Resource Guide
Second Edition, 1999

This publication was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the planning and development of Neighborhood Networks centers.

The guides in this series offer "how to" information on starting up a center, creating programs and identifying center partners; center and program profiles and a wealth of resources.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1995. Since then, hundreds of centers have opened throughout the United States. These centers provide residents of HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties with programs, activities and training promoting economic self-sufficiency. These guides contain examples of successful center initiatives and how you can replicate them.

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Jobs for Youth
Boston, Massachusetts

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Malden, Massachusetts

Marietta Area Community Computing Center
Marietta, Ohio

Oakridge Neighborhood Services Computer Learing Lab
Des Moines, Iowa

Palmetto Learning Center
New Orleans, Louisiana

Plugged In
East Palo Alto, California

PUENTE (People United to Enrich the Neighborhood Through Education) Learning Center
Los Angeles, California

SeniorNet
San Francisco, California

Somerville Community Computing Center
Somerville, Massachusetts

St. Alphonse's Rock Church
St. Louis, Missouri

St. Peter Manor
Memphis, Tennessee

The Clubhouse at the Computer Museum
Boston, Massachusetts

Three Rivers Employment Services
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Chapter 1. Introduction to Neighborhood Networks and the Process of Organizing a Center

What is Neighborhood Networks?

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative launched by HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing in September 1995 that encourages the development of resource and community technology centers in HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing. HUD provides the framework for launching the initiative and the centers. Property owners, residents and managers work together to develop partnerships with local businesses, churches, schools, private foundations and other community organizations to create, operate and sustain Neighborhood Networks centers.

What is a Neighborhood Networks Center?

A Neighborhood Networks center is a place that provides opportunities for education, training, supportive services and connections to the surrounding community for residents of multifamily apartment complexes. Residents participate in the planning, creation, growth and ongoing operations of the center, making Neighborhood Networks unique among welfare-to-work programs.

A Neighborhood Networks center is a means for community residents to become self-sufficient by improving their employability and connecting with people and resources within the community. A successful Neighborhood Networks center helps residents improve their education level, gain job-related skills (such as word processing and accessing the Internet's World Wide Web), build personal job readiness skills, and create jobs and businesses using the center computers. These centers are places where the residents can gather together and connect to the entire community. While Neighborhood Networks centers can be created anywhere within a community, this manual is primarily addressed to owners, property managers and residents of HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing.

How is a Successful Neighborhood Networks Center Created?

Essential to every Neighborhood Networks center is the development of a business plan. A business plan is the formal plan for the center's programs and operation and is the primary method for ensuring sustainability of the center.

Creating a Neighborhood Networks center requires five steps which are summarized below. Each of these steps is discussed in this document.

(1) Form a Neighborhood Networks center steering committee or advisory board, including residents and selected members of the broader community, and decide upon a governance structure for the center (see Chapter 1).

(2) Identify the educational and employment needs, interests and talents of the residents through interviews and surveys; take an inventory of the many and varied neighborhood institutions in the

community that could be Neighborhood Networks center partners; build partnerships that bring resources to the center (see Chapter 2).

(3) Design programs, such as adult education, job preparation, job placement, afterschool, electronic commerce and senior programs to match resident needs, interests, and talents with the resources available from existing neighborhood institutions (see Chapter 3).

(4) Consider the operational needs of the Neighborhood Networks center, such as hardware, software, staff and the center's financial requirements (see Chapters 4, 5, and 6).

(5) Draft the business plan, mapping out the Neighborhood Networks center's operational and financial needs so interested parties and funders can "buy into" the effort (see Chapter 7). Also, refer to HUD Handbook 4381.5, Chapter 9 for business plan format and content information (see the Neighborhood Networks website at http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org). **Note: The business plan must be submitted to and approved by HUD before opening the center.**

How Long Will it Take to Create a Neighborhood Networks Center?

The time required to create a Neighborhood Networks center depends upon many variables, such as staff, computers, participants, space and available funds for operations. For example, a Neighborhood Networks center can be established within a short time if a supervisor is employed and computers and vacant space in the housing development are available for the residents to use immediately. In general, however, it is likely to take six to eight months to establish a center. This timeframe also assumes steering committee members have constraints on their time, such as full-time jobs and families, which means that the time given to the Neighborhood Networks center will be limited.

The following is a *suggested* process for the creation of a Neighborhood Networks center, beginning with the decision to proceed. Establishment of a timeline early in the planning period with the expected completion date for each of the steps in the development process will help ensure that creation of the center moves forward at a reasonable pace.

Steps 1 and 2: Organizing the Steering Committee; Assembling and Assessing Essential Information

(1) Form the Neighborhood Networks center steering committee.

Distribute information about the business plan to the steering committee members.

Conduct the first steering committee meeting; establish subcommittees of the steering committee to assemble information for the business plan (see Chapter 1).

(2) Assess the educational and employment needs and talents of residents through questionnaires and surveys.

Identify community assets and resources (see Chapter 2).

Steps 3 and 4: Designing a Program and Identifying Needs

(3) Steering committee reviews the results of the resident educational and employment needs assessment.

Steering committee reviews community assets and resources and develops a list of potential partners.

Steering committee develops a program for the Neighborhood Networks center (see Chapter 3).

(4) Determine the Neighborhood Networks center start-up needs: number of computers, types of computer hardware and software, space requirements, wiring and telephone lines, security issues and insurance (see Chapter 4).

Steps 5 and 6: Designing Neighborhood Networks Center Operations and Financing

(5) Develop a schedule for the Neighborhood Networks center.

Identify initial staff needs, whether the staff will be full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer.

Design a community outreach strategy for recruiting partners.

Establish procedures for periodic evaluation (see Chapter 5) of the center.

(6) Assemble a startup budget and an operating budget for ongoing expenses (see Chapter 6). The operating budget should project income and operating expenses.

Step 7: Drafting and Submitting the Business Plan

(7) Draft the business plan in accordance with HUD Handbook 4381.5, Chapter 9 (see Chapter 7 and the "Using Chapter (1 through 6) to Develop the Business Plan" section at the end of Chapters 1 through 6). Submit the completed business plan to the HUD Field Office.

Establishing a Neighborhood Networks Center Steering Committee

One of the most important tasks that the Neighborhood Networks center will undertake is assembling the steering committee. Organizing the steering committee is important because the Neighborhood Networks center organizer alone rarely has all the experience needed to establish a center. The organizer will find the expertise of committee members useful in the center's development.

Therefore, at a minimum, the steering committee should consist of the Neighborhood Networks center organizer (who will probably be the owner of the housing development, the property manager or a resident), resident representatives, representatives of the local business community, representatives from

the educational community and one or more professionals (such as accountants and attorneys). The number of members of the steering committee depends on the Neighborhood Networks center's needs. As key neighborhood institutions, as defined in Chapter 2, are identified, members may be added to the steering committee.

The remainder of this section discusses the roles and basic tasks of each steering committee member.

Neighborhood Networks Center Organizer

The Neighborhood Networks center organizer has the idea to establish a center. The organizer pulls the pieces together and makes key decisions about how to make the center operational.

Resident Representative

The Neighborhood Networks center's purpose is to assist residents on a journey to economic independence. Residents must be included in the steering committee. The resident representative can help publicize the development of the Neighborhood Networks center among the residents and provide information about the residents to the steering committee. The resident representative can coordinate the "Assessment of Resident Needs" survey door to door and obtain information from the residents. The resident representative can also encourage resident participation at the center.

Business Community Representative

A representative of the local business community can bring special skills, expertise and, possibly, other business support to the center. For example, a local technology company representative may be able to offer knowledge about computer hardware and software; a corporate representative from a human resources company may offer expertise in staff development and training; and an employment services representative might help with job preparation and placement.

Professionals

The Neighborhood Networks center will need the assistance of a variety of professionals at various stages of its development. For example, an accountant is needed to set up the accounting system. Tracking and reporting of income and expenses is important, and an accounting system will assist the organization to keep within its budget. Partners will want to see the Neighborhood Networks center's track record. The records generated by the accounting system are an important piece of the track record.

The center should consider obtaining the services of an attorney to assist in the establishment of the Neighborhood Networks center. A lawyer may be needed for the following actions:

❑ Establishing the Neighborhood Networks center as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation under state and federal laws.

❑ Obtaining a variance from the local planning body if a vacant apartment is used as the Neighborhood Networks center.

❑ Reviewing leases for any space used by the center.

❑ Reviewing any insurance policies.

Representative of the Educational Community

Representatives from the educational community (local schools, community colleges, colleges and universities) will be valuable members of the steering committee. Educators not only will know what the school system offers but also may provide access to other organizations, resources and information. The educational community also may be a valuable source of volunteers, instructors and survey takers.

Other Members

After several months, the steering committee may discover a need to add new members. For example, people with knowledge of equipment acquisition, fundraising and staffing may be valuable. In addition, as neighborhood partners with resources that the Neighborhood Networks center can tap into are identified by the steering committee (see Chapter 2), representatives of these potential partners may be added.

Governing the Neighborhood Networks Center

The steering committee will have to address who is going to "own" the Neighborhood Networks center and how decisions about the center will be made. There are multiple options for the governance structure, as described in the following paragraphs. Whatever structure is selected, it must be described fully in the business plan (see Chapter 7). The most likely forms of governance structure are:

❑ **Governance by the community**. The steering committee develops organizational documents (such as articles of incorporation and bylaws) that call for the establishment of a nonprofit corporation. The nonprofit corporation would be governed by a board of directors elected from certain categories of people from the community such as residents, neighbors, professionals and so forth.

❑ **Governance by the residents**. Under this scenario, the steering committee also establishes a nonprofit corporation. However, the board of directors would be comprised solely of residents.

❑ **Governance by the property owner**. If a property owner is the primary catalyst for the creation of the Neighborhood Networks center, the owner may simply want the center to be an extension of the other services provided at the property site. This may be especially true if the owner is providing a majority of the center's financing. In that situation, there may be no separate ownership structure created for the Neighborhood Networks center. However, the owner is likely to establish a formal advisory group made up of residents and other interested parties who will provide guidance and feedback to the property management on the center's operations.

Whether it is a board of directors or an advisory board, the Neighborhood Networks center's governing body should meet on a regular basis. The board should consist of between five and 15 people to allow for orderly meetings and constructive work to be performed.

Using Chapter 1 to Develop the Business Plan

The business plan should include the following information from this chapter:

❑ A timeline for opening the Neighborhood Networks center.

❑ A list of steering committee members.

❑ A description of the governance structure of the Neighborhood Networks center.

Chapter 2. Assessing Resident Needs and Interests and Identifying Community Assets and Interests

Introduction

The steering committee or advisory council needs to collect information from the residents about their needs and interests before it determines the programs that the center will offer. It must also maintain an awareness of the employment needs and skills in the local community. The center's ability to provide these programs will depend, in large part, upon the partnerships developed by the center with groups already active in the community. Ultimately, the survival of the center will depend upon its ability to match the needs of the residents with community resources that can help to meet those needs.

This chapter discusses ways to collect information about residents and to identify potential partners in the community who are likely to have resources useful to the center. Chapter 3 will help the steering committee analyze this information.

Assessing Resident Needs and Interest

Why Assess Resident Needs and Interests?

Every community or neighborhood is made up of many different groups of people. Assessing their needs and interests is a way to find out about the people that the center wants to serve so the programs developed by the center will match the people who live in the community. Also, information on potential center users is an important part of the business plan (see Chapter 7).

The assessment should help the steering committee determine:

❑ How much space the center needs and what equipment is desirable.

❑ The center schedule that best accommodates residents.

❑ The types of classes and workshops that the center should offer.

❑ The types of computers and software programs, and associated wiring, that will be needed.

❑ The number and types of teachers that will be required.

What Information is Collected in an Assessment of Resident Needs?

To help develop center programs and meet the needs and interests of the residents, the steering committee needs to collect information about the population to be served, which includes:

❑ Age, sex and ethnic background of all household members, level of education achieved, computer skill level, occupation and sources of income.

❑ Work skills and experience gained in employment, in the home, or in the community, which may translate into new employment or business opportunities.

❑ Needs and interests including education, jobs, afterschool activities, child care, elder services and business interests.

How Do You Gather the Information Needed to Complete an Assessment of Residents Needs?

Develop a Survey or List of Questions

The first thing that the steering committee must do is figure out what information it wants collected. The questions to be asked must be complete and important to the establishment of programs for the center. While it would be nice to know a lot about the people who live in the development, the type of information included in the Sample Center Survey, Exhibit 2–1, will provide a strong basis for organizing a center. Questions outside these limits may be perceived as invasions of privacy.

The following steps are designed to help the steering committee develop a list of questions that is complete and essential to the development of programs at the center:

❑ Make a list of all the questions that need to be asked. Look at the information that will be needed for the business plan (see Chapter 7) when developing this list. Exhibit 2–1, the sample Center Survey, can provide a good starting point.

❑ Circulate the list of questions to qualified individuals or organizations (when applicable) to obtain feedback before finalizing the survey.

❑ After the list of questions is completed, eliminate any question that is asked elsewhere.

❑ For each remaining question, consider how the answer to the question will be used.

❑ If the answer to a question will not be helpful in figuring out what possible programs the center should offer or in preparation of the business plan, then do not ask the question.

Ask Questions and Record the Answers

There are many ways to gather information for an assessment of resident needs. This chapter lists four possible ways to collect this data: (1) use resident assessment data that has already been collected; (2) interview key neighborhood leaders or residents; (3) talk to residents in small focus groups; and (4) conducting a neighborhood survey. You may decide to use only one of these methods or several.

❑ **Use assessments that were done by others.** Talk to people in the neighborhood and ask them if they remember any groups that came to survey them in the past year or so, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Labor, employment agencies, educational institutions, etc. If so, contact that organization and ask them to share their survey findings with the steering committee.

❑ **Interview key community leaders or residents.** Conduct one-on-one interviews with key neighborhood leaders or residents. These interviews can be done in person or by telephone.

❑ **Use small focus groups.** Bring together one or more groups of people who share common interests. For example, you may want to bring together groups of unemployed males, seniors, business owners, school-age children or persons with disabilities. The groups that you bring together will depend on who lives in your community and their interests. Each of these groups may have a different set of reasons for wanting to use a center. Additional help on using small focus groups is provided in Exhibit 2–2.

❑ **Conduct a survey of residents.** A survey can be a good way to determine if and how the center should be developed. Additional guidance on conducting a survey can be found in Exhibit 2–3.

Choose an Appropriate Method for Gathering Data

Table 2–1 lists issues to consider before deciding which method(s) to use.

In fact, in some situations, information gathering may be unnecessary. For example, Good Shepherd Ministries (Washington, D.C.) did not conduct a needs assessment survey because it had been serving the same population for many years with non-computer-based services.

Table 2-1 Ways to Assess the Community Needs		
Data Collection Method	**Reasons to Use**	**Reasons Not to Use**
Use assessments that were done by others	❑ Involves less effort ❑ Does not recreate what others have already done ❑ Helps establish partnerships with other groups who have similar interests ❑ Costs little	❑ The data may not meet all of your needs ❑ The data may not always be accurate ❑ The data may be out of date
Interview key community leaders	❑ Builds support from community lenders ❑ Helps identify possible problems early in the planning ❑ Costs little	❑ Key leaders or residents usually do not represent all of the community
Use small focus groups	❑ Identifies skills and needs that are unique to specific groups ❑ Costs little	❑ It may be difficult to talk to all groups in the community ❑ Small groups of residents do not always speak for the larger group
Conduct resident survey	❑ Gives valuable information needed for planning ❑ Educates residents about possible activities as they are being planned ❑ Identifies potential volunteers	❑ Time-consuming to do ❑ Costly to undertake ❑ May require assistance of trained professionals
Use several methods	❑ More complete data ❑ Involves many interested people and	❑ Multiple methods are more time-consuming and more

	groups	expensive

Mapping Neighborhood Institutions and Identifying Community Assets or Resources

Because property owners and HUD have limited resources for operating the center, the steering committee must look to other organizations to see if their programs or assets can be useful to the center. We refer to these as "community assets" or "resources." These resources will be found at neighborhood institutions, both public and private. This section sets out the process for "mapping" or "inventorying" the community's assets.

This inventory is the beginning of a process in which the steering committee can try to connect community resources with center needs and resources in order to build partnerships within the community. Three steps are required to begin to "connect" a center to specific assets within the neighborhood:

Step 1: Make a List or Inventory of Key Neighborhood Institutions

The inventory is simply a list of the neighborhood and community institutions that could be helpful in starting up and operating a center.

Step 2: Make a Comprehensive List or Inventory of the Resources or Assets of Each Neighborhood Institution

Each institution identified in Step 1 possesses resources that may be useful to a center. Step 2 requires the steering committee to examine each institution for the resources it can offer. The inventory of resources should include courses and programs, personnel, space and facilities, equipment, jobs, economic power, money and outsourcing opportunities.

Step 3: Identity the Role of Potential Community Partners

Pick out those neighborhood institutions that are most likely to be Neighborhood Networks center partners and specify what role these institutions would play in the center.

Creating a List of the Neighborhood Institutions

To begin identifying community resources, the steering committee must make a list of neighborhood institutions, both public and private, that could be helpful in starting up and operating a center. The list can be developed using a combination of methods, such as basic research, Internet research, telephone calls and in-person meetings. Exhibit 2–4 may be used to record basic information about each institution. The following is a list of types of institutions and potential partners likely to be important and possible ways to identify them:

❑ **Schools**. Use the phone book to identify the preschools, public and private kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools and high schools serving the neighborhood. Also include

vocational schools, because they are a source of people with valuable computer and other technical skills. School district personnel should also be added to the list.

❑ **Colleges**. Again, use the phone book to identify community colleges, junior colleges, four-year colleges and universities. Explore whether there are campuses and extension services located in the community.

❑ **Religious institutions**. Identify places of worship through the phone book, hospitals and hotels.

❑ **Libraries**. The phone book, local government and schools will be able to assist in compiling a list of area libraries.

❑ **Local businesses**. Initial sources of information for identifying local businesses include general membership organizations and associations, such as the local chamber of commerce, the Kiwanas Club and the Rotary Club. When meeting with these organizations, ask them to tell you which of their members are active in your neighborhood.

Identify local businesses that would be useful to a center, such as technology companies, software companies, public relations firms, accountants, lawyers, banks, copying centers, plumbers, electricians, furniture companies, telephone and utility companies, and employment agencies. While their benefits to centers are not entirely obvious, banks, utilities and telephone companies often have area development, economic development or community development staff who engage in creating links with community projects. Employment agencies can offer job skills training and employment opportunities.

Government sources for information on business organizations, corporate headquarters, and other corporations include the state Department of Commerce, the Department of Labor's "One Stop Capital Shops," and the federal Small Business Administration office.

❑ **Specific government agencies**. The phone book may be the best source for such information. Identify the municipal, county or regional offices that administer housing, community or economic development, welfare, senior citizen and education/training programs. The list should also include local housing authorities and state and federal government offices in your community that administer similar programs. When speaking with government representatives, ask them for names of community-based organizations serving the Neighborhood Networks center neighborhood.

❑ **Community-based organizations**. Sources of information for identifying community-based organizations include newspapers, directories and other print sources. Most local papers, whether dailies, weeklies or monthlies, publish community calendars, announcements and news about local organizations. A monthly regional magazine may list volunteer and self-help groups. Often, directories may be published by local community newspapers, local political leaders, the public library, United Way, churches and community organizations.

❑ **Directories**. The following general directories also may be helpful:

- **The phone book**. In the yellow pages, check the listings under Associations, Organizations and Fraternities. In the white pages, look under the name of the neighborhood or under the name of ethnic groups predominant in the neighborhood and see if there are listings for community-based organizations.

- **Encyclopedia of associations.** This directory is published by the Gale Research Company (www.gale.com) and is usually available in public libraries. The annually published encyclopedia lists national, regional, state, and local organizations that may be useful for your center's goals.

- **Self-help directories**. Hospitals often publish lists of self-help groups (for new mothers, widows or widowers, etc.)

❑ **Television stations**. Again, the telephone book will give listings of the public and private television and cable stations serving the center's community.

❑ **Police**. Local police precincts can be easily located through the phone book.

❑ **Hospitals**. Locate hospitals, clinics, first aid squads, and emergency medical operations by using the phone book.

❑ **Public housing authorities**. Oftentimes, the location of HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing is in the same neighborhood as locally owned public housing. The local public housing authority (PHA) can usually be easily located in the phone book.

❑ **Electronic resources**. The Internet is a valuable resource for finding neighborhood information as well as national resources.

Developing a List of the Resources Available at Each Neighborhood Institution

Once the steering committee has finished making its list of neighborhood institutions, it can then contact each organization to identify any resources that may be useful to a center. Table 2–2 illustrates the general types of resources or assets that are commonly found at each type of institution, including:

❑ **Training programs and classes** that would complement the center's likely program areas, including adult education, afterschool activities, job preparation, job placement, elder services and small business activity.

❑ **Personnel with expertise** that the center is likely to need, such as accountants, teachers, business advisers and computer repair people.

❑ **Space/facilities** to house the center.

❑ **Equipment**, such as computers, printers, modems and software.

❑ **Jobs** for graduates of the center.

❑ **Economic power**, such as the ability to buy supplies in bulk to save the center money.

❑ **Money** for cash contributions to the center.

❑ **Outsourcing opportunities** where the center could be hired by the neighborhood institution to undertake a task it usually performs itself, such as payroll processing, data processing or inventory control.

Table 2-2 Types of Resources Found at Neighborhood Institutions	Course/ Programs	Personnel/ Teachers	Space/ Facilities	Equipment	Employment/ Jobs	Economic Power	Money	Outsourcing Opportunities
Schools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Colleges	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Libraries	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Local Businesses		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Government Agencies		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Religious Institutions	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Community-Based Organizations	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Television Stations		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Police		✓	✓			✓		
Hospitals		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Housing Authority		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

A detailed discussion about the specific types of resources that a center is likely to find at each type of institution can be found in Exhibit 2–5. The steering committee can contact each institution and determine whether these assets are, in fact, available. Exhibit 2–6, Inventory of Resources Available, can be used to record this information as it is gathered. The information recorded in Exhibit 2–6 can be detailed to assist the steering committee in realistically determining who the most likely neighborhood partners will be and what they can bring to the center's efforts.

What Should the Steering Committee do with all this Information?

By using Exhibit 2–6, the steering committee has collected a lot of information about its neighborhood institutions. Now, the steering committee needs to identify the role it is going to ask these institutions to play in the center and how the institution's existing programs will fit into the center's activities. Using Exhibit 2–7, the steering committee can write down the name of the neighborhood institutions and the exact role that the organization's assets will play in the center. For example, if the local community college has a GED

program, the steering committee would write the name of the community college on Exhibit 2–7 and state that the college's role is to be a source for providing GED training to center users. In Chapter 3, the steering committee will use the information it collected using Exhibit 2–7 to determine the appropriate program areas for the center and to answer questions in the business plan about how the center will meet its physical (e.g., space and computers) and staffing needs, as well as identifying sources of funds and in-kind donations for the center's operations. In addition, the steering committee can conduct research at the local library on the history of contributions from each company or foundation that is required to submit reports of these activities.

Does this Idea of Building Neighborhood Partnerships Really Work?

What follows is a description of how some community-based computer centers have been able to partner with neighborhood institutions to meet the needs of the centers' users:

Schools

These examples illustrate the kinds of relationships that can exist between a local school and a center:

❑ Ames Elementary School of Marrero, Louisiana, provides a "Parents on Board" seminar designed to teach parents how to foster higher academic achievement in their children. This benefits residents of the Foundations for Freedom Learning Center.

❑ Arlington High School of Indianapolis, Indiana, provides assistance in the computer lab of the New Life Community Technology Center.

❑ Manzanita Elementary School helps the Council House Computer Center of Tucson, Arizona. Students work in an intergenerational setting to share their computer skills with residents.

❑ Massachusetts Academy of Math and Science students spend their community service hours at Plumley Village, in Worcester, Massachusetts working with both children and adults to assist with computer training and tutoring.

Colleges

The following examples illustrate the relationships that can exist between a local college and a center:

❑ The Anne Arundel Community College in Annapolis, Maryland, teaches GED classes at the Bay Ridge Apartments Neighborhood Networks Center.

❑ The Berean Institute, a vocational school, offers distance learning programs leading to associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, certified networks engineer certification and certified network administrator's certification. This partnership benefits the Montgomery Townhouses Neighborhood Networks center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Libraries

The following example illustrates the relationship that can exist between a local library and a center:

❑ The Dillard University Library coordinates its college students to assist in tutoring at Versailles Arms I and the Foundations for Freedom Learning Center in Marreo, Louisiana.

