



ConnectHomeUSA Playbook



 **ConnectHomeUSA**
everyoneon
connecthomeusa.org

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The Digital Divide

Technology has changed the way we pursue education, find jobs, do business, and interact with everyone from our doctor to our family to our member of Congress. To accomplish everything from homework to college and career applications, Internet access is now a *necessity*.

Yet many low-income Americans live on the wrong side of the digital divide because they do not have Internet access at home. As of 2016, **46% of families living in public housing do not have high-speed Internet at home or rely solely on smartphones.**

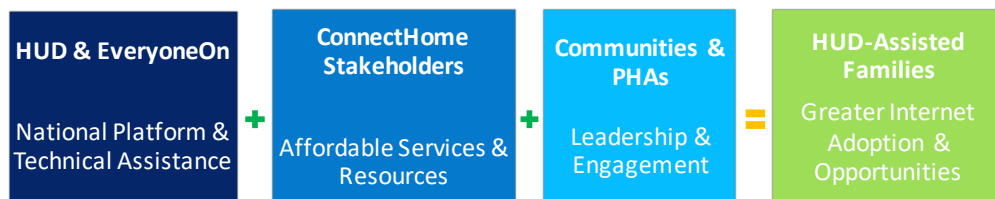
These Americans are missing out on the high-value educational, economic, and social impact of the Internet, and are being left behind. Kids on the wrong side of the “homework gap” lack the tools they need to do their coursework outside of school.

Families are increasingly at risk of becoming isolated from our digital society because they lack access to the Internet and the skills necessary to use it effectively.

ConnectHomeUSA offers a solution

In July 2015, the White House, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and its nonprofit partners EveryoneOn and US Ignite launched the pilot program, ConnectHome. An ambitious collaboration among government, corporate, philanthropic, and community leaders, the expansion program, ConnectHomeUSA continues to be committed to harnessing technology to improve the lives of Americans **living in HUD-assisted housing**.

Through ConnectHomeUSA, the federal government, local governments, public housing agencies, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), nonprofits, and other stakeholders collaborate on a **common platform to** develop locally-tailored solutions to narrow the digital divide.



Stakeholders in the corporate and nonprofit sectors use the ConnectHomeUSA platform to offer HUD-assisted households free or low-cost Internet access, computing devices, and digital literacy training.

Official national ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders include:

High-Speed Internet Access

#ConnectHome

Digital Literacy

*National Stakeholders

Devices

ConnectHome.HUD.gov

What about smartphones?

While smartphones can be a stepping-stone for the chronically unconnected, those who rely only on them are at a severe disadvantage when trying to do homework, apply for college or financial aid, or fill out a job application. Because of these challenges, only Internet-enabled computing devices—such as desktops, laptops, and tablets—can truly close the digital divide.

By helping low-income households **unlock** and take advantage of stakeholder offers, ConnectHomeUSA has resulted in millions of dollars of value for HUD-assisted families. For example:

- ➔ **Comcast** offers its Internet Essentials program to *every* unconnected HUD-assisted household within its nationwide footprint. The program provides affordable high-speed Internet service that costs just \$9.95 per month (plus taxes).
- ➔ **T-Mobile** provides free Internet-enabled tablets to public housing agencies that have adopted its specially discounted high-speed Internet offer for government agencies.
- ➔ **Best Buy** offers teens and families in HUD-assisted housing free digital literacy training through its Geek Squad Academy.
- ➔ **The College Board** offers all HUD-assisted students and families unlimited access to free SAT practice tools, scholarships, and college planning and search services.

HUD's official ConnectHomeUSA partner

EveryoneOn is a national nonprofit working to eliminate the digital divide by increasing access to affordable high-speed Internet service, computers, and free digital literacy courses for all unconnected Americans. EveryoneOn helped design, implement, and expand the ConnectHome pilot. The early success allowed the creation of the expansion program, ConnectHomeUSA which EveryoneOn leads. EveryoneOn offers communities deep expertise on digital inclusion, funding and partnering opportunities with ConnectHomeUSA's stakeholders.

Using the ConnectHomeUSA Playbook

A team effort

The ConnectHomeUSA Playbook, like the ConnectHome pilot, reflects an ongoing collaboration among HUD, various stakeholders—public and private—and the CHUSA communities.

HUD and EveryoneOn express deep gratitude to all the ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders, each of the communities, and the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Education for their assistance in preparing this Playbook and their commitment to sharing their unique experiences and lessons for the benefit of other communities across the nation.

HUD and EveryoneOn collaborated to update the original Playbook. Within these chapters, you will find new insights, best practices and successful strategies gleaned over four years of implementation of the ConnectHome pilot and ConnectHomeUSA program, that will help you leverage public-private partnerships and narrow the digital divide in your community.

The ConnectHomeUSA Playbook incorporates these **lessons, models, tips, and case studies**. It lays out how your community can successfully set up its own digital inclusion initiative step-by-step.

PLAYBOOKS: Connecting your community

Assess the landscape and assemble your core planning team: A backbone of dedicated staff champions your initiative. (*Playbook 1*)

Cultivate and leverage partnerships: Multisector collaboration is essential for narrowing the digital divide. (*Playbook 2*)

Select your population and conduct a baseline survey: Understanding your community's needs allows you to set effective goals. (*Playbook 3*)

Organize your first local convening: Launch your community's initiative by building relationships and momentum among partners. (*Playbook 4*)

Develop your initial action plan (*Playbook 5*) for addressing the **three-legged stool of digital inclusion:** connectivity, devices, and digital literacy. (*Playbooks 6-8*)

Secure dedicated outside funding: This is the catalyst for building upon your initial progress to grow your digital inclusion efforts. (*Playbook 9*)

Engage residents and community institutions: They are your key ambassadors, demonstrating the power and impact of digital inclusion. (*Playbooks 10 & 11*)

Track your progress and share your successes: Measuring success provides feedback to inform and celebrate your efforts (*Playbook 12*)

Empowered with the *Playbook* and the affordable offers that many ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders have extended nationwide, *your* community can now leverage the ConnectHomeUSA platform to connect families and residents, ensuring that America remains at the forefront of opportunity for all.

Making an Impact: San Antonio, TX, a ConnectHomeUSA Legacy Community



Tanairie Martinez gained valuable technical skills through ConnectHome

Tanairie Martinez's story is a testament to the impact that ConnectHomeUSA can have on the well-being of a family. Before getting connected, Tanairie struggled to provide for her herself and her three children, working three jobs just to make ends meet. "I wouldn't even take my son to school in the morning. I'd get home, sleep for an hour and a half, and then get ready to go to my next job," she recalls.

Then Tanairie received a knock on her door from Catarina Velesquez, a ConnectHomeUSA education consultant. Catarina knew that Tanairie had experience in technical support, so she asked her to assist with digital literacy trainings for residents. Tanairie accepted the offer to become a ConnectHomeUSA digital ambassador, treasuring the opportunity to serve her community. She also received a laptop computer through the program.

Tanairie's experience as a digital ambassador changed her career trajectory. She applied for a local technical support position and got the job. Her current role offers her full-time hours and benefits. More importantly, it provides her with the opportunity to spend quality time with her family. Reflecting on the impact of ConnectHomeUSA on her life, Tanairie said, "The digital ambassador program got me to where I am today."

Launchpad



1. Getting Started
2. Building Partnerships
3. Assessing Your Needs
4. Organizing a Local Convening
5. Developing Your Action Plan





Join the digital inclusion movement

When low-income households are able to connect to high-speed Internet at home, they gain the tools to cross the digital divide and access 21st Century opportunities, significantly improving their educational, employment, health, and social outcomes. That is why the focus of ConnectHomeUSA is increasing **high-speed Internet adoption at home**.

While approximately 90% of households making over \$100,000 per year have access to high-speed Internet at home, only about 54% of families with children living in public housing do.

Closing this gap is the fundamental goal of ConnectHomeUSA.

The 3-legged stool of digital inclusion

TIP →

Each leg matters

Be sure to, consider *all* three legs of the digital inclusion stool. Your efforts to address one leg can also build or amplify your efforts around each of the other legs.

STEPS: Launching your digital inclusion initiative

To frame your planning efforts, think of digital inclusion as a stool with three legs, each playing a critical role:

- ➔ **Affordable high-speed Internet** to connect low-income families at home (*Playbook 6*)
- ➔ **Low-cost computing devices**—such as laptops, tablets, or desktop computers—to enable households to use their high-speed Internet connections (*Playbook 7*)
- ➔ **Digital literacy trainings** to ensure that families can make the most of their devices by safely and effectively accessing the Internet (*Playbook 8*)

The *ConnectHomeUSA Playbook* covers all three legs of digital inclusion (*Playbooks 6–8*), including how national ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders and resources can help narrow the digital divide in your community.

STEP 1: Assemble your core planning team

To organize and launch ConnectHomeUSA in your community, assemble a **core planning team** to serve as your initiative's backbone, driving progress forward.

