

ABSTRACT

Metanoia Centers seeks a three-Year Pilot grant to establish a Community Technology Center's Network under the United States Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education program. This project will provide increased access to technology for community residents in partnership with 1) The Boys and Girls Club of Champaign County, 2) Lakeside Terrace, 3) Urban League of Champaign County, 4) Champaign County Public Schools, 5) Metanoia Centers and 6) Douglas Community Center. The Center is located in the community of Champaign County. In July of 1986, the State of Illinois certified the establishment of the City of Champaign-Champaign County Enterprise Zone. The Zone is the result of legislative action, which has committed the State to stimulating economic growth and neighborhood revitalization. The goal of this project is to increase the rate of College attendance for low-income residents of the target area by providing them with access to technology within their own neighborhood. This project anticipates a decrease in the high school dropout rate and an increase in the rate of College attendance for target area residents as a result of its program interventions and support. From a study conducted by Westat for the Illinois State Board of Education in April 1966, it revealed that high poverty schools lag behind the rest of the state in several significant categories, including access to laptop computers, ratio of students to computers, number of computer per classroom and Internet access. Project technologies will include Netscape, and email. Generally, the Centers will hold classes for 10-14 participants per session, depending on the activity scheduled for that day. After center staff receive training, this project will provide two-way interaction of students and center counselors from one point to another point and assist them in advising high school students, adults, or any center participants interested in College attendance.

Table of Contents

Application Page	I
Budget Forms	ii
1. Abstract	iii
2. Table of Contents for Narrative Parts	iv
3. Describe how applicant meets competitive priorities	
4. Project based on selection criteria	
a) Need for this project	4
b) Quality of project design	9
c) Quality of project personnel	15
d) Quality of the management plan	18
e) Adequacy of resources	30
f) Quality of project evaluation	32
Budget	37
Equitable access statement	42
Assurances Non-Constructive	43
Certifications	
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	
Appendix	47

Competitive Priorities

Competitive Priority 1:

Projects that demonstrate substantial community support of, and commitment to, the establishment or expansion of a community technology center. (3 points)

Douglas Center meets this priority with the community partnerships it has established to

link the Community Technology Center's Network:

1. Boys and Girls Club of Champaign County
2. Parkland Community College
3. Urban League of Champaign County
4. Metanoia Centers
5. Douglas Community Center
6. Champaign County Public School

In addition, we include the following business partner:

(Please see Appendix for Letters of Commitment.)

Competitive Priority 2

Project that uses the program funds to establish or expand a community technology center in an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community: (3 points)

Metanoia Centers meets this priority in that it is located in the County of Champaign, which has been, designated the City of Champaign-Champaign County Enterprise Zone by the State of Illinois in 1986. Frederick Douglas Community Center, which will host the program is located in the census tract 2, of the Enterprise Community. The partners are all located in the Enterprise Community as well.

Need for this project

The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. (15 points)

The “digital divide” has widened between technology “have’s” and “have not’s” in Champaign County as well as in the nation. The 1998 Department of Commerce study, *Falling through the Net II: New Data on the Digital divide*, showed that although more Americans now own computers, minority and low-income households are still far less likely to have computers or online access to the internet than more affluent households. Specifically,

1. Nationally Blacks have the lowest percentage of computers in the household, or 19.3% versus an average of 36.6% for all homes and 40.8% for White households. In the target area at least 14.21% of the residents are minority, 12.57 % are Black and 1.64 % Hispanic.
2. The target community for this project is in a central city within the central Section of the country, which has the lowest percentage of computers in the household, or ___-%, versus 42.9% for Western cities.
3. The target community also has the lowest percentage ___ % households with online service, versus a high of 21.7 % in the West.
4. Finally, ___% of the households in _____ have computers, but the best records show that on average only 12% percent of low-income households have computers, and 5.8% have online service in the target area.

Target Area.

The participants for Champaign County Vanguard Youthbuild Initiative will come from municipalities comprised of both Mayoral and City Manager forms of government. The participants will be recruited from Champaign, Rantoul, and Urbana. These cities represent the geographical boundaries of the designated Enterprise Community.

Champaign County, located in central Illinois, covers an area of 997 square miles and has a population of 179,669, according to estimates by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of the Census. Using these figures, Champaign County is the 5th largest county in Illinois geographically, but 12th largest in terms of population. Combining these two measures,

Champaign County has the 15th highest population density per square mile among Illinois's 102 counties. Champaign is the largest of these communities with a population of 67,518. The Minority Households by census tracts where we will be recruiting the participants are: Census Tracts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12.1, and census tract 14.

The target area for this proposal comprises 17.6% of low-income families with 14.08% of children living below the poverty-level versus 17.5% nationwide, in the target area. Champaign county contains over 179,669 people out of 12,419,293 of the state's entire population. Although the city is dominated by major employers such as the University of Illinois, Parkland Community College, Kraft Foods, and Champaign School District, it encompasses a high concentration of low-income families (24,127) and a proportionate pool of high school dropouts in the state. Of the 100,418 adults over 25, only 32,690 have college degrees as compared to 78% nationally. Moreover, a recent study indicates that over 16.8 percent of the students in Champaign County schools qualify and participate in the free and reduced lunch program, and this number is increasing. The recommended ratio of counselors serving students is 200:1 according to the American Personnel & Guidance Association. Yet in a study of area schools that target area students attend, the student to counselor ratio is as high as ____: 1. In addition, during interview, most counselors admitted that 90 percent of their time is spent serving 10% of the student population. Like other economically distressed areas, Champaign County suffers from similar problems of high crime, inter-generation poverty, dropout rates, and chronic unemployment. The 1998 Violent Index Offense Rate in Champaign County was 41% higher than the rate in the other counties. Reports show that only ____ percent of area low-income students enroll in post secondary programs. This project seeks to improve this rate.