Local Businesses

The following examples illustrate the kinds of partnerships that can be established between local businesses and a center:

❑ Lewis and Scott, Attorneys at Law, provide up to four hours of free legal service per month at Houston's Billie Joyce Center.

❑ PC Teknar of Farmington Hills, Michigan, installs computer systems for the Martin Luther King Neighborhood Networks Computer Center.

❑ Clary Office Machines helps with software installation at the Brunswick Village Neighborhood Networks Center in Southport, North Carolina.

❑ The Wisconsin Physicians Service and Sears National Data Entry Office are hiring Northport and Packer Apartments residents who have completed computer-related training at the center in Madison, Wisconsin.

Government Agencies

The following examples illustrate the types of partnerships a local government can have or facilitate with a center:

❑ The Clemson College and 4–H of Charleston, South Carolina, offer Supersitter Babysitter Training for teens so they can babysit children of parents who attend the Family Literacy Program (a pre-GED class) at Bayside Gardens and Manor Community Center.

❑ Child, Inc., of Austin, Texas, collaborates with the public housing authority to provide day care at the Oak Creek Community Center.

❑ In Sacramento, California, the Department of Human Services Education and Training Agency provides a Head Start program and nutrition/cooking classes. A member of the staff has also taught computer classes.

Religious Institutions

The following example illustrates the type of partnership a religious institution can have with a center:

❑ Central Presbyterian Church of Des Moines, Iowa, helps the Oakridge Neighborhood Networks Center by tutoring and helping children with their homework.

Community-Based Organizations

The following examples illustrate the relationships that can exist between community-based organizations and a center:

❑ The civic organization known as 100 Black Men of Pensacola, Florida Inc., provides mentors, postage and office supplies to the Pensacola Village Neighborhood Networks Center.

❑ The AARP-Senior Employment Service offers classes and helps to find employment for the older residents of La Grave Place Neighborhood Learning Center of Fargo, North Dakota.

❑ Goodwill Industries of South Jersey provides job preparation/employability seminars for the residents of the Penn Village Community Technology Center in Maple Shade, New Jersey.

Police Departments

The following examples illustrate the relationships that can exist between police and a center:

❑ The Madison, Wisconsin, Police Department mentors young residents through the Cops and Kids on Computers program at the Northport and Packer Apartments Neighborhood Networks Center.

❑ The 19th Police District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, provides crime prevention resources at the Haddington Townhouse Neighborhood Networks Center.

❑ Richmond Police Activities League (PAL) of Richmond, California, teaches computer classes for the Crescent Park Apartments' youths and children at its Computer Excellence facility. Then the children practice the skills at the Crescent Park Neighborhood Networks Center.

Internet Service Providers

The following example illustrates the relationship that can exist between an Internet service provider and a center:

❑ Lighthouse Communications of West Des Moines, Iowa, connected Oakridge Neighborhood Networks Center to the world wide web and obtained an e-mail account for participants.

Private Volunteers

The following example illustrates the relationship that can exist between private volunteers and a center:

❑ Jackie Dunbar of Virginia Beach, Virginia, helps the We Care Center through organizing and scheduling classes and other activities for residents and partners.

Using Chapter 2 to Develop the Business Plan

The business plan includes the following information from this chapter:

❑ The results of the needs assessment.

❑ The results of the center's survey of community partners and assets.

Exhibit 2-1

Neighborhood Networks Center Survey

Section A – General Resident Information

1. Name: _____

   Address: _____

   _____

   _____

2. Which of the following categories best describes your racial/ethnic background?

   ❑ American Indian/Alaskan Native

   ❑ Asian

   ❑ Black

   ❑ Hispanic

   ❑ White

   ❑ Other (specify)

3. Starting with yourself, indicate the age for each *adult* member of your household. (Adults are persons age 18 or older.)

	Age
You (1)	_____
Household Member 2	_____
Household Member 3	_____
Household Member 4	_____
Household Member 5	_____
Household Member 6	_____

4. Starting with yourself, indicate the highest level of education completed for each *adult* member of your household. (Adults are persons age 18 or older.)

	Not a High School Graduate	High School Graduate/GED	College Graduate
You (1)	❑	❑	❑
Household Member 2	❑	❑	❑
Household Member 3	❑	❑	❑
Household Member 4	❑	❑	❑
Household Member 5	❑	❑	❑
Household Member 6	❑	❑	❑

5. Indicate the sources of your household income. *Check all boxes that apply.*

- ❑ Wages or pay from a job
- ❑ Income from self-employment
- ❑ Pension
- ❑ Social Security retirement
- ❑ Child support or alimony
- ❑ AFDC
- ❑ General assistance
- ❑ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ❑ Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)
- ❑ Unemployment benefits
- ❑ Other (specify)

6. How long have you been receiving any of the following types of income?

AFDC	_____
General assistance	_____
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	_____
Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)	_____
Unemployment benefits	_____

7. Can you read and write in English?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

   If yes, how would you rate your ability to read and write in English?
   ❑   Good   ❑   Fair   ❑   Poor

8. Do you know how to use a computer?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

   If yes, describe your computer skills _____

   _____

9. Do you want to learn how to use a computer?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

10. Please check any computer skills you already have. *Check all that apply.*

- ❑ Word processing
- ❑ Spreadsheets
- ❑ Database
- ❑ Internet
- ❑ E-mail

11. Would you like to own a business?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

   If yes, what kind? _____

12. Do you already run a business (including out of your home)?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

   If yes, describe the type of business you run _____

13. What is the full name of your place of worship? (optional)

   _____

Section B – Employment

1. What is your current employment status?

   ❑ Employed full-time   Please list your job title: _____

   ❑ Employed part-time   Please list your job title: _____

   ❑ Self-employed

   ❑ Unemployed

2. Have you interviewed for a job in the last 2 years?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

   If you are currently employed, please answer the following questions:

3. Did you prepare a résumé to get the job?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

4. Do you work with computers on the job?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

5. Did you receive any computer training for the job?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

   If yes, describe: _____

   _____

6. Is there a different job you would rather be doing?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

   If yes, describe the job: _____

   _____

   If you are not employed but interested in working, please answer the following questions:

7. What kind of work are you looking for? _____

8. Are you looking for full-time or part-time work? _____

9. What additional training do you feel you need to find a job? _____

_____

If you are retired or over 60, please answer the following questions:

10. What was your occupation? _____

11. Did you work with computers?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

If yes, describe how you used them (such as, Internet or wordprocessing) _____

_____

If no, do you want to learn how to use a computer?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

12. Were you a member of any trade organization?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

If yes, please list the name(s) _____

13. Would you participate in learning computer skills or
    training others if a computer facility was close by?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

Section C – Childcare

1. Indicate the age of each *child* who normally lives in the household. (Children are persons age 17 or younger.)

❑ No Children

	Age
Child 1	_____
Child 2	_____
Child 3	_____
Child 4	_____
Child 5	_____
Child 6	_____

2. Would you need help with childcare in order to use a computer center?   ❑ Yes   ❑ No

3. Where do your children (6-12 years old), go after school?

_____

_____

4. Do you believe that your children need afterschool activities?　❑ Yes　❑ No

If yes, describe why _____

_____

5. Do you feel that your children would benefit from a
homework center or from tutoring assistance?　❑ Yes　❑ No

6. When do your children have the most free time?

❑ Mornings

❑ Afternoons

❑ Evenings

❑ Weekends

7. What do you and your children usually do in the evenings?

_____

8. Do your children take any computer classes or classes that use computers?　❑ Yes　❑ No

If yes, where do they take classes? _____

9. Would you take them to a computer center if it was located nearby?　❑ Yes　❑ No

Exhibit 2-2

Guidelines for Organizing a Focus Group

Below are guidelines for organizing a focus group to collect information needed to establish the Neighborhood Networks center.

- **Subject**. The focus group should be used to obtain information from residents about their views on a Neighborhood Networks center and their needs and interests.

- **Population**. Each focus group should consist of people with similar interests. For example, groups could be made up of senior citizens, middle school children, teenagers or adults.

- **Group size**. The size of the focus group is important; groups should contain between seven and 10 people. Groups with fewer than seven participants may not give the range of opinions needed and groups with more than 10 participants may not allow all group members to contribute to the discussion. A focus group, nonetheless, can be conducted with as few as four people.

- **Group leader**. A group leader or moderator should be used to lead the focus group discussion. Before the focus group begins, the leader should develop a list of topics to be discussed and keep the discussion on those topics.

- **Note taker**. Someone should be present during the focus group discussion to take notes. After the discussion, the note taker should organize the notes and prepare them in a usable form for the steering committee.

The steering committee can use the findings from the focus groups as a tool in the development of specific program offerings.

Exhibit 2-3

Guidelines for Conducting a Survey of Residents

Conducting a Survey of Residents

There are many options for conducting a resident survey.

Some options include:

- Distributing the survey and having the residents fill in the answers on their own (self-administered survey);

- Bringing the residents together in a large room, distributing the survey and having the residents fill in the answers; or

- Some combination of the above methods.

Points to consider when determining how you want to proceed include:

- The reading ability of the respondents (people who will be providing answers to the questions);

- Whether an outside business, agency or university will conduct the survey; and

- How fast the information from the survey is needed.

Preparing Residents for the Survey

No resident should be interviewed or receive a copy of the survey without some advance notice. Residents must be informed about the survey before they are asked to participate. Methods of informing the residents could include flyers left at each apartment door, flyers in mailboxes, visits door to door and notices posted in common areas. The notices should make it clear what the survey is being used for and why it is important for everyone to participate. It should be made clear that the information provided will be kept in confidence, and that no information on a particular household or resident will be published or otherwise shared.

Scheduling Interviews

If the survey is going to be conducted as an interview, advance scheduling of interviews is critical. The interview should be scheduled about a week in advance. If too much time passes between the scheduling contact and the interview, the interview appointment may have to be changed due to changes in the residents' schedules.

Maintaining Confidentiality

The steering committee's ability to get good information about property residents may hinge on the residents' belief that information provided will be held in the strictest confidence. People are more likely to provide personal information if they know that it will be kept anonymous and used only for clearly stated purposes likely to benefit themselves and the property as a whole.

Collecting Completed Surveys

Completed surveys can be collected in a number of ways, including having residents return the surveys:

- In a stamped, already-addressed return envelope provided by the organizer.

- In collection boxes placed throughout the housing development.

- At meetings and during door-to-door visits sponsored by the organizer.

Reviewing Collected Surveys

Prior to analyzing the surveys, the steering committee should identify the questions they consider to be most important. And, ensure those questions were answered legibly and as directed.

Establishing A Survey Deadline

The organizer must decide how long to wait for the surveys to be returned or to continue dedicating staff to interviewing residents and collecting survey data. Generally, a four-week survey period is reasonable. Thirty to 50 percent of the residents who are going to return the completed surveys will do so within the first week or two. The rest will trickle in over the next two weeks.

Determining the Adequacy of the Response Rate

Organizers will not be able to use survey data to make key decisions about the center unless they are able to collect data from a sufficient number of residents. In survey terminology, this means that organizers must achieve a high response rate to the survey. While there is no magic number that gives a survey credibility, if 75 percent or more of the households return a completed survey (a 75 percent response rate), then the users of the information from the survey should feel confident that they have heard from enough of the residents. Even a 50 percent response rate to a self-administered survey is considered adequate.

Exhibit 2-4

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Schools

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Colleges

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Libraries

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Local Businesses

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Government Agencies

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Religious Institutions

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Community-Based Organizations

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Television Stations

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Police

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Hospitals

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Inventory of Neighborhood Institutions: Public Housing Authority

Name and Type of Institution	Name of Contact Title	Phone Number Fax Number E-Mail Address	Address

Exhibit 2-5

Specific Types of Resources by Neighborhood Institution

Schools

Schools may offer the following resources:

- ❑ **Training programs and classes**. Identify any classes offered in the elementary, middle and high schools that use computers. In addition, identify any computer training classes taught to persons other than students. Through existing classes or newly created evening courses, schools can provide education and training for residents at or as part of the center.

- ❑ **Facilities**. A center could be located in a school.

- ❑ **Materials and equipment**. Computers, telephones, fax machines and photocopying machines in schools can be used in support of, or shared with, the center. The books and library can be used as a resource center.

- ❑ **Purchasing power**. The materials, commodities and services purchased by schools can be used to initiate, support or expand the center.

- ❑ **Teachers/staff**. Teachers are a concentrated pool of highly trained adults with critical skills and essential knowledge that can be contributed to the efforts of local groups involved in the establishment and operations of the center. In addition, technical staff at schools may be able to provide services, such as ongoing maintenance of center equipment. Ask if the school or school system has a computer coordinator who might help with center training.

- ❑ **Young people**. Students with ideas, energy and idealism can become important participants, employees and volunteers at the center.

- ❑ **Financial capacity**. Schools have the power to generate and receive special funds through bond issues and proposals to government agencies, corporations, and foundations. This special capacity is not usually accessible to community groups and can be an important resource in funding a center.

- ❑ **Outsourcing**. Schools often contract out work, such as data processing, that could be performed at the center. In addition, schools may need small business support activities in connection with special school functions such as plays, sporting events, dances and car washes.

Colleges

Institutions of higher learning differ from each other in many ways. Each offers unique resources and opportunities. Yet, every type of college, whether large or small, urban or rural, offers resources that can be mobilized effectively to assist in establishing the center.

❑ **Training programs and classes**. Identify any classes offered to students, the community and alumni that use computers. Identify any computer training programs offered to administrative staff.

❑ **Personnel**. Faculty and administrative staff are highly-trained adults whose skills and knowledge can be tapped. For example, some faculty members may be experts in how to set up and use computers, and some administrators may be extremely helpful in organizing fundraising and grant-writing activities. These people may be excellent steering committee members. Like schools, colleges will have technical staff able to provide services, such as installation and/or ongoing maintenance.

❑ **Space and facilities**. Colleges have space that can be used by community organizations. Unlike most schools and universities, community colleges tend to be most active in the late afternoon and evening. This means the space may be available during the morning and early afternoon.

❑ **Materials and equipment**. Colleges vary greatly in terms of the specific materials and equipment they have to share with the residents of the community. All colleges, however, have at leat some of the resources listed below:

- Computers
- Fax and photocopying machines
- Audiovisual equipment
- Printing equipment
- Darkroom and other photographic equipment
- Books, videos and audiotapes
- Art materials
- Musical instruments
- Furniture
- Telephones

Colleges can provide Internet access to the center for free or at a nominal charge. This may be the best way to get access for center users.

❑ **Expertise**. Most colleges have learned to reach out to the community and offer classes and workshops beyond the boundaries of the college itself. This means that essential training in a wide variety of practical skills can be offered to individuals and targeted groups, such as seniors, youth and welfare recipients, at the college and at the center.

❑ **Economic power**. Colleges, particularly community colleges, are often able to provide jobs, as well as job training, for residents participating in the center. In addition, colleges often have access to both public and private funds that are available for community-oriented projects. Staff and faculty may provide great assistance in writing grant proposals to support this type of activity and program.

❑ **Outsourcing**. Colleges often contract out work, such as data processing, that could be performed at the center. In addition, colleges may have smaller projects in connection with special events, such as conferences, test centers and homecoming weekends.

Libraries

Libraries are meeting places for young people and community groups. But they are more than storehouses for books and places to meet. They contain a variety of resources, including:

❑ **Training programs and classes**. Identify any classes offered to the community that use computers. Identify any computer training programs offered to administrative staff.

❑ **Personnel**. Librarians have many talents that go far beyond their traditional book lending duties. For example, one might be able to teach a computer class, while another may be able to write grant proposals or instruct residents on how to write grant proposals. Since librarians are often local residents themselves, they are often eager to be involved in activities such as these that will improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

❑ **Space and facilities.** Although these resources will vary depending upon the size and operating budget of each library, all libraries have windows, walls, display cases and bulletin boards where information can be posted. In addition, many libraries have large auditoriums, smaller classrooms and meeting rooms, kitchens, lobbies, parking lots and playrooms.

❑ **Materials and equipment.** One of the main purposes of a library is to make books and other related materials available to interested members of the community. Libraries also have many other types of resources that might include computers, video cassettes, financial information for small business owners, literacy and GED materials, information about other organizations and notices of events taking place in the neighborhood.

❑ **Expertise.** Librarians are information experts. They could teach a class on how to find information. Libraries often offer free classes for people of all ages. Many libraries have established GED, literacy and language classes — and increasingly they are beginning to offer educational workshops on topics such as computer literacy, immigration and crime prevention, as well as arts and crafts, theater, ethnic dancing, exercise and story telling and family writing seminars in which participants compile their poems and stories into anthologies.

❑ **Economic power.** Although some libraries are forced to operate on extremely restricted budgets, most libraries have at their disposal funds that allow them to purchase supplies locally. Some librarians also have the capacity to hire local residents on a part-time basis. Moreover, librarians are frequently able to use their skills to help community organizations and others write and submit grant proposals for the center.

Local Businesses

Businesses that may be useful to centers include technology companies, software companies, real estate developers, realtors, lawyers, banks and utilities. In general, local businesses share common resources. These include:

❑ **Training programs and classes.** Identify any training classes offered to employees that use computers. Find out if the company offers any or would be interested in offering any training programs to the community.

❑ **Space and facilities.** Real estate development companies may be able to donate space and realtors may know someone who might donate space. In addition, large corporations often have inventories of vacant or unused space which, if asked, they might be willing to donate or rent at below-market value. Technology and software companies may have facilities to train teachers or other center personnel or may donate equipment and software.

❑ **Economic power.** Insurance companies, banks, telephone companies and utility companies are typically large businesses. As such, they often will have offices of community development or economic development for the sole purpose of being involved in the community in which they are located. Their involvement can mean cash grants (sometimes on a continuing basis), in-kind contributions including public relations assistance, and political support (which means that if the corporate community is involved, often, political officials will follow).

❑ **Expertise.** Every local business employs people with valuable training and technical skills that can help the center. For example, employees of technology companies can offer technical assistance in selecting hardware and installing it and electricians can provide assistance in wiring the center. Software employees may be able to offer training to center staff on new software and its applications. Lawyers can review leases and contracts. Accountants can set up the books. Plumbers can give maintenance help.

❑ **Materials and equipment.** Many businesses regularly update their computer equipment, both hardware and software, and welcome the opportunity to donate their old equipment to needy community groups. Furniture companies and office supply stores may also be a source for equipping the center or perhaps furnishing it at low cost. Copying centers may offer discounts to center members. Telephone companies, if asked, may provide free hookups to the Internet.

❑ **Unique resources.** Commercial banks have obligations to the community in which they are located under the federal Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). When speaking to a bank representative, also ask to speak with the CRA officer to find out what type of CRA lending they provide. You may want to provide them with your business plan and see if the bank will help fund your operation.

❑ **Outsourcing.** Local businesses often contract out work, such as data processing, that could be performed at the center.

Specific Government Agencies

Neighborhood institutions already providing resources to residents in developments where centers are being created include local, state and federal governments and agencies. In fact, many local governments distribute block grants, often allocated by HUD, that could be available to a center. These already funded programs provide services, such as job training and preparation, which could be offered at your center. Governments may also be excellent sources for outsourcing of work to the center.

Religious Institutions

Every neighborhood contains a variety of religious institutions including Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and others, and they can be mobilized effectively to assist in establishing a center.

❑ **Training programs and classes.** Identify any computer classes offered to members and to the community. Find out if the church/synagogue/hall would be interested in offering any programs in the community.

❑ **Personnel.** Churches and other religious institutions are *staffed* by people who are not only well trained and educated but who also have many special skills, interests and access to the community. In addition, the *members* of the religious organization bring with them a wide variety of special skills, interests and concerns that can be of value. For example, teachers, business leaders, plumbers and carpenters can usually be found within the membership of a local religious institution and each of these members has particular skills that can be utilized effectively in a center. The members could be a terrific source of volunteers.

❑ **Space and facilities.** Many religious institutions have at least one large meeting room, classroom space, office space, basement, lobby and some open, unused space. In addition, other larger, more fully equipped churches and synagogues may also have a gymnasium, library and school. All these resources can become essential assets in the creation and operation of a center.

❑ **Materials and equipment.** Many local religious institutions have computers, photocopiers, fax machines, educational supplies, and furniture, such as tables and chairs. Other larger churches and synagogues may also have a bus or van, and video and/or audio taping equipment that can be borrowed by the center.

Community-Based Organizations

These groups are the most valuable resource a center can utilize because they are already involved in a grassroots effort to improve the community. They also have the knowledge and resources of operating an effective organization. Examples of community-based organizations include groups that help women and children, and teach literacy, job training and healthcare.

❑ **Training programs and classes**. Many organizations have programs that the center can utilize. This list can include a literacy organization, can teach residents to read or offer GED preparation classes. An organization that trains women to get ready for interviews can deliver the same classes at your center. A "drug-free" program can teach residents how to get drugs out of their environment or help people who want to stop being drug dependent.

❑ **Personnel**. Community-based leaders are experts in their areas of interest. They have spent years learning how to get things done on their own and through government agencies. More importantly, they chose this profession because they want to help others. Volunteers from the organization could also be a great asset because they know about available programs, are involved in the surrounding community and have the time to give to their community.

❑ **Space and facilities**. Most organizations have their own space that could be used for meetings and training. And, classes and programs that the organization offers could be held there.

❑ **Expertise**. The center can learn how to operate more efficiently by learning how these organizations apply for grants, find business partners, identify and commit volunteers or educators, find untapped government resources, and operate within a fixed budget.

Television Stations

The list of neighborhood institutions may include cable companies, public television stations, and local affiliates of television stations. The inventory of resources represented by these entities include personnel, facilities, equipment, and expertise.

❑ **Training programs and classes.** Identify any training classes offered to employees that use computers. Find out if the company offers any or would be interested in offering any training programs to the community.

❑ **Personnel.** Technical staff could provide services such as installation and ongoing maintenance or act as teachers at the center. Personnel may possess special skills in public relations, grant writing (particularly the public television stations), computer utilization, and multimedia applications. Reporters may also be important resources because they have connections within the community and could expose the center to potential supporters, new partners and the community.

❑ **Facilities.** These organizations have facilities for meetings and training on multimedia equipment such as videos, cameras, and audio equipment.

❑ **Equipment.** These organizations possess a variety of multimedia equipment on which the center participants can train. Like businesses, they may also have outdated, unwanted computer hardware and software and audio/video equipment that could be of use to the center.

❑ **Outsourcing.** Television stations often contract out work, such as data processing, that could be performed at the center.

Police

Primarily local police departments, but also housing authority police, are untapped resources that can be mobilized for the purpose of developing and securing a center. A resource inventory of a local police department would include:

❑ **Training programs and classes.** Identify any training classes offered to employees that use computers. Find out if the police department would be interested in offering any training programs to the community.

❑ **Personnel.** Police officers' skills and capacities include technical training in such fields as computers, communications, security, investigation and research, and leadership development and conflict resolution.

In addition, both the police officers and the community relations official for the department could bring their community connections and knowledge to the center. The members of the Police Athletic League (PAL) are also a resource.

❑ **Space and facilities.** Police stations can serve as settings for center meetings and educational activities.

❑ **Economic power.** Police leaders may be able to hire local residents participating in center programs. Since local police stations in large cities are often part of larger police departments, funds from the main police station may be available for special education and community relations projects.

Hospitals

The resources that hospitals possess to assist a center include:

❑ **Training programs and classes.** Identify any training classes offered to employees that use computers. Find out if the hospital would be interested in offering any training programs to the community.

❑ **Personnel.** Hospital personnel include medical, administrative, and maintenance staff and many hospitals are encouraging their staffs to play an active part in the community. Examples of staff involvement could include membership on community boards, volunteering for local projects, and providing technical assistance in such areas as child and health care.

❑ **Space and facilities.** Of the many resources hospitals possess, perhaps the most obvious is its space. Some hospitals are now actively encouraging the community to find ways to use their walls, conference rooms, auditoriums, kitchens, cafeterias, and gyms.

❑ **Materials and equipment.** A listing of assets would include such resources as:

- Computers
- Photocopy machines
- Fax machines
- Audiovisual equipment
- Telephones
- Medical equipment

And like businesses, colleges, and television stations, hospitals continually update their technologies and may be excellent sources for good, but used, equipment.

❑ **Expertise.** Hospital personnel with wide professional skills and experience can reach out to center trainees by explaining and showing them how computer skills are useful in the various areas of the medical profession.

❑ **Economic power.** Hospitals control significant budgets. Hospital leadership may be able to direct some of these resources toward the center.

❑ **Outsourcing.** Hospitals often contract out work, such as data processing, that could be performed at the center. Similarly, smaller projects could be performed by the Neighborhood Networks center, such as brochures about self-help groups who meet at the hospital and flyers for luncheon meetings.

