April 2020-April 2021

COVID Technology Capacity Building

Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities with funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

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Executive Summary

"There are decades where nothing happens and there are weeks where decades happen."
Vladimir Lenin

COVID forced decades of progress with the integration of technology further into the daily lives of people worldwide, including people with disabilities. When COVID forced people to shelter in place with limited service delivery, the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD) recognized its members would need to quickly increase their capacity to provide distance-delivered support. AADD received funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and partnered with Assistive Technology of Alaska, who provided technical expertise, and Champney Consulting, who provided project management support.

A total of 76 applications were received during the course of this project from 35 unique referral sources – primarily care coordinators. Fifty-eight Alaskans received equipment and assistance in learning to use it. Eighteen applicants did not receive assistance primarily due to lack of wi-fi access. Lack of follow-through by the support team impacted several applicants. In addition, approximately 20 service providers participated in at least one Zoom information-sharing session or related-webinar.

These resources provided critical assistance in accessing supports during this difficult time.

Project Goal

To ensure people with disabilities received the support they needed to stay healthy (physically and emotionally) throughout the course of the COVID pandemic

This goal focused on two primary outcomes:

1. To build capacity within the disability services system to provide distance-delivered support and services
2. To increase the number of people with disabilities who have access to technology by purchasing devices and support with connections to the Internet

Project Description

Due to COVID, disability service providers scaled back community-based services to protect the health of vulnerable Alaskans. The federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved an amendment to Medicaid regulations (Appendix K) which allowed services to be provided online through phone or videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom. This was a new service delivery model for both the service provider and the service recipient. This project focused on quickly supporting the development of this model. There were two components: 1) creating meaningful services for people delivered using a video-conferencing platform and 2) to ensure people had the equipment and access to participate in these services.

An important partner in this project was ATLA (Assistive Technology of Alaska). ATLA's team of specialists met with applicants and their supporters, identified the best device for the person to access online services and helped the person and their team set up and learn to use the device. An additional outcome of this project was expanded awareness of ATLA's services and expertise.

Project Summary

Component A: Build service provider capacity to deliver online services

- Provided training and peer support sessions via Zoom for six weeks. The first session kicked off April 17, 2020. Topics included the following:
    - Discussion of different online platforms
    - HIPAA considerations
    - Success stories from providers
    - Ideas for online activities
    - Topic-specific curriculum
    - Activities like Virtual Special Olympics and The Arc's monthly dances
- Developed a resource guide for service providers (attached to this report)
- Produced weekly newsletter for providers with resources and summary of Zoom information sessions
- The Arc of Anchorage led five peer-to-peer Zoom sessions for service providers as well as presented on their experiences with distance delivered services at the statewide Full Lives conference.

Component B: Provide technology to service recipients

- Applicants completed a simple one-page application (attached to this report) requesting a device to access online support
- Project manager Kim Champney reviewed applications for eligibility and completeness, followed up with referral source with questions as needed and forwarded completed applications to ATLA.
- ATLA technology specialists conducted mini-consults and provided equipment specific to individual needs.

Lessons Learned

The most important take-away from this project is that people with a wide range of abilities are able to engage successfully in and benefit from online activities.

Additional lessons:

- Access to online services and supports made people's lives better
- Broadband/wi-fi access is important

- The right equipment is important.
- Supporters (paid staff, family members) need both technical training as well as education about the benefits and possibilities of technology in the lives of people with disabilities.

Access to online services and supports made people's lives better: Repeatedly throughout this project success stories demonstrated that many people with disabilities positively benefitted from online activities. In a post-project survey, 73% of the respondents said they "Strongly Agreed" that the applicant's quality of life was improved by the technology received. (Full survey responses attached to this report)

Broadband/wi-fi access is important: COVID illustrated the impact of the digital divide. This divides occurs in two ways in Alaska:

1. People with disabilities often have limited incomes and can't afford monthly internet fees
2. People in rural, remote Alaskan communities have limited broadband access because of their distance from the middle mile. This will change as technology changes (i.e. satellite internet) but is currently a challenge.

The internet is the door to another level of community inclusion. Because this project specifically addressed isolation during COVID, internet access was critical. Introducing people with disabilities, particularly people with I/DD to online opportunities has engaged people in many, many different ways. Examples of online activities included:

- Scavenger hunts
- Cooking projects
- Art classes
- Sign language
- Role-playing games
- Dances
- Exercise classes
- Advocacy meetings

It is difficult to fully document the many different ways people connected online. It is disheartening that many people who could have benefitted from accessing the online community were not able to because they had no access to the Internet.

The right equipment is important: Technology does not work with a one-size-fits-all approach. It's important that people receive devices that are specific to what they want to do as well as have features that fit their abilities. This project allowed for flexibility in purchasing equipment to meet individual needs and preferences.

Supporters (paid staff, family members) need both technical training as well as education about the benefits and possibilities of technology in the lives of people with disabilities: People with disabilities are capable of learning to use technology and to access online supports and activities but rely on other people for assistance. Support team members' assumptions about a person's abilities or interests at times posed barriers. Lack of follow-through by the paid support staff was a frequent challenge. An ATLA technology specialist stated, "There needs to be a message from the top down of an agency that prioritizing AT for the clients they serve is important."

In addition to addressing assumptions regarding technology, support team members need technology training. This training does not need to be at a high level; basic digital literacy is critical and cannot be assumed. Examples include how the internet works, the role of an Apple ID, and basic problem-solving skills. An ATLA specialist stated, "Overall, a challenge I saw often was that the support person had limited technology skills."

Next Steps

Based on the experiences of this project, recommendations for next steps include:

#1:   Fully commit to being a Technology First state.

Technology First means that a state (or system or organization) embraces technology as the first source of support when addressing service plan outcomes. Currently there are 17 Technology First states. In a survey conducted by ANCOR (a national service provider association) direct support professionals working in Technology First states had a significantly higher rate of believing they had the knowledge to support technology use than non-Technology First states. Technology is an important piece to addressing the critical workforce shortages occurring in Alaska as well as across the United States. The ANCOR survey also revealed that 58% of the respondents agreed that technology will help in addressing the workforce crisis. (Source: ANCOR IDD Technology Webinar, March 29, 2021)

"Technology First began as a movement but has transformed to a framework for systems change where technology is considered first in the discussion of support options available to individuals and families through person-centered approaches to promote meaningful participation, social inclusion, self-determination and quality of life." (Shea Tanis, Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities, 2019)

A public, long-term commitment to technology will inspire Alaskans throughout the system (from people receiving supports to direct support professionals to organizations to policymakers) to focus on maximizing the possibilities technology has to offer. In addition, there are opportunities for Alaska to learn from other Technology First states by fully participating in this network.

#2:   Increase access to technology training.

This is a simple statement that has many layers to it. Training just to train is not effective; it has to go hand-in-hand with a systemwide commitment to integrating technology. Basic digital literacy is the first step – DSPs, case managers, assisted living home managers, family members and other supporters need competence in basic technology usage. The next tier of expertise is building capacity to address technology problems that arise. Several providers shared they are reluctant to encourage technology use because they have limited IT resources. A model that is growing in use is to support the development of super users within provider organizations. A DSP or frontline supervisor can complete additional training and provide assistance to colleagues. Disability Cocoon, a national leader in technology for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, has developed an online training program focused on skills for direct support professionals and organizations supporting people with I/DD. This program – called Shift – may be a way forward for Alaskan service providers. More information on Shift available at https://disabilitycocoon.com/shift-1.

#3:   Strengthen funding streams for services and equipment.

