2021 Findings and Policy Recommendations:

Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment

Study Conducted by:
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Thriving in Place tipsf.org/Digital-Equity

Research Questions

- What are the technology barriers and unmet needs of San Francisco residents with disabilities, older adults (60+) and multiply-marginalized communities that have been most impacted by the digital divide during COVID-19?

- What are the links between digital inequality and income, race/ethnicity, disability, age, language, housing, veteran status, and patterns of digital redlining?

- What are opportunities for targeted and strategic interventions to increase levels of digital connectedness?

Study Objectives

Results of this needs assessment and the raw data set will be shared with the Dept. of Disability and Aging Services (DAS), the Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD) and other City agencies and CBOs with the aim of:

- Raising awareness around the technology barriers faced by disability and aging communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Proposing community-driven policy recommendations aimed at lowering the digital divide.
- Encourage more in-depth analysis of data findings using the publicly accessible raw data set.

Methodology

- A total of 3,080 surveys were collected from March 21-June 30, 2021
  - Conducted as a multi-mode survey: print, phone, digital, in-person, Braille, American Sign Language (ASL)
  - Multiple accessible formats and languages (6 languages)
    - 2,614 digital surveys
    - 466 printed and phone-based surveys
  - Majority older adults, BIPOC, low-income residents (with representation of veterans, TAY and people experiencing homelessness)
  - Around 1,300 (42%) reported a San Francisco zip code
  - Total 1,529 survey pool

Community Engagement Methodology

- Community-driven and inclusive participatory research
  - Community partnerships and feedback played an integral role in research administration.
  - Alignment with racial equity and social justice framework

- Mixed-methods research
  - Qualitative and quantitative data collection
  - In-depth analysis of barriers and how they intersect with race/ethnicity, housing, income, age, disability, veteran status and language.

Community Advisory Coalition

Community Advisors	Organization
Asim Brooks	Community Representative for ShelterTech
Aurora Alvarado	Healthy Aging & Disability Resource Program Manager, Mission Neighborhood Centers (MNC)
DeMian Williams	Disability Advocate, AccessSFUSD: The Arc transition program graduate
Hannah Chadwick,	Marketing & Communications Coordinator at Disability:IN
Jason Chittavong	Mentor Coordinator for the Veterans Justice Court of San Francisco
Jennifer Walsh	Ability Integrator at Community Living Campaign (CLC)

Community Advisory Coalition

Lana Nieves	Executive Director of Independent Living Resource Center of San Francisco (ILRCSF)
Leif Pope	Transition age youth
Wendy	Coordinator for Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)
Maia Scott	Accessible visual and performing arts instructor, City College of San Francisco, & Accessibility Analyst for Fable
Orkid Sassouni	San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) Deaf Services.
Raenika A. Butler	Director of the Bayview Hunters Point Adult Day Health Care Center.
Winnie Yu	Director of Programs & Administration, Self-Help for the Elderly

“It shouldn't take a global pandemic to make our culture more accessible to disabled folx. But now that we've seen how beneficial remote, virtual, and accessible options for school, work, healthcare, and social events have been to our communities, let's ensure they continue. And we need to continue to expand access to technology which makes remote options possible to BIPOC, low-income, and other multiply marginalized disabled people.”

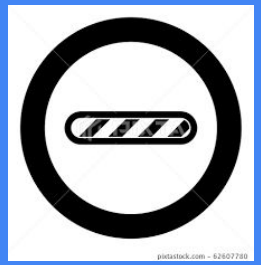
(Sininvalid @sinsinvalid social media post excerpt, October 2021)

Citywide Technology Survey

A 33-question survey of 3,080 stakeholders
Survey Pool of 1,529

Access to Devices + AT

Access to the Internet



Barriers

Digital Skills

Access to Telehealth

Access to Services

Demographics

(Community Needs Assessment Participants)

Based on 1,529 grand total survey pool and 9 Focus groups

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Summary

By Disability (Top 5)

- 394 (26%) Mobility Disability
- 388 (25%) Chronic Pain
- 270 (18%) Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- 259 (17%) Mental Health (PTSD, depression, anxiety)
- 252 (16%) Blind or low-vision

By Age

- Majority (55%, 841) of survey respondents are older adults (ages 60+)
- 134 (9%) transition-age youth (18-24)

By Race/Ethnicity

- Around 70% (1,126) of survey respondents are BIPOC

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Summary

By Income

- Many survey respondents (510, 33%) have household income less than $20,000

By Language (Top 5)

- 755 (49%) English
- 304 (20%) Cantonese
- 146 (10%) American Sign-Language
- 119 (8%) Spanish
- 79 (5%) Mandarin

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Summary

By Housing Residence

- 1,343 (88%) housed in either apartment rental, single-family home, affordable housing, living with friends or family, supportive housing, single-room occupancy (SRO) hotel, or assisted living or board and care home. Most (333) reside in apartment rentals.
- 69 (5%) were experiencing houselessness (unhoused or residing in either navigation centers or overnight shelters), most (39) were unhoused

By Veterans

- 345 (23%) are veterans

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Summary

By Housing Zip Code (Top 10)

- 94102 (141, 9%) Western Addition / Tenderloin / Hayes Valley / Mid-Market
- 94112 (70, 5%) Outer Mission / Excelsior
- 94107 (60, 4%) Potrero Hill
- 94122 (55, 4%) Sunset
- 94108 (49, 3%) Chinatown
- 94103 (48%, 3%) SOMA
- 94110 (46, 3%) Mission
- 94121 (44, 3%) Richmond
- 94116 (40, 3%) Parkside/Forest Hill
- 94134 (37, 2%) Visitacion Valley

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Disability

Demographic Profile by Disability

Disability	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Mobility Disability	394	26%
Chronic Pain	388	25%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	270	18%
Mental health disability (PTSD, depression, anxiety)	259	17%
Blind or Low Vision	252	16%
Alzheimer's, dementia, memory loss	137	9%
Prefer not to say	133	9%
Chronic illness (AIDS/HIV, MS, Cancer)	127	8%
Neurodivergent (Autism, TBI, OCD, etc.)	126	8%
Trauma survivor	113	7%
Learning disability (dyslexia, dyscalculia, ect.)	94	6%
Developmental or intellectual disability	91	6%
Little person/person of short stature	66	4%
IEP or 504 Plan	57	4%
Other	50	3%
ADHD/ADD	48	3%
Grand Total*	**1,529**	**100%**

*Note: Sum of row total excedes Grand Total because one person can cite more than one disability.

