2 chapter Mapping Community Resources

Introduction

The Steering Committee must have as much information about the community as possible before attempting to determine the nature of the program to be offered at the CTC. The success of that program will depend in large part on how well it complements existing programs and addresses interests and needs currently unmet within the community.

Inevitably, the CTC will be judged within the community according to how well it understands and reflects community priorities, even though the community may not be openly articulate about those priorities.

Where the CTC is to be an independent program, the Steering Committee will need information about the proposed participant population as well as about community programs and resources. When an agency is establishing a CTC to broaden or enlarge an existing service program, the participants' demographics and interests may be known, but the process of identifying community resources and potential partnerships specifically relevant to the CTC is still a worthwhile endeavor.

This chapter outlines strategies that can be used to obtain information about the community and about the proposed participant population.

Who Will Participate? What Are Their Interests?

Every community or neighborhood is made up of many different groups of people. The Steering Committee will need general information about the people it intends to serve in order to make sensible choices and decisions regarding:

- space requirements for the CTC
- hardware and software

- types of workshops and/or classes to be offered

- multilingual capacity of CTC staff

- scheduling to maximize opportunity to use the CTC

- numbers and types of teachers and volunteers needed

Census data can be used to obtain information regarding:

- size and density of targeted population

- breakdown of population by age range, sex, ethnic background, language of choice, level of education

- proportion of employed to unemployed, average income level, predominant types of employment or occupation

Other sources for this sort of information include mandatory reports filed with city, state, or federal agencies by housing authorities or other neighborhood programs, and any community surveys that have been conducted recently by other neighborhood agencies.

The Steering Committee will also want to establish the level of community interest in the CTC along with perceived need, among its targeted constituency, for education programs, job skills development, afterschool activities, programs for young children, recreation, elder services, and business interests.

The SC will also be interested in skills and/or talents that participants could offer in service to the CTC:

- Is there a plumber who might offer to fix a leaking pipe, an electrician to help wire the center?

- Are there people already skilled in specific skill areas or certain computer technologies who can serve as volunteers?

- Are there unemployed or elderly community members who would contribute reception services or childcare?

- What other skills are available as resources to the start-up and on-going operations of the CTC?

Community residents on the Steering Committee should be good sources for this kind of information. The Steering Committee might consider organizing and conducting a series of community meetings or focus groups at which SC members can explore these questions with neighborhood residents in person.

How Do You Approach Information Sources?

Start with the positive: a general description of the proposed CTC, then ask about interest in using or participating, inquire about skilled contributions that the individual, family, or institution might make. Then proceed to the information needed to help structure the center to meet those needs. [See Exhibit 2-1]

Locating the Needed Information

Among the many ways to gather information about community residents, consider these first:

- US Census information: Census data, although incomplete, may nevertheless provide much of the quantitative data you need. Census data is available through your local or regional Census office or on the World-Wide Web (http://www.census.gov).

- Steering Committee members may, through positions they hold within other local organizations, possess the knowledge needed or have access to past surveys conducted by municipal or civic organizations that may complement or enhance or update Census data.

- Representatives of local governmental agencies may have knowledge of data sources through reports submitted to their offices.

- Key community leaders and heads of other community service organizations may contribute previously gathered information.

- Neighborhood/block meetings, focus groups of community residents who share common interests (e.g. seniors, business owners, unemployed people, PTA families, tenant groups, children & families in playgrounds, etc.) may provide more personalized data.

If, after exploring all the above methods, the Steering Committee still lacks what it deems absolutely necessary information, it may want to consider initiating a "community survey." CTCNet recommends circumventing this eventuality by whatever means possible. One such is to postpone more detailed survey questions until community residents start coming to the CTC (or to a pilot program). If a community resident turns out to be a regular user, s/he should be more willing to respond to questions regarding interests, needs, and potential contributions than would the inexperienced community at large. (See Chapter 7 - Section on CTC assessment.)

Identifying Local Institutional Resources

"It takes a community to raise a child."

Because operating resources for CTCs will be limited, the Steering Committee must look to other organizations to see if their programs or assets can be useful to the CTC. These "Institutional Resources" can be found at neighborhood agencies, public and private.

Creating this inventory will assist the Steering Committee in developing partnerships. Any partnership must offer benefits to both entities involved. As you think about how a partnership with a specific agency or institution might benefit the CTC, think also of what resources the CTC might offer to that agency or institution.

Step 1: List all the neighborhood and community institutions most likely to relate constructively with the CTC:

- Schools (public and private) including preschools, elementary, middle and high schools, and vocational-technical schools serving the neighborhood. Community School Board members should be contacted, as should school district personnel such as the local computer coordinator.

