

PROMOTING DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR OLDER ADULTS

Senior Health Policy Forum
December 1, 2023

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Age Friendly Cupertino
Santa Clara County Senior Care Commission



Timeline

1990: SeniorNet founded in San Francisco

- Launched online community for older adults
- Provided computer literacy training at 150+ SeniorNet Learning Centers

2004: Older Adult Technology Services (OATS) founded in NYC

2013: OATS opens Senior Planet Center in Manhattan

2019: Senior Planet Center opens at Avenidas in Palo Alto

2020: **COVID arrives**

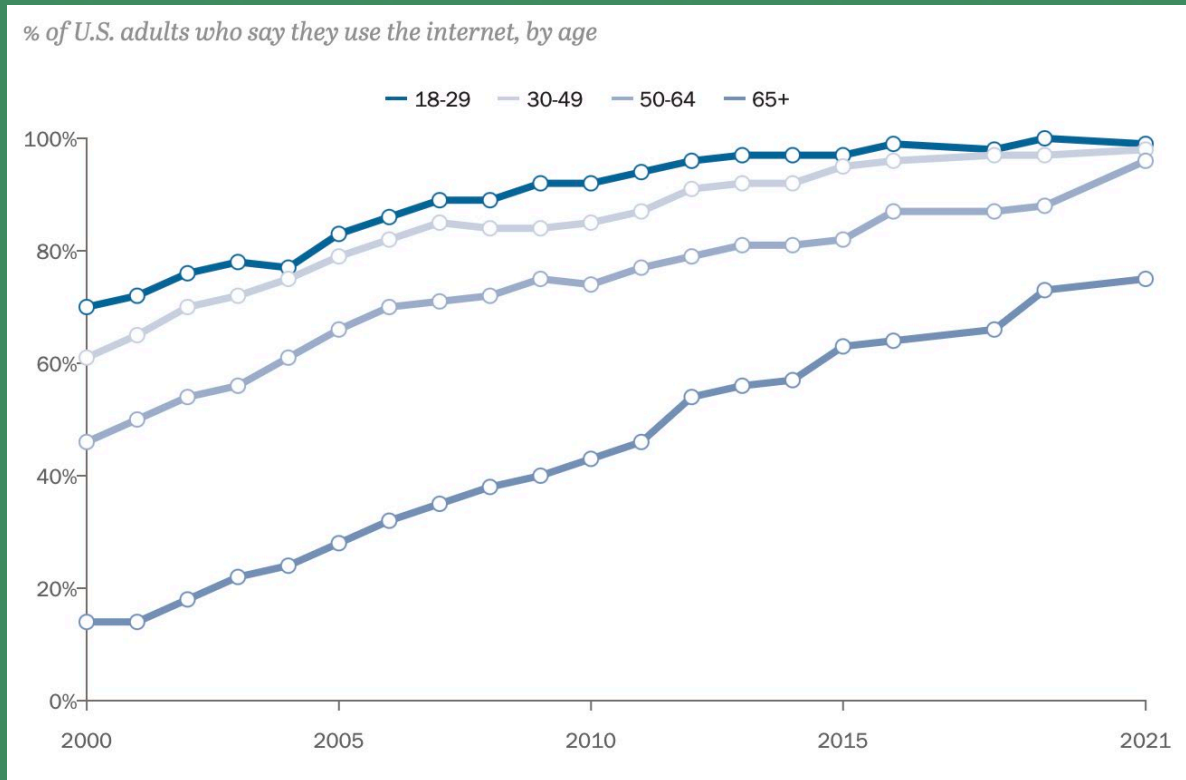


Impact of COVID on older adults

- ❖ Stay-at-home mandate (March 2020)
- ❖ Older adults most medically vulnerable
- ❖ Physical facilities serving seniors closed
- ❖ Programs shifted from in-person to online



But many older adults did not have online access



The Digital Divide: Why Does it Matter?

- ❖ Loneliness and social isolation
- ❖ Limited access to essential services

DIGITAL DIVIDE

Health care zooming past many seniors

Telemedicine out of reach for those without computers, [internet](#)

By Laurence Du Sault

[San Jose Mercury News](#), July 20, 2020



Dan [Makevich](#) receives digital training from a San Francisco nonprofit. With the rise in telemedicine, [Makevich](#) found that not owning a computer [made](#) it difficult to get health care.

Dan [Makevich's](#) terrible eyesight made him retire early from his beloved job of 15 years as a tour guide in the Bay Area and Yosemite. When the pandemic hit, [Makevich](#) knew his age, diabetes and respiratory problems made him a prime target.

What he didn't know [was that not owning](#) a computer would make getting health care much harder.

Santa Clara County Digital Inclusion Initiative Approved by Board of Supervisors August 2020

“Increase collaboration and county-wide coordination by creating a Digital Inclusion Workgroup through the Age Friendly Cities Collaborative and Seniors’ Agenda.”

- But no funding!



