

Illinois CARE Connections FY2022 Summary

Program Overview

In FY2022, IATP extended the Illinois CARE Connections (ICC) program with funding from the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). This program provides technology devices for socially isolated seniors and persons with disabilities who are clients of the IDoA. The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) implements the program by processing referrals, purchasing and assembling the technology bundle for each participant and shipping the bundle to eligible recipients. The program uses an IATP developed accessible online referral system.

Each bundle included a tablet, either an iPad or a Samsung Galaxy, keyboard, headphones, case, the instruction manual produced by IATP in the language requested by the participant. Apps that were downloaded prior to shipping were Face Time of Google Hangout, Zoom, and Covid Coach. In addition, printed information on UIC's Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) was included to encourage participants to register for the 6-class sessions on creating a plan for wellness that is safe and easy to achieve.

Participants are eligible if they are age 60 or above and receiving services through IDoA's Community Care Program services and are at risk of being socially isolated, experiencing loneliness and a lack of connectedness. During Fiscal Year 2022, IATP and the University of Illinois Chicago-Assistive Technology Unit provided telephone technical assistance (TA) to 11 participants who needed help with the tablet bundle received. Five of the 11 TA provided were in-person support and training. This was a significant drop in the number of TA's provided the previous year which is attributed to the fact that the providers were able to step in with in-person supports as well as, on each tablet was a video training on the operation and use of the tablet as an ongoing resource for the participant. In addition, clear, concise, and accessible directions for operations of the device are included in the bundle for each package shipped in the needed language of the recipient.

Data Set Overview

A total of 215 referrals were approved in FY2022 with technology bundles (a tablet plus any add-ons needed to access internet) provided to eligible recipients. This report provides an analysis of final data on the 215 technology bundles provided. Post bundle receipt data was obtained from 70% of all recipients.

Age

The majority of the 215 individuals who received technology bundles are in the age group of 61-80 (77%) with 21% older than 80 and 2% age 60.