Consider the following checklist:

What your core planning team *needs*:

- ➔ **ConnectHomeUSA champions** to jumpstart your initiative
- ➔ **Information technology** staff representatives
- ➔ **Resident services** staff representatives
- ➔ **Chief Innovation (CIO) and Technology Officers (CTO)**
- ➔ **Creative approaches** to solving problems

What your team *does not need*:

- ➔ Prior digital inclusion experience
- ➔ Large numbers of people

Your core planning team may be small at first. It will continue to grow as additional community stakeholders join your initiative.

Case Study Charlotte, NC

Digital inclusion steering team

Charlotte launched a digital inclusion steering team, including representatives from the city, county, school district, public housing agency, library system, EveryoneOn, and other organizations. Initially, Charlotte's core team met regularly to build relationships and coordinate efforts. It conducted research, gathered data and information from sources such as Pew Research Center, and launched a digital media literacy initiative. It also began to identify "WiFi deserts"—areas that lack wireless Internet—within the city.

Over time, this core team launched dozens of community partnerships with local universities, Internet Service Providers, developers, and entrepreneurs. One partnership between the school district and library system allows students to access the library's extensive digital tools with their school ID. Another partnership repurposes surplus laptops for students, with digital literacy training provided by a local college.

TIPS →

Other helpful assessment and planning guides

- **The National Resource Network's** *Access and Digital Inclusion in the Digital Age: A Resource Guide*
- **BroadbandUSA's** *Planning a Community Broadband Map: A Toolkit for Local and Tribal Governments*

STEP 2: Clarify your digital inclusion landscape

One of the first tasks of your core planning team is to evaluate your community's digital inclusion **resources, gaps, and needs**.

These three resources offer a good starting point for your inventory:

- ➔ **EveryoneOn's** website identifies affordable offers for Internet and devices in your zip code (everyoneon.org)
- ➔ **U.S. Census Data** now provides data on computer and Internet access at the census tract level. Check out tables S2801 and S2802. (data.census.gov)
- ➔ **The National Digital Inclusion Alliance** has created regional maps showing rates of coverage using the latest census data. (www.digitalinclusion.org/home-internet-maps/)

As part of this process, use the Playbook to familiarize yourself with what other communities have been doing and identify digital inclusion initiatives that may *already* exist in your community, pinpointing their scope, successes, and challenges.

BroadbandUSA

BroadbandUSA is a federal program that provides free assistance to communities, industry organizations, and nonprofits to expand broadband infrastructure and promote digital inclusion. Across the country, BroadbandUSA offers locally tailored technical assistance and regional workshops that bring together stakeholders to support the planning, funding, and implementation of community broadband programs.

You can use BroadbandUSA resources to gather information, learn how to use broadband to meet your community's needs, make key decisions, and advance broadband adoption in your community. (www2.ntia.doc.gov/publications)

BroadbandUSA is a program of the U.S. Department of Commerce's **National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)**, which is the executive branch agency principally responsible for telecommunications and information policy issues.

STEP 3: Complete the ConnectHomeUSA Launchpad

The next four *Playbooks* complete the ConnectHomeUSA **Launchpad** to get your effort off the ground:

PLAYBOOKS: Launchpad

- ✓ **Playbook 1:** Getting Started
- ➔ **Playbook 2:** Building Partnerships
- ➔ **Playbook 3:** Assessing Your Baseline
- ➔ **Playbook 4:** Organizing a Local Convening
- ➔ **Playbook 5:** Developing Your Action Plan

Congratulations—you are now ready to begin narrowing the digital divide in your community!



Setting up your initiative to succeed

Public housing agencies provide essential leadership in building strong digital inclusion programs. But they cannot make significant progress acting alone. They need partners to help them understand what's needed, assess options, fill gaps, and ultimately implement sustainable solutions.

“In real estate, they say it’s location, location, location.
In ConnectHome, it’s collaboration, collaboration, collaboration.”

—Kim Cole, Director of Strategic Planning, DC Housing Authority

Collaboration is crucial, and it is **at the heart** of ConnectHomeUSA.

Identifying partners

TIPS →

Reach

Leveraging a prospective partner's geographic service area or existing customer base may improve awareness of your initiative and facilitate the delivery of services to places or people you are trying to reach.

Expertise

Accessing the experience and specialized expertise that different partners offer will improve the overall quality and impact of your initiative.

Credibility

Your initiative may benefit from the improved credibility that comes from an already widely trusted partner.

Fill gaps

Identify potential stakeholders who can enable different aspects of your initiative or fill key gaps.

Take it in kind

In-kind contributions, such as research assistance, training programs, or volunteers can prove just as valuable as funding.

To develop a deeper understanding of the resources and opportunities in your community, ask questions such as:

- ➔ What do our residents need, what are their interests in this space?
- ➔ Which organizations are we already working with who could also support this work? And, can these organizations recommend others in their network?
- ➔ Who currently provides high-speed Internet to residents and businesses in your area, and at what prices and speeds?
- ➔ Is your community located within the service footprint of ConnectHomeUSA's national Internet Service Provider stakeholders AT&T, Comcast, Cox, or T-Mobile which offer heavily discounted Internet plans for approximately \$10 per month to eligible households?
- ➔ Which organizations can provide discounted or refurbished computers to residents in need?
- ➔ Where are digital literacy trainings currently offered—such as community colleges and libraries—and what do they offer? Can they bring their programs onsite?

In addition to local partners, engage national partners, including ConnectHomeUSA's official stakeholders. National-level partners tend to contribute in different ways than partners rooted in your community, and you can use the strengths of **both** to achieve greater results.

For example, when national ConnectHomeUSA stakeholder GitHub wanted to offer digital literacy classes in Kansas City, it collaborated heavily with a local nonprofit, the W.E.B. DuBois Learning Center, to coordinate space, logistics, and outreach.

Scope	Contribution
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Digital inclusion expertise, resources, networks ➔ Participation of local affiliates
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Knowledge of and interest in the community ➔ On-the-ground assistance for national partners

The following table lists organizations that are either officially committed to ConnectHomeUSA or have frequently partnered with ConnectHomeUSA communities:

Partner	Role
Core Team	
Public housing agency	Leadership, communication, staffing, coordination, resources
Local elected officials and staff	Leadership, outreach, goals, convening, funding
Critical Partners	
HUD	Guidance, benchmarks, collaboration, national platform
EveryoneOn	Leadership, expertise, guidance, resources
ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders	Free and low-cost Internet, devices, digital literacy training, educational resources
Internet Service Providers	Affordable Internet service and devices
Libraries	Expertise, outreach, staff, facilities, digital literacy training
Large employers/local organizations	Devices, workforce training, volunteers
Resident councils	Needs assessment, survey, outreach, feedback, enthusiasm for project
Other Important Community Partners	
Device refurbishers & providers	Affordable computing devices
Local technology community & digital inclusion advocates	Expertise, passion and energy, financial resources
HUD-assisted multifamily owners	Ensure residents have affordable Internet access
School districts & schools	Assisting students with Internet access and devices at home, STEM programs/materials, broadband networks
Universities & colleges	Survey research partner, devices, digital literacy training, student volunteers
Hospitals	Telehealth programs and other resources (including broadband networks)
Local media	Awareness, interest, and momentum
Funding Partners	
Foundations	Financing and coalition building
Local banks	Investments through the Community Reinvestment Act

Case Study

Cleveland, OH

TIPS →

Build on existing efforts

Identify partners already invested in your residents or in digital inclusion work in your community, like libraries. Invite them to play a leadership or partnership role.

Community meetings

Presenting at community meetings allows you to engage multiple potential stakeholders at once and creates a wider community forum for discussing digital inclusion. Avoid technical jargon in public presentations.

Share your goals

Your initiative may benefit from the improved credibility that comes from an already widely trusted partner.

Fill gaps

Explain how connectivity promotes civic engagement, improves educational opportunity, connects individuals to job markets, and much more.

Lay the groundwork

Your conversations with potential partners will generate valuable new ideas for collaboration.

Building community partnerships

The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority used their already-existing channels of community influence with local and national partners to build partnerships for their ConnectHome effort. In doing so, they were able to access a range of community resources and expertise, as the table below illustrates:

Partner	Contributions
Cleveland Public Library	Leadership, communication, staffing, coordination, resources
National Digital Inclusion Alliance & American Library Association	Leadership, outreach, goals, convening, funding
Local non-profit organizations	Guidance, benchmarks, collaboration, national platform
Catholic Charities Hospital	Leadership, expertise, guidance, resources
Local companies	Free and low-cost Internet, devices, digital literacy training, educational resources

KEYS: Maintaining Strong Partnerships

TIPS →

How long will it last?

Clarify the longevity of your commitments. Some partners may be interested in helping for a year or two, whereas others may be able to commit to a longer-term involvement.

Do a trial run

A short-term engagement with a potential partner may be helpful to demonstrate the long-term benefit of working together.

Don't be afraid to ask for what residents need. And welcome in-kind donations that may arise from your ask. The donations may not be directly relevant to your CHUSA program, but could assist residents nonetheless, e.g. donations of clothing, school supplies, outreach, assistance.

KEY 1: Understand your community's needs

Prior to approaching potential partners, it's a good idea to know what your residents need and what they are interested in. This will help guide your partnership outreach efforts.

