



Illinois Department on Aging

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State of Illinois Distributes Over 1,100 Connectivity and Assistive Devices to Keep Older Illinoisans Connected During COVID-19

\$1.7 million grant provided access for socially isolated seniors and persons with disabilities

Springfield, IL - The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) have distributed over 1,100 connectivity and assistive devices to older adults and persons with disabilities who have been disproportionately affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, after receiving \$1.7 million from the federal Administration for Community Living in May 2020.

Specifically, the funding was used to purchase technology devices; including iPads, tablets and internet / Wi-Fi / hotspot access to combat social isolation and loneliness among older adults and individuals who are disabled. The devices have applications like FaceTime, Zoom, mental stimulation and others so individuals can connect with family members and friends. Devices were distributed throughout Illinois beginning in August. Personal accounts of how these devices truly *Made Connections*, can be [viewed here](#).

Paula Basta, Director of IDoA recently visited the Illinois Assistive Technology Program Building to personally deliver technology device bundles to Lisa Armocida of Staunton (aged 67) and Kathy Durbin of Morrisonville (aged 63).

"We really need each other, even more than we understand or know," **said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA**. "The pandemic allowed us to creatively form new partnerships and come up with innovative solutions to ensure that our older adults remain safe and in their own homes. Providing these new technologies 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 worked to identify clients, customers, and participants who may be at risk of social isolation and would benefit from these devices.

"We are very thankful for our partnership with IDoA and IDHS," **said Willie Gunther, Executive Director of IATP**. "The partnership allowed for the opportunity to help individuals with their technology options to stay connected with family, friends, and their communities during these difficult times."

IDoA has published resources to help connect older and disabled Illinoisans with family and loved ones to prevent social isolation and feelings of loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those resources can be found on the IDoA website [here](#).

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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)

IDoA, its 13 Area Agencies on Aging, and 55 Care Coordination Units are working to ensure that services provided by the agency are never interrupted. If you or an older family member, friend, or neighbor need assistance, please visit 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.

(Picture A, left to right: Kathy Durbin of Morrisonville, receiving a technology device bundle from Paula Basta, Director of IDoA.)

(Picture B left to right: Lisa Armocida of Staunton, receiving a technology device bundle from Paula Basta, Director of IDoA.)

(Pictured C: Paula Basta, Director of IDoA and Willie Gunther, Executive Director of IATP with IATP staff.)

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