

# ConnectHome Playbook

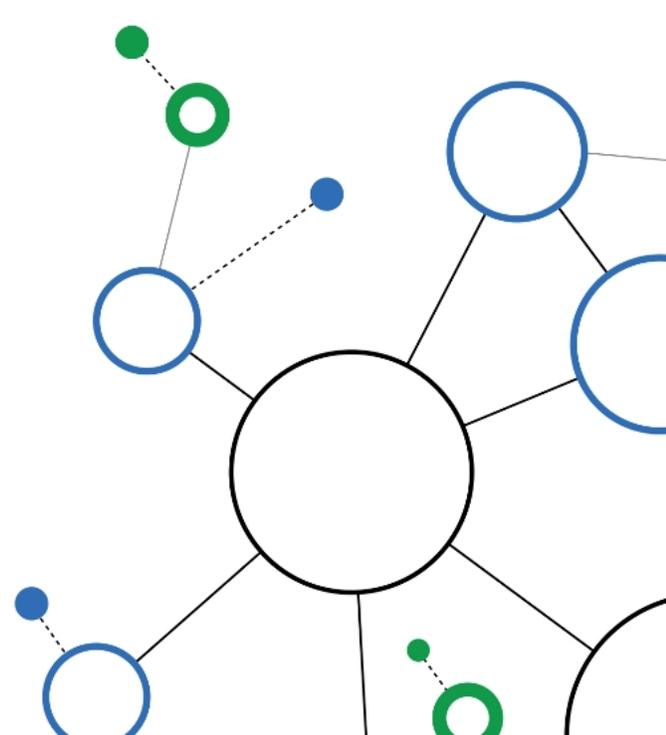
**How to Build Partnerships  
and Narrow the Digital Divide**

in HUD-Assisted Communities Nationwide



**everyone**on

[ConnectHome.HUD.gov](https://ConnectHome.HUD.gov)



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# ConnectHome Playbook: Introduction



## 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 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.

# ConnectHome Playbook

## ConnectHome 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 ConnectHome. An ambitious collaboration among government, corporate, philanthropic, and community leaders, ConnectHome is committed to harnessing technology to **improve the lives of Americans living in HUD-assisted housing**.

Through ConnectHome, 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.

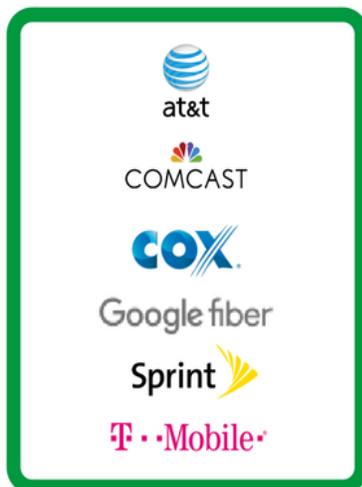


Stakeholders in the corporate and nonprofit sectors use the ConnectHome platform to offer HUD-assisted households free or low-cost Internet access, computing devices, and digital literacy training.

Official national ConnectHome stakeholders include:

## ConnectHome

### High-Speed Internet Access



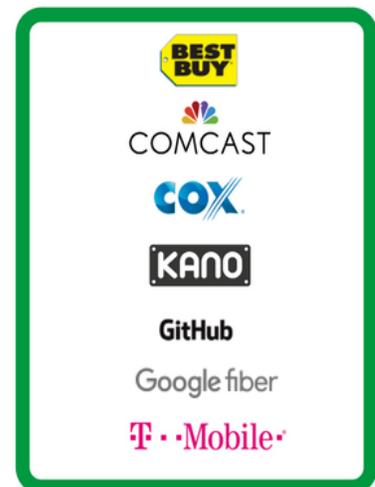
#ConnectHome

### Digital Literacy



\*National Stakeholders

### Devices



ConnectHome.HUD.gov

# Playbook: Introduction

## 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, ConnectHome 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 and college planning and search services.

## HUD's official ConnectHome partners

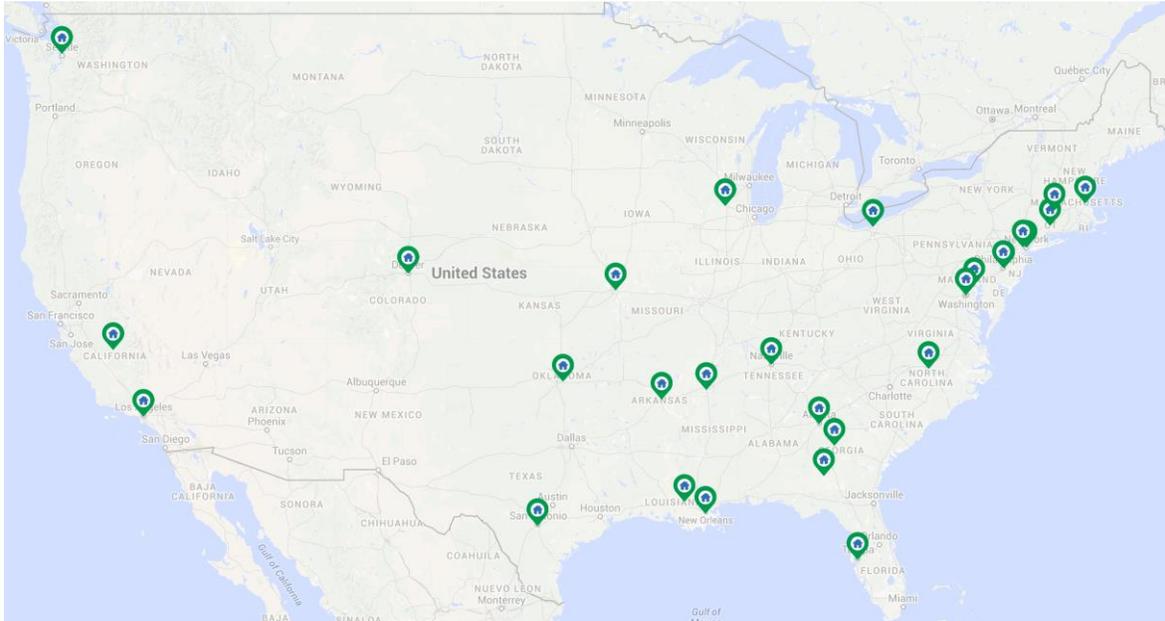
**EveryoneOn** is a national nonprofit working to eliminate the digital divide by increasing access to affordable high-speed Internet service, computers, and free digital literacy courses for all unconnected Americans. EveryoneOn has helped design, implement, and expand ConnectHome. It is active across the country and offers communities deep expertise on digital inclusion and partnering with ConnectHome's stakeholders.

**US Ignite** is a nonprofit partner that creates next-generation Internet applications to benefit the public using new technology. Like EveryoneOn, it works closely with some of ConnectHome's key ISP stakeholders.