KEY 2: Build from areas of mutual interest

When approaching a potential partner, rally around areas of agreement and overlapping interests. For example, when partnering with your local library, explore the mutual benefit of how hosting training events at a library can cultivate new audiences for library services.

KEY 3: Establish clear roles and responsibilities

Outline the scope and scale of each partner's participation. Be as clear and concrete as possible when establishing roles, responsibilities, and timelines. You may want to begin this process at your convening. (*See Playbook 4*)

KEY 4: Designate partnership leads

Each partner should identify a clear lead to manage communication, arrange and participate in meetings, and share issues. To avoid confusion, these leads should take ownership of the relationship.

KEY 5: Maintain regular communication

Regular calls, in-person meetings, and status reports are important tools for collaborating toward meeting your mutual commitments. Memorialize key decisions to ensure everyone is on the same page. Maintain regular communication to proactively address any potential issues.

KEY 6: Track and report progress

Monitor progress toward milestones and track deliverables on a regular basis. Establish each partnership's metrics for success, which might involve the number of families newly connected to high-speed Internet, the number of devices obtained, or the number of training opportunities provided. Measuring and reporting progress is vital to maintaining the enthusiasm of your partners. (*See Playbook 12.*)

Case Study

San Antonio, TX

KEY 7: Celebrate success and recognize partners' contributions

Recognizing partners' contributions at public events, through print or social media are very effective ways of thanking them. And, this type of acknowledgement can also spread the word not just about your efforts but about the quality of the program you are running. Be sure to gauge your partners' interest in public recognition. A word of caution: Some organizations shy away from the spotlight, so check first!

The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA), a ConnectHomeUSA Legacy community, created a robust city-wide digital literacy program which taps into the resources provided by many local organizations. Known as the **Passport Program**, it allows residents to obtain digital literacy training from organizations that signed on as part of the larger **San Antonio Digital Alliance** which SAHA also spearheaded. Building this partnership network proved invaluable to SAHA's ConnectHomeUSA efforts, check out the box below to learn more!

Building a City-Wide Digital Inclusion Coalition

SAHA's Digital Inclusion Alliance includes leaders from the city, library network, school district, libraries, local banks, workforce organizations and more.

Case Study

San Antonio, TX

TIPS →

Before you start reaching out to partners, it's good to have a general idea of what you want to do with your CHUSA program.

Without a general idea to guide you, you might try to take on too much. Your goals can be adjusted as you learn more from residents and partners.

Tap your vendors

They may not be used to contributing to initiatives, so have ideas ready!

City leadership is key

One of the foundations of CHUSA is the required PHA/City partnership. This partnership helps leverage resources and conveys the importance of your work. Avoid making this work political and try to embed it into the work of enduring programs or offices such as an office of economic development.

Strategy	Outcome
Identify Residents' Needs	SAHA conducted a needs assessment by property to educate residents about the program and learn more about their needs and interests.
Asset Mapping	Conduct an inventory of existing partners. What are they offering, what <i>can</i> they offer? Ask partners for referrals to other organizations they work with. And, use in-house resources. Other PHA offices may work with other organizations that could contribute to your efforts.
City Leadership	Use your partnership with the city to help garner visibility, develop new or tie into existing initiatives, and create a working group of city organizations that will help you build a strong coalition of partners.
Identify a Champion	SAHA's ConnectHomeUSA Manager coordinates the Digital Inclusion Alliance. Having this vantage point allows her to track progress, fill gaps, publicly recognize contributions, and maintain momentum.
Enter into an MOU	It's a good idea to enter into MOUs with organizations that you will be working with over the long term. The MOU should clearly delineate areas of responsibility.
Meet Annually	In addition to a regular meetings with your coalition, it's a good idea to meet one-on-one with each partner on an annual basis. Prepare for this meeting with a report or summary showing the year's accomplishments that were made possible by the partner. Pictures are a nice touch! Use the opportunity to revisit what worked well, areas of improvement, whether goals were met, and whether the MOU should be updated.
Give Back	By attending partners' events or meetings; and through media recognition or other PHA events.



Find out where you stand

According to a study of ConnectHome pilot communities conducted by HUD’s Office of Policy Development and Research, 34% of public housing families had broadband Internet connections in their homes. Another 35% were considered “underconnected” or without high-speed Internet access or access via a mobile phone. The rate in your community may be higher or lower. Conducting a **baseline survey** of residents will give you a more accurate measure of Internet adoption and the digital divide in your community. While understanding your community’s connectivity needs is at the heart of ConnectHomeUSA, insight into other needs and assets is also important in order to implement a comprehensive digital inclusion program.

Determining more precisely where your community stands can help you better understand your residents’ needs, set feasible annual goals, develop an effective Action Plan (Playbook 5), and serve as a reference point for tracking progress (*Playbook 13*).

ConnectHome pilot communities that successfully completed a baseline connectivity survey gained valuable data and insights about their residents’ needs and adoption rates. Communities that worked closely with a **research partner**, such as a local university or college, had greater success administering their surveys. ConnectHomeUSA communities have also implemented innovative techniques for obtaining community data, some of which are highlighted here.



Building your research team

TIPS →

Find a research partner

The American Association for Public Opinion Research's Blue Book will help you identify potential research partners. You can read, search, and download it at aapor.org.

Empower your people

Training your staff and residents (with support from resident councils) to conduct a survey can be a cost-effective and efficient option (see "Connecting residents through the survey" below).

BENEFITS OF SURVEYING →

Helps with your strategic planning. "Why offer something your residents don't want?" --*Shanta Baro, North Little Rock Housing Authority*

Helps you become a better organization and build credibility with your resident community. When your residents see you in the community and then deliver on their needs, you become a trusted partner.

Start by evaluating your available research capacity, including both financial resources and staff time, to determine your resources to conduct your survey. Consider the following elements:

- ➔ Is there a local research partner—a university, think tank, nonprofit, or high-school math department—with the statistical background and resources to design and analyze a survey?
- ➔ Does your local government have a research department that could provide survey guidance or other resources?
- ➔ Are there staff members with experience conducting surveys?

Once you have assessed your available capacity and resources, you can **build your research team**, encompassing both technical **analysis** and survey **administration** roles. Options for building a team include:

- ➔ Partnering or contracting with a professional research institution
- ➔ Hiring interested residents or students as survey administrators
- ➔ Enlisting housing agency staff to manage survey administration

Organization	Possible Roles
Public housing agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Defines survey purpose ➔ Coordinates the survey ➔ Dedicates appropriate resources ➔ Trains staff as needed ➔ Administers the survey
Research partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Advises about survey methodology ➔ Helps select a valid sample ➔ Analyzes results
Resident council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Community outreach ➔ Encourages responses ➔ Helps administer the survey

Connecting with Residents Through Surveys

When designing your survey, it's important to ask about the issues you want to address through your ConnectHomeUSA program. In addition to helping residents connect to affordable Internet in their units, what else is important to know? Do residents need training, if so what kind – basic, intermediate, advanced? The information you obtain from residents and other community organizations will help refine your program design.

Case Study

Detroit, MI

The Detroit Housing Commission (DHC)

DHC's ConnectHomeUSA team surveyed their residents through their "Digital Tours." These tours were conducted at each of their properties so staff could engage directly with residents to explain ConnectHomeUSA and to administer their survey. Some tips from DHC:

- 1. Survey administration.** DHC staff timed their outreach to coincide with when rent was due so they could have in-person interactions. In addition to timing surveys with rent payments, staff also conducted door-to-door surveys which yielded rich information. On some days these were conducted in the morning and on other days, in the evening to be able to capture as many responses as possible.
- 2. Survey method.** Residents were offered a paper survey or an electronic version (on Survey Monkey) that could be completed using their smart phones or other device. Paper surveys were mailed to scattered site locations.
- 3. Survey structure.** The survey was simple – just three questions with a few sub-questions as necessary. Surveys were administered by property so needs could be clearly differentiated.
- 4. Survey submission.** Residents could submit their surveys in person, via fax, email, or regular mail.
- 5. Advertising.** The monthly resident newsletter was used to let residents know about the Digital Tours and surveys.
- 6. Incentives.** Residents who participated were entered into a raffle for a small prize.
- 7. Results.** The results of the first round of Digital Tour surveys showed DHC's ConnectHomeUSA staff which sites needed Wi-Fi in common spaces and which sites would need connectivity through an Internet Service Provider. DHC used Wayne State University to help analyze the statistics.
- 8. Using results to build a support network.** Results were also used to approach partners and funders.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGY:

The Executive Director of the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC) asks staff to administer a PHA-wide resident survey every two years. The purpose is two-fold: to understand the changing needs of residents and to communicate the agency's commitment to residents. Consider leveraging your survey to advance other objectives in the process. DHC took such an approach, using its regular six-month resident surveys to learn about residents' connectivity status, interests and needs in a variety of areas. The door-to-door surveys were not only effective at collecting good data, but they also gave staff the opportunity to learn more about residents' other needs. And by working in the community – not only were they gathering important information, they were sending an important message – that DHC cares!



