

Unlocking 21st Century opportunities

Digital literacy provides residents with the skills to make the most of their Internet access and devices through ConnectHome. 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 connections Instant messaging	Internet safety Online services Social networking	File management Office applications 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.

ConnectHome Playbook




ConnectHome stakeholders can help

ConnectHome stakeholders offer free digital skills training and educational resources (visit ConnectHome.HUD.gov for more details):

Online Skills for Families & Residents

Stakeholder	Offer
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>Geek Squad Academy from Best Buy provides teens with hands-on learning opportunities in fun, interactive settings, where they develop technology skills.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>The National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) provides resources for recruiting, retaining, and advancing women from K-12 and higher education through industry and entrepreneurial careers.</p>

Educational Resources for Students

Stakeholder	Offer
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>

Playbook 8: Digital Literacy

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.

KEY1: 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 ConnectHome 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 an 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.

Playbook 8: Digital Literacy

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.

Playbook 8: Digital Literacy