Public Housing Authorities

The list of resources that may be available at public housing authorities includes:

❑ **Training programs and classes.** Many public housing authorities (PHAs) have developed Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) programs using federal funds. These programs often include learning centers with job preparation and life skills workshops and even computer facilities. Selected public housing authorities have been awarded significant funding under HUD's HOPE 6 program. Under this program, and HUD's Community of Learners effort, the PHAs are planning community computer centers like the Neighborhood Networks centers described in this manual.

❑ **Personnel.** Many PHAs have staff members with skills that could be helpful to the Neighborhood Networks center such as public relations, fundraising, and maintenance.

❑ **Space/facilities.** PHAs may have underutilized community rooms.

❑ **Jobs.** Local PHAs may be a source for jobs for center graduates either in PHA administrative offices or in PHA-sponsored rehabilitation or construction projects.

❑ **Economic power.** Many PHAs purchase goods in bulk and control millions of dollars in purchasing power. The Neighborhood Networks center may be able to take advantage of the PHA's large scale of operations.

❑ **Money.** As noted above, under the HOPE 6 program, the PHAs may have funds to create a computer center that could be developed jointly with the Neighborhood Networks center.

❑ **Outsourcing.** Many PHAs contract out for services such as data processing, payroll, newsletter production, etc. This may be an excellent source of outsourcing opportunities.

Exhibit 2-6

Inventory of Resources Available

Name of Institution	Training Programs and Classes	Personnel	Space/ Facilities	Equipment	Jobs	Funding	Small Business Activity/ Outsourcing
Schools							
1.							
2.							
3.							
Colleges							
1.							
2.							
3.							
Libraries							
1.							
2.							
3.							

Name of Institution	Training Programs and Classes	Personnel	Space/ Facilities	Equipment	Jobs	Funding	Small Business Activity/ Outsourcing
Local Businesses 1. 2. 3.							
Government Agencies 1. 2. 3.							
Television Stations 1. 2. 3.							

Name of Institution	Training Programs and Classes	Personnel	Space/ Facilities	Equipment	Jobs	Funding	Small Business Activity/ Outsourcing
Religious Institutions 1. 2. 3.							
Community-Based Institutions 1. 2. 3.							
Police 1. 2. 3.							

Name of Institution	Training Programs and Classes	Personnel	Space/ Facilities	Equipment	Jobs	Funding	Small Business Activity/ Outsourcing
Hospitals 1. 2. 3.							
Other: _____ 1. 2. 3.							
Other: _____ 1. 2. 3.							

Exhibit 2-7

Building Partnerships

Name of Neighborhood Institution	Role in Neighborhood Network Center
Schools 1. 2. 3.	
Colleges 1. 2. 3.	
Libraries 1. 2. 3.	

Name of Neighborhood Institution	Role in Neighborhood Network Center
Local Businesses 1. 2. 3.	
Government Agencies 1. 2. 3.	
Television Stations 1. 2. 3.	

Name of Neighborhood Institution	Role in Neighborhood Network Center
Religious Institutions 1. 2. 3.	
Community-Based Organizations 1. 2. 3.	
Police 1. 2. 3.	
Hospitals 1. 2. 3.	

Name of Neighborhood Institution	Role in Neighborhood Network Center
Other: _____ 1. 2. 3.	
Other: _____ 1. 2. 3.	

Chapter 3. Selecting the Right Program Areas for the Neighborhood Networks Center

The data from the assessment of resident needs and neighborhood institutions (see Chapter 2) was collected for one purpose—to provide the steering committee with the information it needs to make an intelligent decision about the center's program areas. This chapter discusses the likely program areas for a center and the process that the steering committee should follow to determine which areas will best meet residents' needs.

What are Likely Program Areas for a Neighborhood Networks Center?

The areas most likely to be offered by the center include:

❑ Adult education

❑ Afterschool activities

❑ Job preparation

❑ Job placement

❑ Elder services

❑ Business development

A description of each type of program area follows.

Adult Education

Adult education generally includes:

❑ **General Equivalency Degree (GED) training**. This program prepares people to take a test to obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma.

❑ **English as a Second Language (ESL) courses**. These programs teach people the basic skills to speak and understand English. The class concludes with a test measuring students' progress towards fluency.

❑ **Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes**. These classes enable residents to develop the ability to read, write, and perform basic math. Learners progress to GED classes.

❑ **Basic computer literacy workshops**. These workshops introduce people to the keyboard, the mouse, how to turn the machine on and off, and some basic applications that will enable them to

use the computer without supervision and prepare them for more advanced computer training in the future.

Important Considerations for Centers Considering Adult Education Programs

❑ Some adults will require only a few classes to introduce them to computers, after which they may not want further assistance. After they receive initial training, adult presence may increase during public access hours, and demand for adult classes may lessen after a few sessions.

❑ Many adults must bring their children with them. The center should establish a play area and a few classes for the children.

❑ Some adults prefer to learn among other adults rather than in a class integrated with children. The center should, if possible, set aside a classroom and teaching time specifically for adult instruction.

Examples of Successful Adult Education Programs

❑ The Marietta Area Community Computing Center (Marietta, OH) offers ABE classes 4 hours per day on 10 computers in its Apple/Macintosh Center. The adults often return during public access hours to learn other software applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, and graphics design.

❑ The Henry Street Settlement (New York, NY) offers programs for mentally challenged adults aimed at building their self-esteem, teaching them to work and play with other people, and helping them learn problem-solving tools.

Afterschool Activities

This program area includes activities such as:

❑ **Preschool activities**. These classes introduce children to computers using simple software programs such as drawing, animation, and games.

❑ **Elementary school activities**. These classes provide homework help, tutoring assistance, and other activities covering subjects such as reading, writing, math, and science.

❑ **Video games**. Games are often an effective tool for teaching children how to use computers. In addition, video games can just be fun for afterschool entertainment.

❑ **Exploring the Internet**. Once children are equipped with basic computer skills, they may wish to test and improve them by "surfing" the Internet.

Important Considerations for Centers Considering Afterschool Activities

❑ Young people frequently need help. Therefore, the Neighborhood Network center should make sure each computer workstation has space for two people.

❑ Ask the child to make a list of goals, such as improving his/her math grade or writing a report for school, prior to participating in the center's activities.

❑ Assign older children to teach the younger children how to use the computer, play games, and learn other skills.

❑ Provide ample space to move around. Be sure that an optimal amount of space is created.

Examples of Successful Afterschool Activities

❑ Plugged In (East Palo Alto, CA) offers two types of programs for children, teens, families, and adults. They are (1) core programs that are project-based and involve a multidisciplinary approach to content and (2) computer projects/classes where the subject of the projects is technology and its applications. Examples of core programs include Drawing with Pedro, Group Portrait (storytelling), and Kidz Magazine. Computer projects/classes include Kids Basics (introduction to computers) and Kids Advanced (computer business).

❑ PUENTE (People United to Enrich the Neighborhood through Education) Learning Center (Los Angeles, CA) serves close to 2,000 students from age 3 to age 88 each day. The organization has six primary programs whose functions include preparing 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds for school and tutoring children of all ages (from elementary school to high school).

❑ Malden Access Television Studio (Malden, MA) offers a program for children, brought to the studio by the local YMCA, to learn animation software using Fractal Design, Dabbler, and D-Paint.

Job Preparation

Job preparation generally includes both job skills training and job search activities. *Job skills training* includes classes teaching basic computer literacy, keyboarding skills, word processing, graphics applications, spreadsheets, databases, and other office skills. *Job search activities* include résumé writing workshops; interview preparation classes, teaching interviewing skills such as how to dress, what questions to ask, and what is likely to be asked; workplace behavior training; and, how and where to look for a job.

Important Considerations for Centers Considering Job Preparation Programs

The most important consideration for centers is training people for actual jobs. The Steering Committee should consider forming an Employer Advisory Committee that will guide the types of training offered, software selection, and job openings to the types of jobs actually available in the community.

Examples of Successful Job Preparation Programs

❑ Focus Hope–The Fast Track Program (Detroit, MI) runs many adult training programs and provides a computer center for 17- to 23-year-olds who need extra help in reading and math. The center offers computer literacy training 8 hours a day for 7 weeks. At the end of the course,

98 percent of the trainees are successfully placed in colleges, jobs, or the Machinist Training Program, also run by Focus Hope.

❑ Jobs for Youth (Boston, MA) has industries, such as environmental technology and biotechnology development companies, send representatives to the Neighborhood Networks center to establish computer classes for skills that are needed by the companies. People trained in these classes at the center are later hired by the companies.

Job Placement

When a Neighborhood Networks center offers job placement assistance, its activities will resemble an employment agency. The center should develop a database of available jobs in the community. These positions would become known to the center through existing and center-created or center-sponsored sources. Existing sources might include newspapers and local, regional, or national electronic community bulletin boards. The center might create or sponsor new sources such as an Employer Advisory Committee to the center. This body could recruit local businesses to notify the center of vacant or soon-to-be vacant positions, as well as give the center advance notice on new skills the businesses will want their employees to learn. Such new skills training could be part of the center job preparation program. Job openings could be posted on a bulletin board or a community electronic bulletin board, established in a database, or published in a center-based job listings newsletter.

Examples of Successful Job Placement Programs

❑ Three Rivers Employment Services (Pittsburgh, PA) was established in 1987 to provide training in computer skills to low-income adults and to then place the trainees in jobs. Each course has a different focus, including work preparation, vocational training in computer network engineering and data entry, training in office-related applications, computer repair and maintenance training, and training for the Internet and video-conferencing. The courses are demanding and the rate of job placement retention for Three Rivers students is unusually high.

❑ Jobs for Youth (Boston, MA) is closely linked with the business community, who informs the center of any job openings for people with computer skills.

Seniors' Services

Seniors' services include:

❑ Graphic art programs

❑ Games, such as chess, cards and backgammon

❑ Financial planning assistance

❑ Family history programs

❑ Health care services identification

❑ Information services

Important Considerations for Centers Considering Senior Services

Seniors generally prefer to learn about computers in classes made up of other seniors. Offering "seniors only" courses will go a long way toward making them pleased to be at the center and likely to return. In addition, like any other population, seniors learn better in smaller classes and need to be listened to.

Examples of Successful Senior Services

❑ The Somerville Community Computing Center (Somerville, MA) offers a program for seniors only, one is a print shop class in which the seniors make cards and banners.

❑ SeniorNet is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to build an international community of computer-using older adults. Currently, 70 Learning Centers are operating throughout the U.S. and New Zealand. SeniorNet operates a national online network via America On-Line, provides products and services to members, organizes conferences, publicizes the concept of computer-using seniors, and conducts research on the use of computers by older adults. The SeniorNet Learning Centers offer classes specifically designed for older adults. Classes focus on computer skills such as word processing for writing letters and journals, spreadsheets for organizing financial information, databases for organizing information, and telecommunications for communicating with others and obtaining useful information over the Internet.

Business Development

A variety of business activities can be conducted at a center. These types of activities include outsourcing, small business support, self-employment, and entrepreneurship.

❑ **Outsourcing** is an activity in which the center is hired by an organization or business to undertake a task it usually performs itself but chooses to contract out to another organization. Outsourcing activities may include payroll processing, data processing, or inventory. The center might be able to perform tasks for local businesses, government agencies, community-based organizations, or schools for a fee, thereby employing center users who can earn revenue for themselves and the center.

❑ **Small business support** is an activity where the center is made available to center users to support their business operations. Examples include using computers for accounting, tracking inventory, billing, advertising, and so forth. In this arrangement, the center supports business activities of center users, rather than establishing itself as a business.

❑ **Self-employment** is an activity in which center facilities are used by an individual who is hired to perform tasks for a fee, such as designing brochures, creating homepages for the World Wide Web, and providing photocopying services or technical assistance to establish a computer system.

❑ **Entrepreneurship** is a business activity created by a center user or former user in which the person establishes a business at home or at another location using skills learned at the center.

Important Considerations for Centers Considering Business Development

❑ The center is likely to need new equipment and the latest software to compete.

❑ The center must develop a system for sharing profits.

❑ Teenagers and young adults could work with the center to fulfill business contracts, learn business skills, and develop relationships with the business community.

❑ Both the center and individuals have the potential to earn money.

Examples of Successful Business Development

❑ Plugged In (East Palo Alto, CA) created a company with a group of teenagers called Plugged In Enterprises. They will create websites for a fee using equipment and space provided by the center, for both corporate and individual clients. At Plugged In, students learn the technical skills needed to offer such a service, such as mastering multimedia programs and the hypertext mark-up language (HTML). The students also learn business skills including how to meet with clients, bid on contracts, negotiate agreements, and develop business plans. In the first two months of operation, Plugged In Enterprises grossed approximately $3,000.

❑ Edgewood Terrace, managed by the Community Preservation and Development Corporation (CPDC) (Washington, DC), has turned cyberspace access into direct economic opportunities for people otherwise dependent on government subsidies for their livelihood. Trainees perform database entry for private businesses and government clients, working out of an office located in their neighborhood. In addition, the students learn how to assemble, disassemble, and repair computers.

How Can the Information Gathered About Residents be Used to Help Identify the Program Areas That are Right for the Center?

Step 1: Tally the Answers on a Tally Sheet

Once the data has been gathered, the responses should be tallied or summarized. The total number of tallies marked for each question is the "count." Summarizing data for each question to determine a final count can be a very difficult task whether it is performed by hand or by computer. Both of these methods are described in Exhibit 3–1. A tally sheet for summarizing the responses by hand is provided as Exhibit 3-2.

Some relatively simple calculations, such as percentages, should be performed on the final counts to make them more useful. Percentages can sometimes be a more meaningful way to think about the characteristics of residents than counts. A percentage is calculated by dividing a count (such as the count of persons who are Hispanic (50) by the total number of completed surveys (200). To calculate the percentage of Hispanics, 50 is divided by 200 (50 divided by 200 = 0.25 or 25 percent). The tally sheet includes a space to perform this percentage calculation for each answer.

Step 2: Put Certain Answers Together

The tally sheet simply sums up the data collected by the Steering Committee. It does not, however, help lead the Steering Committee to conclusions about the program areas that will best serve the residents' needs. Exhibit 3–3 was designed to do just that. This exhibit sets out the six key program areas just discussed and highlights the questions from the tally sheet that should give the Steering Committee guidance on whether the center should focus on that program area. For example, Exhibit 3–3 ties the following resident assessment data to the adult education program area:

❑ Number of adults with less than a high school education

❑ Number of adults who can't read or write

❑ Number of adults with no basic computer literacy

❑ Number of adults who want to learn to use a computer

The higher the percentage of residents who fit into these categories, the greater the need for adult education at the center. The Steering Committee should complete Exhibit 3–3 and then compare each program area to see the area of greatest need. The Steering Committee should then list, on Exhibit 3–3, its program area priorities with "1" being the greatest priority and "6" being the lowest priority.

How Can the Data Gathered About Neighborhood Institutions and Assets be Used to Help Identify the Program Areas That are Right for the Center?

After the Steering Committee has selected its program area priorities, it should go back to Exhibit 2–7 to consider the assets that may be available from neighborhood institutions. If the available assets seem to favor one priority over another, then the Steering Committee may want to change its priorities. Assume, for example, that the Steering Committee selects "Adult Education" as its first priority and "Business Development" as its second after considering the assessment of resident needs data. Assume, however, that a review of Exhibit 2–7 shows that significant outsourcing opportunities are currently available from neighborhood institutions. This fact may persuade the center to switch its priorities, making Business Development its first priority. The Steering Committee should also review Exhibit 2–7 to identify neighborhood institutions that may help implement the priority program areas.

The Steering Committee's Next Steps

Project Center Use

Following the guidance on developing user projections in Chapters 5 and 7, the Steering Committee should make some preliminary estimates on the number of people who will use the center and the reasons that they will be using it. This information will provide further guidance on which program areas to focus on.

Select One or More Program Areas

The Steering Committee should then make a formal decision about the program areas that it wants to focus on. A center can focus on more than one program area if it has the resources to do so. For example, if the center will be open all day, it could focus on job preparation from 9 a.m. to noon, offer afterschool activities from 2 to 6 p.m., and be open in the evenings for small business support or self-employment activities.

Report Back to Residents

The Steering Committee must not overlook the need to report back their findings to the residents who participated in the information gathering process. No matter what information gathering method was used, residents will be expecting to hear the results and how the information that was gathered will be used to help make their lives better. In fact, the best way to develop and keep resident trust and support—critical elements if the center is to be successful—is to keep them fully informed.

While the Steering Committee may choose to convene a meeting to report the results of the survey and describe the next steps, a written report should also be prepared.

Using Chapter 3 to Develop the Business Plan

The business plan will:

❑ Summarize the needs assessment and partnership building analysis performed by the Steering Committee.

❑ List the program areas selected by the Steering Committee.

Exhibit 3-1

Institutions for Tallying Survey Results

Summarizing Survey Responses

Data can be summarized by hand or by computer.

Summarizing Data with a Computer

You will achieve best results if you can summarize survey data with the use of a computer. Computer databases can store survey answers, add them up quickly and accurately, and calculate "adjusted counts" and "percentages" about the households surveyed. If you have access to a computer and the expertise to operate it, you should use it for this purpose. Manuals for most of the standard PC database programs have instructions on how to set up a database for survey-type information.

Summarizing Data by Hand

Not every organization has access to a computer and a person with the expertise to operate it. The Tally Sheet included in this Chapter provides a worksheet that can be used to produce a written summary of the answers. The Tally Sheet:

- Is organized the same way as the Survey so it can be placed alongside a completed Survey.

- Includes space for entering tally marks and totals so the answers from the Survey can be marked off on the Tally Sheet as they are read off the Survey itself.

To use the Tally Sheet, each Survey will need to be read one at a time, and tally marks entered into the appropriate answer categories on the sheet.

Tallying up answers to individual questions by hand can be tedious and time consuming. One way to make the job easier and more accurate is to divide up the work. First, divide the stack of questionnaires into smaller batches. Next, have each person complete a Tally Sheet for each batch. Finally, add together the tallies from the completed worksheets on one final Tally Sheet.

Exhibit 3-2

Tally Sheet

Section A – General Resident Information

1. Racial/ethnic mix?

Racial/Ethnic Background	Tally Marks	Total Count
American Indian/ Alaskan Native		
Asian		
Black		
Hispanic		
White		
Other		

2. Adult age groups?

Adult Age Group	Tally Marks	Total Count
18-35		
36-59		
60+		

3. Adults' Education level?

Adult Education Level	Tally Marks	Total Count
College Graduate		
High School/GED Graduate		
Not a High School Graduate		

4. Sources of household income?

Source of Income	Tally Marks	Total Count
Wages or pay from a job		
Income from self-employment		
Pension		
Social Security retirement		
Child support or alimony		
Aid for Families and Dependent Children (AFDC)		
General Assistance		
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)		
Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)		
Unemployment benefits		
Other		

5. Literacy?

English Competency	Tally Marks	Total Count
Good		
Fair		
Poor		
None		

6. Computer literacy?

7. Number of residents who want to learn to use a computer?

8. Existing computer skills?

Computer Literacy	Tally Marks	Total Count
Computer literate		
Computer illiterate		
Would like to learn		
Knows wordprocessing		
Knows spreadsheets		
Knows database		
Knows Internet		
Knows e-mail		

9. Number of residents who would like to own their own business?

10. Number of residents who own their own business?

Interested in Business	Tally Marks	Total Count
Would like to own a business		
Already run a business		

11. List of religious institutions residents belong to?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section B – Employment

1. Current Employment Status?

Employment Status	Tally Marks	Total Count
Employed full-time		
Employed part-time		
Self-employed		
Unemployed		

Job titles?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Of those residents currently employed:

2. Number of residents who prepared a résumé to get the job?

3. Number of residents who work with computers?

4. Number of residents who received computer training for their job?

5. Number of residents who would rather be doing a different job?

Of Residents Currently Employed	Tally Marks	Total Count
Prepared résumé		
Works with computers		
Received computer training		
Rather do another job		

Of those residents currently unemployed:

6. What kind of work are residents looking for?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

7. Employment Search?

Of Residents Currently Unemployed	Tally Marks	Total Count
Looking for full-time work		
Looking for part-time work		
Have not interviewedd for a job in the last 2 years		

8. What additional training is needed to find a job?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Of those residents who are retired or over 60:

9. Describe the work they did?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Number of retired residents who worked with computers?

11. Number of retired residents who were members of a trade organization?

12. Number of retired residents who want to learn to use a computer?

13. Number of retired residents who would participate or could train others if a computer facility was close by?

Of Residents Currently Retired	Tally Marks	Total Count
Worked with computers		
Didn't work with computers		
Worked for trade organizations		
Didn't work for trade organizations		
Want to learn to use a computer		
Will participate with a center		
Won't participate with a center		

Section C – Childcare

1. Number of children

Age of Children	Tally Marks	Total Count
No children		
0-5 years		
6-12 years		
13-15 years		
16-17 years		

2. Number of parents who would need child care to use a computer center?

Tally Marks	Total Count

3. Where do children 6-12 years old go after school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Number of parents who believe that children need afterschool activities?

5. Number of parents whose children take computer classes or classes that use computers?

6. Number of parents who would take their children to a computer center if it was located nearby?

Children's Activities	Tally Marks	Total Count
Need aftershcool activities		
Don't need afterschool activities		
Attend computer classes		
Don't attend computer classes		
Attend computer classes with parents		
Would take children to a center if located nearby		

7. When do your children have the most free time?

Free Time	Tally Marks	Total Count
Mornings		
Afternoons		
Evenings		
Weekends		

8. What do the families usually do in the evenings?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Exhibit 3-3

Program Areas Tally Sheet

Questions	Totals	Percentages
Adult Education		
A3. Number of adults with less than a high school education		
A5. Number of adults who can't read/write or rate their literacy as fair/poor		
A6. Number of adults who do not know how to use a computer		
A6. Number of adults who want to learn to use a computer		
Afterschool Activities		
C1. Number of children between 6-18 years old.		
C4. Number of parents who said their children need afterschool activities		
C6. Number of parents who would take their children to a center if it were located nearby		
Job Preparation		
A6. Number of residents who do not know how to use a computer		
A7. Number of residents who want to learn to use a computer		
B1. Number of residents who are unemployed		
B5. Number of residents who want a different job		
B7. Number of residents who have not interviewed for a job in the last 2 years		
C2. Number of parents who need child care to use a computer center		
Job Placement		
B1. Number of residents who are unemployed		
B7. Number of residents who are looking for full- or part-time work		
Elder Services		
A2. Number of residents over 60 years old		
B12. Number of senior residents who want to learn to use the computer		
B13. Number of senior residents who would participate and/or train others if a computer center was nearby		
Small Business Activity		
A7. Number of residents who want to learn to use a computer		
A9. Number of residents who would like to own their own business		
B3. Number of residents who already work with computers		
B7. Number of residents who are looking for full- or part-time work		

Chapter 4. Making the Neighborhood Networks Center Operational — Physical Needs

Introduction

This chapter should be used only after the steering committee has collected and analyzed detailed information about the residents and possible community partners (see Chapter 3), and has used this information to design the center's programs. Then the steering committee can use this chapter to decide what the physical needs of the center will be, including space, computers (software and hardware), non-computer needs, and insurance requirements.

Exhibit 4–1 identifies most of the physical needs that a center will require.

Space Needs and Utilization

This section presents a list of considerations for evaluating the space needed for a center and the center's use of this space. Space utilization by the center will depend upon such factors as how many people are expected to use the center, their ages, group use, and so forth (see Chapter 3), as well as the planning issues identified in Chapter 3 for each program area. Some general rules of thumb exist.

Location

The space should be accessible to the residents and community who will use it. Ideally, the space will be located on the premises of the housing development. If not, the space should be accessible by public transportation.

Rental Cost

The rent may be the most expensive item in the budget. If possible, get the space for free. Identify potential donors and ask them if free space or space at a cost below market value is available. For example:

❑ Ask the owner of the building to donate a vacant apartment or other underused space.

❑ Ask a steering committee member (who may be a real estate broker, developer, or owner of property in the neighborhood) to locate space.

❑ Ask a local, state or federal government official if any property adjacent to the housing development is owned by the government, vacant, and available to be donated.

❑ Refer to Exhibit 2–5 for assistance in locating neighborhood institutions with space.

Ratios of Computers to Square Feet

A general rule of thumb is 20 square feet per computer. While there is no similar rule for the number of participants per space allocated for the computers, remember that one goal of the center is to bring the community together. Therefore, fewer computers with more space will create an environment in which people will share and work together.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

An important concern for any center is the comfort of its members, visitors and staff. Adequate ventilation and moderate temperatures during all seasons are important considerations when investigating locations for the center. It is desirable to find space that not only has windows, but windows that open. In addition, the steering committee should consider the need for air conditioning. In the early days of computers, room thermostats had to be set at certain temperatures to keep the computers cool. The improved technology of desktop computers has eliminated the need for such temperature controls.