Reducing Disparities. Even though 37 percent of American families are online (more than 100 million homes), most of these connections are not in low-income communities. A survey of teenagers who do have on-line service reveals that most of them connect most often for entertainment, e-mail, and school related matters. Some social workers are concerned that the Internet is driving yet another wedge between the have's and the have-nots because teenagers are quick to feel isolated from a social world they feel is moving along without them. (CSMonitor, February 19, 1999).

In the target area, 1 out of every 5 homes are without a parent who has attended College. Most of the schools are wired for information technology, but do not have programs that provide students daily contact with information technology. As schools do develop these programs they will be in accordance with statewide standards, allowing little time to enter into a comprehensive partnership with institutions of higher education as set forth in this proposal. This project would seem to work best in developing student's interest in higher education after school and during the summer in the familial setting of their community centers.

Today's sophisticated "knowledge-based" economy requires an increasing understanding of information technology. Yet most of the target area students lack daily access to PCs. Most of the homes and community centers within the target area have neither the funds nor the expertise to utilize technology to access the information and services that could help students break the cycle of poverty by enrolling in post-secondary education. This project will connect these students to institutions of higher education, to each other, to limitless opportunities for learning new information, and to more affluent and culturally different communities in surrounding counties.

The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals. (15 points)

The Department of Commerce study cited above showed that the “digital divide” between the technology “have’s” and “have not’s” – especially low-income individuals, minorities and the young in central cities – is significant. Also, in view of the time that it will take to connect these individuals to online access at home, the report advocated that schools, libraries, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations make computers and technology accessible to them.

In view of the time and resources it will take to remedy the severe shortage of information technology in the target area, Douglas Center will establish a Community Technology Center’s Network in the Enterprise Community of Champaign County. As predicted by social futurists decades ago, our young persons entering the knowledge-based workforce today, high technology jobs bring a premium paycheck, but others are being left behind. Even worse, a decade ago, one-third of families headed by a person fewer than 25 were poor, triple the rate for all American families at that time. In 1998, the unemployment rate for people in this group was actually higher than it was in 1988. According to Jack Jennings, Director of the Center on Education Policy “Kids don’t necessarily know what’s required to be in College.” (CSMonitor, March 3, 1999). Their lack of knowledge carries a huge price. Around the world, business and affluent people communicate via Internet daily. In contrast, most living within low-income communities has never experienced the World Wide Web, and this lack of information comes with great cost.

Solution. The purpose of this project is to provide an information technology network to assist young people in low-income communities in understanding what is required to enter College.

Significance. Engineers have for centuries utilized their technical abilities to solve human problems. They have examined these problems and built bridges, dams automobiles, trains, subways, heating and cooling systems, television, satellites, computers, printers, copiers, lasers, and, most recently, the world wide web and other information technology. In this “knowledge-based” technology, the Web takes center stage allowing persons to communicate across continents but, “What about persons communicating within and across communities?” and “How about low-income communities connecting with institutions of higher education?” The need to develop this communication is critical for today’s workforce. Even in poorest school districts records show that some young people still rank in the top ten percent of their nationwide graduating class. The significance of this proposal is to build bridges so those individuals in poor communities can connect and be motivated by the offerings of institutions of higher education more readily. Significance is also found in applying state-of-art technology to an old problem. Timing is important. For decades young persons have been losing ground because they do not know how a decision to enter higher education while still in junior high school can serve their pursuit of happiness throughout life. Technology cannot afford to forge ahead leaving millions behind because of their lack of knowledge. The entire country will be affected as was brought out by experts such as Martin Blank of the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington. Blank advocates that we must invest in young people because they will be needed “to fuel our Social Security and Medicare systems in the future.” (CSMonitor, March 3, 1999).

Whether or not we believe Washington’s “think tanks,” if you people are not able to pay into the social security system because they are shut out, often unemployed, unable to compete in this “knowledge-based” economy, there is at least the possibility of weakening the social security base in this country. It is simple. This proposal offers a means through which well-established

technology can impact the swollen dropout rates and meager College-bound rates in one particular community where 10,000 young people are in the K-12 system, very few of them are entering College, and when they do, most of them dropout of College before graduation. (CSMonitor, March 3, 1999). A simple, but significant solution exists. This “drop” can have a ripple effect in changing so many lives and communities. If this pilot project can work in one setting, it can then be expanded to other settings, to health, public safety, and to public service organizations. As a result of a successful pilot, this project will be expanded to other Community Centers in Illinois.

Quality of the project design. (20 points)

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (10 points)

The economic or educational attainment statistics already outlined in the problem statement above give little optimism to residents. The needs identified leave much doubt that residents of the target area will ever be able to overcome the barriers they face without the interventions such as offered in this proposal. Herein is an opportunity to develop the expertise within the staff of community itself in this train the trainers/teachers project. This training will allow the community centers to become at least familiar and at best experts in supporting the educational activities of the World Wide Web that could range from receiving and transferring basic information to actually receiving credit courses via distance learning.