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Age

Demographic Profile by Age

Age	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Under 18	8	1%
18-24	134	9%
25-34	203	13%
35-44	105	7%
45-54	94	6%
55-59	79	5%
60+	841	55%
Prefer not to say	26	2%
Other	39	3%
Grand Total	**1,529**	**100%**

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Race/Ethnicity

Demographic Profile by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Asian/East Asian/South Asian/Asian-American	576	38%
White/Caucasian/European-American	252	16%
American Indian/Native American/Alaska Native	209	14%
Latinx/Hispanic/Latin-American	176	12%
Black or African-American	114	7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	51	3%
Multi-racial or multi-ethnic	43	3%
Prefer not to say	39	3%
Middle Eastern or North African	21	1%
Other	48	
Grand Total	**1,529**	**100%**

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Income

Demographic Profile by Income

Household Income	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Less than $20,000	510	33%
$30,000 - $39,999	286	19%
$40,000 - $49,999	179	12%
$50,000 - $74,999	131	9%
$75,000 - $99,999	92	6%
$100,000 - $159,999	59	4%
$160,000 or more	27	2%
Don't Know	47	3%
Prefer not to say	134	9%
Other	64	4%
Grand Total	**1,529**	**100%**

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Language

Demographic Profile by Language

Preffered Language	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
English	755	49%
Cantonese	304	20%
American Sign Language	146	10%
Spanish	119	8%
Mandarin	79	5%
Other	39	3%
Taishanese or Toishanese	20	1%
Prefer not to say	18	1%
Samoan	14	1%
Arabic	8	1%
Russian	8	1%
Tagalog	8	1%
Japanese	4	0%
Vietnamese	4	0%
Korean	2	0%
Portuguese	1	0%
Grand Total	**1,529**	**100%**

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Type of Residence

Demographic Profile by Type of Residence

Type of Residence	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Apartment rental	333	22%
Single family home	317	21%
Affordable housing	184	12%
I am living with family or friends	179	12%
Supportive housing	177	12%
Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel	89	6%
Assisted living or board and care home	64	4%
Other	59	4%
Prefer not to say	58	4%
I am currently experiencing homelessness, or unhoused	39	3%
Overnight shelter	16	1%
Navigation center	14	1%
Grand Total	**1,529**	**100%**

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Zip Code (Top 10)

Demographic Profile by San Francisco Zip Code (Top 10)

Zip Code	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
94102	141	9%
94112	70	5%
94107	60	4%
94122	55	4%
94108	49	3%
94103	48	3%
94110	46	3%
94121	44	3%
94116	40	3%
94134	37	2%
00000 zip code	124	8%
Blank zip code	518	34%
Grand Total	**1,529**	**100%**

Survey Participants Demographic Profile: Veteran Status

	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Veterans	345	23%
Non-Veterans	1,086	71%
Other	55	4%
Prefer Not to Say	43	3%
Grand Total	**1,529**	

Focus Group Participants

9 focus groups, 49 total participants:

- Older Adults (60+)
- Adults with Disabilities
- Deaf and hard-of-hearing adults
- Transition-age youth with disabilities ages 18-24 (TAY)
- Chinese-speaking older adults (Cantonese)
- Spanish-speaking older adults and TAY youth
- Veterans (Justice Involved)
- Low-Income Residents of SROs and People Experiencing Homelessness
- Disability & Aging Service Providers

Community Needs Assessment Key Findings

(Focus Group, One-on-One Interviews, and Survey)

Overview: Community Needs Assessment Key Findings

Based on focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and survey data from stakeholders, 10 key themes emerged:

1) Access to technology was a vital resource in receiving various COVID related public services and information, as well as maintaining social connections during the pandemic.

2) Affordability, unreliability, and concerns about online security were reported to be primary barriers to accessing the internet.

3) There are digital challenges that go beyond access to devices and the internet. While access to devices and the internet are vital to digital inclusion, there are barriers that cannot be solved by access alone. Lack of accessibility of digital content and services was a key issue that was raised by focus group participants. The need for free or low-cost assistive technology (AT) was another key barrier raised by respondents.

Overview: Community Needs Assessment Key Findings

Based on focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and survey data from stakeholders, 10 key themes emerged:

4) During the pandemic, receiving medical services through telehealth (phone and video) was both vital and presented some challenges for residents with disabilities and older adults.

5) Receiving telehealth services was particularly difficult for Latinx/Hispanic/Latin-American community.

6) Providing free or low-cost assistive or adaptive technology (AT) and AT training would be helpful in making AT more accessible.

7) The need for AT services (such as affordable AT equipment and education) are greater for people with disabilities who are: older adults (ages 60+); experiencing either chronic pain or mental health disability; low-income (less than $20,000); living in single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels; Black, Latinx, and AAPI communities; monolingual (Spanish or Cantonese); and lack access to devices and internet.

Overview: Community Needs Assessment Key Findings

Based on focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and survey data from stakeholders, 10 key themes emerged:

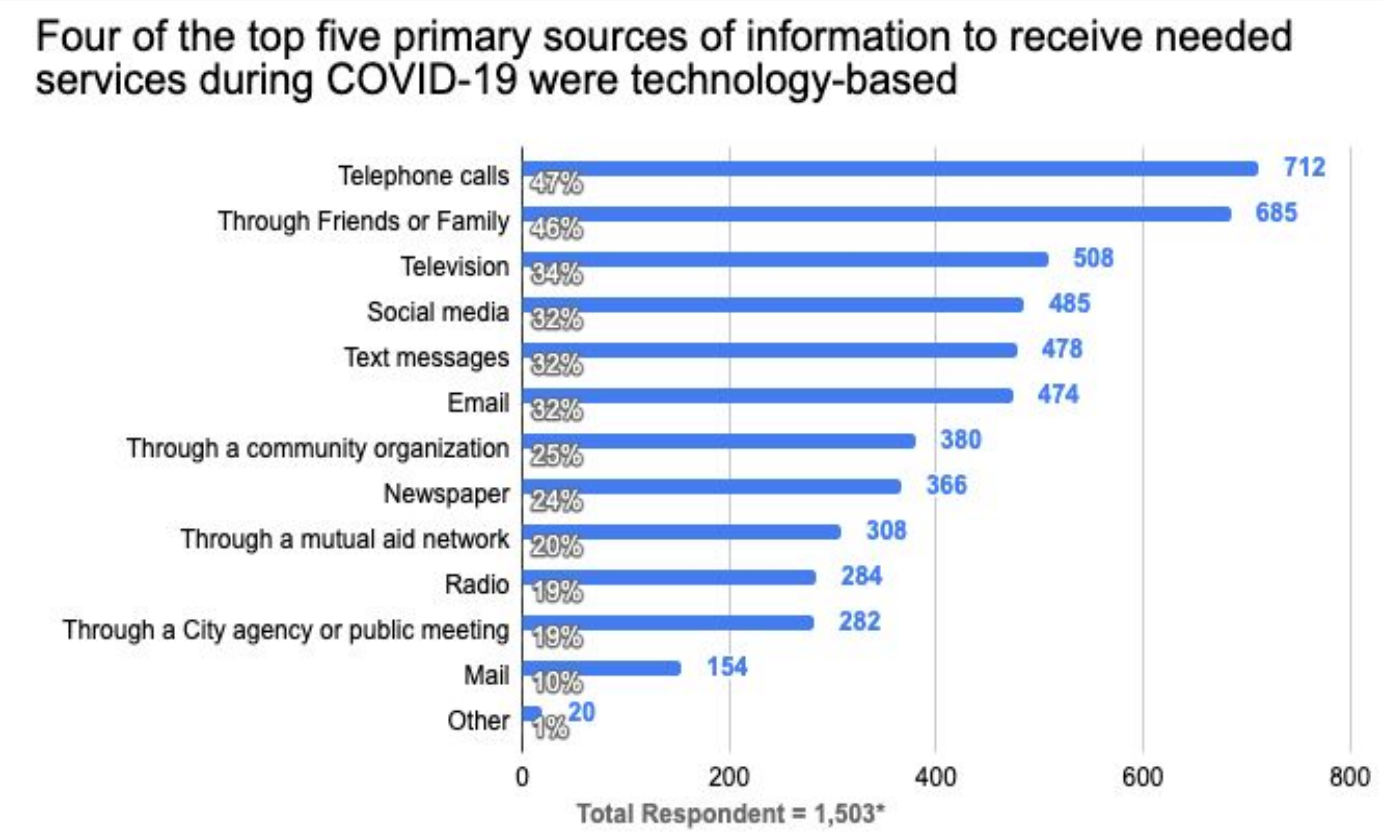
8) Public computer labs such as public libraries, community centers, or tech labs served as important sources of internet for the disability community prior to the pandemic, particularly for Transition-age youth (ages 18-24), veterans, and people experiencing homelessness.

