



## **ConnectHome Nashville – Local Projects Plan**

A collaboration between the Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County, Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) of Nashville, in partnership with The White House and Department of Housing & Urban Development  
December 23, 2015

### **Local Mission Statement:**

ConnectHome Nashville will bring together local stakeholders to leverage existing digital resources and identify new resources for Public Housing residents living in Nashville-Davidson County. ConnectHome will emphasize four primary aspects of digital inclusion – access to low cost broadband internet service, access to low cost devices, initial and ongoing training, and ongoing technical support – with the eventual goal of broadening inclusion efforts from MDHA’s Public Housing properties to all HUD subsidized housing in Nashville-Davidson County.



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## **Introduction**

Metro Government of Nashville-Davidson County and Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency worked with a number of community partners including the Nashville Public Library, the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, and Google Fiber to host the ConnectHome Nashville Local Convening on November 12, 2015. The event brought together community stakeholders from government, non-profit organizations, and businesses as well as members of the media and MDHA residents with the goal of identifying gaps in existing digital services within our community, and pinpointing resources that can be put toward digital literacy efforts across Nashville-Davidson County.

About one hundred community members representing numerous organizations joined Metro Nashville-Davidson County Mayor Megan Barry, MDHA Executive Director Jim Harbison, HUD Regional Administrator Ed Jennings, and HUD Senior Policy Advisor Robbie Greenblum as participants in the ConnectHome Nashville Local Convening.

The convening was organized with two primary objectives in mind; to inform the audience and to encourage collaboration among stakeholders. The first section of the Convening consisted of talks and presentations on ConnectHome from both national and local stakeholders, while the second section of the agenda was formatted as a working session in which community stakeholders broke into small groups to discuss ConnectHome and the challenges and opportunities surrounding digital inclusion efforts in Nashville.

Executive Director Jim Harbison kicked off the event with his comments on MDHA's dual missions of providing quality affordable housing to Nashvillians, while at the same time, using housing as a platform to offer opportunity for resident growth and self-sufficiency in the form of social services, including access to job training, educational resources, and employment opportunities. Mayor Barry highlighted the City's opportunity to offer internet connectivity to as many of Nashville's citizens as possible, and how this connectivity might impact the quality of life for MDHA residents. HUD Regional Administrator Jennings spoke to our collective conscious, referencing that many Public Housing families across the country lack internet connectivity in the home which puts them behind some of their peers in terms of employment and educational opportunities, and HUD Senior Policy Advisor, Robbie Greenblum presented an overview of the ConnectHome program highlighting the identified need, the initial target population, and the ConnectHome goals.

Following these comments, a panel of local partners – including Kent Oliver, Director of the Nashville Public Library, Ellen Lehman, President of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, Daynise Joseph, Community Impact Manager for Google, and Ben Bentley Chief



Operating Officer for MDHA –provided an overview of their respective agencies’ roles in the digital inclusion landscape, and the resources they will bring to the ConnectHome Nashville initiative.

After robust dialogue from the speakers and the panel of local partners, convening participants broke into working groups at tables of six to eight people. At the table discussions, participants were asked to provide their name, contact information, and areas they might be interested in assisting with ConnectHome. Participants were given opportunities to sign up to assist in specific areas including connectivity, devices, training, technical support, program metrics, and fundraising. Facilitators led each table in discussions surrounding the current landscape of digital inclusion, identification of existing gaps in digital inclusion services in the community, available resources that might be available to fill those existing gaps, and additional offerings that might supplement current digital inclusion efforts. Participants took advantage of the opportunity to offer feedback on how the available resources might be efficiently aligned to ensure maximum positive impact to MDHA residents and community members.

After the initial convening, volunteers were assembled to participate in the ConnectHome Nashville Metrics Working Group. Roughly twenty individuals met on December 3, 2015 at the Nashville Public Library to develop program metrics and goals for ConnectHome Nashville, and to discuss ways to measure program performance and impact in terms of both outputs and outcomes for MDHA residents. This group of interested stakeholders laid the framework for the “Goals and Measures” section that follows. This project plan should be viewed as a fluid document as a number of these goals are based on assumptions that represented the best information available at the time, and are subject to constant reevaluation and revision in order to ensure that the program is serving as many families as possible in the most efficient way possible.



