Foster Pet App and Responsive Website

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July - August 2022

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Project Overview

The product:

Solano County Friends of Animals (SCFOA), a non-profit dedicated to animal welfare, required a digital platform to educate and engage potential fosters, adopters, and donors. SCFOA's primary audience consists of individuals passionate about addressing the needs of feral animals and seeking actionable ways to contribute.

Project duration:

July 2022 to August 2022
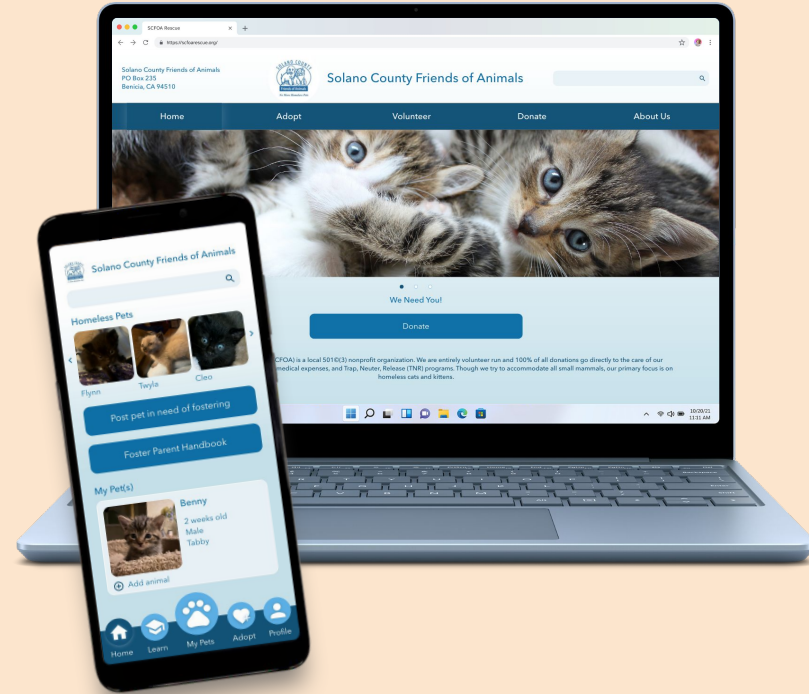
Project Overview

The problem:

SCFOA faces a critical shortage of fosters and volunteers due to a lack of public awareness about fostering and the specific needs of community cat rescue and rehabilitation.

The goal:

Design a mobile app that empowers potential fosters and volunteers with comprehensive education on foster responsibilities and best practices for rescuing and rehabilitating community cats, ultimately increasing successful placements in new homes.

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Project Overview

My role:

Lead UX Researcher and Designer, responsible for the end-to-end design of a mobile application and responsive website.

Responsibilities:

Conducted interviews, created paper and digital wireframes, low and high-fidelity prototypes, conducted usability studies, accounted for accessibility, iterated on designs, and defined information architecture for responsive design.

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Understanding the User

- User Research
- Personas
- Problem Statements
- Competitive Audit
- Ideation

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User Research: Summary

Using SCFOA's online presence, I formulated interview questions to gather user insights. Participants consistently reported difficulty locating critical contact information for medications and authorizations, and lacked clear answers to general foster questions. Notably, research also indicated significant user motivation to engage in animal rescue if provided with an intuitive and comprehensive digital tool.

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Persona 1: **Abigail**

Problem statement:

Abigail is a working mom who needs an easy way to keep track of animals' health information because she needs to ensure accurate and timely administration of vaccinations and medications.

"With the right help any feral cat can be saved, but you just need to know how."

Goals
- Help feed feral colonies
- Nurture sick animals back to health
- Make fostering easier on herself

Frustrations
- Not knowing medical information like over the counter meds, flea medication, and who is dispensing it.

Abigail

Age: 59
Education: BS in Biology
Hometown: Green Valley, CA
Family: 3 sons
Occupation: Clinic Nurse

Abigail is a clinic nurse working towards finally retiring in a few years. She lives with her wife and one of her sons who has a knack for finding abandoned kittens. Abigail helps care for as many as she can through the SCFOA organization and tends to use her laptop to search for animal medications information and get the necessary foster and adoption forms.

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Persona 2: **Neha**

Problem statement:

Neha is a potential foster provider who needs a centralized resource for animal care advice, because she wants to learn how to provide the best possible care according to SCFOA's humane practices.

"I wish there was a kind of foster parent handbook to get prepped."