9) Safe, secure and centralized public computer labs are essential technology services.

10) Customized digital literacy services are necessary for a community with varied digital knowledge and experience.

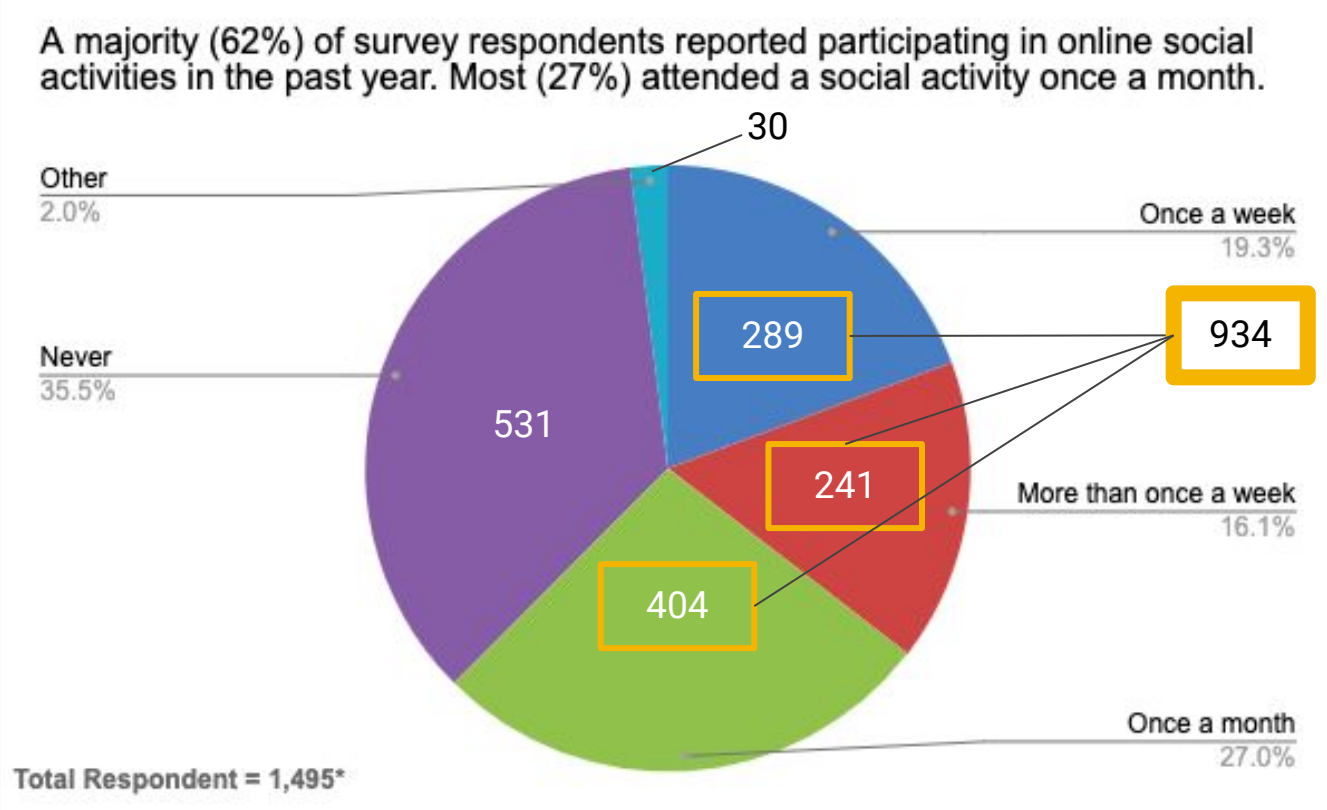
11) Lack of access to the internet is a barrier to employment and academic success. Focus groups revealed that many residents with disabilities routinely face barriers to accessing employment remotely due to unreliable internet.

Access to technology was a vital resource in receiving various social services and information, as well as maintaining social connections during the pandemic.



*Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey, Multiple Answer Question, "How do you get information about the services you need during COVID-19 (like information about vaccines, housing or food access) (Check all that apply)?

Access to technology was a vital resource in receiving various social services and information, as well as maintaining social connections during the pandemic.



*Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey, Multiple Choice (One Answer) Question, "In the last year during COVID-19, have you participated in any online social activities (like virtual art classes, online events or group activities online)?"

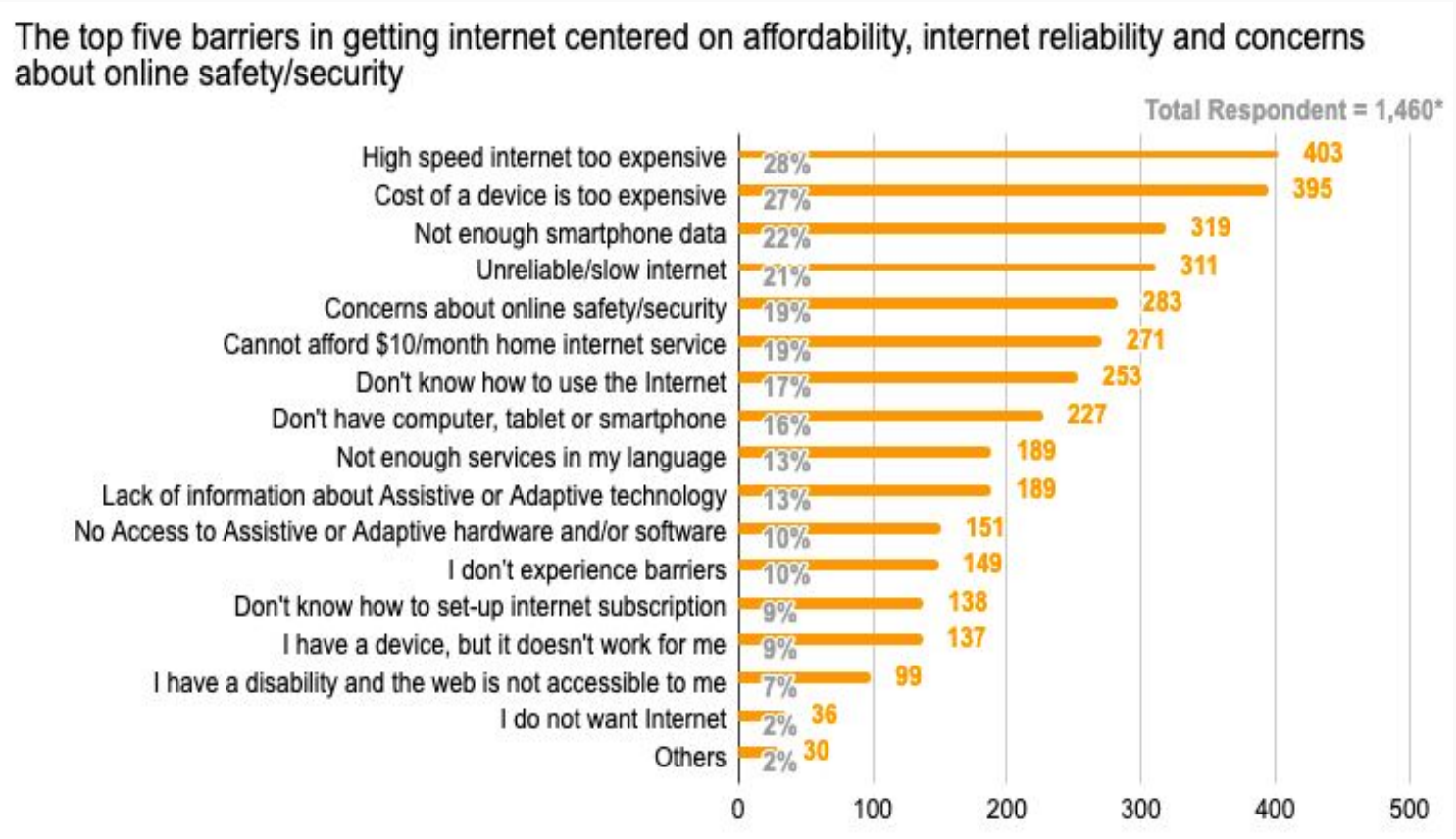
Access to technology was a vital resource in receiving various social services and information, as well as maintaining social connections during the pandemic.

