



# COVID 19: INVISIBLE PROBLEMS

LIFT UP AND SOLVE THE UNSEEN PROBLEMS OF THE CRISIS

United Way's Unique COVID-19 Response  
September 14, 2021



# IDEASCALE

Today's Host:



Gretta Martinez  
Innovation Strategist  
IdeaScale

# UNITED WAY CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

United Way Worldwide's Innovation Team:



Edwin Goutier  
Vice President



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Director  
Social Innovation



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Senior Manager  
Innovation



# AGENDA

- 
- A large iceberg floats in a blue ocean under a blue sky with wispy clouds. The visible tip of the iceberg is on the left side of the frame. The much larger, submerged portion of the iceberg extends deep into the water, illustrating the concept of 'invisible problems' mentioned in the agenda.
- Spotlight: About United Way
  - Context: Invisible Problems
  - Phase 1: Crowdsourcing Invisible Problems
  - Phases 2-3: Prioritizing Invisible Problems, Crowdsourcing and Testing a Solution
  - Advice, Thanks, Q&A, Next



# SPOTLIGHT: ABOUT UNITED WAY



# OUR FOCUS AND REACH

## OUR MISSION

To improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world.

## OUR VISION

United Way envisions a world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability and healthy lives.



# OUR FOCUS AND REACH

in 94% all U.S. communities &  
1,200 communities globally

40 countries and territories

48 million  
people served annually

29,000  
community partners

2.5 million  
volunteers

45,000  
corporate partners

\$4.8 billion raised

7.7 million donors





# OUR SUPERPOWERS



1. We know our local communities
2. With that understanding, we tackle root causes of the most pressing issues
3. We bring people and organizations together to solve problems
4. We drive impact at scale around the world