Goals
- Help with adoption events
- Learn how to care for animals
- Adopt her own cat one day

Frustrations
- Out of touch with knowing when to go to a vet
- Not knowing who to contact and get authorization quickly

Neha

Age: 26
Education: BS in Literature
Hometown: Suisun City, CA
Family: Single
Occupation: Office Assistant

Neha is an office assistant who works closely with people who volunteer for Solano County Friends of Animals. Though she's never owned a cat, she describes herself as a big cat lover and is interested in volunteering with the organization in any way she can. Neha mainly uses a mobile device to get on the internet and is looking into foster care.
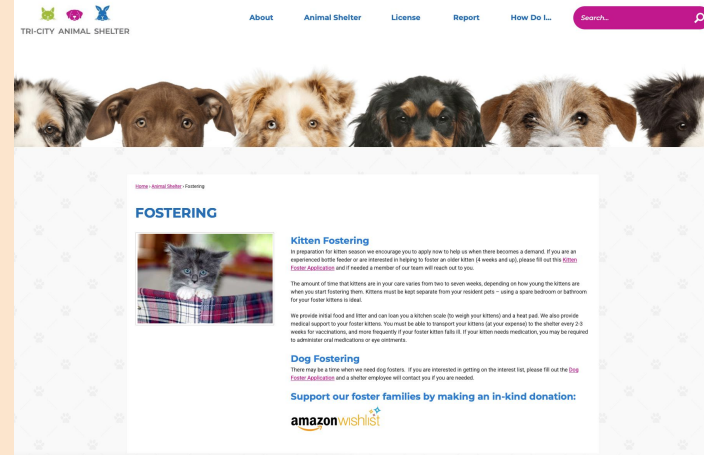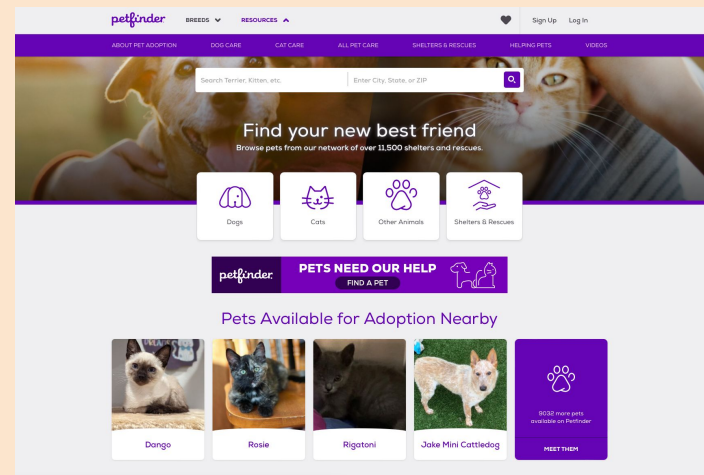
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Competitive Audit

A thorough audit of competitor platforms revealed crucial gaps and opportunities, directly informing the strategic direction and feature set of the SCFOA app and website.
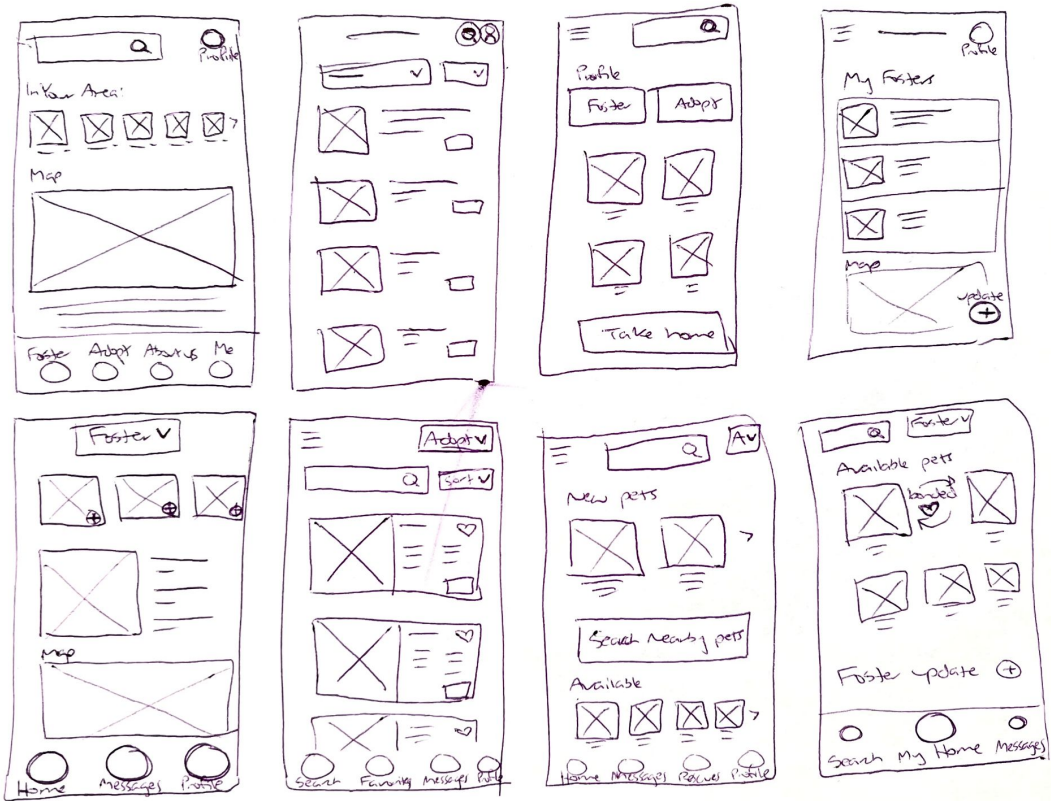

