

# Final Design Report

## Friends In Deed

4/19/21

### Furniture

Friends In Deed accepts donations of used furniture and passes it on, for free, to our community's many families in need.

[Learn More](#)

### Transportation

Friends In Deed offers car repair assistance to families who need a car to get to work and/or to obtain medical treatment for a severe condition.

[Learn More](#)

### Circles

Circles is a program based on the premise that developing meaningful relationships across socio-economic lines has a dramatic impact on the effort to move families out of poverty.

### Direct Assistance

Our direct assistance programs involve utility one-time prescriptions, monthly storage, work shoes, school supplies, and other things on a by case basis.

Masum Chowdhury, Shannon Kenny,  
Taylor Pessetti, and Kelley Sweitzer

**FRIENDS**  **IN DEED**

# About The Client

Friends In Deed is a local nonprofit organization and has been around for over 35 years (Established June 5th, 1983). They started with a donated office space in Ypsilanti, MI and are currently located at 1196 Ecorse Rd, Ypsilanti, MI. Their service is only eligible to Washtenaw county residents. They have two main services that they offer: their circles program (to assist families in poverty with an 18 month recovery program) and emergency services (which include furniture donations, transportation, and direct assistance). The Direct Assistance Program is a program that helps families prevent utility shut off service. This program also offers assistance in getting car repairs to get to work or medical appointments. The Furniture Program includes assistance on getting essential household furniture such as beds, tables, and sofas. Their annual Bed & Crib Drive event allows donors to make donations, so that they can purchase more beds. They pass on used reliable cars for free to those who do not have access to transportation to work and medical related travel. They also have several fundraisers throughout the year and accept multiple forms of donations.

## Mission Statement

*Helping people in need; building community to end poverty*

### Friends In Deed Services

- Transportation
- Furniture
- Direct Assistance
- Circles

### Relevant Stakeholders

- Donors
- Volunteers
- Staff
- New and Returning Clients

## Research Goals and Questions

1. What is the current experience like for users on the site?
2. What does the site's information architecture currently look like, and how can it be improved?

## Research Plan and Methodologies

### Competitive Analysis

This was conducted comparing the Friends In Deed site with similar nonprofit organization websites in Ann Arbor.

### Heuristic Evaluation

The team used Nielsen's 10 usability heuristics to evaluate the site and identify the most glaring usability obstructions.

### Interviews

Interviews were used to ask the users open ended questions about the site and to get more information from their points of view.

### Wireframing and "Paper Prototyping"

The team created low-fidelity designs used to restructure information that is currently on the site before creating high-fidelity mockups.

### Accessibility Screening

The last step is to follow WAVE, axe, and w3 accessibility validators to ensure that everyone can use the site without issues.

### Google Analytics Report

We used the current Google Analytics data that Friends In Deed collected to determine our research questions.

### Card Sorting

Card sorting was the most important form of research we did because it allowed us to see how to restructure the site's information.

### Affinity Diagramming

This entailed collecting interview results and identifying several main themes and user goals to inform the prototyping stage.

### Usability Testing

Users were given tasks to complete and the time taken and number of clicks to complete the tasks were recorded by the team.