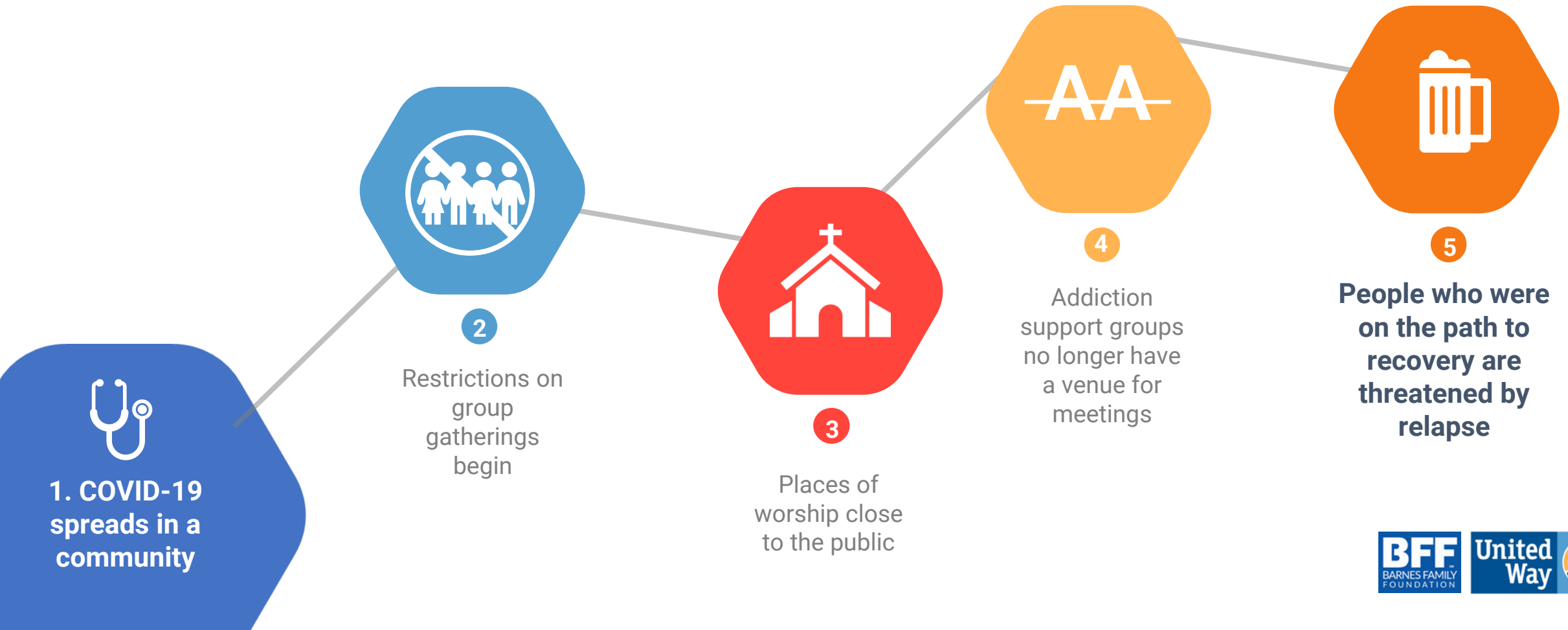




# CONTEXT: INVISIBLE PROBLEMS

# IN THIS PANDEMIC, EVERY CHANGE CREATES UNSEEN DISRUPTION

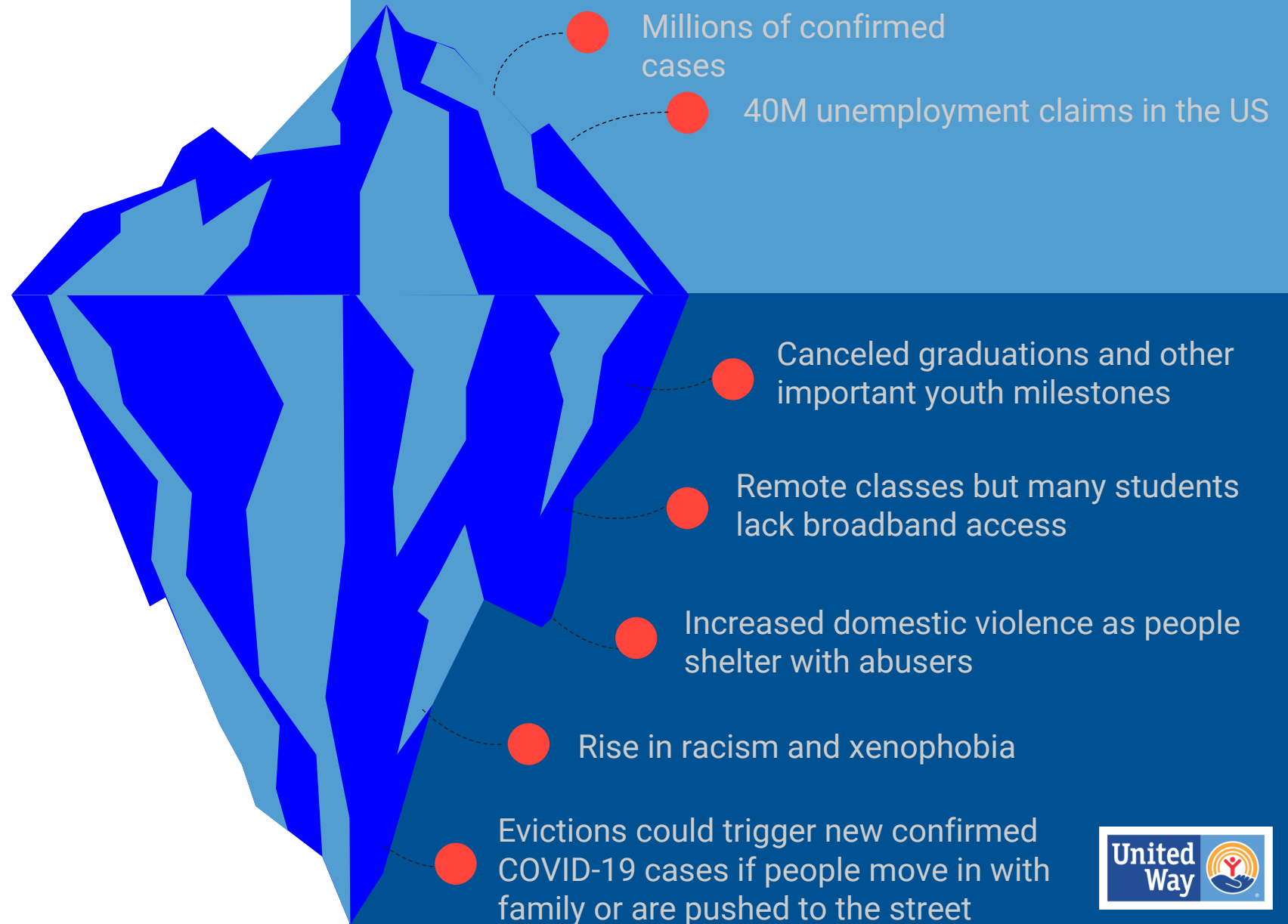
We know we will be dealing with the direct issues caused by COVID-19 in communities around the world. There are also unforeseen consequences tied to even the best decisions we're making and we're moving too quickly to adequately plan for the fallout.





# WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT PROBLEMS LIE BENEATH THE SURFACE

United Way Worldwide's COVID-19 Response Fund was critical to the immediate response to the global pandemic. But if we didn't quickly identify and respond to unseen problems caused by the ripple effects of COVID-19, we would be dealing with wave after wave of complex community crisis. The identification of these unseen problems informed and shaped the path forward as we move from immediate response to recovery.



# EXAMPLE OF AN INVISIBLE PROBLEM AND SOLUTION



**GET YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT**

United Way has launched the United We Count, United We Vote campaign to help people be civically engaged and vote. Use this tool to request an absentee ballot.

[UNITED WE VOTE](#)

[GET YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT](#)

[VERIFY YOUR REGISTRATION](#)

[POLLING PLACE LOCATOR](#)

[LOCAL ELECTION OFFICE DIRECTORY](#)

[WHAT IS YOUR VOTING PLAN?](#)





**PROBLEMS GO IN**

**2. TAG**  
Behind the scenes, United Way moderators tag problems consistently to collect data on the what is being submitted

**1. SOURCE**  
Ask the general public to share the problems that may be unseen

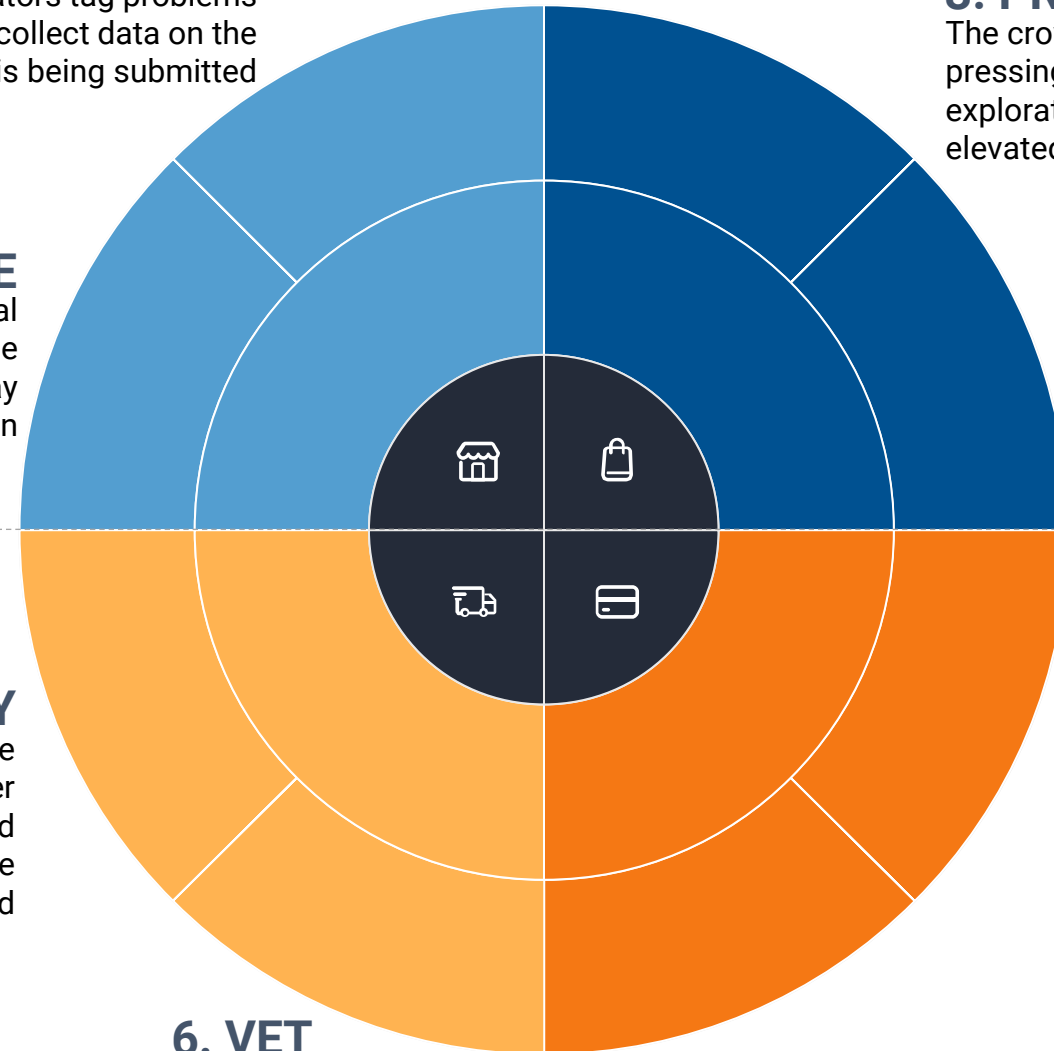
**3. PRIORITIZE**  
The crowd votes on the most pressing issues for further exploration. One to three ideas are elevated to the next stage each week.