Mobile
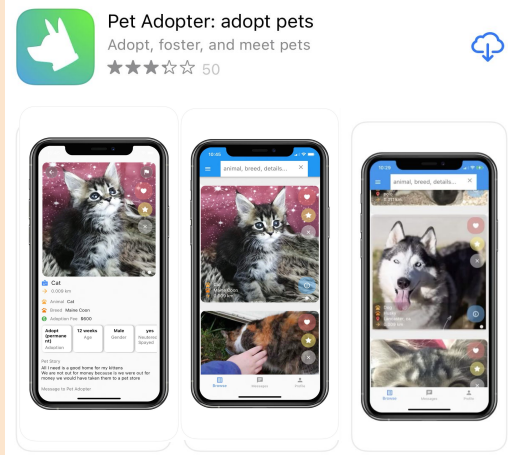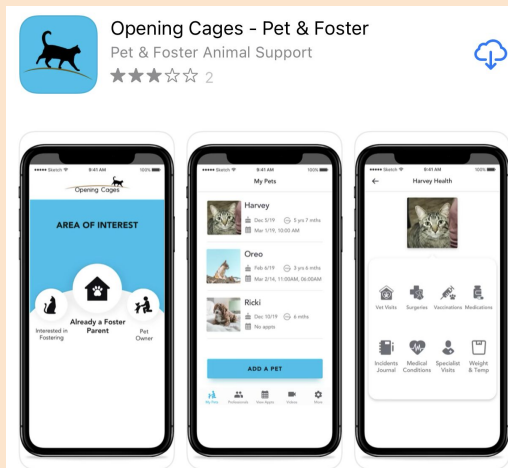
Desktop

Ideation

Based on insights from the competitive audit, I generated a range of potential solutions through focused ideation. These solutions prioritized streamlining animal postings and implementing user-friendly logging and tracking features.
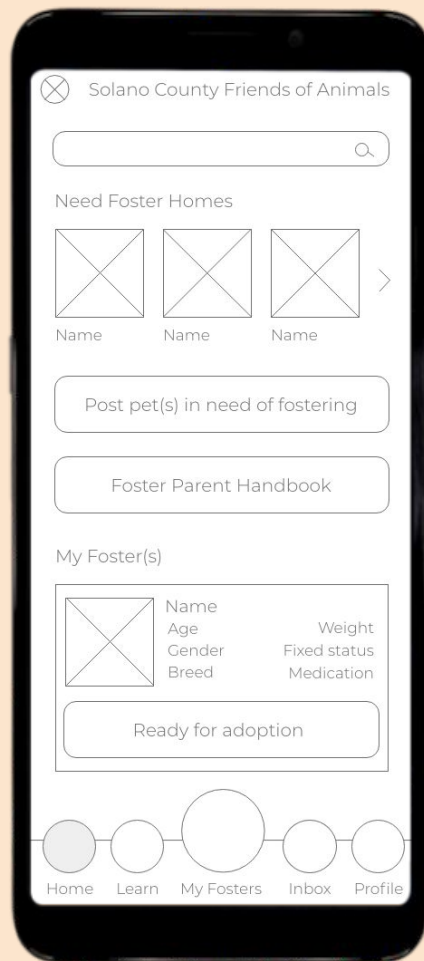
Starting the Design

- Digital Wireframes
- Low-Fidelity Prototype
- Usability Studies

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Digital Wireframes

Building upon initial paper wireframes, I created digital wireframes for the SCFOA app that prioritized personalized guidance for animal logging and care.

Top half of home screen provides quick navigation to important features

Bottom half of home screen provides quick view of the users' foster information

Easy access to app features from global navigation

Solano County Friends of Animals

Need Foster Homes

Name   Name   Name

Post pet(s) in need of fostering

Foster Parent Handbook

My Foster(s)

Name
Age   Weight
Gender   Fixed status
Breed   Medication

Ready for adoption

Home   Learn   My Fosters   Inbox   Profile

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Low-Fidelity Prototype

A lo-fi prototype was created to test key functionalities, including posting found animals and logging medication details for foster animals. This allowed for early validation of core user task flows.