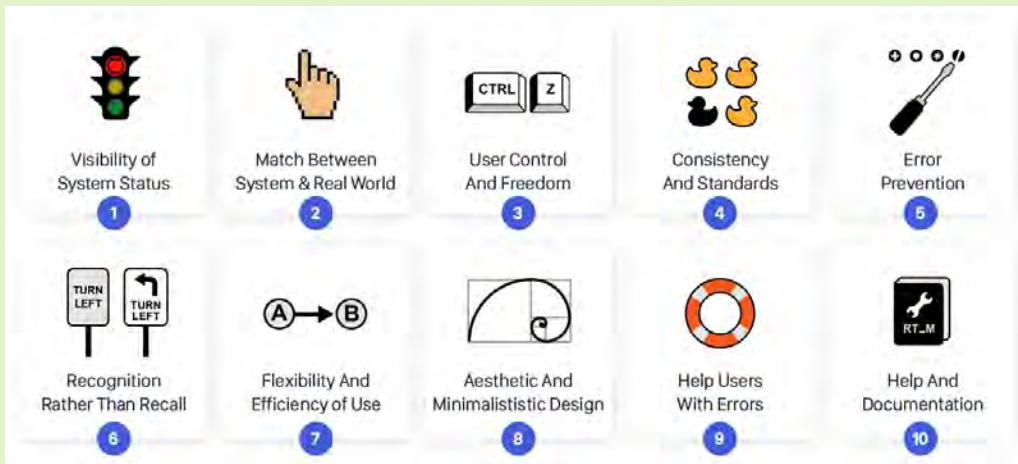
# Desk Research

|                                      | Friends In Deed   | United Way 211 of Washtenaw  | Salvation Army of Washtenaw County  | Goodwill   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Audience Profile</b>              | Families and individuals in need in Washtenaw County, donors, and volunteers  | Families and individuals in need in Washtenaw County, donors, and volunteers   | Families and individuals in need in Washtenaw County, donors, and volunteers  | Families and individuals in need in all over the nation, donors, and volunteers  |
| <b>Navigation Menu</b>               |   |  | Has 2 menus:<br>-Hamburger nav constantly in top right with 8 options<br>-Red menu at top of the page with 5 main options (some are the same between the two)               | 2 menus:<br>-Top menu with 3 options (careers contact and search)<br>-Nav menu with 6 options  |
| <b>Number of Options</b>             | 6 - 3 include dropdown menus  | 9 (almost all include dropdown menus)  |   |  |
| <b>Readability</b>                   | Home/info button is not readable<br>Too much present in sub menus (sub menus under sub menus) and not all of that information needs to be in the direct navigation    | Mostly okay. The donate button is not readable and the scrolling screens do not allow text to stand out                        | Really good - it's very easy to distinguish what goes where and everything makes sense/is easily read   | Good - all options are self explanatory with nothing redundant and stands out from the rest of the page  |
| <b>Responsiveness</b>                | Navigation is responsive but when moved to small screen view with the hamburger menu, all options are viewed and not just the main ones (all dropdown menus are open) | Responsive nav is good - it turns into a hamburger menu and allows you to open/close dropdown menus. Also LOTS of broken links | Hamburger nav is always present in top right which is good, the second nav changes from words to icons, which is hard because people might not know what the icons mean     | Good - hamburger nav is present on small screens and allows you to open sub menus with buttons (and the sub menus are a different shade of blue so it's very easy to tell them apart)  |
| <b>Home Page</b>                     |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Amount of Information Present</b> | Not too much - has the main programs, photos, links   | Not a ton - has main cause, donate volunteer and get help options, and basic information at the bottom                         | Necessary information present - has recent news, photos, a navigation menu, a little bit about them, and a map with locations near you. Seems that all of this is important | Necessary information is present with good graphics - might be a little too much present because it seems like they have their navigation just present at the bottom of the page again |
| <b>Loading Time</b>                  | Takes a while to load between pages and definitely disrupts navigation  | Good - not as long as Friends In Deed but still noticeable   | All pages load very quickly except for the donation page - this might be because it's an external form  | Good - about the same as United Way  |

**Competitive Analysis**  
 In the competitive analysis, our team compared the Friends In Deed website with sites of other competitors of various tiers, including United Way, Salvation Army, and Goodwill. We compared the sites on the main metrics of the navigation, homepage, accessibility, mobile view, and overall design.

## Google Analytics Report

Google Analytics offers a detailed overview of all the data on the website. The team identified critical metrics based on this data, including but not limited to: the average time a user spent on the site, number of returning users, and which devices the users were using the site on. These metrics led the team towards the themes and insights that were focused on in the design process, and the vast amount of data provided many insights.



## Heuristic Evaluation

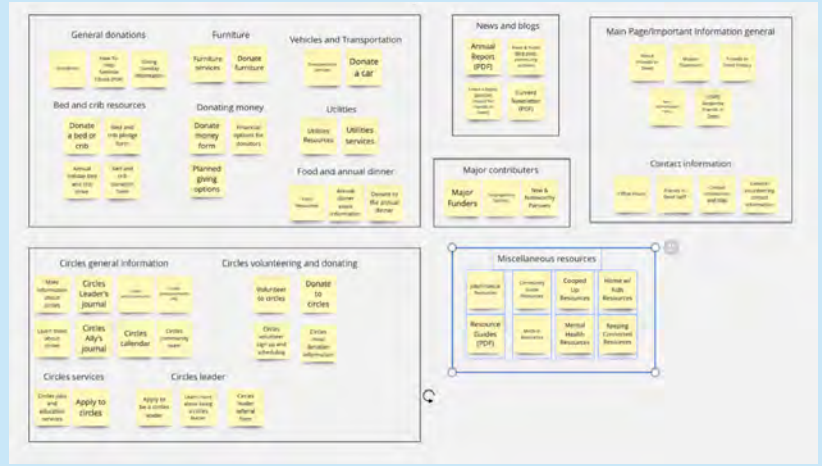
This method helped the team answer both research questions by efficiently evaluating the most glaring usability obstructions that occur on the site without recruiting user participants. For each of the heuristics listed, the site was scored to gauge the platform's usability.