Process Objectives. The project seeks to expand access for all age groups within the target community; from pre-school to seniors as follows:

Age Group	Proposed Times
------------------	-----------------------

Pre-school with parents	Short morning classes. Morning labs for tots and parents.
School-aged:	After school classes. Afterschool/weekend labs. Special “club” or “project” sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings
Older teens:	After school classes. Afterschool/weekend labs. Special “club” or “project” sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings
Adults:	Day and evening classes. Day and evening labs.
Seniors:	Late morning or early afternoon for classes or labs.

Measurable Objectives. Through the strategic placement of technology, the project aims to (1) decrease the high school dropout rate and (2) increase the College-attendance rate for residents of the target area. Using 1997-98 as the baseline, the objective is to decrease dropout rates by at least 10% percent and increase the College-bound rate by 10% percent for participants as compared to high school students not participating in this project.

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population. (10 points)

Champaign’s Douglas Center can develop linkages in partnership with six community’s centers and one business partner. These are 1) The Boys and Girls Club of Champaign County, 2) Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, 3) Parkland Community College, 4) Champaign County Public Schools, 5) Metanoia Centers and 6)Oakwood Trace Community Center and several business partners.,

Community centers within the target area are uniquely situated to be effective partners in this program. Community centers have a long, rich history of supporting families in poverty and immigrants coming into the country since the early 1900s. They have also been very

effective in interfacing with the home, church and schools, advocating on behalf of individuals and families who lack the expertise at times to fend for themselves. They have been particularly effective in providing support for youth, childcare, and increasingly senior care. The community center provides extended day and summer programs for youth. They are ideally situated within the community to develop students beyond the school day and school year, and adults beyond work hours. Collectively, the community centers are serving a minimum of 7-10,000 Participants.

Applicant Qualifications. Frederick Douglas Center is a state-supported institution, offering services to residents of Champaign at its Center. .

Approach. This program uses established, uncomplicated techniques and technologies to create two-way interaction that allows poverty area residents to learn about postsecondary programs while in a familiar setting, their own regularly attended neighborhood centers. The actual technology, Browser, email, on-line search engines, and Microsoft word-processing and other software is used by industry strongly. However, this *program's strength is in engineering a strategy that expands technology for the benefit of new or deprived end users.*

The solution is to place up to seven workstations in a minimum of six community centers within the target area, five on-line workstations and two that are not on line. (Please see following diagram.) These units can serve two students per station, from ten to fourteen students per class. All workstations can accommodate research software such as encyclopedias. This system is designed for two-way interaction of students and center counselors from one point to another point to assist them in advising high school students, adults, or any center participant interested in Center information.

The system will allow a student or center counselor to contact College program staff in admissions, career services, financial aid, remedial specialists, academic advisors, about regular and early admissions programs. The end user and the program counselor can share documents, go to web pages for Colleges over Douglas Center's Internet access, and actually complete on-line applications for various Colleges.

Community Involvement and Commitment. Planning for this particular project has gone on for almost 2 years and has included representatives from Champaign County Community, Champaign County Boys and Girls Club, State's Attorney's office, Champaign County Urban League, Parkland College, Champaign County's Ministerial Alliance, Mayor's office, senior centers, and other agencies. To design this project, the Center contacted a number of civic leaders, educators throughout the state, faculty members and community agency staff, and all expressed frustrations in trying to bring technology into their programs. While there was a desire to establish information networks, none has yet secured them. Cooperation for this program has been statewide. However, it was decided that the program would be more effective if started as a pilot in the community with the greatest need.

The Champaign County business community is committed to developing the local workforce beginning with K-12. Thus realizing that the goal of Frederick Douglas Community Center's Educational Technology Center is to train K-12 and Center teachers in the academic use of technology, local businesses have contributed toward the technology center. These companies include

_____, _____, _____,
_____. (Please see appendix for ____ letter of commitment.)

This pilot project offers an excellent means to test the concepts set forth, obtain end users input, and to develop further strategies. It is expected that once this project is tested, other grants will be obtained to expand the pilot project to additional sites.

Champaign's Douglas Center will administer the Community Technical Centers project, provide the lead staff, and evaluate results with the cooperation of its partners as outlined above. It will contribute staff time, space, administrative costs, and technical expertise and support. Each center partner will designate a person to serve as an on-site liaison and commit to implementing, using and evaluating the technology in accordance with project objectives.

End Users. The end users will be the center staff and residents of the target area. It is essential that these centers receive comprehensive, ongoing support even beyond the grant period. Because the community centers do not have much experience with technology of any nature, one-to-one training is crucial. The project will hire a full-time coordinator/trainer who will be primarily for this training under the direction of the Project Director. Representatives from the six community centers will undergo initial training along with the Center's personnel they will eventually connect to such as counselors, admissions, financial aid staff and career center personnel. Thus actual demonstration among those using the technology will take place with experts on hand to answer any questions and resolve problems. In addition, the trainer will go directly out to the six sites to provide instruction to center trainers and students on a one-to-one, user-friendly manner. Furthermore, information on the use of the technology can be provided via the technology itself through e-mail. An end user scenario follows:

A student and her counselor sit down at the PC in the community center. The student is interested in computer programming but doesn't know whether she can actually go to Center for it and get a job. They connect to the Center's career office and obtain information on the skills and aptitudes to enter into this field. They contact various College offices through e-mail and voice mail, and search the World Wide Web for additional information. Next, they connect to Parkland Community College technology Center and talk with faculty who teach programming as well as students majoring in information technology. Program data are transferred directly to them from the College. Next they connect to the financial aid office and receive information and an application electronically.

