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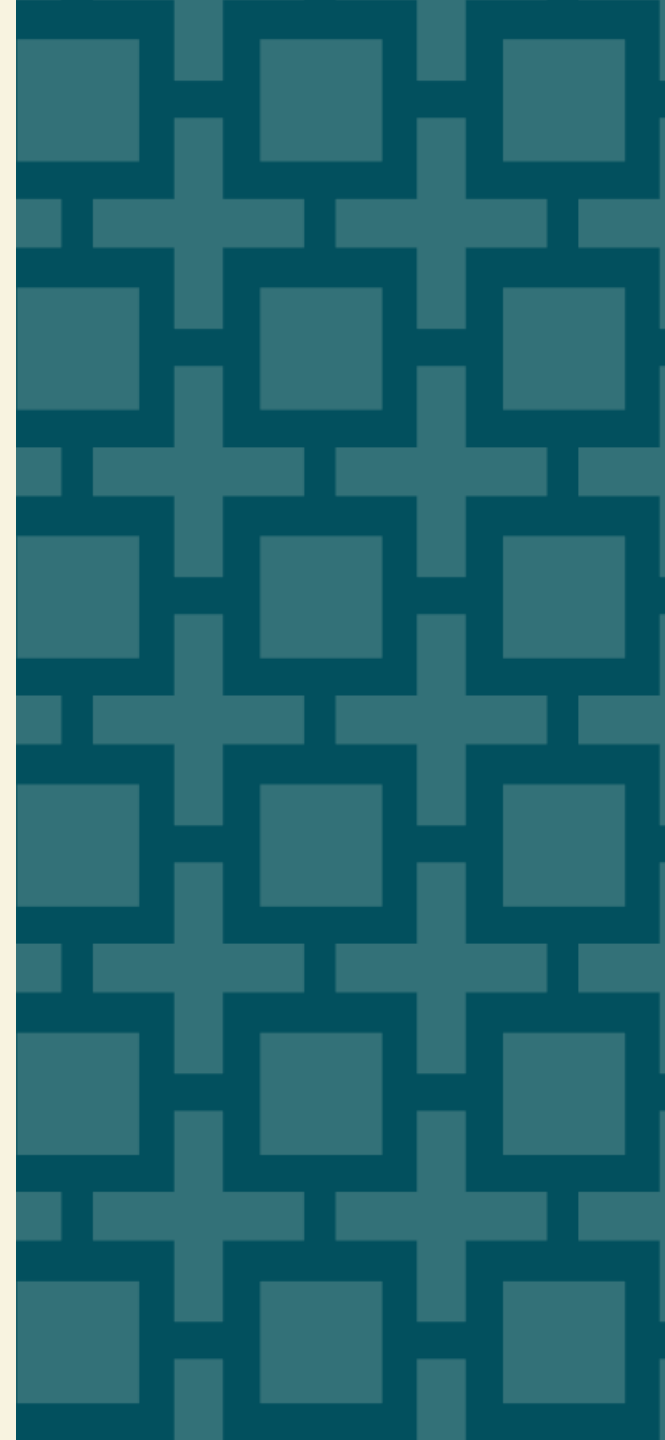
Lessons From Minnesota Voices on Telehealth + Digital Equity

Stephanie Devitt, M.P.P.

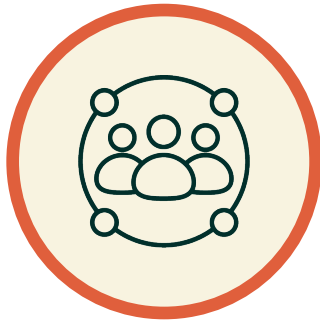
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Our Time Today



Source:
Community-
Informed
Research



Context:
Telehealth +
Broadband Policy



Solutions:
Lessons From
Community
Needs + Priorities

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About Our Work

Content reflects:

Nearly
2,000
people

Half in-depth
interviews;
Half survey
responses

>90% of
responses
from or
serving:
BIPOC, older
adults,
unhoused,
rural

Diverse
sectors:
healthcare,
nonprofit,
business, and
more

Core Post-Pandemic Questions Explored...

