



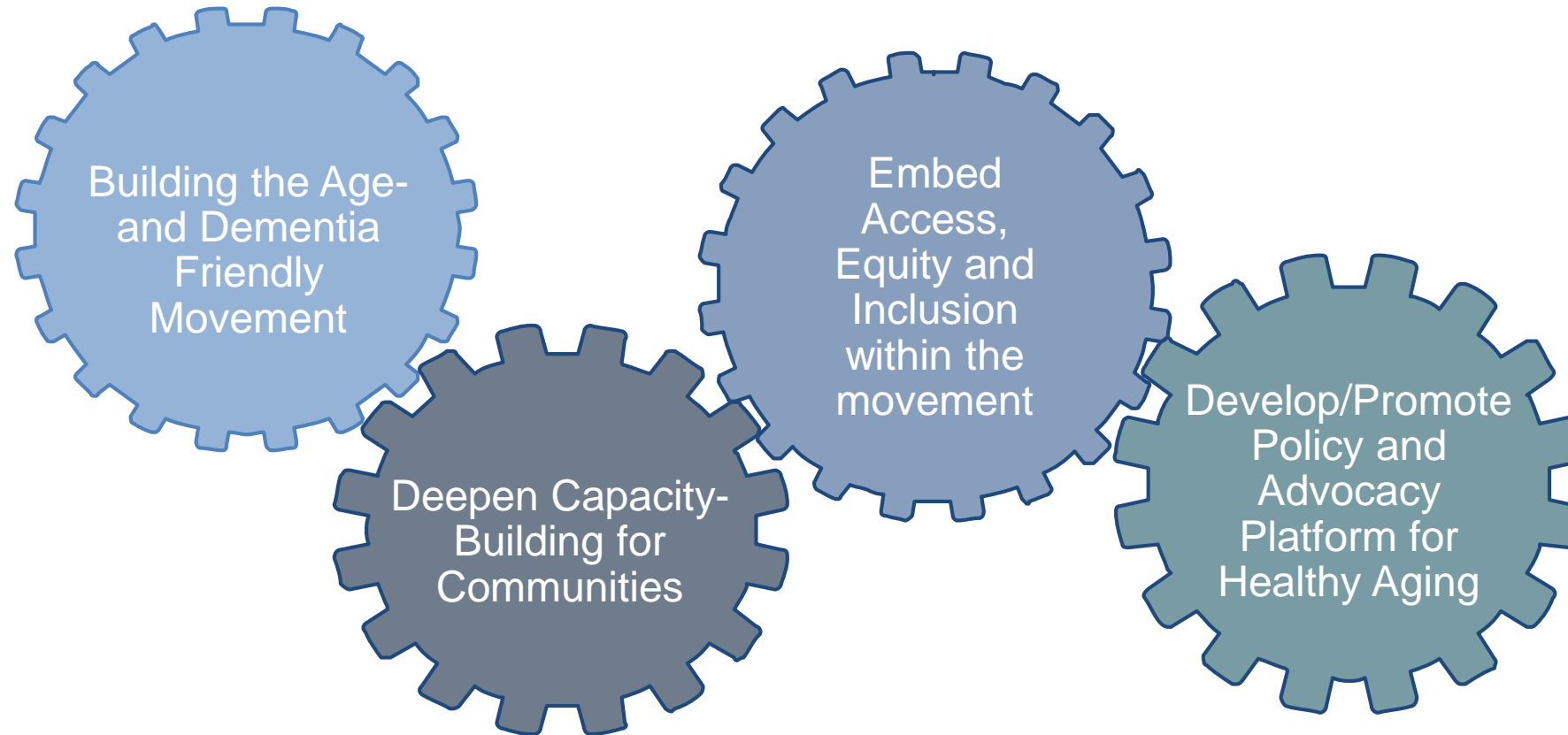
# ***Broadband Equity Commission***

James Fuccione – Mass. Healthy Aging Collaborative  
October 2021

The work of the Massachusetts Healthy  
Aging Collaborative is supported in part by:



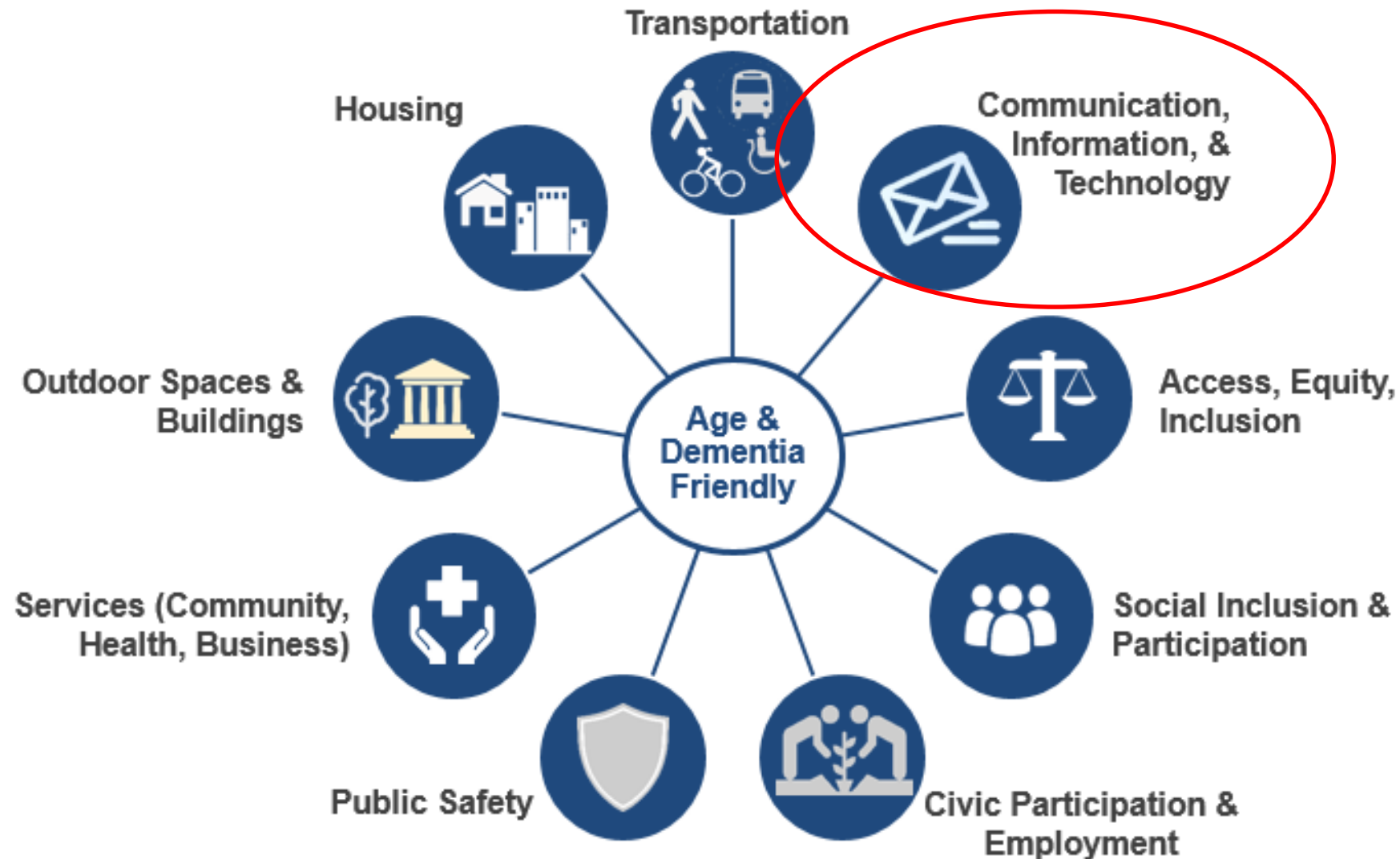
The **Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative** is a cross-sector network of leaders in community, health and wellness, government, advocacy, research, business, education, and philanthropy who have come together to advance healthy aging.

