Launchpad Toolkit Checklist

The Launchpad section of the ConnectHomeUSA Playbook (Chapters 1-5) should be your go-to resource for helping you begin putting your ConnectHomeUSA program into place. This toolkit is a companion piece which will help you operationalize these chapters and help you build a strong foundation for a successful program.

This document is divided into the following sections and companion materials:

- **Section I: Introduction**

- **Section II: Building Your Team**

- **Section III: Understanding Your Community's Needs and Administering a Baseline Survey**

- **Appendix I: Sample Baseline Survey Questions Core Planning Team Mapping Worksheet**
  (Available on HUD Exchange)

In addition to this toolkit, check out the other toolkits developed to complement other sections of the ConnectHomeUSA Playbook:

- **Media Guide and Toolkit**

- **Organizing a Local Convening**

- **Developing Your Action Plan**

- **Fundraising Strategies**

- **Partnership Building**

- **Virtual Event Planning**

- **Digital Literacy Resource Guide**

- **Resident Engagement**

We recommend using each of these to help you plan your ConnectHomeUSA program every step of the way!

✓ Section I: Introduction

Narrowing the digital divide in HUD-assisted communities is the primary goal of ConnectHomeUSA. To frame your initial planning efforts, think of digital opportunity as a three-legged stool:

- Affordable, in-home high-speed Internet access
- Low-cost computing devices
- Digital literacy training to help residents acquire digital skills; and safely and effectively use the Internet

As your efforts get underway, you may wish to add a fourth leg to set a digital opportunity "table" which would allow your residents to use their newly acquired connectivity and digital skills to access expanded opportunities. These opportunities may be educational, professional, social, civic, and/or health related. Ultimately, improved skills and Internet access can improve and enhance residents' quality of life.

✓ Section II: Building Your Team

Launching a digital opportunity program may feel overwhelming at first. Breaking things down into manageable steps is key:

- **Who is going to be involved?** Who will be on your Core Planning Team?
- **Clarify your digital opportunity landscape and determine which area of the digital opportunity stool you'll focus on first.** What is the first step your Core Planning Team will take together?

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Who Is Involved? Assemble Your Core Planning Team.

Assembling a Core Planning Team to design, build and carry out your ConnectHomeUSA program is critical. The team will serve as your initiative's backbone. Start with making a list of possible members and consider framing your outreach efforts around the three big questions outlined below. To help get you started, you can use the *Core Planning Team Mapping Worksheet* that is part of this toolkit.

1. Who should be on your Core Planning Team?

Your Core Planning Team should be effective, but it's not necessary to have many members to be effective. In fact, a smaller team can allow you to be nimbler and more efficient. Below, are ideas to help you brainstorm possible member organizations:

- Digital opportunity or ConnectHomeUSA champions to jumpstart your initiative (such as your Executive Director or other organization leadership)
- Information technology staff representatives
- Resident services staff
- Public housing and/or voucher program staff, depending on the target audience of your program
- Chief Innovation (CIO) and Technology Officers (CTO)
- Partners with creative approaches to problem-solving
- Residents and resident leaders to provide input and to help champion the program within their communities

Tip: Your Core Planning Team may be small at first. It may continue to grow as additional community stakeholders join your initiative.

2. Who from your organization should be involved?

Having dedicated members of the Core Planning Team who understand the importance of this work and understand the vision, is critical to your initiative's success. Having a strong Core Planning Team, especially during the first year of implementation, is critical to your success. Examples of staff who could be involved in your Core Planning Team include:

- Executive Director or other PHA leader
- Designated ConnectHomeUSA lead staff
- Resident leaders
- Resident services staff
- IT department staff

3. Which external organizations would be valuable members of your Core Planning Team?

Examples of external partners that could be involved in your Core Planning Team include:
- Organizations you already work with closely and who share your goal of connecting residents
- Entities that could benefit from this work
- Organizations that can help you reach your goals (i.e. employers, libraries, community colleges)

⊘ Section III: Understanding Your Community's Needs and Administering a Baseline Survey

Once your Core Planning Team is assembled, one of the first tasks is to evaluate your community's digital opportunity resources, gaps, and needs. Below, we provide you a list of resources to consult to help you get started identifying what might be available in your community around the three legs of the digital opportunity stool. In addition to understanding what may be available from outside organizations, it is also important to understand your residents' specific needs. To do this, we recommend administering a baseline survey. A sample survey is also included in *Appendix I*.

> *Tip: Check out the Playbook and other accompanying toolkits such as **Action Plan**, **Partnership Building**, and **Fundraising Strategies** to help with program design and implementation.*

▢ Clarify your digital opportunity landscape.

