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PROGRAM MEMO

TO: Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)
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SUBJECT: Digital Inclusion Projects: CHAT and Digital Connections

Purpose

This Program Memo (PM) provides information and requirements for the Digital Connections (DC), and the Connections, Health, Aging and Technology (CHAT) projects that support California Department of Aging's (CDA) Digital Inclusion initiative. The programs supporting CDA's Digital Inclusion initiative are all designed to support older adults and individuals with disabilities that are impacted by the digital divide and require at least one of the following: a device, connectivity, or digital literacy learning opportunities. The objective of each program is to ensure the digital divide is closed for program participants and that they may experience an improved quality of life as they are able to interact with their community and resources in a more dynamic and often necessary, manner.

There are three appendices to ensure guidance for all the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) partners that maintain the DC and CHAT projects. These appendices are as follows:
- APPENDIX A: DC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
- APPENDIX B: CHAT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
- APPENDIX C: EQUIPMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT FOR DC AND CHAT

Background on CDA's Digital Inclusion Initiative

On August 14, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order (EO) N-73-20 to improve broadband speed and access in California, including improving download speeds for all Californians and to bridge the digital divide for two million Californians who lack broadband access. The EO specifies older adults as a priority population that are at-risk for isolation and loneliness in their communities when impacted by the Digital Divide.

Since this EO was issued, the CDA began working collaboratively with a workgroup of AAA directors to develop the CHAT program as the state's first pilot program for distribution of 4,000 mobile electronic devices to older adults. The CHAT project was funded by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES), Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). In addition to this pilot, CDA partnered with Google to distribute 8,573 donated Google Home Smart Speakers to participants in the Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and the Multipurpose Senior Services Programs (MSSPs) across the state.

The Digital Divide helps to address the following issues impacting older adults and adults with disabilities:
- Nearly 1 in 4 adults aged 65 and over are considered socially isolated, and nearly 1 out of 3 adults over 45 feel lonely.
- Social isolation increases the chance of premature death and rivals the risks of smoking, obesity, and inactivity.
- Older adults are now living longer than 20 years ago but are also more likely to live alone and to be far less socially engaged than the previous generation.
- A 2019 Pew Research Center study found that only 73 percent of people over 65 use the Internet.
- Older adults in California have limited Internet access in their own homes: only 69 percent of those 65 and over have broadband access, and for those 75 or older, the number declines to 58 percent.
- The Center for Disease Control describes loneliness and social isolation as "serious public health risks."

Reference: [Stanford Center on Longevity](#)

Through the CHAT pilot program, CDA and the AAAs developed a robust understanding of how to best serve older adults and persons with disabilities by ensuring all three main components of the digital divide were addressed: (1) the need for a mobile electronic device with installable digital applications, (2) the need for broadband internet connectivity, and (3) the need for digital literacy support to ensure a thorough understanding on how to use the device and navigate online digital resources.

In 2022, CDA launched the Digital Connections project through its Home and Community Based Services Spending Plan, which has allowed CDA to provide technology, connectivity, and digital literacy resources to the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) sites, the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) centers, and the Community-Based Adult Services (CBAS) programs. CDA will continue to fund and support CHAT and DC through **December 31, 2023**. The Digital Inclusion initiative led by CDA will continue to be supported beyond December 2023 through CDA and other partners that will collectively maintain strategies on broadband for all, digital literacy resources, as well as device maintenance and program support by the AAAs.

APPENDIX A: DC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Through this program, CDA will distribute at least 15,000 new Apple iPads to participating AAAs, MSSPs, PACE and CBAS centers. Each iPad will come with a case and AT&T broadband connectivity with 10GB of data allowance through December 31, 2023 (*please note that all iPads can connect to Wi-Fi at any time prior to and after December 31, 2023*). All iPads will be covered by the Mobile Iron Mobile Device Management (MDM) system, Honeywell helpdesk with Language Support, and Remote Admin services through December 31, 2023.

Additionally, participating AAAs will receive a "Connectivity Fund" and an "Administrative (Admin) fund" for their direct oversight and support of the DC Program. Both Connectivity and Admin funds will be associated with CDA budgetary practices for respective reimbursements and associated receipts at closeout. In addition to the equipment and asset management requirements in Appendix C, each AAA, MSSP, PACE and CBAS center shall support the following program requirements:

Program Participant Eligibility
To qualify for an iPad, an individual shall meet the following eligibility criteria:
- Adults 60 years of age and older, or 18 years of age or older with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Does not currently own a mobile computerized device that can maintain the following features:
  - General Digital Application Compatibility (i.e., telehealth resources, Zoom capability, etc.)
  - Mobility (i.e., easy to carry, can move around to different areas as needed to ensure access)
  - Connectivity (either Wi-Fi capable or 5GB broadband capable)
    - *NOTE: If a prospective participant has access to broadband, but no device to connect, then they would be eligible. If the individual has a device but no access to broadband, then they would also be eligible.*
- Resides within the jurisdiction of the AAA, MSSP, PACE, and/or CBAS sites and can be supported by other services offered as needed.