Privacy

Depending upon the population served, privacy may be an issue in connection with the work product of the individual. For example, adult learners are often sensitive about their abilities, as are battered women, and teenagers require privacy just because they are teenagers. Protecting the privacy of their work product by placing the printers out of the traffic stream in the center may go a long way to insuring some privacy for those individuals who require it.

Computers

What Computer Software Will A Center Require?

The center's software purchases should reflect its program focus. For example, a center that focuses on job preparation should have the software that local employers with job opportunities use in their businesses. However, some standard software packages are wise purchases because of their multiple applications and wide acceptance in the marketplace.

Software Focused on Specific Program Areas

The center should purchase software after the steering committee has decided on what program areas to focus (see Chapter 3). The range of software available for any program area is extensive. Consulting with experts from programs that serve the same types of people that the center hopes to serve will help guide you. For example:

❑ **Adult education**. Experts in adult education programs may be found in neighborhood institutions that offer literacy programs, such as public libraries, community colleges, and vocational schools. Software selection will depend on the types of classes offered.

❑ **Job preparation/job placement**. Neighborhood institutions that offer job training programs, such as local government-sponsored employment and training offices, local employment agencies, and local colleges may be able to provide guidance or software. Centers with a job preparation focus are likely to purchase software applications used by local employers, such as word processing, spreadsheet, e-mail, database, desktop publishing, and graphics applications. Job placement services may buy database software for tracking job opportunities and employees they have placed.

❑ **Afterschool activities**. Computer coordinators in the school system, day care centers, libraries, and youth group organizations may be able to recommend software appropriate for afterschool activities. The challenge in this program area is to acquire a mix of software that will entertain and educate a broad range of interests and ages.

❑ **Senior services**. Staff at neighborhood institutions that cater to seniors, such as senior citizen housing complexes, churches, community centers, hospitals, and libraries, may be able to recommend appropriate software.

❑ **Business development**. Discussions with people such as local chambers of commerce and SBA-funded small business development representatives should help the steering committee identify software appropriate for small business support and self-employment activities. Software for outsourcing activities should reflect the type of work expected to be outsourced to the center, such as word processing and accounting.

The steering committee, or its software selection subcommittee, should also consult:

❑ Other existing computer centers offering similar programs (see Reference Materials at the end of this manual).

❑ Publications such as software catalogs and educational magazines, and retail software stores.

Standard Software Programs

Generally, the following standard software programs will be needed because they are the building blocks of computer literacy and will prove invaluable in managing the day-to-day operations of the Neighborhood Networks center:

❑ **Word processing applications** are used to draft and print letters, reports, etc.

❑ **Spreadsheets** are used to create budgets and track money.

❑ **Databases** are used to enter, manipulate and organize large amounts of information and print out reports.

❑ **Graphics applications** are used to create designs and manipulate images "imported" into other programs.

❑ **E-mail** programs are used to send and receive messages and files from computer-to-computer via the Internet.

❑ **Web browsers** are used to access the World Wide Web.

❑ **Multimedia tools including camcorders and scanners** are used to create and send documents that include videotape footage and photographs.

How Does A Center Acquire Software?

Criteria for Selecting Software

Existing "off-the-shelf" software can be acquired through retail stores, the Internet, or donations from companies or individuals. It can also be custom-developed to meet the specific needs of the user.

The following criteria may be helpful for selecting software:

❑ Easy to use

❑ Simple, yet allows for complex operations

❑ Easy to learn

❑ Appeals to both the beginner and experienced user

❑ Takes advantage of new technology

Programs that merely reproduce on the screen material that is accessible in a text should be avoided. Neighborhood Networks centers should seek software that utilizes the special capabilities of computers. Such programs include:

❑ **Simulations**. The user can tackle real-life programs that could not be handled in a classroom. For example, the computer can simulate the path of a spaceship on an intergalactic trip, the effects of a leak at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, or a presidential election. The user chooses the circumstances and the computer illustrates the results.

❑ **Modeling**. Modeling is like simulation in that it extends the power of the user, via the computer, beyond traditional classroom boundaries. Modeling enables the computer to do the drudge work necessary to create the building blocks for further learning. For example, the computer can model several graphs depicting mathematical functions for students to compare, or it can produce blueprints of buildings for architecture students to analyze. With the addition of peripheral equipment, a computer can record and organize temperature, velocity, light, and sound sensitivity data from which students can study content rather than process.

❑ **Games**. Drill and practice material can be successfully and creatively couched in a games context. Developing a successful game strategy can enhance problem-solving skills.

A Neighborhood Networks center should ensure that the simulations, modeling, and games it purchases:

❑ Stimulate user participation. A word of caution — programs touted as interactive in which the user's sole task is to press the space bar are *not* interactive.

❑ Do not offer a single solution that, once mastered, offers no further challenges.

❑ Are not age or sex specific.

❑ Have minimal on-screen instructions. Ensure the vocabulary is appropriate to program content. "Helps" or "hints" should be available to the user.

❑ Do not contain derogatory language or violent content.

Compatibility

While shopping, the term "software compatibility" may appear in stores, catalogs, or conversations. This refers to a computer's ability to read and use software designed for a specific type of computer chip (for example, 386, 486, or Pentium) with specific characteristics (for example, 8MB of RAM, 4x CD–ROM). Inquire what other purchases may be required to make the software compatible, such as extra memory, disk drives, adapters, or a particular operating system.

Use software before you buy it. When purchasing educational software, *always* use it and evaluate it for both its educational and entertainment value. Retail stores often have facilities available for this purpose. Or another organization in the community using the software may be willing to let you try it.

With time, the center's software library will have a versatile base, offering a variety of learning levels and a multitude of computer applications widely used in the marketplace.

What Computer Hardware Will A Center Require?

With any luck, a few computers will be donated to the center. They are likely to be used computers, of various makes and models. The center may also want new computers to run certain software programs to implement a program area. Whether the computers are used or new, shopping for computers requires an introduction to the vocabulary used. This section also provides guidance on purchasing printers and monitors and information on cost ranges for computers.

The term hardware refers to the system unit—the computer, monitor, printer, mouse, keyboard, floppy disk drives, and modem.

❑ **The system unit (central processing unit — CPU)**. The system unit is the personal computer, although without the keyboard and monitor the computer is useless. The system unit is where the computer's brains are. Inside is the hard disk. A hard disk is a small, sealed mechanical device that stores huge quantities of software and data. Manufacturers of systems units include such names as IBM, Apple/Macintosh, Dell, Gateway and many others.

❑ **Monitor**. The monitor is sometimes referred to as the display or the CRT. Its screen displays images that allow the user to give instructions to the central processing unit.

❑ **Printer**. There are three types of printers:

- **Laser** is the most flexible and provides the best print quality.

- **Ink jet** provides next best print quality and is generally less expensive. Color ink jets are an especially good value.

- **Dot matrix** is the oldest and least expensive printer technology. It provides the poorest print quality and is generally not adequate for printing graphics.

❑ **Mouse**. A mouse is a handheld device with two or three buttons and a tail-like cord that you slide around your desktop to move a pointer on the computer screen.

❑ **Trackball**. A trackball is an alternative to a mouse that also moves the cursor around the screen. Rather than sliding it across your desktop, it stays in the same place and you roll your hand across the ball to move the cursor around the screen. A trackball device is often preferred by children and seniors.

❑ **Keyboard**. The keyboard allows the user to type instructions into the system unit. It contains letter and number keys like a typewriter, plus some additional keys used only for computers.

❑ **Disk drives**. Disk drives can be internal "hard disks" or external "disk drives." A disk, sometimes referred to as a "floppy disk" even though they are no longer floppy, is a removable disk used to store computer data. The vast majority of disks come in 3 ½- inch (720K or 1.44MB, which refers to the amount of memory, or storage space, on the disk) and 5 1/4-inch (360K or 1.2MB) formats. Software often comes on these disks. The disk drive is the opening on the system unit into which the disk is inserted. The drive reads and writes data to and from the disks. Disk drives come in the same two sizes as the disks themselves.

❑ **CD (compact disk) ROM drive**. A CD–ROM drive reads data and software applications that are both interactive and can be uploaded to your hard-drive. The CD-ROMs are identical to the CDs sold at music stores; in fact, CD–ROM drives can also play music CDs. Types of CD-ROMs available include interactive encyclopedias, games and word processing software. Current technology does not permit users to record (store) data on CDs. CD-ROM drives can read data at various speeds, with faster drives offering better performance. A number, such as "24X," indicates the speed of the drive; the larger the number, the faster the drive.

❑ **Modem**. A modem is a device that enables the computer to send and receive data over telephone lines, and to communicate with other computers or access the Internet.

What Features Should a Neighborhood Networks Center Consider When Purchasing Hardware?

This section discusses the features that a center should consider when purchasing new or used computer hardware.

Purchasing Used Computers

Used equipment can be adequate under certain conditions. The used hardware must:

❑ Be complete in all its parts

❑ Be in working order

❑ Be able to run software in the center library or come with its own software

❑ Be repairable

Used computers do not have warranties. Some computer repair shops have parts only for newer models and some shops do not employ technicians who are familiar with older machines. The key to deciding between new and used equipment is funding. Although more technologically advanced and arguably more reliable, new computer hardware is dramatically more expensive. Used equipment with sufficient computing power can often be found at significantly lower cost. An older model in working order with usable software installed can provide a perfectly adequate foundation for a center. Many of these computers were previously used by companies for standard business functions.

Speed

The central processing unit (CPU) is the most significant factor in determining a computer's speed and price. The CPU contains the chip that does most, if not all, of the computing in the computer. IBM-compatible computers derive their names from the name of the CPU inside the system, for example, Pentium and Pentium II. The other features of a computer that affect speed are the memory, make and model of the hard disk, and the graphics card (the component that sends data to your monitor).

Memory

Memory refers to the chips that hold data or software in the form of minuscule electrical charges. The main memory is a CPU's work area into which the software and data are copied (or loaded) from the hard disk. Most new computers have at least 32 MB of RAM (Random Access Memory), a number that is constantly growing as software becomes more sophisticated. RAM stores information and runs software. The center should try to obtain computers with at least 32 MB of RAM. A computer with less than 16 MB of RAM will have insufficient space for many of the most popular software programs and will operate slowly.

Another type of memory is ROM (Read Only Memory), which cannot be changed or manipulated by the user. All computers are equipped with sufficient ROM.

Memory is important for speed and will affect what software you purchase. Each piece of software should be labeled with the amount of RAM required to run the software program. Before purchasing software, be sure that the center's computers have adequate RAM to run the software programs.

Hard Disk Capacity

Software and data fill hard disk space, and more sophisticated programs require increasing amounts of hard disk space. The hard disk must have the capacity to store all the software programs and data expected to be used. Conventional wisdom advocates purchasing a hard disk with 50 percent more capacity than you anticipate needing just to accommodate future upgrades that may eat up additional space. As high capacity disk drives have become cheaper to produce, software developers have become gluttonous consumers of hard drive capacity.

Though an internal hard drive can be replaced or a second hard drive can be added if the first runs out of space, it is best to know software storage needs before purchasing your hard drive. It is usually cheaper to purchase one large hard drive than two smaller hard drives with the combined equivalent capacity.

In operation, conserve space on your hard drives by not permitting participants to store their files on the hard drive. Provide them with their own floppy disks and with space within the center to store their disks.

Reliability

Computers seldom break, but problems can occur. Always obtain a one-year warranty covering parts, labor, and telephone technical support when purchasing new computers. Depending on the cost, also consider purchasing on-site service and a two-year warranty.

Computer Costs

When purchasing new computers, comparison shop and negotiate. Small vendors may make deep cost-cutting concessions, but if the cost seems too good to believe, it probably is. The vendor may have skimped on goods and services, such as eliminating support, delaying delivery, substituting components, and hurrying the assembly and installation.

Negotiate with a vendor to receive discounts offered to nonprofit organizations. Some vendors may not have received word from their suppliers that discounts exist. Ask the vendor to check it out. For example, an education discount may not exist but a discount for software used in a classroom may. Discounts usually take the form of a percentage off the retail price. You may want to ask software companies directly if they offer discounts to nonprofit organizations or to organizations that will use the software for educational or training purposes.

Computer Compatibility

Purchasing a variety of hardware systems poses advantages and disadvantages. Purchasing computers using both Apple and IBM operating systems and purchasing several generations of computer technology (e.g., 486, Pentium, or Pentium II) gives a center increased flexibility in selecting software. Such diversity in

software options may make the center more attractive to more people, including participants, instructors, and volunteers.

However, multiple computer models require more software. In addition, if the center is planning to "network" the computers, that is connect all the machines to a network file server, then the file server must be able to handle a variety of operating systems. In some cases this may not be possible. Another disadvantage of multiple models is finding and attracting staff who can teach using the different computers. Some older models may not be capable of running software programs that run on newer machines. In addition, repair and service contracts for a variety of models may be very expensive.

Tailoring the computer selection to match computers in schools, churches or other community organizations is generally not necessary. A person can learn to use any computer and these skills are transferable to other machines. Indeed, a person's experience using a variety of hardware systems with different software capabilities and unique characteristics enhances the computer technology education.

Ratio of People to Computers

A ratio of 1 machine per 25 residents is ideal. A ratio of 50 persons to 1 machine, or 300 people to 6 computers, is adequate. This ratio will allow for supervision. If the space available for the center cannot accommodate enough computers to meet the ideal ratio of people to computers, use what is available.

Monitor

Some important features of the monitor include:

❑ **Monochrome or color monitors**. Color monitors are more costly but are virtually standard equipment, ranging in cost from $200 to several thousand dollars. For a predominantly young participant pool, color is a must.

❑ **Screen size and shape**. Monitor sizes range from 14 to 26 inches. The bigger the screen, the less time is spent scrolling or switching between applications. For most applications, for example, a 15-inch monitor is adequate. A 17-inch monitor is preferred by those who cut and paste between programs, make presentations, or prepare documents. 19-inch to 21-inch monitors are used by desktop publishers.

❑ **Image quality**. In addition to screen size and shape, resolution is an important consideration when choosing a monitor. The resolution indicates the number of points of light that make up an image, and the higher the number the better. A monitor with 800 x 600 has a sharper image than a resolution monitor with 640 x 480 resolution.

❑ **Controls and adjustments**. A computer user can always set brightness and contrast. If additional adjustments are desirable, be sure to inquire about other controls such as horizontal and vertical adjustment.

A good monitor is worth the investment because computing is tough on the eyes. Monitors that come with computers are not always of good quality. Consider buying the monitor separately and look for sharp focus, low glare, straight lines, and no flicker.

Printer

Printers utilize a variety of printing technologies to produce a wide range of print qualities. Not surprisingly, printer costs can vary dramatically depending on the technology you buy. To compare these costs, you need to consider both the initial purchase price for the printer, but also the ongoing operating costs, such as toner, ink cartridges, or special paper. Operating costs, particularly for color printers can be substantial. You should expect to pay the following for a new printer:

- ❑ Dot matrix $100 and up
- ❑ Laser $400 to $1,500
- ❑ Ink jet $200 and up
- ❑ Color ink jet $200 and up

Purchasing Used Printers. Several issues should be considered when buying used printers:

- ❑ Look for models that were top sellers in their day. The likelihood of finding supplies, parts, and service will be greater for the top sellers.

- ❑ Test a used printer by printing 10 pages of sample text and graphics.

- ❑ Check the ports and power cord connections to make sure they are not loose.

- ❑ Make sure front panel controls work properly.

Other Computer Concepts and Terms

Peripherals

Peripherals are any hardware that can be installed internally or connected externally to the computer, such as external disk drives, modems, CD-ROM drives, scanners, and printers.

Operating System

An operating system is the basic software program that controls hardware functionality and enables other software programs to function. It is essential to computer operation. The operating system functions like the foreman of a construction site, directing internal traffic and assigning tasks. The Macintosh operating system is required for Macintosh/Apple computers. IBM and IBM-compatible computers can use DOS or Windows operating systems. There are several versions of most operating system software, which can lead to compatibility problems.

Network

A network connects individual computers through cable and a network operating system, and enables a defined group of users to share information and the use of such devices such as printers and modems.

One type of network is a local area network, or LAN, which enables computers to swap files, exchange e-mail messages, share peripherals (printers, modems, hard disks), and run workgroup software such as Lotus Notes.

Internet

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers and bulletin board services. Most people access the Internet through their company, university, online service, or local bulletin board service.

Some of the things available on the Internet include:

❑ E-mail

❑ World Wide Web — a global network of graphical electronic documents you can browse, interact with, and create

❑ New technologies such as global chat, video conferencing, fax, and free international phone calls

❑ News services

❑ An endless variety of topical databases

❑ Encyclopedias

❑ Home shopping

❑ Travel information

Online Services

Online services are information clearinghouses where members dial in via a modem and exchange e-mail, ask questions, get help, and download useful information. Most online services charge a monthly membership fee and an hourly fee for connect time.

Examples of things one can do online include:

❑ Get a job

❑ Organize politically

❑ Read popular magazines and wire service news

❑ Do research

❑ Surf the World Wide Web

❑ Download software

❑ Get technical support

❑ Join specialized forums or discussion groups

❑ Make travel plans

Multimedia

Multimedia applies to a variety of applications that use special hardware to extend the audio and video capabilities of a standard computer to include stereo sound, high-resolution graphics, and motion video. Generally, computers need CD–ROM drives and significant amounts of memory and speed to use multimedia components to their maximum potential. Multimedia applications include:

❑ Playing games and running educational applications that provide music, sound effects, photographic images, and animation.

❑ Composing and playing music with a synthesizer hooked to the computer's soundboard using special hardware.

❑ Producing videos either for playback on computers or for transfer to videotape.

❑ Running interactive training and presentation software that can include animation, narration, and video sequences.

❑ Producing your own interactive training materials, multimedia presentations, educational software, or special purpose applications.

Producing multimedia can be extremely motivating to young people. If this is your target constituency, it is worth making the investment in multimedia capability.

The Final Word on Computer Hardware and Software

It may be a daunting task to sort through the selection of hardware and software programs on the market. A sound decision will result from a careful and thorough investigation of the options and by asking questions, doing test runs, and asking more questions. Regardless of future changes to hardware, software, and educational technology, deliberate purchase decisions today will allow the center to conduct its technology access program five or more years without it becoming technologically obsolete.

Non-Computer Needs

What Furniture Will a Neighborhood Networks Center Require?

The center will need furniture to make it a desirable place to be. The extent of furnishing will depend on the size of the space and the number of users. There are, however, certain necessities:

- ❑ Tables are needed for computers, for adults and children working together, for adults working alone, for teens doing group projects, and for staff.

- ❑ Desks.

- ❑ Chairs for the tables and computers (provide enough space for two chairs at each computer for instruction purposes and so two individuals can work together).

- ❑ Lamps.

- ❑ A bulletin board to post center hours, class schedules and times, student work product, announcements, and job openings.

- ❑ Coat and hat racks.

- ❑ A couch for waiting and socializing.

- ❑ Bathrooms.

- ❑ Storage space/filing cabinets for manuals, storing hardware and software, and for the work product of participants.

- ❑ Anti-static floor covering.

- ❑ Signs for the center.

What About Electrical Outlets, Telephone Jacks, and Wiring?

Setting up a center requires electrical outlets, telephone jacks, and a lot of wires. Computers, printers, and glare-free, indirect lighting require many electrical outlets and adequate power capacity. The center may also desire air conditioning, which would require an electrician to check that the electrical system can handle the demands of both the center equipment and an air conditioning unit.

Telephone jacks are essential for telephones and modems. To the extent possible, consolidate wiring. Also, be aware of the people using the center: toddlers are likely to want to play with wires, and older children and adults may trip over the wiring.

Coping with the many cables and wires that may be needed to service your computers can be accomplished in a number of ways. Some computer furniture provides for desktop connections or has a

relatively hidden trough built into the back to accommodate the wiring. Wires should not be strung along the floor where they might constitute a safety hazard. You must buy electrical surge protectors in case of an electrical power outage; they protect your machinery and allow for multiple computer hook-ups.

What Security and Insurance Needs Will a Neighborhood Networks Center Have?

"Risk management" is the term to describe the issues of security and insurance for the center property, employees, and the public. Risk management also requires an investigation of any local regulations that would minimize risks to the center. This section will discuss these issues.

Risk to Data Versus Risk to Everything Else

The steering committee should be aware that it has to address risks to data and content on disk drives as well as to life, limb, and equipment. To address risks to data, the center should not allow center users to bring their own disks or to remove disks from the center. This will keep viruses out of the center's systems. The rest of this section addresses other types of risks.

Risk Management Plan

A center's risk management plan is an ongoing program to ensure that certain measures are routinely taken to secure the center, its staff and visitors, and its equipment. The plan is devised to make the center secure, to protect the people who work and visit, and to protect the center from certain types of claims. A risk management plan can be created and implemented in three steps.

Step 1: Identify Risks

❑ What is at risk in the center? This includes the building/room/space, hardware, software, furnishings, and personnel.

❑ What damage or harm could come to each? This includes theft, vandalism, accidents, and natural disasters. For example, an employee may accidentally knock over a keyboard while straightening a desk.

❑ What is the likelihood of damage or harm? This means figuring out the likelihood of harm to each item potentially at risk and the seriousness of the potential harm.

Determine the cost of the insurance in relation to the cost of prevention.

Step 2: Develop a Risk Management Program

A risk management program includes specific measures that must be taken to prevent harm to the people working and visiting at the center and the property in which the center is located. Examples of such preventive measures include:

❑ Taking measures to limit the opportunity for accidents. For example:

- List rules of behavior on the wall. Such rules should include no running, no playing ball, no food, and no beverages.

❑ Taking measures to limit the opportunity for harm to employees and the public. For example:

- Provide escorts for any person leaving the building in the evening.

- Provide escorts for any senior citizen coming to or leaving the center.

- Ensure that more than one person staffs the center in the evening and that they leave together.

- Arrange for additional police attention to the center neighborhood.

- Hire a security guard.

❑ Taking measures to limit the opportunity for theft and vandalism. For example:

- Limit the number of people who have keys to the center.

- Lock the doors of the center.

- Secure the windows.

- Lock the computers, keyboards, and printers to desks or tables and/or lock them in closets each night.

- Lock up all software.

- Keep the lights on all night.

- Install an alarm system.

- Install security cameras inside and/or outside the center.

- Consult the police for their suggestions.

❑ Taking measures to limit the opportunity for destruction of information in the computer. For example:

- Give all users a password.

- Install an anti-virus program on each computer.

- Forbid users from loading their own programs into center computers.

An example of the rules established at one community computer center can be found in Exhibit 4–1.

Step 3: Implement the Risk Management Plan

This includes:

❑ Developing a list of routine measures to be performed by the center.

❑ Assigning tasks to staff and assigning a time when each task will be performed.

❑ Distributing the plan to all employees.

Insurance Coverage

A center can insure its employees, visitors, and property by purchasing an insurance policy or by self-insurance. Self-insurance requires the center to set aside a certain amount of money to cover any claims against it and to protect center employees, visitors, and property from damage or harm.

Typically, a center will rent or lease space. The owner of the space probably has insurance coverage. This insurance, however, will usually not cover the center. This section explains the types of insurance coverage that a center should consider to protect itself, its employees, and visitors.

Generally, insurance coverage applicable to a center is of four types:

Liability Insurance

❑ **Definition**. Liability insurance protects a business against lawsuits and other claims arising from harm to persons on the business property. In general, a liability insurance policy contains a yearly maximum coverage. This means that the insurance company will not pay any claims that exceed a certain amount within a year.

❑ **Coverage**. A commercial general liability policy includes personal injury claims (such as slips and falls), fire damage, and medical payments. Liability insurance would also protect a business against claims arising out of contracts it enters with others, such as the lease of the property and elevator maintenance agreements. A business can also choose to cover employees under the liability insurance. This would give employees coverage for any bodily injury or property damage employees cause while employed.

Property Insurance

❑ **Definition**. Property insurance protects a business against damage to the building, furnishings, and equipment. Most property insurance uses a deductible system that requires the insured to pay a portion of the loss up to a certain amount, called the deductible. The insurance company covers the rest of the loss.

❑ **Coverage**. There are four types of coverage: basic, broad, special, and "difference in condition" coverage.

- **Basic**. "Basic" coverage includes losses caused by events such as fire, lightning, explosions, smoke, vandalism and mischief, and sinkhole collapses.

- **Broad**. "Broad" coverage includes losses covered in "basic" coverage and also water damage, glass breakage, and damage caused by freezing and falling objects.