# Generative Research

## Card Sorting

The team asked users to take topics and labels (in this case, different web pages) and sort them into categories based on how the topics are related on Miro. It helped us understand how users organize the information and allowed us to reorganize the site accordingly due to the way participants sorted the cards into categories.



## General Questions:

- How long have you been a part of the Friends In Deed community?
- How frequently do you access the Friends In Deed website?
- What do you think of the website right now?
- From what type of device do you visit the site most frequently? (On your personal mobile phone or iPad, computer, or on another device that you don't own?)
- When you do go to the website, what would you say is your primary reason for visiting?
- Can you walk me through the last time you visited the website? What were you using it for? How easy or difficult was the task you were trying to complete?

## Interviews

Our team completed seven interviews in total. All in all, the biggest takeaway our team had from the interviews was to make the website easier to navigate. In particular, the navigation bar needed to be redesigned, and our team needed to rearrange the location of relevant information such as contact information, hours of operation, and donation forms.

## Affinity Diagramming


To analyze the results of the interviews, the team created an affinity diagram with responses from participants and grouped the feedback in order to see patterns and themes. From here, we drew insights based on any patterns and made note of how those insights might inform future design decisions.



# Themes and Insights

1. Based on the heuristic evaluation our team found that **labels weren't always clear and headings could be made more appropriate** for their content so the user is able to understand where they're at within the site's organization structure at all times.
2. The heuristic evaluation, as well as the interviews, also showed us there were some **problems with accessibility** in terms of hover states, readability of some text on top of certain backgrounds, and **redundant links** that somewhat confuse the user about what they need to click on in order to get to a certain page.
3. Google analytics showed us that a lot of the site traffic is from **returning users who mostly access the site using a desktop computer**. Our team still hasn't concluded how much of an issue the mobile view actually is, including how critical it would be for our team to specifically set out to design a better mobile view.
4. A large part of our solution should include **redesigning the navigation bar** in a way that makes it more streamlined and efficiently searchable.

# Personas



**Erica Johnson**  
Age 74 • Income: \$90k/yr (retirement)  
Circles Ally

**Aspirations**  
"It's really important for me to give back to my community."

**Goals & Needs**  
Erica has been an active member of the Friends in Deed Community for over 5 years, donating \$1,000 each year to the dinner fundraiser and volunteering her time as a Circles Ally. She is thankful for the people she has met through FID and the lives she has impacted through her volunteer work.

**Involvement**  
Erica has been an active member of the Friends in Deed Community for over 5 years, donating \$1,000 each year to the dinner fundraiser and volunteering her time as a Circles Ally. She is thankful for the people she has met through FID and the lives she has impacted through her volunteer work.

**Technology Usage**  
Erica is not exactly what you would call a Tech native - she struggles to use her desktop computer and does not always install software updates when they arrive. She frequently calls upon her oldest son (30) to help her log in to sites and navigate her desktop. She owns an iPhone 5 and uses it for calling and occasionally texting, but is not comfortable browsing sites with small text and buttons.

**Behaviors**  
In order to stay updated on happenings within Friends In Deed, Erica typically relies on word-of-mouth and phone calls with her co-volunteers and staff. She recently has struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic to stay connected to volunteer efforts, notably during the annual dinner - her favorite event.

Erica Johnson and Emily Smith provide some of the most important user needs within their personas. They provide diverse backgrounds in terms of technological knowledge and devices used to access the site. Their behaviors also represent different use cases for the site, and show that clients are interacting with a wide variety of information.

When creating our personas, we focused on the two main user groups of the site: volunteers and Friends In Deed clients. We highlighted the Circles program by creating personas of a Circles Leader (someone looking to lead their family out of poverty) ally (someone who is reaching across socio-economic lines and making new friendships to build a better community).