**7. DEPLOY**  
Solutions are elevated for further implementation and pushed out for use in the world

**6. VET**  
United Way moderators review solutions with safety, equity, and other important lenses in mind.

**5. TEST**  
Solutions are tested at low fidelity to see if they address the problem

**4. IDEATE**  
The crowd and skilled agency partners and volunteers offer solutions



**SOLUTIONS GO OUT**

# PARTNERSHIPS



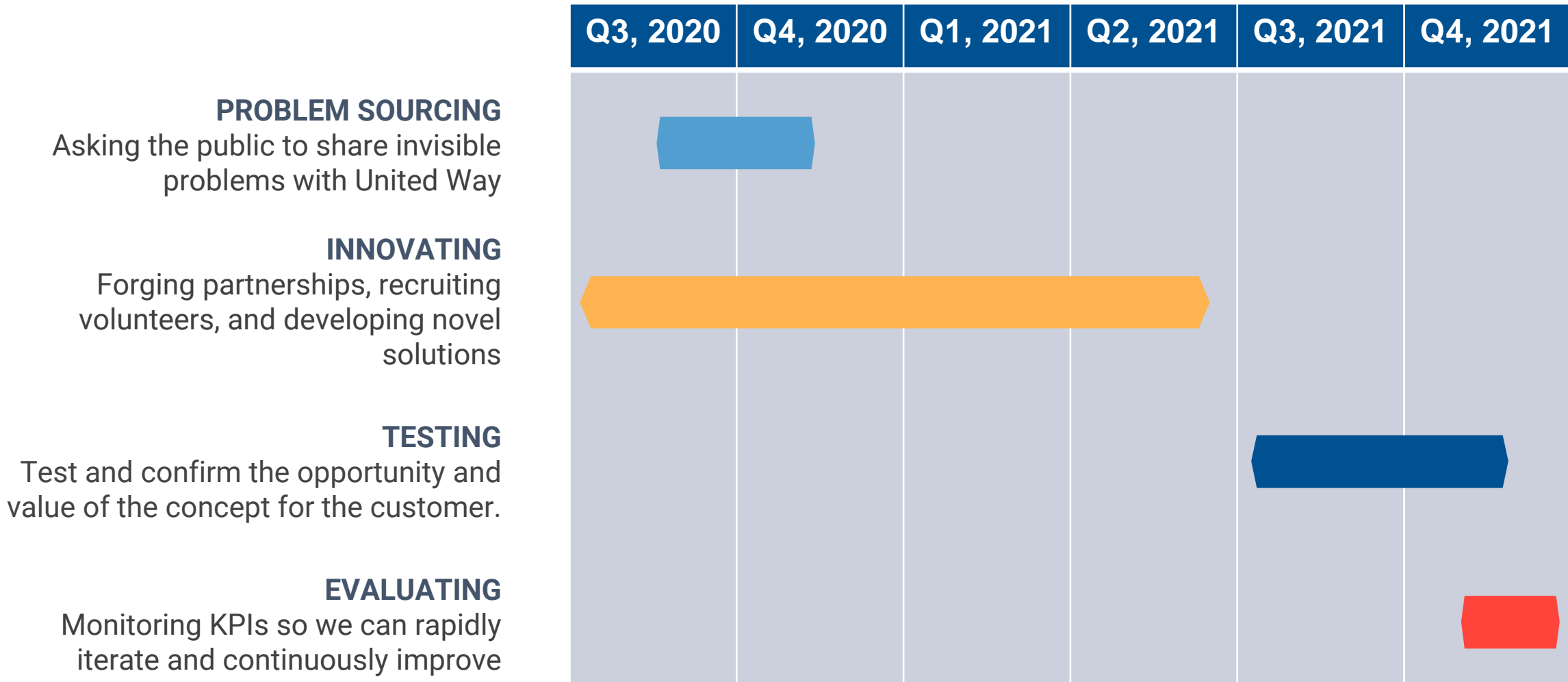
IDEASCALE

**Deloitte.**





# SOCIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE TIMELINE





# COVID-19 Response: It Takes All of Us

Lift up and solve the unseen problems related to COVID-19

[Share a Problem](#)

