Older Adult Digital Inclusion Initiative

Community Forum:
Alameda County Perspectives –
California Master Plan for Aging

December 3, 2021

Age-Friendly Council Older Adult Digital Needs Assessment Survey

Aligns with MPA Goal 3: Inclusion and Equity, Not Isolation – Strategy B, Closing the Digital Divide

Developed by the Council's cross-sector Digital Inclusion Workgroup
Co-chaired by Alameda County Public Health Department, Social Services Agency and Senior Services Coalition

Goal: assess gaps in access to the internet, electronic devices and training/technical assistance

Between April-October 2021, the survey was disseminated widely to low-income older adults with support from community partners

Selected Findings as of 11/1/21

- 1,439 surveys were returned.
  - More than half were paper copies (54%)
  - 45% had incomes <$2K/month

- Internet access at least once a week is available to:
  - 70% of seniors with incomes <$2K/month, vs.
  - 92% of seniors with incomes >2K/month

- People age 75+ are less comfortable with telehealth than younger groups. This increases with age.

- Across all groups with access to devices, seniors are most likely use smart phones, particularly those with incomes <$2K/month

Full report to be posted in early 2022 at agefriendly.acgov.org/af-efforts/internet-survey.page

"Most of us seniors don't understand this technology, we will be left behind or forgotten."

"Many seniors simply don't have the resources to buy ANYTHING that would allow them to access the internet."

"I use zoom but don't have a camera and use my telephone to access the meetings and classes."

Priorities for 2022

- Consider best practices to promote solutions, based on the survey results; great examples here in our County

- Potential funding sources
    - $50 Million allocated to digital inclusion in CA state budget
    - Three federal bills hold promise

- Ongoing funding is essential to maintain no- or low-cost internet subscriptions, device upgrades and TA for low-income seniors

- Continue partnering with regional digital inclusion workgroup