Priority should be given to older adults who are low-income, disabled, or otherwise fall within the category of greatest economic and social need within the meanings of the Older Americans Act, the Older Californians Act, and their respective regulatory counterparts.

Connectivity Fund
The Connectivity Fund allocated to **the AAAs only** can be used for the following services:
- Broadband service support
  - Example: purchasing equipment such as routers or hot spot devices, purchasing broadband service plans, and supporting participant enrollment in programs such as Broadband for All, etc.
- Digital literacy supports
  - Example: digital navigator services, IT supports, training, etc.

- Program outreach
  - Example: distribution of equipment and services, advertising, etc.

The Connectivity Fund is not limited to supporting individuals with a DC Program iPad. Rather, the Connectivity Fund is meant to support all individuals affected by the digital divide (i.e., older adults, individuals with disabilities, unpaid informal/family caregivers, etc.). The eligibility criteria for the supportive services established through the connectivity fund shall be developed by the associated local entity.

Reporting Requirements and Program Evaluation
The purpose of this project is to reduce isolation, increase connections, and enhance self-confidence for older adults by bridging the digital divide through providing access to digital resources and information. For this project, CDA will be partnering with a third-party Evaluator to assess the status of the program, innovative practices, and success stories. The Evaluator will reach out to each AAA, MSSP, PACE and CBAS individually to collect this information in a one-time effort during the summer of 2023.

CDA will provide each participating AAA, MSSP, PACE and CBAS site with a form listing iPads that each Contractor receives. The AAA, MSSP, PACE and CBAS sites shall update this form monthly and send updates to CDA until all iPads have been distributed. The data requested on this form shall include but may not be limited to:
- Demographic information of iPad recipients, if provided by the participants.
- General contact information for iPad recipients (i.e., phone number, zip code, etc.)
- Confirmation if the iPad recipient would like a digital literacy training provider to contact them regarding using the iPad device and accessing other digital online resources more effectively.

It should be noted that the demographic and contact information for iPad recipients is requested, but not required. Any information that recipients are willing to provide would assist the literacy training providers by allowing them to provide device and accessibility resources to iPad recipients more efficiently.

For the AAAs that receive a Connectivity Fund, the program reporting and evaluation efforts would also include providing the data requested above, maintaining a record of qualitative and quantitative data, in addition to providing updated documentation to CDA quarterly, that includes, but is not limited to the following data elements/information:
- Description of program updates and investment strategies, including a summary of work provided by any subcontractors. CDA looks forward to learning about the innovative program efforts utilized by the AAAs to address digital inclusion.
- Number of program participants served.
- Demographic information on program participants, if provided by the participants.
- Identify if program participants received one or more of the following:
  - A device and what type of device.
  - Connectivity support and a description of the type of support provided.
  - Digital literacy support and a description of the type of support provided.

These requirements are only applicable through December 31, 2023.

APPENDIX B: CHAT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Through the CHAT program as of 2021, CDA had distributed 4,000 iPads to participating AAAs. Each iPad came with AT&T broadband connectivity that will be maintained through December 31, 2023 (*please note that all iPads can connect to Wi-Fi at any time prior to and after December 31, 2023*). All iPads will be covered by the Mobile Iron MDM system, Honeywell helpdesk with Language Support, and Remote Admin services through December 31, 2023.

In addition to the equipment and asset management requirements in Appendix C, each participating AAA shall support the following CHAT program requirements:

Program Participant Eligibility
To qualify for an iPad, an individual shall meet the following eligibility criteria:
- Adults 60 years of age and older, or 18 years of age or older with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Lives at home.
    - *Note: The individual can have roommates, but individuals living in Long-Term Care Facilities do not qualify for the CHAT program to support those who do not receive 24/7 care and supervision at this time and are therefore, most at-risk for loneliness and isolation.*
- Does not currently have connectivity or own a mobile computerized device that can maintain the following features:
    - General App Compatibility (i.e., telehealth resources, Zoom capability, etc.)
    - Mobility (i.e., easy to carry, can move around to different areas as needed to ensure access)
    - Connectivity (either Wi-Fi capable or 5GB broadband capable)
        - *NOTE: If a prospective participant has access to broadband, but no device to connect, then they would be eligible. If the individual has a device but no access to broadband, then they would also be eligible.*
- Resides within the jurisdiction of the AAA and can be supported by other services offered by the AAA as needed.
- Complete the University of Southern California (USC) pre-evaluation Survey.
- Agree to complete the USC Post-evaluation Survey.