[Read More](#)

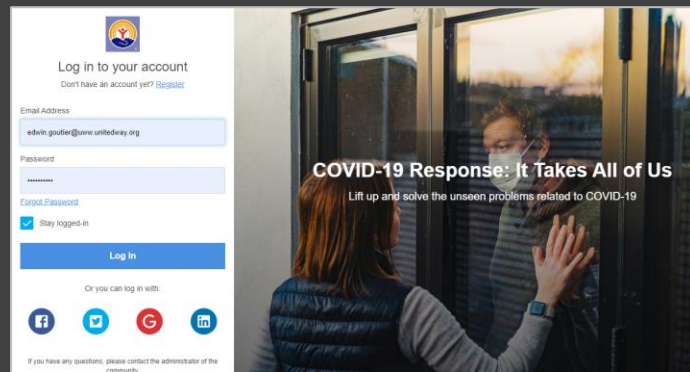
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PHASE 1:

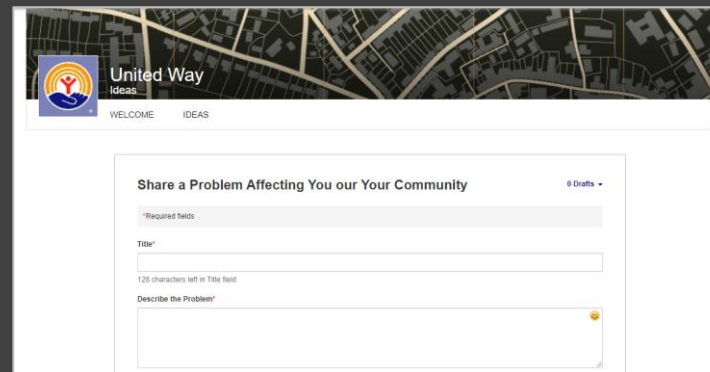
CROWDSOURCING INVISIBLE  
PROBLEMS

# A SEAMLESS JOURNEY FROM PROBLEM TO SOLUTION

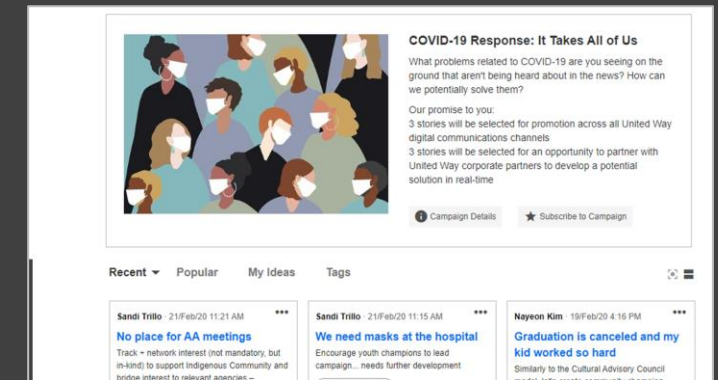
Using IdeaScale, an industry leading open innovation platform, and with support from innovation experts, United Way Worldwide managed the identification, prioritization and solving of emerging social problems related to COVID-19.



Access from any device and one-click login via Facebook, Twitter, Google, or LinkedIn



Easily submit a problem to surface for discussion and consideration



Up-vote, comment on problems, and offer potential solutions



United Way

SHARE HOW YOU'VE BEEN AFFECTED BY COVID-19.

unitedway.ideascale.com

United Way

How are you doing?

Please share a problem related to the impact of COVID-19 that is affecting our communities. To see examples of Invisible Problems shared by others, please visit [unitedway.ideascale.com](https://unitedway.ideascale.com).

We'll use your information to help solve your problem.

Problem Title

Problem Description

Does this problem affect a specific community?

Full name


Email


Cancel Next

# LEVERAGED INNOVATIVE SOCIAL ADS TO TARGET COMMUNITIES WE NEED TO HEAR FROM MOST

To source problems and recruit volunteers, we ran targeted Facebook ads. We also worked with media partners like iHeart Radio to spread the word.