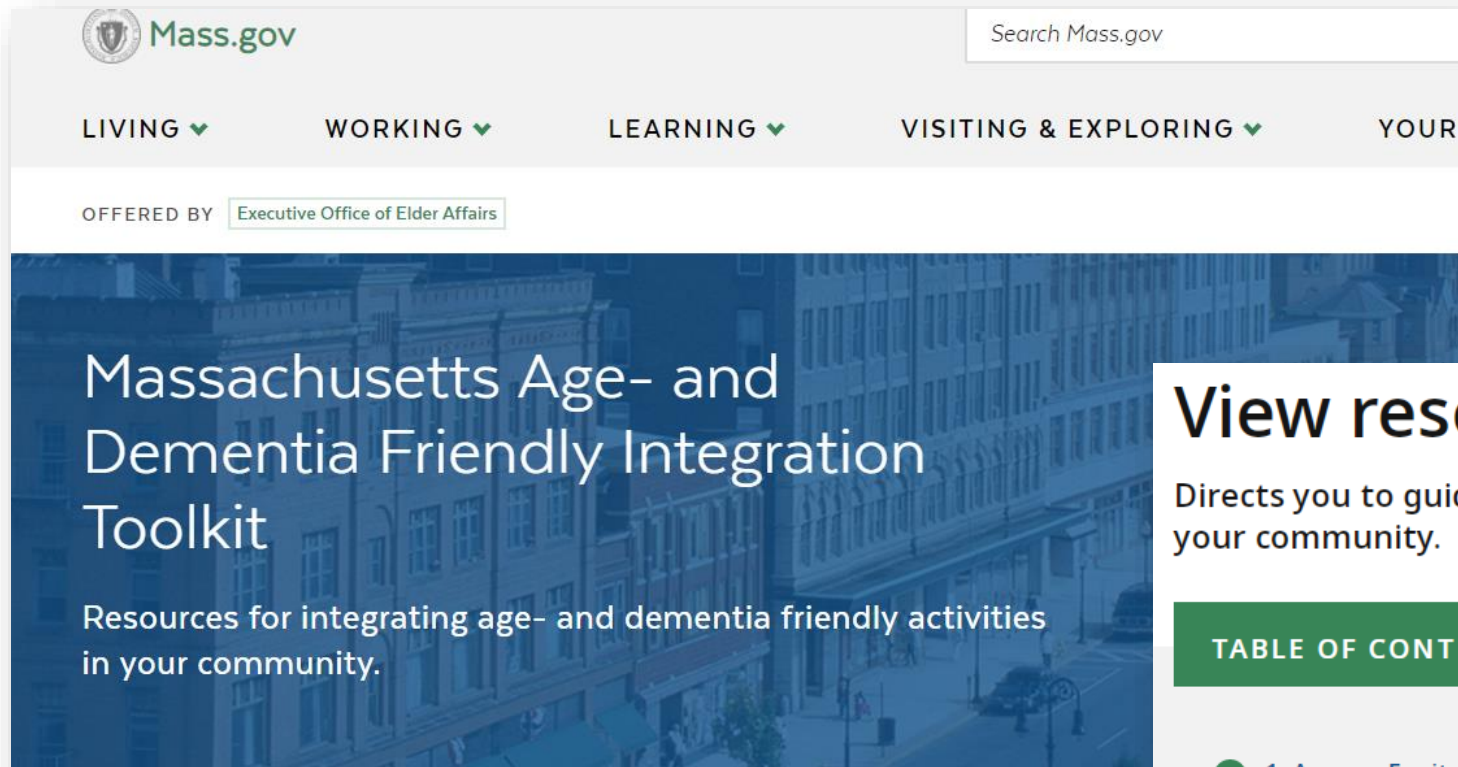




- ✓ Age-friendly environments foster health and well-being and the participation of people as they age. **They are accessible, equitable, inclusive, safe and secure, and supportive.**
- ✓ Without age-friendly environments, health for all cannot be achieved.
- ✓ Creating barrier-free and affordable housing, accessible public spaces, and transportation enable people to stay independent and participate in community life.
- ✓ **Older people play a crucial role in their communities** – they engage in paid or volunteering work, transmit experience and knowledge, and help their families with caring responsibilities.
- ✓ ...These contributions can only be ensured if societies foster their health and participation.

