



Alameda County  
Health Care Services Agency



Alameda County  
Social Services  
Agency

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**Age-Friendly Council Releases Report on Older Adults' Access to Digital Resources**

**ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA** – A new survey report looks at the digital access needs of Alameda County's seniors.

The [Alameda County Council for Age-Friendly Communities](#) (Age-Friendly Council) announced the launch of its new Report on Gaps in Equitable Access to Digital Resources Among Older Adults in Alameda County at [agefriendly.acgov.org](http://agefriendly.acgov.org).

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing problems faced by older adults, including inequitable access to digital resources. To collect information specific to Alameda County, the Age-Friendly Council conducted a countywide needs assessment of adults aged 50 and older from April 2021-March 2022. The survey asked about seniors' level of access to internet services and devices, as well as their need for education and training to support their use of the internet.

Last month was Older Americans Month, and the survey report notes that the 1,476 respondents included a significant number with a high level of need for support to access the internet, digital devices, training, and technical support to use those devices.

**Key findings include:**

- Across all the findings, income level had more of an impact than any other variable, with significant differences between those with incomes lower than \$2,000 per month and those with higher monthly incomes.
- Comfort using telehealth was significantly lower among respondents aged 75 and older than those ages 50-64.
- Race/ethnicity was associated with digital access, and some of those differences remained within groups at the same income level.

The report includes six policy and program recommendations, including that all efforts to address gaps in digital resources have a culturally appropriate approach that considers the needs of the County's diverse populations.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, many seniors experienced increased isolation and more challenges accessing critical services than they had in the past, and many remain unable to connect remotely with health care providers and social supports," said Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency's Public Health Department Director. "This report provides key insights and support for culturally and linguistically competent programs to address the gaps."

"With this survey, we gathered detailed information about seniors' need for internet access, digital devices, and education to use those devices," said Faith Battles, Assistant Agency

Director, Alameda County Social Services Agency. “Developing programs to improve older adults’ access to digital devices benefits the entire community.”

“The report includes program and policy recommendations that, if implemented, will make a difference for Alameda County’s older adults,” said Wendy Peterson, Director, Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County. “We have data now to support the need for specific programs to address the varying needs of older adults across our diverse County.”

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The Age Friendly Council is a cross-sector group that is supported by Alameda County’s Health Care Services Agency and Social Services Agency in partnership with community partners. It includes community-based organizations, advocacy and stakeholder groups, and County staff who bring a coordinated approach to policy and system changes that will enhance the overall well-being of older adults living in Alameda County. The Council’s mission is to engage consumers, leaders, policy makers, and service providers to develop and sustain a community framework that fosters healthy aging.