Interoperability. The system has already demonstrated its longevity and will interoperate with existing systems in area school districts and institutions of higher education. As this program experiences success in increasing the College's-going rate within the target area of Champaign County, it can be expanded to other districts that can benefit from the connections. The system can be expanded at each site and to other sites.

Scalability. Due to the relatively inexpensive costs to the system, the project has great scalability associated with its expansion. The hardware configured should not need upgrades during the life of the project.

Privacy. The only privacy issue relates to financial aid information and is covered by the Douglas Center's policy to protect the end user.

Sustainability. Once in place, the primary cost will be for line usage. The community centers have made a commitment to pick up these costs when Federal funding ends. The Center will continue to provide technical support and services begun under the grant at no cost to the community centers. Likewise, Frederick Douglas Community Center will

continue to provide discounts for services once the grant ends. The equipment purchased under the grant for the six community centers will remain with them, since the project's goal is access for an area hampered by economic barriers.

Quality of project personnel. (10 points)

- (1) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.**

It is the policy of the Center to provide successful employment and to ensure that no discrimination occurs against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability. This policy includes all aspects of recruitment, hiring, training, promotions, and all other terms and conditions of employment. Since the Community Technology Centers' Network will fall under the control of the Center, affirmative action will be taken to ensure traditional disadvantaged; protected classes of individuals age given an equitable opportunity for employment in the project. The Center will advertise the positions and circulate notification of the vacancies to the following resources:

- *The News Gazette and other area newspapers, such as _____
Circulated within the target population communities*
- Community assistance agencies
- Prairie Center homepage on Internet
- University Alumni Associations
- Associations and organizations whose members represent and serve the target population
-

In addition,

- All Steering Committee members will be expected to circulate the job description(s) to their own constituencies.
- Job descriptions will be placed in newspapers, posted on community electronic bulletin boards and circulated to neighborhood institutions,

producers of community newsletters, local businesses, and employment agencies.

- A word-of-mouth network is important, particularly since it is highly desirable to be able to make the hire from the community itself.

(ii) In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator. (10 points)

Qualifications for staff in the Community technology Center's Network program is specifically related to both having knowledge of computer system software, and systems analysis and design as well as the ability to effectively communicate and relate to a diverse population in a multicultural environment. The qualifications for positions are listed below.

Center Director (Full time program manager, as per Center Personnel policy)

Minimum qualifications include:

- Bachelor's degree in education, computer studies, or related field
- Two years experience in the field
- Successful administrative experience
- Experience in writing/managing federal grants
- Excellent oral & communication skills
- Knowledge of theory, components and configuration of minicomputers; microcomputer software; and the concepts and methodology of systems analysis.

Responsibilities of the Director include:

- Managing, developing and coordinating activities relative to overall administration supervision of the program
- Administering the Community Technology Centers' Network in compliance with all federal and Center regulations
- Overall responsibility for systems analysis, including information needs and requirements analysis.
- Recommendation of hardware and software changes, acquisitions and purchases for efficient program management
- Disbursement and management of project funds
- Establishing good working relationships between all partners of the project
- Recommending applicants for hire
- Coordination of program activities

- Supervision, training, and evaluation of project staff
- Overall responsibility for program evaluation

Outreach Worker/Trainer (Full-time Enrichment Coordinator as per Center Policy)

Minimum qualifications include:

- Bachelors' degree in Education, computer studies, or related field
- Good written/oral communication skills
- Two year's relevant work experience
- Knowledge of computer system software, and systems analysis and design

Responsibilities include:

- Coordinate and work directly with the Community Technology Centers' Network partner sites
- Assist the Project director as needed
- Train and work with partners' staff on-site effectively manage community access to technology
- Monitor and maintain the Technology Centers Network
- Diagnose and troubleshoot hardware and software problems

Project Secretary (Full-time position) Minimum qualifications include:

- High school diploma and two years related experience
- Knowledge of business English, bookkeeping and office management.
- Computer literacy is a requirement
- Excellent communication skills
- Knowledge of business math and bookkeeping

Responsibilities include:

- Perform all clerical work for the Center Director and other project staff
- Arrange appointments/assist in posting data/sort and file correspondence
- Prepare invoices/vouchers
- Type letters and route internal mail
- Establish and maintain complex filing systems for the project

Computer Instructors: (Part-time Instructor level position designed to provide services

In the Campus Technology Center weekday evenings and Saturdays)

Minimum qualifications includes:

- Bachelor's degree in education, computer studies or a related field

- Knowledge of computer system software

Primary responsibility includes:

- Providing assistance to community users in accessing technology on a one-to-one basis or small groups as needed

Quality of the management plan. (10 points)

- (i) **The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and with budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (5 points)**