STEPS: Surveying Residents

STEP 1: Identify your population and key metrics

Addressing three key questions about your resident population will help define the scale and scope of your connectivity efforts:

1. Who will you focus on connecting to the Internet at home?

- a. All HUD-assisted households?
- b. Just public housing residents?
- c. Only public housing residents with school-aged children?

2. Which metrics are most important for your community?

In addition to the in-home Internet adoption rate, consider tracking the percentage of your resident population that has a computing device or is digitally literate. It is important to assess your baseline for any key metric that you would like to guide your efforts.

3. What data already exists?

Local government offices, research institutions, and Internet Service Providers may already have Internet adoption data for your community. While this data might not be specific to your residents, it can provide helpful background for your survey.

STEP 2: Select your survey sample

Depending on the size of your selected population and your available resources, you may be able to survey all members of the population. However, if your population is large and resources are limited, you can select a representative sample of households to survey.

Selecting a representative sample for your survey can be a complex process. The following tasks can help guide you when consulting and working in collaboration with an experienced research partner:

- 1. Complete a list of your selected population.** For example, if your population is all households with school-age children who live in public housing in your community, then you will need a full list of each of those households. If your population list only includes households in a single building, your survey results will not be generalizable to all of the buildings in your community.
- 2. Consult an in-house researcher or research partner** to determine an appropriate sample size and sampling method based on your estimated response rate.
- 3. Compile a survey sample list from your selected population.** Using your chosen sampling method, select households from your population list until you reach your desired sample size.

TIPS →

Engage resident councils

Before administering your survey, meet with your resident council and ensure that it understands the plans for administering the survey, the survey's objectives, and why resident participation is critical. This enables the resident council to effectively educate residents and vouch for the survey.

BEST PRACTICE: The Little Rock Metropolitan Housing Alliance enlisted resident council members to administer its baseline survey by providing them advanced digital literacy trainings. This equipped them to inform other residents about the survey, conduct door-to-door surveys, and enter survey data.

As compensation, Resident Council members received Section 3 funds for administering the survey. They also were given the option to receive a free tablet or purchase a computer for \$50, thereby helping to further the community's connectivity goals.

STEP 3: Design your survey

A well-designed questionnaire will greatly facilitate the administration and analysis of your survey, minimize confusion, and provide reliable data. Be sure to:

- ➔ **Keep your survey short.** Each additional question makes it less likely that households will complete the survey. Only ask the most essential questions. No more than three questions is ideal.
- ➔ **Ask whether households have high-speed Internet access at home.** Make it clear that having only a smartphone data plan does not count as high-speed Internet access at home.
- ➔ **Make the survey and questions as easy as possible to understand.** Questions must be clearly-worded, specific, and leave little room for ambiguity. Include relevant definitions, with precise, easy-to-understand language.

EXAMPLE: Single-question survey

Question: Do you currently have access to high-speed Internet on a computer or tablet in your home?

High-speed Internet allows you to quickly view webpages, download large email attachments, and watch live videos. Examples of high-speed Internet at home include a cable Internet subscription or wireless Internet available inside your home.

Answer "No" if you do not have high-speed Internet in your home or only access Internet using a smartphone or a dial-up connection.

STEP 4: Conduct your survey

Important considerations include how to contact, interact, and follow-up with residents, how to record data, your survey timeline, and how to respond to common complications like survey refusals and respondents not being home.

Directly interviewing residents is most likely to yield high response rates and reliable data. In-person interviews with residents allows them to see the survey and follow along with the interviewer, who can further explain the survey and address any concerns that residents may have.

When administering the survey, consider the following:

1. **Develop training materials for your survey team.** These materials should outline the purpose of the survey, provide a



survey script, detail survey-administration procedures, and offer responses to frequently asked questions.

- 2. Train your survey team.** Host in-person training sessions with your survey administrators to clarify the purpose of the survey, review training materials, and practice mock interviews.
- 3. Survey residents.** Consider surveying door-to-door if possible. Where geography and available resources are limiting, you may also consider integrating your survey along with other required resident paperwork. Provide multilingual interviewers, materials, and translation resources (see “Providing translation assistance” below).
- 4. Follow-up by phone,** and use other proven methods when initial attempts at contacting residents are unsuccessful.

Providing translation assistance

If your survey population includes non-English-speaking residents, ensure that they can understand and complete the survey. This will improve response rates and avoid demographic bias in your results.

You can provide translation assistance by:

1. Printing the survey in languages commonly used in your area
2. Engaging resident council members as survey translators
3. Contracting with telephone translation services as needed

TIP →

Keep it going

Use your baseline survey results as a foundation for ongoing tracking of connectivity in your community. Before you begin connecting residents, develop a strategy for collecting connectivity information to ensure continuous data (see Playbook 12). Consider using the **HUD Family Report 50058** for this purpose. (See below for more information).

STEP 5: Analyze and share your results

Work with your in-house analyst or research partner to analyze your survey results. To better understand, interpret, and contextualize your results, share them with residents and other stakeholders to solicit their feedback.

And, after you’ve launched your program, check back with the residents to see how you’re doing. This information loop will help you maintain a program that continues to be relevant.

Using the Family Report, HUD Form 50058 to Track Connectivity and Outcomes

This form is used by PHAs to verify residents' income and to recertify them for continued eligibility for housing assistance. Residents are generally recertified on an annual basis, but some PHAs have moved to a two-year cycle. The 50058 contains fields that are for PHA use only. This portion of the form can be used by PHAs to ask residents about any number of issues including ConnectHomeUSA-related questions. HUD has developed a series of questions and corresponding codes related specifically to ConnectHomeUSA that will allow ConnectHomeUSA communities to understand connectivity status, change over time, and the benefits of connectivity to health, employment and education.

The data from the 50058 is fed into HUD's Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC). HUD staff in the Policy Development & Research division can analyze the data and provide it back to you.

If you are interested in using this method for your data needs, please send a note to: ConnectHome@hud.gov. The HUD team will provide you more detailed guidance.



Bringing your community together

Convening *all* of your stakeholders is a critical first step to successfully narrowing the digital divide in your community.

Your convening is an opportunity for your community's key stakeholders to come to the table with residents and discuss implementing your community's digital inclusion initiative.

Bringing together all stakeholders in the same room allows everyone's voices to be heard, promotes effective discussion of your community's ConnectHomeUSA goals and objectives, and ensures that everyone is on the same page. It is also a critical step in developing your **Action Plan**. (*Playbook 5*).

First: Your Launch Plan

Prior to holding your convening, you should develop a **Launch Plan**. The purpose of the Launch Plan is to create an outline of your ConnectHomeUSA program. Use it to:

1. Identify your target population;
2. Establish focus areas (connectivity, training, device distribution, workforce training, STEM, seniors, etc.);
3. Identify organizations/stakeholders you are currently working with as well as others (including national ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders) who should also attend your convening; and
4. Establish internal staff roles and responsibilities.

Goals of your first local convening

-
1. **Energize** digital inclusion advocates, **mobilize** a diverse—sometimes even unlikely—group of stakeholders around a common vision, and **spur dynamic collaboration** going forward.
 2. **Identify a local champion** who will propel the day-to-day operations of your digital inclusion initiative to maintain momentum from your convening.
 3. **Lay the foundation for your Action Plan.** (*Playbook 5*)
 - ➔ Identify and assess available resources for high-speed Internet connectivity, computing devices, and digital literacy training. Clarify any gaps.
 - ➔ Identify who will lead the development of the plan. Include a housing agency lead and a city lead.
 - ➔ Establish the timeline for completing your action plan.
 4. **Begin to outline commitments, assign partner roles and responsibilities.**
 5. **Establish a process for moving forward**, including dates for subsequent meetings and touchpoints. Consider also establishing committees for different stakeholder groups around project themes, and identify a lead for each group. Each lead will be responsible for managing deliverables and for reporting back to your organization's champion.

KEYS:

Planning your convening

KEY 1: Who should be there?

Consider the same list of stakeholders used when mapping your community's resources:

State and local elected officials	Public housing agency leadership and staff
Resident groups and leadership	Internet Service Providers
EveryoneOn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders
HUD staff	Libraries
Device providers and refurbishers	Technology community
Local media	Local banks
School districts	Colleges and universities
Local educational, or other service-oriented nonprofits (e.g. women's organizations)	Local businesses and employers
Prominent foundations and local funders	Owners of HUD-assisted multifamily properties

TIP →

Transportation

Consider travel distance and share transportation timeframes with participants. If your location is remote, it may be beneficial to meet stakeholders who are coming from out of town at a convenient location and escort them to your convening. You also may want to arrange a meet-and-greet the day before to allow for travel delays and ensure the entire team is on time.

KEY 2: Where will it be?

To enable as many stakeholders as possible to attend, choose a centralized location with convenient access to public transportation for attendees, including residents assisted through HUD programs.

Options include onsite community space, other community centers, libraries, nearby campuses, and civic space. Some of these locations, like libraries, are sure to already have Wi-Fi-enabled meeting spaces.