# Age and Dementia Friendly Communities





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## Massachusetts Age- and Dementia Friendly Integration Toolkit


Resources for integrating age- and dementia friendly activities in your community.

## View resources by focus area

Directs you to guidance on integrating age- and dementia friendly work in your community.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ✓ 1. Access, Equity, and Cultural Inclusion
- ✓ 2. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- ✓ 3. Housing
- ✓ 4. Social Inclusion and Participation
- ✓ 5. Transportation
- ✓ 6. Civic Participation and Employment
- ✓ 7. Communication and Technology
- ✓ 8. Services (Business, Health and Community)
- ✓ 9. Public Safety

The logo for the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative, featuring a stylized circular icon with four human figures in blue, green, and orange, and the text "MASSACHUSETTS HEALTHY AGING COLLABORATIVE" to its right.

DATA REPORT

OUR WORK

AGE-FRIENDLY

RESOURCES

JOIN

NEWS

DATA REPORT

Explore the Report

Highlights Report

Community Profiles

Infographic

State Maps

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Data Sources and Methods




Find Other Data

Area Plans on Aging

HOME > DATA REPORT > EXPLORE THE REPORT > COMMUNITY PROFILES

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## Community Profiles

Choose a city or town to download its community profile.

Select...▼

Choose a county to view a collection of community profiles.

Select...▼

 Edit

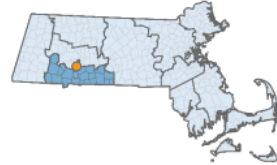


# Data: Community Profiles

2018 MASSACHUSETTS HEALTHY AGING COMMUNITY PROFILE

## Holyoke (Hampden)

Holyoke is a Gateway City in western Massachusetts with 5,497 residents aged 65 or older. The transit score suggests that there is good transit (5/10). Compared to state averages, older residents do worse on several healthy aging indicators with higher rates of tooth loss, obesity, high cholesterol, depression, PTSD, schizophrenia/other psychotic disorders, substance and tobacco use disorders, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, hypertension, heart attack, ischemic heart disease, congestive heart failure, peripheral vascular disease, arthritis, anemia, chronic kidney disease, fibromyalgia, epilepsy, ulcers, and hearing/visual/mobility impairments. They are also less likely to engage in health promoting behavior such as getting the recommended levels of physical activity and having annual dental exams. Holyoke is actively engaged in becoming Dementia-Friendly. Community resources include a YMCA, Council on Aging, cultural council, memory café, and lifelong learning opportunities.



### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

	BETTER / WORSE STATE RATE <sup>1</sup>	COMMUNITY ESTIMATE	STATE ESTIMATE
Total population all ages		40,280	6,742,143
Population 60 years or older as % of total population		18.3%	21.2%
Total population 60 years or older		7,391	1,428,144
Population 65 years or older as % of total population		13.6%	15.1%
Total population 65 years or older		5,497	1,016,679
% 65-74 years		44.6%	55.3%
% 75-84 years		35.3%	29.4%

% 65+ getting Medicaid long term services and supports

0.0%

4.9%

### COMMUNITY VARIABLES & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Age-friendly efforts in community	Not yet	Yes
Air pollution: annual # of unhealthy days for 65+ (county)	6	N/A
Open space in community	20.0%	18.0%
Walkability score of community (0-100)	84	N/A
% of grandparents raising grandchildren	0.9%	0.8%
% of grandparents who live with grandchildren	2.7%	2.9%
# of assisted living sites	1	238
% of vacant homes in community	9.2%	9.8%
# of universities and community colleges	2	163
# of public libraries	1	470
# of YMCAs	1	83
% in county with access to broadband (all ages)	98.0%	97.0%
% 60+ who used Internet in last month	56.3%	71.3%
Voter participation rate in 2016 presidential election (age 18+)	62.0%	71.3%

## KIDS AND SENIORS CAN FLOURISH WITH SUPPORT



- Cities and towns worked hard to provide access and equipment for kids. Other issues—like tight living arrangements—raised new challenges.
- Stigma sometimes limits efforts to help seniors, but telehealth is just one area where digital access could be transformative.

