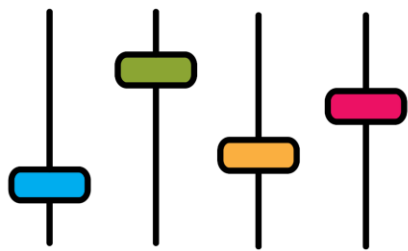


>> SLIDE 1

LEVEL

UP



BUILDING TOMORROW TOGETHER



**2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ON INDEPENDENT LIVING**

2025 Annual Conference on Independent Living

LEVEL UP: Building Tomorrow Together

Presented by the National Council on Independent Living

>> SLIDE 2

Independent Living Technology Program

Decreasing The Digital Inequity In Our Communities

July 24, 2025

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>> SLIDE 3:

Agenda

- The purpose of a Technology program
- Program structure, curriculum, development, and best practice
- Technology program funding

>> SLIDE 4:

What is a Technology Program?

It's a curriculum-based program that provides basic digital skills training, and devices, to consumers who have minimal to no computer skills and do not have access to a device.

>> SLIDE 5:

What is the purpose of a Technology Program?

- To decrease the digital divide.
- What is the digital divide?
 - The digital divide is the unequal access to digital technology, including smartphones, tablets, laptops, and the internet.
 - The digital divide creates a division and inequality around access to information and resources.

>> SLIDE 6:

How to Decrease the Digital Divide

- Provide consumers basic computer or iPad/tablet training.
- Setup and customizing laptops or iPads for consumers.
- Identify the need for and providing assistive tech to consumers.
- Give a device and internet service to consumers.
- Offer individualized support to consumers.

>> SLIDE 7:

Access Living's
Technology Program:

Pilot Program

>> SLIDE 8:

Access Living's Pilot Technology Program

- 25 consumers
- 1 time, 1 hour training
- Refurbished computers
- In-home internet service with Comcast
- Tech support offered after the training-not through AL
- Computer bags, assistive tech/devices, and additional 1:1 support was not offered.

>> SLIDE 9:

Access Living's
Technology Program:
Program Structure

>> SLIDE 10:

Program Structure-Quarterly Plan

- 1st and 3rd quarter:
 - Market program
 - Recruit and enroll consumers into the program
 - 1:1s, walk-in hours, and facilitate 1 to 2 lessons (Advanced information or reviewing previous lessons).
 - Internet distribution
- 2nd and 4th quarter:
 - Facilitate 2 computer groups
 - Facilitate 2 iPad/Tablet groups
 - Facilitate 1 computer group with outside entity (Career Center)

>> SLIDE 11:

Program Structure-Groups

- Number of consumers per group:
 - 8-10 consumers per group.
 - 4-5 groups every other quarter
 - 100 consumers per fiscal year.
- Consumers can choose to take one of the following classes and are grouped accordingly:
 - Computer Class
 - iPad Class
 - iPad Class with VoiceOver

>> SLIDE 12:

Program Structure-Groups

- Duration:
 - 6 sessions, 1 time a week, for 1 hour.
- Location:
 - 2 computer and 2 iPad/Tablet groups are facilitated at AL
 - 1 computer group is facilitated at a collaborative agency's location.
- Peer Support is offered during the group.
 - Peer support is provided a stipend or gift card for volunteering.

>> SLIDE 13:

Access Living's
Technology Program:
Curriculum

>> SLIDE 14:

Curriculum Development Process:

- Surveyed consumers that participated in the pilot program and other AL programs.
- Utilized consumer feedback.
- Connected with other organizations facilitating technology programs in the area.
- Attended technology trainings and conferences focused on teaching technology to consumers.
- Best practices and additional feedback from each group.

>> SLIDE 15:

Computer Lessons

- Introduction to the program
- Computer Basics
- How to use the internet to search for information
- Sending and receiving email
- Using Zoom to make video calls
- Internet fraud and protection

>> SLIDE 16:

Collaborated Computer Lessons **(Career Center & AL Tech Program)**

- Introduction to the program
- Computer Basics
- How to use the internet to search for information
- Internet job search
- Email for jobs
- How to use Zoom/using Zoom for job interviews
- Microsoft Word Basics
- An introduction to Excel

>> SLIDE 17:

iPad and iPad VoiceOver Lessons

- Introduction to the program
- Introduction to iPad
- How to download and use apps
- Sending and receiving email
- Zoom and FaceTime for iPads
- How to use the internet to search for information

>> SLIDE 18:

Access Living's
Technology Program:

Devices and Internet

>> SLIDE 19:

Choosing Devices for the Program

- Device options:
 - Computer
 - Notebook-computer
 - Tablet
 - iPad
 - Phone
- What to consider?
- Why did AL choose computer and iPads?

>> SLIDE 20:

Assistive Technology

Items:

- Stylus
- Large print keyboard
- ergonomic mouse/mouse pad
- Headsets
- Laptop stand

Accessibility Settings:

- Screen reader
- Assistive touch
- Magnifier
- Speak screens/reading assistance
- Sticky keys
- Live captions
- Color contrasts

>> SLIDE 21:

Internet Distribution-Hot Spot vs. Home Internet

- Hot spot or Home Internet Service?
 - Pros and cons for both options
- What to consider?
 - Cost
 - Usage and frequency
 - Location
 - Installation Process
 - Internet provider

>> SLIDE 22:

Internet Distribution-Planning

- Choose between providing a hot spot or home internet
- Identify/collaborate with service providers or organizations that offer reduced rates and/or assistants.
- Identify consumers that qualify for the service.
 - Collect necessary documents and complete enrollment.
- Schedule a date to teach consumers how to connect/use their internet (and distribute devices if you are providing hot spots).

>> SLIDE 23:

Access Living's Internet Distribution

- Hot spots instead of home internet service.
- Collaborate with a local entity for the hot spot and service.
- AL pays for the device and 1 year of service.
- Consumer has to qualify.
- 2 Hot Spot distribution days a year.
 - Distribute the hot spot
 - Connect the device to the consumer's computer/iPad
 - Facilitate a lesson on how to use the Hot Spot
- After 1 year-consumer can discontinue the service or pay a reduced fee.

>> SLIDE 24:

Access Living's
Technology Program:

Program Impacts

>> SLIDE 25:

Health/Mental Health:

- Use MyChart so that consumers can access their medical records, obtain test results, refill prescriptions and communicate with their doctors more efficiently and quickly.
- Attend medical appointments online
- Look up times and locations of fitness classes
- Learn cooking skills to be able to cook healthier meals
- Communicate with family and friends
- Pursue hobbies
- Watch videos/movies to destress and unwind

>> SLIDE 26:

Independent Living:

- Apply for social security
- Pay bills
- Manage online bank accounts
- Shop
- Housing search

Employment:

- Learn new employable skills
- Look for and apply for jobs
- Online interview
- Work remote

Education:

- Apply/attend school/training programs
- Learn new skills online
 - A new language, cooking, additional tech skills
- Attend CIL programs virtually

>> SLIDE 27:

Access Living's
Technology Program:

Best Practices and Program Recap

>> SLIDE 28:

Best Practice

- New vs. refurbished devices.
- Use the same device for all consumers throughout the training.
- Use pictures of the device in the lessons.
- Provide at least 6 training sessions-1 training is not enough support.
- Offer follow-up training sessions on certain topics.
- Limit group size (5-8 people).
- Have additional support staff available during the group (coordinator, intern, volunteer, peer support).
- Leading groups every quarter vs. every other quarter.

>> SLIDE 29:

Best Practice

- 1:1 and walk-in hours are helpful (sign-up for walk-in hours).
- Extra support for those using screen readers.
- One type of internet provider vs. multiple providers/services.
- In home internet vs. hot spot.
- Insurance on devices.
- We limit the program to 50 consumers every other quarter (100 consumers a year).
- Wait list for consumers.
- Provide a bag/case for the device.

>> SLIDE 30:

Technology Program Recap:

- Basic skills training course:
 - 6 sessions, 1-hour per session
- Additional lessons (advanced or review)
- Devices provided:
 - Computer or Tablet
 - Assistive devices/technology
 - Hotspot-the device and 1-year of free service
- Additional Support with the coordinator:
 - 1:1 individuated meetings
 - Walk-in hours
- Peer Support during groups

>> SLIDE 31:

Funding

- Internet providers (Comcast & AT&T)
- Federal, city, or state funding
- Private donors
- Start-up Grants
- Fundraising
- Digital Equity grants
- Broad band USA website
- Join local technology coalitions to learn about funding options in your area

>> SLIDE 32

Questions?