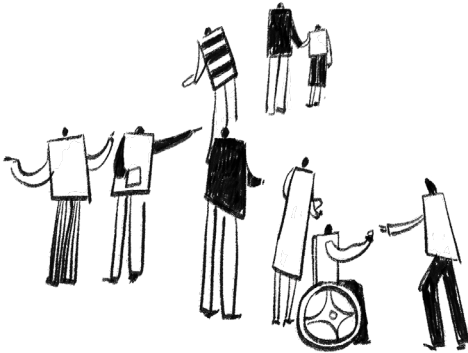# Designing Better → Public Services

The **LAYER CAKE** approach to **DRIVING BEHAVIOR CHANGE** in **GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS**

How Can We...

Ensure that families with high need students can collaborate with public school staff and bus teams?

Guide New Yorkers facing homelessness towards securing permanent housing?

Assist Veterans with navigating the complex landscape of Veterans Affairs benefits?

Equip more entrepreneurs from underrepresented communities to participate in innovation?

Help survivors of domestic violence obtain services without having to share their personal stories over and over?

Accelerate policy and systems change with and for older Americans?

Support American families during the key life experiences of childbirth and early childhood?

Give young people in foster care access to more culturally responsive mental health and wellness offerings?

At Public Policy Lab (PPL), we design policy and services that help people build better lives, prioritizing populations who have been historically marginalized and have limited access to resources.

SEE MORE PROJECTS → publicpolicylab.org/projects

How Public Services Are Delivered

Essential services are delivered to the public through a dynamic system made up of layers of **PEOPLE** and **POWER**.

At PPL, we've observed and interacted with many government systems over a decade. To illustrate how these systems work—and identify where designers might contribute useful products—we've designed the **PUBLIC POLICY LAYER CAKE.**
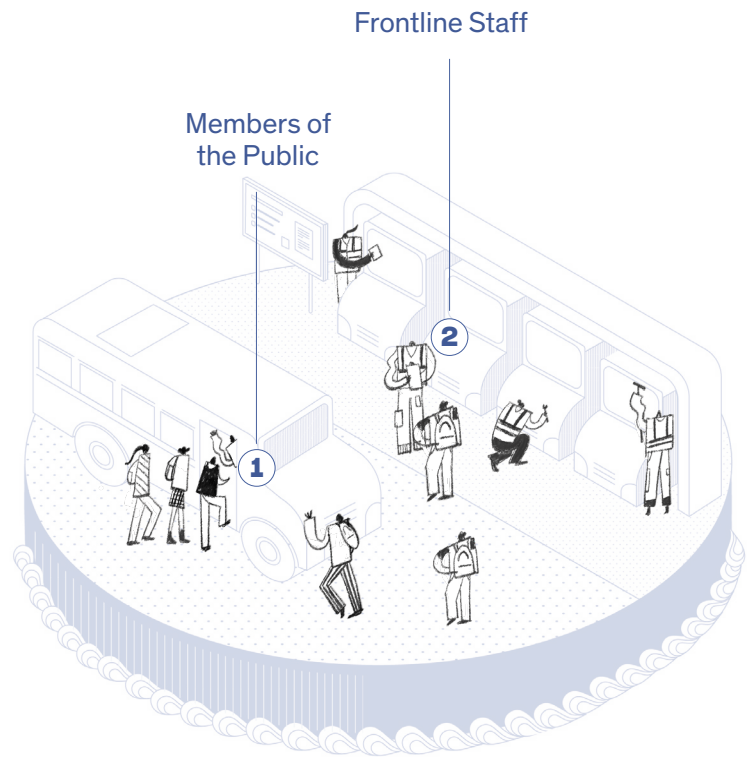
Members of the Public

Frontline Staff

▲ Service Usage & Service Delivery Layer

In each layer of the layer cake, there are different kinds of humans:

(1) Humans that use and interact with the service, such as the **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**;

(2) Humans that make the service possible, from **FRONTLINE STAFF,** to **SERVICE MANAGERS,** to **PROGRAM LEADERS,** to **PUBLIC OFFICIALS;**

And the humans that help design better services, including designers like us.

Designers (Like us!)