- **Special**. "Special" coverage includes everything not specifically excluded by the policy. "Special" coverage is the most comprehensive because in the event of loss, the insurance company must find an exclusion in the policy to deny the claim, rather than the insured having to find a coverage in the policy that applies.

- **Difference in Condition**. "Difference in condition" coverage usually includes coverage for those occurrences excluded by other types of coverage, such as earthquakes, tidal waves, and floods.

Worker's Compensation Insurance

❑ **Definition**. Worker's Compensation Insurance protects a business from employees' injuries or illnesses arising from conditions in the workplace.

❑ **Coverage**. The center must call the State department of labor to find out its obligations regarding this type of insurance. The extent of coverage and its limits vary from State to State.

Local Requirements

A center should consult the local fire department, planning office, and health department to learn if any regulations must be followed. These may include fire or zoning codes, occupancy limits, or cleanliness regulations.

Using Chapter 4 to Develop the Business Plan

The business plan will incorporate the startup physical needs required by the center.

Exhibit 4-1

Checklist of Start-Up Physical Needs

SPACE NEEDS AND UTILIZATION
❑ Rent
❑ HVAC
❑ Partition walls
❑ Installation of closets/secure space
STANDARD SOFTWARE PROGRAMS
❑ Word processing
❑ Spreadsheets
❑ Graphics
❑ Databases
❑ Anti-virus program
PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
❑ Adult education
❑ Afterschool activities
❑ Job preparation
❑ Job placement
❑ Seniors' services
❑ Small business activity
HARDWARE
❑ Computer (including monitor, keyboard, and mouse)
❑ Printer
❑ Modem
❑ Additional warranties
❑ Service contract
FURNITURE
❑ Computer tables
❑ Sign-in table
❑ Work tables, desks
❑ Chairs for desks, computers, tables
❑ Couch
❑ Club chairs
❑ Lighting
❑ Bulletin board
❑ Coat rack
❑ Filing cabinets

❑	Anti-static floor covering
❑	Carpet
❑	Neighborhood Networks sign

ELECTRICAL CONSIDERATIONS

❑	Expansion of power capacity
❑	Installation of electrical outlets
❑	Installation of overhead lights
❑	Telephones
❑	Telephone installation
❑	Computer cables
❑	Computer wires
❑	Extension Cords
❑	Surge protectors

OFFICE SUPPLIES

❑	Color printing paper (letter/legal)
❑	White photocopy paper (letter/legal)
❑	Pads of paper
❑	Pens/pencils
❑	Crayons
❑	Colored markers
❑	Rulers
❑	Printer toner
❑	Toilet paper
❑	Soap/paper towels
❑	First aid kit

SECURITY

❑	Deadbolt for front door
❑	Locks for windows
❑	Locks and chairs to secure equipment to tables
❑	Locks to secure filing cabinets
❑	Alarm system
❑	Installation of alarm system
❑	Security cameras (one inside and one outside the building)
❑	Installation of the cameras
❑	Security Guard

INSURANCE
❑   Insurance policies
❑   General liability
❑   Property
❑   Workmen's compensation

Exhibit 4-2

Sample Center Rules

Welcome to Public Access at
The Somerville Community
Computing Center

When you sign in, you agree to abide by the following:

1.   All users must sign in before sitting down to work.

2.   *If you are able,* please contribute $2.00 for the use of the computers. It really *does* make a difference.

3.   No food or drink at or near the computers!

4.   If the application you are using has sound, please turn it off.

5.   Users under the age of 14 are welcome in the center until 7:00 pm, when they are asked to leave.

6.   Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

7.   Adults and youth have equal access rights to the computers during the times both are present.

8.   The Center staff and volunteers reserve the right to ask anyone to leave the Center at any time for any reason.

9.   Copying software from any of the computers and/or intentionally deleting or altering the contents of the hard drive will be cause for expulsion.

10.   Users of the computer center are asked to remain only in the labs, the hallways connecting the labs and the restrooms to avoid disturbing other classes.

11.   No Rollerblades (or other skates) in the labs.

12.   When the volunteers ask you to finish because it's closing time, please be considerate and do so.

Chapter 5. Making the Neighborhood Networks Center Operational — Scheduling, Staffing, Managing Volunteers, Marketing and Evaluating the Center

Introduction

This chapter outlines the remaining issues that a Neighborhood Networks center should consider after it has made necessary decisions regarding its physical needs. The center can use this chapter as a resource to help it to:

- ❑ Determine the schedule for operations

- ❑ Recruit and train staff

- ❑ Manage volunteers

- ❑ Design a marketing and community outreach strategy

- ❑ Evaluate the center's success and operations

Exhibit 5–1 provides a checklist to help the steering committee make sure that it has addressed each of these areas.

Scheduling

How Should a Schedule for the Center Be Developed?

User Projections

User projections are the steering committee's best guess of how many people are going to use center facilities in general, during different seasons, on different days of the week, and at different times of the day. The projections will vary by program area and by season. For example, will there be more or fewer people using the center during the summer or during holidays? The data gathered and tallied concerning resident needs (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3) will be useful in estimating how many people are likely to use the center at different times.

To develop a projection of the number of people likely to use the center, tally the answers to relevant questions that were posed to residents during the assessment of resident needs, such as, "Do you want to learn how to use a computer?" Once the center opens its doors, you can gain a more realistic estimate of users by instituting a membership database. This may require a computer for people to "log on" when they arrive at the center. At various times, this information can be retrieved and used as user projections. For example, the Harlem Community Computing Center created a membership database with software called

Scan-One and Bar-One. These are scanning/bar code programs (and not the only ones on the market). The heart of the system is the Fox Pro for Windows database. Fox Pro records all the information and creates membership cards, analysis reports, and lists. Chapter 7 contains additional discussion of user projections.

Time Constraints

The steering committee should include a schedule showing the hours of operation of the center in its business plan. The primary goal of the center schedule should be to allow the center to be open as much as possible. Another goal should be to provide adequate time for classes, individual instruction, and public access.

More people can use the center for more purposes the longer that it's open. However, accommodating the residents' needs must be given first priority in the schedule. For example, if the steering committee decides that its program priorities are preschoolers, senior citizens, and afterschool activities, then the schedule should block out mornings (for preschoolers and their parents), early afternoons (for seniors), and mid-to-late afternoons (for school children). If, however, the program offerings are to include adult education classes, then the evenings must be reserved for adults. Blocking out these times for dedicated uses means that the center will be closed to the general public during certain hours. However, if the center can be open at other times of day, other purposes, such as business development, could be achieved. Generally, the amount of time the center will be open will be determined by the amount of money available to keep it open.

Accommodating the needs of neighborhood institutions should also receive priority consideration. If resources permit, the center schedule may set aside time to be open to the community (public access time). The center could also encourage neighborhood institutions to schedule classes whether or not residents are included. These organizations often will bring their own teachers and students and pay a fee to use the facilities.

While the schedule must be firm so that the residents can rely upon it, it must also be flexible if scheduling needs change. Post the schedule in locations where residents and members of the community are likely to see it. Deliver copies of the schedule to individual apartments. Likewise, if the schedule changes, make sure the changes are widely circulated. Exhibit 5–2 is an example of the daily schedule for a community-based computer center.

Staffing

What Are the Staffing Needs of the Neighborhood Networks Center?

The staffing needs of the center must also be described in the business plan. The most valuable asset of the center is its staff, including volunteers. Volunteers are discussed later in this chapter. Hiring staff, developing personnel policies, planning staff development activities, and assessing staff are discussed in this section.

Hiring staff begins with three steps.

Step 1: Determine the Functions of the Center

The steering committee or search subcommittee (see Step 3 below) first lists the activities that it expects the staff of the center will perform. Determine which activities can be addressed on a full-time basis and which should be addressed on a part-time basis. Consider which activities could and should be handled by the steering committee, which activities should be handled by paid staff, and which should be handled by volunteers. Exhibit 5–3 suggests activities that are commonly assigned to full-time and part-time staff. Each center should amend this list to meet its needs.

Step 2: Develop Job Descriptions

Once these functions have been determined, the steering committee can develop job descriptions for the full-time and part-time positions. At a minimum, a Center Director is needed to make sure that the tasks described in Exhibit 5–3 are completed.

A sample job description should have the following elements:

❑   Position description

❑   Duties and responsibilities

❑   Qualifications

❑   Salary and benefits

❑   Application deadline

Step 3: Search for Qualified People

The steering committee may establish a Search Subcommittee to recruit qualified people for paid and volunteer positions. The Search Committee could include:

❑   Members of the steering committee

❑   Volunteers or representatives from neighborhood institutions

❑   Residents

The search can then proceed by publishing the job descriptions in local and regional newspapers, circulating the descriptions to employment agencies and other neighborhood institutions, and posting the job descriptions at the center and other locations where they will be seen by residents.

It is important to consider hiring residents for positions because resident staff members will begin to develop an even greater sense of ownership of the center. For example, resident teenagers can supervise and instruct the younger children. Teenagers who have developed a proficiency in solving technical problems can be hired as troubleshooters.

Initial Staff

The Center Director Position

The center needs a full-time director if it is going to be open and operating during traditional business hours, that is, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Center Director will likely perform the following tasks:

❑ **Administration**, such as hiring, firing, payroll, timekeeping, and paying bills

❑ **Budgeting** including tracking income and expenses

❑ **Reaching out** to neighborhood institutions

❑ **Scheduling** the hours of the center

❑ **Teaching** classes, if time permits

Other Staffing Needs

The center may need additional staff to perform the tasks that HUD attributes to an "On-Line Service Coordinator" in HUD Handbook 4381.5, Chapter 9. These tasks, which may be performed by paid or volunteer employees, include:

❑ Developing programs

❑ Developing a computer literacy program for all property residents

❑ Coordinating and training volunteers

❑ Working closely with student teachers and teaching aides

❑ Keeping logs of class attendance and following up with those who may not be attending on a regular basis.

❑ Working closely with a Social Services Service Coordinator (SSSC) who devotes at least 10 percent of his/her time to the center.

Personnel Policies

If the Neighborhood Networks center is going to have employees, it must develop personnel policies. This is true whether there are one or ten employees. Personnel policies set out the legal responsibilities of the employer and the benefit packages available to employees.

Legal Responsibilities

If the center pays an employee, such action triggers certain obligations under state and federal laws. To ensure that it is meeting its obligations, the center should contact the local IRS and state employment tax offices to find out the center's obligations to report information on salaries and benefits and make tax payments. The center should also contact the state department of labor or department of commerce/business to find out the center's obligations concerning unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, disability insurance, and other labor practices.

Benefit Packages

The center must consider whether to offer benefits to its employees. Benefits can include health, dental, and life insurance; and vacation, sick, and personal leave. No matter what the benefit package arrangements are, a written policy should be prepared and distributed to the employees to whom it applies. The center should be aware that benefit packages can cost the center an additional 15 to 30 percent of employees' salaries. These costs must be reflected in the center financial projections (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Staff Development

Staff development, an important employee benefit, includes both training staff and increasing their job satisfaction. Topics for staff training can include enhancing knowledge and skills on computers, learning software packages, and discovering the newest developments in computer technology. Techniques to increase job satisfaction include giving employees and volunteers more responsibility, adding more activities, developing flexible hours, providing job sharing, and matching jobs with individuals' interests.

Consulting human resources professionals in neighborhood institutions will enrich the center staff development program and may produce volunteer instructors for staff development workshops.

Staff Assessment

The annual performance evaluation process is the most common type of staff assessment. However, it is not perceived as helpful by many people. Increasingly, human resource professionals prefer a style that features continual feedback to the employee to reinforce good performance and stop poor performance quickly. Under this "coaching" concept, the year begins with the employee and the board or supervisor meeting to set goals for employee performance during the coming year. These goals are related to the overall goals of the center as well as to the specific assignment of the worker and his or her stage of professional growth. Goals must be agreed to by both the employee and supervisor.

As the year moves forward, the supervisor should frequently let the employee know how he or she is doing. Praise, as well as constructive criticism, is important. References to the mutually agreed upon goals should be a regular part of these conversations. Adjustments should be made in performance standards as the year goes by.

The supervisor should have a significant role in the employee's achievement of his or her goals. If the employee's performance has not been satisfactory, the supervisor should help get the employee on track. If progress has been good, both can enjoy the success, and an added benefit is that the Neighborhood Networks center's goals are being met. Quarterly or annual reviews should be routine meetings and few surprises should arise. If feedback is constant (even daily, in some cases), these more formal reviews are used for adjustment (up or down) of the employees' goals and performance standards for the year. Proponents of this system believe it is a very effective means of staff assessment for an organization that wants to continually improve its performance.

Managing Volunteers

What Role Will Volunteers Have in the Center?

Volunteers not only reduce the costs of paid staff but are an important source of energy and talent. Volunteers can provide valuable connections with funders in the neighborhood and in the community. Volunteers can also bring expertise and new ideas to the center. The recruitment, utilization, and retention of volunteers is as important an activity as organizing these activities for paid staff. The business plan must clearly reflect the role of volunteers in the center's operations. Issues concerning the use of volunteers are the subject of this section.

Recruitment

The high level of interest generated for the center may result in the center having a regular stream of volunteers. In the event recruitment is needed, sources of volunteers include:

❑ Residents of the housing developments served by the center

❑ People who respond to an advertisement in a newspaper, a notice in the volunteer section of a newspaper, or an article in a newspaper or community newsletter

❑ Students, faculty, and administrative staff in schools, colleges, and universities

❑ Members of neighborhood institutions, such as senior citizen organizations, youth groups, and advocacy and service organizations for persons with disabilities

❑ Volunteer agencies, such as the United Way

❑ Employment agencies

❑ The director of volunteers at hospitals, libraries, and television stations

❑ The director of internships at colleges and universities

❑ Employees of local businesses

Structuring a Volunteer Program

Volunteer Coordinator

To maximize the talents and enthusiasm of the volunteers, a volunteer coordinator is desirable. The responsibilities of a volunteer coordinator would include recruitment, utilization, and retention of volunteers. The job description for a volunteer coordinator should be developed as described above under Step 2: Develop Job Descriptions.

Activities

Volunteers can be used at all stages of the development and operation of the center and for any activity from "go-fer" tasks to professional responsibilities. For example, volunteers can be used to:

❑ Conduct the survey of residents

❑ Select and install the hardware and software

❑ Write grant proposals

❑ Instruct the center visitors on the computers

❑ Design marketing materials

❑ Answer phones, sign in visitors, and photocopy

❑ Provide needed administrative or clerical services

❑ Create, edit, and distribute a Neighborhood Networks center newsletter

Exhibit 5–4 will assist the volunteer coordinator in developing descriptions for volunteer jobs.

Orientation

An orientation program for volunteers is important for them to feel welcome and comfortable with the center, its staff, and the responsibilities of a volunteer. The orientation program should have structure and be conducted over a period of several weeks. The program could have the following components:

❑ Introduction to the Neighborhood Networks center

❑ Explanation of the center goals

❑ Role-playing using various populations as examples

❑ Scavenger hunts to explore the center

❑ Problem solving, including using the computers

Schedule

After the orientation, the volunteers should be assigned their responsibilities and hours. A schedule can be flexible if the assigned tasks can be completed by an understood deadline. Otherwise, the schedule should be firm and posted. Establishing a schedule involves a discussion with the volunteers. A schedule should not be imposed on the volunteers, and should include times for the volunteers and volunteer coordinator to discuss their assignments.

Retention of Volunteers

Volunteering means working without pay, not without rewards. The most important rule concerning volunteers is that they be thanked frequently and appropriately. Means of rewarding volunteers for their services can include:

❑ Volunteer recognition ceremony at which an award or certificate is given to each volunteer

❑ Personal time on the computers

❑ Internet time for personal use

❑ A mass transit pass for personal use

❑ Free tickets to sporting, cultural, or recreational events

❑ Invitations to center fundraisers

Marketing the Neighborhood Networks Center

What Is Marketing and Why Is It Important to a Center?

Marketing or public relations is the process of publicizing the activities and accomplishments of the center. These activities are critically important for generating community interest and increasing the visibility of the center in the community. Ultimately, a successful public relations campaign will result in a substantial amount of goodwill toward the Neighborhood Networks center and continued and increased financial support.

What Should the Center Publicize?

Center Activities and Accomplishments

The first-year goals of the center's marketing strategy should be to:

❑ Introduce itself to the community

❑ Become a familiar organization in the community

❑ Generate interest in its activities among the community

The steering committee should be aware that organizing activities of the center are its first public relations acts. After organization is complete, the center should try to publicize every activity and accomplishment as widely as possible. The kinds of activities that should be announced to the public include:

❑ Establishment of the center

❑ Appointment of the steering committee

❑ Hiring of center staff

❑ Grand opening of the center

❑ The schedule, including public access time

❑ Classes offered

❑ Foundation and grant awards

❑ In-kind contributions from neighborhood institutions

❑ Accomplishments of the students, such as getting jobs with skills learned at the center, passing English fluency tests, earning a GED after attending GED preparation classes at the center, or communicating on the Internet.

❑ Any business development activities it undertakes. For example, if the center is set up to receive outsourcing contracts, then this fact should be advertised, not only in the general circulation media, but also in specialized publications that may generate new business. Likewise, if the center is seeking to provide small business support, then this activity should receive similar marketing treatment.

After the first year, the public relations goals of the center should be to maintain its visibility in the community, to further promote itself, and to broaden and continue to stimulate interest in the activities of the center within the community. The center should, therefore, publicize noteworthy activities and accomplishments. These could include:

❑ New program offerings

❑ New partnerships

❑ The appointment of new steering committee members

❑ Creation of the center homepage on the Internet

❑ Student accomplishments

❑ Feature articles on staff and special students

❑ A "Year in Review" piece about the center

❑ Any foundation or grant awards

❑ Special attention the center receives from government officials, corporations, the media, or community organizations

❑ A center brochure

❑ A monthly center newsletter

The center's activities and accomplishments will involve most center staff members and users. In order for the center to use their names and photographs in articles, press releases, and video footage, the center should obtain a written general release (Exhibit 5–5).

Who Should the Center Tell?

After the center decides what activities and accomplishments to boast about publicly, the center must consider a community outreach strategy. This means:

❑ **Who in the community should know about these activities and accomplishments?** Who is the center's target audience for marketing? The list of neighborhood institutions developed using Exhibit 2–4 is a good starting point.

❑ **Why does the Neighborhood Networks center want them to know?** What is the purpose of the center's marketing efforts? For example, is the center having a grand opening and want to encourage community residents to attend?

❑ **What do they need to know?** What should the center publicize? Using the above example, the Neighborhood Networks center will want to publicize its location, its opening day, whether food and refreshments will be provided, the center program areas, the grand opening's sponsor, who to call with questions, and how to become a member.

❑ **How should they be told?** How will the center market itself? For example, return to Exhibit 2–4 and for each organization listed, identify the form of communication that is likely to be the most effective way to reach the organization's members or employees. Means of communication can include:

- Informal conversations
- Addressing community meetings
- Putting up posters
- Distributing flyers
- Sending letters
- Providing copies of the business plan
- Working with the print and broadcast media

An example of the steering committee's conclusions might look like this:

The Center's Target Audience for Marketing	The Purpose of the Center's Marketing Efforts	What the Center Should Publicize	How the Center Will Market Itself
Other housing residents	❑ To attract users ❑ To attract volunteers	❑ Its purpose ❑ Program areas ❑ Hours ❑ Volunteer and staffing needs ❑ How to participate	❑ Flyers ❑ Meetings ❑ Articles in community newsletter
Local churches, synagogues, and mosques	❑ To attract volunteers ❑ To encourage the donation of funds and equipment	❑ Its purpose ❑ Its location ❑ How to participate	❑ Letters to clergy ❑ Have representatives speak at services

Exhibit 5–6 is a chart, similar to the table above, that can assist a Neighborhood Networks center to develop a community outreach strategy.

How Can a Center Reach Its Target Audience?

Managing the Center's Public Relations

The center will need a media specialist to handle all public relations. Ideally, the center would hire a media specialist to write and place press releases, articles, and public service announcements (PSAs). The more likely scenario is that a volunteer would be recruited to assist with this effort. Likely sources for such volunteers are the steering committee, journalism students attending the local college or university, or even reporters from the local high school newspaper.

Open and regular communication between the steering committee, Center Director, and media specialist is crucial to the timely dissemination of information. The media specialist needs to be aware of all center activities so that pertinent information is circulated promptly throughout the community. It is unimportant that the media specialist be present at the center as long as he or she is in touch with the Center Director and steering committee and gets regular updates on center news.

Creating Media Opportunities

The center will want news of its activities to obtain the widest circulation possible within the community and should rely on the community outreach opportunities explored in the previous section. The center must identify and contact various types of media to get this type of exposure. In addition, the center should consider using the following information outlets and marketing and outreach techniques.

❑ **Newspapers, including dailies, weeklies, supermarket papers, and high school and college papers**. In addition to standard exposure, the center will want to learn about any special sections,

such as community activities sections, special Sunday editions on technology, and "Person of the Week" feature story opportunities.

❑ **Television stations, including networks with community news and cable stations**. The center will want to know if stations offer free airtime for PSAs.

❑ **Radio stations, including network and college stations**. The center will want to find out about PSAs; talk shows that would be interested in interviewing the Center Director, Chairman of the steering committee, or a community partner; and opportunities for getting on-the-air during a telethon.

❑ **Publications belonging to the various community partners, including corporate newsletters, school newsletters for staff and administration, and flyers of community-based organizations**. A press release should be written each time the center partners with a neighborhood institution and this press release should be placed in that neighborhood institution's newsletter or flyer, if one exists.

❑ **Community bulletin boards or kiosks**. These would be places to post the schedule and center staff openings for both paid and volunteer positions.

❑ **Trade publications**. The center should identify trade newspapers, magazines, and other publications (such as journals of higher education and philanthropy) in which to place articles and press releases. The center may gain publicity and, perhaps, offers of technical assistance and funds.

❑ **Magazines**. Find out if a monthly magazine is published in your area.

The opportunities created by a community outreach strategy in the print and broadcast media will afford the center the widest possible exposure in the community.

Evaluating the Center

Once the center is up and running, the steering committee and its partners must ask themselves, "Is the center working?" Evaluation is what you do to learn if your center is operating as planned and meting the needs of residents and other users.

Why Do You Need Evaluation?

Evaluations are useful to the governing board of the center because they will indicate if a program should be continued or discontinued, if a new program should be offered, or if an aspect of a program should be changed. Evaluations also can be useful to funders because funders like to see evidence that the organizations they are funding track their own effectiveness and operations. In fact, the steering committee and any subsequent governing board need to be aware of any reporting requirements of funders, and must make the center staff aware of these requirements so that they can be incorporated into the evaluation process. Finally, evaluations can be useful for getting the opinions of the residents on a regular basis.

Evaluations can be performed by the center or with outside assistance, such as by a consultant or a college or university.

What Is Evaluation?

Evaluation begins with planning. Plans are like roadmaps that are drawn at the beginning to show where the center is supposed to be going and the results that it is expected to achieve. The statements that describe the desired results are called goals. Goals will depend on the program focus for the center. A one-year goal statement might read:

❑ By 2001, as a result of the center, 50 project residents will be qualified for computer-related jobs.

The statements that describe the results needed to achieve a goal are called objectives. Generally, three to five objectives are developed for each goal. Objectives for the goal mentioned above might read:

❑ By March 2001, 100 residents will become aware of the services of the center through mail slot flyers.

❑ By May 2001, 75 residents will commit to getting computer-related job skills and will develop a written learning plan.

❑ By August 2001, 65 residents will have completed half of their plan as shown by attendance records and achievement records they keep.

❑ By November 2001, 50 residents will have the computer-related skills needed to make application for 5 jobs.

Goals and objectives state what the center wants to do. Evaluations allow the center to compare what actually happened at the center with what everyone hoped would happen. Success will be measured not only by what happened, but by what happened in comparison to what was planned.

Evaluators actually ask two questions.

❑ Question one asks how people utilized the center. For example, did center users learn how to use a computer? What software did they learn? Did they get high school diplomas? Did they get jobs? If you ask and answer these questions you are doing an *outcome evaluation.*

❑ Question two asks if the center is the best it can be to help people. For example, was the center open during the most convenient hours for the people who needed to use it? Does the center have the best type of hardware and are there enough computers? Is there enough help for people to learn how to use the computers? When you ask and answer these kinds of questions, you are doing a *process evaluation.*

The rest of this chapter discusses these two types of evaluations in more detail.

How Do You Perform Evaluations?

Outcome Evaluation

An outcome evaluation answers the question, "Did you get the results you wanted from your center?" To complete an outcome evaluation, start with these five questions:

(1) Who used the center?