Resources are needed to expand technology use in Alaska. Both funding for service delivery as well as equipment would go far in impacting technology use statewide.

Areas to explore that would build the technology infrastructure:
- Continue distance-delivered service option: COVID provided the opportunity for Alaska to test out distance-delivered services. For the most part, this test was successful. Not all providers jumped on board for a variety of reasons. But there are discussions about continuing this flexibility at some level beyond COVID. One provider shared how the organization worked with a person to install a camera/computer in his home so a staff person could prompt him through certain daily routines. "We won't go back to in person, we need to continue remote. It would be a regression for us to go back to the way it was before."

- Implement remote support option: Introducing a new waiver service, such as remote support, is a more complex and longer-term opportunity. Remote support is different from distance-delivered services; it uses two-way communication in real time, including home-based sensors, cameras and other devices, to provide a less invasive means of monitoring and responding to the needs of individuals living in their own homes. Providers bill a lower rate for being on call and a staff person responds as needed instead of having a staff person on site with a person. One staff person may support multiple individuals in different locations at the same time. At least 21 states offer remote support as

an option through their HCBS waiver services (Health Management Associates report for the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, October 2020).

- Continue to provide flexible funding for equipment: Alaska has had several initiatives that provided (or continue to provide) funding for equipment for people with disabilities. Mini-grants through the Alaska Mental Health Trust have provided a steady option for eligible beneficiaries. ATLA has multiple grant programs that fund equipment. And, most recently, the Aging and Disability Resource Centers received funds for equipment. These kinds of flexible funds are critical in providing access. As technology becomes more embedded in service delivery, maintenance and replacement costs will need to be considered, in addition to the cost of initial purchases.

A final point regarding funding streams – in an interview with Jerry Bernard, a technology consultant who is also the leader of a large service provider organization in South Carolina; he shared that one of the mistakes he and other providers and leaders made was to make technology expansion and integration more difficult than it needed to be. He pointed out that it's so much easier now than it was years ago because for more people, off-the-shelf devices or low-cost apps can address many support needs. It's important to consider items people are using every day. "It doesn't have to be horribly expensive," he shared. Mr. Bernard would be an excellent resource to introduce to Alaska providers who would benefit from hearing his story of organizational transformation.

#4:   Advocate for affordable broadband access.

Last but not least, affordable broadband access is an important part of the equation. Alaska is currently ranked 51st in broadband access (Broadband Now, April 2021). Human service providers need to be at the table along with other industries and institutions to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are included in the state's broadband planning. Increasingly, internet access is becoming a necessary utility – in the way that electricity and water is critical to meeting daily needs. During this project, one trend that emerged is the reluctance of some assisted living home providers to provide wi-fi access to residents. Reasons for this reluctance included everything from HIPAA concerns and internet safety to lack of technical support to the belief that residents would not be interested in online activities. Broadband advocacy includes educating the system "gatekeepers" as well as partnering with internet providers to look at funding opportunities and innovative improvements. (Attached to this report is a document: "The Rights of People with Cognitive Disabilities to Technology and Information Access")

In Summary

When the COVID pandemic hit, Alaska's services providers, funders and policymakers rose to the challenge. Technology offered an important tool in the pandemic response. This report is written with the hope that the momentum gained and the lessons learned feed the next phase in expanding opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities.

Attachments

Best Practices Guide

Technology Application

Post-Project Surveys (ATLA Team & Referral Sources)

Technology Access Rights Document

Alaska's COVID Technology Response Project

Best Practices Guide

Technology opens the door to community access and social connection for people with disabilities, especially during the current pandemic. This guide offers some ideas and tips.

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Trust
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AADD

OVERVIEW

There are multiple ways technology can assist people with disabilities live the life they choose as well as supporting health and well-being during the pandemic. This guide is not all inclusive but is intended to encourage the introduction and support of technology in the lives of people with disabilities and summarizes lessons learned during the initial stages of this project.

Here are a few definitions to keep in mind:

Remote Support: also known as remote monitoring, is typically a combination of assistive devices that address safety concerns (such as cooking safety, medication dispensing, front door access, etc.) as well as provide support as needed through face-to-face communication.

Distance-delivered services: Under Appendix K, during the pandemic, service providers have been allowed to bill for services where a direct support professional delivers a waiver habilitative service to an individual either by phone or video.

Telehealth: Healthcare providers, including PT, OT, and speech as well as behavioral health services are delivering services from a distance either by phone or video.

In addition to the service types described above, people with and without disabilities are using video communication platforms to participate in community events and classes as well as to stay connected with friends and family.

While COVID is increasing the sense of urgency around technology, the supports described above will not go away once the pandemic is over. Experts have been predicting services will evolve and technology will play a bigger role in the lives of people with disabilities for several years now. Many states are ahead of Alaska in their adoption and success stories. The time is now to jump on board.

GETTING STARTED

Where to start? There's no step-by-step list. Every community, every provider, and every individual are different. Here are some recommendations and resources:

- Identify tech champions in your organization – who are the people comfortable with technology who can be available to problem solve or contribute to the planning effort? Does your organization provide services to a person who is tech savvy and could offer peer support?
- Commit to providing internet access in the spaces you control, i.e. group homes. In some states internet is considered essential and the cost is included in room and board or covered in the Medicaid rate.
  - Partner with a local internet provider. Questions to ask:
    - ✓ Can they provide discounts to support internet access for people with disabilities?
    - ✓ What support can they provide to manage data? *Note: Many providers have shared they are reluctant to provide internet access to recipients because of data misuse by recipients or employees in the past. Most internet providers have addressed this concern and have ways to control data usage.*
    - ✓ What filters are available to ensure safety? In addition to parental controls, filters are now available to block illegal or dangerous websites to ensure safety. One example: https://www.asavie.com/
- Portable mi-fi units may offer an opportunity to meet with people in a safe environment – possibly outdoors or in a well-ventilated indoor location with just a few people. This will allow for an in-person demonstration session – how to log on, how to access Zoom, etc.
- Consider setting up a media room at your office in a space that can be cleaned between users – this will allow for in-person support with learning technology.
- Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) has many programs and technology funding options, depending on a person's disability. Reach out to ATLA to discuss individual technology needs and resources. https://www.atlaak.org/
- Learn from your peers! Join AADD's COVID Tech Project listserve for training and information. Reach out to other providers to ask how it is going and share ideas.

PLANNING ONLINE ACTIVITIES

As the pandemic continues through the fall and winter, services may need to continue to be distance delivered. Service providers around Alaska (and across the country) have successfully engaged people with a wide range of activities to keep them connected and active.

There are different structures to deliver services. Most common are group activities where a small group of recipients meet in a Zoom room with an activity facilitator and possibly additional staff. Another option is a DSP providing support as needed to a person participating in a community-based online class. There are thousands to choose from right now, in every interest area. Or a DSP may meet one-on-one with someone to provide a service. This is the most difficult scenario to make engaging and meaningful.

This section provides planning and facilitation considerations:

- Consider what will connect people if planning a group:
    - Shared interest in a particular activity
    - Age-specific activity: For example there are programs specializing in transition for teens and young adults that focus on independent living skills like budgeting, goal-setting, etc.
    - Social connections: are there friend groups who would like to spend time together?
    - Peer support
    - For ongoing groups – have the participants identify the activities they are interested in

- Know your audience:
    - Will they need a reminder about the time of the group?
    - Is there someone who can help with logging on and learning the technology?
    - Consider walking them through a Zoom test meeting. Here's a link to a Zoom Test Meeting: *Link to Join Meeting Test* (http://zoom.us/test)

- Choose the right group leader:
    - Is the leader comfortable with the technology? Perhaps staff team up and divide responsibilities.

