ConnectHome

Playbook 5: Developing Your Action Plan

Your action plan is your roadmap

Your action plan outlines your community's vision and overarching goals for narrowing the digital divide in your community.

It also provides your team with a detailed roadmap and timeline for achieving key milestones toward your goals. **Specific, concrete, and clear** directives are particularly important for keeping your team grounded and aware of its mutual responsibilities.

Examples of action plans from the ConnectHome pilot communities are available to help you develop your own action plan.

STEPS:
Craft your action plan

STEP 1: Establish your overarching vision

Your overarching vision frames what digital inclusion means for your community. It should include the specific values that motivate your initiative.

For example, HUD's vision in establishing ConnectHome is to "narrow the digital divide for families with school-age children who live in HUD-assisted housing." Your community's vision may be similar or build in different directions, depending on its specific context and needs.

TIP →

Set you sights high

Set yourself up for success by making sure your goals are realistic and attainable. At the same time, your goals should reflect the importance and urgency of closing the digital divide. The best goals force your community's stakeholders to push themselves and accomplish something meaningful that they were not doing before.

STEP 2: Set concrete, measurable goals

State exactly who your initiative is serving, your overall Internet adoption goal, and your baseline estimate *(Playbook 3)*.

Working toward your overall adoption goal, specify individual Year 1 goals for each of the three legs of digital inclusion: (1) connectivity, (2) devices, and (3) digital literacy *(Playbooks 6–8)*.

Make sure your community has a method—even if imperfect—to track progress toward your goals *(Playbook 12)*.

STEP 3: Determine strategies for achieving goals

For each of your goals, lay out your basic Year 1 strategy for achieving the goal in Year 1 *(Playbook 4)*.

Include how you will address funding needs, what funding sources you will pursue, and how you will pursue them *(Playbook 9)*.

TIP →

Line up early wins

In establishing benchmarks, consider which ones might serve as "early wins" to help build momentum. Early wins can include an enrollment event, your first device distribution, or connecting everyone who already has a computer or laptop.

STEP 4: Specify your project timeline

Your plan should include a timeline with dates for achieving key benchmarks. For example, your timeline might include target dates for raising a certain amount of money, connecting specific properties, or graduating a certain number of residents from digital literacy training.

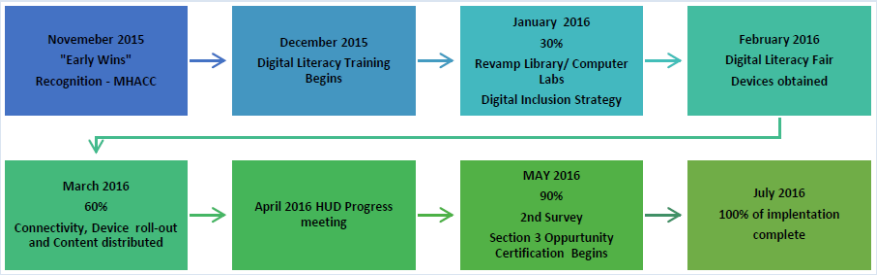
Your timeline will help keep your coalition on track.

Case Study

Little Rock, AR

Timelines and milestones

The Little Rock team laid out a comprehensive, concrete timeline with monthly goals through the end of Year 1. Their timeline, represented in the graphic below, detailed milestones and accompanied supporting narratives for each month:



For their "early wins," the Little Rock ConnectHome pilot set two goals: distributing five devices within 15 days of completing their action plan, and providing Internet access for members of their resident council. Achieving these early wins on a short turnaround served as a springboard for future and larger successes.

TIP →

Listen to your team

It's important to define roles and responsibilities based on your team's input. They will be more invested if their input and ideas are clearly reflected in their tasks and assignments.

STEP 5: Assign roles and responsibilities

Assemble your team of partners *(Playbook 2)*, including those who you have recruited though your local convening *(Playbook 4)*. Designate a team lead to manage roles and responsibilities.

Assign tasks and milestones so that every community partner and team member has ownership of specific project responsibilities. Encourage key stakeholders to take charge of important tasks. For example, messaging might be assigned to the Mayor's Office (or equivalent executive).

Be sure to clarify expectations for each stakeholder throughout Year 1.

TIP →

Livestream your events

Consider streaming live video and Tweets during your announcements and events. Not only does this help get the word out about your efforts and accomplishments, but it also offers residents an opportunity to easily and immediately engage with their new technology.

Developing a communications strategy

You should be proud of your digital inclusion initiative, so why not tell everyone about it and celebrate your achievements? Keeping your team and community well-informed helps to coordinate your coalition and build momentum. (See "Sharing your success," at the end of *Playbook 12*.)

A cohesive **internal and external communications strategy** employs various methods to inform your audience of community partners *(Playbook 2)* and residents *(Playbook 10)* about your work.

Consider your audiences and the communication channels that they regularly use, such as email and social media. Focus your efforts on the methods that can most effectively and efficiently reach them.

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