(2) How many times did each user come to the center and how long did they stay?

(3) What did the users do at each visit?

(4) Did the visit have tangible results, such as leading to a job interview or increased skills on the computer?

(5) Did the number of users, the number of visits, and the things that happened after each visit resemble the centers' goals?

The simplest way to get these answers is to have all users, at every visit, write down their name, the date, the time they came and went, and what they did while visiting the center. All users should also record what hardware and software they used and if they had anything good happen to them because of their work at the center. For instance, did they finish their GED, get into school, or get a job? The center can make it easy for this information to be provided by the user either by having a sheet of paper (a log) at the front desk for visitors to fill in when they first come into the center and before they leave (see Exhibit 5-7 for a sample user log) or by having the user input this information into the computer when he or she logs on and off. See the user projection discussion earlier in this chapter. Every day the Center Director (or a volunteer) should put this log in a safe place so it can be used when time comes to evaluate outcomes. If users don't want their names in the log, they can be given a private password that identifies them to center management.

Every month, or at least periodically, the Center Director or a volunteer should tally this information (see Exhibit 5–9 for a sample monthly user report). The Center Director or a volunteer can then write a report for the Board, HUD, center users, and others who are interested. These comments may also become a part of the center's annual report and reference for future planning and evaluation.

Process Evaluation

In the process evaluation, the governing board, the Center Director, staff members, and volunteers should try to figure out if the center is really operating as effectively as possible. A simple way to make this determination is to ask if the center did what it said it would do. For instance, was the center open when it said it would be? Did the center have the computers and supplies a user would need to do his or her work? Were the computers available when people wanted them? Did the center have enough and the right type of people to meet users' needs (a manager, volunteers, teachers, and other people to help visitors)?

Like the outcome evaluation, the best way to answer these questions is to write down what happens. But instead of writing about what happens from the perspective of the user, managers, staff and volunteers write down what *they* do, how often, when, and what happened because of their work (see Exhibit 5–8 for a sample staff/volunteer log). The following questions can help you figure out which type of information you will need to collect for a process evaluation.

(1) Did users have the computers, supplies, and space they needed to meet their needs? Write in a log the hours that the center was open, what equipment repairs were needed, the number and types of requests users made, and what staff had to do to meet these requests.

(2) Did users have enough help in using the computers? Write in a log the number and type of requests from users on computer use, who met these requests, the type of help that was given, and how much time the help took.

(3) Is what the center doing working? Once every month or so (more in the beginning), have everyone who works at the center meet together and talk about what has been going right and what has not been going so well. The Center Director or a volunteer should write down the good, the not-so-good, and the ways that everyone suggests to fix the not-so-good.

(4) The Center Director should also make sure that paid and volunteer workers write down the times they work at the center, the type of training they get, and any stories about workers that show how well, or not so well, the staff is doing in making the center successful.

Evaluation Reporting

The Center Director should compile the logs and written records together in one report at the end of each year. The center may also want to use a more traditional evaluation report (see Exhibit 5–10 for a sample evaluation/comments form) to get additional user feedback. The report should tell what has happened to users (outcomes) and what the center has done (process) over the year. Besides a description of the outcomes and process, the report should include a discussion of what the center wanted to accomplish.

Using Chapter 5 to Develop the Business Plan

The business plan will include the following information from Chapter 5:

❑ The center schedule

❑ Initial staffing

❑ The role of volunteers

❑ Marketing and community outreach strategy

❑ Evaluation procedures

Exhibit 5-1

Checklist: Scheduling, Staffing, Volunteers, Marketing and Evaluations

SCHEDULE
STAFFING (full-time versus part-time)
❑   Positions
❑   Director
❑   Systems Coordinator
❑   Media Specialist
❑   Teachers
❑   Other
BENEFITS
❑   Health
❑   Dental
❑   Life
❑   Pension
VOLUNTEERS
❑   Coordinator
❑   Activities
❑   Orientation
❑   Retention
MARKETING
❑   Plan
❑   Staffing
EVALUTION
❑   Outcome
❑   Process

Exhibit 5-2

Daily Center Schedule

Apple II Lab and Public Access

	M	Tu	W	Th	F
9:00 – 10:00	**Powder-house 3-4**	**Open Center for Children** Rick Feigenberg	**ABE II** Dolores DeVellis	**ABE III** Dolores DeVellis	**ABE Math** Patricia Wild
10:00-11:00	Eleanor Grogh	**ESL II** Charlotte Knox		**ESL 1A** Augie Suribory	**GED/ADP/ERI** Ngaio Schiff
11:00-noon	**Even Start** Peter Miller	**Head Start**		**GED**	**Powder-house, 4-6**
Noon-1:00		Chris Sangster	**ESL Basic Skills** Joanne Holdridge	Mary Lou Olivieri	Florienne Santil
1:00-2:00	**Public Access-Apple II, Mac & IBM/Council on Aging**	**GED/ERI**	**GED/ERI**	**Business**	**Powder-house, 2 ,3** Linda Hanson
2:00-3:00		Ngaio Schiff	Ngaio Schiff	Ken Tamarkin Doreen Martelli	
3:00-4:00	**Scale Staff Development/ Access**	**Public Access-Apple II, Mac & IBM**	**ESL/ERI (PCs)** Cindy Westhoff		**Community Schools**
4:00-5:00	Peter Miller Ken Tamarkin	**Community Schools**			Bill Mahoney
5:00-6:00		Lisa Ponaruma			
6:00-8:30	**Public Access:** **Apple IIs, Macs,** **and IBM PC-Compatibles** **ESL Read/Write** – Miguel Vallanueva			**ESL 1&3** Marie Lindahl Gwen Davies **WordPerfect** Theresa Haley	**Public Access:** **Apple IIs, Mac and IBM**

Exhibit 5–3

Staffing Checklist

FULL-TIME STAFF

❑ **Director** runs the day-to-day operation and management of the center.

❑ **Systems Administrator** sets up the computers, printers, telephones, fax machines, etc. for the center and handles any technical problems that arise. (A full-time systems administrator may be necessary depending on the size of the center).

❑ **Clerical** person to answer the phones, photocopy, and serve as receptionist.

PART-TIME STAFF

❑ **Clerical** person to answer the phones, photocopying, and serve as receptionist.

❑ **Outreach employee** to develop contacts with neighborhood institutions and potential center users.

❑ **Teachers/instructors** to teach various programs at the center.

❑ **Systems staff** to set up the center and solve technical problems as they arise.

❑ **Fundraising staff** to conduct fundraising events.

❑ **Volunteer coordinator** to ensure all volunteer are productive and utilized effectively.

❑ **Maintenance staff** to clean the facility and repair equipment.

❑ **Security escorts** for ensuring senior citizens and children get home safely.

❑ **Security agents** to open and close (lock) the facility. And, to store securely the computers, printers, software and work product.

❑ **Job counselor** to assist in helping center users find employment.

❑ **Media specialist** to identify media opportunities, and write and place press releases, articles, and public service announcements.

Exhibit 5–4

Guide for Developing Volunteer Job Descriptions

❑ **Job Title** -- This will be the volunteer's identification. Give this as much prestige as possible.

❑ **Major Objective** -- A short concise statement, reflecting the ultimate goal of the service to be performed.

❑ **Qualifications** -- Include all things necessary for the effective performance of duties, listing requirements from physical requirements to human qualities desired. Be careful not to overqualify the position, or you could lose some excellent volunteers due to stringent educational or other requirements. Specifics such as need for a car and insurance should be noted.

❑ **Responsibilities** -- Be specific. List each duty and responsibility for the position.

❑ **Orientation/Training** -- This includes a description of the content and approximate hours needed for orientation and training, and identify whom the volunteer should report to for training.

❑ **Time and Place** -- This should include the exact duty hours, which days of the week, and the place where the volunteer is to report to work. Be specific.

❑ **Commitment** -- The minimum number of months you need from the volunteer based on your investment in training and supervision becomes the minimum length of commitment for the volunteer. A maximum time commitment should also be specified.

❑ **On-the-Job Supervision** -- Name of the supervisor or the supervisor's position should be included. In most cases, this will be the staff person with direct responsibility for the service. Include a schedule of supervisory sessions.

❑ **Benefits** -- List any available benefits to the volunteer, for example, free parking, coffee, mileage reimbursement, and insurance.

❑ **Frustrations** -- Those aspects of the job that can be frustrating, such as the record keeping.

❑ **Satisfactions** -- Those aspects of the job that can give the volunteer real satisfaction and an opportunity for learning.

Exhibit 5-5

General Release

I, _____, for valuable consideration, do hereby irrevocably give my consent to _____, to use my name and any photographs of me involved in Neighborhood Networks center activities at any time for editorial, illustration, promotional, advertising, and other similar purposes in connection with the Neighborhood Networks center's publications and other activities.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Exhibit 5-6

Community Outreach Planning Worksheet

Target Audience for Marketing	The Purpose of the Marketing Efforts	What the Center Should Publicize	How the Center Will Market Itself

Exhibit 5-7

Sample User Log

Date	Name/Number	Start Time	End Time	Task
3/10/96	Hilda Rivera	11:15 AM	1:30 PM	Learn Word Processing
3/10/96	Eddie Vedder	11:30 AM	1:30 PM	Learn Word Processing
3/10/96	Essie Brown	11:30 AM	1:30 PM	Learn Word Processing

Exhibit 5-8

Sample Staff/Volunteer Log

Date	Staff/Volunteer	Start Time	End Time	Task
3/10/96	Teacher Joe Byte	11:00 AM	1:45 PM	Teaching Word Processing

Exhibit 5-9

Sample Monthly User Report

Month:	# User	# Hours	Training	Job Search	School Work	Other
1 March 98	3	6.25	✔			
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						
23						
24						
25						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30						

Exhibit 5-10

Center Evaluation/Comment Form

1. Date: _____

2. Name: _____

3. In the past year, about how many times did you use the Neighborhood Networks center? _____

4. What did you use the center for:

   A. _____

   B. _____

   C. _____

   D. _____

5. Did you find the staff or volunteers helpful: (check one)

   ❑ All of the time   ❐ Some of the time   ❐ Never

6. Did you find the equipment and space met your needs: (check one)

   ❑ All of the time   ❐ Some of the time   ❐ Never

7. As a result of using the center, check all of the following that happened.

   Learned to use computers: ❐
   Learned to use software: ❐
   Learned to use word processing: ❐
   Learned to use spreadsheets: ❐
   Learned to use the Internet: ❐
   Learned to use e-mail: ❐
   Got job interviews: ❐
   Got a job: ❐

Chapter 6. Funding the Neighborhood Networks Center

Introduction

Now that the steering committee has made decisions about such key topics as program areas, computer hardware and software, hours of operation, staffing, and marketing, it has to determine if it can find the money or resources to start up and run the center the way it would like to. This process is called "budgeting." Each new center will actually have two different budgets:

❑ **A start-up budget** detailing the onetime costs of setting up the center and the sources of funds that will be used to cover these costs.

❑ **An operating budget** detailing the ongoing costs of operating the center and the likely sources of funds that will be used to meet these costs.

This chapter provides guidance on budgeting, explanations about the realistic sources that a center may be able to tap for funds, and advice on how to seek out these funds. It is drafted to be used with the *Financial Plans* section of the business plan in Chapter 7, which provides more in-depth, step-by-step help in developing financial projections for the center.

Budgeting

How Is a Budget Prepared?

Budgeting requires three types of estimates:

❑ Estimates of the costs of starting up and then operating the center.

❑ Estimates of how much money the center is likely to be able to raise for these purposes.

❑ Estimates of the likely places that the money will be coming from such as user fees, foundation grants, income generated through center business activities, and so forth.

A budget should be developed in three steps.

Step 1: Make a Detailed List of Center Expenses

This requires listing the areas of expenses, stating particular items in each area, and estimating how much money will be spent on each item for the startup phase and then for the first year of operations. Present this information in a line-item format.

For example:

Office Expenses	Annual Costs
Office Supplies	$500
Copying	$300

Step 2: Make a Detailed List of Income Sources

This requires listing the income sources, such as cash from user fees, in-kind contributions, contributions of public funds, income generated from business activities, and private sector contributions. Within each income source, identify the particular source, such as a grant from the United Way or hardware donations from a company in town. Then, identify the amount of money coming from each income source. Finally, present this information in a line-item format.

For example:

Income Source	Annual Costs
User Fees	$1,000
Private Sector Contributions	$2,000
In-Kind Use of Church Auditorium	$2,000

Step 3: Arrange the Information Collected in Steps 1 and 2 in an Easy-to-Read Format

Exhibit 6–1 is a good example of an easy-to-read format for a budget. The income sources are broken down by source and recorded on the first page. The operating expenses are broken down by cost category over the first three and one-half pages. Finally, the start-up expenses are detailed separately on the last page. There is no right way to present this information, but a person from outside the organization needs to understand the entire financial picture from the budget that is presented.

Neighborhood Networks Center Funding

What Are Likely Sources of Funding and In-Kind Contributions?

Potential funding sources include:

❑ Private and corporate contributions

❑ Foundations and funding organizations such as the United Way

❑ Government funding

❑ User fees, including revenues generated from partnerships within the community (see Chapter 7)

❑ Income generated through business development activities (see Chapter 3)

❑ Fundraising events

A carefully selected steering committee or fundraising subcommittee can assist the center with identifying funding sources.

Private Contributions

Private contributors usually include individual donors, who, in some cases, may even wish to remain anonymous. Private contributions also include donations by individual members of the steering committee.

Corporate Contributions

Corporate contributions are donated by corporations, corporate foundations, and corporate in-kind donation programs.

The inventory of resources (see Chapter 2) will reveal which companies give grants to community organizations. The corporate members of the steering committee should also be tapped for contributions. In addition, personal appeals should be made to other people who might contribute money, services, or in-kind goods and services to the center.

Foundations

Sources for information about foundations include:

❑ **The Foundation Center**, a national, nonprofit clearinghouse for information on private and corporate foundations and grants. The center assists in matching foundation interests with nonprofit needs by publishing reference books on grantmakers and disseminating information on grants available to nonprofits.

❑ **The local public library**, which should have manuals listing foundations by location, kind of activity, and level of funding. Begin with the foundations in your state. Ask the librarian for assistance in locating directories such as *1000 Foundations, Computer Grants Directory, Directory of Computer and High Tech Grants,* and *National Directory of Corporate Giving.*

❑ **The telephone book**, which should have a listing under "Foundations."

❑ **The Internet and the Neighborhood Networks website** at *www.neighborhoodnetworks.org.*

United Way

The local United Way is a leading organization worth investigating for funds. Before applying for funding there, inquire whether corporations *will not* fund you if you receive United Way support.

Other Sources

The local Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanas and Rotary Clubs, the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, and other business associations may give grants or their members may know of local businesses that give grants. Local colleges and universities may also give grants, provide paid or volunteer staff, and offer linkages to job training or educational programs for adults.

Government Funding

Funding can come from local, state, and federal funding sources. Usually, any government application process requires evidence of the center's track record, thus making record keeping by the center an important activity. In addition, the services for which the center is requesting funds must closely match the funding agency's eligibility criteria.

Local and State Funding Sources

The inventory of resources (see Chapter 2) will identify specific local government agencies and their grant resources. For example, the municipal, county, or regional government should be asked to earmark Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the center.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) may be a source of funding for the center. This section will discuss which types of properties can apply to use funds to support a center, what the sources of the money can be, and what the money can be used for. This information can be found in HUD Handbook 4381.5, Chapter 9, provided in the Reference Materials section of this manual.

A property owner may apply to HUD for permission to use certain funds if two requirements are met. HUD must approve the business plan (see Chapter 7) and the items for which any HUD resources will be used.

The property owner may use the following funding methods, when applicable and after consultation with HUD, to fund center activity:

❑ **Residual Receipts Account**. The owner may be able to use funds from the Residual Receipts Accounts to fund a center to the extent that HUD determines that these funds are not required to maintain the habitability of units or to meet other building needs.

❑ **Owners' equity**. Owners of limited distribution property can increase the amount of their initial equity investment (and, in turn, the yield on their distribution) to the extent that they invest their own, non-repayable funds in the center. A rent increase, however, will not be approved to provide for additional yield.

❑ **Funds borrowed from the Reserve for Replacement Account**. The owner may be able to use funds from the Reserve for Replacement Accounts to fund a center to the extent that HUD determines that these funds are not required to meet anticipated repair and replacement needs of the property.

   If this source of funds is selected, then a scheduled repayment plan also must be submitted illustrating how the Reserve for Replacement Account will be replenished consistent with future replacement needs that have been identified.

❑ **Rent increase**. Owners of properties where rents are set under the Budgeted Rent Increase Process may request an increase to cover the costs of a center. These increases will be approved at HUD's discretion subject to the availability of funds.

❑ **Requesting a special rent adjustment**. Under certain, specific situations established by HUD (see Reference Materials), the maximum monthly rent for units under a Section 8 contract may be increased to meet the costs of a center.

HUD will permit such funds to be spent on:

❑ **Computer hardware**. This includes computers, wiring, network servers, special phone lines, and training costs.

❑ **Computer software**. This includes software costs for multimedia applications, educational and job training skills, office and business skills such as word processing and database programs, and access to the Internet.

❑ **Distance learning equipment**. This includes videocasting and other distance learning equipment.

❑ **Security measures**. This includes costs necessary to protect the hardware and software from theft or vandalism, including insurance coverage.

❑ **Space use/retrofit**. Minor retrofit costs are allowed.

❑ **On-Line Service Coordinator (OLSC)**. The salary for center staff to perform the following tasks is an eligible expenditure:

- Develop programs

- Develop a computer literacy program for all property residents

- Coordinate and train volunteers

- Work closely with teachers and teaching aides

- Keep logs of class attendees and conduct a follow up with those who may not be attending on a regular basis

- Work closely with a Social Services Service Coordinator (SSSC) who will devote at least 10 percent of his/her time to the center

Other Federal Funding Sources

The U.S. Department of Labor may have grants for employment and training purposes; the U.S. Department of Education, for education programs; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for preschool and afterschool activities; the U.S. Department of Commerce, for small business development; and the U.S. Department of Justice, for Crime Prevention and Drug Elimination.

User Fees

Some funding can be generated by charging:

❑ **Membership fees**. The center should offer memberships to residents at individual and family rates. The membership fees should be paid all at once or at every visit. The fees should be reasonable for the population being served, such as a fee equal to round trip bus fare or subway fare to the center. For example, the Harlem Community Computer Center offers the following membership rates for a six month period:

- Individuals are charged $30.

- Families (up to 5 people) are charged $35.

- Seniors are charged $15.

- Children are charged $15.

❑ **Class fees**. Fees could be charged to individuals for classes. In addition, if neighborhood institutions use the center to conduct classes for their own members, it is appropriate for the center to charge them a user fee.

❑ **Public access fees**. Visitors to the center should be asked to make a contribution. However, no one should be denied access because of an inability to make a contribution.

A method for projecting reasonable user fees is described in the *User Fees* section of the business plan in Chapter 7.

Income Generated Through Business Development Activities

As discussed in Chapter 3, a variety of business activities that generate income can be conducted at the center, allowing them to become profit centers. Possible business activities include contracting out services, small business support, self-employment, and entrepreneurship. If the center has a role in training individuals to become successful in business or if the center is used for certain business activities, it might be appropriate for the center to develop a system for sharing profits in lieu of payment. An organization that can be helpful in providing guidance and resources for microenterprise development is the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) (see Appendix).

Fundraising Events

Fundraising activities not only provide another source of funds for the center, but they also serve two other purposes—they heighten awareness of the center in the community and they allow lots of people to support the center.

The types of events used to raise money vary tremendously. For example, a center might hold a bake sale, a reception at a local hotel for a charge of $50 to $100 per person, or a silent auction. The center user

community, business and government leaders, existing funders, potential funders, potential steering committee members, and community partners should be invited to all fundraising events.

If the purpose of an event is to heighten awareness of the center and get a lot of people involved, begin a tradition such as an annual bike trip, walkathon for which people collect pledges, or auction (where, among other things, a webpage designed by center members can be auctioned). Other ideas include a fair where center members can display and sell their work or where center users who are self-employed can sell their goods and contribute a percentage of the proceeds to the center as voluntary pledges.

In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are donations given to the center in lieu of cash, such as hardware, software, space, volunteer supervisors and teachers, clerical assistance, or accounting services. A carefully selected steering committee can be a tremendous source not only of cash but also of other resources needed to operate the center. Strategic partnerships with local neighborhood or community organizations can also provide in-kind contributions to get the center operational. Use the data gathered in Chapter 2 and recorded on Exhibit 2–7 to identify likely sources of in-kind contributions.

In-kind contributions are of two types: solicited and windfall. Windfalls usually happen by chance. Most in-kind contributions, however, must be solicited and require formal requests.

Owner's Resources

The owner may obtain a loan from a lending institution to buy hardware and pay for other startup costs. The loan cannot be secured by the property. Surplus cash or other outside sources may be used to repay the loan. A rent increase cannot be required to support the loan.

How Should the Steering Committee Go About Soliciting Funds or In-Kind Contributions?

Solicitation of funds and in-kind contributions involves both informal and formal means. When a steering committee member asks a business associate or friend to contribute funds or to make an in-kind contribution, this is informal fundraising. A request from a friend or longtime associate is a very effective means of raising money. Each steering committee member should be asked to be responsible for raising a set amount of funds, whether in cash or as in-kind contributions.

Other methods for obtaining support include marketing, direct solicitation, community outreach via local media, and community and organization publications.

Solicitation from private and corporate sources requires a four-step process.

Step 1: Define the Project

Elements of defining the project include:

❑   What is the need being addressed?

❑   What is the goal of the program?

❑   How will the project achieve this goal?

One of the key purposes of the business plan (see Chapter 7) is to clearly define the project for funders and interested parties outside of the steering committee and the center family.

Step 2: Research the Sources of Funds

Possible sources of private and corporate funds were discussed in the *Private Contributions* and *Corporate Contributions* sections earlier in this chapter.

Step 3: Write the Proposal

Before writing the proposal, call all potential funding sources and ask for their annual report, application requirements, and guidelines for proposals. After you receive this information, pay attention to the deadlines, initial contacts, and size of the average grant.

The likely elements of the proposal include:

❑   **A summary page**. If an application form is not provided, prepare a brief summary that includes the name, address, and telephone number of the center and the name of the center contact.

❑   **A proposal narrative**. The proposal should be five or more pages and include the following parts:

- Project statement

- Statement of need

- Statement of capability

- Implementation plan

- Staffing plan

- Budget

❑   **Enclosures and attachments**. Include such items as the center's business plan, the résumés of senior staff, a list of members of the steering committee, press clippings, letters of support from the steering committee and potential partners, and the most recent annual and financial reports.

❑   **A cover letter**. The letter should be addressed to the contact person identified in the application materials. The amount of the grant sought, other foundations to which the center has applied, and a request for an interview should be included in the cover letter.

Step 4: Follow Up

Try to arrange a meeting. Keep the corporate or foundation officers informed by correspondence about the project by sending any press clippings, and notices of grant awards, equipment donations, and so forth. Invite the officers to any open house or holiday party that the center sponsors.

If the proposal is accepted, write the funder a thank you letter. When the center receives the funds, write another thank you letter. Most funders request interim progress reports. Be diligent about meeting these deadlines. If the proposal is rejected, call the officer to find out why the proposal was rejected. Ask how the proposal could have been more effective. Ask if any information was missing. Find out when the reapplication process begins. Finally, write a letter thanking the officer for his or her time.

For example, assume the center wants to solicit an in-kind computer hardware contribution. First, prepare a plan that describes the desired hardware. The plan should include:

❑ A statement of how the software and hardware will benefit your program (for example, it might facilitate educational tasks, administrative tasks, or public access to the center).

❑ A description of minimum acceptable standards, the number of hardware systems you need and can physically accommodate, required peripherals, operating systems, and other software required for the intended use.

❑ The number of staff able to use the equipment and the number remaining to be trained.

❑ Sources of assistance in providing staff development, program development, and technical assistance.

❑ The amount in the budget to support the above activities.

Once the contribution has been committed, get details of any donation from the donor. Such details include:

❑ The name, title, address, and phone number of the donor.

❑ How the donated systems and software differ from the plan with respect to type, components, memory, practicality of use, need for staff development, and so forth.

❑ The working order of the hardware.

❑ The legal right of the donor to give the center the software and the legal right of the center to use it.

❑ The donor's willingness to pay for the delivery of the equipment to the center.

If the donated equipment is several years old, before acceptance, research the availability of repair services and spare parts.

With regard to donations of hardware, do not accept a lower grade or earlier model than that which the center already owns unless there is a specific use for it.   Do not accept equipment in poor condition unless there are funds available to repair it and the repair will be cost effective.