### Internet use among seniors varies across Essex County

Share of 60+ population using the internet in the last month, a selection

Town	Recent internet use among 60+ (%)
Peabody	62%
Haverhill	63%
Methuen	63%
Groveland	75%
Rowley	75%
North Andover	78%

SOURCE: CDC, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System





- Older adults **disproportionately impacted** by pandemic include those with limited access/proficiency with technology.
- Communities focused their initial efforts on meeting **basic needs** (food, medicine, personal care, and healthcare and home-based services) among the older adults.
  - Then communities **shifted their focus** to social connection, stable housing, mobility, and other conditions that affect wellbeing and the ability to navigate daily life.
  - **Technology** was a critical part of all these responses.
- Older adults and their families who had **access** to technology were able to seek out a wider array of information, services, and social connections **more quickly**, and organizations were able to reach them **more effectively**. A lack of technology was a **significant barrier**.

## The Digital Divide and Challenges to Digital Equity

IN HAMPDEN,  
HAMPSHIRE, AND  
FRANKLIN COUNTIES,  
MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 2021

**The Age Friendly City Project in Springfield** developed a Technology Program that provides equipment, digital literacy and limited connectivity to some older adults with unmet needs. [Hampden County]

**The River Mills Senior Center in Chicopee** provided tablets and training. [Hampden County]

**LifePath**, serving older adults, offered free equipment and coaching support for its participants who needed the assistance due to isolation and the inability to participate in programming. [Franklin County]

“Older adults need help with set up and problem solving challenges”

TURNERS FALLS

“We need training in Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Khmer”

NORTHAMPTON

“We have never had sufficient digital literacy training in our region.”

GREENFIELD

“Trainings need to be geared to the person using the services. Often much of what is offered is not what is needed by the people using them.”

SPRINGFIELD



**NORTHAMPTON**  
M a s s a c h u s e t t s

- Tech Loan Program w/ in-person workshops began pre-pandemic and moved to virtual when pandemic began.
- Contractor hired with donations for 10 hrs/week to work with older adults 1:1 outside and sometimes in their homes, to learn how to use internet-enabled iPads and Amazon Fire Tablets.
- The training was then moved indoors for winter with parameters set up for training under social distancing and masking requirements.
- The program is open to all members of the Senior Center, with no income qualifications or restrictions.

“*The instructor was such a patient and good teacher. She made a very stressful situation much less stressful. I did not feel overwhelmed when trying to learn new information. I now live in a retirement community and I cannot tell you how many people are uncomfortable with technology and have no one to assist them. This is exactly the kind of program they need.*”



- Digital Access Program utilizes grant support to provide participants receive a free tablet computer, a data package if needed, and in-person training about how using the computer and the internet.
- In-home training for tablets is customized and focuses on what the participants want. Tech-aid resource is provided.
- If participants need a data plan/wi-fi access, ESMV-NS will pay those fees for up to one year. If, after six months, participant is using the tablet to engage successfully online, it becomes theirs at no cost.
- Among 108 current participants, roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  need the data plan.

“ [Participant] used to have a working tablet before, but it broke and didn't have the finances to replace it so he went without. When he got his tablet from us he was so excited because he wanted to reconnect with his family again besides just talking on the phone. He wanted to see them but because they don't live close and, during the pandemic, he hasn't been able to see his grandchildren. He utilized the tablet by connecting with his grandchildren on zoom. He said this tablet is the best thing that's happened to him in a while, he doesn't have to feel alone anymore. ”

