What Is TimeBanking?

TimeBanking is a way of giving and receiving to build strong support networks. One hour helping another earns one TimeBank Hour (also called time credits, Time Dollars, or service credits.) A TimeBank is formed whenever individuals or organizations agree to earn and spend TimeBank Hours to meet the needs of friends, neighbors, and the larger community.

TimeBanks can range from small (15 to 20 members) to large (2,000 or more). They can connect with other TimeBanks. Each TimeBank is unique – a reflection of its members, who they are, the dreams they have for their community, and what they choose to offer and receive.

TimeBank Key Tasks

To serve their members, TimeBanks:

- Log the Time Credits earned and spent by members.
- Establish the Time Bank’s policies.
- Spread the word and give orientations to new members.
- Organize events and meetings for members.
- Work with members to pursue new possibilities.
- Work with members and sponsoring partners to make sure the Time Bank has the funds and resources it needs to thrive over time.

TimeBanks thrive best when these roles and tasks are viewed as a team effort from the start.

How They Work

Think of a babysitting pool where parents swap childcare services. TimeBanking expands that idea to create networks/circles of giving & receiving.

Members give their skills, talents, or resources, then spend the TimeBank hours earned to receive help, lessons, companionship, trips etc. in turn. (The possibilities are limited only by imagination!)

Hours earned may also be donated for all kinds of good-cause projects in community.

One Approach Many Goals

TimeBanking provides a single, principled tool for building community and meeting social goals. It enables associations, organizations, businesses and agencies to work towards their vision and mission in creative ways that respect what all can give. It helps individuals to fulfill their dreams. It builds community capacity and strength over time.

What TimeBanks Need

All TimeBanks need a data bank that includes:

- Members’ contact information
- What members will give and receive.
- An effective way to share the information
- A way to show or log the TimeBank Hours that members earn and spend.

Some TimeBanks log this information by hand, or use paper TimeBank Hours as currency. Most use software to keep track, like Community Weaver software, which is available from TimeBanks USA at Timebanks.org

Targeted TimeBanking

Targeted TimeBanking rewards contributions for group and community projects in all areas of building community. It aims to address human service needs; including education, medical care, elder care, and juvenile justice.

Who Begins TimeBanks

Anyone who seeks to nurture community and its members. That includes individuals, community and church groups, associations, and agencies.

How Much Will It Cost?

The cost of a TimeBank varies, depending on type, size, mission, and the level of staffing. A sponsored, program-oriented TimeBank designed to support an organizational mission will typically run from $50k - $85k. Expanded mission and staffing can take the costs higher still. A small member-organized TimeBank may cost just a few hundred dollars per year.
8 Steps To Create Your TimeBank

1. First Thoughts:
   - What do you want to achieve with your Time Bank?
   - Who do you see joining?
   - Who will help and support?

2. Learn About Time Banking
   - Go to TimeBanks.org
   - Contact TimeBanks through the TBUSA directory online.
   - Consult TBUSA how-to materials for deeper info about what it takes.
   - Brainstorm with your friends and supporters.
   - Join TimeBank conversations on-line.
   - Be ready to take some time with this step!!!!

3. Get Ready To Organize
   - Form your advisory group.
   - Get buy-in from those who will help your TimeBanks succeed.
   - Determine who will take on needed roles
   - Create an action plan, including outreach for TB members
   - Plan out costs and income sources (however small)

4. Set Up A Base
   - Find an office (best of all, where people can gather), a computer, and a telephone for your Time Bank.
   - Time Bank coordinator/s informed & ready to go.

5. Start Your Outreach Work
   - Create a brochure for new members and do outreach.
   - Prepare a members' handbook and orientation materials.
   - Send out invitations to your first new members' orientation

6. Hold your first meeting
   - Hold an orientation for new members.
   - Sign up your first new members.

7. Set Up/Celebrate 1st Exchanges
   - Help members set up their exchanges.
   - Seek out opportunities for targeted group activities.
   - Celebrate Success!

8. Keep Going and Growing
   - Turn to your members for ongoing ideas, support and energy.
   - Remember: Small+Small=Big!

Two TimeBanking Project Examples

1. Seniors receiving food from a food bank earn TimeBank Hours when they prepare after-school sandwiches for children at a local school. The children purchase the sandwiches with TimeBank Hours they have earned as tutors and tutees in the school's after-school tutoring program. It's a "win-win" for all!

2. Young people earn TimeBank Hours by providing entertainment for a community celebration.

5 Core Values of TimeBanking

- Assets: We are all assets; we all have something to give.
- Redefining Work: Building community is real work that TimeBanking recognizes & reward.
- Reciprocity: Commit to give and receive.
- Community: People helping each other reweave communities of strength and trust.
- Respect: Our common humanity calls for each individual to be deserving of respect.