

CASE STUDY

Homelessness Walkathon Website Redesign



With 25 years of success on the National Mall, the Help the Homeless Walk (HTH)'s expansion to include community walks in 5 new US cities is not your average “big fish, small pond” story. Striving to make a bigger-than-ever impact, their website needed in-depth strategic planning, design, implementation and management.

PROJECT PROFILE

CLIENT

Fannie Mae

SERVING

Community and Human Services

VISION

The Help the Homeless (HTH) Program provides a fundraising model to help build the capacity of nonprofits working to prevent and end homelessness to: serve the homeless population, educate the public on homelessness issues, and encourage volunteerism in local communities.

SERVICES

- » Website Design
- » Information Architecture
- » Content Strategy
- » Copywriting
- » Project Management

PHASE 1: DISCOVERY

The Help the Homeless Project's programmatic change was a catalyst for a website redesign which tackled new infrastructure and new participants. As we built our understanding of the new challenges for the organization the central priority became clear: making the website easy-to-use and inviting. Conveying the program's legitimacy to new communities and promoting pride and enthusiasm for the events would help expand HTH's DC-region notoriety nationwide.

2011 Help the the Homeless website

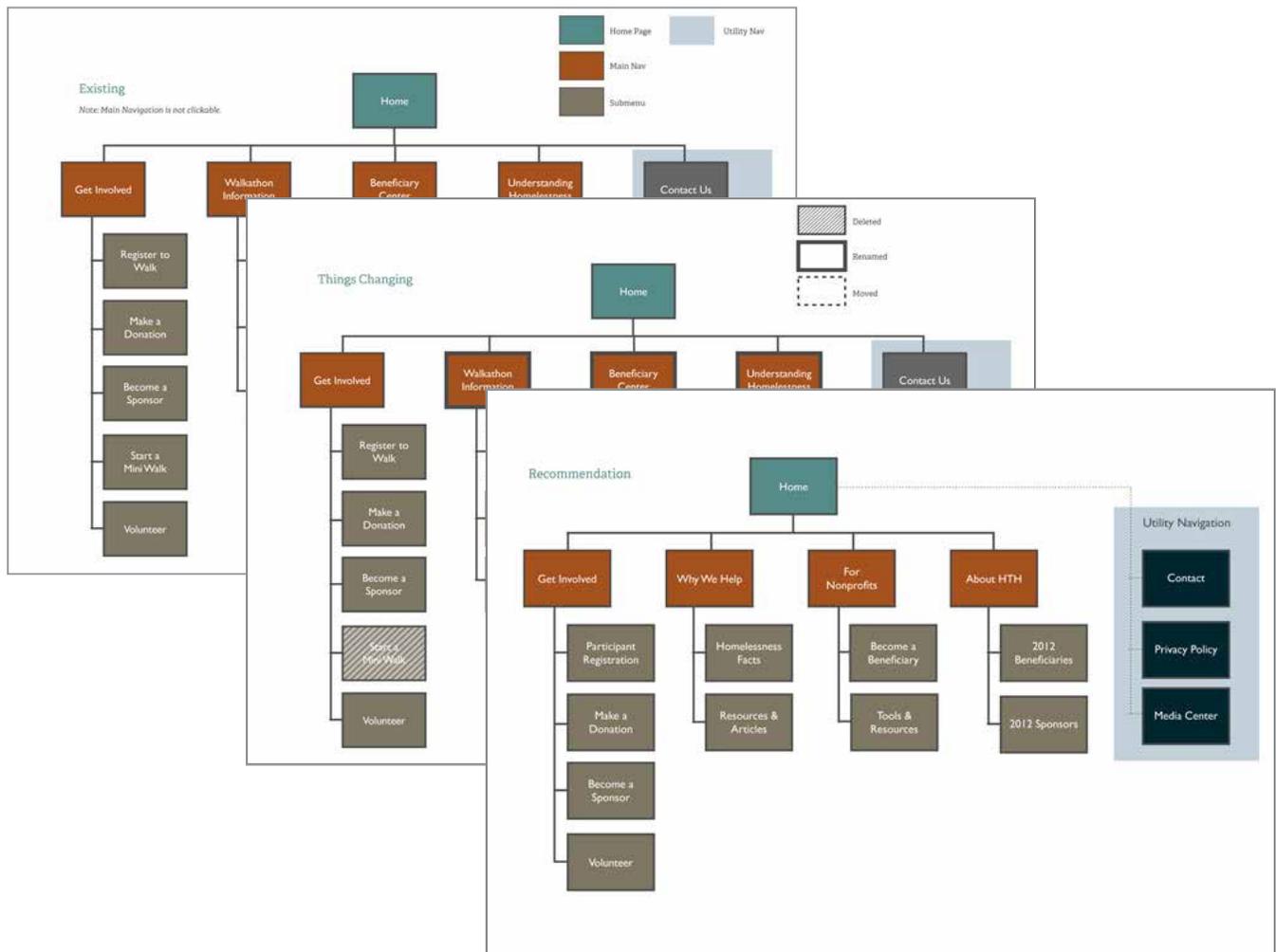


There were countless different types of functions needing attention to make the website as efficient as possible for a first-time visitor. Much of our strategic thinking addressed the process of creating an event, registering for it or donating to it. To start, we had to conduct an audit of the existing website content and structure, then rebuild a sitemap that would equally cater to all regions. Pages were move, removed and renamed to focus on audience needs, as opposed to internal lingo. A series of preliminary wireframes were also developed to show how a user would navigate from the home page through

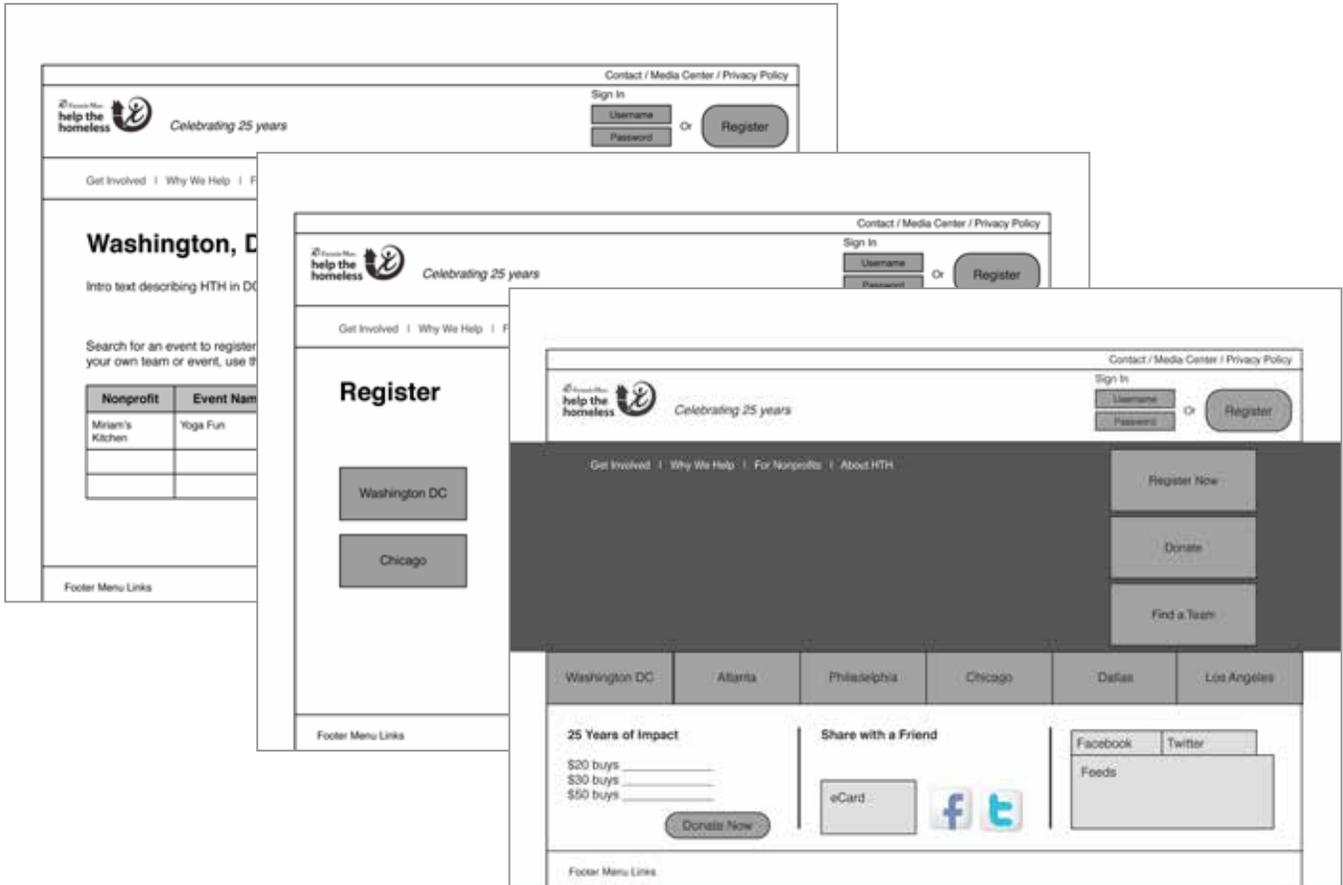
registering for an event. The sitemap and wireframes received instant approval from the client, which allowed us to proceed quickly to generating a detailed user flow chart, which outlined how users would donate, register for an event, start an event, volunteer and sponsor for the best user experience. We also understood that users would access information in different ways, so the flow chart accounted for various entry points.

