On Aging

American Society on Aging

Digital Inclusion and Older Adults: A Survey of Research, Best Practices, and Opportunities for Technology Engagement

13 APRIL 2022

CTN community TECH NETWORK

OATS FROM AARP | OLDER ADULTS TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

front porch | CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND WELLBEING

Who are we?

Davis Park, Vice President, Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing

Kami Griffith, Executive Director, Community Tech Network

Tom Kamber, Executive Director, OATS/Senior Planet from AARP

…and who are you?

Digital Inclusion and Older Adults: A Survey of Research, Best Practices, and Opportunities for Technology Engagement

AGENDA

- The Digital Divide Among Older Adults: Pre-COVID vs Today
- Digital Inclusion Opportunities in Underserved Communities
- Case Studies of Successful (and failed) Digital Inclusion Programs for Older Adults

The Digital Divide Among Older Adults: Pre-COVID vs Today

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Changes in loneliness and social contacts, 2018 to 2020

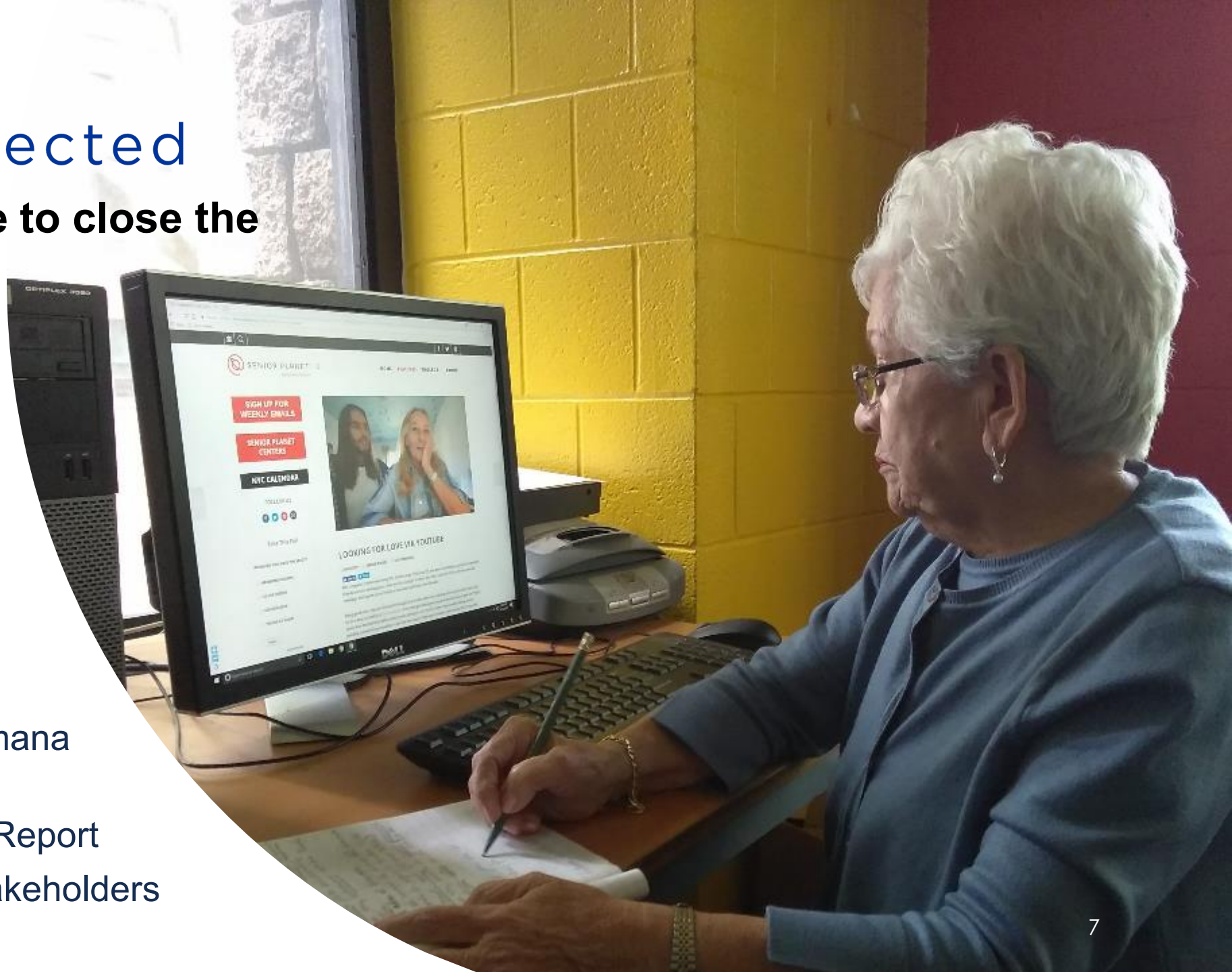
AMONG ADULTS AGE 50-80

October 2018		March–June 2020
34%	felt a lack of companionship	41%
27%	felt isolated from others	56%
28%	had infrequent social contact	46%