Residents living in SROs or experiencing street homelessness reported that having **access to a device and internet** connection allowed them to **connect to friends and caseworkers; access medication; attend AA and mental health support groups; and access other social services**. For individuals experiencing street homelessness, having devices and internet were especially important in checking an online tracking system to find **90-day beds** in shelter. For **transition-age youth (ages 18-24)** experiencing chronic homelessness, **phones** were important in receiving **housing and employment services**, as well as staying **connected to family and friends**.

For **justice-involved veterans**, technology was cited as an essential tool in **navigating** the **Veterans Justice Court system**, attending court dates, hearings, and communicating with caseworkers.

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Focus Group

Affordability, unreliability, and concerns about online security were reported to be primary barriers to accessing the internet.



*Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey, Multiple Answer Question, "What barriers or challenges have you faced in getting Internet? (Check all that apply)?"

Affordability, unreliability, and concerns about online security were reported to be primary barriers to accessing the internet.

"I pay for the Internet but, according to the company, even if I wanted a faster speed, they say that speeds depend on zones. According to them, the area where I live can't have faster Internet." (Latinx/Hispanic/Latin-American older adult residing in Mission neighborhood)

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Focus Group

There are digital challenges that go beyond access to devices and the internet.

What types of devices (like computers, tablets or smartphones) do you have access to? (Check all that apply)

*Note: Sum of column total excedes Total Respondents because one person can cite more than one device.

Answer Choices	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Smartphone	1,017	68%
Tablet	567	38%
Desktop Computer	346	23%
Laptop	285	19%
No access to any devices	205	14%
Home phone/landline	201	13%
Borrow device from friend or family	109	7%
Flip phone	103	7%
School-provided device	57	4%
Don't want a device	24	2%
Other	12	1%
Total Respondents	**1,500**	

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

There are digital challenges that go beyond access to devices and the internet.

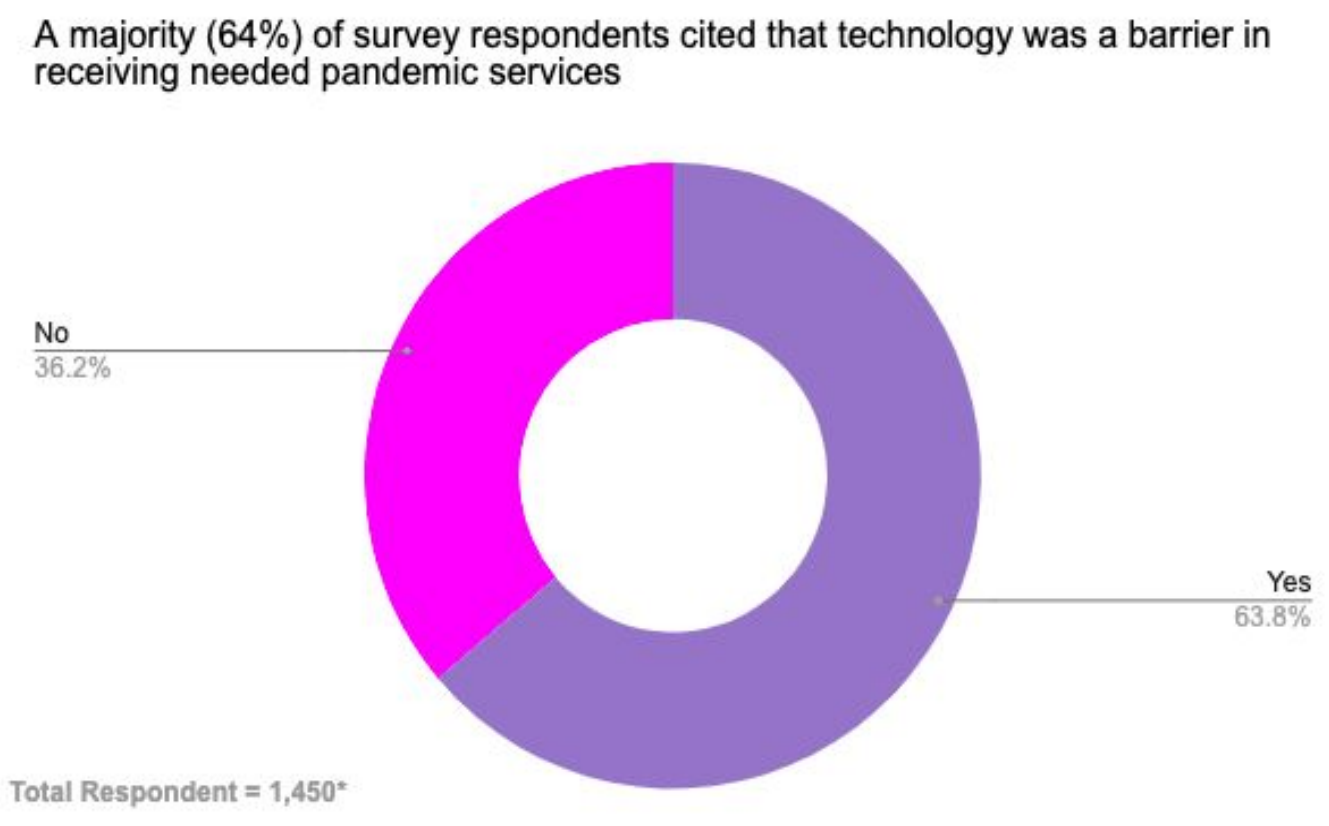
How do you access the Internet? (Check all that apply)

*Note: Sum of column total excedes Total Respondents because one person can cite more than one internet access.

Answer Choices	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Paid broadband Internet	514	35%
Through a public WiFi hotspot	361	24%
Smartphone Internet data plan	343	23%
Paid discounted Internet	342	23%
Receive Free Internet	303	20%
Free Internet from building	207	14%
Do not have any access to the Internet	151	10%
School-provided WiFi hotspot	105	7%
Don't know	37	2%
Other	31	2%
Total Respondents	**1,482**	

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

There are digital challenges that go beyond access to devices and the internet.



*Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey, Multiple Answer Question, "Was technology a barrier to accessing most needed services during COVID-19?"

There are digital challenges that go beyond access to devices and the internet.

- The majority of **Deaf focus group participants** reported using **videophones** (Sorenson and Purple VRS). In order to use a videophone, Deaf residents need a videophone device, an Internet connection, and a screen to connect the videophone. Having access to a videophone was cited as essential for calling friends and family, making appointments, online banking, and accessing essential services.

- All participants reported the **critical importance** of **high-speed internet for making videophone calls**. They cited that high speed internet was the only option because the videophone system required a minimum of 256K of streaming speed to function correctly.

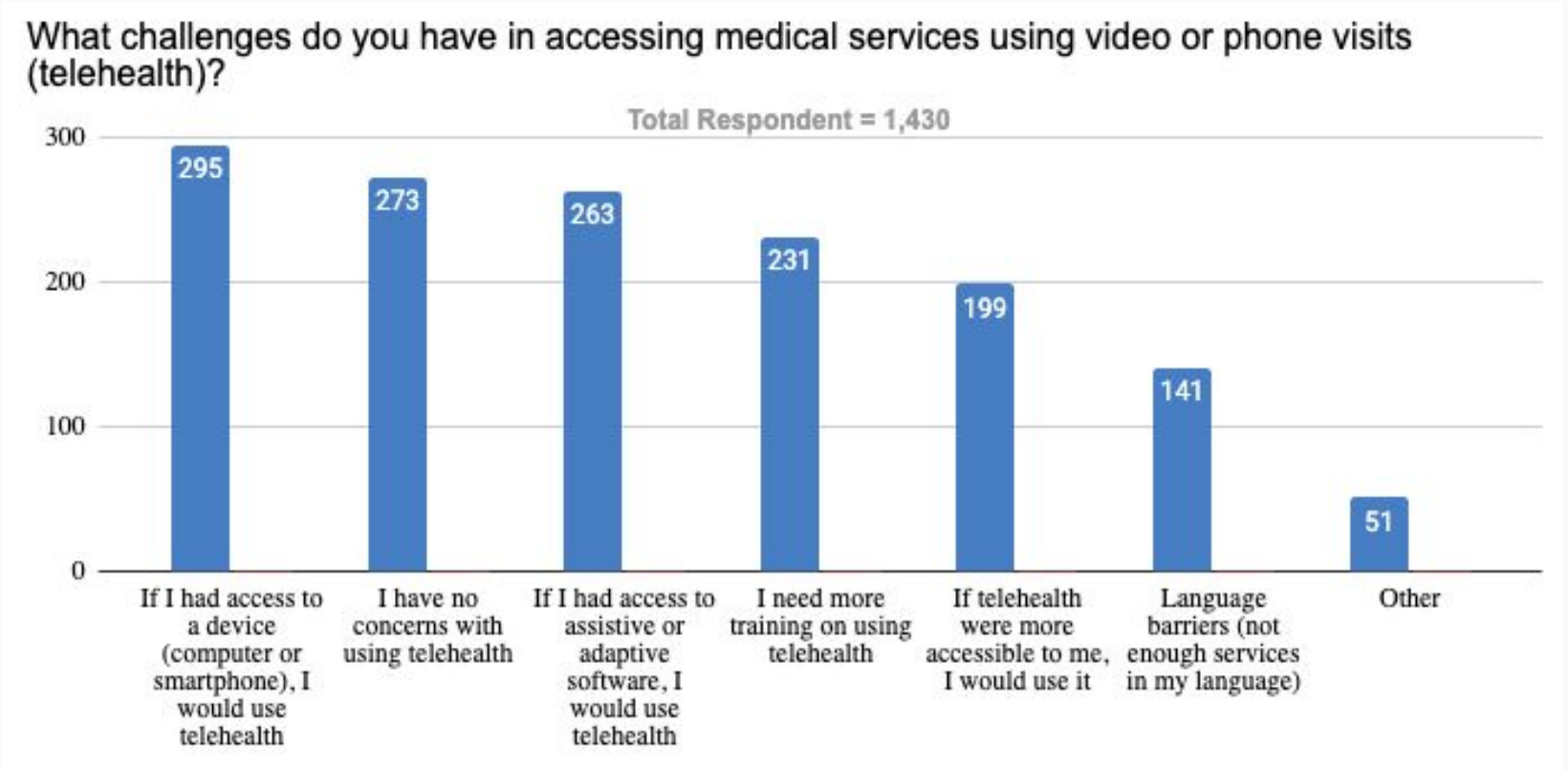
During the pandemic, receiving medical services through telehealth (phone and video) was vital.

Have you received any healthcare or mental health services through appointments over the phone or video (telehealth) during COVID-19?

Answer Choices	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Yes	999	67%
No	441	30%
Prefer not to say	43	3%
Total Respondents	**1,483**	

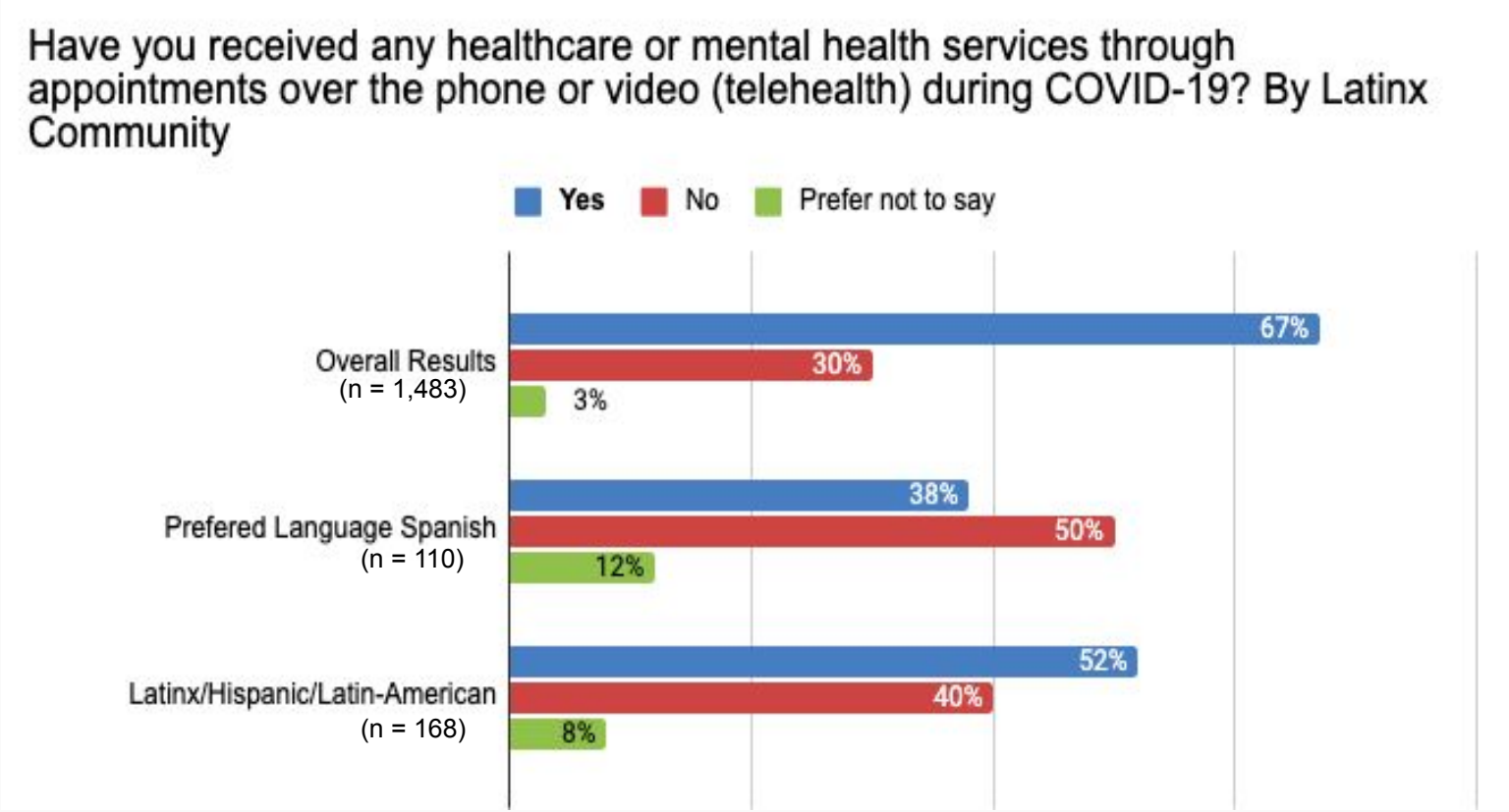
Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