**Emily Smith**  
Age 34 • Income: \$15k/yr  
Circles Leader

**Aspirations**  
"I need to find resources that can help out my family."

**Goals & Needs**  
Emily has lived in Washtenaw County her whole life and now resides in Ypsilanti. Her two children attend Ypsilanti Public Schools. Emily has a minimum wage job where she works full time. Money is really tight in her household and she relies on local thrift stores, libraries, and community organizations.

**Involvement**  
Emily has been a Circles Leader for Friends in Deed for over a year. She is in the process of doing "Circles Leader Training" and has found it useful for financial planning and skill building. She has also previously requested furniture and crib donations through Friends in Deed before.

**Technology Usage**  
Emily uses her Google Pixel phone for most communications and internet surfing. Her children use iPads provided through the school, and she also owns a laptop with limited software. She is comfortable using technology for the most part, but her WiFi is slow and her devices are all a few years old and sometimes do not support high-performance software.

**Behaviors**  
Emily relies on texting to hear about Friends In Deed news. She has grown close with the organizers and staff, so typically they pass word on about events and news. She uses the website to keep track of donation requests and find contact information and frequently visits the site from her phone.

# UX Requirements

When defining our UX requirements, we separated them into four groups: must have, should have, nice to have, and client requirements (which are based on the work expected from us for the course) based on their importance to the client and our design. The group also defined these requirements in terms of effort so we knew how much time and effort these requirements would take. The tasks that were not completed were turned into suggestions for further improvement that we gave to our client in our handover meeting.

| Importance   | Requirement   | Effort | Status          |
|--------------|---|--------|-----------------|
| Must Have    | Fix accessibility errors and pass all accesibility checks     | Medium | Complete        |
| Must Have    | Delete duplicate information                                  | Medium | Complete        |
| Must Have    | Consolidate subpages  | Low    | Complete        |
| Must Have    | Define improtant high-level pages as the navigation bar tabs  | Low    | Complete        |
| Must Have    | Clarify wording for the navigation bar menu                   | Low    | Complete        |
| Should Have  | Replace non-intuituve design patterns                         | High   | Mostly Complete |
| Should Have  | Disable or reduce animated content                            | Low    | Complete        |
| Should Have  | Make fixed-on-click dropdown menus for easier usage           | Medium | Complete        |
| Should Have  | Build landing pages for navigation bar tabs                   | High   | Complete        |
| Nice to Have | Reword misleading headers                                     | High   | Complete        |
| Nice to Have | Rework text content for concision                             | High   | Not Complete    |
| Nice to Have | Reduce loading time   | Medium | Mostly Complete |
| Nice to Have | Create a fully compatible mobile experience                   | High   | Mostly Complete |
| Client       | Create an information architecture chart                      | N/A    | Complete        |
| Client       | Complete milestone presentations in class and with the client | N/A    | Complete        |

# Design Process Overview

Since our project was more focused on information restructuring and less on design, our wireframes, prototypes, and mockups did not look like typical new designs that other teams were implementing. We used screenshots from the existing site in our low-fidelity wireframes to outline where the information would be placed based on our card sorting exercise. In our mid-fidelity prototypes, we made the navigation menu (as well as some other menus on the site) clickable on Figma and designed some small improvements to the site that were not present yet (like the home carousel menu as well as the our programs and services boxes). Lastly, our group decided to combine our high-fidelity designs and our wordpress implementation to save time and resources and to minimize on duplicate work. This allowed a completely navigable prototype for Friends In Deed to change and implement directly into their site.

## Low-Fidelity Wireframes

The team used screenshots from the current site to re-organize the information on Figma.

## Mid-Fidelity Prototypes

We used screenshots as well as new designs to create a highly interactive Figma prototype.

## High-Fidelity Implementation

We completed our high-fidelity mockups and final wordpress implementation in the same step.

## Class Feedback for Redesign

We received helpful feedback from classmates as to what should be changed for our prototype.

## Client Feedback

Our team held weekly meetings with our client to ensure that all of their design needs were being met.

# Implementing Course and Client Feedback

Throughout our time in SI 487, our group received a lot of valuable feedback in terms of our designs and organization from our classmates. Our low, mid, and high-fidelity mockups were constantly being revised after receiving multiple rounds of feedback. This allowed us to change our designs along the way and was able to give our team multiple perspectives on our designs, especially from those who are also familiar with the UX Design space.

