

New Beginnings Policies

Computer Training:

Anyone who is interested in taking part in New Beginnings' Computer Trainings must first attend an orientation. They may not start their training until they have attended the orientation.

Reason for Policy:

It is important that all people making use of the training have an understanding of our policies and how our trainings work. The orientations help us make sure that people can make a smooth transition into the training, and that people's expectations are the same.

Fees:

New Beginnings has two kind of memberships:

- Scheduled
- Random

Scheduled Members:

Scheduled members pay a flat fee for each 8-Week Cycle. With that fee they are able to have a set schedule of up to 2 days a week, and at no extra charge they can make additional appointments day-by-day if space is available.

The fee for being a scheduled member is \$30.00 for an individual. If two or more members of a household want to join, it is \$30.00 for the first member and an additional \$15.00 for each additional member. New Beginnings would like the fees to be paid up front, but are willing to work out a payment plan. (Scheduled Members cannot have a set schedule in the next 8-week cycle until they have paid the last sessions fee in full). Fees are not refundable; unless the reason for leaving is that the person feels we did not meet the expectations laid out below.

Random Members:

Random members are members who do not want, or cannot have a set schedule, but still want to make use of our services. They either call to make appointments as they need them, or they walk-in and make use of computers, as they are open. The first half-hour of a session is free, after that it is \$3.00 regardless of how long an individual stays. The individual should pay ahead of time, and will be reimbursed if they stay less than a ½ hour. After an individual pays \$30 in an 8 week cycle, they do not have to pay for any remaining sessions that they use in that 8 week cycle.

Returning Scheduled Members:

All new members must go through an orientation and will begin at the beginning of the 8-Week Cycle, so they will pay the full fee, but if a past member returns in after an 8-Week Cycle has begun and there is space for them to make a schedule, they will pay a pro-rated fee for the number of weeks that are left. For example if a participant returns 2 weeks into the cycle, they will pay \$22.50 for the remainder of the cycle.

Reason For Policy:

New Beginnings needs to generate some revenues to offset the cost of operating the program. We also want to make the program accessible to anyone. As a result we have set a fee of \$30.00 per session so that it is affordable to most people, yet helps us offset some of our expenses. Please note that this fee covers only about 15% of the actual cost of running the program, but it is an important 15%, and it also helps attract outside funding, since it demonstrates that we do have some source of income, and that the

participants regardless of income value this service. If you have any questions or concerns about the fee structure, please contact the Director.

Reasonable Expectations:

New Beginnings computer program is designed to be self-guided and self paced. Participants should expect the following from the monitor on duty and the program as a whole:

1. Friendly and courteous environment
2. Access to and assistance with self-paced tutorials
3. Competently assist you with the following skills:
 - a. Basic Computer Skills
 - b. Typing
 - c. Introduction to the Internet
 - d. Microsoft Word
 - e. Microsoft Excel
 - f. Microsoft PowerPoint
4. A monitor who helps facilitate your learning process by providing a total of 10 – 15 minutes of assistance throughout your session (when required)
5. Access to Tutoring Session to supplement your training (Max of 1-2 per month)
6. Access to Computer Seminars
7. Advice on training
8. Openness to helping identify resources for non-computer related goals
9. Genuine interest in your overall well being
10. Referrals to other resources whenever possible

If at anytime you do not feel that we are meeting the expectations, please contact the Director so these issues can be addressed. You can either contact the director by calling 978-970-5692, or emailing Director@nbweb.org.

Just as it is important that we meet the expectations above, it is equally important that you understand what is beyond reasonable expectations, given the constraints of our program.