During the pandemic, receiving medical services through telehealth (phone and video) presented some challenges.



Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

Receiving telehealth services was particularly difficult for the Latinx/Hispanic/Latin-American community.



Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

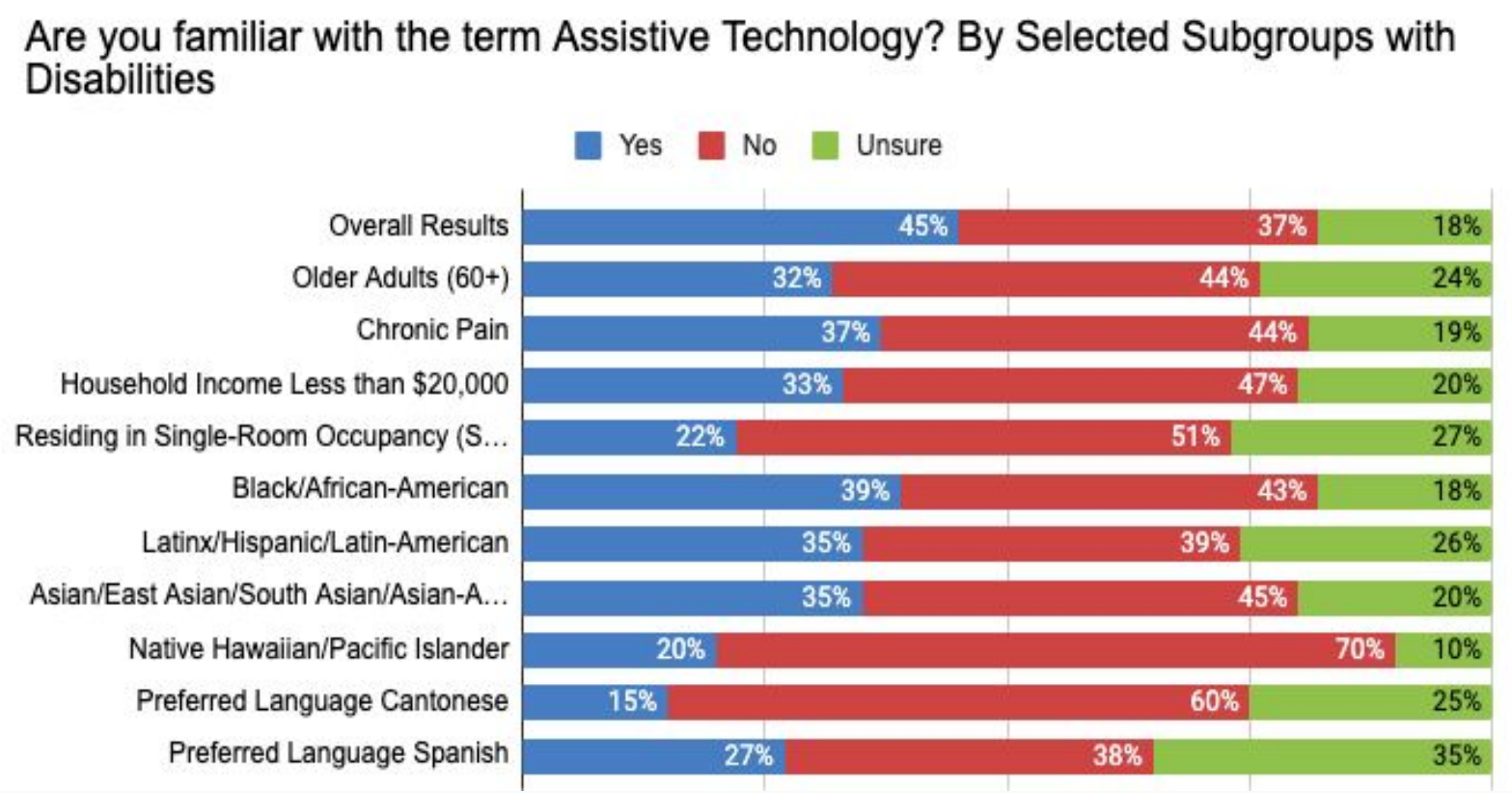
Providing free or low-cost assistive or adaptive technology (AT) and training would be helpful in making AT more accessible.

- 45% (661) of survey respondents reported being familiar with the term “assistive technology” and 51% (721) reported using AT.

- As for AT services needs, overall results show low-cost AT as the primary need (53%, 659), followed by training (45%, 564), then information about available AT options (39%, 485), and lastly, access to free or low-cost repairs (30%, 379).