- Post Secondary Institutions - including technical, junior and community colleges and/or university departments or extension services that may be located in or near your neighborhood. Schools of Library Science are fertile fields for volunteer solicitation.

- Fraternities & sororities or outreach programs associated with those colleges & universities.

- Libraries and museums.

- Local business organizations: Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, BPOE, VFW, Professional Women's Organizations, union locals.

- Major manufacturers or business concerns in or near your neighborhood: restaurants, travel agencies, data services, police, etc.

- Religious institutions and associated special interest groups.

- Community-based organizations: Y's, Boys & Girls Clubs, 4-H, senior centers, credit unions, clinics, homeless shelters, community action agencies, literacy programs, cultural or ethnic clubs or associations, arts councils.

- Press & media: local newspapers, cable access stations, magazines, circulators of advertising, billboard companies.

- Local or regional freenets or other telecommunications providers.

Your Steering Committee can brainstorm additions to this list based on their knowledge of the local scene.

Step 2: List the needed CTC resources. Your list might look something like this:

- space/facilities where the CTC could be located

- rehab for space including wiring

- equipment: hardware, furniture & furnishings, copiers, etc.

- people: potential staff and/or volunteers, people with expertise that the CTC is likely to need (accounting, equipment maintenance, evaluation, etc.)

- distance learning programs/courses available through telecommunications

- complementary programs (e.g., adult literacy, afterschool, job training and/ or placement, recreational, elder services, Head Start or Even Start)

- jobs for participants who acquire new skills at the CTC

- economic capability such as the ability to buy in bulk, to share educational software licenses, to offer free internet accounts

- publicity and ways to promote the CTC

- money—good old cold hard cash contributions to the CTC

- other (your Steering Committee can doubtless add to this list)

Step 3: Use the information developed in Steps 1 & 2 to determine those neighborhood agencies and institutions with which partnerships might be the most beneficial to both parties.

Construct a database of community resources listing contact information for key institutions, the potential resources from each and, if possible, the potential benefit for that institution from collaboration or partnership with the CTC.

What Should the Steering Committee Do?

1. Using the chart showing the institutions to be contacted and the potential resources (Step #3 above), apportion contact tasks among Steering Committee members so that the entire list is covered.

3. Provide an introductory scenario for SC members to use (see Exhibit 2-1).

4. Provide a tabular format that SC members can use to record the results of their conversations and meetings (see Exhibit 2-2).

5. Assemble the results and prepare a summary report.

6. Discuss this report at the next SC meeting and decide which partnerships to pursue in the short term, and which might be more suitably pursued at a later date.

7. Confirm the agreed upon partnerships, formally or informally.

What Resources are Available Through CTCNet Affiliation?

CTCs that join the Community Technology Centers' Network receive access to resources, such as the following:

Connections:

- with the growing number of community organizations throughout the U.S. that are engaged in similar efforts, and the individuals, organizations, funding sources, businesses and industries that are providing resources for this work.

Technical assistance:

- from CTCNet staff, other affiliates, and CTCNet associates: program planning and development; equipment and software evaluation and selection; community outreach; volunteer recruitment, training and leadership; board and/or advisory committee support.

- in fundraising support: how-to workshops, proposal templates and review, identification of potential collaborators, support letters.

- with materials: *CTC Network News* (monthly online) and *Community Technology Review* (approx. annual); tip sheets for obtaining software donations; and web-based articles and resources (http://www.ctcnet.org).

Staff development:

- Leadership Institute to assist development of center staff.

- annual All-Affiliates Conference with speakers, Network and affiliate workshops, and discussion sessions.

Telecommunications:

- national, regional and topical e-mail lists.

- cooperative web resource development.

- telephone, e-mail, and in-person advice and support, including workshops at regional and national meetings.

Opportunities to:

- engage in collaborations with other affiliates.

- share in hardware and software donations.

- present your successful strategies at regional and national meetings.

- participate in framing CTCNet policies.

Additional membership benefits for Affiliates in CTCNet cluster area through a CTCNet Regional Coordinator who will:

- when possible, visit your site to assist in developing an individualized plan of goals and objectives under affiliation and provide any necessary orientation to your telecommunications account and other CTCNet services.

- work with area affiliates to convene regional meetings around topics of common interest and concern.

- serve as liaison between CTCNet staff and the area affiliates.