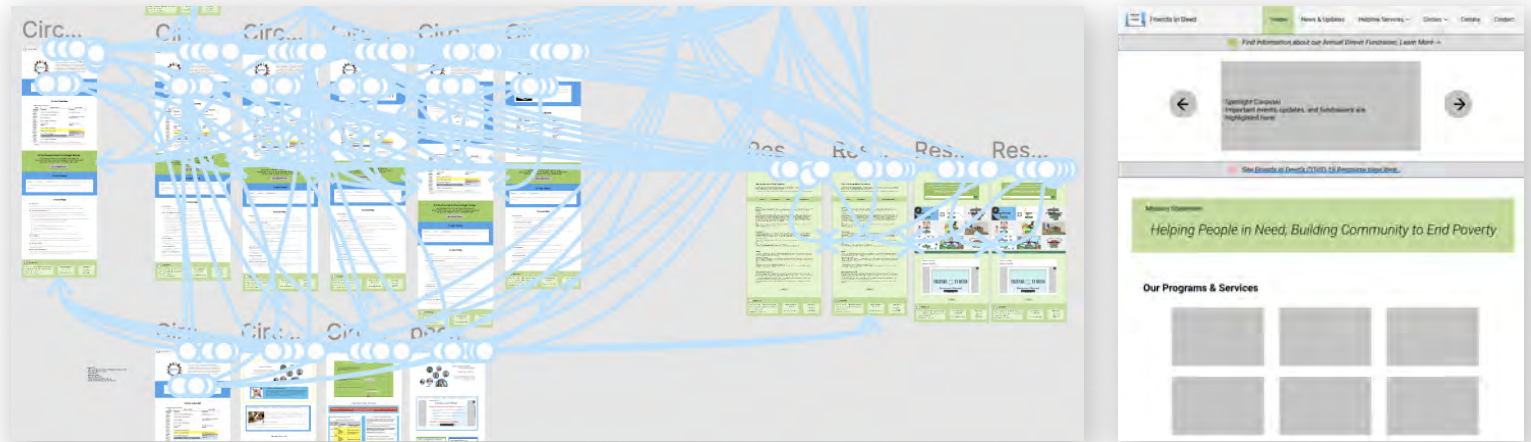
Along with class feedback, we also received a lot of helpful feedback from our clients in our weekly meetings. This allowed us to take their design needs into account in our mockups. They were also able to provide us with helpful information about the structure of the Friends In Deed services and programs, aiding in our information restructuring.



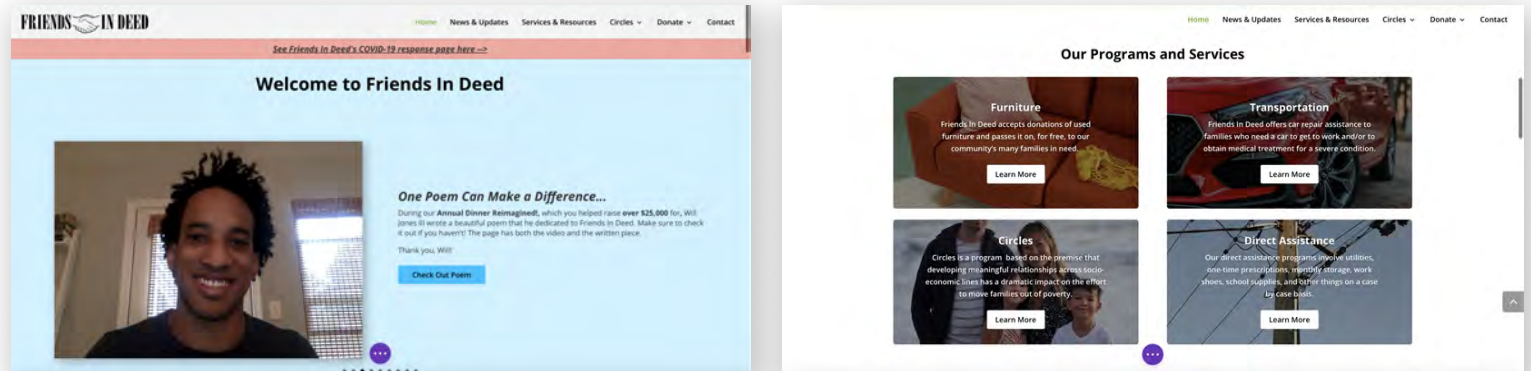
# Low-Fidelity Wireframes



# Mid-Fidelity Prototypes



# High-Fidelity Implementation



# Final Design Rationale

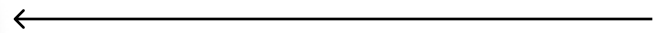
The rationale used for our final designs was mostly based on the previously determined UX requirements. As we worked with our client, certain requirements were more prioritized than others, and additional concerns arose along the way. Below are the main concerns that had the most influence on our design decisions.