The proposal taskforce reviewed current best practices in the development of this project and adapted successful ones from the Center Start-Up Manual published by the Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet) in Newton, Massachusetts (1977). These procedures were modified based on local needs, experience and interests. Because computer applications range over such a vast area, the Champaign Community Technology Centers' Network will identify specific areas in which to concentrate its programming activities as follows:

The start-up process for the project centers generally will move through the following five steps:

1. Form a Steering Committee to serve as the advisory committee for the project.
2. Engage in a process of community mapping to identify interests and needs of prospective participants.
3. Form additional partnerships and develop commitments for assistance from members of the community.
4. Research and structure program offering in response to identified needs and interest (e.g., adult education, after school sessions, job preparation, elder services, family and pre-school programs).
5. Initiate the pilot program through which to test the planned programming structure and to further refine conclusions relating to community interest and need.

Months 1-4

- Form the Steering Committee.
- Conduct the first meeting of the Steering Committee: establish subcommittees of the Steering Committee.

- Institute mapping of neighborhood institutions.
- Conduct the second meeting of the Steering Committee, including new members identified through community mapping.
- Gather in-depth information regarding intended constituency needs and assets.
- Formalize Steering Committee membership to reflect information
- Hire the staff to run the project.

Months 5-8

- Hold Steering Committee meetings once a month.
- Determine the programmatic focus to reflect identified needs and interests of the community.
- Build partnerships with neighborhood institutions.
- Develop all elements of the proposal.
- Implement the proposal.
- Design a strategy for ongoing operations and initiate a pilot program.

Months 9-12

- Identify software programs for the program needs of the residents.
- Acquire computers and software.
- Rehab and move into space.
- Welcome the assistance of volunteers with initial orientation sessions.
- Provide full-scale program services.

Because computer applications range over such a vast area, the Champaign Douglas Center

Community Technology Centers' Network will identify specific areas in which to

concentrate its programming activities as follows:

Public Access and/or Open Lab Time

Centers will include some public access and/or open lab time.

- Public Access offers members of the community the opportunity to use computer and communications technologies to explore their own interests, to develop skills, and to discover what the technology can do.
- Open Lab Time provides those otherwise involved through structured classes with opportunities to practice what they are learning or to branch out into further explorations.

Important considerations regarding public access and open lab programs

- Designate some times specifically for children and other times for older teens and adults.
- Schedule some times during the day and some in the evening
- Introduce programs for the most popular software. These are available both as on-screen tutorials and in audio form with earphones for the users.
- This will normally be a heavy usage time with a variety of individuals each doing different things. Provide staff or volunteers at least one volunteer for every ten users.
- If public access is to include Internet access, more than one phone line or a high-capacity access line may be needed. Special rules limiting one person's access time may need to be instituted.

Pre-School and Family

Pre-school and family programs include:

- Times when parents can bring young children and work together with them to explore appropriate software such as drawing, animation, and learning games.
- Opportunity to partner with a local Even Start, Head Start, or day care program that may not have access to computers.

Important considerations regarding pre-school and family programs

- The attention span of young children is limited, so such sessions should be short—a half hour or 45 minutes at most.
- Young children may not be able to reach the mouse or keyboard comfortably from ordinary chair height. If you don't have adjustable chairs, stock plenty of telephone books or pillows.
- Parents may need prior guidance in using the software to enable them to work effectively with their children. Plan on an introductory session or two for the parents.

After school Activities

These will be structured for different age groups or offered as open lab time for children. In addition to giving children an opportunity to acquire skill with basic computer applications, some will enjoy:

- **Subject-Area Activities.** Commercial software that offers homework help, tutorials, and other activities covering subjects, such as reading, writing, math, sciences, and other subjects, is readily available.
- **Games.** Games can be effective tools for getting children and young adults interested in learning more about computer technology. Exercise caution I choosing games—some are violent, others are mindless.

- **Exploring the Internet.** Once children are equipped with basic computer skills, they may wish to test and improve them by “surfing” the Internet, using the World Wide Web (WWW) as a research tool, or communicating with far-flung peers through electronic mail.
- **Multimedia Publishing:** Designing personal web pages, constructing family or neighborhood profiles, creating project reports for school.
- **Music Making:** Learning about and/or writing music and songs (may require additional hardware and software).

Important considerations regarding after school activities

- Know every child. Enforce sign-in and sign-out procedures. Be sure you can notify an appropriate person if special circumstances arise.
- Make sure all children know the rules of the center and where to find what they need
- Young people working alone need frequent attention. To facilitate peer tutoring and collaborative learning, encourage two or more to work together at a single computer.
- Assign more knowledgeable children to work with the less knowledgeable.
- Provide ample space to move around, stow book bags, coats, etc.

Adult Education

Establishing a comprehensive adult education program will involve far more than computer access. There will need to be classroom or tutorial space for non-computer-based learning and instructors with the experience and qualifications needed to teach these classes. Rather than developing an adult education program from the ground up, a collaboration or partnership with an existing program in the community may serve the goals of both. Adult education generally includes:

- **General Equivalency Degree (GED) training.** This is a program in which persons are taught certain skills to prepare them to take a test to obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma.
- **English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.** These programs teach people the basic skills to speak and understand English. The class concludes with a test measuring students progress towards fluency in the English language;
- **Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes.** These classes enable residents to develop the ability to read, write, and perform basic math. Learners progress to GED classes;
- **Life-long Learning Opportunities:** Extension courses, “Associate” degrees, Distance Learning; and,
- **Basic Computer Comfort.** These workshops introduce people to the keyboard, the mouse, how to turn the machine on and off, and some basic applications which will

enable them to use the computer without supervision and prepare them for more advanced computer training in the future.