University of Michigan Survey June 2020 Source: University of Michigan

AGINGconnected

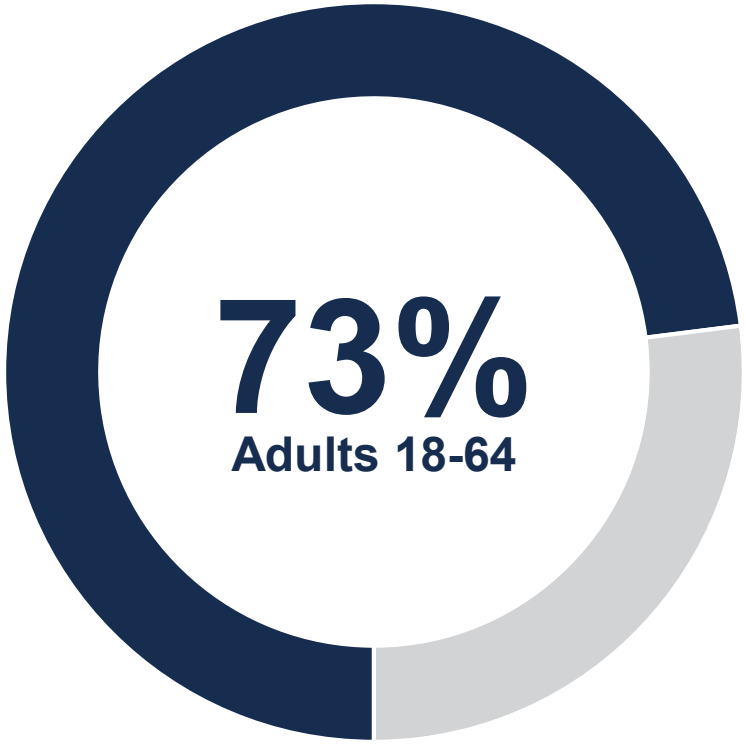
A national initiative to close the connectivity gap

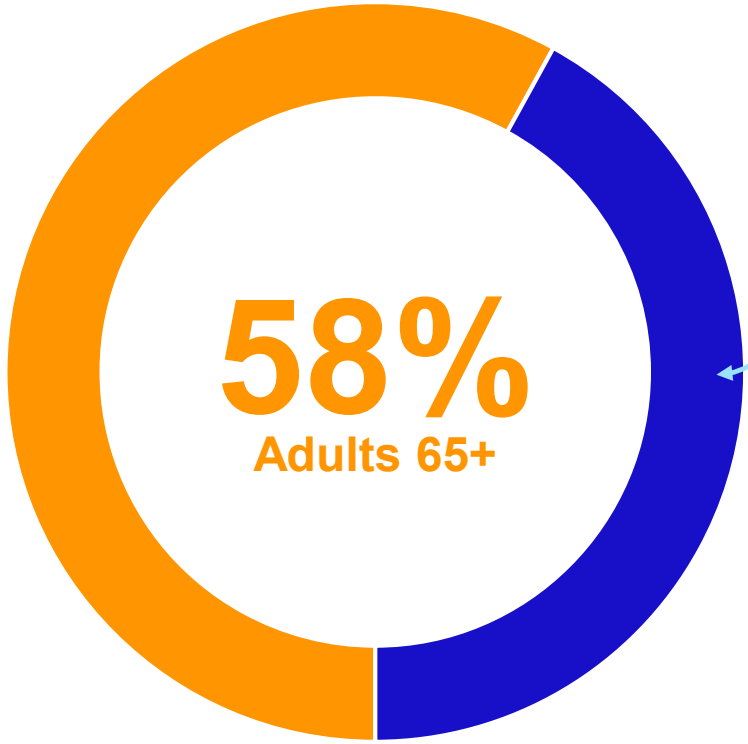


- Partnering with Humana Foundation
- National Research Report
- A Consortium of Stakeholders