## **Objectives, Goals, and Measurement**

- ❖ Primary Objective #1: Identify reliable baseline data on # of MDHA Families with Home-Based Internet Access and Devices, and use baseline data to identify target population for ConnectHome services. Target population is defined as families or individuals that do not have access to internet at home and families or individuals that do not have appropriate devices for optimal internet functionality. The target population may expand as program scope increases.
  - Goal 1.1: Distribute Initial Baseline Survey to residents in four ConnectHome properties
  - Goal 1.2: Refine goals for specificity once baseline survey results have been conducted
  
- ❖ Primary Objective #2: Increase Internet Access to MDHA Public Housing residents
  - Goal 2.1: Create free broadband Wi-Fi access in four ConnectHome community centers by March 31, 2016 for use by residents and the broader community
    - Sub-goal 2.1.1: At least 10% of target population will participate in on-site training utilizing WiFi hot spots at the community centers by July 1, 2016
  - Goal 2.2: Expand broadband access to four additional community centers in the first two years of ConnectHome, with the eventual goal of having free broadband access in all MDHA Community Centers.
  - Goal 2.3: Increase home-based internet access in target population by 35% by July 1, 2016 and increase 50% within first two years of ConnectHome
  
- ❖ Primary Objective #3: Increase the availability of affordable devices to MDHA Public Housing residents
  - Goal 3.1: Develop training prerequisites and administrative process for device distribution by February 15, 2016
  - Goal 3.2: Identify and distribute low cost devices to at least 35% of ConnectHome target population by July 1, 2016
  - Goal 3.3: Identify and distribute devices to 50% of target population within the first two years of ConnectHome program
  
- ❖ Primary Objective #4: Increase number, convenience, relevance, and diversity of training opportunities for MDHA Public Housing residents



- Goal 4.1: Provide substantive trainings for MDHA residents to gain knowledge and skills that are relevant to their lives
  - Sub-goal 4.1.1: Provide initial internet/computer literacy training to all participants receiving a low-cost device
  - Sub-goal 4.1.2: Provide job search/employment training to 20% of target population by July 1, 2016, showing users how to search employment sites and fill out online job applications
  - Sub-goal 4.1.3: Provide educational/skills trainings to 20% of target population by July 1, 2016, showing users how to utilize online training resources such as Khan Academy/Coursera
  - Sub-goal 4.1.4: Provide educational support training to 20% of target population by July 1, 2016, showing users how to complete administrative aspects of furthering their education, for instance, financial aid, FASFA, and online enrollment applications
  - Sub-goal 4.1.5: Provide health trainings to 10% of target population by July 1, 2016, showing users how to search for basic healthcare information on the internet, how to enroll in the Affordable Care Act, and how to use online health portal to communicate with physicians
  - Sub-goal 4.1.6: Identify and develop other trainings in these areas based on resident interest and feedback
  
- ❖ Primary Objective #5: Provide ongoing technical support for MDHA Public Housing residents
  - Goal 5.1: Identify partner organization in which to apply for Tech Hire Grant
  - Goal 5.2: Use Tech Hire grant to train and educate two MDHA residents at each ConnectHome property to provide ongoing technical support to residents at their respective properties
  
- ❖ Primary Objective #6: Develop and create process for distribution of consistent, periodic survey of program participants
  - Goal 6.1: Use Initial HUD Survey for baseline data
  - Goal 6.2: Conduct quarterly surveys beginning in July of 2016 to assess the impact of the ConnectHome program, by measuring progress toward program's stated short and medium range goals
  - Goal 6.3: Reevaluate and revise goals on an annual basis in order to ensure maximum impact and effort toward serving MDHA residents



## **Digital Inclusion Initiatives**

ConnectHome Nashville's top priority is to leverage the existing digital inclusion offerings in Nashville-Davidson County to improve the lives of residents at MDHA. The creation of program metrics and goals will be critical in order to measure the impact of each of these initiatives on the quality of life for MDHA residents. The ConnectHome initiatives listed below touch on the four primary digital inclusion priorities including internet access, device availability, training, and ongoing support, with each relating to improved outcomes in a number of areas including education, employment, job training, and health. Our goals and metrics listed above were designed with several of these initiatives in mind.