Community Partnerships That Have Worked for CTCNet Affiliates:

The Northport and Packer Community Computing Centers in Madison, Wisconsin have enriched their programs in a highly diverse number of areas through community collaborations (see Exhibit 2-3). Other CTCNet affiliates have also been able to partner with neighborhood institutions for mutual benefit:

Schools

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

- A local Adult Education Program provided space, electricity, phones administrative and personnel assistance to the Somerville Community Computing Center (Somerville, Massachusetts).

- Teach For America is a national program that places recent college graduates in urban and rural school districts. More than 10 classroom teachers who are part of the Teach For America program have brought small groups of students to Plugged In afterschool hours (East Palo Alto, California).

- A school district computer coordinator arranged to have the district's technology maintenance department repair computers for the Somerville Community Computing Center in return for the center hosting groups from a neighboring school that did not have computers.

Colleges

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

- Graduate students from a local college served as volunteers at Playing to Win (New York, New York).

- The Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology contributed equipment and its staff donated its time in developing the program philosophy and concept for The Clubhouse at the Computer Museum (Boston, Massachusetts).

- A faculty member of San Jose State University is a member of the Board of Directors of Plugged In (East Palo Alto, California).

- The Harlem Community Computer Center provided in-service training for students from Columbia University's Teachers College (New York, New York).

- Bristol Family Center, Alpha Alliance, and the Somerville Community Computing Center have served as test sites for program development of the Hands-On Universe—a project of Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories in California.

Libraries

The following examples illustrate the relationships that can exist between a local library and a CTC:

- Brooklyn Public Library operates 5 learning centers with over 150 volunteer tutors to facilitate learning among 850 low-income adult learners.

- New York Public Library offers Internet access.

- Washington, D.C. Public Library offers adult literacy courses using computers.

Local businesses

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

- Local corporations contributed funds to Community Access and Playing To Win (New York, New York).

- Somerville Cable Access Television (SCAT) asked a local restaurant owner to serve on its Board. In turn, the restaurant owner provided low-cost catering for SCAT functions.

- Plugged In obtained the support of corporations and their staff in the following different roles:

    - as corporate sponsors. All the computer equipment was donated by companies such as Bay Networks, Apple Computer, Inc., and Hewlett Packard. Corporate support also accounts for approximately one-third of Plugged In's budget.

    - on the Board of Directors.

    - on the Executive Advisory Council (East Palo Alto, California).

Specific government agencies

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

- The City of East Palo Alto's Community Services Department has sent nine different groups of students to Plugged In as part of their Summer program. Students learn basic computer skills.

- The City Manager of the City of East Palo Alto sits on the Board of Directors of Plugged In.

- The Lansing Housing Commission in Michigan received funding through HUD's Drug Elimination Program to institute a computer program along with community policing, with police officers establishing rapport with youngsters while helping them learn computer skills.

- Out of the City of Waco's Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), $75,000 has been awarded to Mission Waco to develop adjacent commercial properties that had been boarded up for years due to crime, blight and social dilemmas. At the site, Mission Waco is preparing a Community and Youth Development Program, including a computer lab.

Religious institutions

Religious organizations have started community technology centers in communities throughout the United States. As just a few of the many examples that can be found among CTCNet members:

- El Centrito De La Colonia is a bilingual bicultural community center located in the Mexican American community of Oxnard, California, known as La Colonia. Sponsored by Sisters of St. Joseph Ministerial Services (SSJMS), it operates a free After School Drop-In Computer Program.

- In 1960, Friendship Community Church was placed by Pittsburgh Presbytery in the heart of a densely populated urban area, adjacent to the Pittsburgh's largest housing development. The Church has emphasized youth programs, starting the New Beginnings Learning Center in 1989 to enhance, encourage and support the academic performance of community youth.

- The Jewish Community Center of the St. Paul Area serves the social, cultural, educational and recreational needs of more than 15,000 persons of all ages in the St. Paul area. To support the community surrounding the Center, it will be offering computer classes in several languages including Spanish, Laotian, Vietnamese and Russian.

Community-based organizations

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

- Union Settlement provided space to the Playing To Win computer center (New York, New York).

- Plugged In has developed partnerships with a wide range of community-based organizations including:

  - Children's Preservation Network is an afterschool program for elementary school children in East Palo Alto. Children's Preservation Network brings groups of students to Plugged In to learn

basic computer skills and complete creative projects.

- Next Generation Daycare is a child care program in the Palo Alto area. Last summer, a group of 5 and 6 year old children in the program went to Plugged In to learn basic computer skills.

- Plugged In also has the executive director of a community-based organization on its Board of Directors (East Palo Alto, California).