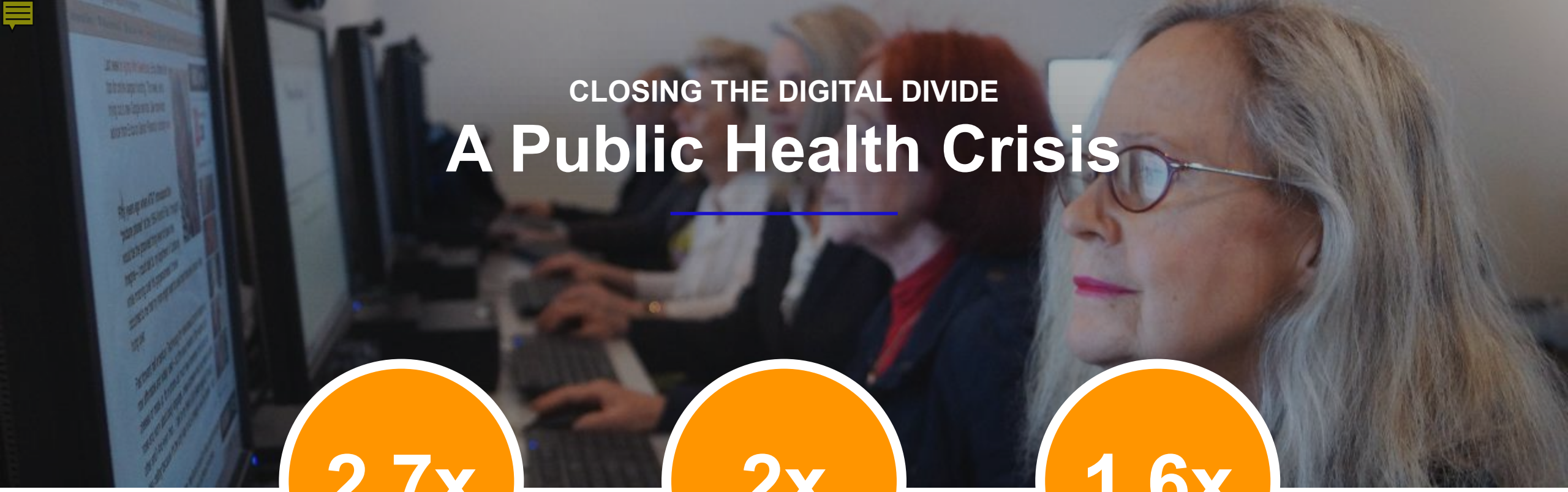
The Broadband Gap for Older Adults

Percentage of Americans with in-home wireline broadband





21,800,000 without broadband at home



CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

A Public Health Crisis

2.7x

Medicaid enrollees likelier to be offline

2x

Those with **functional impairments** likely to be offline

1.6x

Those with **frequent depressive systems** are likely to be offline

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CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

A Social Justice Crisis

10x

Low Income
under $25K to be offline

2.5x

Black seniors
likelier to be offline.

3.3x

Latino seniors
likelier to be offline.

1.6x

Rural older adults
likelier to be offline.

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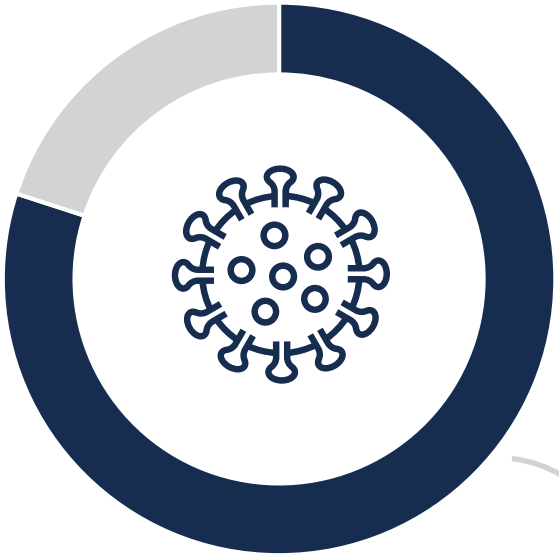
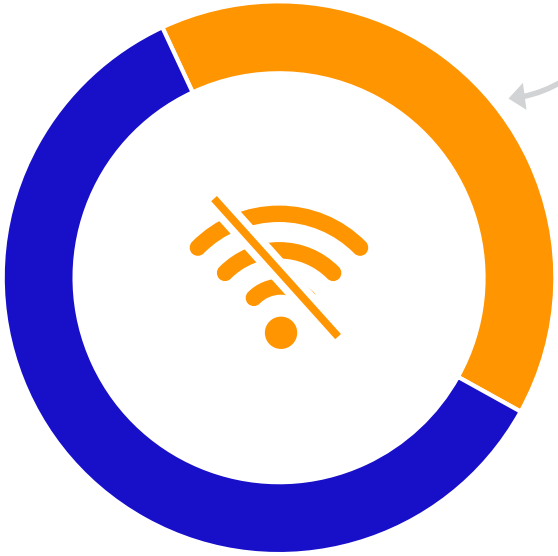
The Risks of Digital Isolation Amid COVID

Seniors need to get connected to access vaccine appointments and tele-health resources.



80%

of **COVID deaths** have been older Americans



40%

of them likely **lacked access to online resources** like telemedicine and social connectedness

Four Paths Forward

- Articulate the value of broadband to seniors
- Expand access to low-cost offers
- Prioritize social equity and inclusion
- Develop content, communities and experience for older adults to increase utilization of broadband services

Digital Inclusion Opportunities in Underserved Communities

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Seek Out Partnerships

- Libraries
- Churches
- Schools
- Hospitals and Community Clinics
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Affordable Housing Communities
- Senior Service Centers

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Identify your State and Regional Digital Inclusion Funding Resources

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

- $100M (minimum for each state) + State formula
- Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program, $5M (min)
- Planning, building state office capacity, and to fund outreach and coordination activities with local communities and stakeholders

Affordable Connectivity Program (FCC subsidized broadband for qualifying Americans)

Funding for High Speed Internet for Congregate Living

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Affordable Housing Toolkits

- LeadingAge Broadband in Affordable Housing: A Guide For Providers
- SAHF Bridging the Digital Divide in Affordable Housing Communities

Content Resources for Agencies

- Oasis Connections Guide to Online Safety
  - English language videos
  - Spanish language videos
- National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA)
  - Digital Navigator model
  - Coalition Guidebook
- Self-paced Tutorials

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Content Resources for Learners

- learnfree.org
- golhelp.org
- digitallearn.org
- techboomers.com

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Q: What Opportunities, Funding, and Partnerships Do You See in Your Communities?

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Case Studies of Successful (and failed) Digital Inclusion Programs for Older Adults

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Successful Tech Adoption

- **PURPOSE**: Technology needs meaning and purpose—it is a means to the end
- **CULTURE**: Community needs to advocate technology; associates & staff are users of the technology
- **FOUNDATION**: Instant Success in technology is CRITICAL to adoption with older adults.
- **SUSTAINABILITY**: Ongoing Training and support = sustainability of adoption.

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CTN
community
TECH NETWORK

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SF Connected Program

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

- Established in 2010
- Free digital literacy classes in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Vietnamese to older adults and adults with disabilities
- Helping these populations understand how broadband access will be useful to them in their daily lives
- Help individuals overcome social isolation, access resources for healthy aging, slow the progress of cognitive impairment, and learn skills to manage personal finances or increase income.