How do people
connect to
resources and
opportunity?

How do
people use
public space
now?

***Where are patterns the same
– and where are they different –
across racial and ethnic communities, older adults,
rural, unhoused, and others?***

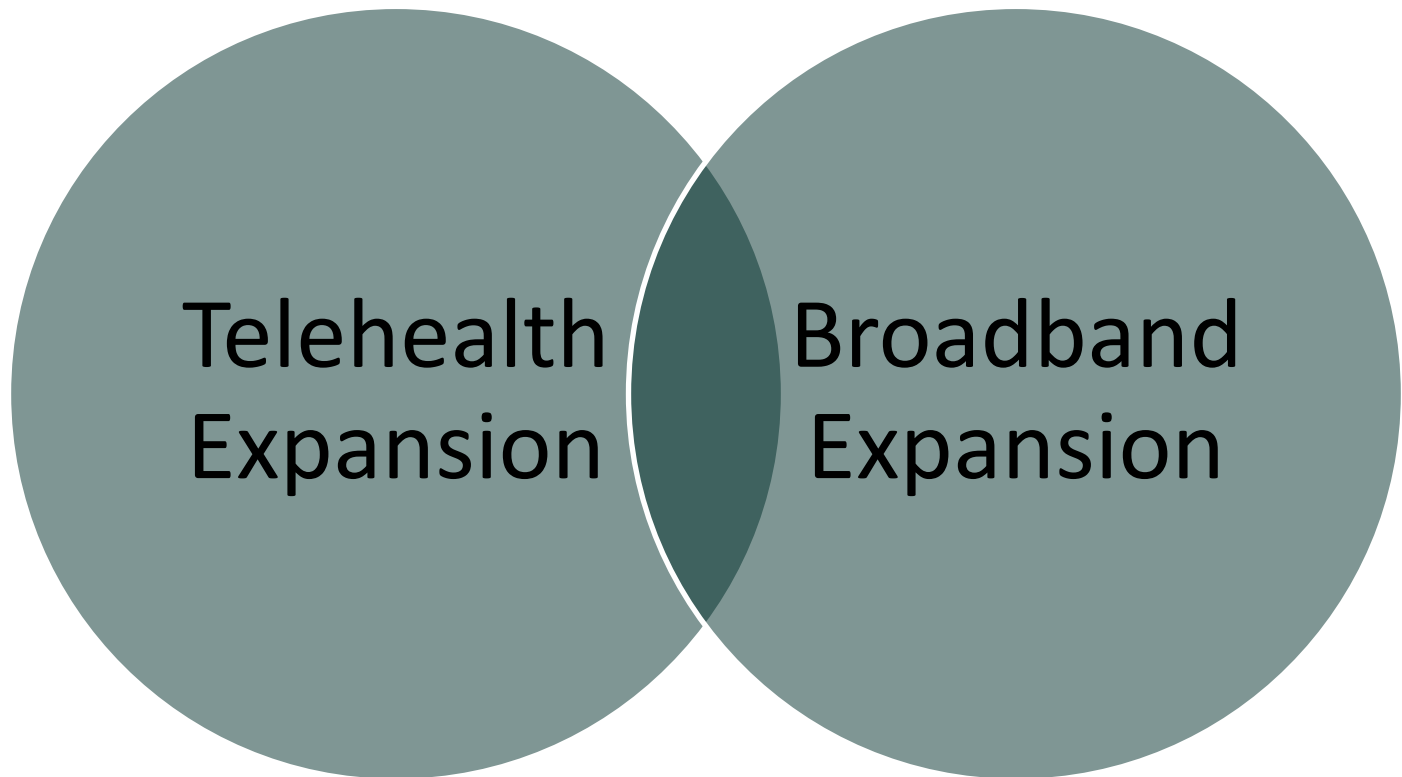
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Context:

**The Pandemic Changed
Telehealth + Connectivity**

Connectivity + Telehealth

Emergency pandemic policies included:



Telehealth Expansion: Policy Changes

More places

More modes

More services

Some Telehealth Policies Expire Soon



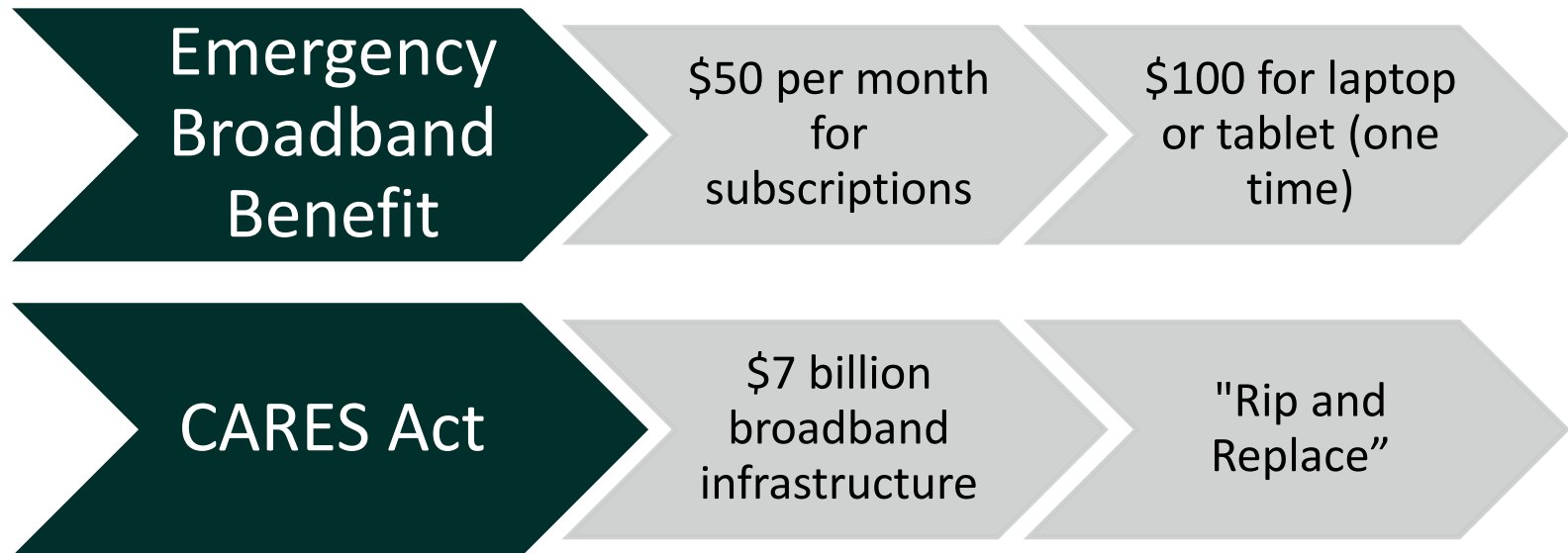
Permanent Policies:

- Behavioral health: from home, any location, FQHCs
- Rural health clinics
- Audio-only


Expiring Dec. 31, 2024:

- **No geographic restrictions** for non-behavioral health
- FQHCs and rural health clinics **provide non-behavioral telehealth**
- **Audio-only** for some non-behavioral health