## 1. Highlight seasonal, fundraising, an event information

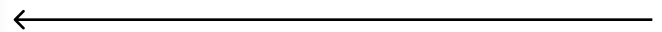
To encourage our client to avoid including irrelevant or unimportant information in their main navigation bar, our team needed to come up with better ways for Friends In Deed to highlight important upcoming events and non-static information. This resulted in the addition of a banner at the top of the homepage, and enlargement of the homepage carousel slider to fit the size of the screen “above the fold.” These elements allow Friends In Deed to add any important information they wish to highlight as needed throughout the year, without disrupting the site’s global navigation.

## 2. Establish a consistent and intuitive global navigation system

Prior to this project, our client had been using the global navigation to highlight seasonal information by changing the main navigation bar. In our heuristic evaluation, our team found that this could cause confusion and disorientation among users. We emphasized to the client that this bar should not be changed monthly as previously done, but only as needed, and moved all seasonal information to the carousel menu, as outlined in the first rationale description.



The global navigation be seen at the top of the page, and includes important landing pages for Friends In Deed information.



The carousel can be seen here at the top of the page to portray some of Friends In Deed’s most important seasonal information.

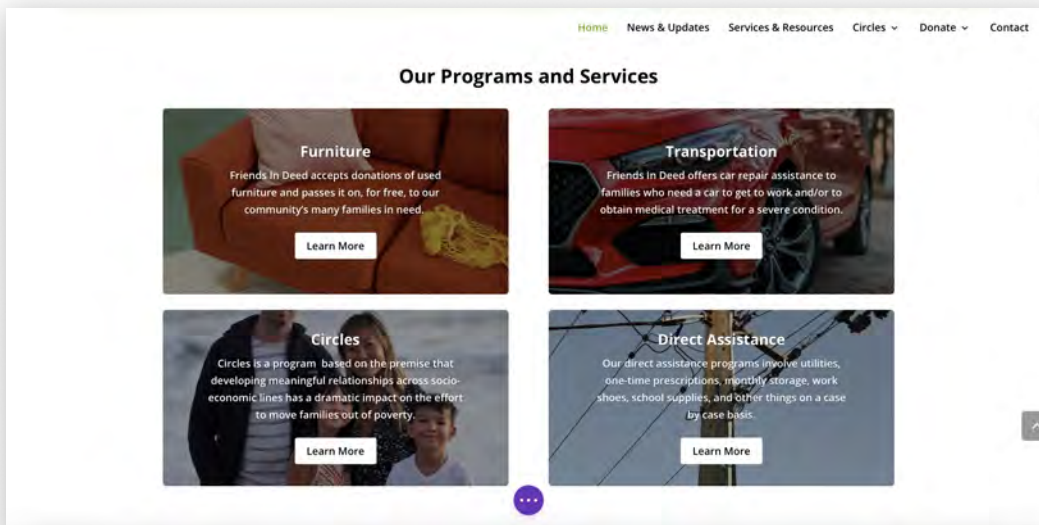
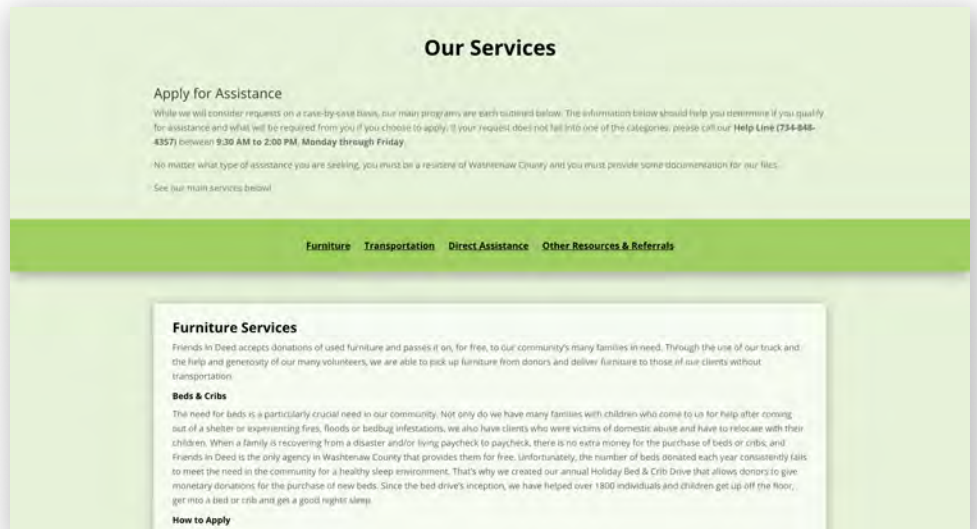
# Final Design Rationale