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Home Connect

CTN homeCONNECT

- Audience
  - 60+ Adults in San Francisco
  - Little/no home internet access
  - At risk of isolation
  - Great desire to get online
- Deliverables
  - 10" tablet shipped/delivered
  - Internet enrollment help
  - 5 one-hour remote training sessions
- Activities (since April 2020)

Referral Partners	>50
Seniors referred to the program	826
Received a tablet	642
Completed basic training	555
Hours of instruction provided	5,032

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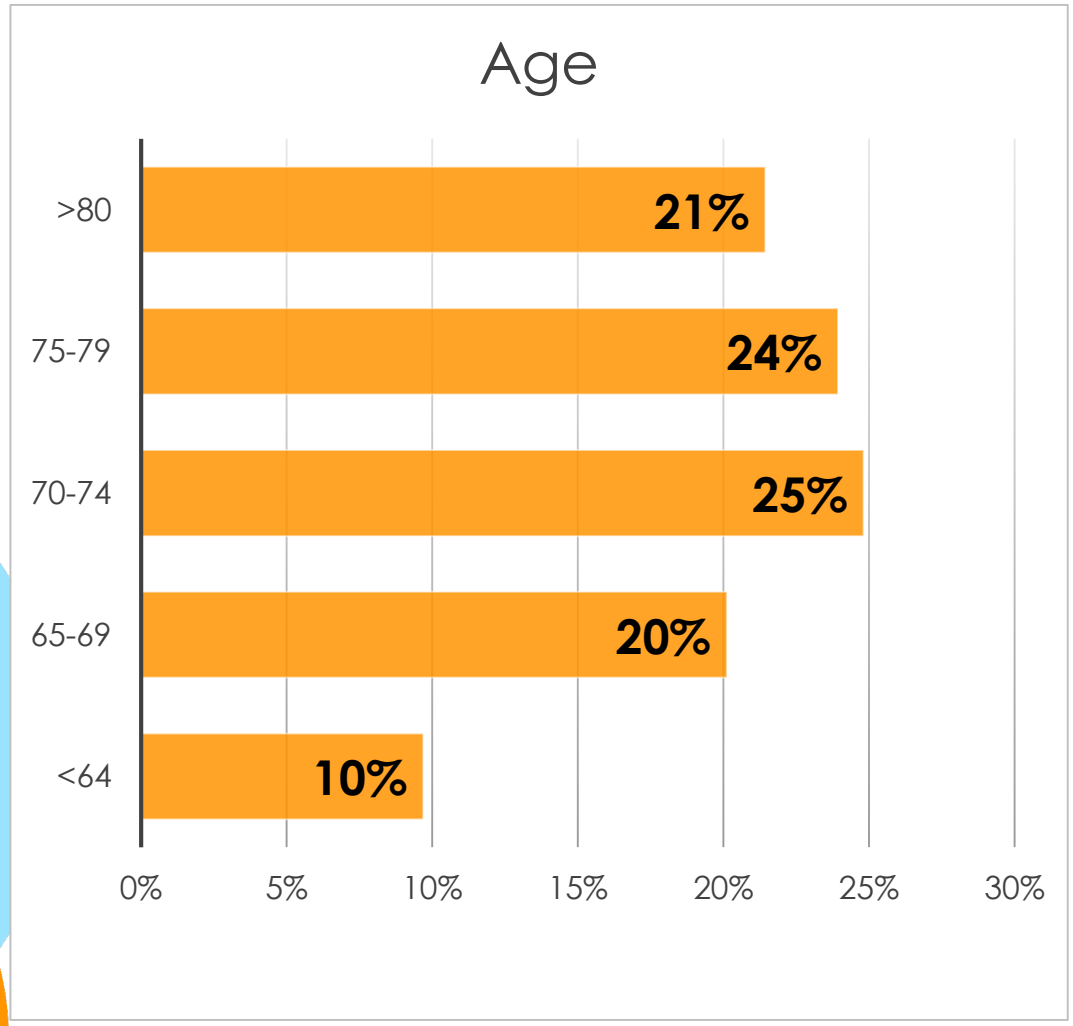
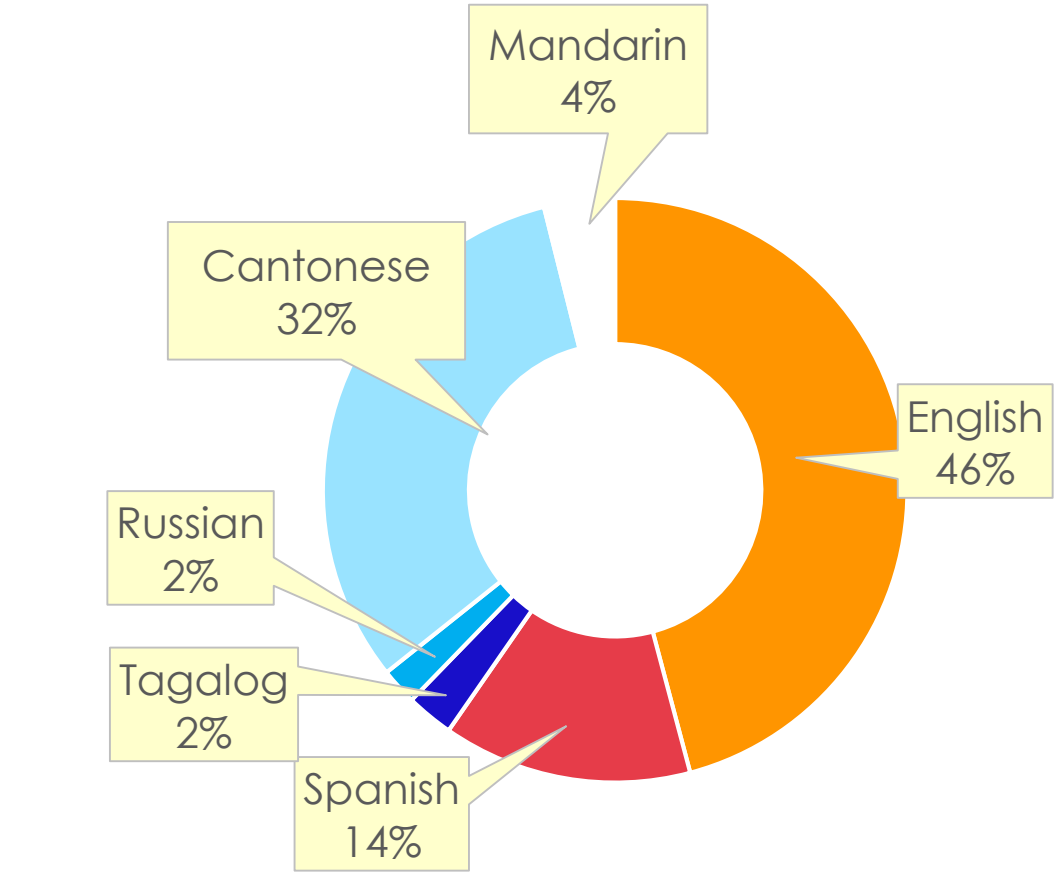
Home Connect Demographics