Select a neutral location where everyone, from residents to ISP stakeholders, will feel comfortable. Your convening could be an opportunity to highlight the participation of a key stakeholder, and you may want to host your convening at or near their location.

Case Study

Jersey City, NJ

One convening? No, two is better!

The Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA) held two convenings in very close succession. The first served to identify organizations that could support JCHA's ConnectHomeUSA program and the second, held just six months later, was used to recognize stakeholders for the contributions they had already begun fulfilling; identify new resources; recognize resident success; and continue building momentum. During both convenings, JCHA set aside time for theme-based activities during which local organizations helped JCHA think through its goals in various areas (e.g. STEM), identify additional partners, and made commitments of support (see Key 5 and Tip 2 below). Both convenings were half-day events and accomplished a lot in a short amount of time.

KEY 3: Who will set the agenda?

Your core planning team is typically best positioned to set the agenda. Consider also working with skilled facilitators who have experience organizing events in your community.

KEY 4: Who will facilitate the convening?

Determine who will take ownership of leading the discussion and reaching consensus around key decisions. Choose someone with the experience and skills to facilitate a diverse group of folks working on complex issues of digital inclusion.

KEY 5: Create theme-based breakout sessions

Managing a large group of stakeholders and capturing their commitments in a large-group setting can be difficult. After opening remarks and other activities (see tips below) break up the participants into working groups focused on various themes or goals (e.g. connectivity, digital literacy training, STEM, etc.)

KEY 6: Who will invite participants?

Personally invite stakeholders to the convening. And, an invitation from your organization's leadership will convey the importance of this event. Follow up the email invitations with telephone calls and in-person meetings to explain the importance of the initiative and the initial convening. This is the first step to building a powerful coalition.

TIPS: Day of your convening

Resource →

JCHA used the online-interactive game Kahoot, to both educate and engage the audience. A free 7-day trial period is available.

TIP 1: Break the ice

Begin the convening with simple, relationship-building exercises. Develop ground rules to establish expectations for the conversation during the convening.



TIP 2: Have a notetaker and commitment forms

Structure the convening in an interactive, participant-oriented manner with small group activities. You can assign attendees by topic area (as identified in your Launch Plan). Or, you can have participants select the areas or have them self-select. Either way, have a notetaker from your organization at each table to capture the information shared for later use. Develop a commitment form that potential partners can complete during these sessions and leave with the notetaker. Some organizations may not be able to make commitments without consulting their board or other key staff.

TIP 3: Include diverse voices

Encourage those directly impacted by the digital divide—HUD-assisted residents and families—to play direct roles in the process.

During the convening, ask, “Who is Missing?” and invite them to join the initiative.

TIP 4: Invite Local Media

Media attention can help garner additional support for your efforts by reaching a wide audience. Target media outlets such as local papers, radio and TV stations to let them know about your convening and the goals of your ConnectHomeUSA initiative.

On the day of your convening, have a fact sheet with contact information handy, and if possible someone from your public affairs office.

TIP 5: Create a safe space

Consider keeping detailed minutes anonymous for people not formally representing an organization. This creates a comfortable environment where participants feel safe being creative and honest.

To encourage as much candor as possible for the convening, limit media attendance to a specific time-window. Let participants know when that media timeframe will be.

TIP 6: Thank everyone for attending!

Contact attendees to share key takeaways and next steps.

Case Study

Choctaw Nation, OK

Confirming key players

Choctaw Nation first brainstormed key players from their existing networks and collected contact information. They then contacted key players to gauge their interest and availability, identify further contacts, and determine a date and time for the convening. It was important to ensure the availability of key stakeholders before settling on a particular date. Finally, they followed up with key players to encourage their participation and verify their attendance. Consistent communication reminded people to attend and reassured them that the convening was actually happening.



Your action plan is your roadmap

Your action plan outlines your community's vision and overarching goals for narrowing the digital divide in your community.

It also provides your team with a detailed roadmap and timeline for achieving key milestones toward your goals. **Specific, concrete, and clear** directives are particularly important for keeping your team grounded and aware of its mutual responsibilities.

A template for you to work from is available from the ConnectHomeUSA team. And, examples of action plans from the ConnectHome pilot communities as well as other ConnectHomeUSA communities are available to help you develop your own action plan.

STEPS:

Craft your action plan

TIP →

Set your sights high

Set yourself up for success by making sure your goals are realistic and attainable. At the same time, your goals should reflect the importance and urgency of closing the digital divide. The best goals force your community's stakeholders to push themselves and accomplish something meaningful that they were not doing before.

TIP →

Line up early wins

In establishing benchmarks, consider which ones might serve as “early wins” to help build momentum. Early wins can include an enrollment event, your first device distribution, or connecting everyone who already has a computer or laptop.

STEP 1: Establish your overarching vision

Your overarching vision frames what digital inclusion means for your community. It should include the specific values that motivate your initiative.

For example, HUD's vision in establishing the ConnectHome pilot was to “narrow the digital divide for **families with school-age children** who live in HUD-assisted housing.” Your community's vision may be similar or build in different directions, depending on its specific context and needs.

STEP 2: Set concrete, measurable goals

State exactly who your initiative is serving, your overall Internet adoption goal, and your baseline estimate (*Playbook 3*).

Working toward your overall adoption goal, specify individual Year 1 goals for each of the three legs of digital inclusion: (1) connectivity, (2) devices, and (3) digital literacy (*Playbooks 6–8*).

Make sure your community has a method—even if imperfect—to track progress toward your goals (*Playbook 12*).

STEP 3: Determine strategies for achieving goals

For each of your goals, lay out your basic Year 1 strategy for achieving the goal in Year 1 (*Playbook 4*).

Include how you will address funding needs, what funding sources you will pursue, and how you will pursue them (*Playbook 9*).

STEP 4: Specify your project timeline

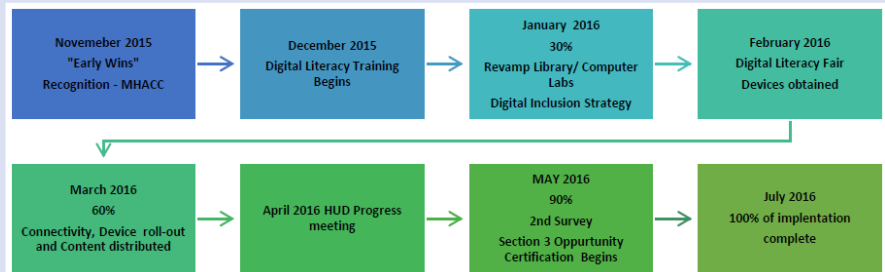
Your plan should include a timeline with dates for achieving key benchmarks. For example, your timeline might include target dates for raising a certain amount of money, connecting specific properties, or graduating a certain number of residents from digital literacy training.

Your timeline will help keep your coalition on track.

Case Study Little Rock, AR

Timelines and milestones

The Little Rock team laid out a comprehensive, concrete timeline with monthly goals through the end of Year 1. Their timeline, represented in the graphic below, detailed milestones and accompanied supporting narratives for each month:



For their “early wins,” the Little Rock ConnectHome pilot set two goals: distributing five devices within 15 days of completing their action plan, and providing Internet access for members of their resident council. Achieving these early wins on a short turnaround served as a springboard for future and larger successes.

TIP →

Listen to your team

It's important to define roles and responsibilities based on your team's input. They will be more invested if their input and ideas are clearly reflected in their tasks and assignments.

STEP 5: Assign roles and responsibilities

Assemble your team of partners (*Playbook 2*), including those who you have recruited through your local convening (*Playbook 4*). Designate a team lead to manage roles and responsibilities.

Assign tasks and milestones so that every community partner and team member has ownership of specific project responsibilities. Encourage key stakeholders to take charge of important tasks. For example, messaging might be assigned to the Mayor's Office (or equivalent executive).

Be sure to clarify expectations for each stakeholder throughout Year 1.

TIP →

Livestream your events

Consider streaming live video and Tweets during your announcements and events. Not only does this help get the word out about your efforts and accomplishments, but it also offers residents an opportunity to easily and immediately engage with their new technology.

Developing a communications strategy

You should be proud of your digital inclusion initiative, so why not tell everyone about it and celebrate your achievements? Keeping your team and community well-informed helps to coordinate your coalition and build momentum. (See “Sharing your success,” at the end of *Playbook 12*.)

A cohesive **internal and external communications strategy** employs various methods to inform your audience of community partners (*Playbook 2*) and residents (*Playbook 10*) about your work.

Consider your audiences and the communication channels that they regularly use, such as email and social media. Focus your efforts on the methods that can most effectively and efficiently reach them.

A uniform brand can increase the visibility of your communications. You may find it helpful to tailor the key messages featured on the ConnectHomeUSA website (<https://connecthomeusa.org>) for your community.

Three-Legged Stool



- 6. Connectivity Strategies
- 7. Computers and Tablets
- 8. Digital Literacy





Connecting residents to high speed Internet at home

One of the most important decisions for your community is deciding how to connect residents to at-home Internet service to reach your community's connectivity goals. ConnectHomeUSA's national Internet Service Provider (ISP) stakeholders and your community's local ISPs are key partners in this effort.