It is useful to review your community's needs and available resources using the three legs of the digital opportunity stool as your filter. For each leg of the stool (connectivity, devices, and digital literacy training), you might ask these questions:

*   What do residents need?
*   What resources are currently available in our community that can fulfill those needs?
*   What gaps exist?

These resources offer a good starting point for understanding connectivity, devices, and digital literacy training in your community:

1. CONNECTIVITY:

*   The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has released the first digital map showing key indicators of broadband needs across the country. The **interactive map** allows users to explore different datasets about where people do not have quality Internet access.

*   The National Broadband Map provides a high-level summary of the Internet providers and services available in every region, including Internet service speeds (**https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/#/**)

*   EveryoneOn identifies affordable offers for Internet in your zip code (**https://www.everyoneon.org/find-offers**)

*   The Affordable Connectivity Program provides up to $30 in monthly subsidies for HUD-assisted residents. To learn more go to: **https://www.fcc.gov/acp**.

2. DEVICES:

- Alliance for Technology and Reuse (AFTRR) has an interactive map to locate and learn about nonprofit refurbishers and recyclers in your area (https://www.aftrr.org/)

- EveryoneOn identifies offers for affordable computers in your area (**https://www.everyoneon.org/find-offers**)

- The Affordable Connectivity Program will also provide up to $100 through participating providers for a device. To learn more go to: **https://www.fcc.gov/acp**.

3. DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING

- Check out our **Digital Literacy Training Guide** for an overview of topics that should be covered for different learning levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced); training tips; and an overview of five free and comprehensive digital literacy programs;

- Your local library is a great place to start. They often offer digital literacy training classes, and sometimes will come to you;

- Goodwill Industries offers digital literacy training (**https://www.goodwill.org/dca/**)

- Your local community college may have training programs, or you may be able to establish a partnership to bring training onsite.

Tip: *See ConnectHomeUSA Playbook 5: Developing Your Action Plan and Toolkit for more information about setting goals and a shared vision.*

☐ Administer a Baseline Survey

One of the first steps to building an effective program, is to have accurate data about what your resident community needs. ConnectHomeUSA strongly suggests conducting an initial survey to gather baseline data about residents' access to in-unit Internet service, devices, and the need for training. This will ensure your ConnectHomeUSA program is responsive to residents' needs. This in turn, will build trust and lead to program success.

Why a survey?
- Conducting a baseline survey of residents will give you a more accurate measure of Internet adoption and the extent of 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, and serve as a reference point for tracking progress.
- ConnectHomeUSA communities that successfully completed a baseline survey gained valuable data and insights about their residents' needs and adoption rates; and they were able to design more targeted programs.

What is in this section?
In this section, you will find step-by-step instructions for designing a baseline survey to obtain key data points about your community.

1. Identify the population and key metrics you want to measure
2. Select the survey sample
3. Design the survey
4. Conduct the survey
5. Analyze and share your results

1. Identify the population and key metrics you want to measure

The three key questions below will help you define the scale and scope of your survey:

1. Who will you focus your connectivity efforts on?

- All HUD-assisted households (public housing and voucher holders)?

- Just public housing residents?

- Residents at a specific property?

- Only public housing residents with school-aged children?

2. Which metrics are most important to track for your community or your program?

- In addition to the in-home Internet connectivity, consider tracking the resident population that has a computing device and the need for digital literacy training.

- It's important to consult the resident members of your Core Planning Team when designing your survey.

3. What data already exists?

- You can also check local economic development offices or research institutions for this information.

- While this data might not be specific to your residents, it can provide helpful background for your survey.

- Refer to the data from NTIA's "Indicators of Broadband Needs" map.

> *Tip: National level data can be useful to getting a general idea about your community's connectivity needs, but it may not tell the full story. A baseline survey can help fill in the blanks!*

2. Select the survey sample

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

When selecting a representative sample for your survey, it's important to:

- Understand the full universe of your target population. For example, if your population consists only of households with school-age children who live in public housing in your community, how many households does this represent?

- If your target population is large, create a subset that can serve a representative sample of your target population.

3. Design the survey

There are two major considerations you need to keep in mind as you develop the survey.

1. Writing the Questions. A well-designed questionnaire will 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.

- **Make the survey and questions as easy as possible to understand.** Questions must be clearly-worded, specific, and leave little room for ambiguity.

- **Provide definitions.** Include relevant definitions, with precise, easy-to-understand language. And, make it clear that having only a smartphone data plan does not count as high-speed Internet access at home.

Tip: A representative sample is generally 10% of your target population. Consult an in-house researcher or research partner to determine an appropriate sample size and sampling method based on your population size.

2. Deciding on a Survey Distribution Method. Consider the following methods to administer your survey and what is likely to yield the best results:

- **Direct Interviews:** This 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.

