



What is a Mutual Aid Network?

People around the world have been experimenting with time banking, cooperative saving and investment, complementary currencies, cooperative ownership, and other forms of mutual credit. Each fills a different, complementary role in economic and community life. Mutual Aid Networks have discovered ways to connect them in a comprehensive system that can lead to a much-needed overhaul in how our economy works. Mutual Aid Networks are redesigning work by redesigning our own work lives and the work lives of the people in our networks. Mutual Aid Networks are creating avenues to commission work from each other, compensated in a variety of ways to meet real needs and build real communities.

The mission of a Mutual Aid Network is:

“To create means for individuals to discover and succeed in work they want to do, with the support of their community.”

MUTUAL AID NETWORK CORE PRINCIPLES

- 1 Redesigning Work. Mutual Aid Networks recognize that every individual possesses passions and skills which he or she can contribute to their communities and the larger Mutual Aid Network, and will work to find the highest uses to which those qualities and abilities can be applied.
- 2 Reciprocity. Helping works better as a two-way street. “How can I help you?” becomes “How can we help each other to build the world in which we both live?”
- 3 Respect. Every human being matters. Respect is a foundation for freedom of speech and freedom of religion, and supplies the heart and soul of democracy.
- 4 Voluntary and Open Membership. Mutual Aid Networks are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, sexual, racial, political or religious discrimination.
- 5 Democratic Member Control. Mutual Aid Networks are democratic organizations with transparent governance structures controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Persons serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership.
- 6 Member Economic Participation. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their Mutual Aid Networks. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the

Mutual Aid Network. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their Mutual Aid Network co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their contributions within their co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

7 Autonomy and Independence. Mutual Aid Networks are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

8 Education, Training, and Information. Mutual Aid Networks provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and workers so they can contribute effectively to the development of their MAN. The main Mutual Aid Network will inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

9 Mutual Aid within Mutual Aid Networks. Mutual Aid Networks serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by partnering with other Mutual Aid Networks and organizations that have aligning principles.

10 Tracking and Performance Measures. In order to track their progress in meeting the goals of the Mutual Aid Network Core Principles, Mutual Aid Networks will strive to measure and map their socioeconomic resources and needs, internalizing their “external” costs and benefits to the greatest extent possible.

11 Tools and Processes. Mutual Aid Networks will work to utilize expanded definitions and metrics of capital, wealth, debt, growth, and profit to enable the full range of non-monetary elements of their economies to be understood and characterized using the best available tools, technologies, and techniques.

12 Building Community Sustainability. Mutual Aid Networks will help build local, bioregional, and global economic systems based on material steady-state operating principles that recognize biophysical limits to growth, with the goal of achieving long-term sustainability – not just seven, but seventy generations into the future.

Adopted from: <http://www.mutualaidnetwork.org/about-man/man-core-principles/>

What is the Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley?

The Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley will utilize the mission and core values of Time Banking in order to develop and sustain a network of reciprocity, social support, and increased community engagement.

The Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley seeks to actively uphold the fundamental principles of Time Banking by affirming that each individual has a valuable contribution to bestow upon his or her neighborhood, and that each individual's contributions are equally necessary to the overall functioning of the community as a whole. One of the primary objectives of the Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley is to address the inequalities that have prevailed throughout health care in order to improve the quality of care received by various underserved populations within our community.

The Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley will oversee the formation of Neighbor-to-Neighbor Care Teams in an effort to provide social support to individuals who have been diagnosed with multiple chronic illnesses and have remained isolated from their community. The Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley Neighbor-to-Neighbor Care Teams will consist of Time Bank members who can routinely provide wellness phone calls, home visits, hospital visits, education, transportation, companionship, and additional services that promote wellness but are not typically provided in conjunction with health care.

Furthermore, the Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley seeks to bolster respect and resilience within the Lehigh Valley by engaging populations who are currently re-entering the community as the result of former incarceration or discharge from a rehabilitation center. The Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley will utilize Time Banking with re-entering community members in order to reinforce the significance of their time and talents, as well as to empower them to develop leadership and advocacy skills.

Neighborhood Health Centers of the Lehigh Valley (NHCLV) is committed to providing in-kind and administrative support, and has continued to explore future cooperative efforts with the newly developed Lehigh Valley Impact Hub. In addition, NHCLV has a long-standing collaboration with Community Exchange Time Bank of Lehigh Valley Health Network, the Parish Nursing Coalition of the Lehigh Valley, and Pennsylvanians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild (POWER).

Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley Goals:

- Continue to encourage Time Banking amongst individuals who have been neglected by traditional health care models
- Recruit an increased number of members including credible messengers who can function as allies for the aforementioned individuals
- Introduce Time Banking and enroll various vulnerable populations (i.e. formerly incarcerated, juveniles aging out of the foster care system, individuals recovering from addiction, homeless populations, and newly settled refugee communities)

If you or your organization are interested in contributing to your community by partnering with the Mutual Aid Network of the Lehigh Valley, please contact Hasshan Batts at hbatts@nhclv.com or Janelle Zelko at jzelko@nhclv.com