- Any approach to addressing digital equity should not only consider older adults, but **all sectors** of a community.
  - Older adults live in a variety of residential settings and many live in an **intergenerational household**. Many still are responsible for raising grandchildren or care for their adult children.
  - Skill-building policies and programs can be **flexible** and **use existing community assets**.
  - Include education and awareness of **fraud and scams**.
  - Many older adults are **proficient users** of technology and can serve as a **resource** to their peers. We should be recognizing the potential contributions everyone can make to address the digital divide.
  - Impending 3G shutdown will impact older adults and low-income individuals with relatively outdated devices as well as medical devices
- **Recommendation:** *Support partnerships and collaboration between councils on aging, libraries, schools, public housing, local government, healthcare, faith communities and community-based orgs to address awareness, broadband access, device access, and literacy.*



## Community Compact IT Grant Program

This competitive grant program focuses on driving innovation and transformation at the local level via investments in technology.



Mass.gov

<https://www.mass.gov/community-compact-it-grant-program>



MASSACHUSETTS  
TECHNOLOGY  
COLLABORATIVE

Massachusetts Broadband Institute Notice of Funding Availability  
Grants to Gateway Cities to Establish Community WiFi Hotspots

<https://masstech.org/massachusetts-broadband-institute-notice-funding-availability-grants-gateway-cities-establish>

# Thank You!

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  - 617-717-9493



Executive Office  
Of Elder Affairs





## MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION for the **Blind and Visually Impaired**

- The Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired launched the Access Technology Training program in 2017 to provide technology instruction for people who are blind or visually impaired.
- This training can open access to printed and digital information, social connection and communication, transportation, healthcare information, and more.
- Through individual lessons participants learn to use technology to meet their own goals and needs.
- Clients bring their own technology ...When possible, the program provides device demonstrations and trials so that clients can gain some experience with a device before committing to a purchase.

“

*With technology, I am not afraid to be alone because I have access to the outside world*

”



- Burlington Council on Aging's Tech Assistance Program **partners with local high school** to provide community tech support for older adults (pictured above).
- Villages of the Berkshires, Inc. launched in August 2020 as the first Village in the country to partner with an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). **OLLI members and Berkshire Community College students** served as volunteers, providing socially distanced services such as technology support and wellness calls until face-to-face services could safely expand.
- Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) in Boston launched "Digital Dividends," an **intergenerational** tech support program enlisting local college students for residents of public and affordable senior housing. Program provides devices and connectivity.

A screenshot of the website's "Resources" page. The top navigation bar includes links for "DATA REPORT", "OUR WORK", "AGE-FRIENDLY", "RESOURCES" (highlighted with a red circle), "JOIN", and "NEWS". A secondary navigation bar contains "About", "Contact", and a search icon. The left sidebar lists "Resource Library", "COVID-19 Resources", "Digital Equity Resources" (highlighted with a red circle), and "Stories from the Field". The main content area features a breadcrumb trail "HOME > RESOURCES > DIGITAL EQUITY RESOURCES", text size and print controls, and social media icons. The page title is "Digital Equity Resources". The main heading is "Community Resource Guide: Technology Access and Programming for Older Adults Aims to Bridge the Digital Divide". The text describes the importance of technology access during the pandemic and mentions a resource guide published by the Massachusetts Task Force to End Loneliness and Build Community. It also includes contact information for James Fuccione.

**RESOURCES**

Resource Library

COVID-19 Resources

**Digital Equity Resources**

Stories from the Field

HOME > RESOURCES > DIGITAL EQUITY RESOURCES

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**Digital Equity Resources**

**Community Resource Guide: Technology Access and Programming for Older Adults Aims to Bridge the Digital Divide**

The pandemic has shined a light on the importance of technology in our daily lives. Access to technology, including internet use, is a social determinant of health – helping us connect with others, engage in our communities, work remotely, and receive vital information and services.

**Technology access is important for people of all ages.**

This fall, the [Massachusetts Task Force to End Loneliness and Build Community](#) published a short [resource guide](#) for communities looking to start or strengthen technology access and programming for older adults.

The guide includes resources, examples, and practical tips based on the belief that successful technology programs operate as a three-legged stool – with broadband, devices, and training as the three legs that are necessary to encourage meaningful engagement for older adults. Please contact [James Fuccione](#), Senior Director of the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative, for additional information or assistance.