**MDHA Connected Communities** – MDHA is working with a number of Internet Service Providers, including Google Fiber, Comcast, and Basic Internet as well as other community groups and organizations to increase broadband internet access for residents living in our properties. Connected Communities will focus on increasing internet access in the home as well as MDHA community centers that serve our residents. Initial implementation will include four of MDHA's Public Housing family properties – Andrew Jackson Courts, Cheatham Place, Edgehill Apartments, and John Henry Hale – with the goal of expanding to additional sites as the program matures. Increasing internet connectivity across these four sites will have significant positive consequences for the approximately 1,250 families living in these properties. MDHA's ConnectHome page will serve as one repository for information on the program, and will be an online resource where residents can go to find out more about the offerings of ConnectHome Nashville.

**Community Foundation of Middle TN** – CFMT connects resources with needs in Middle TN. Creation of Nashville Digital Inclusion Fund in September 2015 to support well-run and efficient program(s) that provide access to hardware, connectivity, training and support to as of yet underserved children, youth, new Americans, un/underemployed, seniors, medically fragile and incarcerated individuals as a fundamental tool in the fight to break the cycle of poverty. The Digital Literacy Fund is one example of an existing community resource which ConnectHome will look to tap into for acquisition of devices.

**Nashville Public Library Basic Digital Literacy Training** – NPL provides basic computer skills training in the library and throughout the community. Classes may be stand-alone or part of an ongoing series, and cover subjects including computer usage, online research and Microsoft Office. Class content utilizes real life examples to promote relevancy to the lives of the attendees. The library has three mobile units with ten laptops each as well as mobile hot spots which enable training to be conducted at partner organizations lacking connectivity. It is likely that some portion of this training will be a prerequisite for ConnectHome participants to



acquire a low cost device, which comports with the ConnectHome Nashville's view that the device and training should go hand in hand.

**Research Study: Digital Inclusion in Metro Nashville/Davidson County** – With the exception of national statistics and a single outdated Metro Public School survey, we have no comprehensive data regarding the state of digital inclusion in Metro Nashville. The Metropolitan Government Information Technology Services Department, the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, and Vanderbilt University's Center for Nashville Studies is in the planning stage of a comprehensive study of residents that may be used as a benchmark and a basis for directing digital inclusion initiatives.

**Anytime Access for All** – A collaborative initiative to provide a computing device, free or reduced price internet service, relevant training and support to the estimated (2012) >40% of Metropolitan Nashville Public School students who are required to use computers in their classes (blended learning) but who do not have access to an appropriate device at home. ConnectHome is building on much of the incredible work already completed as a part of the Anytime Access for All initiative.

**Adult Basic Education Program and Northstar Digital Literacy, Martha O'Bryan Center** – MOBC offers digital literacy services through its Adult Basic Education (ABE) program. The ABE program uses the flipped classroom model where students work at their own pace on computers, receiving instruction from teachers when they get stuck or need extra support. MOBC intends to incorporate Northstar Workforce Readiness training which would supplement the current ABE program by focusing on improving participants' ability to successfully communicate and present job-related qualifications/certifications to potential employers. ABE and the Northstar program are great examples of the types of education and workforce readiness programs that are available and should be aggressively marketed to MDHA residents with basic computer and internet skills.