Connectivity models adopted by ConnectHomeUSA communities include:

- ➔ Individual ISP subscriptions
- ➔ Wireless hotspots and Internet-enabled tablets
- ➔ Property-wide Internet connections

These models are not mutually exclusive. Successful ConnectHomeUSA communities often adopt a **"menu approach," using more than one model** to address the needs of residents.

For example, because building wireless networks to deliver high-speed Internet service for all residents may take years, a community that commits to this course may still wish to work with local ISPs to sign up individual residents for Internet service during the interim.

Case Study

Memphis, TN

Adopting a “menu” approach

The Memphis Housing Authority chose a variety of connectivity strategies to respond to local needs.

First, it reached an agreement with T-Mobile, which is donating over 1,000 tablet computers connected to its data network at a discount, with the city of Memphis paying for the first two years of service. This strategy helped many families get connected, even as they were relocated as part of a Choice Neighborhoods revitalization project.

Second, the housing authority reached an agreement with Comcast to fully wire public housing properties, enabling residents in those properties to sign up for discounted Internet service.

Finally, for the properties not serviced by Comcast, the housing authority is encouraging households to sign up for AT&T’s discounted Internet service, Access from AT&T.







MODELS: Connecting residents

MODEL 1: Individual ISP subscriptions

In buildings served by an ISP, residents can typically sign up individually for a high-speed Internet service subscription.

Because the normal cost of this service may be unaffordable for many HUD-assisted households, national ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders AT&T, Comcast, and Cox Communications offer sharply discounted Internet service **throughout their nationwide footprints**.

ConnectHomeUSA’s ISP offers usually cost less than \$10 per month before taxes, waive all set-up fees, and are available wherever stakeholders provide service, as summarized in the table below.

National ConnectHomeUSA ISP Stakeholder	\$10/Month ConnectHomeUSA ISP Plan	Household Eligibility	Current ISP Customers	Past Debt Restrictions
		Only recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Eligible	No debt less than 6 months old for AT&T fixed Internet service
		All HUD-assisted households	Ineligible	No Comcast debt less than 1 year old
		All HUD-assisted households with K12 children	Ineligible	No Cox debt less than 7 years old

To better understand which ISPs serve your area and their offerings, consult the connectivity tools discussed in *Playbook 1: Getting Started*:

Case Study Rockford, IL

Partnering with an ISP's local team

Taking advantage of the high number of units already wired for Comcast's Internet service, the Rockford Housing Authority worked closely with Comcast's local team to increase the number of residents actually signed up for service.

RHA began by helping Comcast identify units that were properly wired for service but lacked Comcast subscriptions. Comcast then offered to assign a sales representative to go door-to-door to enroll families. After conferring with its resident representatives, RHA permitted Comcast to implement its plan, which increased residents signups up for Comcast service. To further improve coordination, Comcast regularly shared enrollment numbers with the housing agency so that they could track their progress together.

As part of the arrangement, Comcast also made payments to the housing agency, which it directed toward digital inclusion initiatives

Individual ISP Subscriptions

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Cost-effective if an offer is available and buildings are already connected ➔ ISPs can help publicize offers to residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Requires residents to individually contact ISPs, navigate the enrollment process, and pay service costs ➔ Past debt restrictions may limit eligibility for low-cost offers ➔ May be impractical, if buildings lack preexisting service ➔ Difficult to track progress without ISP cooperation

TIPS: Exclusive marketing agreements

In exchange for exclusive marketing rights at a property, ISPs sometimes offer to install infrastructure in a building supporting multiple services (for example, cable, Internet, phone); discount Internet service property-wide; or make payments to property owners. Payments might be based on the size of the property or on the amount of revenues the ISP earns from the property's residents.

These agreements can be structured in a way that mutually benefits housing agencies, residents, and ISPs. But keep in mind that, if the provided services prove inadequate, the combination of an infrastructure installed by a single service provider paired with an exclusive marketing agreement can make it difficult—legally and practically—for an owner to curb the provider's access to the building in favor of a competitor. For these reasons:

Consult legal counsel early and refer to the PIH Third-Party Agreement Notice 2017-24 covering third party agreements involving the use of PHA property: <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/17-24pihn.pdf>

Seek the best deal for your residents. Ask about free installation, discounted Internet service, forgiveness of residents' outstanding debts, customer service, and the size of upfront and monthly payments from the ISP.

Ask housing agencies and owners in neighboring communities about their experiences. Communities that learn what other communities have negotiated are better positioned to obtain favorable provisions. EveryoneOn is another valuable resource.

Clarify owner rights to terminate the agreement and bring in an alternative provider if things go poorly.

Case Study

Albany, GA

Paying for residents' ISP subscriptions

In 2016, the Albany Housing Authority and EveryoneOn worked closely with AT&T, an anonymous donor, and a local bank to help residents not only sign up for Internet service but also pay for it. The arrangement works as follows:

Setting up individual bank accounts. The housing agency and EveryoneOn set up bank accounts for every household interested in enrolling in the Access from AT&T affordable Internet offer. To keep costs down, the housing agency's banking partner agreed to waive all fees associated with the accounts.

Enrollment and linking. The housing authority and EveryoneOn then assisted interested households in enrolling in Access from AT&T and linking each household's AT&T account to the household's newly created bank account.

Automatic payment. Each month, the donor disburses \$10 into each household's new bank account. Then, using the account's "autopay" feature, the bank account automatically pays the household's \$10 per month AT&T bill.

TIP →

Consider this adoption strategy especially for connecting residents who are in transition or will be moving (for example, in connection with Choice Neighborhoods or Rental Assistance Demonstration revitalization programs). Where coverage is available, wireless hotspot connections can be an effective approach for ensuring continual access to the Internet.

MODEL 2: Wireless hotspots and tablets

One of the quickest and easiest connectivity solutions available to your community may be purchasing wireless hotspots or Internet-enabled tablets in bulk and distributing them to unconnected households. The hotspots or tablets provide accessible high-speed Internet service, either through a computing device connected to the hotspot, or directly through the Internet-enabled tablet. This solution may be particularly attractive where properties are not properly wired for Internet, or where residents face barriers to signing up for Internet service on their own.

Many ConnectHome pilot communities embraced this connectivity strategy during their first year. Some purchased Sprint's "Spark" hotspot devices and distributed them to unconnected families for four years of free Internet service (subject to monthly data limits). Others took advantage of T-Mobile's ConnectHome offer and paid for T-Mobile wireless service (at highly discounted prices) on tablets donated by T-Mobile.

Wireless Hotspots and Internet-Enabled Tablets

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Quickest and cheapest strategy if buildings lack physical connections ➔ Can provide connections and devices directly to selected populations (for example, families with children) ➔ Can free residents from having to enroll or pay service costs on their own ➔ Unconstrained by past resident debt ➔ Residents can stay connected anywhere within the ISP's service area ➔ Hotspots and tablets can be transferred and reissued to incoming households ➔ Easy to track enrollment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Monthly data caps may restrict robust use, such as watching videos, resulting in significantly slower speeds for the month

Case Study

New York, NY

A huge deal

In December 2016, New York City and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) announced an agreement with ConnectHomeUSA national stakeholder T-Mobile to provide 5,000 Internet-enabled tablet computers to families living in public housing in the Bronx.

Each tablet was donated by T-Mobile and is connected to high-speed Internet through the T-Mobile cellular data network in NYC. NYCHA organized a process for identifying unconnected families and distributing the tablets. Recipients not only get the tablet at no cost, but also get free Internet service for two years.

New York City's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications dedicated \$1.2 million to leverage a special T-Mobile offer of heavily discounted Internet service. T-Mobile also offered families free instruction on how to use their new Internet-enabled tablets.



MODEL 3: Property-wide Internet connections

Some connectivity solutions extend by design to **every** unit in a property. Three types of property-wide Internet connections seen in ConnectHome pilot communities are described below:

Type of Property-wide Internet Connection	Description	Payment
Wireless Network	Free wireless Internet reaches every unit (like a dorm or hotel)	Housing agency pays for installation, management, and ongoing operation
Google Fiber (available only in select locations)	Direct fiber optic connections deliver Internet to each unit	Google Fiber covers costs for installation and maintenance (only for select public housing agencies)
Bulk-Service Agreement	Wired connections provide Internet to every unit	Housing agency makes a monthly payment to the connecting ISP

Communities that opt for this model view Internet access in essence as a utility, like electricity and gas, that should be available in every household. By not asking residents to pay, this model removes cost as a barrier, thereby addressing the top reason that unconnected families do not have Internet at home.

Property-wide Internet Connections	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Provides automatic connectivity ➔ Eliminates barriers for residents ➔ Connects large numbers of residents ➔ Past resident debt irrelevant ➔ Easy to track connectivity and progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Initial investment may be required ➔ Heavy planning required ➔ First connections can take time ➔ Quick results unlikely

Case Study

Washington, DC

TIPS →

Learn from housing agencies with network-building experience

Learning early about upfront costs, ongoing maintenance and upgrade expenses, and the resources necessary to sustain a network will help your community select the right strategy.