A Word on Sustainability

Funders, users, and neighborhood institutions are all going to want to know that what the center is asking them to invest in or partner with is going to be "sustainable" or "in business" beyond the first year. When developing the center's budget and the financial plan section of the business plan, be sure to emphasize how sustainable the center will be after startup and the first year's operations. In fact, as described in the *Financial Plans* section of Chapter 7, the center will have to provide annual budgets for the first three years of operations to reflect "sustainability." Obviously, multiyear commitments of money or in-kind contributions make the center more sustainable and will provide everyone with a degree of comfort that their investment will prove worthwhile.

Using Chapter 6 to Develop the Business Plan

As stated earlier, this chapter was drafted to be used together with the *Financial Plans* section of the business plan in Chapter 7.

Exhibit 6-1

Sample Budget Report

PROJECTED OPERATING EXPENSES					INCOME SOURCES			
					In-Kind	Revenue	Public Monies	Private Sector
PERSONNEL								
Salaried	position	% time	base salary	budget amount				
Abe								
Betty								
Carmela								
Deirdre								
Eduardo								
Frank								
Total salaries	>>>							
	job	rate	budget amount					
Hourly								
Gerald								
Henry								
Ida Mae								
Total hourly	>>>							
Subtotal Salaries & Hourly								
Benefits	annual	rate	per month	budget amount				
FICA								
Hospitalization								
Major Medical								
Dental								
Life								
Disability								
Unemployment								
Workers Compensation								
Vacation pay								
Subtotal benefits	>>							
			(continued on following page)					

		# days/hours per meeting	rate per hour		budget amount				
	Professional fees								
		Accountant								
		Bookkeeper								
		Consultant #1								
		Consultant #2								
		Honoraria								
	Subtotal professional fees	>>							
TOTAL PERSONNEL		>>							
OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES									
	Site Costs	Last yr. budget	Last yr. actual	% increase	budget amount				
		Rent								
		Utilities								
		Maintenance Supplies								
		Cartage								
	Subtotal	>>							
	Security and Insurance								
		Alarm Company								
		Liabilities and Theft								
		Equipment Insurance								
		Keys								
		Fire Equipment								
	Subtotal	>>							
	Hardware and Software								
		Hardware repair								
		Software purchase								
		Computer supplies								
	Subtotal	>>							
	Office Expenses								
		Supplies								
		Equipment Maintenance								
		Copying								
		Printing								
	Subtotal	>>							
		(continued on following page)							

	Communications								
	Telephone								
	Postage								
	Messenger								
	Fax								
Subtotal		>>							
	PTW Network								
	Telecom								
	Workshops								
	Conference								
	Membership Fee								
Subtotal		>>							
	Educational Materials								
	Books								
	Periodicals								
	Other								
Subtotal		>>							
	Travel and Entertainment								
	Local								
	Fare and Living Expenses								
	Special Events								
Subtotal		>>							
	Newsletter								
	Reproduction								
	Printing								
	Dissemination								
Subtotal		>>							
	Depreciation								
	Hardware								
	Office Equipment								
	Furniture								
Subtotal		>>							
	Other								
	Miscellaneous fees								
	Discretionary								
Subtotal		>>							
		(continued on following page)							

TOTAL PROJECTED OPERATING EXPENSES	>>>							
Subcontracts and Capital Expenses								
Subcontractor #1								
Subcontractor #2								
Subcontractor #3								
Capital Expenses								
Hardware								
Furniture								
Office Equipment								
TOTAL Subcontracts and Capital Expenses	>>>							
GRAND TOTAL	>>>							
PROJECTED START-UP EXPENSES								
Labor (Site Preparation)								
Construction								
Painting								
Telephone								
Security								
Miscellaneous								
Purchases								
Hardware								
Furniture								
Office Equipment								
Supplies								
Other								
Consultants								
Meetings								
Publicity								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL Start-Up Costs	>>>							

Chapter 7. Preparing a Business Plan for the Neighborhood Networks Center

Introduction

At this point, the steering committee has thought through the essential questions.

❑   What will the future users of the center need?

❑   What will the center program areas be?

❑   How will the center operate?

❑   What will the center cost to start up and operate?

The steering committee must now commit all these decisions to writing and put them in a format that is understandable to the outside world. This format is called a business plan.

What Is a Business Plan?

The business plan is used for many purposes. It can be used to tell people about your project or serve as a guide to help you set up your program and run it. The business plan can be used to show partners and funders why you need their help or to demonstrate to staff what they will be doing. It is important to look at your business plan at least once a year. It may need changes or you may decide to completely redo certain sections.

Getting Started

Developing a business plan can be a long process, but it is not difficult if you take it one step at a time. Up to this point, you have collected a lot of information. Now you will organize the information and begin to actually plan your program and decide what it will take to make it work. You should plan a series of meetings for the steering committee to work through each section in the business plan.

The business planning process helps the steering committee make decisions about your center and write them down. As you work through sections of the business plan, you may find that you need to go back and make changes to sections you wrote earlier. This is a normal part of the planning process.

Outside Support

It may be useful at this point in the process to bring in an outside person to help your steering committee develop the plan. It would help to have as a member of the steering committee someone who has financial or business skills, especially to help with the budgets. If no one on the committee has these skills, you may want to hire someone or bring someone in from the community. A suitable person may be available at a local community development corporation (CDC), Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC), or a

local community college or business school. You may be able to find someone from one of these institutions who is willing to work with you pro bono (without asking a fee). For further information on budgeting, see Chapter 6.

Integration with the Other Sections of the Manual

Up to this point, you have gathered information. Now you are starting to write your business plan. For most sections of the plan you will start with information you already have. Preparation of each section will help you decide what else you need to know. Below you will find a table that lists the sections of the business plan and identifies the chapters in this manual that contain the information you will use when writing your business plan.

Business Plan Section	Subsection	Chapter(s) Describing Source of Information
Program	Assessment of Resident Needs	2 and 3
	Program Descriptions	3
	User Projections	3 and 5
	Community Partners	2
	User Fees	6
Operations	Organization, Staff, Governance	1 and 5
	Start-up Needs	4, 5, and 6
	Ongoing Needs	4, 5, and 6
	Timelines	1
	Communication/Marketing	5
Financials	Start-up Expenses	4, 5, and 6
	Start-up Income	4, 5, and 6
	Ongoing Expenses	4, 5, and 6
	Ongoing Income	4, 5, and 6
	Presentation and Revision	6
Presentation	Attachments	Based on Business Plan
	Executive Summary	Based on Business Plan
	Table of Contents	Based on Business Plan
	Cover Page	Based on Business Plan
	Binding and Distribution	Based on Business Plan

The Business Plan: Section by Section

This guide takes you through each section of the business plan in the order that you will write your plan. Usually, this will be the order in which you do the work, but sometimes you will have to go back and change earlier sections as you figure out more about your center. To prepare each section of the plan, you will need the information you gathered as you went through this manual. You will also need to meet with the steering committee to discuss each issue and to develop the actual plan.

At the end of this chapter there is a section called *Presenting Your Plan* that will describe how to prepare the Cover Page, Table of Contents, and Executive Summary, as well as how to put together the final

version of the plan. These three sections will be presented at the beginning of the business plan, even though they are prepared at the end.

As you go through this chapter, you will find the following tools:

❑ **"Boxes"** describing the purpose of each subsection and what questions you are answering in the section. They also tell you where to look in the rest of the manual for information needed at that point.

❑ **"Shaded boxes"** giving examples of how something might look in your plan.

❑ **"Notes boxes"** providing a place to write down notes, ideas, and questions about the business plan while it is being developed.

The steering committee should decide on a way to collect and organize all of the pieces that go into the business plan. You may want to create a notebook or file for each section of the plan.

Program

This section describes your program offerings and why they are the right choice for your community. It has five subsections: needs assessment, program description, user projections, user fees, and community partners. These subsections are useful planning tools for the start-up of your center. You will need to return to this section each year as you prepare your budget for the next year. After several years, it may be useful to do another needs assessment to help develop new program areas for the center.

Needs Assessment

> **Purpose:** The information gathered in a needs and interest assessment is used to develop an understanding of the most useful program areas for your center.
>
> **Question to answer:** What are the important needs and interests among the residents?
>
> **Reference:** The information gathering process for this section is described in Chapter 2 and the analysis of this data is discussed in Chapter 3.

It is critical to show how much the programs you are planning are needed by the residents. This process will ensure that the programs really will meet needs in the community. It will also help explain the community's needs to others. This process is important to complete even if the steering committee has already identified the program areas that you would like to implement.

In determining needs and interests, be sure to examine resident opinions as well as objective, demographic information; i.e., number of residents who are receiving AFDC.

Steps to Presenting the Assessment of Resident Needs and Interests in the Business Plan

(1)   Discuss the process that the steering committee went through to get the assessment data (for example, use of small focus groups, center survey, and so forth).

(2)   Summarize the findings in a written report. For example:

> ❑   Over half of the adult residents have not finished high school. Of these, 40 are unemployed.
>
> ❑   Three-fourths of the adult males surveyed have work experience in the construction industry or in other trades and expressed interest in building their skills in these areas to increase their employability.
>
> ❑   Forty of the middle school students are below-grade-level in reading and math.

(3)   Review Exhibit 3-3 and describe how the information led the steering committee to choose the program areas ultimately selected. For example:

> ❑   Adults could use a GED program.
>
> ❑   Adult males could use technical training in a field with good long-term employment forecasts.
>
> ❑   Middle school students could use help with their schoolwork.

This is an example of how to prepare the summary of the needs assessment for the business plan. Other information that you collect as part of the needs assessment can be included in the attachments section.

> **Assessment of Resident Needs and Interests**
>
> In a study of resident needs and interests completed through focus groups, three groups were identified who could use the services of the center.
>
> ❑   Over 60 percent of the adults in the community have not finished high school and 40 of them are unemployed. A GED program would provide these people with qualifications to get entry level jobs they cannot get now.
>
> ❑   Technical training in a field with good growth potential would allow them to secure permanent positions that build on their existing skills and help them avoid seasonal layoffs.
>
> ❑   A survey of residents revealed that 75 percent of the adult males would like to receive job training in a field that involves physical work.

Notes:

Program Description

Purpose: A description of the program areas is the basis of the business plan. This section of the business plan describes the centers' activities and determines the staffing, financing, and all other parts of the program.

Question to answer: What program(s) are you planning to offer?

Reference: The description of program areas is based on Chapter 3, as well as operational decisions made in Chapter 5 concerning issues such as staffing and evaluation.

The description of program areas should explain the program in enough detail for readers to know what you plan to do.

Steps to Preparing the Description of Program Areas Section of the Business Plan

(1) Explain the process that you went through in Chapter 3 in considering resident needs and interests, and resources available from neighborhood institutions, as you selected the center's program areas. Again, use Exhibit 3-3 to assist you in describing this process.

(2) For each program area, you should discuss how you will implement it. This includes naming the program, and describing its goals and objectives, hours of operation, staffing, and what you hope participants will get from it.

This is an example of how to prepare the summary of the program description for the business plan. Other information that you collect as part of the program description can be included in the attachments section.

Program

The goal of the High School Equivalency program is to offer a GED class using computers. The program will consist of 10 people in each class that will meet 2 times per week for 10 weeks. The program will need one teacher and one assistant. The program objective will be that seven participants get a GED.

The goal of the afterschool program will be to introduce children to computers and show children how computers can be both fun and educational. The afterschool program will have 1 staff person for every 10 children and will be open from 3-6 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program will focus on fun with computers, math, and English skills improvement. The objective is that children will improve their grades in school and that they will have fewer absences related to disciplinary problems.

Notes:

User Projections

Purpose: The user projections tell the reader how many people you expect to use the center at various times. This information will help you prepare the rest of the plan, especially the parts on staffing and financial needs.

Questions to answer: How many people will use the center? For which programs? What will a weekly schedule look like?

Reference: This is information you gathered in Chapters 2, 3, and 5.

The user projections are your best guess of how many people are going to be using the center at various times of the day, days of the week, and seasons. The projections will vary by program focus and season. For example, will there be fewer or more people using the center during the summer or at holiday times?

You will base your best guesses on the information you have gathered. Some guesses will be right and others will not. As you develop and begin operating your center, you may need to adjust your business plan and activities. When you plan for the second year, you will have information from the first year to use to make projections.

Steps for Developing User Projections for the Business Plan

(1)   For each program area, try to figure out the number of interested people and how many people the center will be able to handle. Use any information you developed in Chapter 5.

One way to do this is to use a calendar and for each day put in the number of people you expect to attend each session. For the first couple months, you will want to have separate projections to reflect growing use of the center. For example:

One-Week Schedule for Month One of Operations/Anticipated Attendance							
Program	Hours	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
GED	9-1	10		10		10	
Seniors	10-2		6		6		
Middle School	3-6	20		20		20	
Preschool Program	3-4:30		8		8		
Adult and Young Adult Drop-in	9-2						25

(2)   Summarize this information in the business plan. The calendar worksheets can be attached to the back of the plan.

This is an example of how to prepare the summary of user projections for the business plan:

User Projections

Based on the assessment of resident needs and interests and our program plan, we are projecting that:

Ten people will sign up for the first GED session and 25 for the second session; and,

Twenty children will attend the afterschool program for the first month, 25 the second and third months, and 30 thereafter.

Notes:

User Fees

Purpose: The user fee section of the business plan will help to determine what people are willing to pay and how much the center needs to charge.

Question to answer: What is the fee structure for the center?

Reference: Use the information you gathered in Chapters 2 and 3 to help you think about the amount people will be willing to pay.

Now that you have determined what people need, what programs you are likely to provide, and how many people will use them, you need to start thinking about what people will be willing to pay to use the center and how much the center needs to charge to offer the desired programs.

Income for the center can come from user fees, money raised through fundraisers, and income from center business activities such as data entry or graphic design. User fees can be charged per use, per course, per month, or any other way that fits the needs of your center.

Steps for Thinking About User Fees

(1) Develop a range of prices for each program. Think about who you are projecting will use the program, what they are able to pay, and what they will get in return. Will you let anyone come for free? Do you want fees for some programs and not for others? Will fewer people attend if there is a fee? Will people place a higher value on courses if they pay a fee?

(2)   In the *Financial Plans* section later in this chapter, you will figure out how much you will need people to pay in order to provide the program. Then you will return to this section and figure out how many people you think will be willing to pay that amount.

This is an example of how to prepare the summary of the user fees for the business plan:

Fee Structure

Middle school students will pay $0.25 per visit to the center. They will be encouraged to work with the center staff to raise money through bake sales and car washes.

The GED course will cost each participant $50 for the 10-week session. This can be paid as a lump sum at the beginning of the session, or $5 per week.

or

Fee Structure

Membership fees are_____.

Fees for outside groups to conduct classes are_____.

Fees during public access time are_____.

The profit sharing formula for business activities conducted by or at the center is _____.

Notes:

Community Partners

> **Purpose:** The community partners section will show that you have an understanding of who possible community partners are and the roles they could play in creating and running your program.
>
> **Questions to answer**: Who are the partners? What will each partner do? What will they expect in return? How will you work together?
>
> **Reference:** Different types of potential community partners are described in Chapter 2 and their likely role is analyzed in Chapter 3.

Steps to Preparing the Community Partners Section of the Business Plan

(1) Focus on the key neighborhood institutions identified when selecting program areas in Chapter 3.

(2) Approach these groups and explore possible relationships. It will be important to negotiate the role of the community partner, which may take some time. Your ideas for the role that community partners might want to take in your program may not fit their strengths and interests. It is important that all parties feel that they are getting something from the partnership.

(3) Develop your budgets before you approach funding sources.

(4) After meeting with all potential community partners, write up the agreements that you have made with each of them. You will need to describe these agreements in your business plan.

(5) A useful attachment to your business plan is a set of letters of support from community partners. If you have formal agreements with partners, you should also attach them at the back of the plan.

(6) Toward the end of each year you will need to meet with current community partners and funders to talk about their role for the coming year. You will also need to be continuously looking for new partners and funders if you want to expand your center.

The following are nine categories of partners divided into sectors. Centers would have success by developing partners in each of the three sectors: private, nonprofit, and public.

❑ Private sector:

- Businesses
- Computer services
- Media

❑ Nonprofit sector:

- Nonprofits/charities

- Community organizations

- Churches

- Foundations

❑ Public sector:

- Schools and colleges

- Government agencies

This is an example of how to prepare the community partners summary for the business plan:

The center has developed the following arrangements with community partners:

❑ The New City National Bank is contributing three used computers and the time of one staff person to help set them up.

❑ The New City YWCA is donating some used carpeting.

❑ The New City Housing Authority has offered the services of a budget analyst to assist with preparation of the budget.

❑ The New City Community College is going to teach a GED course at the center. The college will advertise the course in local newspapers.

Notes:

Operations

This section will discuss the operations of the center, including what you need to get the center started and to keep it going. The operations part of the business plan has the following sections: organization, start-up needs, ongoing needs, timelines, communication, and possible problems and solutions.

Organization

> **Purpose:** The organization section tells the reader about your plans for staffing and governance.
>
> **Questions to answer:** What body will govern the center? Who is in charge of running the day-to-day operations of the center? What other staff will you have? What will their duties and hours be?
>
> **Reference:** Governance issues are discussed in Chapter 1. Staffing needs are addressed in Chapter 5.

Steps to Preparing the Organization Section of the Business Plan

(1) Describe the work that staff will need to do and the hours they will need to cover based on the program description and the user projections.

(2) Describe the tasks that will be performed by paid full-time and part-time staff, and volunteers. Also describe how volunteers will be coordinated and equipment maintained.

(3) Describe the salary and benefits provided for paid staff.

(4) Describe the governance structure of the center.

This is an example of how to prepare the organization part of the business plan:

Organization

Staffing

The center is planning to hire the following staff:

Online Services Coordinator
Full-time, 9-5

The Online Services Coordinator will be responsible for administration of the center, financial management, fundraising, and coordinating volunteers. He or she should have a college degree and 5 years of relevant experience.

Computer Teacher
Part-time, flexible hours

The computer teacher will be responsible for preparing and teaching all computer-related classes, and training volunteers to assist with classes. He or she should have a college degree, preferably with a concentration in computers or education, and 2-3 years of relevant experience.

Governance

The center is governed by a 5-10 person steering committee. The committee meets twice a month. There is an advisory group that meets on a bimonthly basis. A list of the members of the steering committee and advisory group is appended to this plan as an attachment.

Notes:

Start-Up Needs

Purpose: The start-up needs section of the business plan lists all of the items you need to start your center. It lets the reader know you have thought carefully about all of the items needed.

Question to answer: What will you need to start the center?

Reference: Possible start-up items are listed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Start-up needs include all items, services, and expenses you will need to open the center. This includes the space, staff, and supplies that you will need before the center opens, but not those items used after the center begins operation.

Steps to Presenting the Start-Up Needs of the Center in the Business Plan

(1) List all of the start-up items needed. It is most likely that you gathered all of this information in Chapters 4 and 5. You should also prepare detailed lists of items needed to begin the center's operation and attach them to the back of the business plan. You will use these lists to prepare a budget for start-up financial needs in the financial section of the business plan.

This is an example of a summary list to be included in the business plan:

Start-Up Needs

The center will need the following items for center start up:

Hardware	Salaries
Software	Space
Supplies	Furniture

This is an example of a detailed list to be attached to the back of the business plan:

Start-Up Needs

The center will need the following items for center start-up:

Hardware	Supplies
5 Pentium Computers	Paper
2 Printers	Pens
Associated cables	Computer disks

Software	Furniture
MS-DOS	Desks
Windows	Chairs
MS Office	White boards

Funding

Rent for 2 months
Utilities on center space for 2 months
Director's salary for 1 month

Notes

Ongoing Needs

Purpose: The ongoing needs section lists all of the items that will be needed by the center on a regular basis.

Question to answer: What will be needed to operate the center on an ongoing basis?

Reference: This section is based on Chapters 4 and 5.

Ongoing needs are the day-to-day expenses of operating a center. Making a list of the ongoing needs will allow you to determine what the continuing costs of running the center will be. The costs will be a part of the budget of this business plan.

Steps to Presenting the Ongoing Needs of the Center in the Business Plan

(1)   List all of the ongoing items needed. It is most likely that you gathered all of this information in Chapters 4 and 5. Ongoing items could include:

❑ Rent

❑ Personnel, taxes, and benefits

❑ Utilities

❑ Contractual arrangements

❑ Insurance

❑ Maintenance

❑ Printing

❑ Outreach/marketing

❑ Additional hardware and software

❑ Security

❑ Internet and cable

❑ Contingency

❑ Supplies

(2)   Prepare a summary of the ongoing needs you expect the center to put in the business plan. You should include detailed lists of items needed for center operations as part of the budget, which will serve as an attachment to the business plan.

This is an example of a summary list to be included in the business plan:

The Neighborhood Networks center will need the following items for ongoing operations:

Ongoing Needs

The center will need the following items for ongoing operations:

Space	Supplies
Personnel	Outreach
Equipment	Contingency

Ongoing Needs

Space	Supplies
Rent	Replacement of Software
Utilities	Educational Materials
Security	Computer Disks
Insurance	Paper
Personnel	Outreach
Salaries	Marketing Materials
FICA	Newsletter
Workers Compensation Insurance	Printing
Unemployment Insurance	Postage
Professional Fees	
Employer Share of Taxes	Contingency
Contracts	
	Unanticipated Expenses
Equipment	
Maintenance	
Replacement of Hardware	
Internet Access Fees	

Notes

Timeline

> **Purpose:** To tell the reader the process and timing for setting up the center.
>
> **Questions to answer:** When do different tasks for the center need to happen? Who is responsible for making them happen?
>
> **Reference:** Chapter 1 and the activities described in the rest of the binder.

Steps to Planning a Timeline

(1) List all the tasks needed to set up the center.

(2) Organize the list in the order that the tasks will happen.

(3) Assign a month or several months when each task will happen.

(4) Assign a deadline for when the tasks must be done.

(5) Think about whom will be doing the tasks. You may want to actually put names next to each task on your timeline.

This is an example of a timeline to be included in the business plan:

Timeline			
Task	**Time**	**Deadline**	**Person**
Talking with partners	January-March	March 30	Bob, Barb
Finding space	March	March 30	Betty
Hiring staff	March	March 30	Bill
Equipment setup	April	April 30	Bertha
Software installation	April	April 30	Bertha
Center opens	May 1	May 1	All

Notes

Communications and Outreach

Purpose: Describe your plans for telling people about the center.

Questions to answer: Who will you tell about the center? What do you want them to know? Why do you want them to know it? How will you tell them?

Reference: You will find information for this subsection in Chapter 5.

Steps to Preparing the Marketing and Outreach Section of the Business Plan

(1)   Explain the process that you went through to develop your marketing and community outreach plan in Chapter 5.

This is an example of a marketing plan to be included in the business plan:

Marketing and Community Outreach Plan

We plan to communicate about the center with many different groups. Our communications plan is as follows:

Media Opportunities

- ❑   Newspaper press release
- ❑   Community Partner Newsletter articles
- ❑   Cable TV public service announcements (PSAs)

Outreach

We plan to communicate with housing residents in order to interest them in becoming involved with the center. We are especially interested in having them become users and volunteers. We plan to tell them about the center, its programs, its hours, and how to participate. In addition, we will tell them about our volunteer needs. The communication methods include flyers, meetings, and newsletter articles.

We plan to communicate with local religious institutions. We would like to encourage these institutions to donate funds, equipment, and interested volunteers. We plan to tell them about the center, what it does and whom it serves. We plan to write letters to clergy and ask to speak at services.

Develop center brochure.

<u>Notes</u>

Possible Problems and Solutions

Purpose: This section lets the reader know that you have thought about possible problems and have a realistic approach to solving them.

Questions to answer: What might possibly go wrong? How might you solve these problems?

It is important to discuss what might possibly go wrong. That will help you avoid these problems, but if they happen, you will have ideas about how to solve them. Although it is impossible to know exactly what will go wrong in opening and running your center, thinking about different challenges will strengthen your plan. It will also help you to realize that, in all likelihood, things will not go as you planned and that you need to be ready for problems.

Steps to Presenting Possible Problems and Solutions in the Business Plan

(1)   On a piece of paper write down a list of all the possible things that could go wrong when you set up the center or when it is in operation.

Here is a list of possible problems that you might encounter:

❑   Not having the right hardware

❑   Not having the right software

❑   Not having enough staff

❑   Theft of equipment

❑   Not having enough users

❑   Having too many users

❑ Having picked the wrong program areas

❑ Not having enough funding

❑ Losing access to the space being used for the center

(2) For each possible problem write what you think is:

❑ The chance of it happening

❑ The seriousness of the problem if it happens

❑ What you might do if it happens

(3) For those problems that you think have better than a 50 percent chance of happening and that you think are serious or very serious, write a paragraph or two about the problem and your idea of the best solution.