# ConnectHome Playbook

## ConnectHome pilot communities

Twenty-eight pilot communities across the nation are part of ConnectHome. They include a mix of large, medium-sized, and small cities, as well as one Tribal nation.



### ConnectHome Pilot Communities

Albany, GA	Cleveland, OH	Macon, GA	Philadelphia, PA
Atlanta, GA	Denver, CO	Memphis, TN	Rockford, IL
Baltimore, MD	Durham, NC	Meriden, CT	San Antonio, TX
Baton Rouge, LA	Fresno, CA	Nashville, TN	Seattle, WA
Boston, MA	Kansas City, MO	New Orleans, LA	Springfield, MA
Camden, NJ	Little Rock, AR	New York, NY	Tampa, FL
Choctaw Nation, OK	Los Angeles, CA	Newark, NJ	Washington, DC

# Playbook: Introduction

During the first several months of the pilot, communities organized local stakeholders and identified their connectivity gaps and needs. This process typically culminated in a local convening of stakeholders and development of an action plan. Implementation followed.

By early 2017, the ConnectHome communities had seen the following impacts:

## Achievements in ConnectHome Pilot Communities

**25%**

Reduction in unconnected households with K-12 children living in public housing

**Over  
\$700**

Average value of Internet & other benefits over two years for each participating household

**37,000+**

HUD-assisted residents directly impacted

### Connecting Native American communities

The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority's ConnectHome initiative has developed innovative solutions for connecting residents across its vast rural landscape of more than 10,000 square miles in southeastern Oklahoma.

Their various approaches are highlighted in case studies, tips, and impact stories throughout the Playbook. While specific approaches will vary among tribal communities, the Choctaw Nation's successful digital inclusion efforts demonstrate how communities of all sizes, locations, and circumstances can use ConnectHome to connect residents to 21st Century opportunities.

## Using the ConnectHome Playbook

### A team effort

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

HUD and EveryoneOn express deep gratitude to all the ConnectHome stakeholders, each of the pilot 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.

Building on the first year of ConnectHome, HUD and EveryoneOn collaborated with pilot communities and federal partners to identify key insights from their experiences about how to best leverage public-private partnerships to narrow the digital divide.

The *ConnectHome Playbook* incorporates these **lessons, models, tips, and case studies**. It sets 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 ConnectHome stakeholders have extended nationwide, **your** community can now leverage the ConnectHome platform to connect families and residents, ensuring that America remains at the forefront of opportunity for all.

## Making an Impact: San Antonio, TX



*Tanairie Martinez gained valuable technical skills through ConnectHome*

Tanairie Martinez's story is a testament to the impact that ConnectHome 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 Velezquez, a ConnectHome 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 ConnectHome 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 ConnectHome on her life, Tanairie said, "The digital ambassador program got me to where I am today."

# Launchpad

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- 1: Getting Started
- 2: Building Partnerships
- 3: Assessing Your Baseline
- 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 ConnectHome 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 ConnectHome.

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

## STEP 1: Assemble your core planning team

To organize and launch ConnectHome 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*:

- **ConnectHome 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.

# Playbook 1: Getting Started

## 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.

### TIP →

#### 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:

- **The National Broadband Map** provides a high-level summary of the Internet providers and services available in every region, including Internet service speeds ([broadbandmap.gov](http://broadbandmap.gov))
- **The Connecting America's Communities Map** provides information about open-access networks, computer labs, and training programs in your zip code ([www2.ntia.doc.gov/BTOPmap](http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/BTOPmap))
- **EveryoneOn's** website identifies affordable offers for Internet and devices in your zip code ([everyoneon.org](http://everyoneon.org))

As part of this process, use the Playbook to familiarize yourself with what other communities have been doing and identify digital inclusion initiatives that *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](http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/publications))

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

## STEP 3: Complete the ConnectHome Launchpad

The next four *Playbooks* complete the ConnectHome **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

"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

Public housing agencies provide essential leadership in confronting the digital divide. 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.

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

## 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 worth 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 or training programs, can prove just as valuable as funding.

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

- 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 ConnectHome's national Internet Service Provider stakeholders AT&T, Comcast, or Cox, 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?

In addition to local partners, engage national partners, including ConnectHome'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 ConnectHome 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
<b>National</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Digital inclusion expertise, resources, networks</li> <li>→ Participation of local affiliates</li> </ul>
<b>Local</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Knowledge of and interest in the community</li> <li>→ On-the-ground assistance for national partners</li> </ul>

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

# Playbook 2: Building Partnerships

Partner	Role
<b>Core Team</b>	
<b>Public housing agency</b>	Leadership, communication, staffing, resources
<b>Local elected officials</b>	Leadership, outreach, goals, convening, funding
<b>Critical Partners</b>	
<b>HUD</b>	Guidance, benchmarks, collaboration, national platform
<b>EveryoneOn &amp; U.S. Ignite</b>	Leadership, expertise, guidance, resources
<b>ConnectHome stakeholders</b>	Free and low-cost Internet, devices, digital literacy training
<b>Internet Service Providers</b>	Affordable Internet service and devices
<b>Libraries</b>	Expertise, outreach, staff, facilities, digital literacy training
<b>Resident councils</b>	Needs assessment, survey, outreach, feedback, excitement
<b>Other Important Community Partners</b>	
<b>Device providers &amp; refurbishers</b>	Affordable computing devices
<b>Local technology community &amp; digital inclusion advocates</b>	Expertise, passion and energy, financial resources
<b>HUD-assisted multifamily owners</b>	Ensure residents have affordable Internet access
<b>School districts &amp; schools</b>	Assisting students with Internet access and devices at home
<b>Universities &amp; colleges</b>	Survey research partner, devices, digital literacy training
<b>Local media</b>	Awareness, interest, and momentum
<b>Funding Partners</b>	
<b>Foundations</b>	Financing and coalition building
<b>Local banks</b>	Investments through the Community Reinvestment Act

## Case Study

Cleveland, OH

### TIPS

#### Build on existing efforts

Identify partners already invested 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

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
<b>Cleveland Public Library</b>	Outreach, hosted resident engagement events and digital literacy trainings, served as “Tech Central” for device distribution
<b>National Digital Inclusion Alliance &amp; American Library Association</b>	Wealth of experience and best practices
<b>Local non-profit organizations</b>	Grant writing, resident relationships, and deep knowledge of community needs
<b>Catholic Charities Hospital</b>	Connected seniors living in nearby high-rise buildings with an Internet transmitter
<b>Local companies</b>	Transported residents to training sessions

# Playbook 2: Building Partnerships

## KEYS: Maintaining Strong Partnerships

### TIP →

#### 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.

### KEY 1: 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 2: 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.

### KEY 3: 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 4: 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 5: Track progress and celebrate successes

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*.)



### Find out where you stand

Nationally, the average Internet adoption rate for families living in public housing is about 54%, but 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.

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 12*).

ConnectHome communities that successfully completed a baseline 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 survey.