Work with your local jurisdiction's chief technology office

They are typically responsible for the management of technology across local government buildings in your jurisdiction. The office may have already made investments that you can leverage in planning and building a wireless network.

Leveraging DC's broadband network

In its first year of ConnectHome, dcConnectHome connected over 1,700 public housing households to free wireless Internet. It was able to achieve this impressive result by building upon DC's municipal broadband system, DC-Net.

Thanks to grants from the federal Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), the city had been able to expand DC-Net and was providing Internet service to the housing authority's management offices. Working closely together, the City and housing authority installed special directional antennae to extend wireless Internet connectivity from the housing authority's management offices to several public housing properties. This enabled public housing households within reach of the wireless signal to achieve free connectivity.

Over the year, the housing authority spent about \$70,000 for wireless connectivity equipment, deployment, and testing, and another \$20,000 to verify connectivity. The city also incurred costs. Even so, the cost-per-resident was relatively low, given the large numbers of residents connected.

Making an Impact: Kansas City



Tamara Butler is a community advocate for digital inclusion through ConnectHome

Through ConnectHome, Google Fiber worked with the Kansas City Housing Authority to offer ultra-high-speed Internet service at no cost to residents in select public housing authority properties. Both the housing agency and Google Fiber are partnering with community organizations to provide digital literacy training to bridge the digital divide, especially for families with K-12 students.

Tamara Butler was one of ConnectHome's first connected residents in Kansas City. She used her high-speed Internet connection to apply for and get a job. She also purchased a car so she could transport her three sons. Her youngest son, Willie, enjoys watching PBS Kids programming on YouTube. Tamara is working with other residents to promote the availability of free Internet access in her West Bluff community.

Across Kansas City, ConnectHome stakeholder ISPs are working to connect nine public housing properties, reaching more than 1,300 families in the metro area. They are also working to drive awareness about the importance of the Internet and grow the digital equity ecosystem.



In-home devices are vital in the 21st Century

Having computing devices at home enables residents to effectively use the Internet. With their larger screens and keyboard capabilities, **computers and tablets** allow users to actively engage with rich content, such as documents and web forums.

In contrast, smartphones and other Internet-connected devices have more limited data input capabilities and are designed for more passively consuming information. Smartphones are useful for providing quick information on the go, but this portability has significant tradeoffs:

1. **Their limited screen sizes** cannot readily display all documents and websites.
2. **They lack full-size keyboards**, making them ill-suited for typing documents.
3. **They cannot run** many common applications.
4. Smartphones that rely solely on cellular Internet service are **subject to data caps and overage charges**. This can make watching educational videos and interacting with rich content online cumbersome and cost-prohibitive.

Because of these challenges, those who rely only on smartphones are at a deep disadvantage when completing homework, applying for college or financial aid, or filling out job applications. While smartphones can

Two ownership models

be a stepping-stone for the chronically unconnected, only full-size computing devices—such as desktops, laptops, and tablets—offer true access to 21st Century opportunities.

How you **distribute** computing devices is just as important as how you **obtain** them. Here are **two models** to consider:

1. Under a **managed model**, housing agencies allocate computing devices to households as unit-based amenities, much like appliances. The housing agency retains ownership of the devices, and residents are expected to return their devices when moving. An advantage of this approach is that it preserves the availability of existing devices for new residents.
2. Under an **ownership model**, housing agencies provide or help residents purchase devices, which residents then own. An advantage of this approach is that housing agencies do not need to assume responsibility for tracking or maintaining devices.

MODELS: Obtaining Devices

TIP →

Youth refurbishers

Consider hiring and training youth to refurbish devices at your agency, imparting valuable job skills in the process. For example, Kansas City pays and trains youth residents to refurbish computers and teach digital literacy classes through a summer youth employment program funded by the City's Workforce Development Board.

Model 1: Refurbishers

Local businesses and community organizations—such as universities, schools, government agencies, libraries, hospitals, nonprofits, foundations, and even housing agencies—regularly upgrade and replace their computers before the end of their useful life.

Rather than go to waste, these computers can be refreshed and updated for reuse by trained refurbishers. Refurbished devices can then be made available to housing agencies and assisted residents for free or reduced cost.

Many ConnectHomeUSA communities have successfully obtained computing devices through innovative public-private partnerships that take surplus computers, get them refurbished, and deliver them to residents for reuse.

Case Study

Nashville-Davidson County, TN

TIP →

Software discounts

Verify that your refurbisher is installing legally licensed software. Many software companies offer low-cost (often \$10 or less) “Citizenship Licenses” to low-income households through authorized refurbishers.

Nashville’s Digital Inclusion Fund

The Digital Inclusion Fund, run by the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, brings together private- and public-sector organizations to refurbish computers for families served by Nashville’s Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency.

Here is how their model works:

- ➔ The Digital Inclusion Fund received a commitment from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, a local hospital, to donate more than 3,800 of its used, surplus computers.
- ➔ The original manufacturer of the computers, Dell, provides logistical assistance for shipping the computers from the medical center to ER2, a national electronic recycling company.
- ➔ ER2 refurbishes the computers. Through an agreement with the Digital Inclusion Fund, ER2 commits to providing one free laptop to a family for every two computers that have been donated.
- ➔ The housing agency then applies to the Digital Inclusion Fund for free laptops to serve ConnectHomeUSA households.
- ➔ Once the laptops are awarded by the Fund, ER2 installs the laptops with software tailored to residents’ needs and ships them to the housing agency for distribution to families.

TIP →

Stakeholder offers

Many ConnectHome stakeholders, such as Best Buy’s Geek Squad and Kano, offer free or low-cost devices, either directly or in concert with other ConnectHome stakeholders and organizations.

MODEL 2: Internet Service Providers

Some Internet Service Providers (ISPs), including national ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders, offer **free or discounted computers and tablets** in connection with their low-cost, high-speed Internet offers.

Two ConnectHomeUSA national ISP stakeholders—Comcast and Cox—offer computers to residents for less than \$150 each. In addition, many ConnectHome communities (with assistance from EveryoneOn) negotiated with ISPs to provide devices to residents at specially designated community sign-up events.

Where possible, this has the advantage of connecting residents to the Internet and providing them with devices all in one step.

Case Study

New York, NY

2-in-1: Internet and devices

Internet Service Providers not only provide Internet access, they also can help provide devices to residents, with logistical support from public housing agencies. As part of its ConnectHomeUSA national stakeholder commitment, ISP T-Mobile provided 5,000 Internet-connected tablet computers to families living in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) public housing in the Bronx.

To facilitate this arrangement, NYCHA organized a process for identifying unconnected families and distributing the tablets. This made it easy for T-Mobile to focus on what it knows best—Internet and devices—in providing benefits for residents without having to navigate the logistical landscape of public housing.

MODEL 3: Donors

Some organizations interested in narrowing the digital divide or serving low-income households may be able to purchase computing devices and provide them to your residents. Find out also if these donors can cover the cost of Internet service, either as part of an ongoing commitment or for a fixed period of time.

Case Study

Washington, DC

TIP →

Technology partners

Reach out to the charitable arms of technology companies with offices in your area to see if they can offer their surplus devices. Use this as an opportunity to enlist them as a partner for providing technical support, digital literacy training, and volunteers.

Build-your-own computer



To provide computing devices, the DC Housing Authority worked with many ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders, including Best Buy's Teen Tech Center volunteers, who funded 50 Kano computer kits and 20 Google Chromebooks for youth residents. The devices were distributed at a Boys & Girls Club location, with support from GitHub. Participants learned how to assemble and program the computers kits, as well as how to use their new devices to access the Internet.

KEYS: Your device strategy

TIP →

Refine your strategy

After distributing devices, check in with residents to see how they are using their devices and whether they are having any problems. Find out if you can offer any support or digital literacy trainings. This also provides an opportunity for tracking, evaluating, and refining your device strategy.

KEY 1: Assess available resources

In developing a device strategy, it's helpful to think through a few essential questions:

- ➔ Who will **lead** your efforts to obtain devices?
- ➔ What is your **budget** for device acquisition?
- ➔ Can the housing agency **track and maintain** devices?

KEY 2: Leverage partnerships

Do you have existing or potential partners who can offer surplus or discounted devices, refurbishing services, or donations?

- ➔ If so, how will you **engage** with these partners?
- ➔ If not, how will you **cultivate** such partnerships?

KEY 3: Understand resident needs

Just as important as available resources and partners are resident needs. Consider:

- ➔ What are your residents' **goals**, and what kind of devices do they need to achieve them?
- ➔ Are there **existing resources**, such as shared computer labs, that residents can access?
- ➔ Can residents **afford** to purchase discounted devices, and if so, at what price point?

Case Study

Los Angeles, CA

TIPS →

Include training

Many refurbishers and low-cost device providers offer digital literacy training and resources along with their devices.

Warranty service

Clarify your device provider's process and policies for residents to return and repair devices.

Technical support

In addition to one-time setup assistance, ensure that residents have access to ongoing technical support for their devices.