Important considerations regarding adult education programs

- Many adults must bring their children with them. The project will establish simultaneous classes for the children and/or a play area.
- Some adults prefer to learn among other adults rather than in a class integrated with children. The projects will if possible, set-aside teaching time specifically for adult instruction.
- Many adults work; accommodate these schedules.

Elder Services

Some older persons particularly enjoy:

- Mentoring younger people
- Games such as chess, go, or backgammon
- Telecommunications contact with relatives and friends
- Telecommunications and CD-Rom-based travel explorations
- Financial planning assistance
- Family tree programs and family history productions
- Health care and other services information
- Just “being part of” the communications age

Important considerations regarding elder education programs

Seniors often prefer to learn about computers in classes made up of other seniors. Offering “seniors only” courses may go a long way to making them pleased to be at the center and likely to return. In addition, like any other population, seniors learn better in smaller classes and need to be listened to.

Our seniors truly enjoy working with young people; thus the project will form a senior volunteer corps to assist during lab times open to children.

Internet Access

People who have heretofore been excluded for whatever reason from computer access need a degree of computer comfort with a variety of applications before they are willing to launch themselves into cyberspace. Hence, this project with Internet access as its focus will offer introductory courses aimed at equipping participants with basic computer skills.

Career development and Job Preparation

Job skills training will include classes teaching basic computer literacy, keyboarding skills, word processing, graphics applications, spreadsheets, databases and other office skills classes. *Job search activities* will include resume writing workshops; classes teaching interviewing skills such as what questions to ask and what is likely to be asked; how to dress; workplace behavior training; and, how and where to look for a job.

The factor most likely to produce a successful job preparation program is the availability of real jobs to those who complete the program. The Steering Committee will form an Employer Advisory Council that will match the types of training offered, software selection, and program emphasis to the types of jobs actually available in the community.

A technique proven to be particularly motivating in engaging young people in job preparation courses is to present them with promised employment after successful completion of the Center course. An Employer advisory Council will take the lead in lining up these jobs.

Important considerations regarding a job preparation program

- The project will develop a database of available jobs in the community. Jobs can be researched through the Steering committee and/or through neighborhood partnerships. Other sources might include newspapers and local, regional, or national electronic bulletin boards. The WWW contains pages such as CareerPath.com (<http://WWW.careerpath.com>), which enables searches of job listings from newspapers in eight major cities.
- Job Preparation students, as an activity, may wish to prepare a database of available local jobs and a second database of their own skills and desired types of employment.

- The Employer Advisory Council will recruit local businesses to notify the Center of vacant or soon-to-be vacant positions together with advance notice on the skills required for those positions.
- Job openings can be posted on a bulletin board, a community electronic bulletin board, and/or published in a Center Job Listings Newsletter. Performing these tasks can be assigned to participants in the program.
- The Center will organize and/or host a “Job Fair” with participants doing the research and implementation as a project. Alternatively, participants can be encouraged, and prepared, to attend job fairs sponsored by other agencies in the community.

Community Technology Centers; Network activities and accomplishments

The first year goals will be to:

- Introduce marketing strategy itself to the community;
- Become a familiar organization in the community;
- Broaden its participant base; and,
- Generate interest in its activities among the community.

The Steering Committee will be aware that organizing activities of the community technology Centers’ Network are its first public relations acts. After organizing is completed, the project should try to publicize every activity and accomplishment as widely as possible. The kinds of activities that should be announced to the public include the:

- Establishment of the Community technology Centers’ Network;
- Appointment of the Steering Committee;
- Hiring of project staff;
- Grand opening of the project;
- Schedule, including public access time;
- Classes offered;
- Foundation and grant awards;
- In-kind contributions from neighborhood institutions;
- Accomplishments of the students, such as getting jobs, passing English fluency tests, earning GEDs after attending GED preparation classes at the Centers or communicating on the Internet; and,
- Any electronic commerce activities it undertakes. For example, when centers receive outsourcing contracts, this fact will be advertised not only in general circulation media but also in specialized publications that may generate new business. Likewise, when the Centers provide small business support, this activity will receive similar marketing treatment.

Public Relations. After the first year, the public relations goals of the Community Technology Centers' Network will be to maintain its visibility in the community, to further promote it, and to broaden and continue to stimulate interest in the activities of the project. The project will publicize noteworthy activities and accomplishments.

These should include:

- New program offerings
- New partnerships;
- The appointment of new Steering Committee members;
- Creating Community Technology Center's web pages on the Internet;
- Success stories of participants;
- Feature articles on staff and special volunteers;
- A "Year in Review: piece about the project;
- Any foundation or grant awards
- Special attention the project receives from government officials, corporations, the media, or community organizations;
- Designing a logo;
- Developing a brochure for the project; and,
- Publishing a monthly newsletter about the project.

