Neighborhood Tech Help

Partnership Guide

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

The **Neighborhood Tech Help Partnership Guide** is intended to support the staff of a community anchor institution to plan their own NTH program by sharing our experience building a hyper-local tech support initiative in neighborhoods.

We recommend that you review the Neighborhood Tech Help Program Model before reviewing this or our other resources. These partnership guidelines evolved from best practices and the experience of others across North America. We advise that you do similar comparative research to find the program model that works best for you and your community.

This document is organized to provide you with a starting point based on program development and implementation in New York City. Take what works for you and leave what doesn't.

NTH PROGRAM MODEL OVERVIEW

The NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) is committed to ensuring that all the households supported by the agency's rental assistance subsidies or that live in HPD-assisted affordable housing developments have free or low-cost access to the internet, as well as the skills and confidence to leverage the internet and technology to improve their socioeconomic status.

In order to support a digital shift in Section 8 processing, HPD, the Brooklyn Public Library (BPL), the New York Public Library (NYPL), and The Queens Borough Public Library (QPL) have collaborated to initiate a program called Neighborhood Tech Help (NTH)–launched officially in spring 2025–which provides Section 8 households individualized support resolving challenges in using technology and the internet.

The program supports the hiring of local young adults as part-time staff (Tech Corps members) across all three New York library systems. The Tech Corps members were trained to deliver ad-hoc technical support to a diverse range of New Yorkers in-person at centrally-located community sites.

In October 2022, the NYC Behavioral Design Team (BDT) launched a project with HPD, BPL, NYPL, and QPL to better understand and report on the behavioral barriers to engagement with the libraries' existing digital literacy programming—as well as propose several high-level design concepts that incorporate these insights—to improve the efficacy of the city's new Neighborhood Tech Help program.

Following this research, ideas42 published a report of their insights that begins with an in-depth summary of their research activities. The report supports the determination of the following pilot priorities:

- The population of New Yorkers who are least comfortable using digital tools
- The barriers these individuals face in accessing services provided by their local libraries
- The challenges they encounter in using–and acquiring skills to use– digital tools
- The specific skills and tasks people desire to learn and how to achieve them

Learn more about the initiative and how to plan your own, be sure to review the **Neighborhood Tech Help Program Model.**

NTH HOST SITE PARTNERS

To successfully implement Neighborhood Tech Help, each community anchor institution will need to identify physical locations and host partnerships to help ensure the institution's capacity to provide services. These physical locations throughout the neighborhood will participate in the program by hosting NTH members on their premises on a consistent basis. Partners may include, but are not limited to, local community centers, computer labs, churches, landlords and/or management companies for existing buildings that may include a concentration of your target participants, senior centers, soup kitchens, etc.

Each institution should determine their host site(s) as part of their planning phase. Start by identifying boundaries or neighborhoods for project implementation. These boundaries should be used as an initial guide and may shift due to factors such as the location of target audiences. The following considerations support the identification of host partners and locations:

- Collaborate with a partner that understands the intention and the value add of this program for patrons and building management. Consider non-profit landlords or others with a focus on community betterment.

- Look for a host partner location with existing relationships and collaborations with other service providers in the neighborhood. Leveraging these relationships can support planning for the best time/day of service delivery and ensure this host partner's willingness to collaborate.

In order to ensure alignment, **all NTH host sites should:**
- Be a location where community members are already gathering (laundromat, senior center, park, building community center, computer lab, religious center, etc.)
- Meet ADA guidelines for accessibility
- Be a publicly accessible space (i.e., patrons don't need to be residents, a specific age, or have I.D. to enter)
- Accommodate and provide the following materials to NTH members:
    - Table(s) (in a semi-private space, when available)
    - Chairs for Tech Corps members and patrons
    - Access to free (no password) WiFi
    - Working electricity/power outlets
    - An existing computer workstation, if possible
    - A lockable storage location for technology equipment, if possible
- Security/safety protocols including, but not limited to, a security guard, cameras, etc.
- Allow for accessible wayfinding signage
- Be accessible regardless of weather conditions

We recommend using the accompanying **Host Partner Assessment Tool** to track your process.

Two additional considerations for host sites include:
- Protocol for assessing safety
- Insurance concerns

It is recommended you develop an MOU with your host partner(s) to establish clear expectations regarding schedule, set up, and safety protocols for Tech Corps members and patrons using the service. A sample MOU template can be found on page 5.

OUTREACH AND AWARENESS PARTNERS

Hyper-local outreach and awareness partners will support connection with the target audience through existing local organizations, institutions, and networks (i.e., community-based organizations, places of worship, community programming, social services, etc.) We recommend the following in building your relationship with community partners:

- Collaborate with partner to understand the dynamics of the target neighborhood
- Explain Neighborhood Tech Help to partners and provide necessary materials to support their ability to liaise with the community
- Provide outreach materials to each partner, who will then be responsible for disseminating them
- Provided a digital toolkit containing links to PDF versions of all flyers and posters, social media graphics, and suggested captions for partners to post, if they so choose
- Share potential opportunities (i.e., block parties, workshops, etc.) or gathering points for Tech Corps members to attend and share information about the pilot with the community

Be sure to review the **Neighborhood Tech Help Outreach Toolkit** for additional resources for identifying and planning hyper-local community outreach.

TOOL: SAMPLE MOU AGREEMENT

Memorandum of Understanding Between [Institution Name] and [Host Partner Name]

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to outline goals and expectations between [Institution Name] (Pilot Lead) and [Host Partner Name] (Host Site Organization) regarding the implementation of [Program Name].

Duties
[Institution Name] will implement and oversee [Program Name] and agrees to the following:

   A. Serve as the primary contact with the general public as it relates to the implementation of [Program Name]
   B. Carry out all tasks related to [Program Name], such as providing one-on-one tech support to individuals of the local community
   C. Support the [Host Partner Name] in the set up and take down of the tables, chairs, and other signage both inside and outside the designated location
   D. Others duties/agreements

[Host Partner Name] will act as a host site for the for the implementation of [Program Name] and agrees to the following:

   A. Hosting [Program Name], Tech Corps staff, and members of the public in/at [host site location] during the designated times; schedule listed below
   B. Provide X tables, X chairs (for Tech Corps members and patrons), electricity/power outlets, and access to free WiFi
   C. Provide Tech Corps with access to lockable storage location for technology equipment
   D. Allow the Tech Corps to place signage inside the [host site location] and on the outside property at the designated times
   E. Provide security/safety protocols including, but not limited to, a security guard, cameras, etc.
   F. (FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS ONLY) Allow outside members of the public, who are not residents, into the building to receive services
   G. Others duties/agreements

Term
This MOU will commence on [Pilot Start Date] and continue until [Pilot End Date].

Schedule for [Program Name]
[Insert the times and days of the week when services will be provided]

Cancellation

This agreement may be terminated if any of the following events occur:

A. The [Host Partner Name] fails to perform or observe any covenant of this agreement, and this failure remains unremedied fifteen (15) days after notice in writing

B. Expiration of four weeks after either the [Host Partner Name] or [Institution Name] has given written notice of its intent to terminate the agreement

Points of contact responsible for administration:

Insert Institution Name
Contact Name, Title
Full Address

Insert Host Partner Name
Contact Name, Title
Full Address

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, [Institution Name] and [Host Partner Name], through duly authorized representatives, entered into this Memorandum of Understanding. The parties, having read and understood the foregoing terms of this Memorandum of Understanding, do by their respective signatures dated below hereby agree to the terms thereof.

[Institution Name] By:
Authorizing Official   Date

[Host Partner Name] By:
Authorizing Official   Date