

STEPHANIE WADE

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New York, NY

ABOUT ME

I'm a global innovation leader, human-centered designer, problem solver, and change-maker working to create a better world. A dynamic leader with diverse business, public and non-profit experience, I am interested in helping organizations build a culture of innovation and implement bold new ideas that improve people's lives.

EDUCATION

Masters and Bachelors

Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government
Master in Public Policy

Boston College
Bachelor of Arts: Honors
Degree in Sociology, Minor in Studio Arts

Design

Austin Center for Design
Design Thinking

Adaptive Path
Service Design Training

School of Visual Arts
Graphic Design, Typography

General Assembly
Visual Design

WORK EXPERIENCE

Ascendant

Founder and CEO (2021-present)

As a global innovation leader, I help public and social organizations create bold, new ideas that dramatically improve peoples' lives around the world through program, service, and UX design-based innovation projects, by building a culture of innovation, and developing and delivering bespoke human-centered design and equity-centered innovation curriculum and training.

Adjunct Faculty

IIT Institute of Design (2021-present)

Bloomberg Philanthropies

Lead for Innovation and Design (2016-2021)

As a leader of the global Bloomberg Philanthropies innovation initiative I led teams that equipped over 100 city mayors and their staff to build a culture of innovation and tackle big problems that deliver better results for their residents. By using the most effective approaches in innovation, including design-based innovation, data analytics, and behavioral economics, cities learned how to co-create with key stakeholders to develop effective solutions that have measurable impact. As a creative director, I led teams that trained 8,000 staff and launched 450 initiatives world-wide. For example, **Mobile, AL reduced blight by 53%, Syracuse, NY has decreased housing evictions by 75%, and saved taxpayers \$1.47M in 4 months. Tel Aviv, Israel filled an education gap for young families and saved them \$1M a year.**

- Build and manage a \$65M portfolio of innovation programs around the world
- Build and manage relationships with 100 U.S. and international cities to help them create successful design-based innovation programs and cultures
- Develop and deliver world-class design-based innovation curriculum to teach cities around the world how to effectively use innovation to deliver better services and measurably improve residents' lives
- Serve as a creative director for innovation teams to set the bar for innovation and creativity and provide critiques to guide and direct their work so they achieve the best possible outcomes
- Manage a multiple teams to deliver training and coaching to help cities embed innovation into their organizational DNA
- Created and manage a new national innovation program in partnership with the Israeli National Government and a leading non profit to spread our design curriculum and approach across Israel
- Partnered with the OECD to create the world's first City Innovation Survey and Map to understand and document how cities are investing in innovation around the world (<https://cities-innovation-oecd.com/>)
- Created and lead the world's first Chief Innovators Summit that brings city innovation leaders together from around the world to build a community of practice and share lessons learned
- Serve as a subject matter expert to Mayors, Chief Innovation Officers and city staff on how to build a successful innovation capacity

Adjunct Professor and Innovator in Residence

Duke University, Sanford School of Public Policy (2016-2018)

As their first Innovator-in-Residence, I created and taught a for-credit course called *Innovation In Government, By DESIGN* that helped students learn how to properly apply design-based innovation to solve public-sector problems.

KEY PRESENTATIONS

Impact Hub New York (2020)

Experimentation by Design
Copenhagen, Denmark (2020)

Wonder Woman Tech
Long Beach, CA (2019)

Design For America
Chicago, IL (2019)

Chief Innovators Studio
Detroit, MI (2018)

Chicago Ideas Week
Chicago, IL (2017)

City Lab
Paris, France (2017)

UX Exponential
Washington, DC (2016)

Public Sector Innovation Week
Brasilia, Brazil (2015)

Engaged Exchange
Gates Foundation
Washington, DC (2015)

LabWorks
London, England (2015)

Australian Government
Canberra, Australia (2015)

Customer Experience Summit
Washington DC, (2014)

OECD
Paris, France (2014)

AWARDS

1st place, Design Management
Institute, Lab@OPM (2015)

Board Member Design Thinking,
DC (DT:DC)

Multiple awards at Booz Allen
Hamilton (2006-2014)

Senior Fine Arts Award
Boston College (2001)

WORK EXPERIENCE (continued)

United States Government, Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Director, Innovation Lab at OPM (2014-2016)

I led a team of public and private sector staff to drive design-led innovation across the U.S. Federal government. We worked closely with the White House, Federal agencies, and private sector organizations to create a culture within government that fosters rapid innovation. To do this we taught design-based innovation and led design projects that tackled some of the government's most challenging problems to improve the services it delivers across the country and around the world. **For example, I led one project that increased student access to free meals around the country and saved taxpayers an estimated \$600M.**

- Led multiple Federal-wide service and UX design innovation projects domestically and internationally
- Led a team to develop and execute the Lab's design strategy, business, marketing, and operational activities
- Transitioned the Lab into a business in government and exceeded sales target by 500% in our first year
- Led creation and delivery of customized government design curriculum and workshops to build innovative public sector leaders
- Created and managed an International Design Fellows Program
- Grew the Lab into a global leader in government innovation

Booz Allen Hamilton

Design Researcher and Strategic Planner (2006–2014)

Played critical business and methodology development roles to launch Booz Allen's design thinking and innovation consultancy service. Managed cross-functional teams to improve innovation, strategy, operations, and performance for international and domestic organizations. For example:

- Conducted design projects on immigration reform, Veteran Medical Care, Disaster Training, the Special Olympics, and other program areas
- Led the development of a \$25B 10-yr National Strategic Plan for climate change and corresponding communications plan
- Designed a 5-year strategy to transform the Abu Dhabi Judicial system and performance management capabilities
- Led strategic planning, performance measurement, and organizational assessment projects in multiple agencies in the U.S. Federal Government

Government Accountability Office

Analyst for Strategic Issues (2005)

Framed and conducted quantitative and qualitative research and analysis on the U.S. federal budget process to develop recommendations for constraining spending for mandatory accounts. Contributing author: *Mandatory Spending: Using Budget Triggers to Constrain Growth* (GAO-06-276)

Massachusetts State House

Chief of Staff, Representative Frank Smizik (2003–2004)

Served as primary liaison for all press contacts, state agencies, lobbyists, interest groups and local government officials. Wrote, researched, analyzed, and tracked legislation; managed constituent services through state, local and private resources.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Assistant to Director of Planning and Development (2001– 2003)

Oversaw \$425 million Campaign budget. Delivered successful programs for State Department visitors. Helped develop the first Diversity Action Plan.