



# Build a Neighborhood Skills Database

A Guide for Relocalizing our Communities

# The Relocalization Network

## Neighborhood Skills Database • synopsis and roles

### Synopsis

Compile a database of who has what practical skills in your neighborhood. You may be surprised at the talents your neighbors have, from general skills like carpentry and gardening to very specific skills like diesel engine repair and child psychology. A skills database is a great way to start relocalizing your community immediately, because it helps everyone access the resources that are right in their own neighborhood. It can help people buy, barter or donate services within the neighborhood, as well as be a resource for education, community projects, and establishing a local currency.

### Roles

Interviewers	Collect the information from neighbors
Data compilers	Compile the information into a useable format, like a categorized list or an electronic database
Database steward	Make the data available to neighbors in printed or online format, and coordinate updating of the data as needed

### Time Frame

1 to 2 months

### Tools

Telephone, computer, word processing or database software

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## Neighborhood Skills Database • project outline

### Project Outline

Develop a plan to inventory the skills of as many people as possible in your neighborhood. Key points you will need to establish first:

- What are the boundaries of the neighborhood or area you will inventory?
- In what manner will you make the information available to your neighborhood? Your neighbors will want to know if you are publishing information online or just creating a printed directory for the neighborhood. Be sure to ask permission as needed.
- What kinds of information do you want to include, and how will you categorize it?
- Are there any groups you can partner with to research, develop and promote the database? (For example, community organizations, neighborhood associations, local newsletters, etc.)

There are many ways you can collect skills information, such as holding neighborhood potlucks, posting flyers at local gathering places, and simply going door-to-door. When you collect information from your neighbors, be sure to get each person's full contact details and ask their permission to be contacted for advice or instruction concerning their area of skill. One fun way to collect information at a neighborhood gathering is to have a very large-scale map of your neighborhood displayed on which people can write their skills occupation right in the spot where they live.

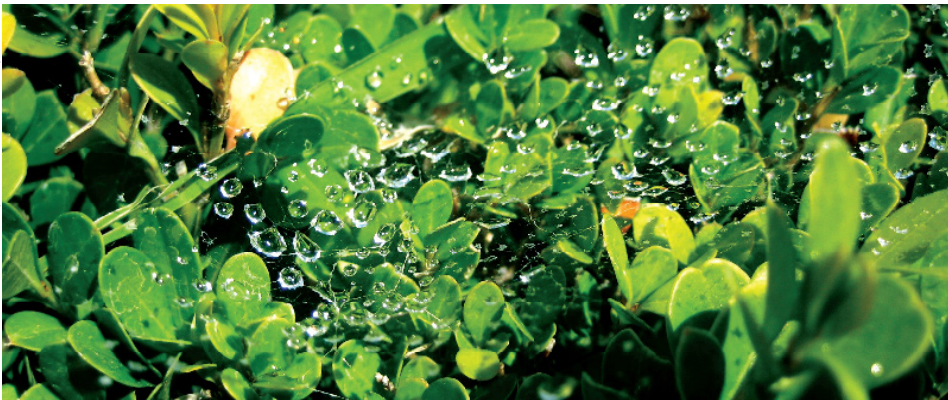
You may want to track down specific skills that would be particularly useful for Relocalization efforts. For example:

- Food production skills, like organic gardening, tree pruning, animal husbandry, and saving seed.
- Traditional manufacturing skills, like metalworking, woodworking, pottery, weaving, knitting, and sewing.
- Organizational and communication skills, like meeting facilitation, project management, community organizing, lobbying, and media relations.

Finally, after you've collected all the information you need and have compiled it into a useful format for people to use, promote the resource regularly to your neighbors, and find ways to update it and to keep track of how people make use of it.



Photo Credit: David Sund (front cover / back cover)



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## Get Involved

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