## 3. Highlighting Friends In Deed programs with equal importance

Our client stressed a concern for the visibility of their programs if they weren't displayed in the global navigation or near the top of the page. To solve this issue, we experimented with different types of secondary navigation that would highlight the page content at the top. We settled on the secondary navigation bar shown here below as well as a section on the homepage to highlight the programs. This greatly improved discoverability of important programs and services on each page.

### Secondary Navigation

The secondary navigation bar seen here allows users to see which major services are visible on this page. Users can also access the information on the page by clicking on the link directly in this nav.



### Homepage Cards

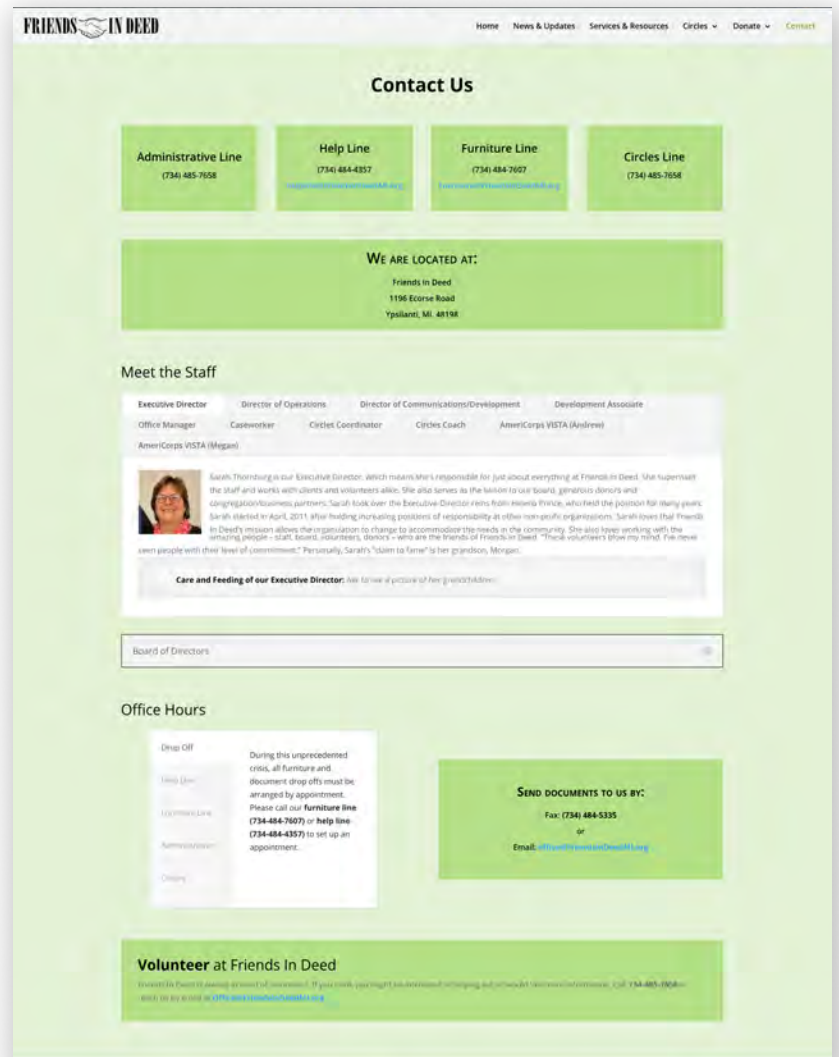
The cards on the homepage were created for enhanced visibility for the Friends In Deed programs since they are not all visible in the main navigation menu.



# Final Design Rationale

## 4. Improving discoverability of information

Lastly, our team also wanted to improve discoverability of certain information that, in our research, was difficult for users to locate. To fix this, we created new distinct pages specifically for “contact” and “donation” information. The aggregation of information on these respective pages made it easier for users to find what they were looking for by grouping all related information together.





