IBM Watson Health™ Universal Access solution helps connect people and families to government services they need to reach their socio-economic potential. We designed the technology to enable government agencies to deliver modern, efficient, client-centric digital services through a single, flexible, multiprogram portal.

Benefits:

- Human-centered citizen experience for optimal citizen experience
- Fully functional accessibility upon delivery for easy implementation
- Configurable business processes to customize to your needs
- Extension and interoperability maximum efficiencies
- Security, performance and scalability provide peace of mind while being flexible for growth
- Flexible deployment options help you achieve your objectives

How technology drives consumer demand

Technology trends drive change. The more people rely on their mobile phones, the more they expect to have streamlined experiences and processes in everything they do on their mobile devices. Engaging with government agencies is no different as citizens expect the same level of technology innovations in every online experience. Citizens demand public sector agencies provide streamlined access to government programs like private-sector online experiences—when they don’t, the overall user experience is poor. Disappointing or cumbersome online interactions result in a lower level of citizen trust in government, currently recorded at 43% across all OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.¹

“The design system gives us a state-of-the-art user interface toolbox we can use to achieve an excellent user experience on ACCESS HRA.”

Fintan O’Dowd
Diona implementation partner
Mobile devices aren’t just for entertainment anymore

The number of mobile phone users in the world is expected to pass the five billion mark by 2019. People use their mobile phones for more than social media and entertainment—they use them to manage their lives utilizing online shopping, banking, communication, productivity and more. According to Flurry Analytics, a subsidiary of Yahoo!, the average U.S. consumer spends five hours a day on these devices. Mobile device use will continue to grow creating even more demand for advanced technological offerings and even higher expectations from users.

Finding ways to improve citizen engagement

Under tight fiscal constraints and growing expectations, governments are intent on finding better systems of engaging citizens through technological advancements. The challenge lies within translating complex policy and legislation and delivering it in a simple citizen-centric website. Often best efforts fail, resulting in a less than optimal user experience on an agency-centric website—which leaves citizens frustrated and dissatisfied.

Solving the technology and engagement challenge with a single solution

IBM Watson Health™ Universal Access solution solves this challenge by delivering a responsive, multiprogram portal which connects people to all the services they need from a single point of contact. Grounded in customer need and supported through cycles of continuous improvement, the solution offers the latest in both citizen and developer experiences. Universal Access comes with predefined configurable business processes for triage, screening, application and appeals, as well as a secure, personalized citizen account for ongoing engagement. The system also provides a fully functional, human-centered user experience upon delivery so it’s ready to go immediately. The innovative system is designed for government and empowers designers and developers to build responsive web experiences better and faster—helping you deliver modern, efficient, client-centric digital services in weeks instead of months.

“The efforts at DSS have been very successful. Seventy-five percent of SNAP applications are submitted online and foot traffic in the offices has reduced by thirty percent. In addition to providing an enhanced customer experience, this lower-touch model frees up our eligibility workers’ time and allows them to focus on those clients who truly need their support.”

Lauren Aaronson
Deputy Commissioner
New York City Department of Social Services
**Key features and benefits**

Using a secure citizen portal accessible from any device, citizens can find, screen, and apply for all the benefits and services they might need, navigating a simple, intuitive path through the processes, which include:

**Triage**—Using a short set of questions, the system quickly identifies the clients’ needs and directs them to appropriate community services and government programs. A list of service providers is displayed on a Google map where the citizen can self-refer or get directions to the provider’s location.

**Multiprogram screening**—Citizens can self-screen for all the organization’s programs, with screening results intelligently directing citizens to appropriate benefits, services and referrals.

**Single application for multiple benefits**—Application forms are pre-populated with screening data for ease of use. Intelligent scripts guide citizens though the application process, with information captured once and shared across relevant programs, reducing workload and increasing data quality and adding a more positive experience for the citizen.

**Personalized account**—Citizens can continue to manage benefits through an online account, where they can view and resume in-progress applications, view payments, update their details, communicate with the organization and lodge appeals—all without the inconvenience of having to go to a service center.

Unlike other citizen portal solutions, Universal Access offers:

**Fully functioning accessibility upon delivery**—Unlike many other solutions, Universal Access meets the high accessibility standards outlined in Section 508/WCAG guidelines with an AA rating. However, we do not believe that this is enough. Plus, the system provides guidance to ensure any extensions and customizations also comply with Section 508/WCAG guidelines.

Universal Access implements best practices for browser support and accessibility from the leading global government digital services organizations, including all modern browsers as well as IE11.

**Human-centered design**—A simple, consistent human-centered experience, accessible from any device and aligned with global digital service standards, guides the citizen through triage, screening, application and ongoing processing.

**Security, performance and scalability**—Built with modern, well-understood technologies such as Java, ReactJS and JavaScript, the system is fully secure, performant and scalable, proven by the many large and complex HHS (health and human services) implementations live today, serving up to thirty million people across five countries in eight different languages.

**Configuration, extension and interoperability**—Universal Access comes with predefined, configurable business processes, a full suite of REST APIs and can be extended and integrated with a range of back-office systems, enabling organizations to provide and update a modern, consistent experience for clients, without changing the disparate backend systems.

**Flexible deployment options**—The system can be deployed anywhere, including on premises, cloud and hybrid cloud environments, depending on your requirements.
“Critical programs like SNAP* serve people facing very difficult times, so it’s vital that those programs are easy to access. We’re very proud to work with Watson Health to bring accessible online service to New Yorkers in need with ACCESS HRA.”

Steven Banks, Commissioner, New York City, Department of Social Services

*supplemental nutrition assistance program: fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap

Read our blog about our recent collaboration with NYC DSS to deliver new citizen and developer experiences.

To find out more about IBM Design Thinking, visit: ibm.com/design/thinking/

To find out more about IBM Watson Health Solution for Social Program Management, visit: ibm.com/watson/health/government/social-program-management/

About IBM Watson Health

Each day, professionals throughout the health ecosystem make powerful progress toward a healthier future. At IBM Watson Health, we help them remove obstacles, optimize efforts and reveal new insights to support the people they serve. Working across the landscape, from payers and providers to governments and life sciences, we bring together deep health expertise; proven innovation; and the power of artificial intelligence to enable our customers to uncover, connect and act — as they work to solve health challenges for people everywhere.

For more information on IBM Watson Health, visit ibm.com/watsonhealth.