



**NEIGHBORHOOD
CONNECTIONS**

Library Implementation

Library Implementation



Is my library prepared?

Once the need for Neighborhood Connections is established, the library is ready to commence with the program. However certain resources will need to be taken into account. An **Implementation Checklist** is provided on page 7 to help make the determination.

Personnel The strength of Neighborhood Connections is the one-on-one appointment system that the Community Resource Specialist (CRS) oversees. The appointments can be anywhere from 30-45 minutes in length and often take place in a quiet location inside the library. The location of the appointments can be at the discretion of library staff provided there are no safety concerns. After the meetings, there is a follow-up process conducted by the specialist. This can happen on a weekly basis or at an appropriately designated timeframe until the referral needs are met. It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to have a dedicated CRS for this type of project.

Access While most Neighborhood Connections clients favor face-to-face meetings, depending on the type of help sought, assistance can be delivered over the phone or through email inquiries. The CRS will often book phone appointments for this purpose.

Logistics There are a variety of places this program can be implemented: a quiet corner of the library or a meeting room will usually suffice. The CRS will need a laptop and cell phone to conveniently shift between meeting spaces. You will also need a schedule of appointment times between the CRS and program participants. Appointments can be made by staff at the information desk during opening hours. Sometimes for more intensive help, the CRS may choose to block off more time for a patron's appointment (i.e. they will need legal as well as housing referrals). Most follow-ups are conducted over the phone or through subsequent appointments. The follow-up process is essential and helps keep participants on track to achieve their goals.



Can my library sustain this program?

As with any library program, there will be costs involved with operating and maintaining Neighborhood Connections. However, once the initial supplies (laptop, cell phone, office supplies, marketing and promotional materials) are obtained, much of the cost will rely on keeping the program staffed with at least one CRS. This can be absorbed into the library budget if possible. Other options include partnerships with organizations such as universities with Social Work degree programs or local non-profits that can provide interns, volunteers, or outreach staff. It is imperative to advocate this program to the community which can, in turn, lead to funding opportunities. Always keep an eye out for potential donors and partners.

A note about staffing though—we highly recommend the CRS position be a “library position” — a staff member who reports to library management and conducts most appointments within the library environment. This is because of the library's unique status as an open, welcoming environment. Many individuals experiencing issues such as homelessness and access to resources typically head into the library first while seeking assistance. Therefore having this be a library program is an appropriate fit for both patrons and staff.

The **Implementation Readiness Checklist** on the next page will help you evaluate your library's potential for success with Neighborhood Connections.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Component		Not Ready	Needs Work	In place	Comments
Personnel	Clients There is a clear need for this program. A needs assessment has been conducted.				
	Staff Staff/Interns (including 1 CRS) are ready to begin scheduling, assisting clients, promoting the service, and gathering and analyzing data. At least one bilingual staff member is recommended.				
Access	Appointment System Established system for patrons to make appointments with the CRS.				
	Information/Resources Library will compile and make accessible a resource guide with info about housing, food banks, low-cost clinics, and other essential services.				
Logistics	Days/Times Program is available select days/times to accommodate client and CRS schedules.				
	Meeting Space Library can provide a discreet place for resource referrals during meetings with the CRS.				
	Supplies The CRS will need a computer and phone access. Mobile supplies are recommended for outreach events.				
Sustainability	Administrative Support The program is recognized and supported by Library administration.				
	Community Support The program is receiving attention. There is potential funding from various sectors.				
	Long Term Partnerships Possible partnerships with non-profits, local agencies, and county departments that will help continue (or expand) the program after the start-up period.				