Within these layers, there are **FRONT STAGE** interactions between members of the public and government staff, and **BACK STAGE** actions taken by staff.
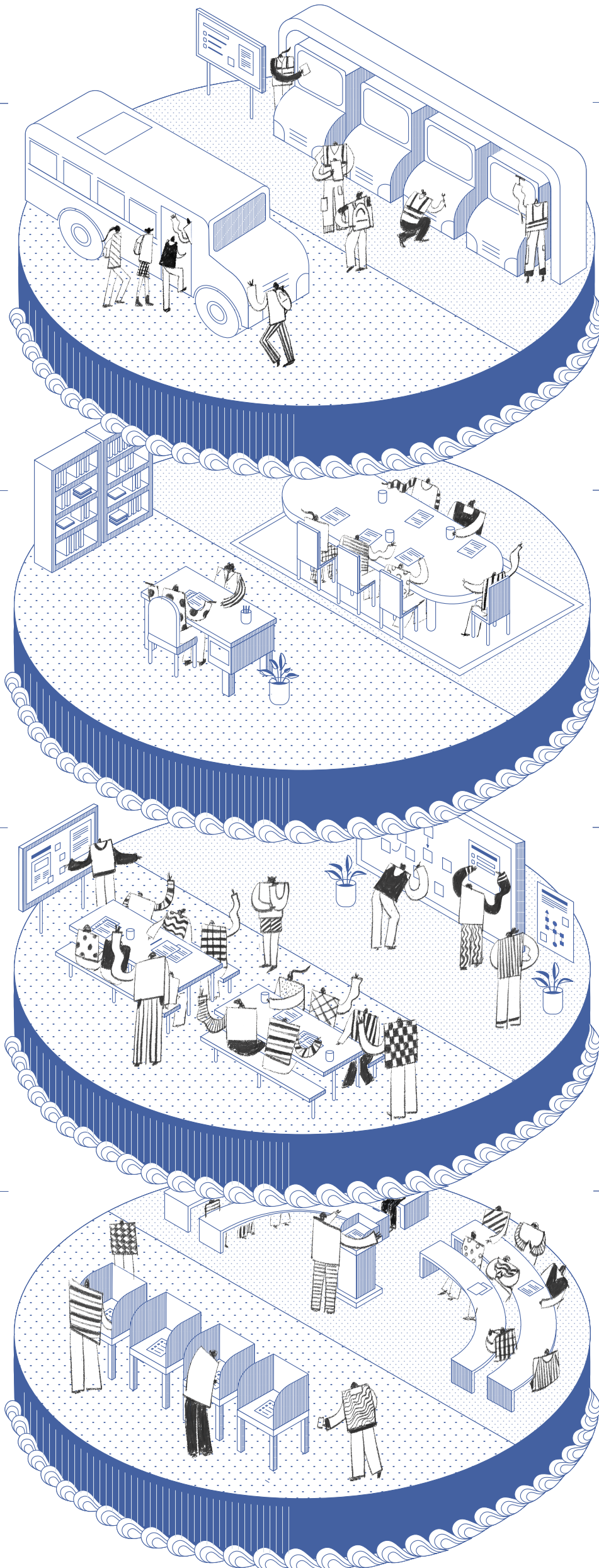
Driving real behavior change within these systems requires **WORKING AT EVERY LAYER.**

We work with government staff to create holistic tools, models, and services. We also work with members of the public to bring their voices into decision-making.

At the end of day, we strive towards a future where all public services are designed for, and with, the people.

#FORTHEPPL

Public Policy Layer Cake

SERVICE USAGE

Members of the public use and interact with services to meet their needs

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Service usage products, such as a user-friendly enrollment platform

SERVICE DELIVERY

Frontline staff interact with members of the public to represent and deliver services

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Service delivery and learning tools, such as a client referral tracker or training curriculum

SERVICE MODIFICATION

Members of the public suggest changes to how services are delivered

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Service change products, such as a customer feedback mechanism

SERVICE OPERATIONS

Service managers manage frontline staff and operational processes

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Service protocols and data tools, such as an eligibility framework or data visualization platform

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public participate in deciding how services are structured and delivered

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Consensus products such as a participatory budgeting tool

PROGRAMS & SYSTEMS

Program leadership develop programs and systems (including legal, data, and tech) to administer services

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Policy delivery models, such as an interagency collaboration model

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Members of the public elect policymakers and influence political priorities

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Opinion products, such as a redesigned voting system

POLICIES & RULES

Public officials legislate policies that dictate the creation of programs and systems

DESIGNERS CAN MAKE

Policy concepts, such as a new program funding stream

PUBLIC POLICY LAB

PUBLICPOLICYLAB.ORG

Interested in

Working With Us?

GET IN TOUCH!

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BETTER SERVICES for the **PEOPLE**