1. It is not realistic to expect to get more than 10 – 15 minutes of assistance per day. If you are confused about something you need to sign up for a tutoring session. Because we serve so many people and so many different schedules, our computer program is meant to be self-guided and self paced. The monitor's role is to facilitate this process, not tutor. Asking the monitor to spend unrealistic amounts of time with you, takes away from others in the program.
2. It is unrealistic to expect to sign up for more than 1 or 2 Tutoring sessions a month. The tutoring sessions are meant to supplement the self-paced training, they are not meant to replace it. We do not have a large enough staff to do this. Taking up more than 1 or 2 tutoring slots a month, is taking away from other in the program that need help.
3. It is unrealistic to expect us to give you assistance in programs that we do not include as part of our training. Although we might provide you with tutorials that you can explore on your own, and with slight assistance from the monitor, it is unrealistic to expect quality assistance, and unfair to expect New Beginnings staff to spend large amounts of time to help you figure things out. New Beginnings hopes to eventually expand what we offer with regards to computer training, but until we do it is important that we focus out time and energy in creating the best possible trainings that we do currently offer.

Reason for Policy:

It is important that we are held accountable to what we claim to be offering. It is equally important that you have realistic expectations of what we can offer. If you do not have realistic expectations, both you and the staff will be very frustrated.

Scheduling Time:

People may not schedule more than 2 hours per day of computer time, and may not have a set schedule of more than 2 days a week.

If space is available, people are welcome to stay past their scheduled time, until someone else needs the computer. They may also call up on the days they are not scheduled and request a 1 – 2 hour time slot. We will accommodate you if space is available.

Reason for Policy:

New Beginnings has limited space, and is trying to share its services with as many people as possible, while still giving its participants enough time to move forward on their computer related goals.

Walk-Ins

People may drop by without an appointment, and make use our computers, so long as they have enough knowledge of what they need to do that they do not take more than 5 – 10 minutes of the Monitors time to accomplish what they need. It is important to note that if you are a walk-in, your slot is not guaranteed, and in the event of a full room of scheduled people, you will be asked to leave. Priority goes to people who have made a scheduled appointment. To prevent this from happening, you may ask the monitor on duty when you come in if you may immediately reserve set slot of time. If the monitor see that both the schedule and the room show that there is space, they will reserve you that set time, at which point the Walk-in policy no longer applies to you. Please note you may not reserve more that 2 hours.

Also note that you are welcome to stay past your scheduled times if space is available, but in the event of a full room of scheduled people, you will be asked to leave. Priority goes to people who have made scheduled appointments for the time slot.

Note: If you are not a member, the first half-hour is free, but there is a \$3.00 fee for the remainder of the session. (If you have paid \$30.00 in fees this session, then the fee is waved).

Reason for Policy:

New Beginnings computer room is high demand. The only way to manage this so that people have enough time to access the computer to meet their needs is through scheduling. We recognize that their will be down times, as well as times when people are absent, so in order make the best use of these computers, we allow for walk-ins.

Over-Flow Policy

New Beginnings has 2 computer rooms. The main computer room has 11 computers available to the public; the second computer room is for seminars and staff. When possible, we over book the main computer room by 3 computers to allow for the reality that more often than not some people will miss their appointments. This allows us to use the main room to its capacity. Occasionally everyone who scheduled will show up, which makes it necessary for us to open up the training room to the public. It is only during these times that we will open the room to the public. We do this because we have made prior commitments to these people. If the main room is full, but has some walk-in participants, and another person arrives for their scheduled appointment, we will ask the people who are not scheduled for that time slot to leave in the following order:

1. Children
2. People who have been using the computer for over 2 hours (even if some of that time was from a scheduled appointment)
3. People who are using the computer for chat or games
4. People who are not doing work (Work is defined here as: Training, School Work, Job Search, or work related to Goals, Seminars or One on Ones)
5. People who have been using the computer the longest

(Note: This applies to only people who are not scheduled for this time.)

If you are not scheduled, and you are asked to leave to make room for a scheduled person, please be courteous and quick about your departure in order to ensure that the Scheduled participant gets to make use of the time they have scheduled. (You may wait outside the room to see if there is another opening in the near future.)