Home Connect Graduates

Carlos and Bonnie Perez

"We were pleased and grateful with our teacher Maria; she was always kind and patient while teaching us how to use the tablet and the apps. We love seeing our friends again on Zoom. We use our tablet to order medicine refills, so we no longer have to go to Kaiser and expose ourselves to infection while waiting for the medicine to be ready."

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Home Connect Replicated

seniorCONNECT

- Led by AGE of Central Texas
- Activities (since May 2021)
  - Referral Partners
  - Seniors referred to the program
  - Received a tablet
  - Completed basic training
  - Hours of instruction provided

Patricia completed the Senior Connect program in May 2021

CTN Partner Programs

Curry Senior Center

Senior Vitality
iPads, internet enrollment help, digital literacy (in-person and remote), videos

LITTLE BROTHERS FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY SAN FRANCISCO LBFE

Tech Allies
iPads, internet enrollment help, digital literacy, volunteer training

SOURCEWISE
COMMUNITY RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

Google Home Smart Speaker
Remote and in-person training, videos

FCA Family Caregiver Alliance®

Caregiver Training
iPads, remote digital literacy training in Spanish

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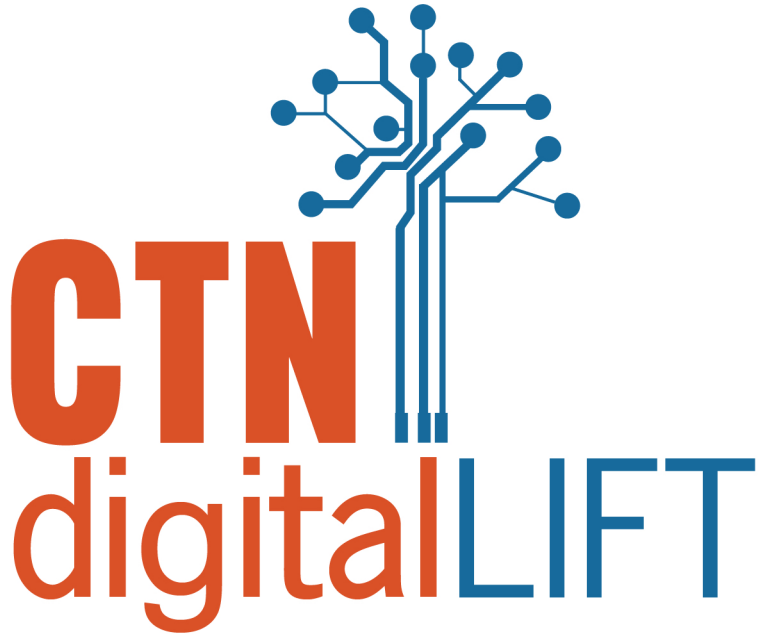
DigitalLIFT



- Provides assistance to social service agencies interested in developing a digital inclusion program
- Access to curricula in multiple languages
- Train-the-trainer instruction
- Develop a community of practice with fellow agencies
- Ongoing support

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DigitalLIFT Course Outline

- Overview of the Digital Divide & Program Models
- Assessing the Need
- Analyzing the Data
- Program Types, Internet Options, Device Options
- Drafting a Program Plan
- Broadband and Device Acquisition
- Conducting Training Activities
- Reviewing & Finalizing Program Plan
- Scheduling and Promotion
- Program Staffing & Volunteers
- Volunteer Recruitment & Management
- Program Evaluation
- Reporting Out & Advocacy