View SCOFA's low-fidelity prototype

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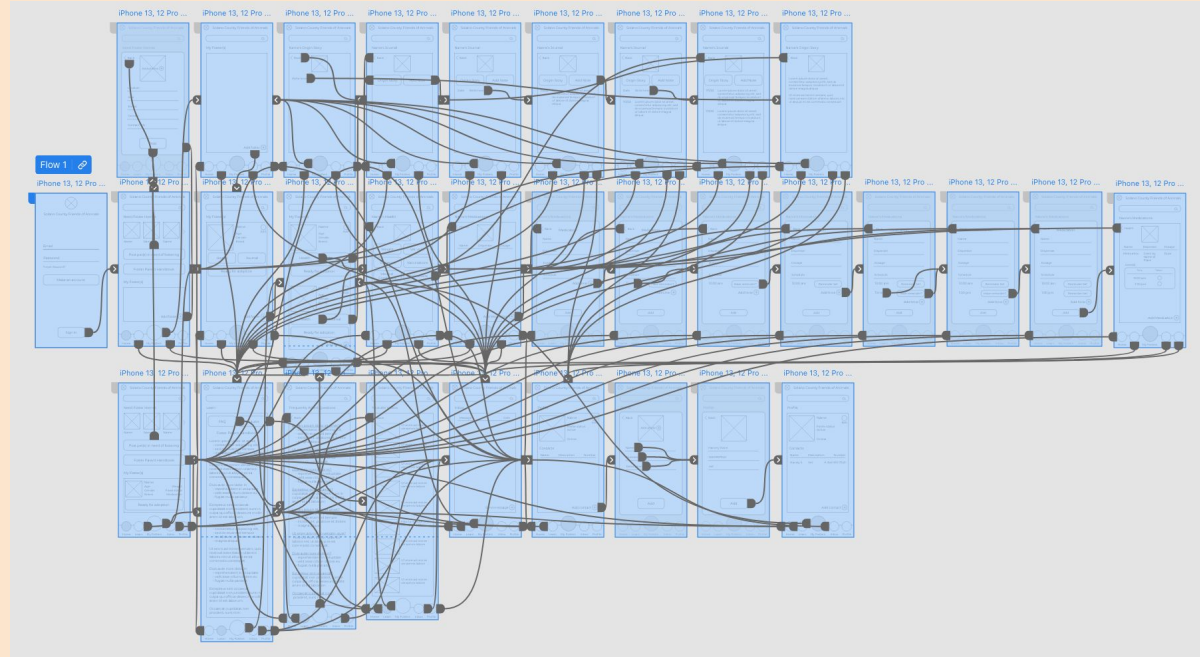
Usability Study: Parameters

Study Type:

Unmoderated usability study

Location:

Solano County, CA

Participants:

5 target users

Length:

15-25 minutes

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Usability Study: Findings

The usability study revealed the following key insights:

1

Onboarding Confusion

Users were unsure how to initiate tasks and needed clarification on the app's purpose, such as whether it would be more like a workbook or Petfinder replacement.

2

Profile Organization

Users were confused about the distinction between "My Fosters" and "Profile," desiring a more intuitive organization and the removal of unnecessary profile features.

3

Pet Listing Display

Users preferred a dedicated page or tab for viewing animal listings in full, rather than a single scrollable line, for improved browsing and information access.

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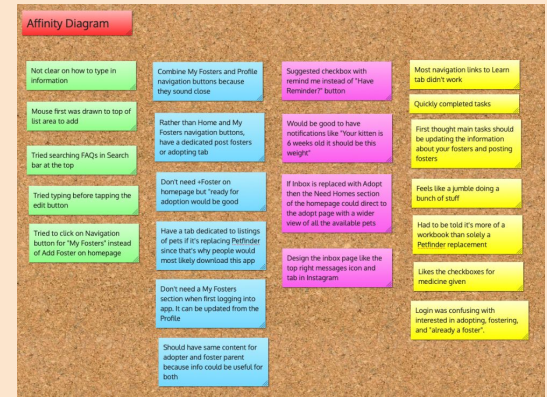
Refining the Design

- Mockups
- High-Fidelity Prototype
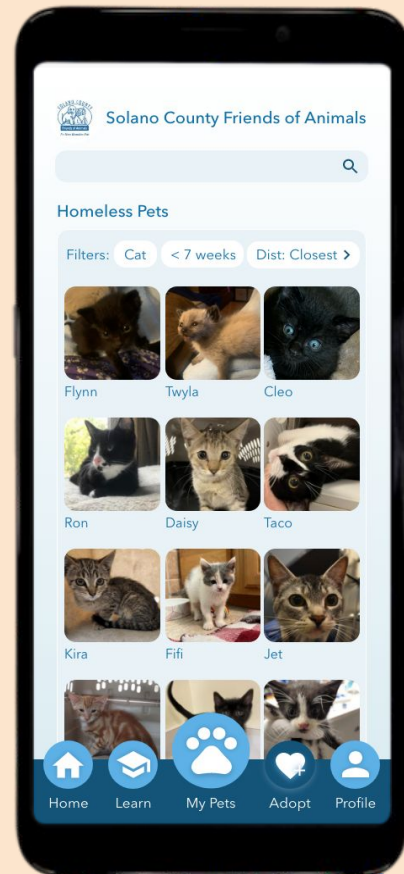- Accessibility