Broadband: A Focus of Pandemic Investment

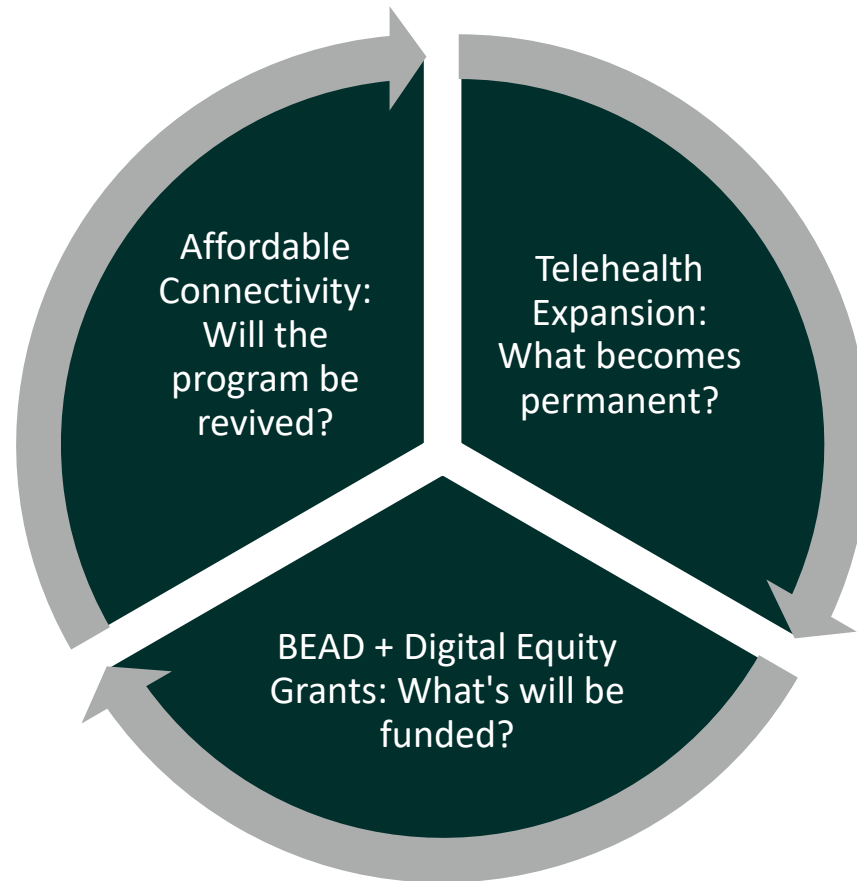


Broadband: IJA Accelerated Investment



BEAD Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$45.45 B. nationwide• \$650 M. for Minnesota
Digital Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$2.75 B. nationwide• ½ national, competitive grants• \$12 M. for MN
Affordable Connectivity Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$30 / mo. for subscriptions• Auto-enrollment with housing, food, Medicaid, etc.

Coming Months Could Roll Back Online Progress....



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Solutions:

**Lessons + Priorities For
Broadband and Telehealth**

Key Ideas:

1. Broadband access is critical to health, including accessing telehealth.
2. Older adults have less access to broadband than Minnesotans as a whole.
3. Getting the online access means getting connected, staying connected, and knowing how to use the connection