## 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](http://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).

Start by evaluating your available research capacity, including both financial resources and staff time, to determine your resources to conduct a baseline 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?
- 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
<b>Public housing agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Defines survey purpose</li> <li>→ Coordinates the survey</li> <li>→ Dedicates appropriate resources</li> <li>→ Trains staff as needed</li> </ul>
<b>Research partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Advises about survey methodology</li> <li>→ Helps select a valid sample</li> <li>→ Analyzes results</li> </ul>
<b>Resident council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Community outreach</li> <li>→ Encourages responses</li> <li>→ Administers the survey</li> </ul>

# Playbook 3: Assessing Your Baseline

## Case Study

*Little Rock, AR*

### Connecting residents through the survey

Consider leveraging your baseline survey to advance your other digital inclusion objectives in the process. The Metropolitan Housing Alliance took such an approach, using its baseline survey as a platform for engaging its residents in digital inclusion.

The housing agency 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## Playbook 3: Assessing Your Baseline

### 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.

### TIP →

#### 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.

### 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. When surveying English language learners, 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*).

## 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.



### 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 ConnectHome goals and objectives, and ensures that everyone is on the same page.

## 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 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 local champion.

# Playbook 4: Organizing a Local Convening

## 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 and US Ignite	National ConnectHome stakeholders
HUD staff	Libraries
Device providers and refurbishers	Technology community
Local media	Local banks
School districts	Colleges and universities
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 is 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

*Kansas City, MO*

### The Sprint Accelerator

Kansas City leveraged space from a key stakeholder. In choosing the Sprint Accelerator as the location for their convening, Kansas City highlighted Sprint as a key stakeholder and leveraged its innovative and open space environment to create an interactive convening. Importantly, this site delivered the strong message that the Kansas City government is a place where technology happens. The venue also was centrally located, which allowed easy access for HUD-assisted residents and those taking public transportation.

### 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: Who will invite participants?

Personally invite stakeholders to the convening. Follow up your 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.

## 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.

# Playbook 4: Organizing a Local Convening

## **TIPS:** Day of your convening

### **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.



Structure the convening in an interactive, participant-oriented manner with small group activities.

### **TIP 2: 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 3: 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 4: Thank everyone for attending!**

Contact attendees to share key takeaways and next steps.



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## Your action plan is your roadmap

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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.

Examples of action plans from the ConnectHome pilot 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 ConnectHome is 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.

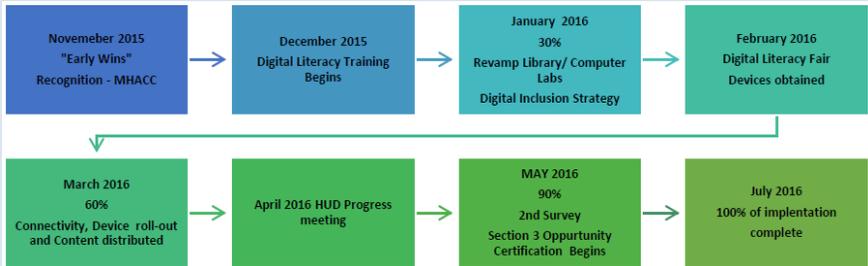
# Playbook 5: Developing Your Action Plan

## 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.

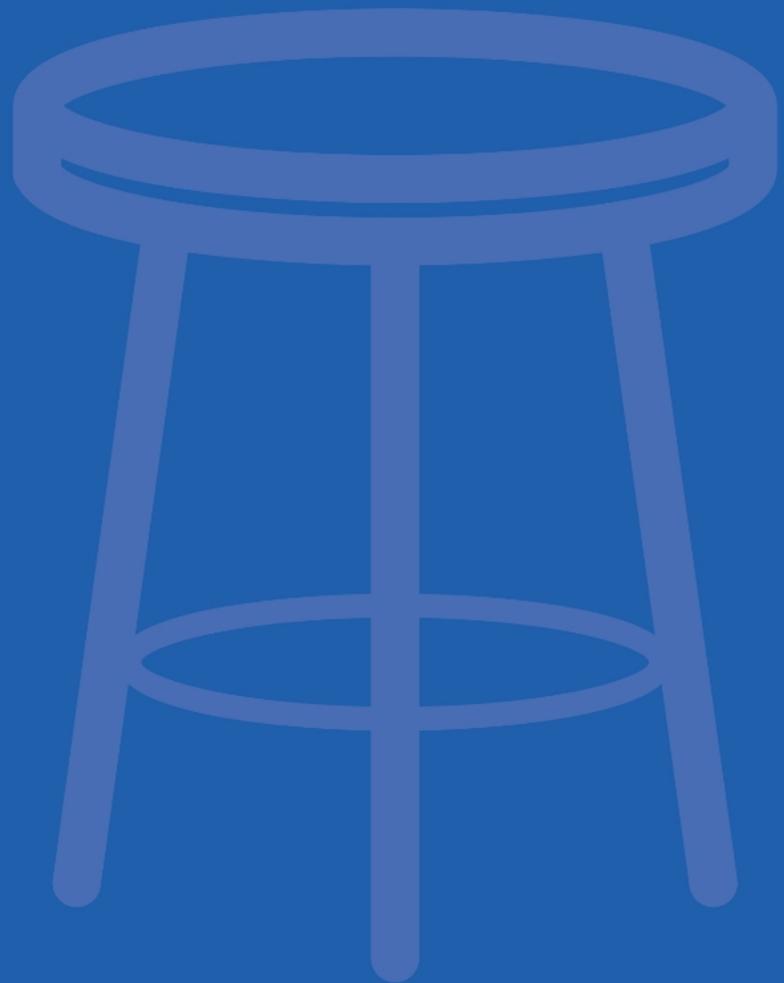
A uniform brand can increase the visibility of your communications. You may find it helpful to tailor the key messages featured on the ConnectHome website ([ConnectHome.HUD.gov](http://ConnectHome.HUD.gov)) for your community.

# Three-Legged Stool

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- 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. ConnectHome's national Internet Service Provider (ISP) stakeholders and your community's local ISPs are key partners in this effort.

Connectivity models adopted by ConnectHome communities include:

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

These models are not mutually exclusive. Successful ConnectHome communities often adopted 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 ConnectHome stakeholders AT&T, Comcast, and Cox Communications offer sharply discounted Internet service **throughout their nationwide footprints.**

ConnectHome’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.

# Playbook 6: Connectivity Strategies

National ConnectHome ISP Stakeholder	\$10/Month ConnectHome 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 K-12 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"> <li>→ Cost-effective <i>if</i> an offer is available and buildings are already connected</li> <li>→ ISPs can help publicize offers to residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Requires residents to individually contact ISPs, navigate the enrollment process, and pay service costs</li> <li>→ Past debt restrictions may limit eligibility for low-cost offers</li> <li>→ May be impractical, if buildings lack preexisting service</li> <li>→ Difficult to track progress without ISP cooperation</li> </ul>

### 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:

**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.

**Consult legal counsel early.**

# Playbook 6: Connectivity Strategies

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

## 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 ConnectHome 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.