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Mockups

Leveraging insights from the usability studies, I refined the mockups by replacing the underutilized inbox feature with a prominent, dedicated section for browsing adoptable pets directly from the home screen and navigation bar, enhancing discoverability and user engagement.
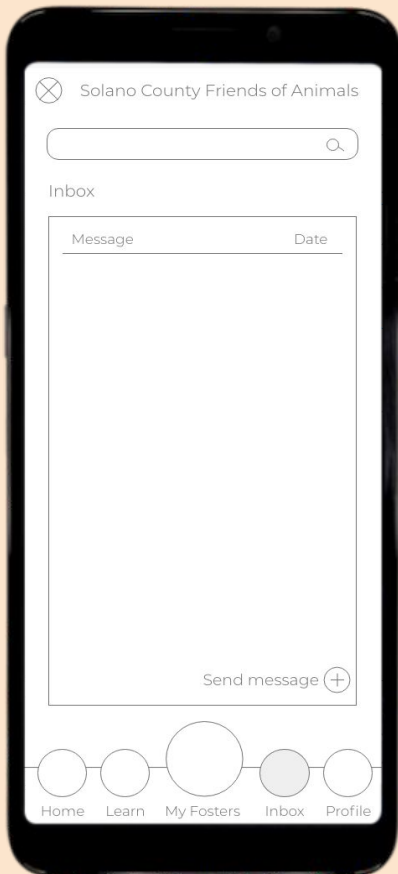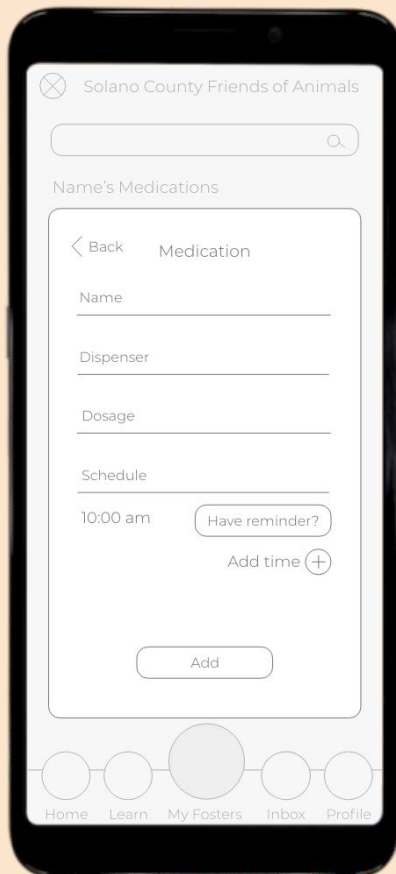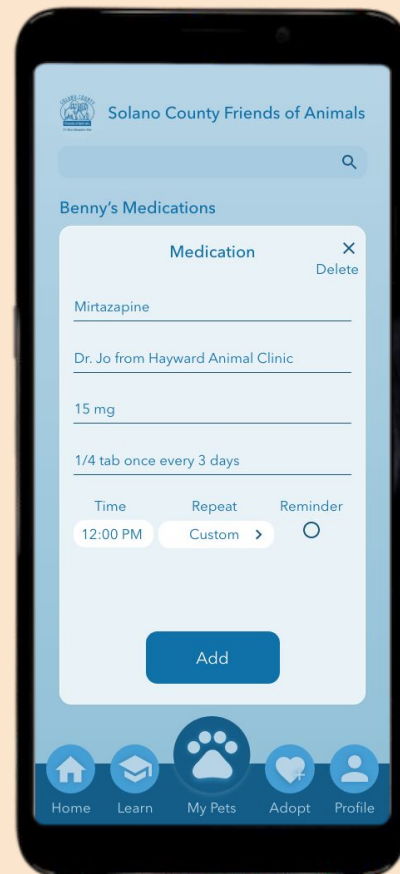
Mockups

The medication page was redesigned to improve medication management with a clearer time editing functionality. This included customizable options for setting repeat schedules giving users greater control over medication administration.
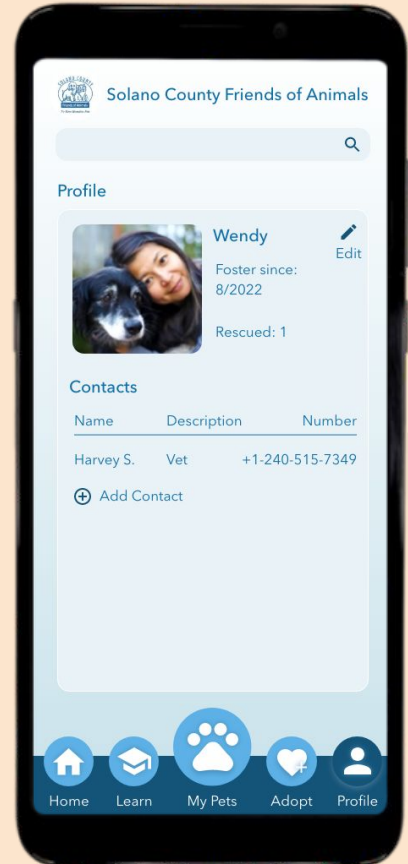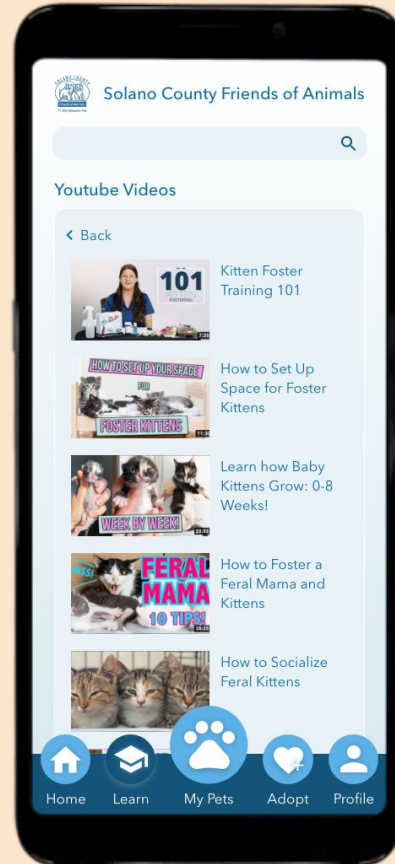
Solano County Friends of Animals