# Usability Testing

## Overview

Our team conducted a usability testing study with our newly designed high-fidelity implementation. The study consisted of in-person live user testing with several timed tasks to be completed on the site and a System Usability Scale (SUS). The team’s primary goal of the evaluation study is to understand users’ interpretation of the site content, ability to navigate the sitemap, and perception of the visual design and branding. By the end of the study, we were able to synthesize feedback and implement last-minute improvements to the site’s design.

## Recruitment

The team decided to recruit friends and family such that the study could be completed in person and as efficiently as possible. This is a free alternative that offers a group of users who have never used the site before, which is ideal for the types of research questions the team was asking. There is undoubtedly room for bias in this group of participants, particularly with age and experience with technology. Many of our roommates, friends, and eligible participants are around the age of 18-23 and are somewhat tech savvy.

## Tasks for Analysis

Below, we have listed each of the tasks users took part in for our study. The metrics that were measured along with these tasks were the number of clicks associated with the task as well as the average time in seconds to complete the task.

- Find the “New and Noteworthy” Newsletter
- Find the Friends In Deed COVID-19 resource page
- Find the section that mentions car repair services
- Locate the Friends In Deed Circles calendar
- Locate the Friends In Deed facility address
- Locate the car donation form to fill out

## Results and Takeaways

We were able to recruit seven participants total in the few days that we had to complete this study. Unfortunately, this was not an ample number of participants to conduct a full statistical analysis. However, we were able to gain valuable insights from the tasks and data we collected and the survey results from after the tasks. Some of the questions that stood out to us most were those that asked “I found the website unnecessarily complex” and “I think I would need support of a technical person to use this site” in which all of our participants chose either “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”.

| Task                | Task 1 | Task 2 | Task 3 | Task 4 | Task 5 | Task 6 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Avg. Clicks         | 3.25   | 1.2    | 2.4    | 1      | 0.8    | 2.75   |
| Avg. Time (seconds) | 21.985 | 7.72   | 13.66  | 8.725  | 6.36   | 7.9    |

# Final Client Recommendations

With a limited timeframe to complete our project, our team had to prioritize certain UX requirements over others. Our team made an effort to solve all of the highest priority problems, and did our best to support future growth of various programs within Friends In Deed. Below are some of our final recommendations for our client moving forward as they use the website framework we created for them.

## We recommend:

### 1 Adding icons in the footer to indicate phone and email

This is a quick fix that involves finding appropriate telephone and mail icons and including them next to the Friends In Deed contact information in the footer.

### 2 Adding a drop-down to the “Services & Resources” tab as needed

Our client mentioned anticipated future growth of certain programs that would require more space, which means they might need their own pages. While there was not enough information on their current site for our team to create entirely separate pages for these services, we recommend that going forward they add a drop-down to the “Services & Resources” tab in their navigation bar, as needed, to provide space for these programs.

- **Keep the services & resources landing page**

The current page created by our team for the “Services & Resources” section can remain in place and serve as a landing page for all services & resources going forward. This page can provide a highlighted summary of each service/program and provide a link to the full page for that corresponding program.

- **Add pages for growing programs**

In the future, as programs scale up, our client should add additional pages, as needed, to ensure all relevant information can be displayed. We recommend that these new pages follow a similar style to the rest of the site, and be placed mindfully within the appropriate global navigation category.

### 3 Limit homepage carousel slider items

The more sections included here, the less visibility each one will have. Our recommendation is for our client to try to only include short-term events and important announcements, while keeping the maximum number of carousel items to about 5 or less.

# Executive Summary

## Research Insights

- The information architecture should be re-organized and made more streamlined
- Some accessibility issues, like text readability and contrast, need to be addressed
- Some labels could be more clear and appropriate for the information they are portraying

## Design Insights

- Non-static, seasonal fundraising and event information needs a designated location
- Consistent global navigation is needed for all pages
- All services and programs need saliency and discoverability
- We need to ensure discoverability of contact and donation information

## Validation Findings

- Our new information architecture proved to be more successful for those finding information with less clicks and more efficient timing
- Participants in the study claimed that the site was well laid out and did not have problems with the secondary navigation bars or information architecture

# Key Takeaways

- **Projects do not always turn out the way you plan, be flexible**
- **Consistent meetings between team and client are critical for success**
- **Team communication and even distribution of work is important**
- **Define and re-define the scope to the client throughout the project**