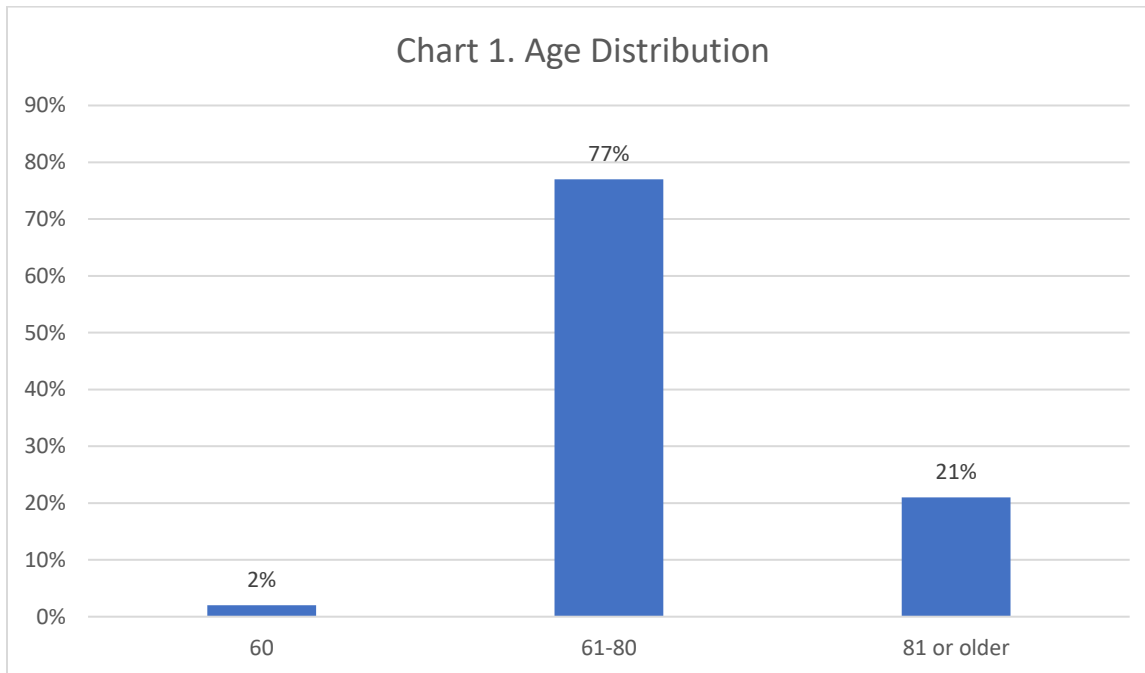


Chart 1 provides an overview of the age distribution of all bundle recipients.

Referral Reason

The vast majority of referrals identified combating social isolation (64%) as the primary desired outcome for obtaining the tablet bundle. The rest of the referrals identified being able to communicate with family (19%), being able to purchase necessities online (12%) and recreational activities (5%) as the primary desired outcome.

Functional Skills Needed to Use Tablet

Individuals completing a referral were asked to identify any functional limitations that would impact the ability of a recipient to use the tablet. This information was used to help identify any adaptations and/or peripherals that were needed for the basic tablet bundle. Questions were posed specific to interacting with a tablet. For example: Can the individual interact with a tablet without magnification, or do they need magnification? The vast majority of individuals referred had sufficient functional skills to use a tablet without significant adaptation, specifically 97% had sufficient cognition, 98% had sufficient motor skills, and 96% had sufficient hearing. Screen magnification was noted as needed in 26% of referrals making vision the functional area that required the most adaptation to support tablet use.

Bundle Types and Internet

Requests for iPads (63%) were at almost twice the rate as requests for Android based tablets (37%). This significant preference for iPads could be based on past use of and familiarity with IOS devices, more superficial awareness of the Apple/iPad brand name, or possibly an artifact of family or provider influence when completing the referral form and making the tablet equipment request. Internet access hotspots were provided to well over half (59%) of all recipients as part of the technology bundle.

- Total iPads 136
- Total Androids: 79
- Total Hotspots: 127

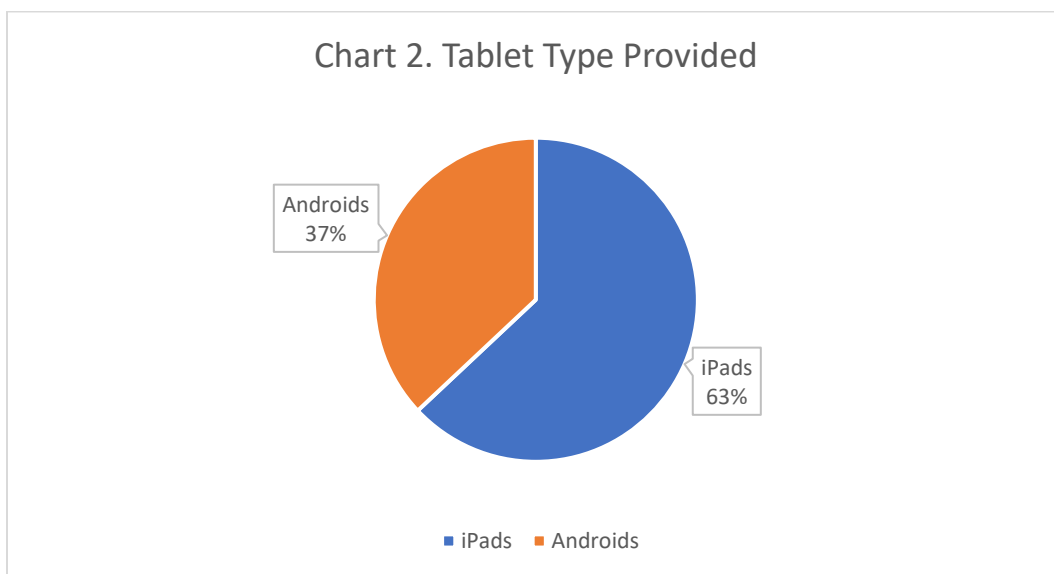


Chart 2 provides a summary of type of tablet provided to bundle recipients.