# Playbook 6: Connectivity Strategies

## 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
<b>Wireless Network</b>	Free wireless Internet reaches every unit (like a dorm or hotel)	Housing agency pays for installation, management, and ongoing operation
<b>Google Fiber</b> <i>(available only in select locations)</i>	Direct fiber optic connections deliver Internet to each unit	Google Fiber covers costs for installation and maintenance <i>(only for select public housing agencies)</i>
<b>Bulk-Service Agreement</b>	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"><li>→ Provides automatic connectivity</li><li>→ Eliminates barriers for residents</li><li>→ Connects large numbers of residents</li><li>→ Past resident debt irrelevant</li><li>→ Easy to track connectivity and progress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ Initial investment may be required</li><li>→ Heavy planning required</li><li>→ First connections can take time</li><li>→ Quick results unlikely</li></ul>

## 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.

## Playbook 6: Connectivity Strategies

### 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 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.

## Two ownership models

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 ConnectHome 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.

# Playbook 7: Computers and Tablets

## 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.

### 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.

## 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 ConnectHome 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.

## MODEL 2: Internet Service Providers

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

Two ConnectHome 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 ConnectHome 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 ConnectHome 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.

# Playbook 7: Computers and Tablets

## KEYS: 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?

### 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 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.

## Playbook 7: Computers and Tablets

### 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.



### 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

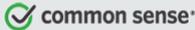
**Educational resources** that help students master material and access instructional materials bridge the “homework gap” from school to home. Other resources help prepare students to prepare for college and apply for financial aid.

# ConnectHome Playbook

ConnectHome stakeholders can help

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

## Online Skills for Families & Residents

Stakeholder	Offer
	<p><b>The American Library Association (ALA)</b> 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><b>Geek Squad Academy from Best Buy</b> provides teens with hands-on learning opportunities in fun, interactive settings, where they develop technology skills.</p>
	<p><b>The Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)</b> enable young people in need to achieve futures as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. Nationwide, there are more than 300 Boys &amp; Girls Clubs located at public housing sites.</p>
	<p><b>Common Sense Media</b> 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><b>The National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT)</b> 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><b>ABCMouse.com</b> 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><b>The College Board</b> 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><b>PBS Kids</b> 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.

# Running Your Program

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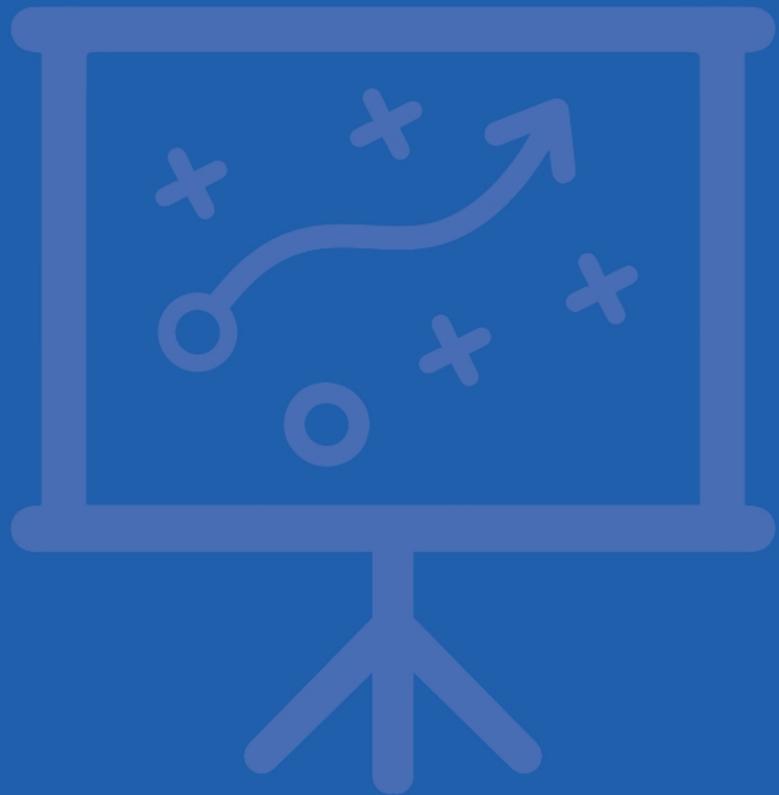


9: Securing Funds

10: Engaging Residents

11: Partnering with Schools

12: Tracking Progress





### Catalyzing your initiative

Securing funds to help residents obtain computers and tablets and connect to the Internet at home must be at the forefront of your community's strategy to narrow the digital divide.

Universally, successful ConnectHome communities recognize the **need to identify funding sources**, obtain financial commitments from both the public and private sectors, and mobilize philanthropic partners.

Funds are important to cover not only costs associated with connectivity, devices, and digital literacy training, but also the costs of a dedicated staff to manage a successful digital inclusion program.

## Begin early and focus on demonstrated needs

Begin exploring fundraising opportunities early on. Securing dedicated funding for your community's efforts early builds a strong foundation to achieve success.

Start by assessing your community's funding needs. Consider how many residents are currently unconnected, and your goals for connecting residents, providing devices, and hosting training. Be sure to consider the costs of staff time that are needed to coordinate digital inclusion efforts. Incorporate this needs assessment in your funding requests.

### TIPS: Securing funds

**Involve key partners:** All of your key partners should be aware of your fundraising efforts and involved in some way.

**Identify a lead:** To foster strong coordination and ensure fundraising receives the sustained attention needed, identify a fundraising "quarterback," who will lead your efforts. Identify this quarterback before the end of your first stakeholder convening, if not before.

**Keep sustainability in mind:** A financial strategy that makes improved digital inclusion sustainable recognizes that one-time investments are not sufficient on their own. Whether by creating an ongoing budget item or transitioning residents to pay on their own, think about how to make your strategy fiscally sustainable.

**Celebrate and share your success!** Share with funders stories and metrics that demonstrate your success, and be sure to recognize their impact.

# Playbook 9: Securing Funds

## SOURCES of funds for digital inclusion

### 1: Public housing agency funds

Review your housing organization's funds and consult with legal counsel to determine:

1. Are there **Capital or Operating Funds** that could be allocated for this work?
  - **Wiring for Individual Housing Units:** Neither Capital Funds nor Operating Funds can be used to pay for a resident's in-unit Internet subscription. However, the Capital Fund can be used to pay for the costs of making a unit Internet-ready.
  - **Computer Labs & Training:** Capital Funds can be used to establish and renovate a public housing development's computer lab, while Operating Funds can be used to cover the ongoing costs of operating the lab, including for staffing and digital literacy trainings.
2. Are other sources of funding available through the programs below?
  - Economic Opportunities (Section 3) Funds
  - Tenant Participation Funds
3. Does your housing organization or a partner organization have an affiliated nonprofit with federally-recognized 501(c)(3) status or state-recognized status?