# Deloitte-UWW Invisible Problems Designathon

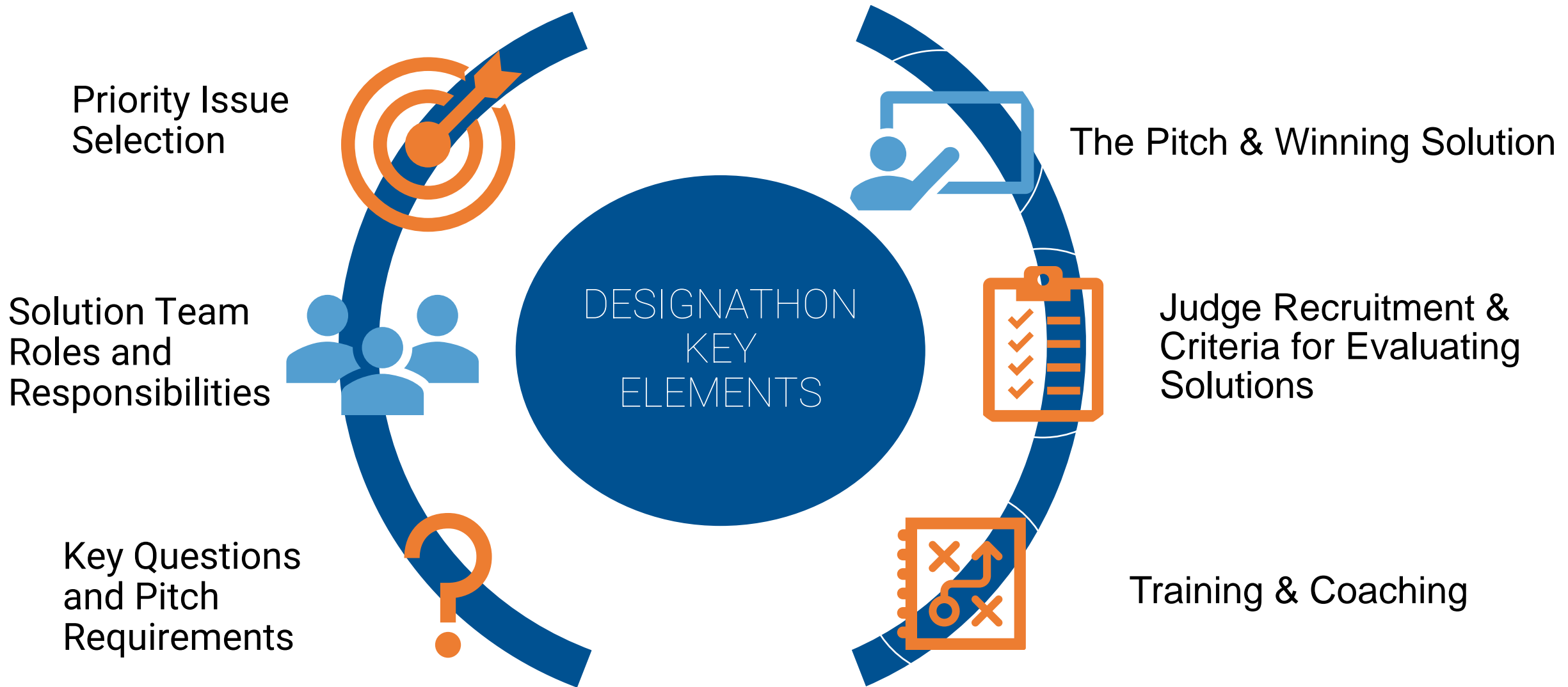
 Browse Ideas

 [Unsubscribe from Campaign](#)

Deloitte and United Way Worldwide are partnering to research and test solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic's "invisible problems". Stories and information about the coronavirus pandemic are all over the news – on social media, newspapers, and TV. Businesses, especially small ones, are closing and laying off workers. Families are grappling with how to take care of and educate children who are now home full-time. Hospitals are running low on beds and equipment to treat the sick. The vaccine offers hope but questions abound regarding public will to vaccinate and access for all. All of this while many people – nonprofit staff, healthcare workers, grocery and pharmacy staff, and farm workers – are still working on the front lines to keep our communities running. What minimally viable solutions can we develop to address these COVID-19 invisible problems?