After we received approval of the flowchart from the client and the Convio software partners, we proceeded to develop a complete grayscale, interactive prototype of the website, inclusive of our content strategy. This allowed us to vet the entire website labeling and navigation, along with identify all content. Using ProtoShare as our tool for interactive prototypes, the entire team was able to review and post comments or respond to requests. The information architecture was continually refined for the smoothest user experience possible.

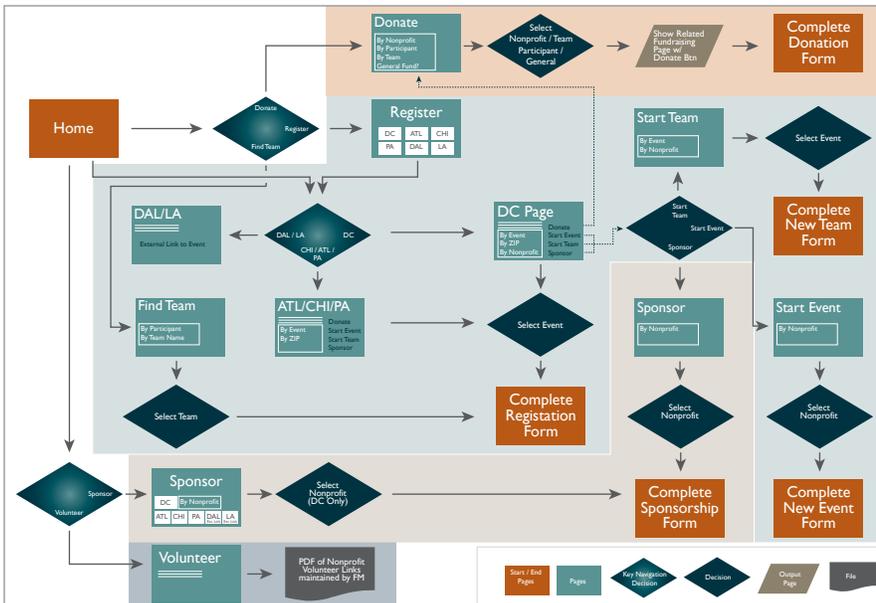
Information Architecture Development: Sitemap



Information Architecture Development: Wireframes



Information Architecture Development: Flowchart





PHASE 2: VISUALIZE

Once the sitemap and static wireframes of the information architecture were approved, we proceeded with developing design concepts to maximize time. The design needed to have high-impact photos that were appropriate for community walk formats, highlight the 25th anniversary, utilize Fannie Mae colors, and integrate some minor design elements that were used in the printed materials for brand cohesion. We also pursued the goal of making the site feel more youthful and sleek for the incoming flux of new users. The impression has to be that the organization is fresh and trustworthy, which was supported by implementing a logical style guide that is easy to digest when navigating the extensive content on the site.

Design concept development



OUR POINT OF VIEW

“It was great for me to get to work with the Help the Homeless project again because I knew a lot about it from college. The service group I was involved with worked with HTH and now I feel like I’ve come full circle by working with them again as a designer.”

–Ryan Phillips, Designer & Web Developer

We also developed custom e-Cards for participants to send via e-mail to friends, family, and colleagues to serve as both advertising and encouraging participation.



PHASE 3: IMPLEMENT

Bringing the vision to life was a collaborative effort with our Convio software partner, Event 360. We created a high-fidelity HTML/CSS prototype of the entire website before passing the plan to Event 360 for integration into the Convio platform. As the appointment project managers, we executed an in-depth review process of the website's details to ensure the cleanest, simplest usability we can create.



“This is exciting. I perused the site and it is so user friendly and well organized. I have a feeling this is going to a very rewarding experience for The Bridge and we appreciate Fannie Mae’s continued support with initiatives like this!”

–Dallas Participant

“Thanks for the Walk Website... it looks great! We can start to use it to get groups interested in walks now.”

–Atlanta Participant

IMPACT

The HTH Program is the nation’s largest fundraising effort focused on homelessness. Within the first three months of launching the website, over 150 community walks were created, supporting over 70 nonprofit organizations. We anticipate the creation of 800 community walks by the conclusion of the event in November! In the bigger picture, it serves to change the status of homelessness in communities, and we are excited to support that progress!