

DeshaForward e-Community

OVERVIEW

Primary Purpose: The e-Community process is an assessment process in which communities (as a county) identify needs; potential uses; places of access; generate awareness; and ultimately gain a better understanding of how technology can make their communities more competitive.

Secondary Purpose: Providing local communities with the knowledge infrastructure (i.e. through training the trainers) to continue progressing on their own.

- Community meetings drive the process
- Volunteers collect information from local citizens and business to measure demand
- Engage local ISP's to play an active role in the county. Used demand assessment to match interested customers with service providers.

Timeline (with overlap)

1 month	Selection of e-Champion and Steering Committee
4 months	Initial public engagement
3-6 months	Research (ongoing)
9-12+ months	Fundraising (ongoing)
6 months	Plan creation

- **Total planning time: 9-12 months (less with time and dedication)**
- **Implementation** timelines vary depending size and scope of project

After implementation, annual reviews/updates (for adoption) should take place within 1-3 months

Integrated Schedule with DeshaForward Process

October ✓	Select Chair & Initiate e-Community Process
November	Focus Groups
December	Survey
January	Present IT Assessment & Priorities
February	Preliminary IT Strategic Plan
March – April	Complete Strategic Planning Process
May-June	Endorsement & Implementation

e-Community Steering Committee (i.e. a volunteer Board)

- Chair
- Vice Chairs [For the Technology Plan, each Vice Chair is responsible for writing a report (incorporating the community's feedback) based on their respective function]
 - Vice Chair, Administrative & Legal (ideally, an Attorney)
 - Vice Chair, Marketing
 - Vice Chair, Research
 - Vice Chair, Telecommunications & Technology
 - Vice Chair, Programs & Applications
 - Vice Chair, Funding
- Members



Result: Each community will develop a long-term technology plan tailored to their county.

Outline of e-Community Plan

1. Cover Page
2. TOC
3. Executive Summary
4. e-Community Steering Committee Members
5. e-Community Partners list
6. Report on public engagement, community involvement, and the planning process
7. Area Profile and general area assessment
8. Goals & Objectives
9. High Speed Internet Connectivity
10. Public Internet Access
11. Training in digital literacy, computers and internet use
12. Web Applications
13. Budget
14. Financial resources available to the community
15. Timeline
16. Community Check-Ups
17. Summary

Technology-based Economic Development. This work helps define an economic strategy, specific to technology, for region:

- Enhancing overall infrastructure of area
- Retraining dislocated workers for new, better paying jobs
- Increasing the level of technology education & know-how of citizens
- Providing entrepreneurs with new ways of speeding business processes
- Creating a resource map of an area that can be used for future economic planning

IN DETAIL

Steps in the e-Community Process

1. ✓ **Plan**
 - Make Connections: Generate community awareness and volunteer enlistment (i.e. Community involvement). Define e-Community and discuss how to create one in your area
2. ✓ **Commit to being an e-Community**
3. ✓ **Hold Public Forums to Listen to the Community**
4. ✓ **Choose an e-Champion**
5. ✓ **Create e-Community Steering committee**
6. **Name Group & Create mission statement (based on Town Hall meetings)**
7. **Steering Committee reviews public forums and perform research to verify the Community's thoughts**
 - Review notes taken at public forums
 - Discuss the community's thoughts
 - Divide community feedback into several categories
 - Agriculture, Business/Industry, Community & Culture, Government, Healthcare, Education, Libraries
 - Assign topics for further research to committee members



Some of the Assessments:

- Community's relationship with technology
 - Vice Chair of Research: Community Assessment
 1. Community Survey – How community views technology
 2. Search for public internet access sites
 3. Get quantitative impression of your community (fact-based finding)

End Result: 1-3 page document detailing what you learned about community and how it relates to technology
- Telecommunications and technology assessment
 - Vice Chair of Research & Vice Chair of Technology
 - Meet with stakeholders (local, state, and federal government officials; ISP's; telecommunications, telephone, wireless, satellite & cable companies; telephone cooperatives)
 - GIS Map Update
- Digital literacy training and web applications assessment
- Assessment of your community's institutions (Vice Chair of Research & Vice Chair of Programs & Applications) – Time Frame is several months:
 - Set up meetings with leaders of organizations in the defined sectors
 - Inquire as to what technology is currently being used
 - Future plans incorporating technology and their technology needs

8. Steering Committee formalizes list of needs: Prioritize and encompass e-Community Steering Committee's thoughts on how the community can be improved

9. Steering Committee presents ideas to the community

- Community Profile
- Community Vision
- Community relationship with technology
- Telecommunications and technology assessment
- Institution and community sectors assessment
- List of technology priorities

10. Formulate e-Community Plan

11. Create the Plan (to address community's needs through technology)

NOTE: Although the Vice Chairs have been assigned to pull together the various sections, content should be developed and approved by the Steering Committee to ensure a cohesive plan.

12. Implement the plan

- Work with providers to evaluate possibilities for service deployment.
- Marketing (based on e-Community Plan)
- Raise Funds necessary funds to implement connectivity plan
- Implement (based on realistic timeline for fundraising and implementation phases of e-Community Plan)

13. Ongoing Evaluation

- E-Committee Steering Committee: keep group energized & growing
- New Committee:
 - Continue overseeing ongoing implementation plans
 - Monitor investments that have already been made
 - ID new possibilities
- Annually or Biannually: Conduct another assessment of local area