

# Code for Canada Fellowship

The Code for Canada Fellowship is an experiential learning program for government teams that helps to build digital capacity and kickstart culture change across the organization.

As part of the 16-month program, Code for Canada places digital professionals inside government, where they use their skills to help public servants harness design and technology to address challenges. Using modern digital skills and methods, like user-centered design and iterative development, fellows spend 9 months collaborating with staff to create a digital product that modernizes the delivery of a public service or function.

## What the Code for Canada Fellowship can do for you

- Harness the power of digital from experienced professionals and facilitate progress on your digital technology government project
- Build your organization's digital capacity by familiarizing staff with modern digital methods and tools through a carefully-designed curriculum of delivery and training
- Encourage collaboration across the organization engaging a broad group of stakeholders in training and program activities beyond just a core project team
- Act as a pilot for digital transformation by enabling your organization to transform the way it works together and how it serves its stakeholders

## Who are the Fellows?

Code for Canada fellows represent the brightest minds of Canada's tech sector -- they are professionals that not only have years of experience creating great digital products at well-known tech companies, but also a deep passion for using their skills to make an impact and improve Canadians' lives. Fellows work in cross-functional teams of three, **with one developer, one designer, and one product manager** to build a great solution and demonstrate new ways of working.



Learn more about the Fellows here:  
<https://medium.com/code-for-canada>

## How is the Fellowship different from a 'tech vendor'?

People ask us how participating in the Fellowship is different from engaging a conventional IT vendor. It's very different! We don't compete with vendors, because the Fellowship is so different:

- Fellows don't just build a digital solution, they build digital capacity
- Fellows aren't just top tech talent, they are top talent with passion
- As a nonprofit, our mission is to help governments better serve residents' needs. We are not constrained by competing priorities (like shareholders or partner technologies).

# Fellowship Case Study

## Partner:

Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities & the Ontario Digital Service

## Cohort: 2017

## Challenge:

The Ontario government offers dozens of training, language learning and skill upgrading opportunities for adults, but users find it difficult to navigate all the choices and disparate information

## Fellows worked closely with staff at MTCU to prototype a new digital product that connects learners in Ontario with opportunities.

The tool seamlessly combines traditional information about adult education programs with knowledge of wraparound services like childcare, internet access or transit subsidies, making it easy and simple for learners to take the next step in their journey.

The development process included extensive user research across the province, from Ottawa to Thunder Bay, including interviews with:

- 151 adult learners
- 25 service provider admin staff
- 5 counsellors
- 16 service provider instructors

The fellows worked iteratively, developing lightweight prototypes and refined the tool based on feedback from users.

Officials at MTCU described the product as “the foundation on which the future adult education experience can be built on” and reported that the fellows’ iterative, user-centred approach to product development fostered greater collaboration between the ministerial partners responsible for adult education in Ontario. MTCU staff have since embraced agile development, and are now exploring how it can be applied to other policy and program challenges.

# 95%

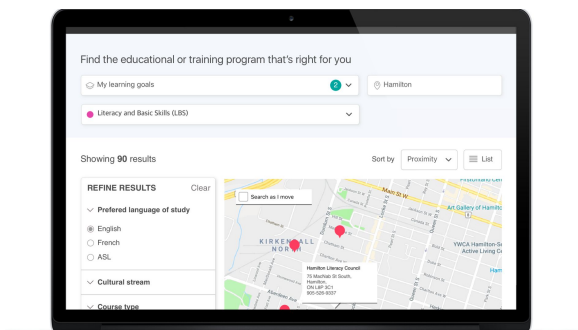
Fellowship survey respondents in government who felt the fellowship met or exceeded expectations

“ ”

Some of the key takeaways that the fellows have brought to us have been around the *[user's] voice*...Code for Canada’s work and the Fellows being here makes it *less of an intimidating approach*.

The work has validated a lot of our assumptions about challenges, *so we can step forward with more confidence* to be able to tackle some of them.

-- Assistant Deputy Minister, Government of ON, MTCU



# Fellowship Case Study

**Partner:**

Government of Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada & the Canadian Digital Service (TBS)

**Cohort:** 2017

**Challenge:**

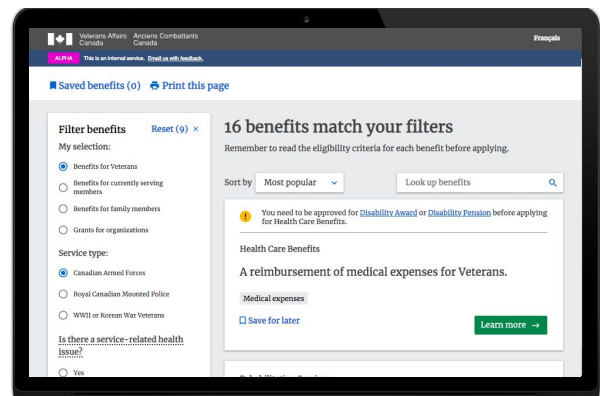
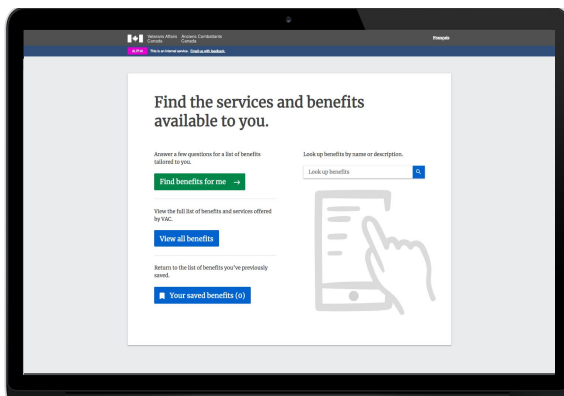
The current Veterans Affairs website is complicated and confusing making it difficult for Veterans to understand which benefits they're eligible for.

