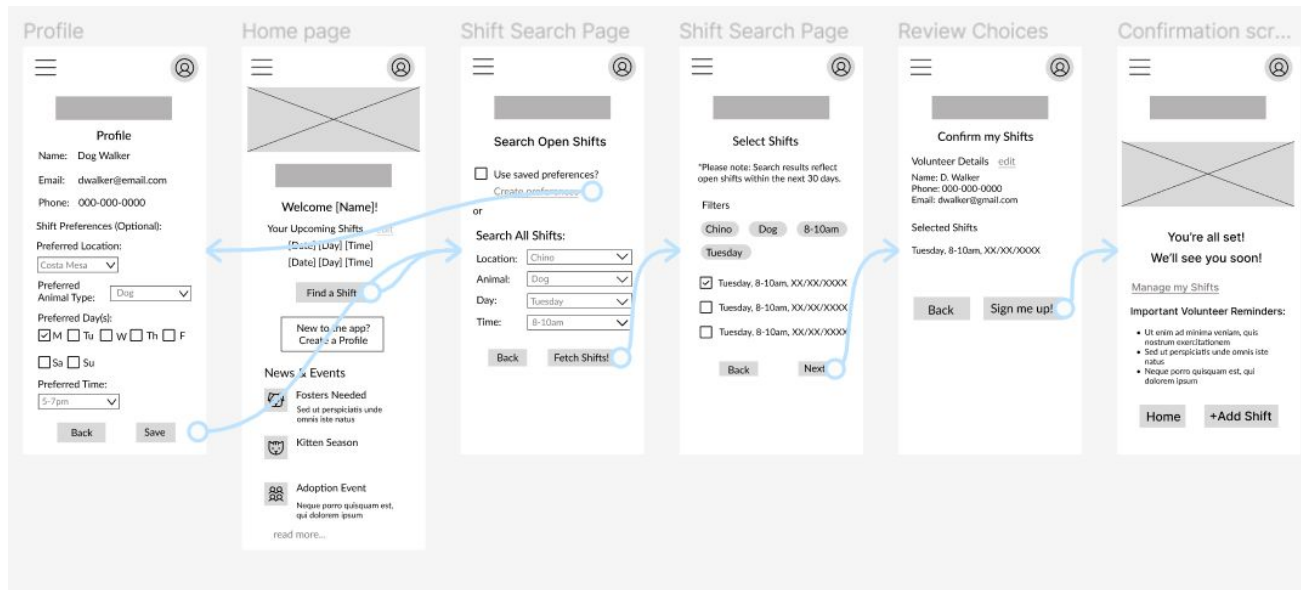
Main User Flow:

1. Find a Shift to start search
2. Search Open Shifts
   a. Can use saved search preferences
3. Display search results and select desired shift(s)
4. Review and confirm choice
5. Signup complete

[Link to low-fidelity prototype](#)

Google

Usability study: findings

I conducted two usability studies, one with the low-fidelity prototype and one with the high-fidelity prototype. Both had 5-6 participants between the ages of 21-75 who had been volunteering at the shelter for at least a month.

Round 1 findings

1 Users want more information about shift duration

2 Saved shift preferences feature difficult to use

3 Users need a clearer path to creating and saving the profile

4 Users wanted shelter location and contact information

Round 2 findings

1 Users still unsure how to use saved shift preferences

2 Users want to an option to make multiple selections per search criterion

3 Better confirmation needed for profile saving process

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Refining the design
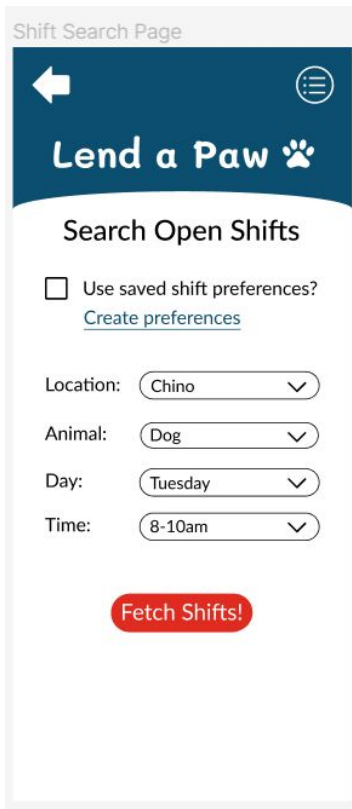
- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

Mockups

Search Page

Users were still unsure how to use the saved shift preferences after the second usability study, so I changed how the tool works and removed the check box from the search page. I also re-designed the search filters to allow more than one item to be selected in each category.