PHASES 2-3:

PRIORITIZING INVISIBLE PROBLEMS,  
CROWDSOURCING AND TESTING SOLUTIONS



*Communications, Schedule, Deadlines, Platform Navigation*



# DESIGNATHON EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE TIMELINE

## April 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Start Designathon registration.	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Attend Designathon Orientation. Start to form Teams.	9	10
11	12 Finish forming teams.	13	14 Designathon Kick-Off	15 Work on Solutions.	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Optional: Feedback Office Hours	23	24
25	26 Upload Pitch Decks	27	28 Pitch Session	29	30 Designathon Winners announced.	
					May 7: Complete Designathon evaluation	

# IDEASCALE: FULL-SERVICE HUB

## IDEASCALE

- **Problems** (Ideate)
- **Let's Team Up** (Build Team)
- **Work through Your Solution & Pitch Deck** (Refine)
- **Judging** (ReviewScale)
- **Winner!** (Reserve)
- **Idea Bank** (Reserve)

# SOLUTIONS

- ▶ Public Health Awareness Campaign about Importance of Social Activity to Mitigate COVID-19's Effect on Kids' Mental Health



- ▶ Grocery Delivery to Elderly without Technology



- ▶ Tutoring 4<sup>th</sup> Graders in Literacy





# TESTING A SOLUTION



## GOALS

- ▶ A stronger understanding of what's required to bring the solution to market
- ▶ Overall feasibility, market desirability, and viability of the concept.



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CONCLUSION

ADVICE, THANKS, Q&A, NEXT

# REFERENCE: CROWDSOURCING PROBLEMS FUNNEL

**WE'RE LISTENING:** Your thoughts and experiences are valued. Tell us the unseen problems you're facing due to COVID-19. If you have thoughts about how to solve the problem, share that, too.

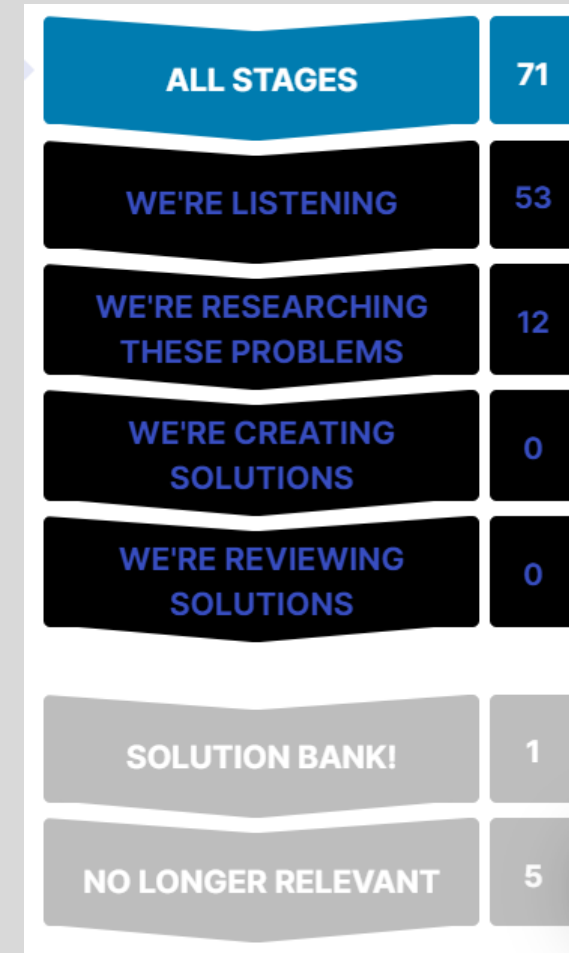
**WE'RE RESEARCHING THESE PROBLEMS:** From your submission, we will dive deeper into its impact on our communities. United Way staff and volunteers will research the challenges and needs to better understand the problem you've surfaced so we can begin to consider innovative solutions.

**WE'RE CREATING SOLUTIONS:** Together, with our community, stakeholders, and skilled volunteers, we will brainstorm and create innovative solutions to the problems you've shared.

**WE'RE REVIEWING SOLUTIONS:** Before a new solutions goes live, we want to make sure it works and doesn't cause any unintended negative impacts on our communities. After the solution takes flight, we will continually refine and improve the solution.

**SOLUTION BANK!** This is a place to store problems and their solutions that we've deployed.

**NO LONGER RELEVANT:** Ideas that are no longer current or relevant for the research or solution development stages.



**For 211  
(visible only to administrators)**

Functional Stages:

Ideate

Refine

Refine

Assessment

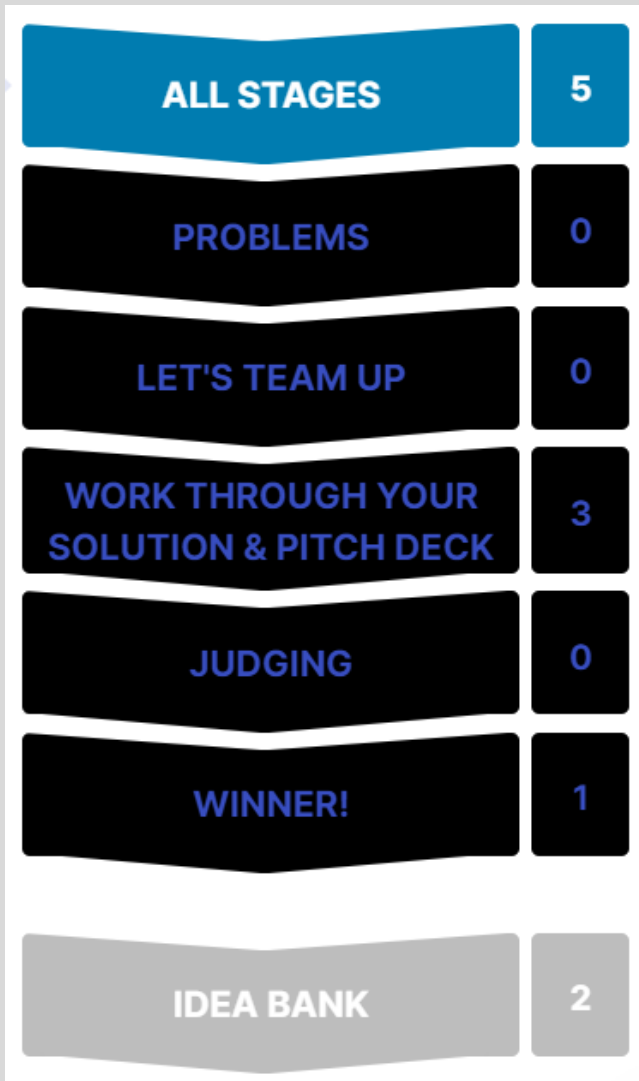
Reserve

Reserve

Reserve



# REFERENCE: DESIGNATHON FUNNEL



## Functional Stages:

Ideate

Build Team

Refine

ReviewScale

Reserve

Reserve

**PROBLEMS:** These are the problems you are designing solutions for.

**LET'S TEAM UP:** In this stage, you're assembling around the most compelling problem that you want to develop a solution for United Way to test. There are two team roles: Solution Team Lead (one available per problem) and Solution Team Champions. The Solution Team Leader is responsible for leading the Solution Team towards its end goal of working through a solution concept for United Way to test. Solution Team Champions collaborate with each other to develop a possible solution for United Way to test. Browse the solutions, check for open positions, and join solution teams looking for someone like you.

**WORK THROUGH YOUR SOLUTION & PITCH DECK:** These solutions sound promising. We're looking for specific information on these concepts. Answer the questions and flesh out your solution, refine that content into a pitch deck and upload it here (as an attachment) by 5:00 p.m. ET, April 26, 2021, prior to presenting at the April 28th Pitch Session.

**JUDGING:** In this stage, your solutions are reviewed by the Judges. Reviewers rate your solutions based on the specified set of criteria to help uncover the concepts with the most potential.

**WINNER!** Congratulations, Deloitte Volunteers! Pending alignment and resources, United Way will test and refine this winning "invisible problems" concept for feasibility to see if they can be scaled or should be retired. Check in in a few months to find out what happened with the idea you're passionate about.

**IDEA BANK:** This is a place to store solutions which are not currently active in our innovation workflow.

# ADVICE

- Line Up Partners from the Start to Help Solve People's Problems
- Build in Time for Testing Ads and the Ad Approval Process
- Design for Mobile
- Create and Implement a Communications Plan for the Designathon
- Recruit the Necessary Cross-functional Team at the Beginning
- Over Recruit and Diversify Designathon Judges

# THANK YOU!

- ▶ Our sponsors and partners: The Barnes Family Foundation, iHeart Radio, Ally Bank, Deloitte
- ▶ Our IdeaScale Innovation Strategist, Gretta Martinez
- ▶ IdeaScale's Support Staff

# QUESTIONS?

- **Download the Invisible Problems Case Study.**



- Connect with your company's CSR leader to explore if open innovation can support corporate purpose.
- Reach out to United Way's Center for Social Innovation at [innovation@unitedway.org](mailto:innovation@unitedway.org) to bring a social innovation challenge to your company.
- **Feeling inspired? Donate to United Way's Innovation Fund. Cash or Crypto accepted.**

# NEXT STEPS

CASH



CRYPTO



# THANK YOU

**United Way Center for Social Innovation**

[Innovation@unitedway.org](mailto:Innovation@unitedway.org)