Reason For Policy:

The reason we only will use the Training room for overflow of scheduled participants is because we already have made a commitment to these people. New Beginnings currently has very limited space, and when the staff is not monitoring, they need to use the other computer room to work on projects, prepare for seminars, and meet. When the staff is not using the room, we have found that one monitor trying to serve two rooms is too much. The result is everyone's experience suffers.

Removal Policy:

Participants who miss two weeks of appointments without calling will called, and given one week to either begin their schedule, or request a new schedule. If they do neither, they will be removed from the schedule. They may return to the program anytime they would like, but they will have to set up a new schedule. They also can come in for random appointments at no charge since they have already paid the \$30.00 membership fee for the Cycle.

Participants who have an attendance rate of less than 50% for a Cycle (with the exception of a vacation or medical leave that they inform us of before the fact) will be notified that in order to keep their schedule in the long-run will have to improve their attendance rate for the next cycle. If they have 2 sessions of below 50% attendance, they will be removed from the schedule, and invited to become pay as you go random members.

Participants that have not paid their Cycle fees in full by the end of the session, will have their schedule removed. They will be informed, and invited to make a payment in full and set up a new schedule for the next Cycle. If they are unable to do so they will be invited to become pay as you go random participants. They will not be able to be scheduled participants until they have paid the balance on their unpaid cycle.

Reason for Policy:

To be successful with the computer training, people must come consistently, and although we realize this at times can be difficult to do, people who do not do so are taking slots away from those who are able to make the commitment. We will have a number of people who are going to make use of the program on a random basis, if you are not coming, you are taking this slot from them. Also some people have had to make difficult sacrifices to make their schedule, if people are not using their times that would work better for these people, we want to make them available. Although you are paying a \$30.00 fee to make use have a schedule, keep in mind that it is only paying 15% of the costs of running this program. Think of the fee as guaranteeing your first 2 weeks of a cycle, and that if you make your appointments, you are receiving the rest for free, but if you don't you are forfeiting that schedule.

Please note, we understand that people sometimes go through tough times both personally and financially, so we are not making any judgments about you, rather we are trying to run a program that allows those that can of it can do so to their fullest. If you are having problems, let us know, and we will do our best to work things out. We want you to be able to make use of our services. That is why at the very least, you can always make be a Random Pay As You Go member.

Vacations & Extended Leaves:

If you need to be excused for more than two consecutive weeks for what ever reason, you will need to have your schedule removed, and set up another when you return.

Reason for Policy:

Since we understand people go on vacation, have friends in town or have to deal with medical or family emergencies, we allow people to have up to two consecutive weeks excused with no effect to their schedule. Unfortunately since New Beginnings computer slots are in such high demand, we cannot hold the slots open for any longer periods. Please note that not only are you welcome to comeback after a leave, you are strongly encouraged.

Children

New Beginnings is an adult program. This means you need to be over 18 to use our program. You will notice that on the weekends and in the late afternoons and early evenings there are some children who use our computers. These are children who live in the apartment complex, and understand that they only can have access if the room is not crowded. If you find them to be disruptive, please let the monitor know. If you have any questions with regards to the policies as they specific relate to these children, you can refer to the Children's Policy that is posted by the door.

If you have a child that is interested in learning more on the computer, please let us know, and we can try and refer you to other programs in the area that are geared towards children.

Reason For Policy:

New Beginnings mission is to serve adults. We allow the children of the complex access if they have parental permission, because we recognize that there are so few safe places for kids to go, and we see it as a good use of our facility during down times, but if they are disruptive or distracting, you should inform the monitor so we can address the situation. They should not be a distraction to you.

We currently are looking into teaming up with RRC to offer an after school program while, so that the children in the area can have access to a more structured safe place after school.

Internet Use:

Our computers contain no filters, thus a person could access any kind of material that is on the Internet. The computers at New Beginnings are not to be used to access inappropriate material. If you are found to

be doing so, you will not be allowed access to New Beginnings for 4 months. If you are found doing so a second time, you will not be allowed access to New Beginnings for 1 Year. A third time will result in your being banned.