Name's Medications

< Back   Medication

Name

Dispenser

Dosage

Schedule

10:00 am   Have reminder?

Add time ⊕

Add

Home   Learn   My Fosters   Inbox   Profile

Solano County Friends of Animals

Benny's Medications

Medication ✕
Delete

Mirtazapine

Dr. Jo from Hayward Animal Clinic

15 mg

1/4 tab once every 3 days

Time	Repeat	Reminder
12:00 PM	Custom ❯	◯

Add

Home   Learn   My Pets   Adopt   Profile
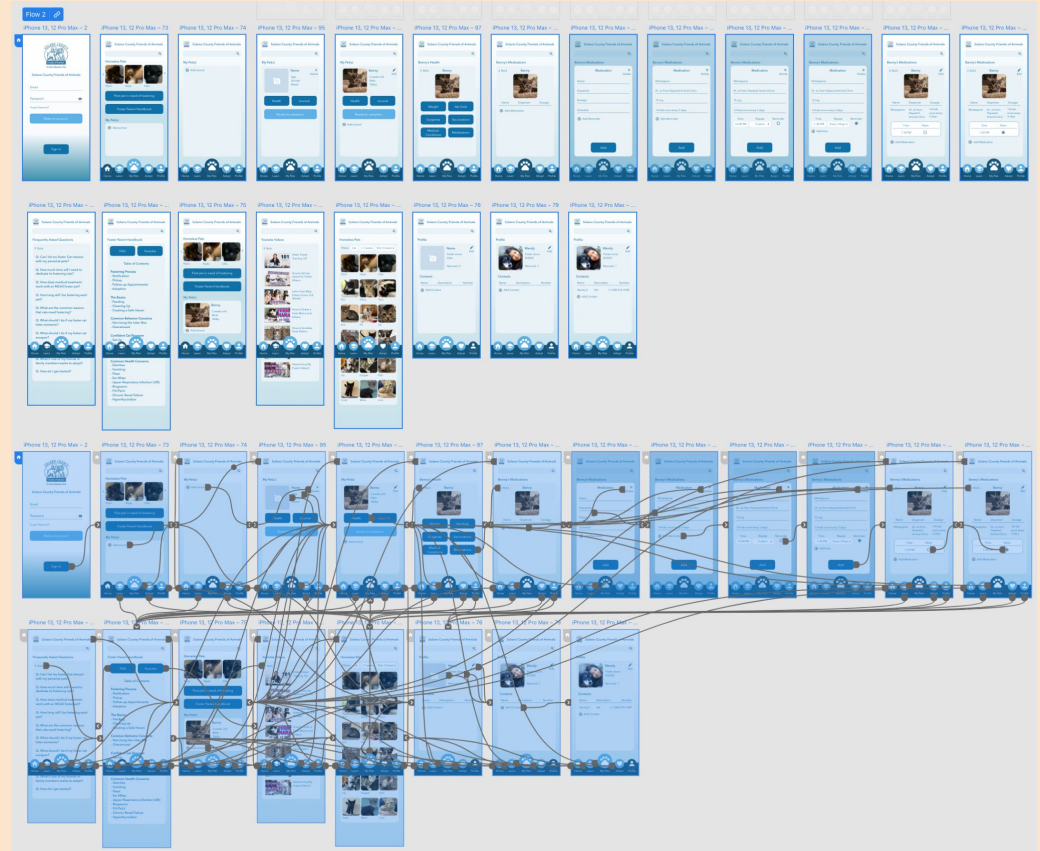
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Mockups
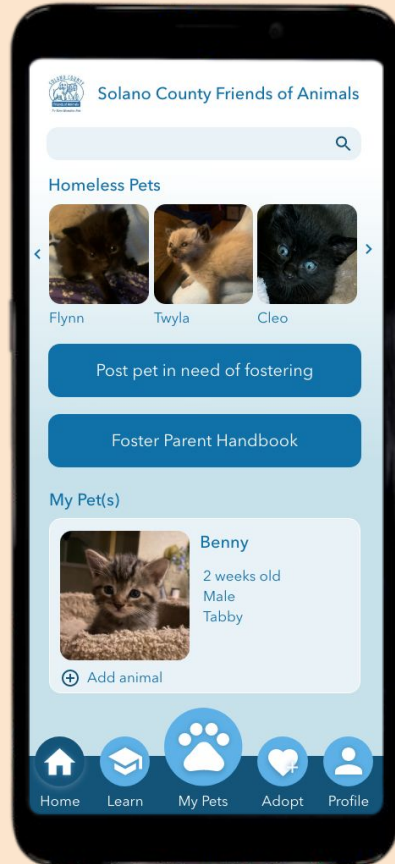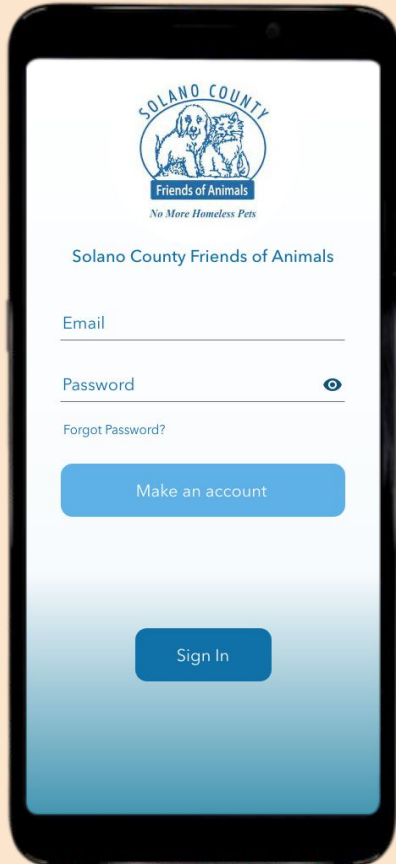
High-Fidelity Prototype