**Nashville Public Library Job Training / Employment Programs** – NPL provides job labs that teach people how to create resumes, search for jobs online and complete online applications. These trainings happen in-house and through outreach. The library also subscribes to a collection of digital employment products. These classes are open to the public and are provided for different age groups. Mobile labs are used in the administration of these trainings, and are deployed to branches as well as partner organizations. In the future these could be offered on-site at MDHA properties as part of Job Skills 101 training.

**Nashville Public Library Educational Programs** – Provides diverse learning opportunities; including, library resource and database trainings that cover a wide range of subject areas such as test prep, career training, language learning, technology skills, and more. We have hundreds



of databases, instructional materials, and downloadable products such as downloadable books, movies and magazines. Training for these products may be in-person or self-guided online.

**Nashville Public Library’s StudioNPL** – The program provides 21st century and STEAM skill development to teens throughout the community. Spaces are conducive to self-directed, interest-based and mentor-driven learning. Introduction through in-depth workshops are provided at all library locations as well as to our partner organizations. StudioNPL targets teens between 12 – 18 yrs. old for the program, which includes mentoring by library staff and other community partners in specific areas of interest. Resources include 3D printers, computers with a variety of software programs, game creation, writing, music composition, etc. Built-out spaces are available at many locations with additional locations coming in the next year. The program has 3 mobile labs traveling to branches and around the city with at least one more mobile lab to be created in 2016.

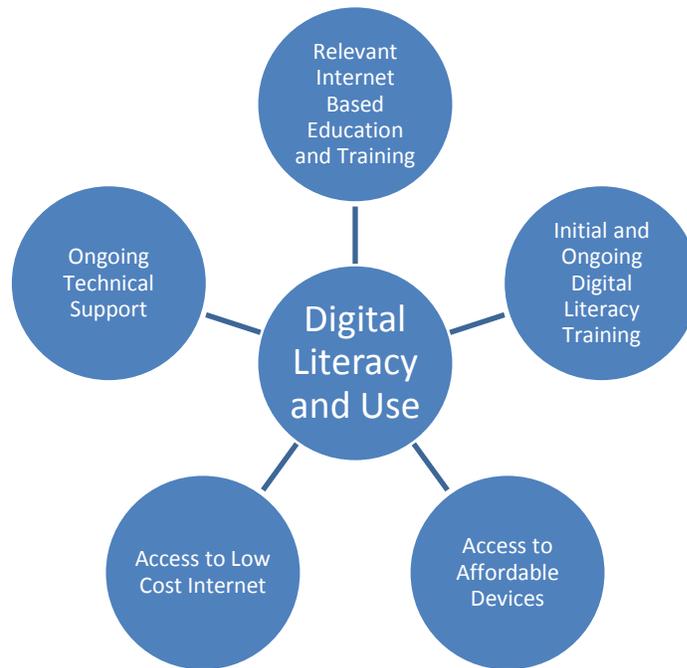
**Be Well at NPL** – The library provides access to health databases and in the near future the library will launch a system-wide initiative called Be Well at NPL which will include an online portal directing patrons to online health resources. MDHA families could benefit greatly from access to the online health resources provided through this program.

**It’s Training Time Course Calendar** – MDHA is in the early stages of creating a comprehensive training calendar, which will identify online education/training opportunities for our residents, broken down by subject matter and availability. The training calendar will include instructor-led and self-guided online offerings, providing individuals with a clear understanding of when different offerings will take place, so they can arrange their schedule in order to attend.

### **ConnectHome Framework: How do the ConnectHome Nashville initiatives fit together?**

Establishing a program framework is critical in ensuring that digital inclusion resources are being leveraged in a consistent and efficient manner that achieves outstanding results for our residents. Many of the ConnectHome Nashville partnerships and funding opportunities haven’t been formalized, but without mentioning specific organization names, there is plenty of opportunity to describe the general process by which ConnectHome Nashville will function on the local level. ConnectHome Nashville identified five components that work together to develop a digitally literate individual. Three of these components – access to the internet, availability of devices, and initial training – represent upfront requirements for effective internet usage and basic digital literacy. But just as important as these upfront requirements, are the individual’s long-term willingness and desire to use the internet. ConnectHome Nashville has identified ease of usage and the relevance of content as two probable determinants of long term usage and have identified ongoing technical support and identification of relevant content as two ongoing components that can work in tandem to

increase long term use. Adequately addressing these five components will be critical to the success of the ConnectHome program.