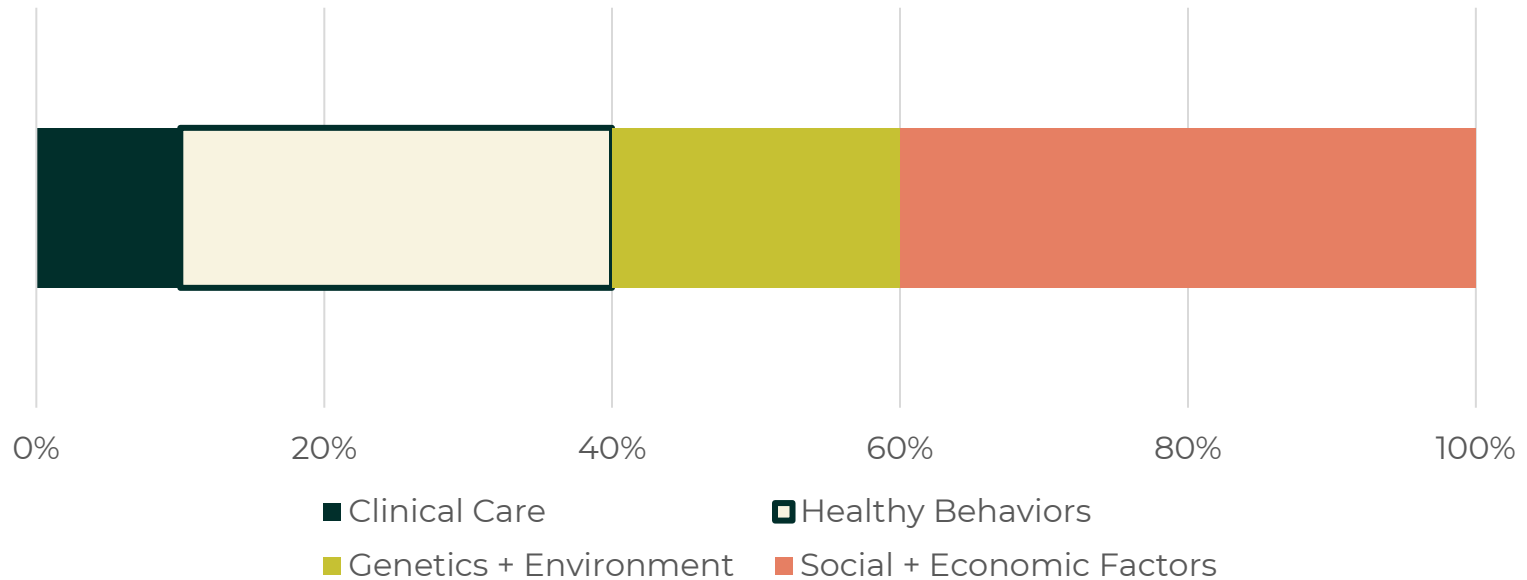


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Broadband Access Is Critical To Health