The high-fidelity prototype showcases the refined user flows for profile creation, adding fosters, and medication editing, designed to enhance usability and address user pain points.

View the SCFOA high-fidelity prototype

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Accessibility Considerations

1

Use of Colour

I specified important information by using a combination of text, colour or graphical objects. This will benefit users with partial sight or limited colour vision, colour-blindness and users who use text-only, limited colour, or monochrome display screens.

2

Consistent Navigation

I ensured that repeated components occur in the same order on each page of a site. This will be helpful for users with cognitive limitations, low vision and intellectual disabilities as it becomes easier to predict where they can find things on each page.
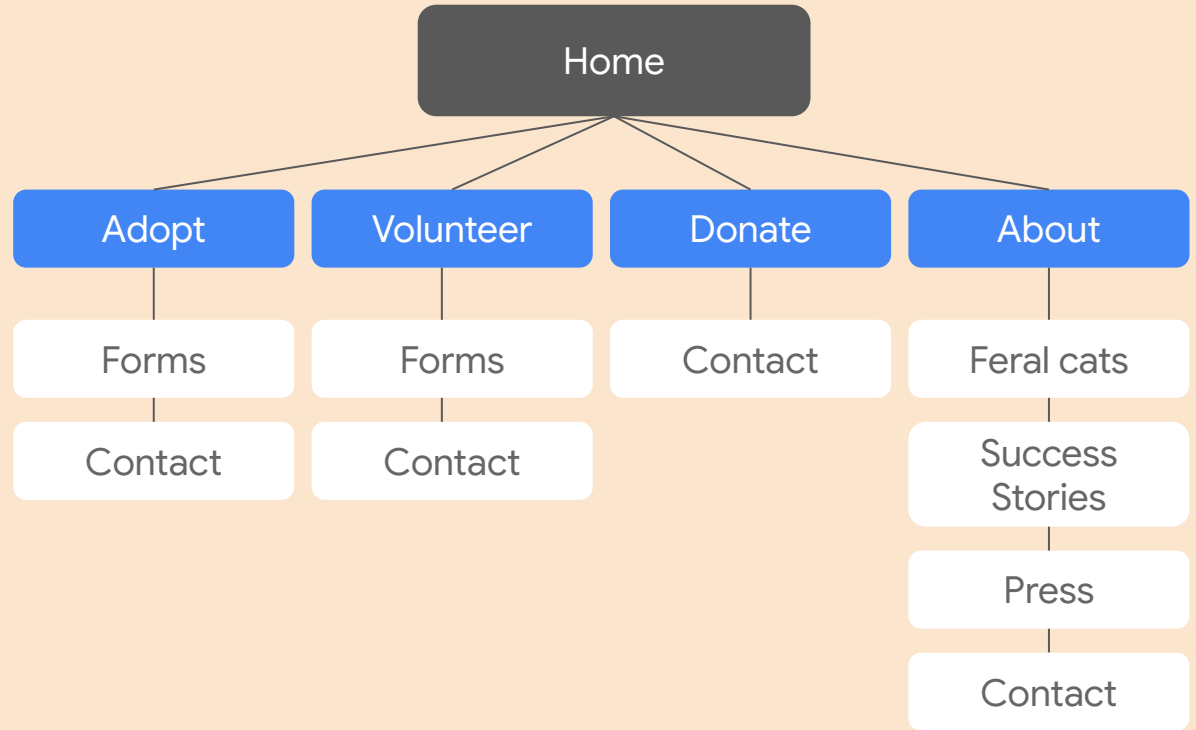
3

Use of Headings

I used descriptive and informative page titles. This will help users with limited short-term memory, low vision or difficulty reading text — they can see only few words at a time and know the purpose of each section.