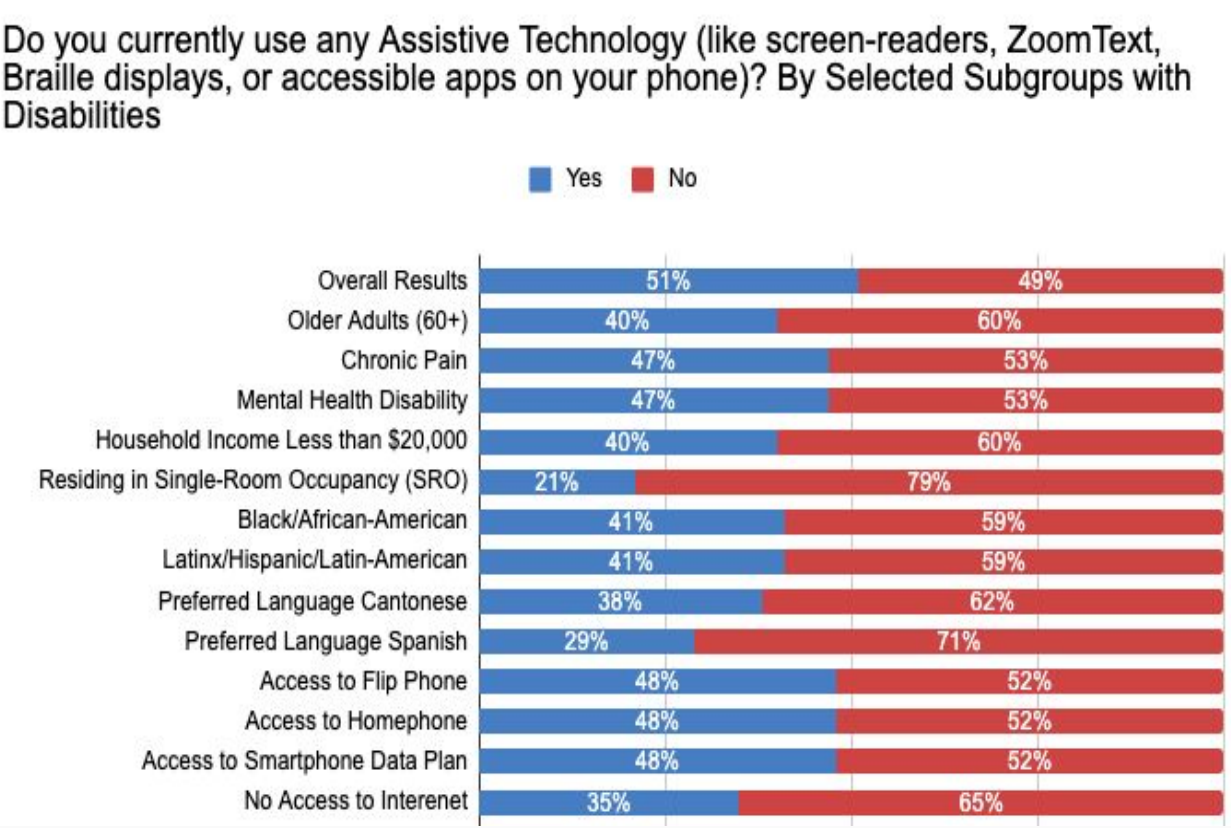
Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

The need for AT services (such as accessible AT equipment and education) are greater for people with disabilities who are:



Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

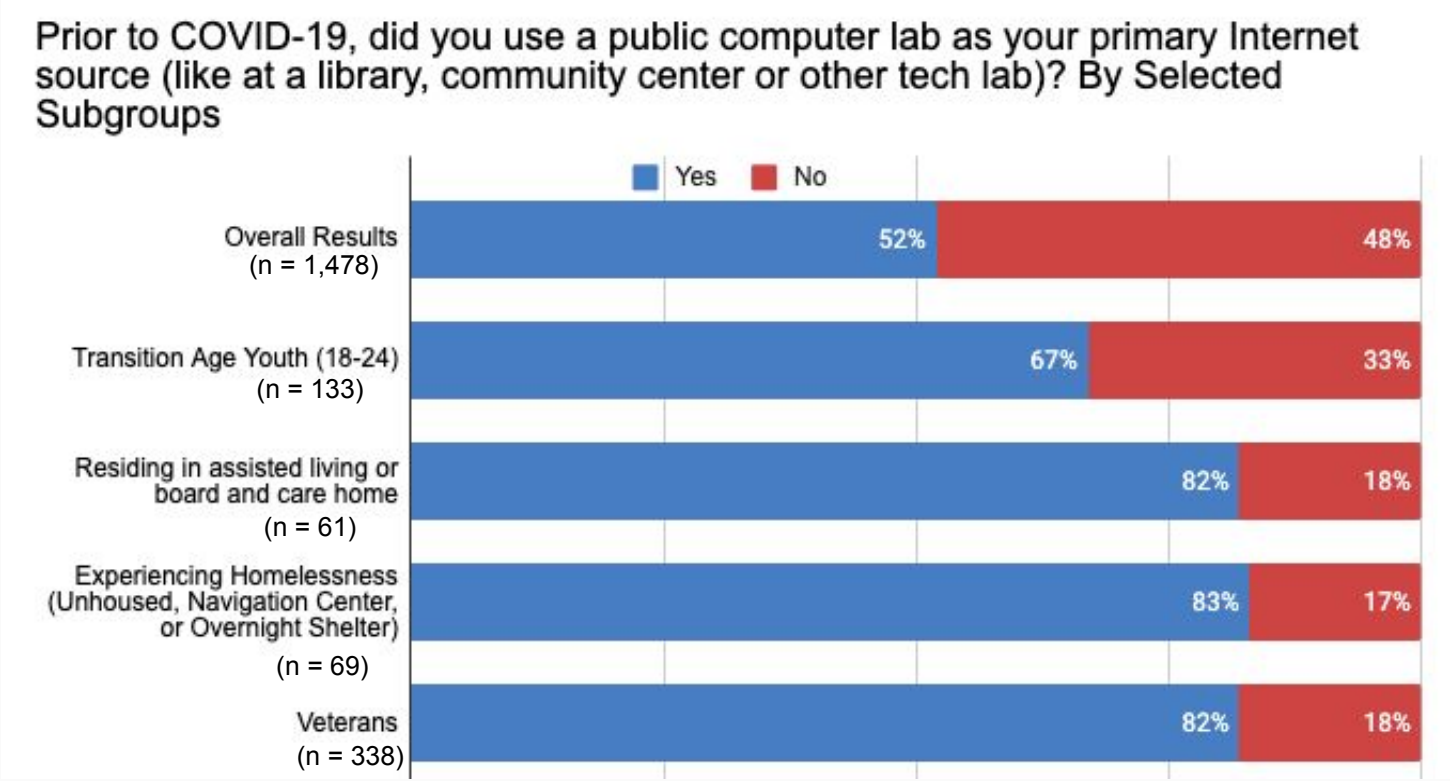
The need for AT services (such as accessible AT equipment and education) are greater for people with disabilities who are:



Subgroups	Total Respondents
Older Adults (60+)	782
Chronic Pain	360
Mental Health Disability	243
Household Income Less than $20,000	468
Residing in Single-Room Occupancy (SRO)	76
Black/African-American	103
Latinx/Hispanic/Latin-American	164
Preferred Language Cantonese	276
Preferred Language Spanish	108
Access to Flip Phone	95
Access to Homephone	189
Access to Smartphone Data Plan	322
No Access to Interenet	133
Overall Results	1,425

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

Public computer labs such as public libraries, community centers, or tech labs served as important sources of internet for the Disability community prior to the pandemic, especially for:



Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

Safe, secure and centralized public computer labs are essential technology services.

"Safety became an issue because I didn't want to bring my devices outside and then try to use them with this handheld wheelchair. And it's so dangerous you know...I have chains on everything I own. So there used to be safe places to go like the Technology Center at St. Anthony's, but they're all closed with COVID you know."
(Older adult resident living in SRO, who previously experienced homelessness)

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Focus Group

Customized digital literacy services are necessary for a community with varied digital knowledge and experience.

While survey results showed that computer technology training appeared within the top five most needed services during the pandemic, at the same time there was also indication of little need in internet literacy, indicating diverse digital knowledge and capabilities.

Customized digital literacy services are necessary for a community with varied digital knowledge and experience.

*Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey, Multiple Answer Question, "What are the services that you have needed most during the COVID-19 pandemic? (Check all that apply)"

Customized digital literacy services are necessary for a community with varied digital knowledge and experience.

Please tell us how you use the Internet (Check all that apply):

*Note: Sum of column total excedes Total Respondents because one person can cite more than one way of using the internet.