Priority should be given to older adults who are low-income, disabled, or otherwise fall within the category of greatest economic and social need within the meanings of the Older Americans Act, the Older Californians Act, and their respective regulatory counterparts.

Reporting Requirements
The federal Administration on Community Living, which provides federal oversight of this funding, has requested that AAAs track the data and expenditures separately, "at a minimum and where possible. States should be recording the number of clients to whom service is provided, the name or category of services provided, the number of units of service provided, and the expenditures related to providing such services." This is currently

being completed with the Digital Divide Program Manager and all data is being communicated through chat@aging.ca.gov.

In addition, for this project, CDA will be partnering with a third-party Evaluator to assess the status of the program, innovative practices, and success stories. The Evaluator will reach out to each AAA individually to collect this information in a one-time effort during the summer of 2023.

APPENDIX C: EQUIPMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT FOR DC AND CHAT

Pursuant to the funding authority underlying the DC Program, title and ownership of the devices shall immediately and unconditionally transfer to local programs (e.g., title vests with the AAA and CDA does not tag or track as part of State property) upon delivery from CDA, to allow for effective program administration at the local level. In addition, the funding authority for DC supports the extension of the CHAT program going into 2023, which permits CDA to transfer ownership of digital devices to local programs to allow CHAT iPads to be effectively administered at the local level.

Based on transfer of title and ownership, and the underlying authority to do so, Contractor's shall manage all DC and CHAT devices as follows:

- Maintain detailed property records that include, among other things:
    - a description of the device
    - an identifying number for the device
    - the location of the device and
    - the ultimate disposition data, including the date of disposal.
- Develop and implement a control system to ensure adequate safeguards are in place to prevent and investigate any loss, damage, or theft.
- Implement measures to care for the device and keep it in good condition.
- These maintenance restrictions are on a per unit basis and last until disposal of the device.
    - Note: iPads do not depreciate to $0 value until after 5-years of activation. Therefore, all functioning iPads shall be maintained for the purposes of the Digital Connections and CHAT programs until the iPads fully depreciate to $0.

In the event that a device becomes lost, stolen, broken, or is disposed of outside of the terms of the contractual agreement established with CDA, then each Contractor shall perform the following:
- Notify the AT&T Customer Service by contacting 855-563-0055.
- Update the property log per the respective property records.
- Notify CDA, if prior to December 31, 2023, to allow CDA to turn off connectivity for that device.

Note: Contractors are not required to replace the lost, stolen, broken, or disposed iPad devices.

If a device is going to a new program participant, the Contractor shall perform the following:
- Ensure the device is reset so that all personal information and data is deleted from the device for any previous users.
    - Notify CDA for any iPad, if prior to December 31, 2023, as CDA can support updating the iPad device through the Mobile Iron MDM system as well. Similarly, AT&T Customer Service 855-563-0055 can support this need as well.
- Update the property log per the respective property records.

Process for transferring the CHAT devices from CDA to the AAA

The Business Management Bureau (BMB) will email each of the participating AAA's the following:

An inventory spreadsheet of their CHAT devices; and STD 158 Property Transfer Report form. Upon receipt of the inventory spreadsheet and STD 158, the AAA shall review the inventory spreadsheet and, if any discrepancy is noted, submit an email to property@aging.ca.gov detailing the discrepancy. Please include in the email subject line: PSA # Inventory Discrepancy Noted. BMB will work with the AAA to address and resolve the discrepancies.

If no discrepancies are identified, sign and date STD 158 as the Property Custodian in box number 6 in the signatures section of the form. Once signed, email the STD 158 to property@aging.ca.gov and include in the email subject line: PSA # Signed STD 158 CHAT Devices.

Once BMB receives the signed STD 158 from the AAA's, BMB will route the STD 158 for internal signatures, and remove the CHAT devices from the BMB's inventory. BMB will email a completed copy of the STD 158 to the participating AAA and no longer track the CHAT devices.

Inquiries

For Digital Connections program inquiries, email: digitalconnections@ca.gov

For CHAT program inquiries, email: chat@aging.ca.gov

/ Sutep Laohavanich/

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