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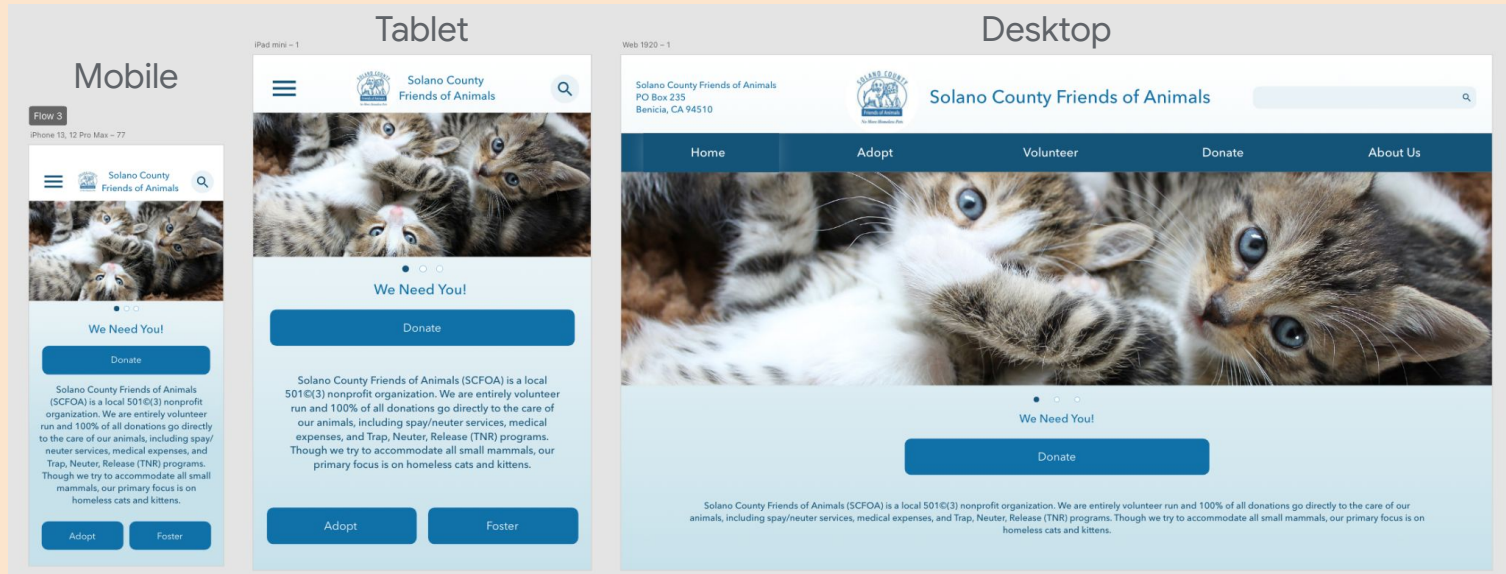# Responsive Design

- Information Architecture

- Responsive Design

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Sitemap

Following the app designs, I created a responsive website to ensure a cohesive user experience across all devices. The SCFOA sitemap served as the foundation for the website's organizational structure, guiding the design of each screen for consistent navigation and information architecture.

Home

Adopt

Volunteer

Donate

About

Forms

Forms

Contact

Feral cats

Contact

Contact

Success Stories

Press

Contact

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Responsive Designs

To ensure an intuitive user experience across all devices, responsive designs were created for mobile, tablet, and desktop screens, which were strategically optimized to address the unique user needs and interaction patterns associated with each device and screen size.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

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Takeaways

Impact:

The app successfully demystified fostering, making it feel accessible to potential volunteers. User feedback highlighted the app's educational value, with one participant stating, "The SCFOA app helped educate me about the necessities of animal care in a way that's easy and engaging."

What I learned:

This project reinforced the importance of focused problem-solving. While addressing a complex issue, I learned that simplifying the solution to meet specific user needs, rather than attempting to combine multiple functionalities, resulted in a more effective and user-friendly app. Diligently adhering to each step of the design process was crucial in developing truly valuable solutions.

Next Steps

1

Conduct post-launch research to assess the app's effectiveness in increasing feral animal awareness and achieving adoption goals. Utilize analytics and user feedback to inform future iterations.

2

Develop and integrate additional educational content on humane animal care practices, ensuring users have access to comprehensive and up-to-date information.

3

Implement a system to recognize and reward users for their contributions to animal rescue, promoting continued participation and community engagement.

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Let's Connect!

Thank you for your time reviewing my work on my SCFOA app! If you'd like to see more or get in touch, you may reach me through my contact info provided below:

Email: barbarahaggertywork@gmail.com
Website: barbarahaggerty.com

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