- It's important to pre-plan. Consider creating a simple class plan that includes:
    1. Timeline of activities
    2. Warm-up/Icebreaker activity
    3. Main activity including goals being addressed
    4. Review of the meeting rules

5. Time to visit
6. Breaks
7. Supplies Needed
8. Visual Cues – videos, pictures, etc. Have them open and ready to share.

- Commit to the learning curve:
  - It may take some trial and error to make it work for everyone.
  - The technology takes time to learn, both for people with disabilities and staff. It takes patience but people of all ages and abilities are being successful.

FACILITATION BEST PRACTICES

- Simplify access as much as possible
  - Keep the meeting link/software the same
  - Use simple consistent passwords
- Keep groups small or use breakout rooms to help people engage
- Orient people to the audio and video controls of the technology, such as how to mute and unmute the audio, turn the camera on or off, use the chat, and explain when to use these features in the group. May need to review this repeatedly depending on the group participants
- Let people in the meeting know how to participate if it's a group situation – Should they raise their hand physically? Is there a button to push that will indicate they want to speak?
- Build in transition time – 10 minutes in the beginning so people can get on and say hello. Consider adding time at the end to socialize.
- Stay flexible – make changes based on experience
- Plan for breaks to go around the "room" to ensure everyone gets a chance to give input, including those who may be quiet or have not yet stepped up to add their thoughts.
- Build in time to stretch/move – take stretch breaks
- Create a consistent structure for each virtual session – start creating new routines
- Avoid anything that could intensify sensory overload, including background noise, bad audio, large groups, brightness, or messy backgrounds. Your role as the facilitator is to manage those distractions. As the facilitator, you may need to mute people.
- It's OK if people call in on the phone – be sure to describe what is happening and who is in the meeting because they won't know. Also at the beginning of the meeting/group – type their name in the participant list so people know who's on the phone.
- As the facilitator, you should keep the phone number and access for the meeting handy, in case you need to call in because of poor audio quality or an unstable internet connection.

ZOOM TIPS

Zoom is the most common platform being used to provide services as well as for virtual events. While there have been some concerns with safety, taking reasonable precautions addresses the safety issues. In addition, Zoom has made significant changes to ensure the safety of participants. Zoom provides many how-to guides and resources. Zoom handouts, which can be either emailed or printed and displayed in various settings, are included at the end of this guide.

Here are a few highlights:

Safety precautions

- Don't publish the Zoom link on social media
- Set up either a passcode or a waiting room (Zoom will require this beginning 9.27.20).
  - Again – make the process to join an activity as simple as possible for the participant. A waiting room option is easier than expecting someone to enter a passcode.

Other tech tips

- Keep the phone number and access for the meeting handy, in case you need to call in because of poor audio quality or an unstable internet connection.
- If you call in while staying on the computer video, turn your computer 'speakers' off. This is different choosing 'mute'. If you're on both the computer and the phone there will be a loud echo that will make it impossible for people to hear each other. Just remember to turn your computer speakers back on after the meeting is over.
- If there is an unstable internet connection, give Zoom time to adjust – it will often improve in a few minutes. In the meantime, turning off the video may help.

Here is a series of short how-to videos created by a service provider for people with disabilities and supporters on how to use Zoom:

How To Join a Zoom Meeting:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ApwdyWdV_s&feature=youtu.be

How to Use Zoom During a Meeting:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fY0ZlWi8n-U&feature=youtu.be

How to Download Zoom
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRrIJVQAlNQ&feature=youtu.be

If you plan to share your screen, pay attention to the screen pictured below which pops up after you click Share Screen – choose what you want people to see by clicking:

A = Blue Screen: everyone will see whatever you see on your screen.

B = Whiteboard: for games like Pictionary or Hangman

C = A specific file: If your file is open on your computer, it will appear as an option when you screen share.

D = If you are going to share a video with sound, check the "Share Computer Sound" box to ensure good sound quality. If you check the "Optimize screen sharing for video clip" – then you won't see the participant screen when you are sharing a video or doing a presentation.
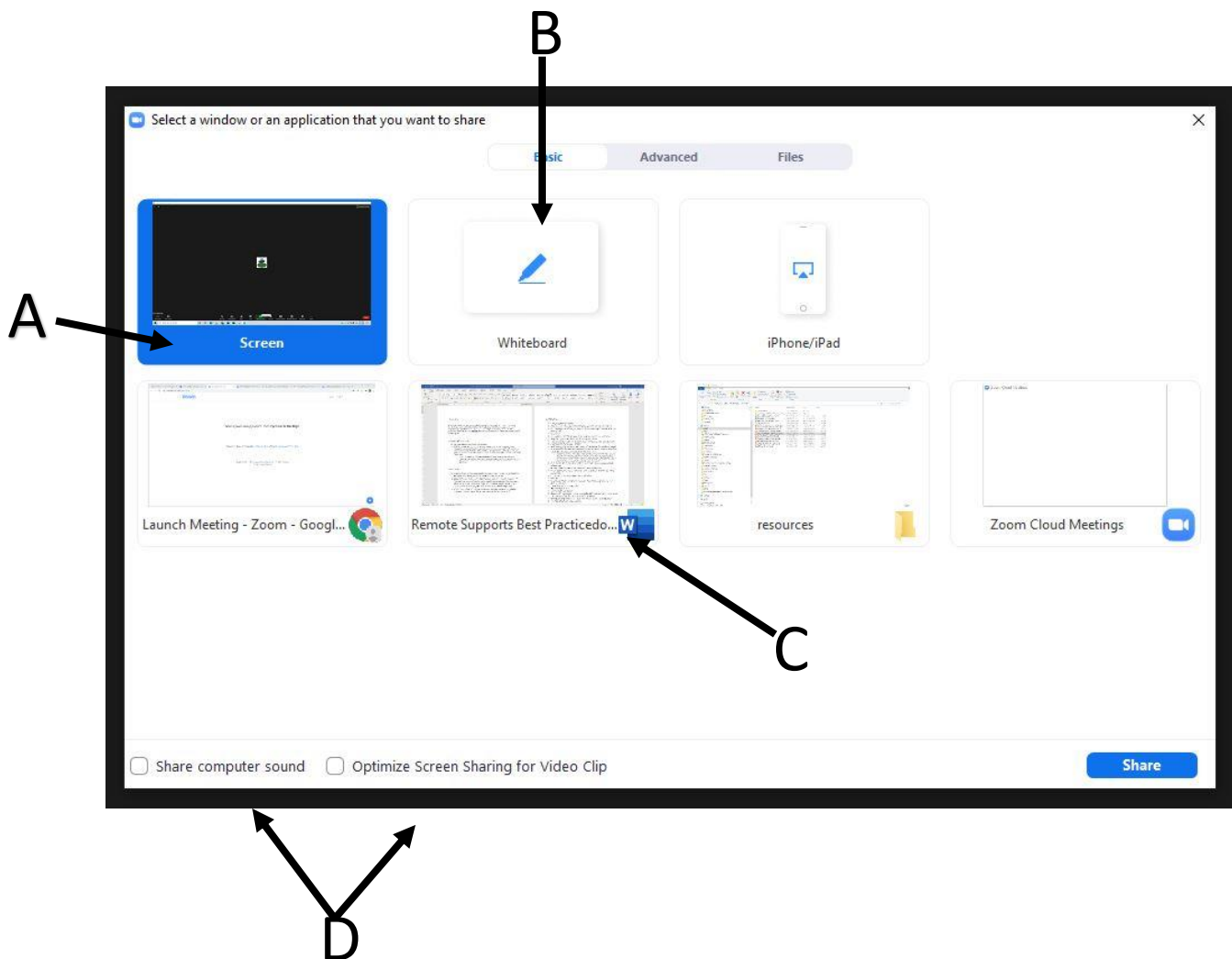
ONLINE ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Card games like War, Yahtzee
- Exercising – you can use screen sharing and participate in an online exercise class together. Or someone from the group could lead an exercise routine. Zumba and yoga have been popular options.
- Use action figures to role play scenarios specific to individual goals (safety, social skills, employment)
- Simon Says
- Use a prop like a stuffed animal, photo to engage in conversations, turn taking
- Art projects (drop materials off, then do art together online)
- A virtual experience tour – lots of these online, see Resources page of this document
- Explore music using YouTube – karaoke!
- Walk in place while watching a travel video (YouTube has lots of virtual hiking options)
- Do It Yourself facial masks using items found in a kitchen. Add on painting nails and call it a Spa Day. Here's a sample recipe (there are many online!)
  - *Combine 1/2 cup hot—not boiling—water and 1/3 cup oatmeal. After the water and oatmeal have settled for two or three minutes, mix in 2 tablespoons plain yogurt, 2 tablespoons honey, and 1 small egg white. Apply a thin layer of the **mask** to your **face**, and let it sit for 10 to 15 minutes. Then rinse with warm water.*

