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## PRESS RELEASE

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# State of Illinois Receives \$1.7 Million in Connectivity Assistance to Keep Older Illinoisans Connected During COVID-19

*Grant provides technology devices for socially isolated seniors and persons with disabilities*

**Springfield, IL** - The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) received \$1.7 million from the federal Administration for Community Living to provide services to older adults and persons with disabilities who are disproportionately affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding will be used for the purchase of technology devices; including iPads, Grandpads, tablets and internet / Wi-Fi / hotspot access to increase social engagement and connectedness, targeting those who live alone, who don't normally receive in-home services and who live in rural areas. The devices will have applications like FaceTime, Zoom, mental stimulation, telehealth and others so individuals can connect with family members, friends, and providers.

"The stress on everybody is growing every day, and we want you to know you are not alone," said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA. "While senior communities have been locking down, we've also been looking at creative ways to keep residents engaged to counter the isolation. Providing these new technologies will help establish the social connection that our seniors need to maintain their health."

IDoA, the Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP), and IDHS' Division of Developmental Disabilities and Division of Rehabilitation Services will work in tandem to identify clients, customers, and participants who may be at risk of social isolation and would benefit from these devices during these unprecedented times.

"We are excited to announce this grant with IDoA and provide additional assistance to some of our most vulnerable residents in Illinois," said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou. "We also want to remind Illinoisans about the IDHS benefits, services and supports that are available to them during this difficult time. Visit [www.dhs.illinois.gov/HelpIsHere](http://www.dhs.illinois.gov/HelpIsHere) or call **1-833-2-FIND-HELP (1-833-234-6343)** for more information and to apply today."

IDoA has published resources to help connect older and disabled Illinoisans with family and loved ones to prevent distress and feelings of social isolation. Those resources can be found on the IDoA website [here](#).

IDoA, its 13 Area Agencies on Aging, and 46 Care Coordination Units are working around the clock to ensure that services provided by the agency are not interrupted during COVID-19. If you or an older family member, friend, or neighbor need assistance, please visit [www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging) or contact the **Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 888-206-1327)** or by email [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov).

**###**

Respect for yesterday. Support for today. Planning for tomorrow.

[www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)