OurCycle LA

OurCycle LA is a project of the City of Los Angeles to refurbish thousands of surplus computers from city agencies and give them to families and individuals in need, including those served through ConnectHome by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.

The project is financed by grants from funders like the California Emerging Technology Fund, as well as individual donations, and takes used computers donated by the City and delivers them to a nonprofit electronic recycler, human-I-T, for refurbishing.

Once the computers are refurbished, HACLA uses grant funds to pay for human-I-T to transport the computers and distribute them to its residents. Residents receive the computers at no cost after participating in digital literacy training, which human-I-T organizes through the Youth Policy Institute and Best Buy's Geek Squad Academy. Residents also receive ongoing technical support from human-I-T, facilitated by the unique serial number human-I-T assigns to each device as part of the refurbishment process.

So far, human-I-T has refurbished 2,500 computers, with over 700 distributed to HACLA households.

Making an Impact: New York City



Nicole Soares and her family access educational opportunities through ConnectHome

Through New York City's ConnectHome effort, over 5,000 families in New York City Housing Authority's public housing in the Bronx began receiving free tablets and high-speed Internet service from ConnectHome national ISP stakeholder T-Mobile in December 2016. Nicole Soares and her family were one of the households impacted by this new access.

Education is a priority for Nicole and her family. A Parent-Teacher Association member, Nicole works hard to ensure that she and her family excel in their educational pursuits, but affording a computer and internet service was not an option before ConnectHome.

While her family still achieved academic success, completing school work was difficult without connectivity at home. Since many assignments require use of the Internet, Nicole and her children had to go to the public library to complete homework, conduct research, and apply for jobs and internships.

Now, with at home Internet service and a new tablet, Nicole's family can not only succeed academically, but keep in touch with loved ones and access valuable services. Nicole is enrolled full time and making straight A's at the Metropolitan College of New York. Her son, Jovaughn, is also currently enrolled in college. Her daughter, Bailey, is nine-years old and involved in numerous extracurricular activities.

Playbook: 8 Digital Literacy



Unlocking 21st Century Opportunities

Digital literacy provides residents with the skills to make the most of their Internet access and devices through ConnectHomeUSA. This includes both **online skills and increased access to educational resources**.

Online skills equip residents with the confidence and ability to achieve their goals on the Internet. While residents will vary in their levels of digital fluency, a strong foundation in basic skills will help all residents progress to more advanced skills. Examples include:

Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
Using devices	Internet safety	File management
Internet connections	Online services	Office applications
Instant messaging	Social networking	Email communication

Educational resources that help students master material and access instructional materials bridge the “homework gap” from school to home. Other resources help prepare students to prepare for college and apply for financial aid.

ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders can help

ConnectHomeUSA stakeholders offer free digital skills training and educational resources (visit <https://connecthomeusa.org> for more details):

Online Skills for Families & Residents

Stakeholder	Offer
	The American Library Association (ALA) works to extend and expand library services—connecting residents with digital literacy training and free print and digital resources that support learning, employment and creativity for all ages and interests.
	Geek Squad Academy from Best Buy provides teens with hands-on learning opportunities in fun, interactive settings, where they develop technology skills.
	The Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) enable young people in need to achieve futures as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. Nationwide, there are more than 300 Boys & Girls Clubs located at public housing sites.
	Common Sense Media promotes the safe use of technology and media for families and children. It reviews and rates digital and print media for parents and teachers.
	The National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) provides resources for recruiting, retaining, and advancing women from K12 and higher education through industry and entrepreneurial careers.

Educational Resources for Students

Stakeholder	Offer
	ABCMouse.com provides comprehensive digital education resources for children ages 2–7, with more than 5,000 learning activities and 500 complete lessons on reading and language arts, math, science, social studies, health, art, and music.
	The College Board connects students to college success and opportunity. It helps more than 7 million students each year with college readiness and SAT prep programs. College Board offers free SAT prep programming and scholarships specifically for public housing residents.
	PBS Kids programming builds knowledge, critical thinking, imagination, and curiosity to empower children for success in school and life. It offers interactive videos, web games, mobile games, and classroom activities to enhance childhood learning.

KEYS:

Organizing digital literacy training

TIPS →

Be focused

Signing up residents for classes is easier when they know the specific purpose or desired outcome of the training—such as producing a resume, finding a job, or keeping their family safe online.

Track participation and respond to feedback

Being responsive to resident feedback will help your community's digital literacy programs and partnerships evolve and improve over time. You can achieve this by tracking participation and following up with residents—both those who continue to attend and those who stop attending—to gauge their feedback. Designing your programs with flexibility in mind allows you to tailor your trainings to better meet resident needs.

KEY 1: Partner with community organizations

Partner with community organizations that already provide digital literacy training, such as:

- ➔ Libraries
- ➔ Schools (*Playbook 11*)
- ➔ Community colleges and other higher-education institutions
- ➔ Workforce Development Boards
- ➔ Nonprofits and community organizations
- ➔ Local and regional government

Public libraries in particular stand ready to assist ConnectHomeUSA communities to provide digital literacy training to your residents. You can partner with your local libraries to offer digital literacy trainings, lend wireless hotspots and devices, host technology fairs, and provide digital literacy curriculum for other trainers.

You can connect with your local library system either directly or through the American Library Association. Particularly in smaller communities, libraries may be one of the few community institutions with computer labs, public Internet access, classes, and one-on-one assistance. Some libraries can provide trainings at public housing sites using mobile technology labs (see below), and others are directly co-located within public housing developments, such as in Chicago and Topeka.

Knowledgeable staff members can train residents directly or help train other staff members, residents, and community volunteers to host trainings.

TIP →

Keep it fun

Focus on the social benefits to encourage your residents to participate. For example, helping residents set up email accounts to stay connected with family and friends has the added benefit of enabling access to more practical applications, such as teacher-parent and doctor-patient portals.

KEY 2: Design trainings for your audience

Assess your resident training needs and tailor topics to specific audiences. For example:

Students	Families	Senior Residents
Pre-school preparation	Job applications	News and e-reading
Homework assignments	Online banking	Social connections
Completing projects	Bill payment	Personal fulfillment
Web-based learning	E-filing taxes	Health management
Exam preparation	Budget tracking	Caregiver support

KEY 3: Hold regular, convenient trainings

If possible, host your trainings in a centrally located computer lab, library, school, community center, or recreation facility that is easily accessible to residents. Ensure computers are equipped with necessary software and applications.

Schedule trainings at consistent and convenient meeting times to encourage regular participation.

Case Study *Washington, DC*

Mobile technology labs

Computer labs, libraries, and schools are key locations for delivering digital literacy training. But even where these resources are scarce, you can bring training directly to residents with mobile technology labs.

Washington, DC's city-sponsored digital inclusion initiative, Connect.DC, repurposed a 48-foot-long former bookmobile bus to create an award-winning Mobile Tech Lab. The lab includes 11 tablets, 11 computers, and a 60-inch Internet-enabled TV screen, at a one-time cost of \$150,000.

The Mobile Tech Lab delivers digital literacy training to thousands of residents in underserved areas of the City, including at public housing developments.

TIPS →

Host a “Digital Inclusion Day” resource fair

Generate interest in your digital literacy resources and trainings by bringing together stakeholders for a Digital Inclusion Day. Participation from local celebrities and elected officials, such as the mayor, can help drive turnout and build momentum. Consider hosting the fair at a computer lab so that stakeholders can offer live demonstrations that encourage residents to sign up for future trainings.

Offer incentives

For example, the Housing Authority of Kansas City partnered with a local refurbisher to offer residents \$50 computers as an incentive for participating in digital skills training. They also partnered with their local American Job Center to offer 8-week paid internships for participating youth.

KEY 4: Promote your events

Resident leaders, councils, and other trusted community members, like past participants, can help spread the word about your training events.

Fostering training cohorts builds connections among residents, encouraging participation and providing mutual peer support.

KEY 5: Make it worth their while

Many residents juggle family, work, and other responsibilities. Providing upfront benefits and long-term incentives can encourage them to invest their time.

To increase participation in training classes, consider offering free Internet subscriptions and computers or tablets to those who successfully complete training. This has the added benefit of providing all three legs of digital inclusion—Internet, devices, and training—to residents with a comprehensive, unified approach.

Making an Impact: Choctaw Nation



Hayden Stonebarger trains elders through Choctaw Nation's Youth Advisory Board

Choctaw Nation's youth are instrumental in connecting their elders to the Internet. In partnership with Boswell Public Schools, Southeastern Oklahoma State University is educating the Choctaw Youth Advisory Board about Internet safety, social media, information access, and basic tablet applications. Once the students receive the training, they travel throughout the Choctaw Nation to share these learnings with their community's elders.

Hayden Stonebarger, a 14-year-old youth board member, is a great example of this partnership in action. Hayden shows the elders in his community how to access vital resources like ordering their medicine online.

These youth-elder connections are helping to bridge generations. Youth benefit from greater access to information, educational opportunities, and leadership development. Elders look forward to their regular visits from the students, during which they are empowered to share their life experiences and traditional culture. Through these interactions, the history and legacy of the Choctaw Nation's elders are extended and preserved for future generations.



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