(Note: If you are concerned that something you are going to look at might be deemed inappropriate, please contact a monitor, and they will clarify the definition for you.)

(Please note that we have had very few problems with this, but we would like to keep it this way.)

Reason for Policy:

We recognize that adults have the right to access any kind of material they deem fit, and we are strong proponents of free speech, but we also are trying to create an environment where people feel comfortable. New Beginnings is a public space, so often what you see, can also be seen by the rest of the room. Beyond this, minors have access to our computers, and the browsers we use keep a history of places people have been, this can result in minors being exposed to things that not only are in appropriate, but also are illegal given their age.

Printing Policy:

People should not print more than 15 pages per session, unless they make a special request for a project that they are working on. In a case where they have been given special permission to print more than 15 pages, they should break up their printing into 10 page sections, and wait at least 3 minutes between printings.

Our printer is set to print double sided and in black and white, if you need to print something in color or single sided, please inform a staff member and they can change the setting so that it will print appropriately for the project on which you are working.

Reason For Policy:

There are two reasons for this policy. The first and foremost is to not tie up the printer for staff and other participants. The second is for cost reasons. Any print out with significant amounts of color costs us about \$0.10 a page. This adds up over time.

Food & Drink

New Beginnings allows people to bring in drinks to the computer room. We ask that you be careful.

New Beginnings does not allow people to eat food in the computer room (with the exception of the Monitor). If you bring food that you would like to eat while here, please eat it in the kitchen.

Reason for Policy:

New Beginnings wants to create a comfortable environment for people, and from our experience people can bring in drinks without damaging the computers, or causing a mess. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for food. The smell of the food is often distracting to others, and sticky and greasy fingers mess up the computer and the area surrounding it. Monitors are exempted from this policy; often their monitoring time is the only time they can eat, or they are the only staff person working.

Parking Policy

All participants at New Beginnings must park their cars in Visitor Parking, which is located behind the strip of stores. Please note this policy applies to everyone, and is in effect for all hours which we are open. If you have a handicapped parking plate or sticker, you may park in the Visitor Handicapped space located at the back of the community center. If Visitor Parking is full, park your car in a spot near the center, and inform a staff member of the situation.

Reason for Policy:

New Beginnings is fortunate enough to be provided free space by Westminster Village. Currently there are times when parking is limited for the residents of the apartment complex. We have agreed to work with the management office to reduce this problem, by having our participants park in visitor parking.

Cell Phones

If you bring your cell phone to New Beginnings, please turn the ringer to vibrate if possible. If you need to talk on your cell phone, please leave room and talk in the foyer or kitchen area.

Reason for Policy:

New Beginnings understands the importance of cell phones in this day and age, but since New Beginnings is a learning environment, phones ringing and people talking on the phone can be distracting to the other participants in the room.

Reporting Issues or Problems

If at any time you have a problem or issue with our service or with a staff member, please bring this to the attention of the Director of New Beginnings. You may either call, talk directly or email the Director. The Director will work to clarify policies and miscommunications or address any problems.

To contact the Director either:

Send an email to Director@Nbweb.org or call 978-970-5692 and ask to speak to the Director.

Reason for Policy:

New Beginnings wants to create the best environment possible for both its participants and staff. The Director's role is to ensure that this is happening. Problems cannot be solved, nor issues resolved unless the Director is made aware of them.

(Please note: If you are having a problem with a Staff Member or a volunteer, please do not feel like you are getting them in trouble by bringing this issue to the Director. Rather you are making the Director aware of the issue so that he can address it, and help the staff member or volunteer improve their service. Since better service is goal of everyone involved at New Beginnings, you are merely helping us all with this process.)

Snow Days

If the weather seems bad, please call **978-970-5692**. If New Beginnings is closed there will be a message saying so by 8:00 AM in the morning. If the weather gets bad in the middle of the day, please call the same number to find out if we are still open.

If we are open and you do not feel comfortable driving, just call and ask to be excused. We do not want you to go out in conditions that you feel are unsafe.