



ConnectHomeUSA Expansion Application Instructions

A. Background

This next phase of ConnectHomeUSA (CHUSA) was announced through a [Federal Register Notice](#) and is creating a new tiered structure – Tier 1 for communities that are new to the work of digital inclusion and Tier 2 for PHAs, tribes, and Multifamily properties that either are currently participating in the initiative or have in the past. With the accomplishment of prescribed metrics, Tier 1 communities will be able to graduate to Tier 2, and similarly, Tier 2 will be able to graduate to Tier 3.

B. Number of Communities Being Accepted

Tier 1: HUD is looking to accept 50-100 in Tier 1.

Tier 2: A maximum of 100 (this is based on the total number of communities that have participated in CHUSA).

Tier 3: No applications are being accepted at this time.

C. Instructions for Applying and Application Deadline

Applicants interested in either Tier 1 or Tier 2 must submit a **Letter of Intent** to CHUSAapplications@hud.gov. The Letter of Intent should address the items required for your tier which are described below. There is no maximum word count or page limit requirement set for the Letter of Intent, though we recommend keeping your letter between two to three pages. If your response requires more than this, all pages of your letter will be read and evaluated.

All applications must be submitted by April 12, 2024. Any application submitted after this deadline will not be accepted. Please reach out to connecthome@hud.gov with any questions.

D. Tier 1 – Letter of Intent Requirements:

To apply as a Tier 1 community, you must submit a **Letter of Intent** indicating that you will begin working to close the digital divide in your community. In order to demonstrate that you are prepared to participate in CHUSA, the Letter of Intent must provide information requested below and indicate how you will meet the following requirements (this list is found under “Application Requirements” in the Federal Register Notice):

1. Commit to assign a staff person(s) to lead the work if selected to join;
2. Indicate the developments, addresses, and number of units you will be targeting;
3. Commit to conducting a baseline survey by the end of the first year of participation to understand your target community’s needs for free/affordable internet service, free/affordable devices, and the training to use them;
4. Establish annual internet adoption, device, and training goals for each of the three years of participation (these can be revised after the results of the baseline survey come in);
 - a. For example: “In year 1 we plan to distribute 25 devices, in year 2 we plan to distribute 50 devices, and in year 3 we plan to distribute 100 devices.”
 - b. We encourage you to set goals that are achievable and realistic for your community.



5. A commitment to participate in CHUSA-sponsored training events such as webinars and summits;
6. A commitment to participate in CHUSA community of practice forums that may be established for this Tier; and
7. A commitment to submitting quarterly reports – (optional but needed to receive badges).

Finally, the letter must provide a primary point of contact and be signed by your Executive Director or other official authorized to make this commitment.

E. Tier 2 – Letter of Intent Requirements:

Tier 2 asks applicants to build upon past work as a CHUSA community and create new pathways of opportunity for residents. For this reason, Tier 2 requires active engagement by three entities: the housing provider, state or municipal leadership, and a quality-of-life partner. The three entities must commit to working together to close the digital divide and leverage connectivity gains to help residents make progress in other socio-economic areas.

HUD is asking existing CHUSA communities (or previous pilot communities) to formally opt into this expansion by submitting a Letter of Intent that addresses the elements described below.

Items to Address in Your Letter of Intent (found under “Application Requirements in FR Notice):

1. Identify key staff person(s) responsible for carrying out your CHUSA program;
2. Quantifies your connectivity, device, and training achievements *to date*. This will serve as a baseline against which to measure your future progress
3. Indicate the developments, addresses, and number of units you will be targeting for this phase of your participation;
4. Commit to administering another baseline survey in the first six months of your participation to inform your ongoing connectivity, device, training, and other goals;
5. Include a description of your vision and goals for this phase of your participation (including for connectivity, devices, and training) and how this work will be supported by your organization's leadership. (Note: goals may be updated after results are obtained from the baseline survey);
6. Identify and include the contact information for a state, municipal, or tribal partner agency; and
7. Identify and include the contact information for a quality-of-life partner.

Finally, the letter must provide a primary point of contact and be signed by your Executive Director or other official authorized to make this commitment.

F. Selection Criteria

Tier 1: HUD is looking for comprehensive and detailed responses to the criteria outlined above. Letters of Intent should clearly demonstrate a strong interest in narrowing the digital divide in the target communities.

Tier 2: HUD is looking for comprehensive and detailed responses to the criteria outlined above for this tier. Letters of Intent should clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to narrowing the digital divide in your target communities and demonstrate strong partnerships with state, local or Tribal government and a quality-of-life partner. Letters of Intent should clearly describe how the applicant's organization



will support the work and how this work can complement the organization's other self-sufficiency efforts or programs.

G. Required Levels of Engagement:

Selected communities should be prepared to engage in the following ways:

Tier 1: Assign a staff member(s) to lead the work. This means the staff person will be given the time to learn about digital inclusion, share findings with key staff, and develop an initial CHUSA Action Plan.

Tier 2: Selected communities will be asked to host a local convening; submit an Action Plan; enter into a formal agreement with a quality-of-life partner; establish annual internet adoption, device and training goals for each of the three years of participation; track progress on a quarterly basis; participate in HUD-sponsored technical assistance and community of practice forums.

H. HUD Recognition:

Communities will be awarded a variety of digital badges to acknowledge their many accomplishments. If communities wish to advance to the next tier, achievement of certain milestones will be required. Badges will be awarded for each milestone achieved. Once awarded, CHUSA communities can post the badges can be posted to their websites, used for press announcements, and/or for fundraising.

I. More Information

For more information, please view the Federal Notice of Expansion [at this link](#) or contact connecthome@hud.gov with any questions.