

2 chapter

Mapping Community Resources

"The success of the Cyber Cafe @ Malden Center is really two stories. It's the story of people like Sophia, Mary-Ann, and countless others who are no longer disenfranchised, but are part of the world of technology that is redefining every facet of their lives. The second story is about community leaders coming together in a partnership at the grassroots level to create a new community resource, one that truly bridges the gap in the digital divide."

*Tony Abate, as submitted by George Moriarty, Executive Director of the Career Place Community Technology Access Coalition, Cyber Cafe @ Malden Square
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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. Ideally a CTC will be created in response to an unmet community need.

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 and location requirements for the CTC (including access to public transportation)
- 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, disability status, and religion
- 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. Check your state web site by visiting <http://www.state.XX.us>, where XX is your state's initials. For example, the web site for the state of New York is <http://www.state.ny.us>. Federal agency resources may be accessed via the FirstGov portal at <http://www.firstgov.gov>.
- 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, family support groups including families with kids with disabilities, 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 method 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.” -- African Proverb

Because operating resources for CTCs are typically 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. Many departments are fertile fields for volunteer solicitation, and many institutions today have community liaisons or offices that coordinate volunteers.

- Fraternities & sororities or outreach programs associated with those colleges & universities.
- Libraries and museums.
- Assistive technology resource centers (similar to an ATA center, <http://www.ataccess.org>).
- 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: United Way, YMCA'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, radio stations, magazines, circulators of advertising, billboard companies.
- Local or regional freenets or other telecommunications providers, technology companies, additional businesses in the community.
- Nonprofit development centers or management support organizations for nonprofits.
- See Exhibit 2-3 for a graphical representation of "putting the community into community technology."

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 (e.g., 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 (SC) members so that the entire list is covered.
2. Provide an introductory scenario for SC members to use (see Exhibit 2-1).
3. Provide a tabular format that SC members can use to record the results of their conversations and meetings (see Exhibit 2-4).
4. Assemble the results and prepare a summary report.
5. 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.
6. Confirm the agreed upon partnerships, formally or informally.

Community Partnerships That Have Worked for CTCNet Affiliates

Schools

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

- "We are in the process of finally having the school district be receptive to our services as being an enhancement to the services they already provide. This we credit to first forming a relationship with the PTA's (principal in particular), asking the principal to provide a volunteer to represent her/him on our board. From that we let the relationship grow and annually increased requested support as needed. We have found that principals are very resourceful and have authority to make decisions in most cases for their facilities. We suggest to start by getting a letter of support from the school district, then a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), without setting any limits." (JoeAnne M. Thomas-Joseph, The J Connection, Inc.)
- "Community Technology Centers here in Zanesville, Ohio are working with pre-school and kindergarten children 4 days a week on a software program called aerobics. The children are learning skills like the differences in the letter sounds. The software allows them to learn rhyming words and what sounds an object makes along with a follow up step 2 that shows them math skills and letter reconciliation." (Tricia Dupler, tlush13@yahoo.com)
- "I coordinate 4 CTCs in Connecticut with funds from the U.S. Department of Education. Two of our Regional Access for Technology (RAFT) Centers are in public schools (elementary) and one is in a child care facility. The two things that stand out in my mind are 1) the hesitancy of schools to be open to the public regarding the traffic a CTC would generate & the general safety of the children, 2) payment and availability of a custodian to be on site at all times as required by the public schools. Once you work out these two issues things are all set to start up. The best way to go for #1 is to choose a location (if available) within the school where you can have a dedicated entrance/exit separate from the main entrance of the school. This makes parents and school districts much happier. We also did a lot of reassuring folks in the beginning that the public would not disrupt the public school. We work hard at respectfully voicing this issue to the public on a regular basis." (Paula M. Cymbala, RAFT Regional Access for Technology)

- "Our work with schools has developed over the past 3 years beginning with summer workshops for teachers in basic skills. From that we springboarded into working on-site at schools with teacher-student teams using computers to complete academic tasks. We affiliated with two local colleges to offer degree credits and worked the program into a 3 credit graduate class. We have offered this opportunity multiple times at a fee with success." (Harold Smith, CyberSkills/Vermont)
- "Keep in mind when working with teachers that you don't have to be a techie to work with technology. Learning how to troubleshoot computers doesn't necessarily come from memorizing an overwhelming amount of computer facts. Understanding how to identify that something is wrong, to record observations, and knowing where to find information that provides potential solutions is at the heart of being able to troubleshoot. The only way to learn how to solve computer complications is through practice and hands-on experience. Students who have learned basic computer applications, such as the word processing and graphics programs, can become basic troubleshooters, as long as they have confidence in themselves and they learn the process of observation and information gathering that helps them find answers." (Rahsaan Harris, Playing2Win)

Colleges

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

- Graduate students from a local college serve as volunteers at Playing to Win (New York, New York) and many other CTCs.
- 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, Ma).
- Bristol (CT) Family Center and the Somerville (MA) Community Computing Center have served as test sites for program development of the Hands-On Universe—a project of Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories in California.
- The Community Literacy Center is a community/university collaborative of Pittsburgh's 80-year-old Community House and the Center for the Study of Writing at Carnegie Mellon University.