Shift Search Page

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Search Open Shifts

☐ Use saved shift preferences?
Create preferences
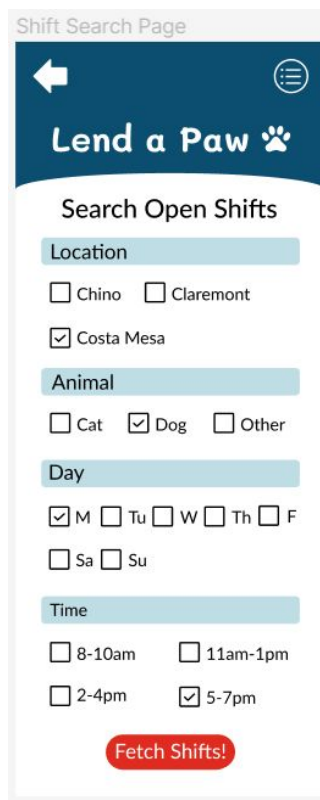
Location: Chino ⌄
Animal: Dog ⌄
Day: Tuesday ⌄
Time: 8-10am ⌄

Fetch Shifts!

Shift Search Page

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Search Open Shifts

Location
☐ Chino ☐ Claremont
☑ Costa Mesa

Animal
☐ Cat ☑ Dog ☐ Other

Day
☑ M ☐ Tu ☐ W ☐ Th ☐ F
☐ Sa ☐ Su

Time
☐ 8-10am ☐ 11am-1pm
☐ 2-4pm ☑ 5-7pm

Fetch Shifts!

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Mockups

Profile Page

My first priority was to split the name field into first and last names so only the first name will display in the home page "Welcome" heading. I also changed the save path so users are re-directed to the home page after saving their profile. Lastly, I provided a note to help users better understand how the shift preferences tool functions.
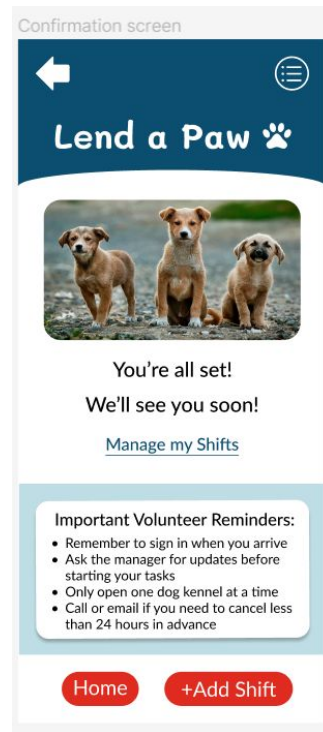
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Mockups

Home page

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Welcome [Name]!

Your Upcoming Shifts edit
[Date] [Day] [Time]
[Date] [Day] [Time]

Find a Shift

Need to update your contact info?
Edit Your Profile

News & Events

Fosters Needed
Sign up to foster a pet in your home

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Search Open Shifts

Location
☐ Chino ☐ Claremont
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Animal
☐ Cat ☑ Dog ☐ Other

Day
☑ M ☐ Tu ☐ W ☐ Th ☐ F
☐ Sa ☐ Su

Time
☐ 8-10am ☐ 11am-1pm

Saved Pref Search Results pa...

Lend a Paw 🐾

Select Shifts

*Please note: Search results reflect open shifts within the next 30 days.

Filters
Costa Mesa   Dog
Monday   5-7pm

☑ Monday, 5-7pm, XX/XX/XXXX
☐ Monday, 5-7pm, XX/XX/XXXX
☐ Monday, 5-7pm, XX/XX/XXXX

Next

Confirmation screen

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You're all set!
We'll see you soon!

Manage my Shifts

Important Volunteer Reminders:
- Remember to sign in when you arrive
- Ask the manager for updates before starting your tasks
- Only open one dog kennel at a time
- Call or email if you need to cancel less than 24 hours in advance

Home   +Add Shift

Google

High-fidelity prototype

Link to high-fidelity prototype
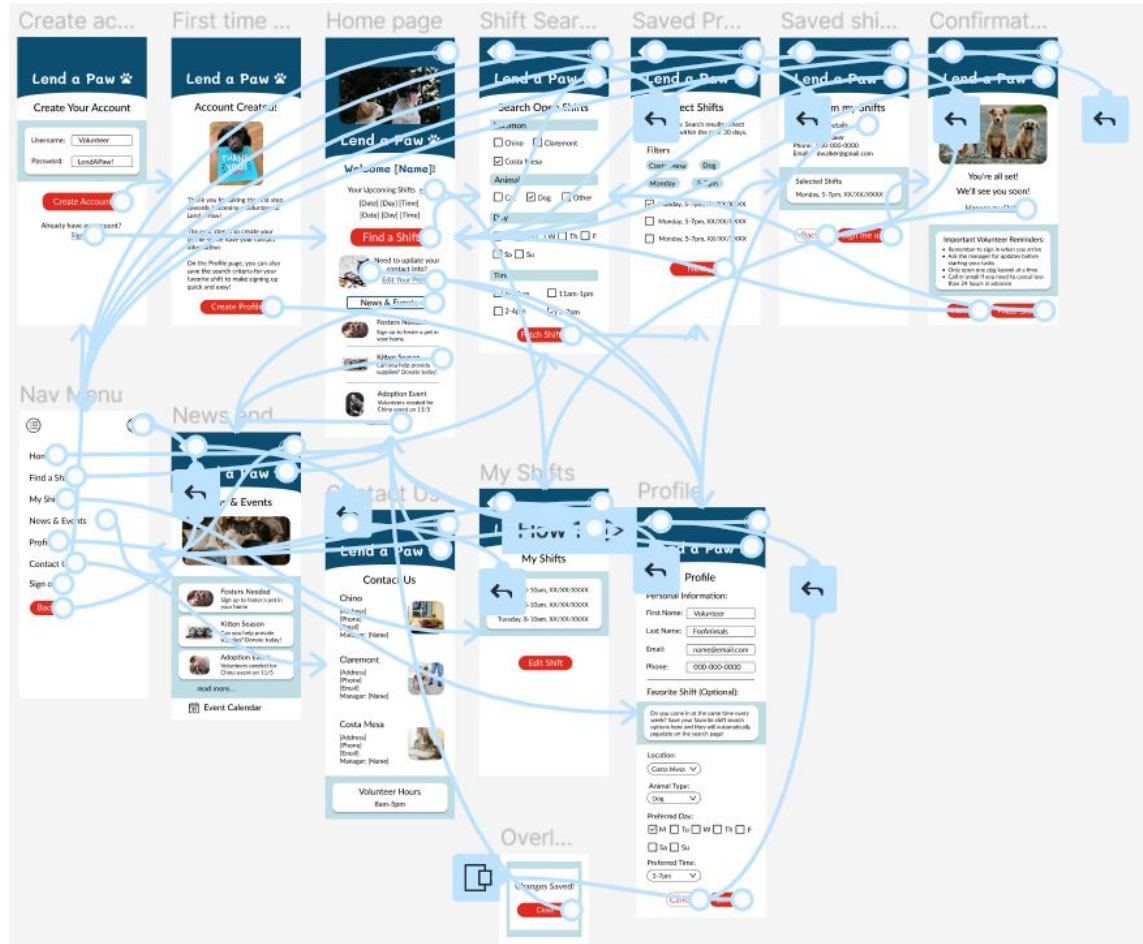
Accessibility considerations

1

Text and background color combinations were tested using a color contrast checker to ensure a minimum 4.5:1 ratio for WCAG 2.0 AA Pass rating.

2

More white space was added around elements to make touch targets easier to select. Layouts are consistent across pages where possible.

3

Data entry is kept to a minimum. The shift preferences tool can help reduce the number of clicks needed to sign up for volunteers who volunteer for the same shift every week.

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Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Google

Takeaways

Impact:

"I think the app works really well. It is easy to use and clean in format"

"Very straightforward, there wasn't a lot of clicking or options that could be confusing"

(high-fidelity study participant comments)

What I learned:

This project helped me to learn to recognize false-consensus bias in my designs, and to create designs that reduce effort and increase engagement of users. I also learned to use accessibility tools to make my designs more inclusive and to better meet the needs of all users.

Next steps

1

I recommend meeting with developers to discuss the feasibility of the app design and revising the current website to be more user-friendly for volunteers who prefer computers to mobile devices.

2

The volunteer managers should be consulted to see how data and processes in this app can help address their needs in volunteer management.

3

Usability study participants identified additional opportunities for increasing engagement with users by adding incentives for frequent volunteers and incorporating social media into the app.

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Let's connect!

Please let me know if you have any questions about my work or the ideas presented here.

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