Loneliness Rating

The UCLA Loneliness Rating Scale was administered at the time of client referral to identify a baseline rating of loneliness and again after receipt of the tablet bundle to identify any change in rated level of loneliness. This scale provides a rating of 3 to 9 with ratings of 3-5 identified as "not lonely" and ratings of 6-9 as "lonely".

A total of 150 tablet bundle recipients reported pre and post loneliness rating scale scores. Almost two-thirds (62%) rated loneliness as less after obtaining the tablet bundle. Correlations between the age of clients who received a tablet bundle and loneliness ratings revealed no significant relationships. This was true for all recipients and for recipients by age group.

Prior Technology Use and Loneliness Rating Change

The change in loneliness rating was also analyzed as a function of prior tablet use. The majority (81%) of all bundle recipients had no prior tablet experience that would translate to using the bundle provided.

There was a slight difference in the level of loneliness rating improvement post bundle receipt between all recipients who had prior tablet experience (1.64-point improvement) and those who did not (1.14-point improvement). Both moved from a lonely rating area (6+) to a not lonely rating area (4.6-5.2) with the recipients who had prior tablet experience showing the larger impact on reducing loneliness. However, it is important to note that the N of those with prior tablet experience is very small (28) making it difficult to draw any conclusions from this difference.

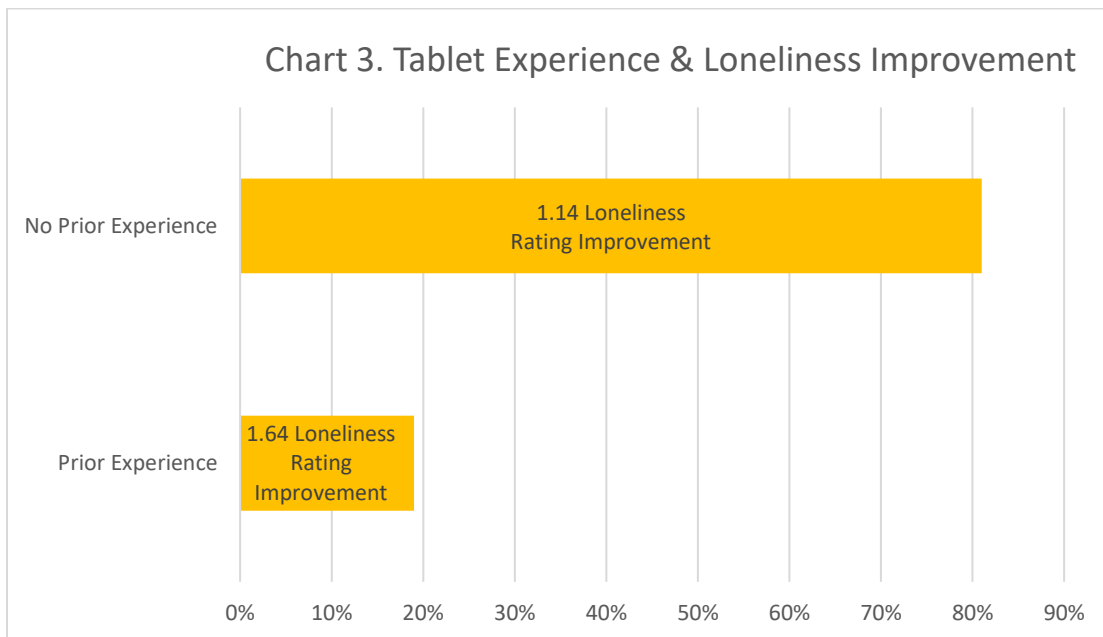


Chart 3 provides a summary of improvement or difference between improvement of those with and without prior tech experience.