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.
- Most public libraries now offer at least limited 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 contribute funds to many CTCs.
- 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.
- The Association of Christian Community Computing Centers (AC4, <http://www.ac4.org>) was formed in 2000 to support Christian community computer centers across the world in their effort to provide access, skills and relationships needed to succeed in the information age. The initiative grew out of PREP Community Computer Center of Bruce Wall Ministries in Boston.

Community-based organizations

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

- The East TN Technology Access Center is providing training to CTCs in the

Knoxville area on using basic assistive technology tools with a broad range of students.

- Plugged In has developed partnerships with a wide range of community-based organizations. For example, Next Generation Daycare is a child care program in the Palo Alto area. A group of 5 and 6 year old children in the program went to Plugged In to learn basic computer skills.

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.

Additional Contact Information

Paula M. Cymbala, LEARN Project Coordinator, RAFT Regional Access for Technology, <http://www.learn.k12.ct.us>

Rahsaan Harris, Executive Director, Playing2Win, 1330 5th Avenue, New York, NY, 10026, <http://www.playing2win.org>, rharris@playing2win.org, 212-369-4077

JoeAnne M. Thomas-Joseph, The J Connection Inc. Southwest Florida Community Technology Centers, 31108- 6th Street W, Lehigh Acres, Fl 33971, <http://thejconnection.freewebspace.com>, (239) 368-8167, jconnect@strato.net or thejconnectionlcitt@yahoo.com

Harold Smith, Co-Director, CyberSkills/Vermont, Old North End Community Technology Center, 279 North Winooski Avenue, Burlington, VT, 802-860-4057

Additional Resources

- **ABCD Training Group (Asset-Based Community Development)**
<http://www.abcdtraininggroup.org/>
- **Introduction to Creating Partnerships**
<http://www.partnerships.org.uk/AZP/part.html>
- **IPR Research Asset-Based Community Development Institute**
<http://www.nwu.edu/IPR/abcd.html>
- **Making the Net Work Toolkit — Involving the Community**
<http://www.makingthenetwork.org/tools/involve.htm>
- **Making the Net Work Toolkit — Local Resources Checklist**
<http://www.makingthenetwork.org/tools/findhelp.htm>
- **Neighborhood Technology Resource Center**
<http://www.northwesttower.com/mainpage.html>
- **Randal D. Pinkett Papers et al.**
<http://www.media.mit.edu/~rpinkett/papers/index.html>

Exhibit 2-1

Community Partnership 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: CTC Resource Worksheet

Resource	<i>What do we have already? What do we need? Where could these resources come from?</i>	<i>Who will coordinate this?</i>	<i>What issues or questions do we have to resolve?</i>
Community Involvement (Advisory committee and ongoing participation)			
Mission Statement, Needs and Audience Identification (What is driving the center and for whom)			
Programs (Classes, Open Lab Time)			
Oversight and Management (Who will advise? Who will make decisions? Who will implement?)			
Staff for program coordination, training, etc. (paid volunteers)			
Volunteers			
Technical Support (who will provide ongoing equipment maintenance?)			
Facilities (space, electricity, air, entry)			
Furnishings (desks, lights)			
Hardware (equipment)			
Software (computer programs appropriate to your needs)			
Networking (i.e. for sharing printers)			
Internet (connection and services)			
Marketing (for classes and volunteers)			
Resource-raising (How are you going to continue your program?)			
Evaluation (How will we know if we're successful: for each individual, for our organization, for our community. What specific measure will we use to check this?)			