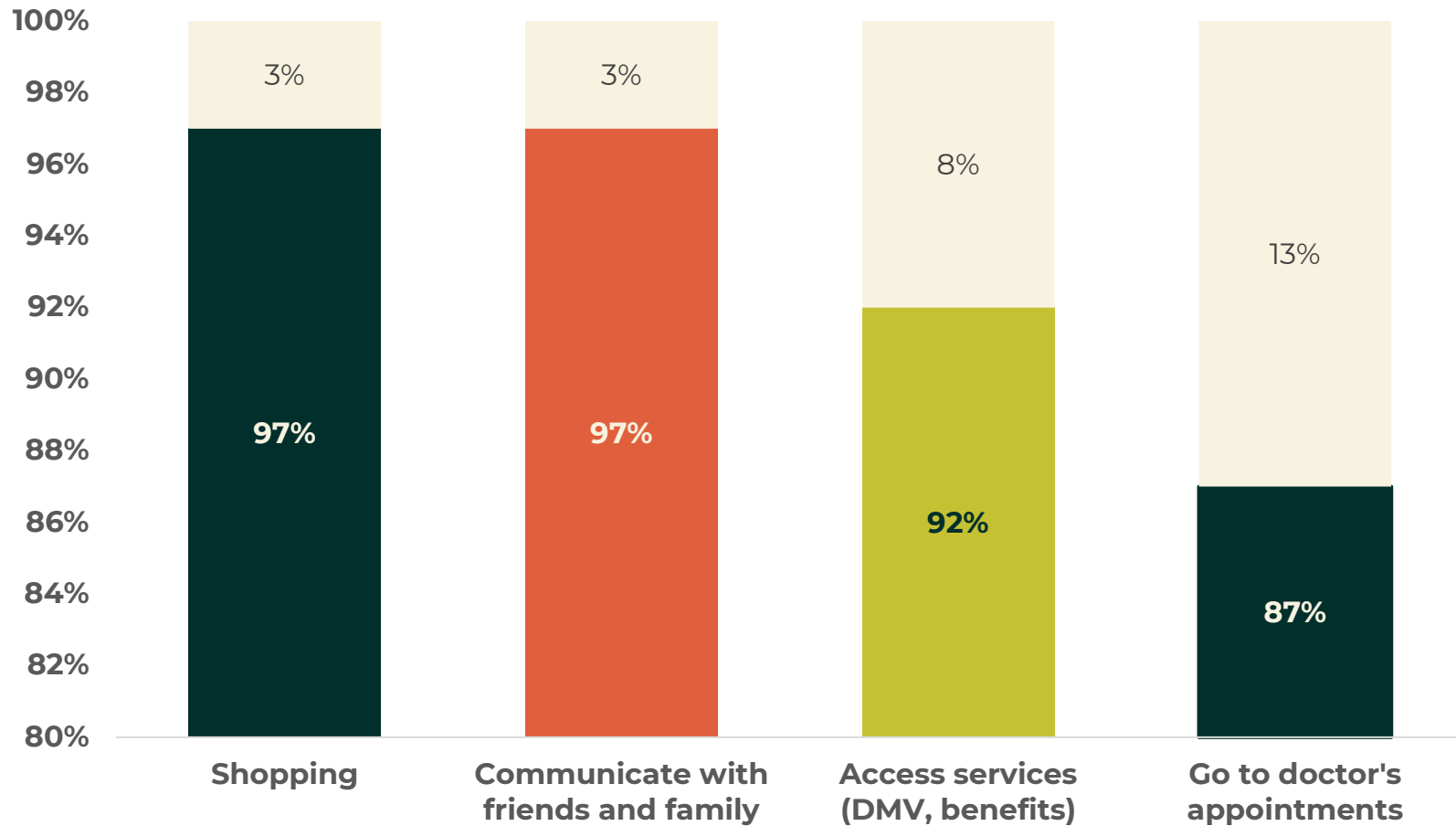
Broadband Access Is Critical To Health

Chart: Social Determinants of Health



Broadband: A “Super-Determinant of Health”

People Go Online For Many Reasons....



Broadband + Telehealth Helps People Reach Care

....By overcoming barriers to transportation

“Sometimes it would be nice to get in on a cancellation or get to see a doctor sooner than later. [Without telehealth] it doesn’t matter.....[The doctor’s office calls and says they] have an appointment today at 2:45? That’s wonderful, but I have no way to get there [without telehealth]” – Patient

“I’m not super far away, but sometimes I [don’t have] access to a vehicle and... I have some anxiety about driving, particularly in bad weather.” – Patient

“When you talk about transportation, we live 25 miles from Mayo, but [our volunteer drivers] don’t want to drive down to Mayo because of all the construction downtown..... While we’re so close to great medical care, getting there... is not easy. That’s the big barrier there.” -- Community-based service provider

“If I was at Hopkins, getting to the Minneapolis VA [Hospital] would be two buses and the light rail. It’s two and a half hours [each way without telehealth].” – Patient

Broadband + Telehealth Helps People Reach Care

..... By making it easier to involve loved ones in care

“My father-in-law lives in New Ulm and has had heart issues. He's been up to Minneapolis [to consult a provider and] to have some procedures done...Because he doesn't really drive long distances, my husband or his sister [has to take] a day off work, go to his home, pick him up, drive him up to [Minneapolis] for an appointment, and then drive him back home [to New Ulm] and then drive home themselves. For a follow-up appointment, he was able to do a telehealth appointment. . . My husband and his sister didn't have to take that time off work., which made everybody very happy” – Patient

“My parents live in Ely, and my dad has had a lot of medical appointments [that require] driving to Virginia [or] Duluth, and [those trips are] fine. But one of his specialist providers is in Kentucky. Getting access to the [highly specialized] practitioners that aren't available in a rural place [without telehealth] is really great.” – Patient

Broadband + Telehealth Helps People Reach Care

..... By integrating healthcare and other online services for older adults

“We are in a staffing crisis [at community care providers and]. . . I would say that there's probably less appointments that would be missed [with telehealth]. You're going to get more consistent appointments because you can change out the staff very quickly and easily. You're not relying on transportation.” – Community-Based Advocate