- (ii) **How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate. (5 points)**

Prime mover organizer

Champaign Douglas Center, the organizer, pulls the pieces together and makes, or delegates, key decisions about how to make the Community Technology Centers' Network operational.

Community representatives

The Community Technology Centers' Network is being designed to serve residents of the immediate and/or the surrounding community. The voices of these people must be heard on the Steering Committee from the beginning. Tenant organizations, neighborhood associations, local

religious institutions, community service agencies, PTAs, etc. will be good sources for community representatives.

Community representatives serve as the liaison with the intended project participants. They publicize the development of the project in and for the community, and their experience serves to inform the Steering Committee of the needs, interests, and assets present in the community.

Business community representatives

Representatives from the local business community will be solicited to bring special skills, expertise, and possibly other business support. _____, a local technology company representative will offer knowledge about computer hardware and software; a corporate representative from a human resources company may offer expertise in staff development and training; and an employment services representative could help with job preparation and placement.

Professionals

The Community technology Center's Network will need a variety of professional advice and/or service from volunteers at various stages of its development. In addition the Center is supported by well-established accounting and auditing systems for State and Federal funds.

Marketing/public relation's professionals who will provide valuable services to the program in the creation of a marketing community outreach plan also support the Center. These professionals have the following expertise: ability to write press releases and place them in newspapers; experience writing grant proposals; and access to local media organizations such as television, radio and cable stations. Marketing/public relation's professionals may include a

public relations company executive, a public relations specialist from Local Corporation, or a professor of public relations.

Representatives of the educational community

Representatives from the educational community (local schools and their PTA's, Douglas Centers, and universities, libraries, museums, and adult education programs) will be valuable members of the Steering Committee. Educators not only will know what the school system offers but also may provide entry to the other systems as well. The educational community also may be a valuable source of volunteer instructors, professional development opportunities, and so forth.

Other Members

After several months, the steering committee may discover a need for adding new members. For example, people with knowledge of equipment acquisition, fundraising, and hiring may be valuable. In addition, as neighborhood institutions with resources that the project can tap into are identified by the Steering Committee representatives of these potential partners will be added.

Adequacy of resources. (10 points)

(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (5 points)

The _____ Campus Teaching Resource Center and labs are accommodated in a series of rooms on the _____ floor of the building. The Educational Technology Lab is in Room _____. Faculty training is also set up in Room _____ using ____ networked notebook computers and a multimedia presentation system. This combination of space provides adequate support for the Center faculty and K-12 teachers in

Champaign County. The Educational Technology Certificate Program is accommodated in this space as well as one of the existing computer labs.

The Education Technology Lab contains specially designed furniture, computer equipment and software to support design teams and individuals working alone and collaboratively across campuses and Centers. Dedicated technical support for faculty projects is available here daily. An Instructional Designer for teachers in this program is available on _____.

Collectively, the Frederick Douglas Community Technology Centers' Network will provide a full range of services as described above. In addition, the host institution will make available the following basic resources in its Center office: 1) Space Needs and Utilization, 2) Hardware, 3) Computer Supplies 4) Furniture, 5) Electrical considerations, 6) Office Supplies, and 7) Office Equipment.

(iii) **The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (5 points)**

Recipients of the services of the Community Technology Centers' Network based at the Champaign Douglas Center and at the six partner network sites are virtually unlimited, covering the population of the Cities of Champaign and Urbana and surrounding communities. Collectively, the project partners currently serve a minimum of ____, 000 individuals in their community centers. It is estimated that the Community Technology Centers' Network project will serve a minimum of 7,000 participants per year. In its first year of operation, the federal cost per participant would be less than \$ _____. Federal costs are reduced in subsequent years of operation to less than \$ _____ per participant at the 1,000 level of use by the third year of operation.

Quality of project evaluation. (10 points)

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible. (5 points)

Frederick Douglas Community Center has a large array of excellent external program evaluators available to it at the K-12 level, Departments of Education, Urban Affairs, Mayor's Office, and individual firms. In fact, many of these groups will most likely want to evaluate the projects' outcomes on their own. At any rate, the Community Technology Center's Network proposal-writing team expressed that rather than pre-select an external evaluator, the Steering Committee in their advisory role will assist in the selection of an experienced external evaluator who will be retained by Metanoia Centers. This expert will assist in the design of the evaluation plan; documentation plan and dissemination plan as described within this proposal. These plans will be developed under the direction of the external evaluator and with the cooperation of the Steering Committee and Project staff. The evaluator will be expected to answer the questions, Are the data valid? Can they be supported by research? Are the data available on a monthly or quarterly basis? Are all stakeholders providing feedback? Is each center being evaluated evenly? What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in the project's environment? The external evaluator will be expected to provide services throughout the grant period such as assisting with mid term corrections, if needed.

At the beginning of the first funding cycle and before the first activity, the Project Director will convene the Steering Committee in order to discuss performance measures in reaching the objectives of this project. The two outcome objectives are to utilize information technology and infrastructures in order to (1) decrease the high school drop

out rates and (2) increase the rate of Center attendance for high school participants, clearly a community-wide problem. The evaluation will be both formative and summative, and uniformity of reporting is essential for developing comparative data. Thus, identical project reporting sheets will be created for every activity carried out in reaching both process and outcome measurable objectives. These standardized evaluation forms will be used by project staff and cooperating partners throughout the project period. Pre-project Center-attendance rates for each of the community center cohorts will be determined and compared to the Center attendance rates for participants after project activities have taken place. In addition, there will be a record of the number of training sessions, attendance at these sessions, completed admissions forms, financial aid forms, career counseling sessions and other services received by center participants. Follow-up on each cohort of participants will be conducted for five years to determine long-range effect.