Answer Choices	Count	Percent
I have an email address	845	57%
I am comfortable reading and sending emails	650	44%
I use social media (like Facebook, What'sApp or WeChat)	645	44%
I can join a video call or event (like on Zoom or Google Chat)	580	39%
I know how to search for information online (like on Google, Bing or Safari)	508	34%
I don't know how to get online using the Internet	313	21%
I can fill out online forms or pay bills online	294	20%
Total Respondents	**1,479**	

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Survey

Customized digital literacy services are necessary for a community with varied digital knowledge and experience.

- Focus group data also showcased a range in digital literacy needs and experiences. Digital literacy needs varied from basic operations of devices and internet to using specific apps, like Zoom.

- The reasons for gaps in technology knowledge were also diverse. For some individuals, lack of access to technology led to little or no digital literacy. For instance, focus group participants with a history of being disconnected to systems of care (individuals with a history of chronic street homelessness or justice-involved) reported incredible hardships in using technology, as extreme as not even having any idea of what WiFi is. Reasons for gaps in digital literacy could also stem from inaccessibility to affordable, culturally aware trainings. For example, older adults whose primary language is either Cantonese or Spanish emphasized the importance of language access in providing digital education.

Customized digital literacy services are necessary for a community with varied digital knowledge and experience.

"I don't know what the definition of WiFi or hotspot or computer jargon. I've never seen anything on the news...like you're supposed to just know what it means. I feel like I should know, but I don't."
(San Francisco resident living in single-room occupancy [SRO] hotels)

"I really hope there are more workshops and training for seniors to learn using Zoom. It will be very helpful for all of us. There is a great need for this. We can use this to chat with relatives who live very far away from us." (Older adult focus group participant whose primary language is Cantonese)

"I just got out of prison. I get out into this society. They didn't have phones when I went in. Now everybody's got one, it seems like everybody's completely centered on it and attached to it and everything revolves around the phone and here I am, I don't know how to even use the...thing."
(Older adult veteran focus group participant)

"I'd like to receive more training […] There are people who live totally alone and they don't have anybody to help them. And we need to get training for our own benefit, to improve our way of life and be able to learn more about technology." (Older adult focus group participant whose primary language is Spanish)

Source: Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment Focus Group

Overview of Recommendations

Recommendation

1. **Prioritize improving free or low-cost digital connectivity for residents with disabilities and older adults. There is a clear unified call from disability and aging advocates to establish the "internet as a utility," which provides an important opportunity to think of the internet as public infrastructure rather than a luxury or commodity.**
    - Continue to fund the installation of free WiFi and public computer labs in affordable housing, supportive housing, shelters and senior centers.
    - Purchase devices and fund the expansion of device recycling/refurbishment and distribution.
    - Work in partnership with SFPL to expand distribution of free WiFi hotspots.
    - Audit map of free public WiFi hotspots in San Francisco.
    - Set up free and publicly accessible charging stations and lock boxes.
    - Long-Term: Deploy free Fiber-Optic infrastructure so that all SF residents can benefit from free high speed internet.

Recommendation

2. Develop a centralized hub to build awareness around existing digital inclusion programs, free or low-cost internet, devices and Assistive technology (AT), and digital skills training. Although San Francisco has a robust portfolio of digital inclusion programs, there is a clear need to increase awareness and education around these vital technology resources.

- Compile a centralized directory of digital inclusion assets and resources.
- Design a user-friendly tipsheet on how to access free or low-cost internet services, digital skills training, and resources on assistive technology.
- Develop and support outreach channels to assist residents with disabilities and older adults sign up for the federal Emergency Broadband Benefit internet subsidy program and other low-cost internet offers.
- Partner with 311 Information Services

Recommendation

3. Develop pipelines to increase funding and distribution of free or low-cost Assistive or Adaptive Technology (AT) devices, repairs, and training.

- Develop a plan to increase funding for assistive or adaptive technology (AT) devices and software at public technology labs.

- Develop accessibility trainings for CBOs and service providers to increase their awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, as well as strategies for ensuring that their digital services and technology solutions are accessible to users with disabilities who rely upon assistive technology.

Recommendation

4. Launch a citywide digital accessibility program aimed at ensuring that virtual events, information and digital services are fully accessible for people with disabilities.

- Create an Accessible Technology Playbook to provide a framework for improving the delivery of accessible information and communication technology (ICT) in the City of County of San Francisco.

- Create an “Access Fund” to support CBOs in making their online events and services more accessible.

- Develop a Accessible Technology Compliance Officer position that would help guide and inform city agencies and CBOs in ensuring full access for residents with disabilities and establish partnerships and inclusive participatory research.

Recommendation

5. Invest in digital equity programs and community-led solutions for transition-age youth with disabilities (18-26), youth experiencing chronic homelessness and youth in the foster care system.

- Develop a plan for building a citywide Digital Equity program geared towards increasing digital equity for TAY youth with disabilities (18-26).

- Work in partnership with SFUSD to ensure that transition-age youth with IEPs and 504 Plans can retain their Chromebooks and assistive technology after they graduate or exit SFUSD.

- Leverage partnerships with organizations working to strengthen tech education pipelines for under-resourced youth.

Recommendation

6. Create and implement measures to ensure that remote employment opportunities and accessible workplace technology are made available for residents with disabilities in the City and County of San Francisco.

- Create a Tech Employment Scholarship Fund to help remove employment barriers for transition-age youth (18-26), and promote more tech employment pipelines for youth with disabilities.

- Continue to offer remote participation options for disabled residents to participate in public meetings conducted by the City and County of San Francisco.

Recommendation

7. Develop digital stewardship models to include community members with disabilities & older adults in the designing, building, and evaluating of digital equity solutions for the Digital Equity Strategic Plan 2010-2024.

- Create a Disability and Aging Taskforce made up of a diverse cross-sections of people with disabilities to advise and lead all aspects of the Digital Equity Strategic Plan 2019-2024.
- Develop a citywide Digital Navigator training and employment program for libraries, supportive housing and senior centers. Digital Navigators provide person-centered assistance to address the entire digital inclusion process
- Continue to build the newly-formed Bay Area-wide regional digital equity consortium to assist in the identification of internet access gaps, and to ensure that the communities affected by the digital divide are involved in decision-making to close digital equity gaps.

Recommendation

8. Pilot initiatives aimed at lowering barriers to telehealth access in partnership with affordable and supportive housing communities to equip residents with internet access, telehealth tools and digital literacy skills.

- Provide peer-led trainings in access to telehealth services to residents with disabilities and older adults living in affordable and supportive housing.

- Partner with the Center for Connected Health Policy, a digital inclusion and telehealth policy research organization, to measure the impact of these pilot programs

Recommendation

9. Boost investment in digital literacy programs, with a particular focus on language access, accessibility, and cultural relevance.

- Invest additional funds into expanding language access options for digital literacy trainings and work in partnership with “trusted” community leaders to develop the training classes and curriculum.

- Develop a multi-series Digital Literacy training in multiple languages and accessible formats on SFGOV.TV with an emphasis on reaching monolingual communities of color, people with disabilities, and older adults.

Recommendation

10. Continue to develop the Bay Area Regional Digital Equity Consortium to advance local, regional and statewide Digital Equity efforts and common alignment of policy recommendations.

11. Roll-out recommendations and manage the implementation of urgent initiatives that address the needs and barriers of San Francisco residents with disabilities and older adults. We are urging City policymakers to actively work towards enacting these short- and long-term recommendations proposed by the 2021 Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment.

Thriving inPlace

Learn more about the Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment:

www.tipsf.org/Digital-Equity

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