This is an example of how to prepare the possible problems and solutions section in the business plan:

Possible Problems and Solutions

One problem the center might experience is having too many users. If this occurs, the Director should raise funds to hire more staff to teach extra sessions. If funds are not available, the center will explore raising user fees and/or organizing fundraisers. Waiting lists should be kept to fill vacancies.

<u>Notes</u>

Financial Plans

Financial plans are the budgets used to plan your center. The budgets include both income and expenses. As discussed in Chapter 6, you will need to develop two different budgets. One is for the start-up period. This will include everything needed to get the center ready for opening day. The other budget is the ongoing budget. This will include all of the day-to-day operating finances.

The next several sections take you through the steps necessary to gather the financial information you will need to develop budgets. The sections are *Start-up Expenses*, *Start-up Income*, *Ongoing Expenses*, and *Ongoing Income*. The *Presentation and Revision* section will help you take the information that you have gathered here and in Chapter 6 and organize it for the business plan. There is also a sample of a cash flow worksheet at the back of this section. This worksheet will help you think about how money will flow in and out of the center.

You will need help from a person experienced with financial statements to put the information together in the final form needed for the business plan. If there is no financial person on the steering committee, we suggest that you find a businessperson, accountant, or financial manager from a nonprofit organization who can volunteer some time to help you.

Start-Up Expenses

> **Purpose:** To tell the readers what resources you will need to start the center.
>
> **Question to answer:** What are all of the costs necessary to start up your center?
>
> **Reference:** This section is based on the *Start-up Needs* section in the business plan and on Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

The financial plan for the start-up lists the costs of getting everything ready before you actually open the center.

There are two types of start-up costs:

❑ **One-time costs**. These costs are for things you buy only once. They will be the same no matter how long it takes to set up the center. This list will include computer hardware and software, furniture, supplies, and renovations. Most of these items will eventually need to be replaced, but they often can be used for five or more years after you buy them.

❑ **Monthly costs.** These costs are for things which you spend money on each month. They include items such as rent, utilities, and staff time. The monthly start-up costs will continue as ongoing costs, but the amount that is spent before the center opens is part of the start-up expenses section.

Steps to Figure Out How Much Money You Will Need to Start Up the Center

(1) Copy the list of start-up needs generated in the start-up needs section of the business plan. For each item on the list, estimate a cost. List the quantity of each item that you will need.

(2) To figure out the total cost for each item, multiply the cost per item by the quantity needed.

(3) Divide the list into two separate groups. One group is *one-time costs;* that is, those that will be the same no matter how long it takes to set up the center.

For example:

Item	Quantity	Costs Per	Total
Computers	5	$1,500	$7,500
Desks	7	$200	$1,400
Chairs	20	$100	$2,000
Supplies			$500
Total one-time costs			*$11,400*

The second group is for *monthly costs.* The total of monthly costs depends on how many months it takes to set up the center. These costs include items such as rent, utilities, and salaries. You will probably have monthly costs for at least two months before the center opens. Your timeline should tell you when to start paying for each item.

(4) Add up all of the expenses for each month.

For example:

Item	January	February
Rent	$800	$800
Utilities	$200	$200
Staff time	$400	$800
Total costs per month	$1,400	$1,800

(5) Prepare a list of all start-up expenses, including total one-time costs and the costs per month for the entire start-up period.

For example:

Costs Per Month	
January	$1,400
February	$1,800
Total one-time costs	*$11,400*
Total start-up expenses	*$14,600*

(6) Put aside the lists for the financial adviser who will help prepare the presentation.

<u>Notes</u>

Start-up Income

Purpose: To tell the reader where you will get the resources needed to start the center.

Question to answer: How are you going to pay the start-up expenses?

Reference: This section is based on the community partners section in the business plan and Chapter 6 in this manual.

Steps for Identifying Start-up Resources

(1) Identify which start-up items community partners might give. What would these items cost if the center had to pay for them?

(2) Identify volunteers who can help build the center or do other needed tasks. What would this work cost if the center had to pay for it?

(3) Find your start-up expense total and subtract savings you hope to make from partner gifts and volunteers. How much money do you still need to raise?

(4) Review the *Sources of Funds* section in Chapter 6. Make a list of possible community sources. You may want to find an adviser who has experience in your community. Be creative. Small local events such as bake sales can build interest in the center while raising money. Make a plan regarding how you will get the rest of money you need to raise.

(5) Gather all of the information on start-up resources you have developed and take it to the financial adviser to develop into a presentation.

This is an example of how to prepare the start-up income section of the business plan:

Resources From Community Partners	Value
New City National Bank will donate three computers	$4,500
New City Housing Authority will provide staff support	$500
New City Community Foundation will provide a grant for start-up needs	$7,500
Total from community partners	$12,500
Total start-up expenses	$14,600
Additional funds needed	$2,100
To raise the remaining $2,100 in start-up costs, the steering committee will organize middle school students and their families to conduct monthly bake sales and car washes.	

Notes

Ongoing Expenses

Purpose: To tell the readers how much money it will take to operate the center.

Question to answer: What are all of the costs associated with running the center?

Reference: This section is based on the ongoing needs section of the business plan and on Chapter 6.

The financial plan for ongoing needs lists the costs of the program. *The financial plan should be done month-by-month for at least the first year. You should also prepare annual budgets for the first three years.* Keep in mind that the program may experience monthly differences according to holidays, school schedules, and programming. There are also likely to be increases in users, as people become more familiar with the program.

Operating expenses should be recorded in an annual Operating Budget with the following line items:

Operating Budget

❑ Rent
❑ Personnel
❑ Contracts
❑ Additional Hardware and Software
❑ Maintenance
❑ Supplies
❑ Internet and Cable
❑ Outreach/Marketing
❑ Printing
❑ Insurance
❑ Security
❑ Utilities
❑ Contingency

Steps to Figure Out How Much Money You Will Need to Operate the Program

(1) Copy the list of ongoing needs generated in the section *Ongoing Needs.* For each line item identified above, there will need to be a cost for that item. The cost will represent the amount needed for the total quantity, not just one unit.

(2) For each cost, figure out how much you expect to be spending annually. Some of the costs, such as supplies, will depend on how many people use the program. Other costs, such as rent, will be the same whether there are no users or a thousand.

(3) You should include an expense item for hardware and software replacement. This is an amount of money that should be put aside each month to replace the equipment that breaks down and is not repairable, and the software that is out of date.

Example of an Annual Operating Budget	
Item	**Annual Cost**
Rent	$6,000
Personnel	$39,500
Contracts	$4,000
Additional Hardware and Software	$5,000
Maintenance	$3,500
Supplies	$4,000
Internet and Cable	$300
Outreach/Marketing	$1,500
Printing	$1,500
Insurance	$3,000
Security	$2,800
Utilities	$3,400
Contingency	$8,000
Total	*$82,500*

(4)   Put aside the lists and operating budget for the financial adviser to help prepare the presentation.

<u>Notes</u>

Ongoing Income

Purpose: To tell the readers where you will get the resources to operate the center each month.

Question to answer: How are you going to pay for your ongoing expenses?

Reference: This section is based on Chapters 2 and 6.

Steps to Figuring Out the Resources Available for Ongoing Center Operations

(1) Identify which ongoing needs partners might fulfill each month. How much money will this save each month?

(2) Estimate the monthly income that could be raised based on planned partner recruiting, fundraising, income generated by center business ventures, and user fees.

For example:

Income	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Fundraising	$100	$100	$100	$100	$150	$150	$200
User fees	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50
Grants	$2,000	$0	$0	$1,000	$0	$0	$1,000
Partner contributions	$1,000	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500
Total income	*$3,150*	*$1,650*	*$1,650*	*$2,650*	*$1,700*	*$1,700*	*$2,750*

(3) Estimate your monthly expense totals based on the information in the annual operating budget. Subtract the monthly savings you hope to get from donations of equipment and supplies and volunteers. How much money do you still need to raise each month?

(4) Review sources of funds from your work on start-up income. Which sources might help you in the first year? Can you raise contributions from the community? What are the sources of grant funding? Who might be able to help you find this funding? Design a plan for how you will get the remaining funding.

For example:

	January	February	March	April
Monthly expenses	$2,270	$2,315	$2,320	$2,390
Monthly income	$3,150	$1,650	$1,650	$2,650
Money needed (extra*)	*($880*)*	*$665*	*$670*	*($260*)*
To raise the extra income needed, the steering committee will continue to organize bake sales and car washes.				
*For any month in which you have more income than expenses, you can carry the extra income over to meet future expenses and cover deficits.				

(5) Put aside the lists for the financial adviser to help prepare the presentation.

<u>Notes</u>

Presentation and Revision

After you have gathered all of the necessary information, you will need help from a person experienced with financial statements to put the information together in the form needed for the business plan. At the back of this section there is a sample cash flow worksheet (Exhibit 7-1). This section helps you collect the information that you will need to prepare it. We suggest that you find a businessperson, accountant, or financial manager from a nonprofit organization who can volunteer some time to help you.

After you have finished the steps outlined above for start-up expenses and income, and ongoing expenses and income, talk to people about expenses and funding. As you get more information, you will need to revise your budgets. It is very likely that the first draft of the budgets will show that you do not have enough resources to start and operate your center. If this is so, you will need to review and change your budgets several times to get a budget that works. This is part of the normal budgeting process.

Once you start the center, you will need to total what the expenses and income really are. Compare them to your budgets. You may have to change your program activities, or raise more money if you don't have enough.

At the end of each year, you need to make new budgets for the next year. For the second year, you will be able to look at real expenses and income for the first year to guide you. If you change your programs, increase the number of users, change the user fees, raise salaries, add staff, or make other changes, the changes will become part of your new budget. You will then need to repeat the steps involving examining your ongoing expenses and income to get everything to match up.

Presenting the Business Plan

Now that you have finished your business plan, you can look forward to the very satisfying feeling of sending a final copy of your plan to community partners and potential funders. Before you send it out, you will want to make the plan look like the important document that it is. Some finishing touches will make the plan a friendlier report. You should add sections that summarize the contents and tell readers where to go for specific information. Only put summaries in the main part of the plan; adding attachments to the back will give readers some of the additional information you collected.

The following sections describe the final steps in finishing your plan. They are *Attachments, Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Cover Page,* and *Binding and Distribution.*

Attachments

The business plan is written primarily in paragraphs, with some numbers included in the text. Most of the numbers and specific information you have collected will be attached to the back of the business plan in the attachments section as additional supporting documents. You can send the reader to the back of the plan for more information should he or she want it. For example, in the section on user projections in your business plan, you might include a reference such as (See Attachment 2: User Projections).

The following are some of the items you might want to include as attachments:

❑ Assessment of resident needs

❑ User projections

❑ Center layout

❑ The equipment list

❑ The organization chart

❑ Résumés

❑ Financial projections

<u>**Notes**</u>

Executive Summary

Purpose: The executive summary gives highlights of the business plan. It will include a description of the center, explain why the center is needed, how it will operate, what its program areas are, and how it will be supported. The executive summary introduces the reader to the business plan.

Questions to answer: Who are you? What are you planning? Why are you planning it? How will you do it? When will you do it?

Reference: Consult your business plan for points to be included in the summary.

The executive summary is the first real section of the business plan. It needs to excite and interest the reader so he or she wants to continue reading the plan. The executive summary is an overview of the plan that includes its most important points and should be one or two pages in length.

Steps to Writing the Executive Summary

(1) Put all the sections previously discussed in the right order for the business plan.

(2) Read the business plan carefully and note the most important points.

(3) Write down the most important points to tell the story of your center in one to two pages. Remember, readers can turn to more detailed descriptions later in the plan. Make sure that you answer the following questions:

❑ Who are you? Describe your committee.

❑ What are you planning? Describe the center.

❑ Why are you planning it? Discuss the need for the center.

❑ How will you do it? Describe your plan.

❑ When will you do it? Provide an overview of your timeline.

Notes

Table of Contents

Purpose: The table of contents tells the reader what sections and subsections are in the business plan and on what pages he or she can find them.

Reference: The business plan you have developed.

After you have finished writing all the other sections of the plan, put them in the order listed in this manual. Make a table of contents by listing all the names of the sections and the page number on which each section starts.

Notes

For example:

Table of Contents

Program

Operations

Financial Plans

Cover Page

Purpose: The cover page is the first thing in the business plan that readers will see. It must tell the reader who you are, what you are planning, and when the planning took place.

Questions to answer: Who are you? What are you doing? When are you doing it?

Reference: At the end of the planning process, you will need a business plan title for the cover page.

The cover page should include the name of your center, the title of your business plan, and the date. It should be put together at the end of the planning process so that you can be absolutely sure about the title and date.

For example:

> The New City Project
> Neighborhood Networks Center
> Business Plan
>
> April 1998

Binding and Distribution

You will want your business plan to look professional and be easy to read. Since you are trying to set up a computer center, we recommend that you use a computer to type your plan. Using a computer will also make it easier to make changes and rearrange sections. If you do not yet have a computer available, you may be able to find a community partner who will let you use one.

You should have a proofreader tell you what he or she thinks about the center's business plan. It is especially important for the reader to tell you what parts are not clear, so you can revise the document. This person might be one of your community partners or a volunteer who has strong writing skills.

There are several different aspects to creating the final report that you will want to think about.

<u>Binding</u>

There are many possible ways to bind a report. The following are listed in approximate cost from least to most expensive, though we recommend that you get some actual cost estimates before making a decision on binding:

❑ **Staple**. This is the easiest, cheapest, and the least professional looking. You can do this yourself.

❑ **Velo-bind**. This method presents the business plan very nicely. It uses a hard backing and a plastic cover with a three-hole binding system. You can purchase velo-bind kits at office supply stores. With this method you can also insert colored tabs as dividers between sections.

❑ **Three-ring binder**. The three-ring binder is a stronger report folder. It is easy to add and subtract pages as needed. You can make these reports up yourself. It is also possible to add tabs between sections in a three-ring binder.

❑ **Spiral binding**. Spiral binding has to be done professionally. It creates a very polished presentation. Speak to your local printer to find out what is possible.

You should ask yourself the following questions when deciding on a style of binding:

❑ How many copies are you going to want?

❑ How much will the reports cost to bind?

❑ Will you want to make more copies at a later date?

❑ Who is the reader and how might he or she react to the professional quality of different types of binding?

Number of Copies

You should make enough copies for all of your initial needs plus some extras. Here is a list of people you may want to give copies of the plan:

❑ steering committee members

❑ Members of the board of directors

❑ Staff

❑ Key people at the housing development

❑ Community partners

❑ Funders

❑ Neighborhood activists

❑ Local political leaders such as the mayor or city councilpersons

❑ Government officials, including local, state, and federal housing, economic development, and education department representatives

❑ Other key people

Keep at least one original copy of the report in case you have to make additional copies for other readers.

Chapter 8. Using the Internet and the Neighborhood Networks Website

Introduction

What the World Wide Web Can Offer You

If you think the World Wide Web is not for you, please read on.

Why get on the Internet? It's not a fad. It is the fastest growing communication medium around. It's the way of the future.

This is not to say that print media will disappear. We will still see newspapers, magazines, and journals. And we will probably continue to see their prices rise, if the last couple of years are any indication. Paper is expensive; it also becomes outdated very quickly.

The Internet's World Wide Web, or Web for short, has the capacity to keep up with the rapid pace of information today. With news changing daily, most organizations do not have the luxury of printing announcements or newspapers every day. On the other hand, an organization can update its website by the minute, the hour, or whatever interval its Webmaster chooses.

Nearly everything you would want to know can now be found on the Web. It is an excellent research tool, whether for work or for personal interests. All you need is a computer with a modem, a telephone line, and an Internet service provider.

No longer do you have to look through volumes of information at your local library. No longer do you have to call for information. You can type the name of a subject onto your computer screen, press the enter key, and see tens of thousands of references to your subject.

Here are a few examples of information you can find:

❑ Government records, statistics, and resources

❑ Potential partners for your centers

❑ Telephone numbers and addresses of companies.

The Neighborhood Networks Website

The Neighborhood Networks Website (http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org) is the most complete source of information on the initiative. Updated weekly, the site can be accessed day or night. Visitors can download publications, read the latest Neighborhood Networks news releases, find information about potential funders, ask questions, and link to related websites.

Information on the Neighborhood Networks website is organized into seven categories that appear as "buttons." Below are category by category descriptions.

About Neighborhood Networks

Overview: This introductory section provides a program description and its rationale.

What's New

Overview: This section provides program updates and announcements. Visitors can read about center openings, dates of upcoming events, funding announcements, and much more. Updates are organized by month, with the current month prominently displayed when you first enter the section. Past months are archived (in our News Database) and are easily retrievable.

Publications

Overview: This section provides a variety of program publications and reference materials. Visitors can obtain copies of the newsletters, *Technical Information Updates*, *Fact Sheets*, *Partnership Reports*, the *Resource Guide*, and other publications.

The aforementioned documents are provided in HTML and/or PDF format. The PDF format allows users to view materials electronically as they would appear in print. To view, save, or print these files requires a special client software created by Adobe Systems Inc., called Acrobat Reader. Special step-by-step instructions are provided for installation of the reader software, included on the website.

Other materials available in this section include HUD Notices and media guidelines.

Locations and Information

Overview: This section showcases five individual databases that visitors can use to search detailed information in the following program areas: Neighborhood Networks centers, properties, resources, conferences, and news articles.

Other information provided includes:

❑ List of HUD Neighborhood Networks Coordinators

❑ List of Neighborhood Networks centers in operation

The Neighborhood Networks Databases

All Neighborhood Networks Databases are available through the Neighborhood Networks website. Data is collected about each center from business plans and interviews with centers' staffs. The databases serve both HUD and centers as a tool for making comparisons among centers regarding resources and partners. The website features searchable databases containing thousands of records. Search results are arranged in a list, which can be reviewed and printed. The following is a list of databases and information available in each.

❑ The **Center Database** is the gateway to detailed center information. Data includes a description of the programs available at the center, educational and social services provided, partners, funding sources, and contact information.

❑ The **Property Database** provides information about properties that plan to open a center or currently operate one. Data includes a description of the property and resident population and contact information.

❑ The **Resources Database** identifies a broad range of resources that could be used to support the establishment or operation of a center. These include financial resources (for example, grants or scholarships), computer equipment, software, technical support, volunteers, and how-to publications.

❑ The **News Database** contains articles and press releases relevant to Neighborhood Networks from a variety of different media sources. Data includes media source, title, author, date, and written text of the news features.

❑ Finally, the **Conference Database** provides specific information about upcoming conferences, workshops, seminars, and meetings that address Neighborhood Networks-related issues and topics. Data includes event title, focus, dates and locations, and registration and price information.

Residents, HUD staff, property owners, management agents, and partner organizations play a vital role in helping to keep information current in these databases. To submit updates, please contact the Neighborhood Networks Information Center by telephone at 1-888-312-2743, by fax at 703-934-3156, or by email at **nnetworks@icfconsulting.com**.

Instructions for Viewing the Database

(1) Access the Neighborhood Networks website at **http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org**.

(2) Click on the "Locations & Information" button.

(3) Choose one of five databases (Center, Property, Resources, News, or Conference) to search.

(4) Conduct your search either by all text (OPTION 1) or by a specific field (OPTION 2). For OPTION 1, to search text, just type in a word or words in the adjoining box and press "SUBMIT." The database will find all records that meet your criteria and list them once the search is complete. For OPTION 2, to search by field, select a field from the pull-down menu. Type in a keyword or words in the adjoining box and press "SUBMIT." The database will find all records that meet your criteria and list them once the search is complete.

Bulletin Board System (BBS)

Overview: This section is not currently operational. It is intended to provide a forum for Neighborhood Networks stakeholders to share their ideas, opinions, experiences, and information on a wide range of topics.

Other Resources

Overview: This section provides links to other websites and is organized into several major categories. The categories are Microenterprise/Small Business, Employment, Health Care, Child Care, Transportation, Community Improvement, Education, Volunteerism, Youth Sites, Sites for Seniors, Sites for Parents, Popular Web Sites, Neighborhood Networks Centers, Community Networking and Computers, Civic Network Sites, Housing-related Sites, Welfare Reform, and Federal Program Information.

Guestbook

Overview: The Guestbook enables visitors to sign in and provide comments or direct questions to the Webmaster. Requests are referred to the Neighborhood Networks Information Center, where an Information Specialist responds to requests.

Using Internet Service Providers

Internet service providers, commonly referred to as ISPs, allow customers to access the Internet via a dial-up connection to the ISP's computer. The ISP's computer, referred to as a "server" or "host", is itself connected to the Internet as a "gateway". Most ISPs also provide their customers with e-mail accounts, start-up software needed to browse the Internet, such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer, and space on the company's server where users can post their personal websites.

When shopping for an ISP, Hewlett Packard's newsletter *HP At Home* advises that you ask the following questions:

❑ Is the charge a flat rate or based on use? (Most ISPs charge a flat rate but the online services have extra charges for frequent use.)

❑ What is the user-to-modem ratio? (This will tell you how often you will get a busy signal. Ratios higher than 10 to 1 should be avoided.)

❑ Can I connect to this ISP with a local phone call? (All national ISPs have local dial-up points, but you may need to make a toll call from certain areas of the country.)

❑ Is there 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week customer service?

❑ Is there a free trial period? Do I get server space to post my own Web pages?

❑ How frequently do blackouts or temporary interruptions in service occur?

Due to the explosion of the Internet, several thousand ISPs are now available. Chart A lists some of the more popular ISPs and their toll-free 800 numbers.

Online Services

An alternative to ISPs are the online services, listed on Chart B. These service providers are known for their ease of use, especially for Internet beginners. In addition to access to the Web, online services often provide other benefits, including proprietary databases of useful information, easy-to-use menus, personal e-mail accounts, online chat features, and toll-free 24-hour technical support. As for cost, almost all of the online services now charge a modest monthly flat fee for unlimited usage.

(While the services of these companies have been well received by consumers, HUD does not endorse any one online service or ISP. These companies do represent a good place to start your search.)

Publications

General Resources

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Sanders, Jo and Stone, Antonia, The Neuter Computer: Computers for Girls and Boys, New York, Neal Schuman Publishers, 1986.

Building a Center

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Internet Resources

Neighborhood Networks: http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org

Housing and Urban Development: http://www.hud.gov

Community Development Society: http://www.scn.org/IP/cds

Neighborhoods Online: http://libertynet.org/community/phila/natl.html

Community Opportunity Program/Institute for the Study of Civic Values:
http://libertynet.org/~edcivic/commopp.html

Participatory (Community Development) Initiatives: http://tdg.uoguelph.ca/~pi

Small Business Net: http://www.lowe.org

Civic Network: http://www.civic.net

Handsnet: http://www.handsnet.org

Social Development Resources: http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/praxis.html

Small Business Resources: http://www.ntia.doc.gov/opadhome/mtdpiveb/smabus.htm

Entreworld: http://www.entreworld.org

Capital Children's Museum: http://www.ccm.org

Neighborhood Networks Centers' Websites

❑ Agler Green Community Technology Center; Columbus OH: http://www.infinet.com/~agclc

❑ Island Grove Neighborhood Networks; Greeley, CO: http://www.islandgrove.org

❑ St. Peter Manor; Memphis, TN: http://www.mecca.org/~mpatton/stpeter.html

❑ Shelter Hill Community Technology Center, Mill Valley, CA: http://midas.org/npo/shill/shhome.html

❑ Yesh-Villa Nueva Community Technology Center and Educational Center; San Ysidro, CA: http://www.yesh-villanueva.net

Reference Materials

HUD's Neighborhood Networks Authority

The Management Agent Handbook, Handbook 4381.5, Chapter 9 Neighborhood Networks

Publications

Internet sites

Business Plan

HUD Guidance for Developing the Neighborhood Networks Business Plan

Business Plan; New Beginnings Learning Center

Microenterprise

Association for Enterprise Opportunity

Success Magazine: 25 Best Business Schools

Examples of Policies and Best Practices

A Vista's Guide to Mobilizing Interest Resources

Training Handbook: Community Computer Center Manual for Staff and Volunteers

Villa Nueva Lab Fall 1998 Class Schedule

Agler Green Computer Learning Center Guidelines

St. Peter Manor Homepage

The Grove Neighborhood Networks After-School Program

Sommerville Community Computing Center Volunteer Evaluation

Sommerville Community Computing Center Participant Questionnaire

Computer Recycling

CompuMentor

PEP National Computer Recycling Programs

State Agencies for Applying for Donations of Surplus Government Computer Equipment