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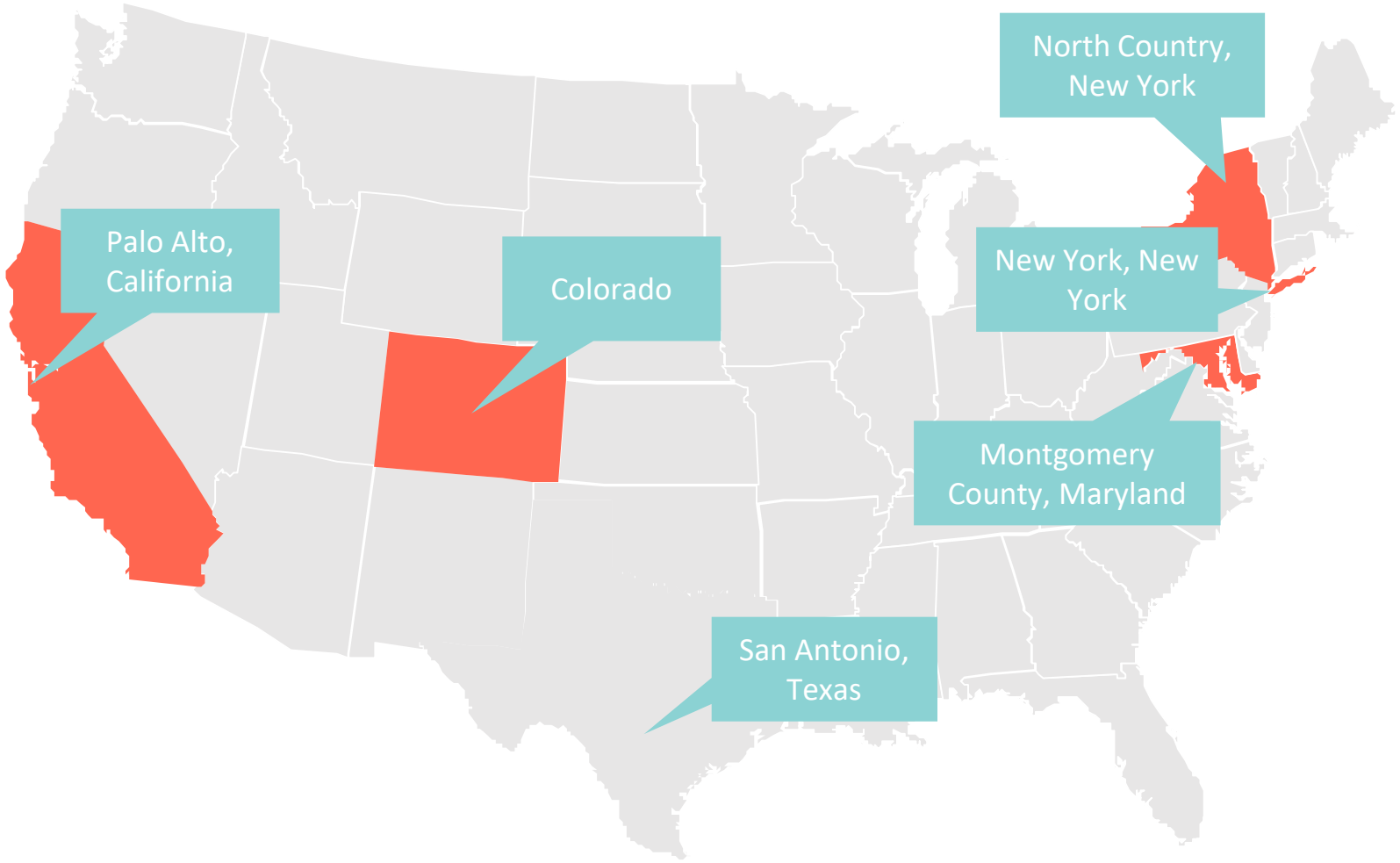
Introducing Senior Planet

Our Motto: Aging with Attitude

The Senior Planet training model:

- Designed with and for older adults
- Mainstream devices and application
- Emphasis on partnerships

Located in six geographies across the country



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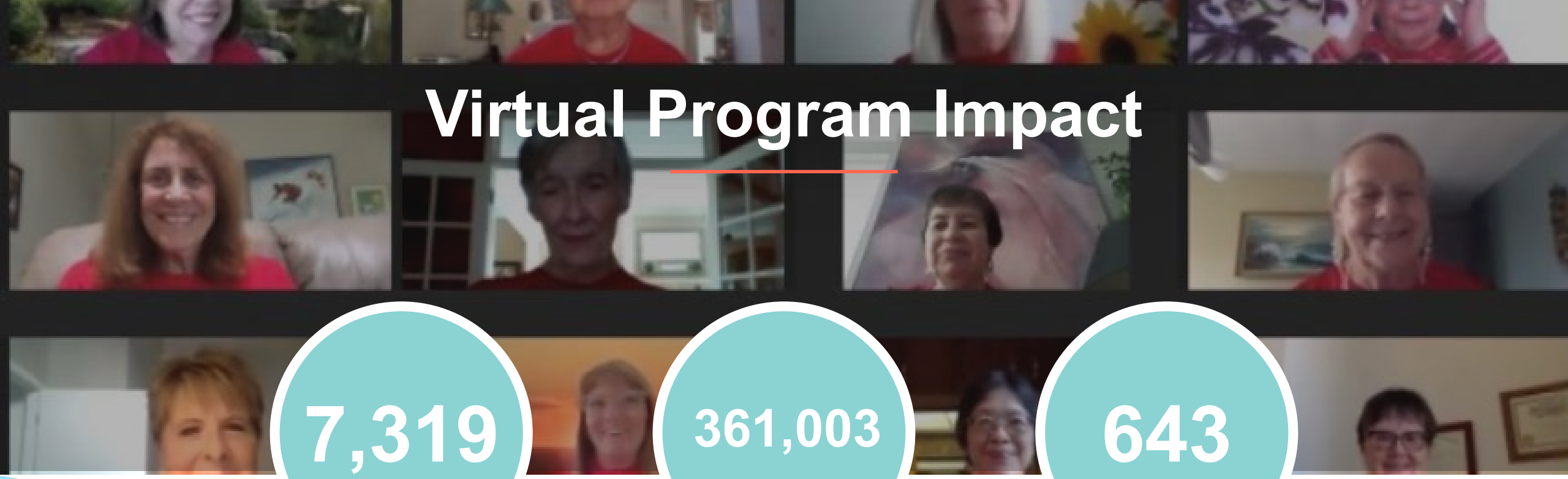
The Digital Pivot