It is the premise of this project that access to information and services via this technology will increase College-bound rates within the target area. The evaluation will also include monitoring the progress of objectives and activities against the timeline, written evaluations completed by the end users, and log of usage. On-line, interactive focus discussions regarding the project's successes and failures will be an on-going activity via the technology itself. Regular meetings of project partners with recorded minutes will produce additional evaluative feedback.

The Steering Committee needs to know whether its plans for the Community Technology Centers' Network are effective and what the project partners can do to

improve its effectiveness. Establishing procedures to provide this sort of information will provide a “self-assessment” plan and engage in “formative” or “process” evaluation.

The best course has been established to build strategies for data collection and opportunities for participant feedback into the operational plan for the program from the very beginning. This procedure will institute the following:

- Sign-in/sign-out procedures to provide a record of who uses the program services, how often, and for how long.
- Participant folders to contain journals of computer use, work-in-progress, data disks, and copies of completed projects
- Teacher/instructor logs to include plans for classes together with follow-up notes, anecdotes regarding specific occurrences or specific accomplishments of participants.
- Volunteer logs to describe tasks assigned and accomplished, difficulties encountered, suggestions for change.
- A comments box prominently located to enable participants to make suggestions, request, and even offer criticism.
- Regularly scheduled meetings that include groups of participants, volunteers, and staff to provide opportunities for direct feedback.
- Appointing a participant representative to the Steering Committee.

For smaller centers, a dedicated computer provides a good mechanism. The sign-in program can be tied to a database that can generate weekly or monthly reports. Of course, if the center is large, or if a large group arrives all at once, the computer sign-in can be time-consuming. If the arrivals are in a group and there is a group leader, the leader can enter the information for everyone.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

Documentation and Dissemination Dissemination of project information will occur throughout the target area via the interactive units and on the Home pages of the partners, Additionally, partners will disseminate at appropriate conferences and publications, particularly the American Association of Community College (AACC) Journal and International Council for Resource Development Dispatch Newsletter.

Following is a minimum plan for documentation, which will be reviewed; expanded and updated by the advisor committee, project director, and center staff after notification of funding.

**Program Process Evaluation Calendar
October 2003 to September 2003 (First Year)**

Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Process Evaluation Measure
Advertise the Program	Project Director _____ Staff	Advertisements on File
Arrange for Public Service Announcements on local TV and radio; flyers to Organizations; public notices in Newspapers	Project Director Marketing Dept.	Press releases on file
Program Staff Hired	Project Director	Positions in payroll
Program Staff Workshop on goals And objectives	Center Staff Project Director	Attendance at Workshop
Advisory committee meetings	Project Director	Minutes
Recruiting, interviewing External evaluator	Advisory Committee Project Director	Comprehensive Folders Agreement on file
Record keeping System procedures	Project Director External evaluator Advisory members	Comprehensive Record keeping System; procedures On file
Interview and train Center trainers, participants	Project Director Trainer	Logs Evaluations
Quarterly retention analysis	Project Director	Reports of file
Program revisions to Department Of Education upgrade, Vocational & Adult Programs (if necessary)	Project Director	Revision of file
Evaluation of program & staff	Project Director External evaluator	Evaluations on file In personnel office
Monthly reports	Center directors Trainers Project Director	Reports on file
Training sessions, individual and Group	Center staff	Log of contacts
Program Staff Meetings	Project Director	Minutes of Meeting

Monthly & Annual Reports	All Staff	Reports on file

BUDGET

To ensure that the budget is sound and reasonable, cost-effective and complete (and in line with state and federal policies and regulations), cost analyses have included competitive pricing, going-rates, and an audit of each purpose, activity and service to justify costs before entering them into the final budget. The Center purchases materials, equipment and services from state-approved vendors who offer the best prices, consistent with quality, delivery and service. Purchases made with federal funds are according to the Educational General Audit Regulations (EDGAR). Authority to order supplies and equipment is vested in department directors subject to review and approval by the Center's Director. In addition, personnel costs are consistent with approved salaries and benefit packages for comparable Center positions. Please see the Budget Narrative for specifics.

Steps taken to Ensure Equitable Access to, and participation in, this Federally Assisted Program for Program Beneficiaries with Special Needs: (GEPA, Section 427)

Frederick Douglas Community Center is fully committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. The Center is architecturally accessible to disabled students. Barrier free restroom, telephone and eating facilities, as well as accessible classrooms, library and computer labs are provided. Automatic doors and elevators are installed in appropriate areas. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for program participants needing specific assistance.

Metanoia Centers, Inc.

*1313 N. Clock Street***Champaign, IL 61826***www.metanoiacenters.org***(217) 355-6423*

The Community Technology Centers' Network partners are equally committed to serving all members of the community in an equitable manner.

In addition, all project literature will carry the following statement:

Access to and Participation in the Community technology Centers' Network are encouraged without regard to race, color, age national origin, gender or disability.