Fellows worked with VAC staff to develop a prototype that enables veterans to easily identify and access the public benefits available to them.

Benefits at a Glance is a new digital tool built by Code for Canada fellows in partnership with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and the Canadian Digital Service (CDS). The tool helps veterans navigate the robust — but complex — benefit programs offered by VAC, incorporating plain language descriptions of services, a personalized search function, and features that provide a seamless transition between online and offline interactions between veterans and frontline VAC staff.

Their **11 hours of one-on-one interviews** with Veterans, family members, and still-serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces yielded **200 pages of user research notes and insights**.

Benefits at a Glance is now publicly available as an alpha version, and will soon be helping veterans across Canada access and receive important benefits.



The team at VAC reported that working with fellows showed them “change is possible” and provided valuable lessons for enabling digital transformation across the department. VAC has since hired a new service design manager to apply lessons from the fellowship more broadly, and to scale the Benefits at a Glance tool to better serve those who have served their country.

**95%**

Fellowship survey respondents in government who felt the fellowship met or exceeded expectations

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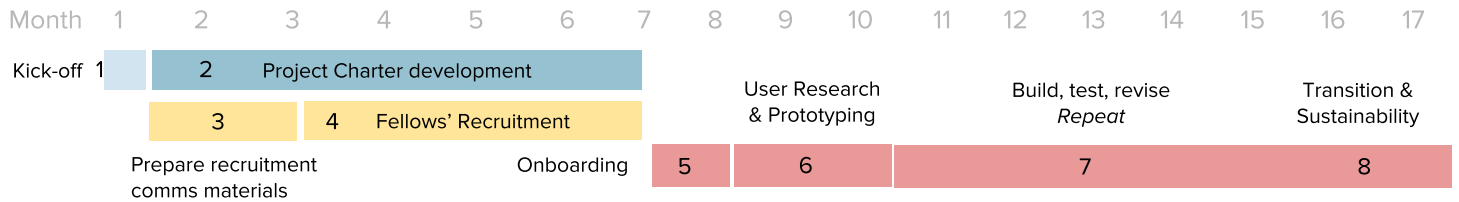
*The fellowship experience has helped us to learn to be tough on problems, and easy on people... by collaborating on user-centered challenges and leaning into those challenges, then we will continually gain new insights into our work which will bring us closer to solving the problem that we're all engaged in to solve.*

-- Manager of Service Design & Delivery, VAC



# Fellowship: Get Involved

## The Fellowship Timeline



### 1 Fellowship kick-off

3 hours

The 2-hour kick-off event marks the beginning of the Fellowship program and lays the groundwork with your organization to kick start digital transformation.

### 5 Onboarding

1 month

Code for Canada staff spend four weeks onboarding them so the fellows are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to work with government teams to deliver a digital product and kickstart culture change within the organization. Code for Canada also provides one week of training to our government partners.

### 2 Project Charter development

Up to 6 months

Code for Canada works with our partners to develop the Project Charter -- the governance document that summarizes the program objectives, activities and expected working relationship between your staff and the Fellows.

### 6-8 Fellows residency in government

9 months

Fellows spend 9 months with their government partners working alongside staff to deliver a new digital tool or product. The 9-months are divided into the following key phases:

- User research & prototyping
- Iterative software development & user testing
- Transition & sustainability

### 3-4 Fellowship Recruitment

4 months

Code for Canada manages the entire recruitment process of fellows from end-to-end. Our carefully planned recruitment process helps us to secure highly skilled and passionate talent. We work with our partners to create compelling promotional material to encourage candidates to apply to be a Fellow. For past examples of promotional materials for recruitment, see here: <https://codefor.ca/fellowship/>

## The impact and cost of the Fellowship

The Fellowship is not just a way of building new technology -- it is a program that offers a carefully designed combination of digital training and technology delivery. It lays a strong foundation for digital transformation within public sector organizations while minimizing the risk and overhead associated with organizational change initiatives. **The Fellowship is great for teams that have already planned technology projects, but are keen to approach them in new ways while training up staff.**



Total (per team of 3 fellows): \$450,000

### Legend

- Yellow: Fellow wages and benefits
- Blue: Fellows & Government staff training design & delivery
- Purple: Kick-off and project charter
- Red: Recruitment communications and campaign

## How to partner with us

We are looking for government partners who want to build 21st century public services that better meet residents needs. **Our Fellowship cohorts are slated to run every 6 months -- with the next one starting in Summer 2019.** Do you have a technology project and are interested in building digital capacity of your staff? We would love to talk with you! Contact **Dorothy Eng, Director of Partnerships**, at [dorothy@codefor.ca](mailto:dorothy@codefor.ca) or (647)668-8880 to learn more and see if the Fellowship is right for you.