## Case Study

*Los Angeles, CA*

### Raising funds through a nonprofit arm

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles and its nonprofit arm, Kids Progress Inc., partnered to conduct a phone and mail campaign to raise money from donors for their community's ConnectHome initiative.

The mailer provided different options for sponsorship, indicating how many families would be connected at each level (for example: "\$10,000 will connect 68 families for four years").

The campaign raised over \$66,000 from donors to purchase hotspots from Sprint that were then distributed to public housing households to provide them with free wireless Internet.

## TIPS →

### Don't start from scratch

Consult this list of federal grants for broadband-related activities:

*BroadbandUSA: Guide to Federal Funding of Broadband Projects.*

### Leverage CDBG funds

In most cities and towns, a community development or planning department oversees CDBG funds. In unincorporated areas and special districts, the county's office of community development or planning oversees CDBG funds. To find out more about how CDBG funds are used in your community, contact your local grantee:

[hudexchange.info/grantees](http://hudexchange.info/grantees)

## TIP →

### Be creative

Even where funds are not specifically dedicated for Internet adoption, communities have leveraged workforce development and adult education funds to provide digital literacy training.

## 2: Federal funds

The federal government has many grant programs that provide funding for a range of broadband-related activities. The Federal Communications Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and HUD are some of the agencies offering grants.

One of the most important sources of potential funding is the federal Lifeline Program, which is operated by the Universal Service Administrative Corporation and provides a discount on phone service to low-income Americans. In 2016, the program was expanded. It now offers a \$9.25 per month discount on Internet service from participating carriers (the discount rises up to \$34.25 per month in Tribal areas). **All HUD-assisted households are eligible for the discount.** Check whether your local Internet Service Provider participates in the program.

HUD's Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the related Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program promote community economic development, with a special focus on low- and moderate-income persons. Eligible uses include broadband infrastructure development. HUD's Broadband Infrastructure FAQs offer further guidance:

[hudexchange.info/resource/4891/cdbg-broadband-infrastructure-faqs](http://hudexchange.info/resource/4891/cdbg-broadband-infrastructure-faqs)

### Additional funding for Tribal communities

HUD has issued guidance explaining how funds allocated through the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG), Title VI of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act, and the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Program can be used to develop the necessary infrastructure for broadband initiatives. For more information, see *Program Guidance 2016-01, "Using IHBG, Title VI, and ICDBG to Fund Broadband Activities."*

## 3: State and local funds

Some states and cities have dedicated funds to build broadband infrastructure, provide digital literacy training, and support other initiatives to narrow the digital divide.

For example, the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) is a nonprofit corporation that makes investments to accelerate the deployment and adoption of broadband to underserved communities and populations. CETF grants helped fund digital inclusion projects in two ConnectHome pilot communities, Fresno and Los Angeles.

# Playbook 9: Securing Funds

## Case Study

*Seattle, WA*

### Building upon existing funding schemes

Instead of reinventing the wheel, Seattle's ConnectHome fundraising effort built upon the city's existing Digital Equity Initiative, which aims to ensure all Seattle residents have access to and proficiency using Internet-based technology. Leveraging contacts from that initiative, the city helped the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) secure a large grant from Google to pay for low-cost Internet subscriptions for unconnected SHA residents.

## 4: Philanthropic organizations

A wide range of foundations at the local, state, and national levels have designated digital inclusion as a funding priority. Resources to help you get started include:

- **The Foundation Center:** Search their database of funders ([foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org)). The full database can be accessed from more than 450 locations across the country ([grantspace.org](http://grantspace.org)).
- **Professional and College Alumni Associations:** Local chapters may be a source of funding, scholarships, and volunteers.
- **Benevity:** Connects nonprofits to corporate giving ([causes.benevity.org](http://causes.benevity.org)).

## Case Study

*Memphis, TN*

### The Women's Foundation

In early 2016, the ConnectHome coalition in Memphis was interested in partnering with T-Mobile to supply hundreds of its families with Internet-enabled tablets. Because T-Mobile was donating the tablets, funding was needed only to pay for Internet service during the first year. However, neither the housing authority nor the City had the funds to do so.

After the coalition reached out to local donors, the Women's Foundation for a Greater Memphis answered the call. It provided \$50,000 to cover the first year of connectivity for households receiving the tablets, and committed to fund more in the future.

## Case Study

*Nashville-Davidson  
County, TN*

### Matching funds

The Nashville Digital Inclusion Fund launched in 2015, involving a diverse set of community organizations, including: Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County, Google, Comcast, the James Stephen Turner Family Foundation, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and Dell. Administered by the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, the fund is designed to provide free or low-cost Internet access, computers, devices, training and support to Nashville citizens.

The Metropolitan Government made an initial \$100,000 investment in the fund. After the Mayor issued a matching challenge to the digital inclusion community, Google, Comcast, and the James Stephen Turner Family Foundation each matched Metro's donation, bringing the fund's balance to \$400,000.

The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee invests the fund's assets and makes grants to qualified organizations to work on broadening digital access, hardware and training. The local housing authority applied to the fund and has been receiving hundreds of computers for distribution to public housing residents.

## 5: Corporate social responsibility

Consider both local and national corporations with community investment goals and philanthropic missions that align with your efforts. Many corporations offer sponsorships and employee volunteer opportunities. Also consider:

- **Chambers of Commerce:** Conduct local philanthropic activities and provide connections to business members.
- **Asset Building Coalitions:** Administer large pools of funds to offer grant opportunities, often including investments in education.
- **Community Banks:** Provide resources that qualify for Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) credit.

# Playbook 9: Securing Funds

## Case Study

Rockford, IL

### Unlocking CRA funding

The **Community Reinvestment Act** encourages banks to help meet the credit needs of the communities they serve, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Banks can meet their CRA requirements by supporting broadband projects, including both infrastructure and those related to the “three-legged” stool of access, devices, and training.

Using guidance from the Federal Reserve Bank, the executive director of the Rockford Housing Authority developed and submitted a CRA proposal to local and regional banks. The proposal outlines the specific ways local banks can support the housing authority’s ConnectHome efforts, obtain CRA credit for doing so, and gain access to a new customer base.

For more information on using the CRA for broadband projects, see *Closing the Digital Divide: A Framework for Meeting CRA Obligations (2016)*.

## 6: Charitable donors

Consider reaching out to local business leaders and past contributors. Additionally, you can launch an online crowdfunding campaign, promoted through social media. Volunteer organizations can donate funds and staff resources to support your fundraising efforts.



Residents are  
your most  
important  
stakeholders

"Residents don't trust institutions. They trust *people*."

—Jeffery Patterson, CEO, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority

Digital literacy provides residents with the skills to make the most of Successful communities empower residents as valuable allies in their community outreach efforts, recognizing that the **most effective ambassadors for digital inclusion are usually residents themselves**.