Device and Instruction Use

Follow-up data from 150 bundle recipients indicate extensive use of the technology provided. Almost half recipients (47%) reported using the device more than 5 times per week or pretty much daily. Another 42% reported using the device 2 to 5 times per week which is still very regular use while 11% indicated they used the device once a week. Most recipients (79%) used the instructions provided with the bundle shipped.

1. A Short Scale for Measuring Loneliness in Large Surveys: Results From Two Population-Based Studies. Hughes ME, Waite LJ, Hawkley, LC, Capioppo [JT Research on Aging](#). 2004;26(6):655-672

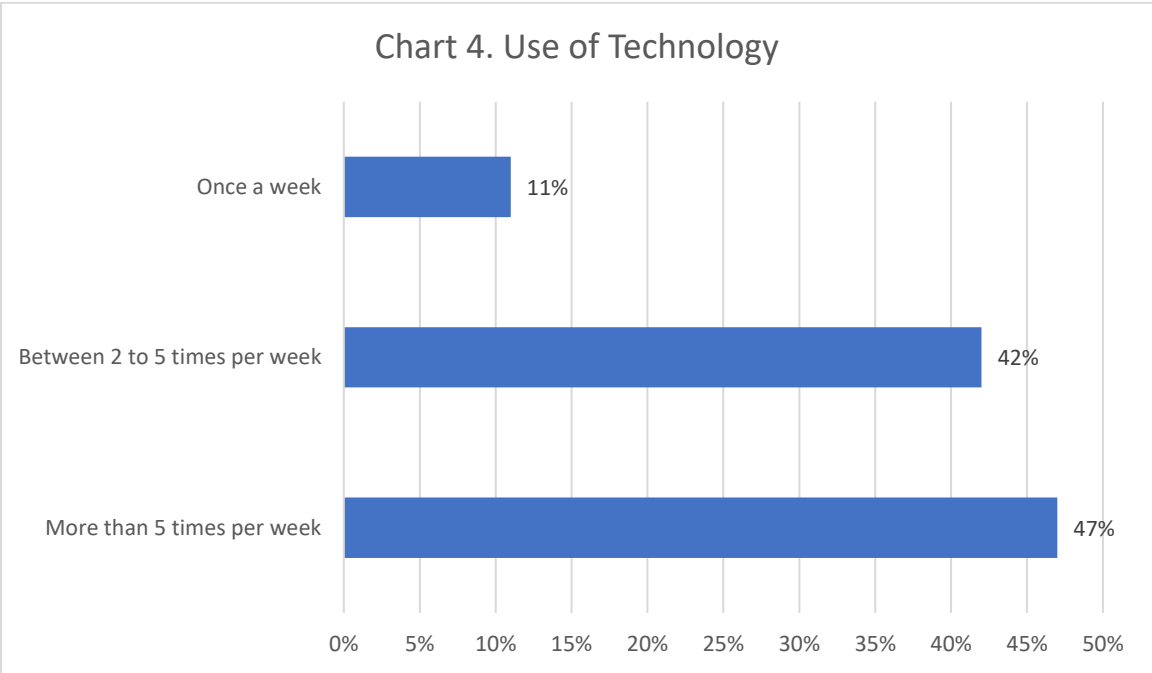


Chart 4 highlights time of technology use by bundle recipients.

Outcomes and Satisfaction

Overall, 94% of bundle recipients reported that they would not have been able to obtain the technology needed to address their social isolation without the Illinois Care Connections program. Recipients were also asked to report their level of satisfaction with the Care Connections program. Ninety-three percent (93%) of all recipients reported being highly satisfied or satisfied with the program.

Future Plans

IDoA partnered with IATP for Fiscal Year 2023, to offer seniors aged 60 and above who are receiving services through a Community Care Program statewide continued access to tablet bundles to increase socialization with family and friends and continue to decrease the feelings of loneliness and promote safety and wellness.