- **Direct Mail:** Responses can be anonymous, and residents can fill it out at their convenience, and all recipients will receive the same questions which eliminates any interviewer bias. But generally the response rate to mailed surveys is low, residents may leave some answers blank, and it is difficult to control when the residents will return the survey.

Tip: Communities that worked closely with a research partner, such as a local university or college, had greater success administering their survey.

- **Online Survey:** Emailing out a survey link to residents is a relatively inexpensive option. But it does require that the resident have Internet access to complete the survey, so responses could be biased towards those who already have Internet access and feel comfortable online.

- **Text Message Survey:** Sending out a few quick survey questions via SMS to all your residents who have a cell phone can be an inexpensive and effective option. You can probably reach a good portion of the population. And users who do not have Internet access can still respond to the survey via text message.

4. Conduct the survey

Keep in mind the following tasks as you administer the survey:

- **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. **This step is particularly important for in-person surveys.**

- **Train your survey team.** Host training sessions with the staff who will be administering your survey to review survey questions, clarify the purpose of the survey, practice administering a survey (for those that will administer in-person), and answer any questions.

- **Survey residents.** Implement your survey using your chosen method for distribution.

- **Follow-up.** Do outreach by phone and use other proven methods when initial attempts at receiving responses are unsuccessful.

5. Analyze and share your results

Once the survey has been administered and any necessary follow-up has concluded, it is time to analyze the responses and share the results with your Core Planning Team and community members as well! Some tips to keep in mind:

- Work with your in-house analyst or research partner to analyze your survey results. Depending on your survey method, this may require hand counting and recording of results.

- Tabulating responses in Excel can be a useful tool to aggregate and display your survey data.

- Write up a brief report and include charts and graphs if it makes sense. Keep an eye out for patterns or trends in the data.

- To better understand, interpret, and contextualize your results, share them with residents and other stakeholders to solicit their feedback.

6. Survey Design Resources

We have included a sample survey that HUD used in the early days of the ConnectHome pilot to understand the extent of connectivity across the pilot communities. Please see Appendix I. If you want to administer more in-depth questions, consult these sources.

- A **collection of resources**: about developing a survey from Rutgers University.

- A **tip sheet** on developing survey questions from Harvard University.

- The Community Toolbox has a **series of free resources**, including tips on how to design and conduct a survey.

- The American Library Association and other organizations partnered on a digital opportunity survey in 2014 and the full set of questions is **available online**.

- The City of Austin, TX conducted a random digital opportunity sample survey, which included housing authority residents. Check out the summary findings **here**.

Appendix I – Sample Survey Questions

Below is a sample survey that HUD used to develop a baseline level of information at the start of the ConnectHome pilot program in 2015. You will notice the questions are short, use simple and precise language, and the overall survey is just a few questions. The results of HUD's study using this baseline survey tool can be found here: **https://www.huduser.gov/portal/connect-home.html**

Do you (or anyone living in your household) have Internet access in your home (including by smart phone)?

☐ **Yes**   ☐ **No**

If **Yes**	If **No**

How do you (or anyone living in your household) access the Internet in your home? *Please check all that apply.*

☐ Through a high-speed Internet subscription (for example: Comcast, Cox, AT&T, Verizon, CenturyLink, Charter)
Who is your provider? _____

☐ Through a smartphone data plan (for example: Sprint, Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile)
Who is your provider? _____

☐ Through a dial-up connection

☐ Through WiFi based outside of your home (for example: public access or from a neighbor)

☐ Other: _____

If you don't have Internet access in your home, what are the reasons? *Please check all that apply.*

☐ Cost for Internet access

☐ Cost for devices (desktop computers, laptops, etc.)

☐ My housing unit or building isn't wired for service

☐ Tried to sign up for service but couldn't

☐ Not comfortable using computers or Internet

☐ Not interested in using the Internet

☐ I access the Internet outside of my home

☐ Other: _____

Which devices do you (or anyone living in your household) use to access the Internet in your home? *Please check all that apply.*

☐ Smart phone

☐ Desktop computer

☐ Laptop, Notebook, or Netbook (for example: Chromebook, HP Mini, Macbook, Dell Inspiron)

☐ Tablet (for example: iPad, Samsung Galaxy Tab, Kindle Fire)

☐ Gaming console

☐ Smart TV or device that connects TV to the Internet

☐ Other: _____

If you don't currently have Internet access in your home, have you *ever* had Internet access in your home?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Have you heard of ConnectHome, a program that brings free or low cost in-home high-speed Internet to residents of public housing?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ I don't know

If you have Internet in your home, is it free or low-cost through ConnectHome?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ I don't know   ☐ I don't have Internet