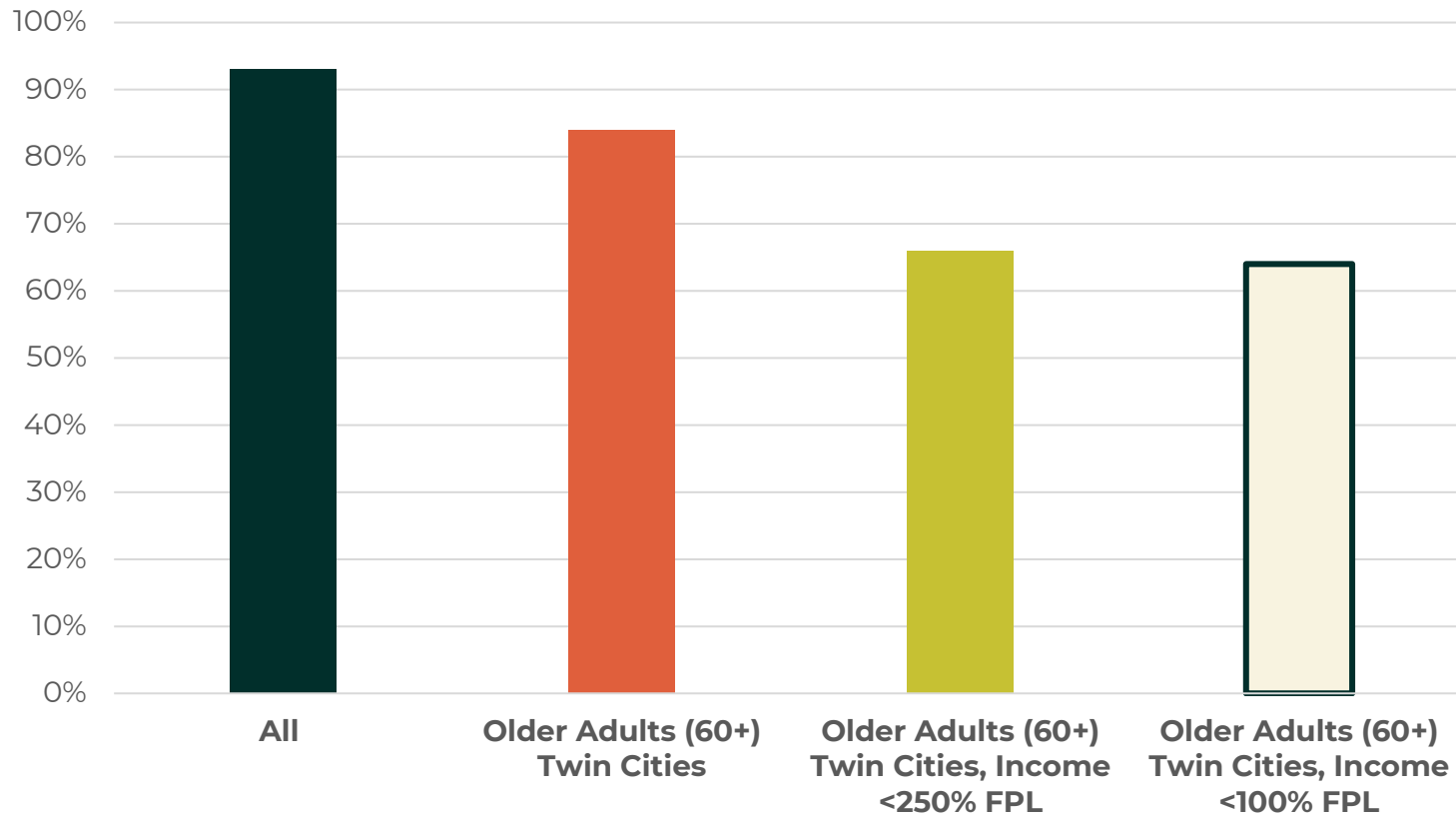
“Classes went online and ...all of a sudden we had a bunch of people in Brainerd signing up who we never had sign up before. They had access to this [Medicare-reimbursable exercise] program now. The class leader was in the Metro and the participants were in the Metro, Brainerd and all over Minnesota.” – Community-Based Advocate