Without residents' trust and understanding, your community's efforts to accelerate Internet adoption will likely stall.

Well-executed engagement efforts result in residents who are excited and invested in the program's successes, well-informed about the offers available to them, and understand how Internet connectivity will directly improve their educational and job opportunities.

## KEYS: Effectively engaging residents

### TIP →

#### Learn about residents' digital needs

You can build rapport, gauge interest in digital literacy training, and share information about ConnectHome (see *Playbook 3: Assessing Your Baseline*).

## KEY 1: Craft clear and focused messages

Relevant, impactful communication is paramount to engaging residents. Consider your existing messages that best resonate with the population that you are trying to reach. This should influence how you brand your ConnectHome offering.

Residents are likely to have different ways of accessing information, so you should employ **multi-channel outreach**. Create attractive and informative materials like flyers that explain how to sign up for individual Internet Service Provider (ISP) offers, and videos that share success and impact stories. Consider distributing relevant materials at schools, community organizations, places of worship, and highly-trafficked areas of housing complexes. As you communicate with residents, keep the following in mind:

- **Frequency:** Provide timely updates and reminders and open a line of communication for feedback. By engaging residents regularly and consistently, you can maintain momentum as well as try out different methods to hone your technique.
- **Integration:** Share ConnectHome messages alongside other materials and announcements. Add information to quarterly newsletters, community announcements, a resident welcome packet or brochures at the rental office.
- **Follow-up:** Set up systems for residents to contact you if they have connectivity questions or issues. A toll-free number or a drop-down box on your housing authority's website could allow residents to inquire about signing up for service or to report an issue once connected.
- **Synchronize:** Coordinating communications with organizations that also are working to narrow the digital divide in your community will strengthen your resident outreach efforts. When residents hear about clear and consistent paths to connectivity from multiple trusted sources, they are more likely to take advantage of available services.
- **Incentives:** Provide incentives for residents to respond to outreach and provide helpful feedback on your efforts.

# Playbook 10: Engaging Residents

## TIP →

### Using Section 3 Funds

Housing agencies have provided residents with a small stipend to help with outreach and baseline survey efforts

## Case Study

*Kansas City, MO*

## KEY 2: Empower residents as ambassadors

Residents know how to appeal to the wants and needs of their peers, so resident councils and advisory boards, residents employed through HUD's Section 3 programs, and resident volunteers should be involved in both strategy creation and resident outreach. Check in regularly with these groups to evaluate the effectiveness of your strategy and accept their guidance on needed changes.

### Connected Neighbors

To improve its resident engagement efforts, the Housing Authority of Kansas City collaborated with its resident council and property managers. The housing authority created a program called "Connected Neighbors," which empowers the resident council and residents to lead outreach efforts.

Google Fiber trained the resident council on effective strategies for sharing information about Google Fiber's ConnectHome offer. By going door-to-door, the Resident Council and resident partners were able to directly connect with their neighbors and spread awareness about ConnectHome and ISP stakeholder offers.

## KEY 3: Enlist staff with strong relationships

- **Property managers:** Through online platforms, social media, and mail outreach, property managers can play a vital role in informing residents about connectivity offers. They can also help troubleshoot issues with devices, modems, or connectivity.
- **Service coordinators:** Resident service coordinators work with residents to balance their budgets and are well situated to promote connectivity as a way to enhance the resident's experience with service delivery activities. For instance, Jobs Plus coordinators who are working with residents on resume submissions or employment could promote ConnectHome as a way to access more economic opportunities and provide information about ISP offers.
- **Intake and relocation specialists:** Intake and relocation specialists provide residents with information after relocating and are situated to encourage Internet adoption. Specialists can give residents information about connectivity options in their new community and help limit breaks in Internet connectivity.

## Case Study

Rockford, IL

### Integrating outreach into resident services

In its effort to reach out to residents about ConnectHome, the Rockford Housing Authority relied on trusted housing authority staff to educate residents and navigate obstacles.

Staff members who were already working with families about budgeting and personal finance helped these residents determine if they could afford Internet service, connecting them with Comcast sales representatives. Residents who had debt—a potential barrier to signing up for ISP services—received individual consultation.

### KEY 4: Organize engagement events

Community events are a great way to build excitement for your ConnectHome efforts, as you can distribute devices and sign up families for connectivity and digital training. They also provide an opportunity to invite partners and local ISPs to interact with residents. In addition to hosting events centered around ConnectHome, think about ways to incorporate your ConnectHome efforts into already scheduled or standing PHA or partner events. Consider the following:

- **Leverage ISP events:** ISPs in your area will host events to promote their offerings. Find a way to promote your efforts in these spaces.
- **Host an event with official ConnectHome stakeholders:** Stakeholders like GitHub and the Boys and Girls Club of America provide spaces and potential opportunities for collaboration.
- **Host a Digital Inclusion Day:** Sponsor a day centered on digital inclusion at your community center, housing authority, or partner location. Residents can learn about offers, participate in digital literacy training, and get connected on the spot.
- **Consider existing resident engagement efforts:** Incorporate learning from events that have the best attendance when planning new efforts for ConnectHome.

# Playbook 10: Engaging Residents

## Case Study

*Los Angeles, CA*

### HACLA's systematic approach

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) hosted a series of training events to distribute discounted Sprint hotspot modems. The hotspots were paired with refurbished computers and distributed to residents upon completion of a digital literacy training. HACLA reached the widest possible audience by offering the training in both English and Spanish. Residents were provided with translation devices and a professional translator. To make the events more engaging, HACLA incorporated resource fairs and raffles.

Frequent and varied communications supported the success of these events. In order to promote registration, HACLA's ConnectHome team sent targeted mailers and made door-to-door visits to households with school-age children to inform residents about the initiative. They also sent reminders prior to each training via flyer and robo-call. After each event, they made follow-up calls to thank participants and encourage them to use their new Internet connectivity and computers. Following all six trainings, they contacted residents who might be interested in future trainings with a final round of flyers and calls.

The team also worked diligently to make sure that both the residents and staff members had access to information. They coordinated with resident services and on-site partners to streamline outreach, establish common locations for training materials, and provide technical support hotlines for residents who experienced problems with their devices at home.

Finally, HACLA coordinated with Sprint to obtain a monthly usage report, providing data to help troubleshoot connectivity issues.



### Closing the “homework gap”

**Schools** now use the Internet to facilitate instruction, assign homework, and share essential information with students and families, including grades, progress reports, and service opportunities. A lack of Internet connectivity at home creates serious learning challenges for students, while hindering parents from following their children’s progress.