- Photo collages/photo quilt – collect pictures and create a collage using powerpoint, publisher, etc
- Scavenger Hunts for items around the house or in a neighborhood
- Virtual walks together – go on individual walks – show people what they are seeing using phones
- Dance parties – search *Just Dance videos* on YouTube
- Charades – use texting/private chatting to assign words
- Virtual Disney Rides – on YouTube. In a group – have breakout rooms by ride type (fantasy, scary, etc)
- Storytelling – each person says a line
- American Sign Language class
- Dungeons & Dragons group – use the website Roll 20 for

Adventure Club Idea
Staff set up community-based challenges - for example, a treasure hunt that a participant completes around town with a parent or direct support professional. Afterward - everyone in the group meets on Zoom and shares their experience with the activity. For every challenge completed, the person earns a badge or points (either tangible or digital). So many badges/points earned then you level up. Earn prizes for reaching certain levels.

campaigns, dice rolling, etc. (In a Zoom session, share the screen to view Roll 20 platform)

- Cooking - one program started a "Salad Club" – everyone made salads together and then ate their salads. Also Special Olympics has been hosting a weekly "Cooking with Darcy" event.
- Use Zoom Whiteboard – play Pictionary or Hangman
- Educational groups on topics like budgeting, social skills, advocacy, etc. Zoom makes it easy to share visuals like videos or photos.

5-To-1 Countdown: To get focused before an activity

◊ Describe 5 things you see in the room

◊ Name 4 things you can feel ("my feet on the floor" or "the air in my nose")

◊ Name 3 things you hear right now ("traffic outside")

◊ Name 2 things you can smell right now (or 2 smells you like)

◊ Name 1 good thing about yourself

EMPLOYMENT

While new employment opportunities may be limited during this time, meaningful skill-building and job exploration activities can occur remotely. This may also be a good opportunity to partner with the local school district transition program to create new relationships. Schools will be seeking out meaningful remote learning options.

Employment-related activities that can be supported remotely:

- Job seeking skills training
    - Practice interviewing
    - Online applications
    - Review job listings
    - Resume development
        - Consider working with someone to develop a video resume – can use Zoom to record. Lots of information online – here's one resource: https://ohioemploymentfirst.org/view.php?nav_id=120
- Career Exploration – lots of online tools for this! Examples:
    - MyNext Move (https://www.onetonline.org/help/onet/mynextmove)
    - Youtube videos highlighting areas of interest
    - Informational interviews via Zoom
    - Online Interest inventories: Pictorial Interest Inventory is one example (https://ca01000043.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/220/Pictoral_Interest_Inventory_template_Boces.pdf)
- Vocational Evaluation
- Job Development
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
    - Explore Work is an online resource, specific for transition age – from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WITAC) (https://explore-work.com/)
- Career Discovery
- Job Coaching
    - Explore apps to provide remote support through the SOAR search engine at the Job Accommodation Network (https://askjan.org/soar.cfm)
    - MeMinder app was developed specifically for people with IDD who need vocational supports (http://createabilityinc.com/vocational-assistance/)

APSE (Association for Persons in Supported Employment) is a very good resource for information! https://apse.org/

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Curriculum Example

This curriculum example was provided by Capabilities Inc. during an APSE Remote Supports Webinar – all learning objectives can be completed via phone or videoconference. Site visits are coordinated remotely with willing employers.

Session 1: Worksite Behaviors

- Introduction: shaking hands and making eye contact – discuss the importance
- Importance of first impressions
- Good and bad body language/ behavior
- Watch videos of jobs visiting in next meeting (if available/ time allows)

Session 2 & 3: Site Visits

- Visit two community employers to learn about jobs (remotely or with safety precautions in place)
- Employer's daily duties, personnel, daily expectations, shifts, accommodations, compensations, and unwritten rules of work at job sites
- Review site visits
- Importance of thank you notes
- Thank you notes

Session 5 & 6: Site Visits

- Visit two community employers to learn about jobs (remotely or with safety precautions in place)
- Employer's daily duties, personnel, daily expectations, shifts, accommodations, compensations, and unwritten rules of work at job sites
- Review site visits
- Thank you notes

Session 7: Networking (consider local Rotary groups, business organizations)

- Networking using social networking
- Appropriate social media
- Local networking organizations
- Local resources
- Contact local networking organizations and resource

RESOURCES

National Technology Resources
- Disability Cocoon: information hub dedicated to relevant technology for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities https://disabilitycocoon.com/
  - Shift Technology training: Disability Cocoon recently launched a technology training program specifically for DSPs and organizations providing supports to people with developmental disabilities https://disabilitycocoon.com/shift-1
- National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging distributed resource guides targeted at training volunteers on how to teach technology use to older adults: TeachSD Toolkit: https://sdsu.app.box.com/s/4bciiodwx6n3wllhqqzjskabxka3014z
- Mobile Internet Skills Training Toolkit: a collection of short simple videos on different platforms – Youtube, Facebook, Whatsapp, etc. as well as more general safety and accessibility features: https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/connected-society/mistt/
- Apple: recently introduced a dedicated support team to address accessibility questions; launched a new website focused on accessibility features - https://support.apple.com/accessibility
- APSE (Association for Persons in Supported Employment) is a very good resource for information! https://apse.org/

Alaska Resources
- Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities: to connect with other service providers and information regarding technology and people with developmental disabilities http://www.aaddalaska.org/
- Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA): https://www.atlaak.org/
- Stone Soup Group's COVID resources: https://www.stonesoupgroup.org/resources-for-families/. Stone Soup is also providing virtual activities like monthly game groups and Friendships & Dating classes.
- Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska has ideas for online activities: https://www.alzalaska.org/social-hub/
- Special Olympics Alaska: lots of virtual activities – from dance parties, to cooking classes, to sports challenges. Details on their website – specialolympicsalaska.org

Recreational Activities
- Great activity list for kids: https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/04/28/parents-guide-education-resources-coronavirus/?arc404=true

- Great list of virtual tours: https://www.forbes.com/sites/laurabegleybloom/2020/04/27/ranked-worlds-15-best-virtual-tours-coronavirus/#72bafd0a6709
- Another list of virtual field trips: https://www.weareteachers.com/best-virtual-field-trips/
- Virtual Disney Rides: available on the Virtual Disney Youtube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYyJUEtYv-ZW7BgjhP3UbTg
- Online Uno with Friends: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/p/uno-with-friends/9p110p3hnghd?activetab=pivot:overviewtab

Curriculum/Educational Activities
- Skills to pay the bills curriculum: https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/
- Online safety: https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/resources/safeguards-resources/i-can-be-safe-online/

Other
- Can Plan App: this is a simple app that can help organize daily tasks and schedules. https://www.canassist.ca/EN/main/programs/technologies-and-devices/at-home/canplan.html
- House Party: Houseparty is a social networking app that allows up to eight people to video chat at once in a "room." There is a dice option that makes playing games easy. https://www.pocket-lint.com/apps/news/151530-what-is-houseparty-the-group-video-chat-app-that-s-brightening-up-isolation
- Netflix Party: This is a Google Chrome add-on that allows people to watch a Netflix movie together remotely. All participants have to have a Netflix account. Combine it with Zoom to have a movie night with friends remotely. https://www.netflixparty.com/
- Simply Home provides innovative, person-centered technology options to support people being independent in their home environment. They provide information videos and resources. https://www.simply-home.com/
  - FeelSafe Consulting is an Alaskan-based partner of Simply Home that can provide consultations and advice: http://www.feelsafeconsulting.com/

Zoom - How to Zoom

Zoom helps people meet, talk, and share with video phone calls

Connect to Zoom on Your Device
Go to Zoom website using your computer browser: *Link to Zoom website* (zoom.us)

OR

Download the Zoom app to your phone or tablet:
Go to the Zoom Download Center: *Link to Zoom Download Center* (zoom.us/download)

Choose the blue Download button labeled Zoom Client for Meetings.

Watch a video - TMG: Zoom Made Easy

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ApwdyWdV_s&feature=youtu.be

Join a Zoom Meeting from an Email Message

Check your email. Open the Zoom message.

Click the link entitled "Join Zoom Meeting."

A pop up box will ask if you want to Open Zoom. If you are on a computer, click Open Zoom. If you are using a phone or tablet, click "Ok."

Need help?
Join a test meeting: *Link to Join Meeting Test* (http://zoom.us/test)

Zoom Help Center: *Link to Zoom Help Center* (https://support.zoom.us)

ZOOM – HOW TO SET UP SOUND & VIDEO

Zoom helps people meet, talk, and share with video phone calls

How to set up your Sound & Video in Zoom:

After you join a Zoom Meeting …

1. Pick your sound from choices on the popup box
Phone Call:

- Click "Phone Call"
- Call a phone number on the "Dial" list
- Type in the Meeting ID numbers, then #

Computer Audio:

- Click "Computer Audio"
- Click button labeled "Join with Computer Audio"
- Test Speaker and Microphone

2. Start your Video

- On Computer: Click "Start Video" button at bottom of page
- On Phone or Tablet: Click "Join with Video"

Need help?
Join a test meeting: *Link to Join Meeting Test* (http://zoom.us/test)

Zoom Help Center: *Link to Zoom Help Center* (https://support.zoom.us)

ZOOM - MEETING CONTROLS

Zoom helps people meet, talk, and share with video phone calls

**Videos on Zoom Meeting Controls**

New York Institute of Technology on Zoom Meeting Controls: *Link to video on You Tube*

Video from Zoom on Meeting Controls: *Link to video on You Tube*

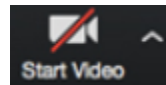**Important Zoom Meeting Controls**

1. The Microphone Button (Unmute or Mute)

- Click "Unmute" to talk
- Click "Mute" to turn your microphone off
- Click the up arrow to expand microphone menu to check your sound
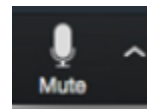
2. The Camera Button (Start or Stop Video)

- Click "Start Video" to turn camera on
- Click "Stop Video" to turn camera off
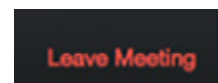- Click the up arrow to expand video menu to check your video

3. The Share and Chat Buttons

- Click "Share" at bottom to show the screen on your device to others
- Click "Chat" at bottom to type messages to people in the group
- You can share web pages or chat with others
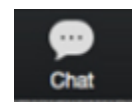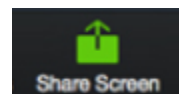
4. The Leave Meeting Button
- Click the "Leave Meeting" button to exit the meeting

ZOOM - SOCIAL RULES

Zoom helps people meet, talk, and share with video phone calls

Video Meeting Social Rules

1. Be Ready

- Do: Practice before the meeting
- Do: Be on time
- Do Not: Wait for the start time to practice getting into a Zoom meeting
- Do Not: Show up late

2. Check Sound
- Do: Unmute microphone to talk
- Do: Listen to others
- Do Not: Eat food during meeting
- Do Not: Make too much noise

3. Check Video
- Do: Wear nice clothes
- Do: Groom your hair before the meeting
- Do Not: Wear your PJs (pajamas) to the meeting
- Do Not: Use a bad background

4. Take Turns
- Do: Raise your hand
- Do: Type in the chat box
- Do Not: Talk over others
- Do Not: Talk too long

COVID Response Technology Project
Application for Tech Access

Applicants will receive individualized assistance to identify technology based on the person's abilities and needs.

Name of person who needs technology assistance:

Date of Birth:

Physical Address (include community/town):

Name of person making this referral & provider organization:

Relationship to the individual requiring assistance:

Two ways to contact the person making this referral:

Has this person received a Trust mini-grant this year?   Yes   No

How will technology benefit this person (check all that at apply):

☐ Social connections
☐ Maintaining routines (activities of daily living)
☐ Help in event of emergency situations
☐ Distance delivered services/remote supports
☐ Medication assistance
☐ Visitor safety
☐ Medical care (telehealth)
☐ Falls
☐ Seizures
☐ Kitchen safety
☐ Behavioral support
☐ Other (please describe below)

Tell us more:

Brief description of person's abilities - please specify if the person is deaf, hard of hearing or has a speech-related disability:

Living Situation:

Key team members/supporters who can assist with technology:

Does the person currently have Internet access at home?   Yes   No   Unsure

Send the completed form to TechAssistProject@protonmail.com. This is an encrypted email account created specifically for this project. Any questions regarding this application email kim@champneyconsulting.com.

Questions for ATLA Team
AADD COVID Rapid Response Lessons Learned

This survey was completed by five technology specialists at ATLA who provided direct assistance to project applicants.

What were the biggest challenges in providing online access to people in this project?

Use this rating scale for each of the following:
5: Major challenge – applies to most of the applicants
4: Significant challenge – applies to approximately 50% of the applicants
3: Definitely a challenge – applies to less than 50% but still major impact
2: A challenge in limited situations – applies to a handful of people
1: Not a challenge

- Ability of the person receiving technology: **3 - Definitely a challenge**
- Skills of the person providing assistance to the person in their home: **3.2 - Definitely a challenge**
- Attitude of the person providing assistance: **2.4 – A challenge in limited situations**
- Logistics like setting up Apple IDs, network passwords: **4 – Significant challenge**
- Lack of broadband access: **3 – Definitely a challenge**

How would you rate the technology readiness (i.e. motivated, ready to invest time & resources if needed, recognized the importance of technology) of the following stakeholders?

Use this rating scale:
5: Very ready to adopt technology – top priority
4: Recognize it is important, not ready to invest the time, resources
3: Open to the idea but don't see it as a priority
2: All talk but no action
1: Don't see it as important, not motivated, technology not on the radar

- People with disabilities: **4.6 – Recognize it is important**
- Paid direct service staff: **3.2 - Open to the idea but not a priority**
- Care coordinators: **3.8 – (Almost) Recognize it is important**
- Family members: **4 - Recognize it is important**
- Provider organization managers: **3 - Open to the idea but not a priority**

If this project were going to be repeated, what changes do you recommend (specific to providing online access for people with disabilities) to improve outcomes?

- The individuals filling out the application should notify the person that is listed as the Point of Contact. I had a few instances where the person filling out the application wasn't the person to talk to about the client. It was also unclear on who should be attending trainings - i.e. other staff members with the ALH.
- The beneficiary is qualified to start the grant program before CC submits the application.
- A designated reliable support person is determined before submitting the application. That person agrees to call back, be available, set up appointments, and follow through to benefit the beneficiary. After working with the many different support individuals, it was not their skill level but their follow through that determined the success.
- The CC who submits the grant application will be available to assist in contacting the designated support person. For example, when I emailed a CC to let them know after numerous attempts to connect, I was not getting a response from the designated support person. The CC emailed me "can't you call her?" That did not benefit the client.
- The timeframe we hold the requested equipment is limited. If the designated support person and CC does not respond, we return equipment to inventory so another client can utilize the equipment.
- More education to family members, stakeholders, care providers, etc on digital literacy. The presentation with Christine O Connor was excellent. There was a lot of misunderstanding how the internet works, how an iPad works along with setting up Apple IDs, etc and a lot of time spent educating.
- Easier access to cc's, and the amount of time they can spend with the client to help set up the tech.

What changes would you like to see in the community-based service system generally to increase access to technology for people with disabilities?

- Consistency with services, for example, all clients in group homes are able to use the Wi-Fi that is available in their home.
- A message from the top down of an agency that prioritizing AT for the clients they serve is important. Awareness that social isolation along with the challenges and behavioral issues that comes with isolation can be diminished using the proper tools.
- CC understands the importance of their role. There are steps that need to be completed after you turn in a referral. As the paid broker of services, your clients need you to be aware of and actively involved in the process.
- Advocacy at a state and federal level about increasing broadband access for people with disabilities.
- Advocacy for ALHs to provide internet access (even if subsidized). We are living in a technological day and age & many devices require internet access. The fact that some ALHs made it difficult or refused to provide access was disheartening.
- I think the most significant improvements will occur once people are safe to meet face-to-face. As I see it, this was the common factor in most all of the challenging moments.

Can you briefly describe 2-3 situations/individuals that were impacted positively by this project?

- An elementary age individual with Down syndrome who lives with her family. After lockdown, the isolation caused her to lose her language skills she had worked so hard to gain. Not being able to see individuals she had previously engaged with on a regular basis increased behavioral issues. She was provided with AT that allowed her to connect with family members, peers, and staff virtually. The connections allowed for the return of some of her skills.

- An individual who has communication and physical limitations became even more isolated during the lockdown. He was provided with AT that allowed him to connect with medical providers virtually without his parents worrying about him leaving the house as an at risk individual. He is able to connect with family members who live out of state. He attends varying day hab virtual events with peers and staff. He used to enjoy going outside, so his parents now have National Park and zoo virtual tours scheduled throughout the day. His parents encourage games that he enjoys, plays, and his parents consider all of these wonderful opportunities to stimulate him cognitively while staying home.

- An individual with a physical disability isolated at home with no access to distance communication. Family was not sure what ability this person had to access an iPad due to their physical barriers. We trialed it. We provided a large iPad with a mount and adapted stylus. The family was surprised that this individual was able to understand and use the iPad. We are going to setup shortcuts on the device so they are able to use less movements to open apps. It is being used for distance communication and recreation.

- The majority of individuals I worked with (7 out of 12) needed a device to access Day Hab and other remote activities to decrease isolation and increase social interaction.

- Per recent phone conversation with a case manager in Homer who had two teens in the program: He said he was very appreciative of how quickly the applications were turned around, and devices were in his kids' hands. He said they were able to participate in their therapy sessions on a more regular basis, and were more engaged in the process. He said he noticed a boost in their self-esteem by having their own electronic devices and were more upbeat during the rougher times of isolation because they had an increase in connectivity with their friends, family, and providers.

- Recent phone call with CC working with a client (blind) in an ALH. Originally, they were looking for something that would allow her to listen to music. ATLA sent the one-touch radio and the CC said she has learned to turn it on and off, and navigate it independently. She said she turns it on first thing in the morning, and it runs until bedtime. CC said she smiles regularly at having such a luxury.

Anything else?

- ATLA had three staff involved in attempting to locate lost equipment because a support person did not check their overflow mailbox. The support staff was told the equipment was going to be mailed after the setup was completed. They were notified the day the equipment was scheduled to arrive, and again two days later along with the CC. When they emailed five days later saying they did not have the equipment, II spoke with the paid caregiver and asked if they checked their mailbox; they said yes. Then the next day they emailed ATLA saying they found it in the overflow mailbox. In the last email, the CC added "Awesome. Thanks".

My theme seems to be accountability. Since there are paid professionals and some guardians involved in this process, I was surprised at the lack of response and follow through with the goal to benefit the client. So my major recommendation would be an agreement that the responsible parties follow through before submitting the application. And if they are not responding, what steps can be taken to ensure the client's needs are met.

- Kim, thank you for listening to us. I appreciate the time you took to listen to our feedback and learn more about the nuances of providing assistive technology.

- Challenge: Overall, a challenge I saw often was that the support person had limited technology skills. The support person would be listed as someone who can independently support the individual with tech access but, often, I would come to learn that the provider does not have the technology skills to assist them and I would get repeat phone calls from the provider.

COVID Technology Response Project
Post-Project Survey

An online survey was sent to the 35 people who completed applications on behalf of a beneficiary. Eighteen people responded.
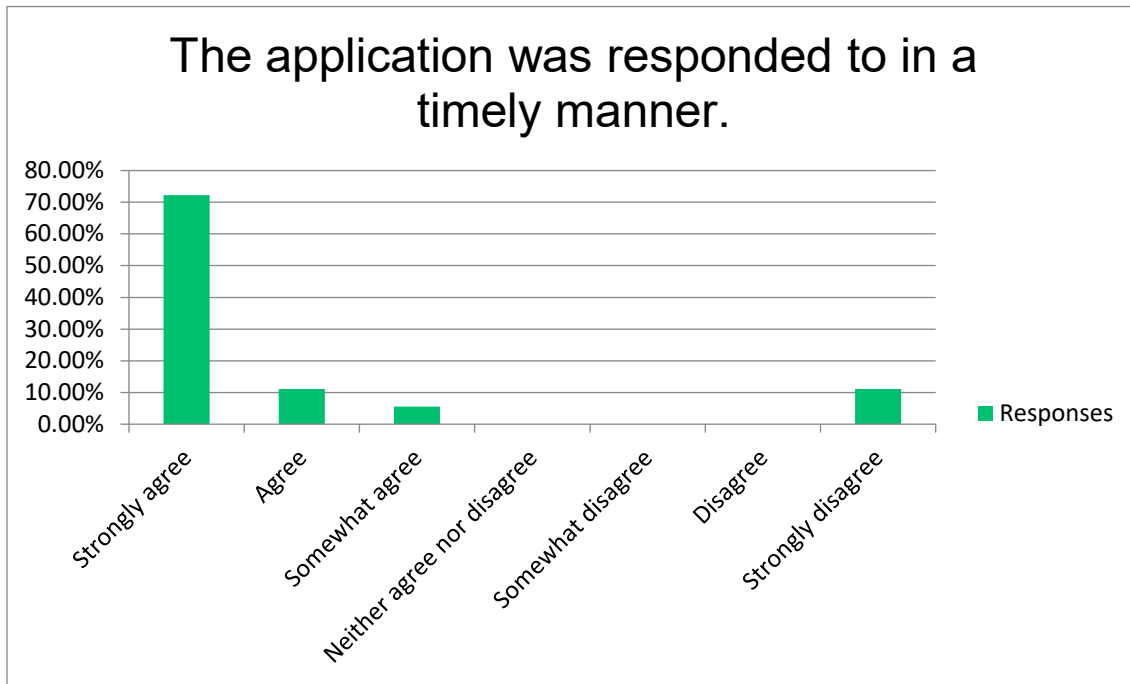
Question 1: Relationship with the applicant:

My relationship with the applicant:
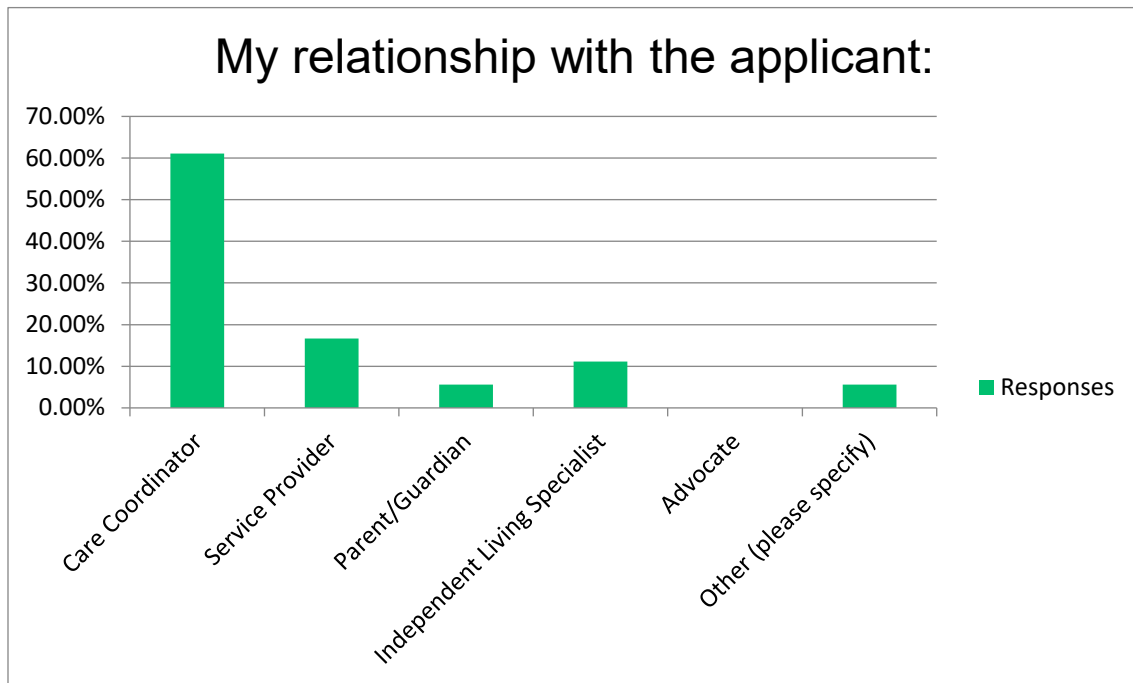
Question 2: The application process was simple to complete.

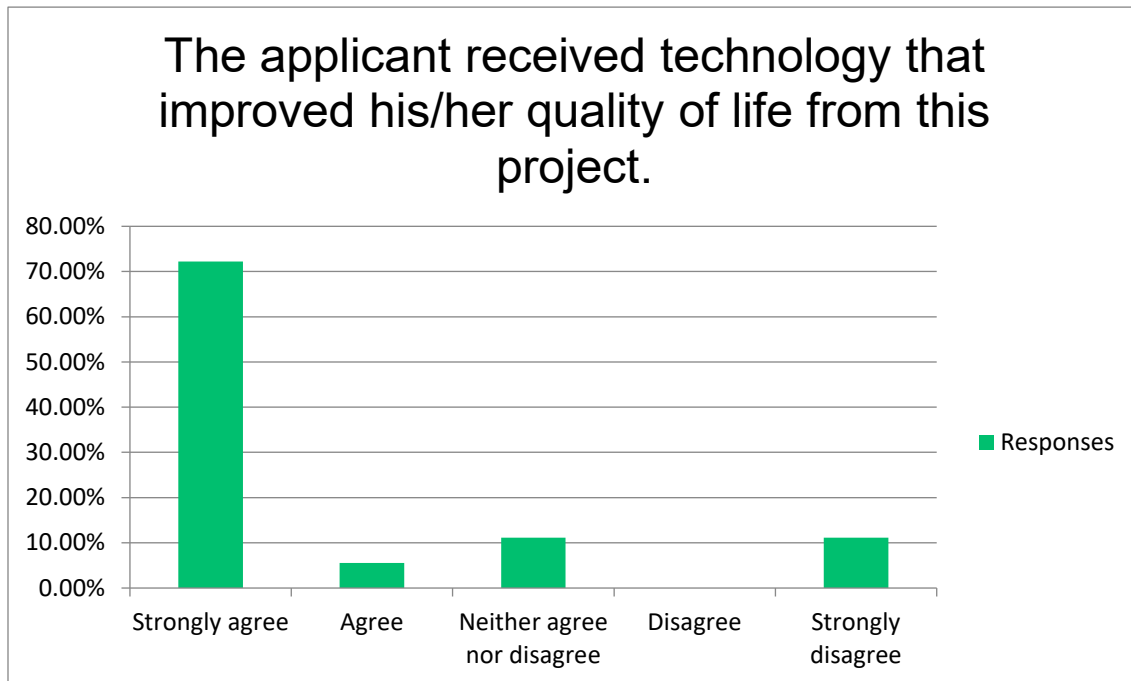## The application process was simple to complete
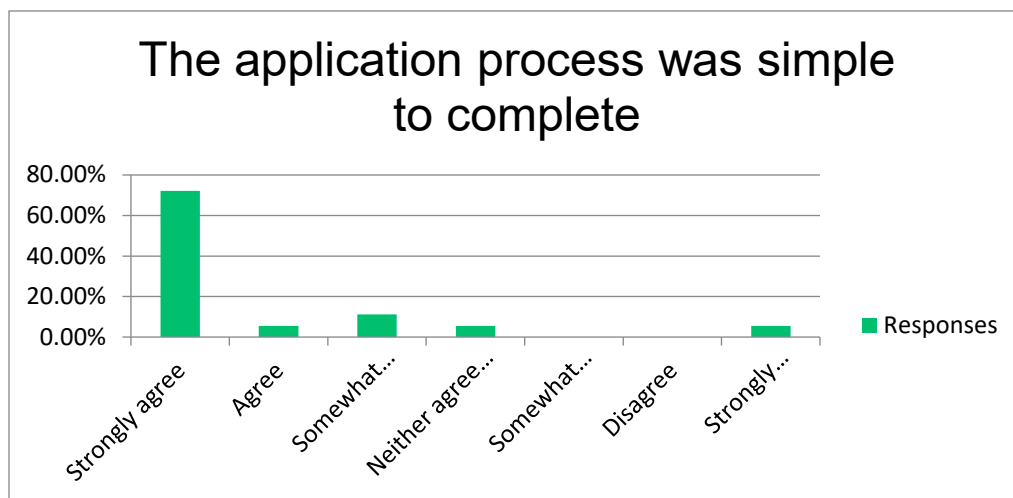
Question 3: The application was responded to in a timely manner.

Question 4: The applicant received technology that improved his or her quality of life.

Question 5: Aspects of this project that worked really well were:

- Application process
- Communication was fantastic, and I'm sure everything else would've worked smoothly.
- The application process was smooth and had no issue. The iPad arrived in a very timely manner. Step by step illustrated instructions were included for set up and use of preloaded apps.
- The ATLA staff are outstanding!! Responsive, effective, knowledgeable and helpful in a very professional way.
- The application was simple and straight forward. The individuals help process the applications were helpful and responsive. The project correctly identified technology that would be useful and helpful to the individual.
- Client received the equipment quickly and application process was smooth.
- That it was offered
- The Simplicity of it
- The application was really easy and the technology consultants were really easy to talk with and discuss the individuals receiving the grant. Overall, it was the easiest grant process I have ever been involved in.
- Coordination and communication with the technology provider to ensure the technology was a good fit for the recipient's needs, that it had all the apps and settings needed for ease of use, and that the recipient was comfortable using the equipment.
- The client was able to get a device that worked well for her and was easy for her staff to get set up.
- The lady was nice to talk to but nothing ever ended up happening. We were told it was still being worked on but nothing has been given to the recipient.
- Simplicity of application and quick response
- The folks who I helped apply really enjoy the freedom they have gained from having a piece of technology, like their iPad, that has allowed them to stay connected to their friends and families while being able to participate in grouped activities while social distancing. Being able to connect face to face with people even over the screen is very meaningful and has helped folks continue to feel connected.
- None
- Getting the equipment to my daughter
- Really helpful staff. I had originally assisted my recipient with receiving a tablet that would allow them to socialize and participate in needed services remotely. However, Liz Hunt made me aware of other items they loan to further assist with increasing individuals' independence. I am currently working with a couple of individuals to identify items they could use to increase their overall independence within their homes.
- Communicative staff who were willing to reach out directly to the client without lots of hand holding.

Question 6: This project would have worked better if:

- There would have been better follow through from the ATLA support staff
- I'm not sure how the process could have been improved. It was very simple
- The guardian and primary care givers were more trained to accept the new technology and how the client might excel using it.
- I had no issues.
- It allowed more flexibility for individuals use
- Involving staff post application
- I think overall it was really great!   I would only suggest that somehow more people took advantage of the opportunity so maybe more outreach but I am not sure where that could have happened. Maybe social media.
- Access to internet is the biggest challenge for many recipients to be able to use technology. Working with service providers who control a recipients access to internet services is a subset of this challenge, as many limit recipients access or the recipient finds frequent service interruptions due to issue related to the service provider.
- I can't think of ways that it could have been better.
- The recipient would have actually ever received the equipment that we were told he would receive, which was low tech communication options
- The applicant really didn't want an iPad because he had never used apple products. He really had his heart set on a laptop. He is giving it a try, but still unknown if he will embrace it.
- We all know the internet issues and costs.
- If there was clear application guidance and criteria; if methods to obtain needed items were clear; if there was a point of contact to connect with; if there was perhaps a choice of suggested items/communication packages to know possibilities of what might be approved; if true accessibility was provided (for someone who needed chin controls, for example)
- More advertising, and a list different items that could be offered. I had no idea they offered other items such as modifications to use in the kitchen, timed pill boxes, etc. until my 3rd application. If I had known of these sooner, I'm sure I would have assisted some of my individuals in applying sooner.

Question 7: Suggestions for changes in the system specific to people with disabilities:

- I don't know at this time.
- Train more parents, caregivers and DSPs for how to use and introduce them to technology and social platforms to allow access for the folks with disabilities to have access and support.
- Continuing to offer access. The DD and senior community seem to lag behind in terms of tech use and understanding.

- Allow the use to be more broad-based - education doesn't just happen at school
- Wi-Fi continues to be a barrier. Lots of individuals don't have consistent Wi-Fi access and/or cannot afford it. Also, provider support to assist individuals could increase, maybe additional training could be provided as part of the grant to support staff. Some staff just aren't tech savvy.
- Regulations needs to be amended to provide options for recipients to use technology to access services in a manner that meets their individual needs and allows them to work towards greater independence.
- Unknown at this time. Possibly have devices available for people to try out (rent) to see if they will work well however during the pandemic, that was not really a realistic option.
- More upfront and realistic possibilities. Options to help obtain needed funding to connect people with technology + access to internet or Wi-Fi. There's a chicken & the egg syndrome in some cases: they don't know the equipment they need & won't be able to receive the equipment if they don't have Internet - but they don't want to pay for and cannot access the Internet if they don't have the equipment & tools needed to make that possible.
- Most of the changes that could be made were mainly due to the pandemic. Some of the individuals that were applying for technology, also had older guardians, who were not comfortable with newer technology, but were having to assist. In person set-up and or training would have been more beneficial. However, due to the circumstances, it is understandable why this was not possible.
- We were accessing tablets for clients to use which was super helpful. A slight improvement would be if we could also access internet service with that device. I don't think it was included in the grant but it is a critical resource for remote and low income families.

Question 8: Anything else you would like us to know?

- Thanks so much for your help, Kim!
- The iPad was utilized for distance waiver support services. Additionally, the iPad helped stay connected to friends and attend zoom classes
- This is a wonderful program that is expanding the use of technology for folks who experience disabilities. It is just now catching on and needs to be continued as time goes on.
- Thank you. This project had a positive impact on the applicants life and helped them not only weather the worst of the pandemic but also gave them access to the community through a new mechanism.
- Thank you for the amazing opportunity to help our individuals in such a difficult time in our lives. I know the individuals that were a part of this project on my caseload were so happy and fortunate, it really helped them get through a tough time.

- Thank you for providing this service and enabling recipients to access technology to overcome barriers imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- None at this time. Thanks for your help!
- I know you're busy and it is great work you are doing, but a year is a long time to wait.

The Rights of People with Cognitive Disabilities to Technology and Information Access

Whereas

- Twenty-eight million United States citizens have cognitive disabilities such as intellectual disability; severe, persistent mental illness; brain injury; stroke; and neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease;

- People with cognitive disabilities are entitled to inclusion in our democratic society under federal laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and under state and local laws;

- The disruptive convergence of computing and communication technologies has substantially altered how people acquire, utilize, and disseminate knowledge and information;

- Access to comprehensible information and usable communication technologies is necessary for all people in our society, particularly for people with cognitive disabilities, to promote self-determination and to engage meaningfully in major aspects of life such as education, health promotion, employment, recreation, and civic participation;

- The vast majority of people with cognitive disabilities have limited or no access to comprehensible information and usable communication technologies;

- People with cognitive disabilities must have access to commercially available devices and software that incorporate principles of universal design such as flexibility and ease of use for all;

- Technology and information access by people with cognitive disabilities must be guided by standards and best-practices, such as personalization and compatibility across devices and platforms, and through the application of innovations including automated and predictive technologies;

- Security and privacy must be assured and managed to protect civil rights and personal dignity of people with cognitive disabilities;

- Enhanced public and private funding is urgently required to allow people with cognitive disabilities to utilize technology and access information as a natural consequence of their rights to inclusion in our society;

- Ensuring access to technology and information for the 28 million people with cognitive disabilities in the United States will create new markets and employment opportunities; decrease dependency on public services; reduce healthcare costs; and improve the independence, productivity, and quality of life of people with cognitive disabilities.

Therefore

We hereby affirm our commitment to equal rights of people with cognitive disabilities to technology and information access and we call for implementation of these rights with deliberate speed.

View endorsers of this document and join us at: colemaninstitute.org/declaration