Submitted by David Keyes; Produced by the City of Seattle Department of Information Technology (206) 684-0600; <http://www.cityofseattle.net/tech>

Exhibit 2-3

Putting the Community into Community Technology

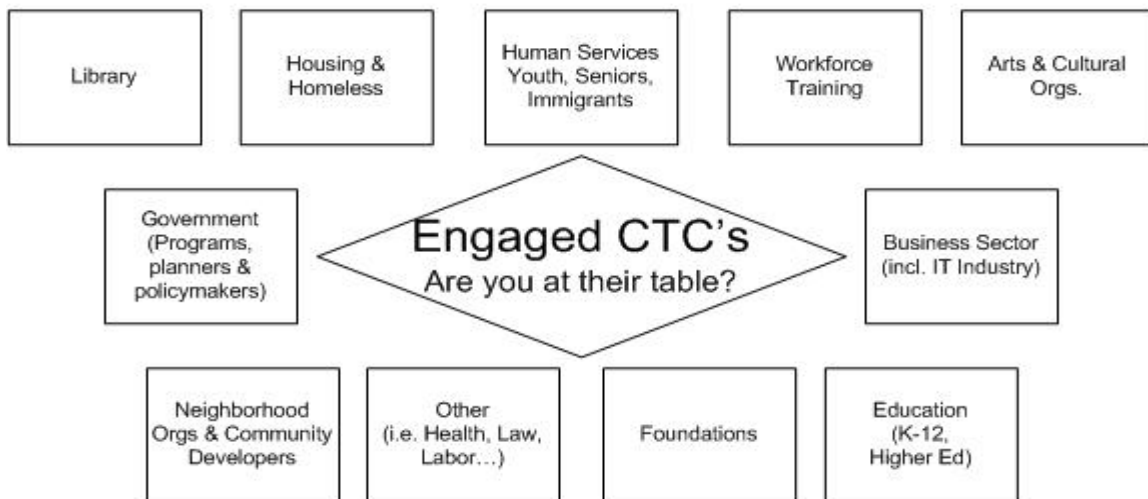
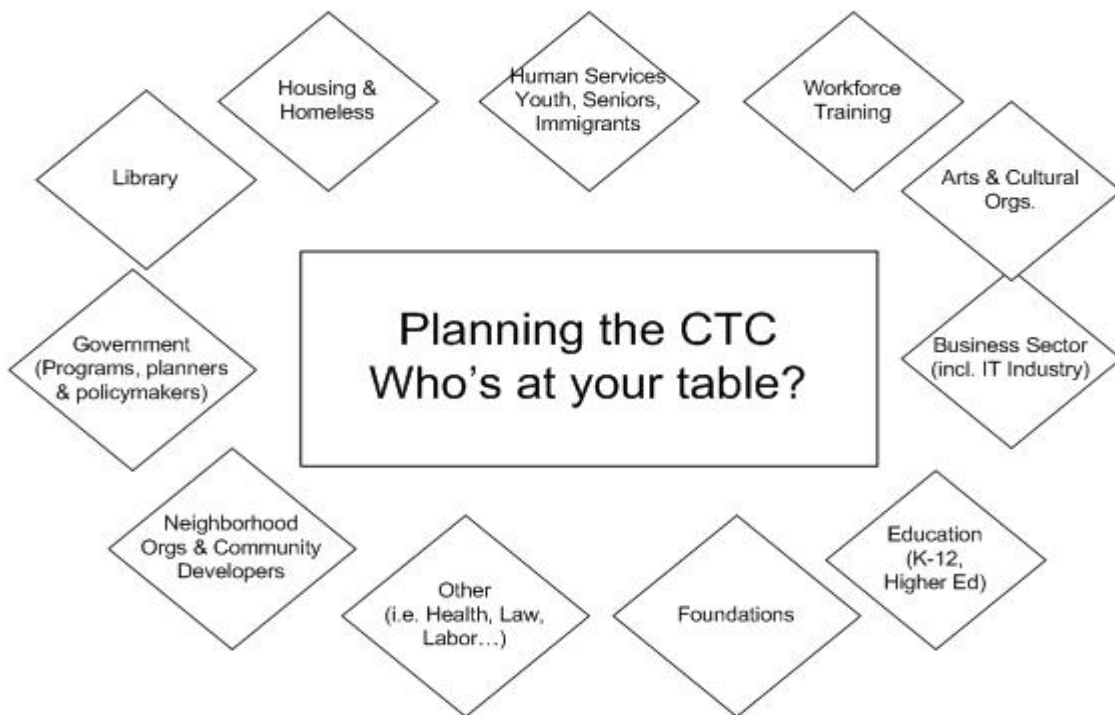


Exhibit 2-4 Partnerships with Local Institutions		
Institution name and address:	Notes on contacts made:	Resources available to CTC (including estimated value):
Contact name, phone, fax, email:		Resources CTC can offer to institution:
Institution name and address:	Notes on contacts made:	Resources available to CTC (including estimated value):
Contact name, phone, fax, email:		Resources CTC can offer to institution:

