



Keep Us Connected

2020 Campaign to Bridge the Growing Digital Divide in SF

BACKGROUND: San Francisco has the highest proportion of seniors and adults with disabilities in California. Of those 75 and older, 36% live alone and are facing health and other mobility problems. COVID-19 “stay at home” orders have left many older adults, people with disabilities, and those with compromised health are virtually trapped in their homes. With libraries, and senior and community centers closed, they are unable to participate in regular activities or access essential services. Their situation is further aggravated by the fact that **more than 50 percent lack home internet access**, along with the devices, digital literacy, and support they need to participate in the digital world. All of this has led to an increase in social isolation and loneliness, both of which lead directly to poor health and wellness outcomes.

PROBLEM: COVID-19 has revealed the true extent of the digital divide and intensified its impact on vulnerable populations. While San Francisco is a world leader in technological innovation and the City has committed millions to internal tech needs, **100,000 people, including a sizeable segment of its older adults and residents living with a disability, remain disconnected from the digital world!** Simply put, too many people don’t have reliable internet access, a device, or the digital literacy and support they need to get information, have routine online medical visits, pay bills and taxes, connect meaningfully with family and friends, or participate in any activities made available through the internet.

SOLUTION: Keep seniors and people with disabilities in San Francisco connected by:

- Expanding access to affordable broadband internet
- Expanding access to free & low-cost devices
- Expanding training and technical support

Connected living contributes to living longer and healthier lives. Computer training & internet access won’t end isolation but they provide a vital link to family, friends, social services, medical services, religious communities, and virtual programming at senior centers like exercise classes and online social activities. Paired with assistive technologies, **digital access can help SF residents overcome a vast range of physical and mental disabilities in their own homes and communities, safely, while staying connected to the rest of the world.**





Budget Proposal:

We are asking for \$968,000 to strengthen and expand SF Connected beyond current baseline funding to close the Digital Divide and prevent its adverse impacts on our more vulnerable populations. The **2020 Keep Us Connected Campaign** builds on the success of the original program and funds items needed now more than ever.

Broadband Internet Access

\$ 120,000

- Help individuals access existing ISP programs and increase the number of partnerships with non-profits for reduced price access.

Digital Equipment

\$ 220,000

- Increase the available number of free and affordable devices available for purchase and for loan.

Staff - Trainers

• Training with Digital Coaches and Tutors

\$ 325,000

Provide more virtual one-on-one training and classes; hire more computer trainers, tutors, and volunteer coordinators, a majority of whom could be seniors and adults with disabilities, providing employment opportunities and supporting peer learning

• Bi-lingual & Disability Savvy Computer Trainers and Tutors

\$ 150,000

Grow the number of bi-lingual trainers and tutors and those experienced with assistive technology to better reach those with loss of vision, hearing, dexterity or other disabilities;

Staff - In-take and Coordination

\$ 108,000

- Raise resources and better coordinate efforts to close the digital divide in San Francisco.

Internet and Equipment Setup and Technical Assistance

\$ 10,000

- Offer assistance to individuals to use and maintain their own equipment including initial set up, through online tech support, repair and loaner programs, on-line help events in multiple languages.

Train the trainer material and expanded outreach material

• Training and Outreach Material

\$ 10,000

• Other Program Costs (background checks, etc.)

\$ 2,000

Program Evaluation

\$ 23,000

- Conduct an evaluation of program outcomes; different intervention models; and user experiences.