Collaboration between public housing agencies and school districts can overcome this “**homework gap.**” Some of the ways that school districts can support your efforts to encourage home Internet adoption include:

- **Identifying students** who are unconnected at home and determining their eligibility for discounted Internet service
- **Providing computers, tablets, or wireless hotspots** for students to bring home
- **Promoting partners, organizations, and events** with free and low-cost offers
- **Educating families** about the benefits of digital inclusion (parents are more likely to sign up for low-cost Internet options when they learn about the benefits for their children)

## Working with “Future Ready Schools”

Thousands of school districts across the country have signed the Future Ready Schools Pledge and are ready to partner with you to promote digital inclusion. Launched in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Education and the nonprofit Alliance for Excellent Education, the initiative helps school districts prepare students for educational and employment success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

One of the principles at the core of Future Ready Schools is that high-quality digital content should be accessible not only at school **but also in homes and communities**. Because of their commitment to improving student access to computers and high-speed Internet at home, Future Ready Schools are ideal partners for closing the “homework gap” in ConnectHome communities.

## Case Study

*New York, NY*

### Library Hotspots

New York City (NYC) Public Schools partnered with three public library systems, Google, and Sprint to make 5,000 free wireless hotspots available to NYC public school students who do not have Internet access at home.

The program enables eligible families to “check out” the wireless hotspot from the library for the school year at no cost, bring the hotspot home, and connect their computer or tablet to access free wireless Internet service. The program is designed to help NYC public school students access online resources at home and raise their digital exposure and confidence.

The initiative launched in 46 library branches throughout NYC, most of which are located in high-need neighborhoods with low Internet connectivity rates. Coordination efforts are run through Community Schools, which are neighborhood hubs where families can access social services and students can receive supplemental instruction. Hundreds of families living in HUD-assisted housing in New York City have been benefitted from the program so far.

# Playbook 11: Partnering with Schools

## Case Study

*Charlotte, NC*

### ONE Access

In 2015 the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg (CMS) accepted the White House's ConnectedED Library Challenge to facilitate students' access to information and educational resources outside the classroom. Partnering with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, they established the ONE Access initiative.

One Number Equals (ONE) Access uses students' school identification numbers instead of separate library cards. With their school ID, students can access library research databases, borrow digital materials, and check out print or audio books. In its first year, over 100,000 students—nearly 2 in 3 across the entire school district—accessed library services through ONE Access.

Last fall, CMS and the Library launched the ONE Access and Student Mobile Hotspot Lending pilot program with Sprint to offer wireless hotspot modems to students who lack an Internet connection at home. Students can go to their local library and use their ONE Access Account to check out one of 150 free available wireless hotspots for up to 30 days, just like checking out a book. This pilot program is designed to be a catalyst for future initiatives that encourage students' exploration of digital resources and enable them to work on assignments outside of school.

## KEYS:

Partnering with your local school district

## TIPS →

**Personal connections** are crucial for success. Emails and phone calls can be a starting point, but in-person conversations are the most effective.

**Tour your local schools.**

Learn how they use technology in the classroom to discover potential areas for collaboration.

**Be persistent.**

If you are unable to connect with the right school official initially, don't give up. Particularly in a large district, you may have to talk to several people before you find the best point of contact to support a joint connectivity initiative.

## KEY 1: Focus on shared goals

In your initial conversations with schools, keep digital equity front and center. Ask school personnel about the academic challenges faced by students who lack home Internet access. Learn about their parent communication strategies and how home Internet access might improve the home-school connection.

## KEY 2: Get to know school leadership

When working with school districts, get to know the following key players:

- **Superintendents:** This individual could be your best access point. The Superintendent will help you identify the best points of contact at specific schools.
- **Chief Information and Technology Officers (CIOs / CTOs):** In large school districts, there is often a designated CIO or CTO. They may be a good initial contact because of their specialized knowledge and responsibilities.
- **School Principals:** The principal is the chief administrator of a school and can be a good starting point for engagement. School principals are most likely to have personal relationships with families in HUD-assisted housing.

## KEY 3: Partner with Parent-Teacher Associations

Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members are actively engaged with their school communities and can be powerful allies in your relationship-building efforts. Collaborating with PTAs allows you to leverage their existing relationships, communication channels, and human capital.

# Playbook 11: Partnering with Schools

## Case Study

*Atlanta, GA*

### Atlanta Public Schools

Atlanta Public Schools have played a central role in Atlanta's ConnectHome initiative.

- To connect students who were either English-language learners or participating in the Centers for Hope afterschool program, the school district mobilized its resources and staff to **identify eligible students**.
- School staff then reached out to identified families to **communicate** the families' eligibility for free Internet-enabled tablets and other important program information.
- To improve the educational utility of the tablets provided to students, the school district customized the tablets by **pre-installing apps** for the district's online parent and student portals. Through these portals, students can access homework assignments, and parents can access their children's attendance reports and grades, and communicate with teachers and school leaders.
- Once the free tablets were distributed, school district staff **trained** students and parents on how to effectively use them.



### Measuring and sharing success

Tracking progress is essential for assessing the impact of your community's efforts, learning what is and what is not working, fine-tuning your goals and setting new ones, and demonstrating your success.

Begin setting up a process to track your progress in conjunction with your baseline survey (*Playbook 3*) and action plan (*Playbook 5*).

At a minimum, you should aim to measure progress in your population's **home Internet adoption**. You can track this in a variety of ways, as the following table illustrates:

Metric	Data Sources	Pros	Cons
Households actively <i>using</i> high-speed Internet at home (not counting smartphones)	Resident survey	Reliable	Difficult to track without directly surveying residents
Households with high-speed Internet service at home (not counting smartphones)	Resident survey / Internet Service Provider	Good proxy metric for adoption	Requires Internet Service Provider cooperation
Units connected through property-wide networks	Housing agency / Internet Service Provider	Ease of counting	May overestimate adoption

## Collecting data across HUD programs

ConnectHome has created opportunities for communities to coordinate their resources, objectives, and data collection across HUD programs, including Family Self-Sufficiency, Jobs Plus, and Choice Neighborhoods. Data collection in one program may enable you to collect data for another program without creating additional burdens for residents and staff.

Some pilot communities collect data about in-home Internet access as a benchmark for their self-sufficiency and mobility programs. For example, Family Self-Sufficiency and Jobs Plus program coordinators are capturing the number of participants who live in unconnected households as part of their required program monitoring data. This enables those communities to gain a better understanding of how progress in a program like ConnectHome might help generate better outcomes in other programs, and to identify synergies among programs and residents.

# Playbook 12: Tracking Progress

## MODELS: Tracking new connections

You can track new Internet connections in your community with a combination of methods, based on your available data and resources:

### MODEL 1: Resident surveys

Resident Internet adoption surveys are one of the best methods for tracking progress over time. For ease and consistency, you can model your tracking survey after your baseline survey (*Playbook 3*).

As with the baseline survey, you can partner with a research partner—ideally a local university, government agency, or research organization—to assist with selecting a representative sample, designing your survey, collecting and analyzing your survey data, and reporting your findings.

You also can engage residents, students, and staff to administer your tracking survey, whether door-to-door, by telephone, in the mail, or at resident events—including your community’s Internet sign-up events.

### MODEL 2: Recertification and relocation forms

You can ask residents if they have access to high-speed Internet at home as part of your regular recertification and relocation paperwork. If they do, consider asking if they have *gained* access since the time of your baseline survey or last recertification.

You may also want to train your staff to clarify *in what manner* residents are connected to high-speed Internet. This can also be a good opportunity to inform residents about the affordable Internet, device, and digital literacy offers in your community.

#### Intake surveys

The Tampa Housing Authority surveys incoming residents about their in-home Internet adoption, the availability of a computer or other Internet-ready device in their home and interest in participating in digital literacy trainings.

Trained intake specialists survey residents who are relocating into their communities or recertifying their eligibility. The specialists also use the opportunity to discuss the benefits of digital inclusion and share information about ConnectHome stakeholder offers. By surveying residents in this way, the housing agency continually measures community progress toward in-home Internet adoption.

## TIP →

### **Go straight to the source**

Many Internet Service Providers have affordable access initiatives. Contact your community's program representative to explore ways you can share Internet adoption to track your progress. It can be very helpful to have a representative from the Mayor's office involved in these initial discussions.

## **Model 3: Internet Service Provider agreements**

### **Individual Internet subscriptions**

As a result of their ConnectHome stakeholder agreements, national Internet Service Providers (ISPs) regularly share with HUD numbers of new Internet connections in the ConnectHome pilot communities. Specifically, they provide information about the number of households in public housing and HUD-assisted multifamily developments that sign up for their low-cost Internet offers in these communities. HUD then shares the relevant number of new connections with each pilot community to help track progress.

### **Property-wide connections**

If your community has property-wide Internet connections—whether through a wireless network or a bulk billing agreements with ISPs—you can use your occupancy data for the property to track new connections.

Communities that adopt single-payer connectivity models through bulk-billing agreements with ISPs can track connectivity through the standard monthly billing process.

# Playbook 12: Tracking Progress

## Sharing your success

Powerful impact stories can inspire residents to learn more about the benefits of digital connectivity, as well as motivate stakeholders to participate and contribute toward your community's efforts (see "Developing a communications strategy," at the end of *Playbook 5*).

**Blogs and social media posts** are great ways to share the impact of your work and the successes residents have achieved. Putting together success stories can be fun, quick, and easy.

Examples of success stories, photos, and videos are located throughout the *Playbook* and on the ConnectHome website ([ConnectHome.HUD.gov](https://ConnectHome.HUD.gov)). Here are **five key elements** to include:

1. **Brief background** about ConnectHome efforts in your community
2. **Resident profiles**, with a short summary of their backgrounds and brief descriptions of the relevant challenges they face
3. **Description of how they addressed and overcame their challenges** through your community's digital inclusion efforts
4. **Examples of their successes and positive impacts** as a result of being connected with digital opportunities
5. **A call to action** for residents and stakeholders in your community

**Photos and videos** are engaging and effective ways to tell your stories. You can frame all of the essential elements of your story in an interesting way, with soft, natural lighting, and clean and attractive backgrounds.

Work with your organization's legal department to obtain photo and video releases from any resident that is individually identifiable, including from the parents of any minors.

## Making an Impact: Little Rock

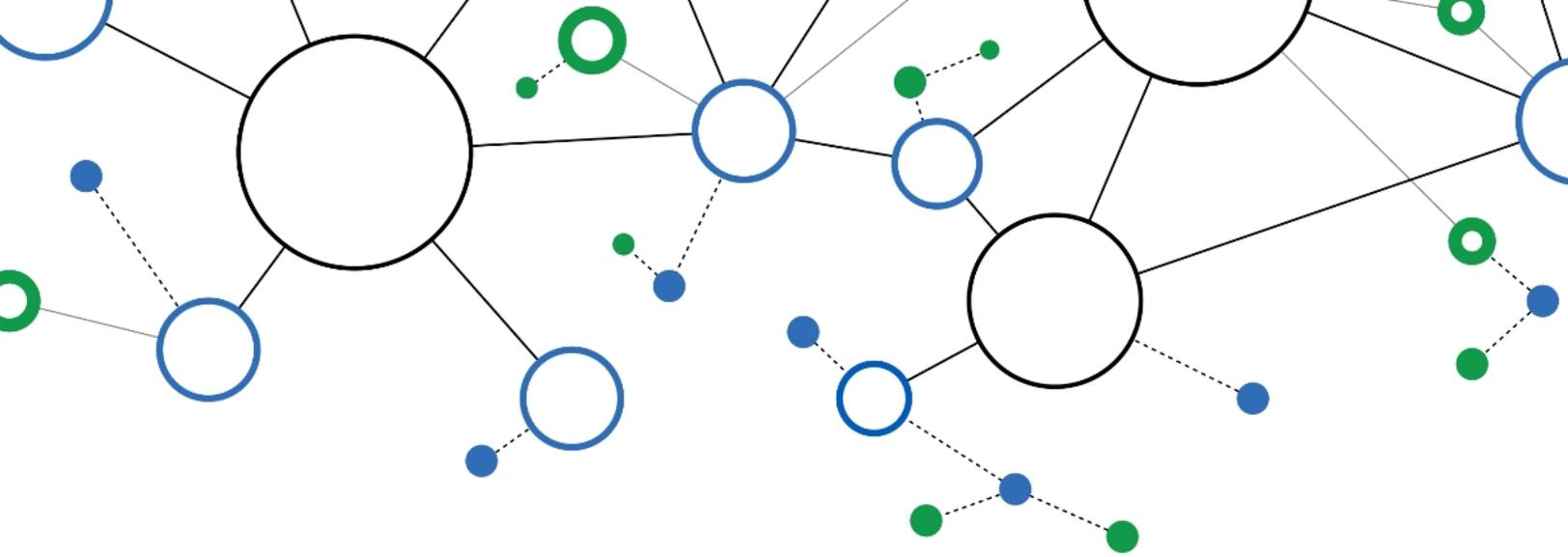


*"I am really glad this program exists for my kids." —Stacie Brown*

For Stacie, a mother of four in Little Rock, having access to affordable high-speed Internet at home means saving the hour-long roundtrip bus ride to the library, and having access to a tablet means no longer having to wait in line to access a computer. With digital literacy training through a partnership between the city's Metropolitan Housing Alliance and BestBuy's Geek Squad, Stacie is gaining 21st Century job-ready skills.

For Stacie's four children, ConnectHome means being able to research and apply for college and federal financial aid, discovering recipes that support healthy eating habits, and, for her son, learning multiplication tables in a way that is tailored to his special needs.

"I can now get on the Internet and am able to do everything that everyone else is doing," Stacie says. "Being a single mother, I have had to put my dreams on hold, but ConnectHome is helping me to start working toward my dreams."



# ConnectHome



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