There are numerous internet/computer training opportunities available throughout Nashville, many of which can be offered anywhere in the City via mobile labs and hot spots.

ConnectHome Nashville's approach to digital literacy begins with training, because without the ability to effectively utilize internet access, and without understanding the relevance of the service, there is little chance that internet service is going to have much impact on the quality of life for MDHA residents. For that reason, basic digital literacy and computer skills training will be offered to our residents at MDHA community centers as well as additional sites around town. MDHA believes it is important to make these offerings as convenient and non-intimidating as possible in order to encourage participation, and the best way to accomplish this is to meet people in the communities where they live.

Training is only valuable if the individual has a device by which to access the internet, and similarly, the device is only valuable if the user has appropriate training. For that reason, our model will emphasize the connection between initial digital literacy training and the device, by tying the availability of low cost devices to completion of the initial training. Several of our partners have worked to identify donated computers/devices that may be used for the benefit of our ConnectHome Nashville program participants, and the next planning phase will address development of the initial training curriculum required to receive a device, taking care to make



sure the training is relevant and achievable to MDHA residents, while at the same time, providing the mix of knowledge and skills participants will need to successfully navigate computer usage and the internet.

Our goal is to build on the initial digital training by offering additional training opportunities for our residents to grow their expertise in areas such as employment and job search skills, education and certifications, and healthcare. These trainings will occur at MDHA community centers as well as other facilities across Nashville, and will be part of the broader Training Time – Course Calendar developed by MDHA.

Learning how to use new technology can be frustrating, and ConnectHome Nashville has a goal of providing our program participants with ongoing technical support, so they have someone to turn to for solutions to their IT questions concerning hardware, software, and the internet.

MDHA is partnering with a local non-profit that is in the process of applying for a Tech Hire grant. If awarded, a portion of the grant may be used to train several MDHA residents to be “Junior Geeks” at which point, those residents receiving the certification will be employed at a ConnectHome property to provide ongoing technical assistance to program participants.

With a combination of upfront training, access to internet and devices, ongoing technical support, and relevant training and content offerings, ConnectHome Nashville can make a lasting impact in the lives of MDHA residents.



## **Local Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities**

Organization: Metropolitan Government of Nashville-Davidson County  
Description: Mayor's Office and the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department  
Role: Co-Sponsor, convener, and Program Planning participant for CHN  
Contact: Keith Durbin – Chief Information Officer & Director of ITS Department, Lonnell Matthews – Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods

Organization: Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA)  
Description: Housing and Development Agency for Nashville-Davidson County  
Role: Co-Sponsor and lead agency  
Contact: Ben Bentley, Chief Operating Officer

Organization: Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee  
Description: Charitable Giving Organization  
Role: Program Planning Participant and Device lead  
Contact: Christine Pulle, Program Manager-Nashville Digital Inclusion Fund

Organization: Nashville Public Library  
Description: Local Public Library System  
Role: Program Planning Participant and Training Lead  
Contact: Marian Christmon, Public Technology Services Manager

Organization: Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)  
Description: Local Public School System  
Role: Program Planning Participant and Metrics Working Group  
Contact: Laura Hansen

Organization: Google Fiber  
Description: Internet Service Provider  
Role: Connectivity  
Contact: Daynise Joseph, Community Impact Manager

Organization: Comcast  
Description: Internet Service Provider  
Role: Connectivity  
Contact: Terry Vo, Community and International Affairs Consultant

Organization: Basic Internet  
Description: Internet Service Provider  
Role: Connectivity  
Contact: Roland Williams



Organization: Belmont University  
Description: Local University  
Role: Community Partner and Devices  
Contact: Millicent Jolly