Digital Inclusion Webinars (March 2021)

DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR OLDER ADULTS
March Madness
WORKSHOP SERIES
THURSDAYS IN MARCH



MAR 11
1:30 PM

USE OF TECHNOLOGIES WITH OLDER ADULTS
TO HELP SUPPORT A MEANINGFUL LIFE

WESLEY CHENG / TELEVISIT

[HTTPS://SENIORSAGENDA-MARCHSERIES-PART1.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://seniorsagenda-marchseries-part1.eventbrite.com)



MAR 18
1:30 PM

TELEHEALTH, COVID-19, AND THE OLDER ADULT

MEI WA KWONG /
CENTER FOR CONNECTED HEALTH POLICY

[HTTPS://SENIORSAGENDA-MARCHSERIES-PART2.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://seniorsagenda-marchseries-part2.eventbrite.com)




MAR 25
1:00 PM

CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED:
PROGRAMMING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

KAMI GRIFFITHS / COMMUNITY TECH NETWORK

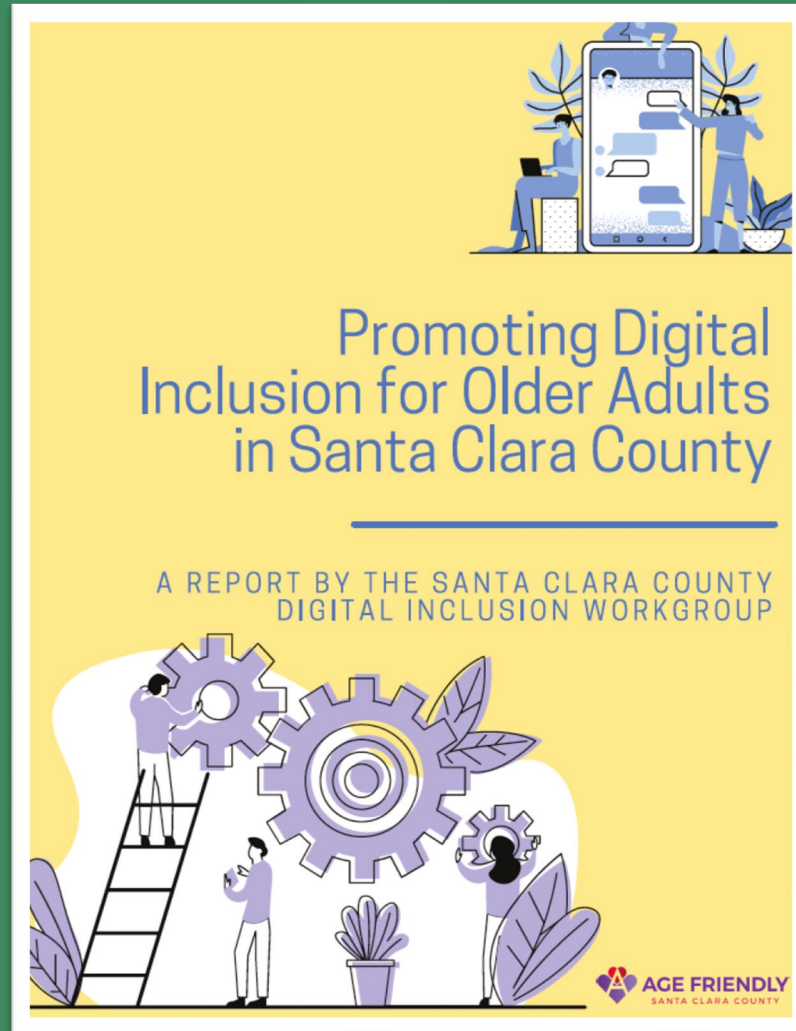
[HTTPS://SENIORSAGENDA-MARCHSERIES-PART3.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://seniorsagenda-marchseries-part3.eventbrite.com)

WWW.AGEFRIENDLYSILICONVALLEY.ORG



AGE FRIENDLY
SANTA CLARA COUNTY

White Paper (June 2021)



White Paper: Key Findings

1. As many as 1/3rd of seniors in SCC (~96,000) lack access to high-speed broadband at home, making them vulnerable to social isolation and unable to access vital services.
2. Digital inclusion requires:
 - 1) an access device
 - 2) connectivity
 - 3) digital literacy training
3. Multiple initiatives are underway to promote digital inclusion, but need coordination, more funding.



Bay Area Digital Inclusion Coalition (BADIC), Aug 2021



State Funding Arrives

1. California Dept. of Aging/Sourcewise:

- Google Home Smart Speakers, 2021: 610 participants
- CHAT Program (iPads), 2022: 215 participants

2. State of California/County Dept. of Aging & Adult Services:

- Access to Technology (ATT), 2022/23 - \$2.1 million, 2,000 participants in Santa Clara County



Next: Federal Funding

1. Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), 2021
 - \$14.5 Billion to subsidize internet access
 - 53,150 Santa Clara County households enrolled as of Nov 2023
2. Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program
 - \$42.5 Billion to expand high-speed internet access in all 50 states
 - California released its draft plan on Nov 7, 2023
3. Digital Equity Act
 - \$2.75 Billion to promote digital equity and inclusion, ensure that all people have the skills, technology & capacity to fully participate in the digital economy.