By early-April of 2020, we had converted 20+ English-only lectures for delivery through SeniorPlanet.org; now over 150 lectures, workshops, and multi-week series in English, Spanish, Chinese and Russian.

Began to offer free capacity building trainings to support aging service provider and nonprofit professionals learn best practices for offering virtual programming.

Advocacy work creating focused effort around connectivity during COVID-19.

Operationalized national and local hotline support systems.



Virtual Program Impact

7,319

Number of **Senior Planet Virtual Programs Hosted**

361,003

Number of **engagements in Senior Planet programs**

643

Number of **Professionals Attending Capacity Building Sessions**

Mid-March 2020 ← → October 2021

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Impact Areas

Creative

Social

Financial

Health

Advocacy

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Lighthouse for Older Adults

Developing a Replicable, Scalable Model to Address the Digital Divide in Affordable Senior Housing Communities

CITRIS AND THE BANATAO INSTITUTE

front porch CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND WELLBEING

ESKATON Transforming the Aging Experience

UCDAVIS HEALTH

CDW HEALTHCARE PEOPLE WHO GET IT

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The Lighthouse Project

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Technology-enabled health and well-being for residents living in affordable housing during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond

- A rapidly deployable and scalable digital inclusion pilot program that provides **internet accessibility** and **digital literacy training** to improve wellbeing, access to health care services, and communication

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Lighthouse Project: Program Goals

Improved health and well-being

Provide access to WiFi and information (i.e. transportation, grocery delivery, community info, entertainment, etc)

Increase engagement through training and support

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Implementation Approach

A user-centered approach was used during project design:

- **Broadband Access** for internet connectivity for devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.).
- **Broadband Affordability** to support a building's internet infrastructure needs on-going
- **Broadband Adoption** through curriculum design and deployment, outreach strategies, and a community-based model that socializes technology learning and support
- **Broadband Content** is the user's digital destination: meaningful, valuable, relevant, and in-language content to support the health and well-being of older adult users

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Implementation Approach

Device Selection Needs

- Large screens to accommodate vision changes
- Good quality speakers or extra headset devices for people with low hearing
- Video chat and voice first capabilities
- Styluses to help with fine motor skills
- Multi-lingual accommodations

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Implementation Approach

Multiple devices were adopted and distributed. Training solution had to be device agnostic for scalability.

Lenovo Yoga Android Tablet (CDW, grant)

Amazon Alexa Show (Amazon)

Powered by Speak2

Google Hub Max (Volara)

Powered by Volara

Samsung Tab A7

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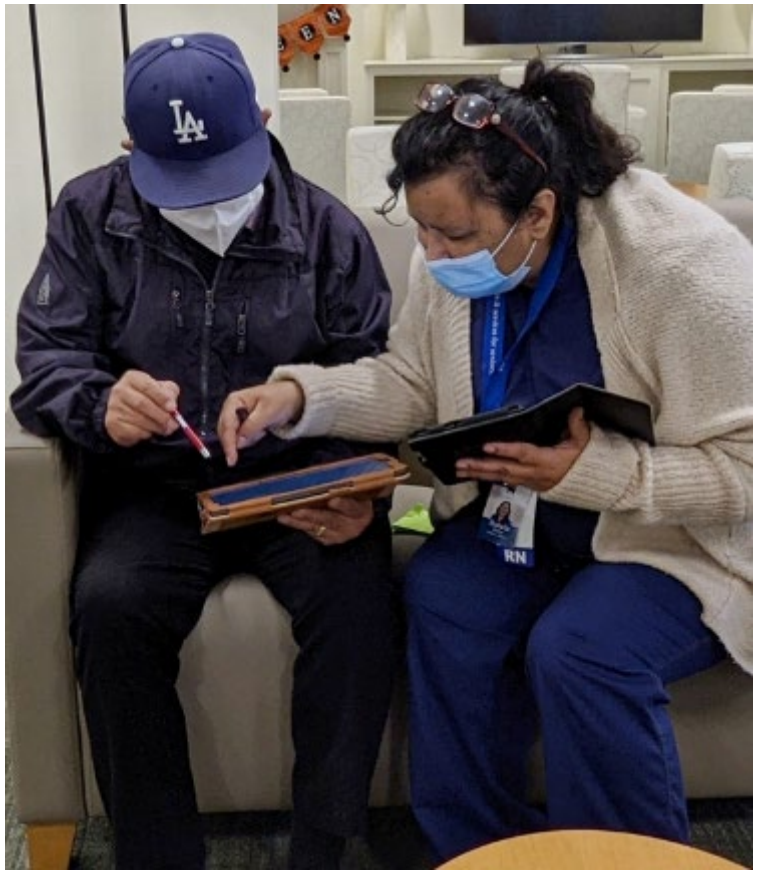
Implementation Approach:

Peer- and Community-based Learning Model Deployed

1. Resident ambassadors were recruited & provided device 1-3 weeks prior to deployment to become "super users"
2. Staff and/or residents held 3-5 initial technology workshops after deployment
3. Resident Ambassadors hosted ongoing office hours at community
4. Small group "Pods" to help socialize technology learning and tech support



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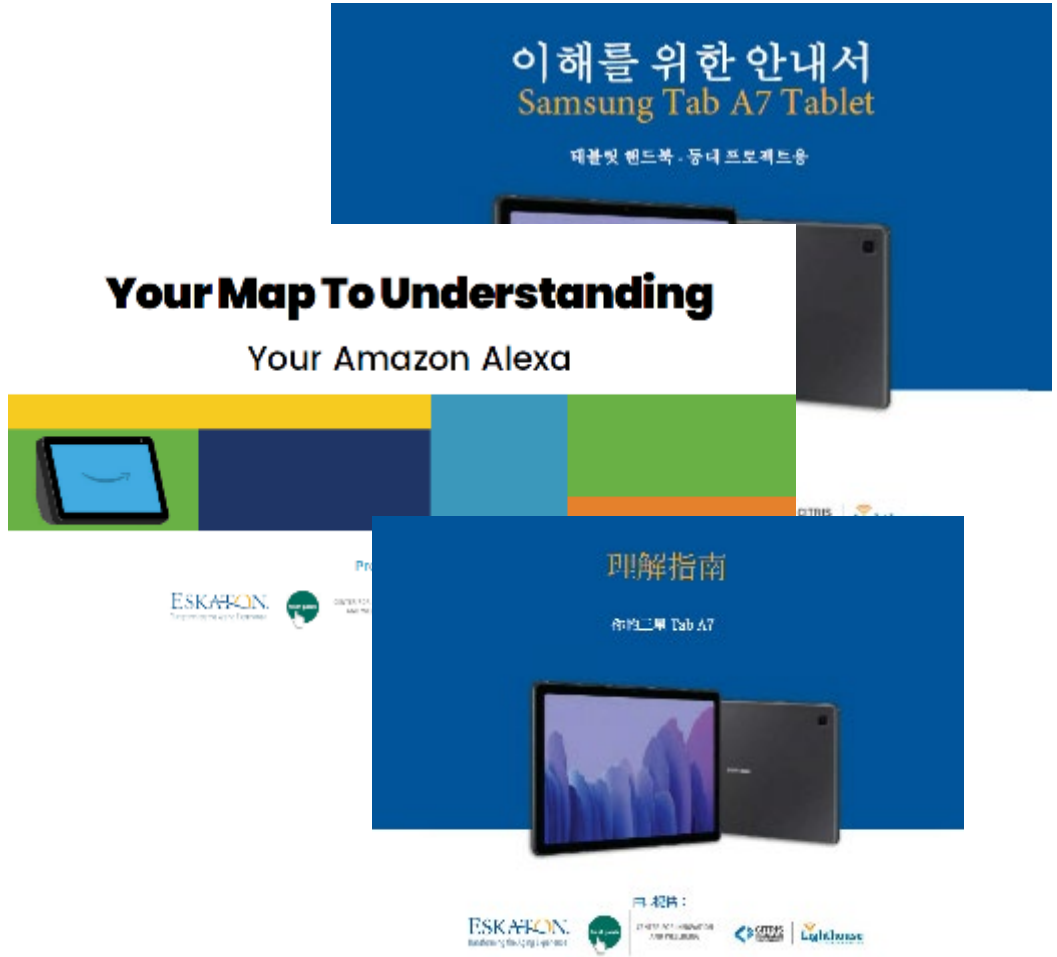
Implementation Approach:

User-focused training material utilized

- Provided in-language curriculum for every deployment & device
- Created weekly focus areas (i.e. device basics, camera usage, downloading apps, using apps, video calling, etc)
- Focused on offering bite-sized content that would not overwhelm the residents



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Implementation Approach:

Leveraged effective communication

- Provided regular communication to residents about workshops and office hours
- Offered regular reminders about survey deadlines
- Created in all languages represented within the community

Lessons and Challenges

- Recruiting residents to participate in-language
- Providing multi-lingual material about the project (letters, flyers, etc)
- Developing multi-lingual curriculum
- Providing multi-lingual support
- Providing advanced tech-support in-language if ambassadors don't know answer

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Lessons and Challenges (cont'd)

- Encouraging resident participation & understanding community specific needs
- Staffing challenges
- Maintaining project enthusiasm for sustained adoption
- Identifying a device that met ALL accessibility requirements. All devices used had pros & cons.

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Where To Start in Affordable Housing

- Survey the needs of your residents and staff
- Assess technology readiness
- Build awareness of importance of digital inclusion with all key stakeholders
- Develop your partnerships
- Plan for infrastructure, devices, training and support and ongoing costs/resources

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Q/A and THANK YOU!

Davis Park, Vice President, Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing

Kami Griffith, Executive Director, Community Tech Network

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