Organization: Martha O'Bryan Center  
Description: Non-profit focused on Education and Employment Training  
Role: Education and Workforce Training  
Contact: TBD

Organization: Boys and Girls Club of Middle Tennessee  
Description: Community Based Non-profit Serving Youth throughout Middle TN  
Role:  
Contact: TBD

Organization: Nashville Tech Council  
Description: Workforce Development Organization  
Role: Employment and Workforce Training  
Contact: Sandi Hoff

Organization: Best Buy  
Description: Electronic  
Role: National Partner  
Contact: TBD



## **Communications Plan**

### **Coverage to Date:**

When the Obama Administration announced ConnectHome, several local news outlets reported on the coverage of our selection as a ConnectHome community. Read and listen to some of our local new coverage during the week of the announcement in [The Tennessean](#) and on [Nashville Public Radio](#).

The media coverage continued the week after the announcement. Read and watch the coverage on [WKRN](#) and [The Tennessean](#).

At our local ConnectHOME convening, The Tennessean and Nashville Public Radio provided updates on the process. Click here to read and listen to coverage in [The Tennessean](#) and on [Nashville Public Radio](#).

We have also shared several posts and tweets on MDHA's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Google Plus pages.

### **Plan Moving Forward:**

We intend to continue to engage our digital inclusion stakeholder community, national and local partners and public housing residents in our existing social media and news media efforts. We will continue to engage the news media on our announcements and efforts through targeted press releases and media advisories.

In addition, we have created a webpage to summarize the ConnectHome program. The page will also feature our media coverage. The webpage, [www.nashville-mdha.org/connect-home](http://www.nashville-mdha.org/connect-home) is live, and additional content, such as offerings for low cost internet access and devices, as well as details of web-based training and education opportunities will be included on the site. We hope to make the site a one stop shop for everything ConnectHome.



## **Conclusion:**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's ConnectHome program has successfully established a national forum for discussion and sharing of best practices in digital inclusion, bringing together national partners to assist in areas of connectivity, devices, training, and ongoing support. While there were substantive digital inclusion efforts already in place in many local communities including Nashville, the support of HUD and the ConnectHome national partners has accelerated the momentum around this issue, and has created the framework by which public housing authorities and cities can partner to make a significant impact in the lives of families across the country.

ConnectHome Nashville's digital inclusion strategy emphasizes the following long term priorities:

- **Sustainability** – The program must have a sustainable structure, both administratively and financially, that will ensure ConnectHome service to MDHA residents for years to come
- **Scalability** – Thousands of non-Public Housing families across Nashville-Davidson County lack the advantages of internet access at home, and while initial program goals focus on MDHA's ConnectHome Public Housing properties, a longer term program goal is to expand the program to reach all families living in subsidized housing in Nashville-Davidson County
- **Adaptability** – Technology is constantly changing and improving, and the design and structure of ConnectHome Nashville has to be nimble enough to change and improve with it
- **Replicability** – Digital Inclusion is a relatively new area of philanthropy, and similar to any burgeoning enterprise, ConnectHome must continue to refine best practices that can be replicated to assist in future digital inclusion efforts in other communities
- **Efficiency** – Resource constraints are abundant, and ConnectHome Nashville's program design must seek to achieve maximum impact with minimum resources... we must do more with less

ConnectHome Nashville is using these priorities as a framework to create a digital inclusion program that serves MDHA residents with all the benefits of internet connectivity, but for a much lower cost. If ConnectHome and similar initiatives are successful in measuring local outcomes, perhaps one day we will be able to analyze the benefits of broadband connectivity relative to its impact on transportation, health, employment, public safety, and education outcomes, extrapolating the individual and societal economic costs benefits of digital inclusion work from a robust body of research to show the economic importance of the work we are doing. For the time being, we will continue to measure outcomes in the best way possible in order to tell the local story of how ConnectHome impacts the lives of individuals and families across Nashville-Davidson County.