
Section 3. Form a Collaborative Planning Team

3.1. Overview

Forming a collaborative planning team is the first step of developing a NET Guard Program. The idea to develop a NET Guard Program in a community typically begins with one or two “champions” – individuals who see a need and advocate starting a program. A champion will bring together a core of individuals who can provide skills, expertise, contacts, and connections that will aid in developing and refining the program. These individuals are the initial “collaborative planning team.”

Members of the collaborative planning team may:

- Assist in developing the concept into a functional program
- Build support among government and nongovernment organizations, including for-profit and not-for profit businesses
- Provide valuable insight from professional experiences in program development, emergency management, volunteer management, new technologies and social media, or ITC operations

The collaborative planning team should coordinate from the start with local emergency management and the local government’s IT department. Support from these groups is important to program development.



3.2. Identify Individuals to Form the Collaborative Planning Team

The responsibility of the champion is to attract individuals to help with the development the NET Guard Program. These individuals are subject matter experts who can be program leaders, advisors, recruiters, and activists during the implementation process of the NET Guard Program.

Examples of individuals to consider for a NET Guard collaborative planning team include:

- A representative from the local government emergency management agency
- A representative from the local government ITC

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- A local IT professional who understands ITC needs during a disaster, knows the local IT private sector, and is part of the local ITC professional community
 - A representative from the local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) or Volunteer Center
 - A manager or champion from a well established voluntary program such as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) or Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)
 - A individual who has experience and technical skills related to social media or virtual volunteerism
 - An active civic volunteer leader who knows the needs of the community well

The tool “Organizing a NET Guard Collaborative Planning Team” listed at the end of this section lists types of individuals and organizations for your consideration in building the collaborative planning team. The recommendation for the size of the core of the collaborative planning team is five to ten individuals to form a manageable working group with a variety of expertise.

The basis of the NET Guard Program concept of operations is on its integration with local emergency plans. Volunteers provide services that meet local needs for ITC support during an emergency. Therefore, it is essential to include local government emergency managers in the collaborative planning team.

Although individuals may vary their level of involvement as the NET Guard development process proceeds, it is important to maintain continuity of leadership throughout the process.

3.3.Outline the Initial Local Program Concept

A key factor in organizing a NET Guard Program is understanding the community and how the program can best support the community by addressing local needs. Initial considerations for the collaborative planning team to adapt and refine include:

- Examine the community’s disaster-related technology and communication needs requiring assistance
- Identify needs that could be provided by trained volunteers
- Target both government and non-governmental organizations with an interest in receiving the kinds of support that NET Guard teams provide
- Identify community-wide program partners from both government and non-government.
- Refine the concept based upon needs, resources, and partners

The NET Guard Program will be refined throughout the development process; however, it is important to outline a general concept and direction for the program

After identifying the collaborative planning team and outlining a general concept for the NET Guard Program, the collaborative planning team should meet and develop a general plan to guide the program development. Topics for discussion include:

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- What partners should be included?
 - Who are the proposed recipients of services, and who are the providers?
 - How should the NET Guard Program engage the community and promote the program to others?
 - Who should be the lead or sponsoring organization, particularly for the start-up of the NET Guard Program?
 - What are some of the functions that the NET Guard Program will perform?

3.4.Engage the Community

After creating a general plan to outline the NET Guard Program, the collaborative planning team should begin to engage the community by inviting potential partners to meet and discuss the NET Guard concept. An introductory NET Guard presentation and sample meeting agenda are included in the Toolkit. During this meeting:

- Discuss local needs that NET Guard can support
- Identify stakeholders, interested private sector partners, and potential resources
- Identify challenges to be addressed
- Reach a consensus on the program's value within the community
- Establish next steps and schedule a follow-up meeting

3.5.Develop and Distribute a Program Development Timeline

Based on the discussion with partners and community leaders, the collaborative planning team should develop and distribute a revised outline of the NET Guard Program and a development timeline. This document should state in broad terms the major tasks and expected timeframe. Creating and distributing this document is an important piece of the process as it states the intent to develop the NET Guard Program and the steps involved. It also keeps your development on schedule and explains the design of the program and the implementation process.

3.6.Tools to Support Forming a Collaborative Team

Tool Kit items relating to this section of the NET Guard Guide are listed below.

Title or Description	File Name	Public/ Private
** NET Guard Tool Kit: Organizing a NET Guard collaborative planning team (may need to be updated) **	Organizing a NET Guard collaborative planning team.docx	Either
Fact Sheet about the FEMA Regional Emergency Communications Coordination Working Groups	FEMA RECCWG Fact Sheet.pdf	Either
Program Partnerships established by Hamilton County *Example*	Hamilton County - Program Establishment and Partnerships.doc	Either
NET Guard Tool Kit: Sample collaborative planning team Meeting Agenda	Sample Planning Team Meeting Agenda.docx	Either
NET Guard Tool Kit: Sample NET Guard Informational Meeting Invitation	Sample Planning Team Meeting Invitation.docx	Either