Documentation

The work outlined in this chapter should result in the following records:

- A database of community resources including individuals, service agencies, and institutions. You will expect to update this database periodically and to use it to research new partnerships and/or potential collaborations, new board/steering committee members, and other resources as the need arises.

- A report or spreadsheet giving community demographics and tabulating expressed interests and needs of community residents. This record, too, will be updated from time to time, and will continue to be useful as you frame grant proposals and requests for funding.

Exhibit 2-1

Interview Scenario:

1. Introduce yourself and mention the name of the person who gave you the contact information.

2. Make an appointment to meet with the person, if possible. If the CTC is operational, or in its pilot phase, invite the person to visit. If a meeting is inappropriate, ask if the person has time now or if there's a more convenient time when you could call back.

3. Describe very briefly the plan to develop the CTC. The Steering Committee can formulate this statement to be used by everyone making these contacts.

4. Describe very briefly the prime reason you are making this contact (i.e. to explore possible available space, complementary programs, etc. - whatever you think the most likely shareable asset from this institution might be).

5. Explore what interest the contact may have in assisting you.

6. List briefly other resources the CTC is interested in identifying.

7. Ask for referrals to other people and institutions that might be interested in helping.

8. Thank the contact for time and for whatever assistance has been suggested or pledged.

Follow-up:

1. Fill in the information on the contact sheet.

2. Follow through with any referrals you may have been given.

3. Write a short note to the contact, saying thank you and describing steps that you have taken as a result of that conversation.

4. Make sure the contact receives an invitation to the next CTC open house.

Exhibit 2-2

Partnerships with Local Institutions

Institution name and address:	Notes on contacts made:	Resources available to CTC:
Contact name, phone, fax, e-mail:		Resources CTC can offer to institution:
Institution name and address:	Notes on contacts made:	Resources available to CTC:
Contact name, phone, fax, e-mail		Resources CTC can offer to institution:

Exhibit 2-3: *Centers at Northport and Packer Apartments in Madison, Wisconsin Collaborate with Community Partners*

- **Head Start -** Partner: *Dane County Parent Council*
  Classes provide early childhood education to 57 children.
- **Child Care Center -** *Partner: Dane County Parent Council*
  On-site day-care for 16 children (plans for expansion).
- **GED/HSED classes -** *Partner: Madison Area Technical College*
  Students provide instruction to assist adults to obtain GED/HSED.
- **ESL Classes -** *Partner: Madison Literacy Council*
  Provides beginning classes in conversational English; 12 participants.
- **College for Kids -** *Partner: The University of Wisconsin/Madison*
  Lego Logo course combines robotics and computer program writing.
- **Title One Book House Club -** *Partner: Madison Metropolitan School District*
  Reading Program for students functioning below grade level; 15 participants.
- **Summer Enrichment Program -** *Partner: Northport and Packer Community Learning Centers*
  Reading, problem-solving, math, computers, science, gardening, recreational activities and field trips. 1996 enrollment: 130 children.
- **Safe at Home: -** *Partner: Retired Seniors Volunteer Program*
  Six-week course focusing on home safety issues; 30 youth participated in 1996.
- **E.R.O. (Event + Response = Outcome) Youth Against Violence -** *Partner: Dane County Youth Commission*
  Multimedia projects and publications that provide training on non-violent behavior; 18 children participated.
- **Cops and Kids on Computers -** *Partner: Madison Police Department*
  Community Learning Center trains police officers to mentor students on the Internet.
- **Everyone Learns -** *Partner: Madison Metropolitan School District*
  School district utilizes computer labs to enhance training for teachers; in exchange teachers provide training to residents and management on various software programs which provide direct correspondence and linkage to the public schools.
- **Packer Community Garden -** *Partner: Community Action Coalition*
  Community gardens, plotted on computer, developed and nurtured by youth, individuals and families; 20 participants.
- **Public Forums -** *Partner: University of Wisconsin Business School*
  Promote civic involvement through resident participation in forums on public issues.
- **Northport and Packers Neighborhood Jobs Centers -** *Partner: Dane County Jobs Center*
  Focused program of employment preparedness to move from the dependency of welfare to the self-sufficiency of work; expect 118 participants.
- **Peer Mediation Training -** *Partner: Briarpatch Counseling Center*
  Learning to mediate disputes and enhance communication; 7 youth participating.
- **Software Classes -** *Partner: John Balwit, Technology Development Instructor*
  Learning Microsoft Word 7.0, navigating the Internet; open enrollment.