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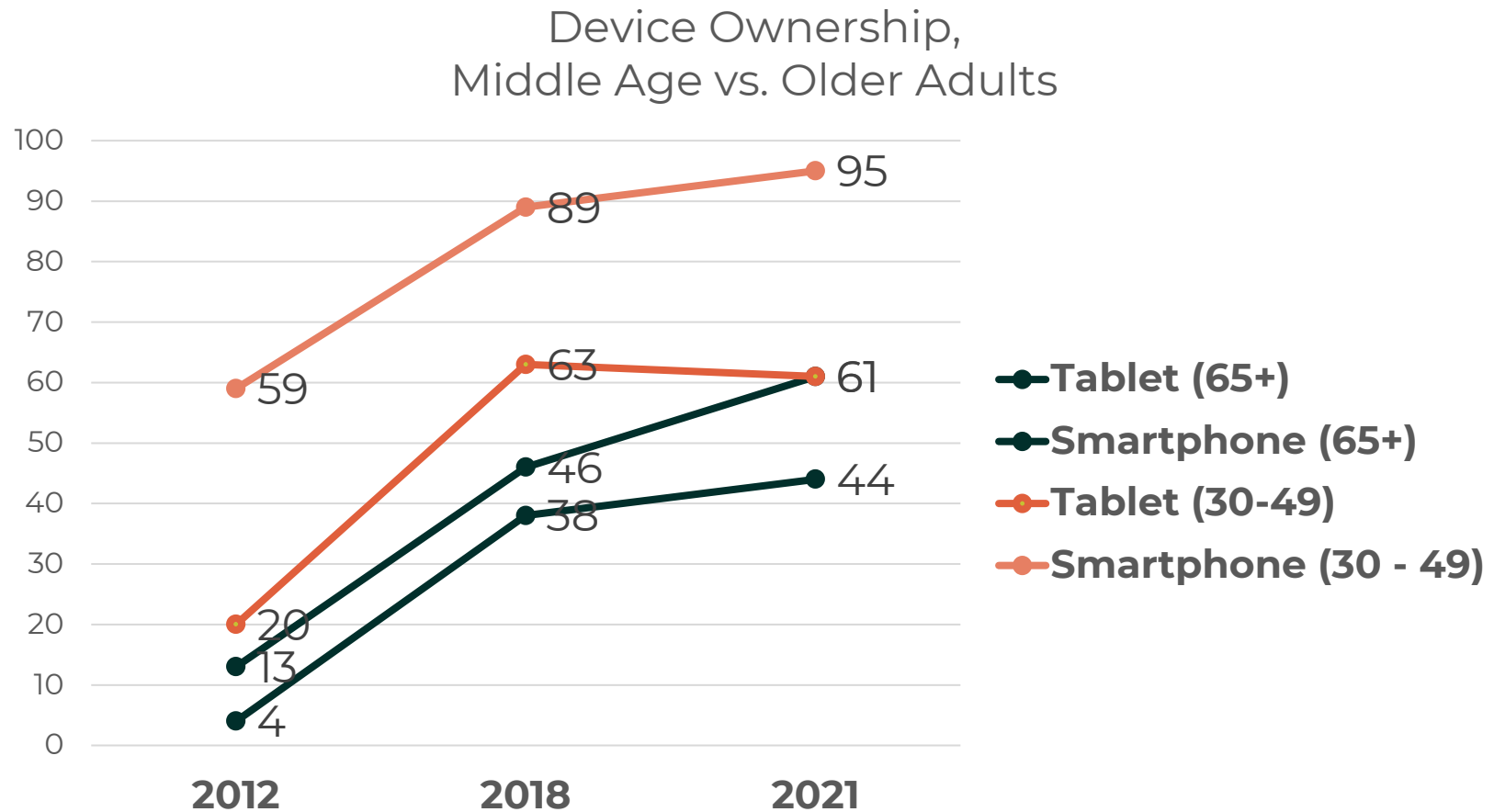
Older Adults Have Less Access to Broadband

Older Adults Have Less Access to Broadband

Broadband Access



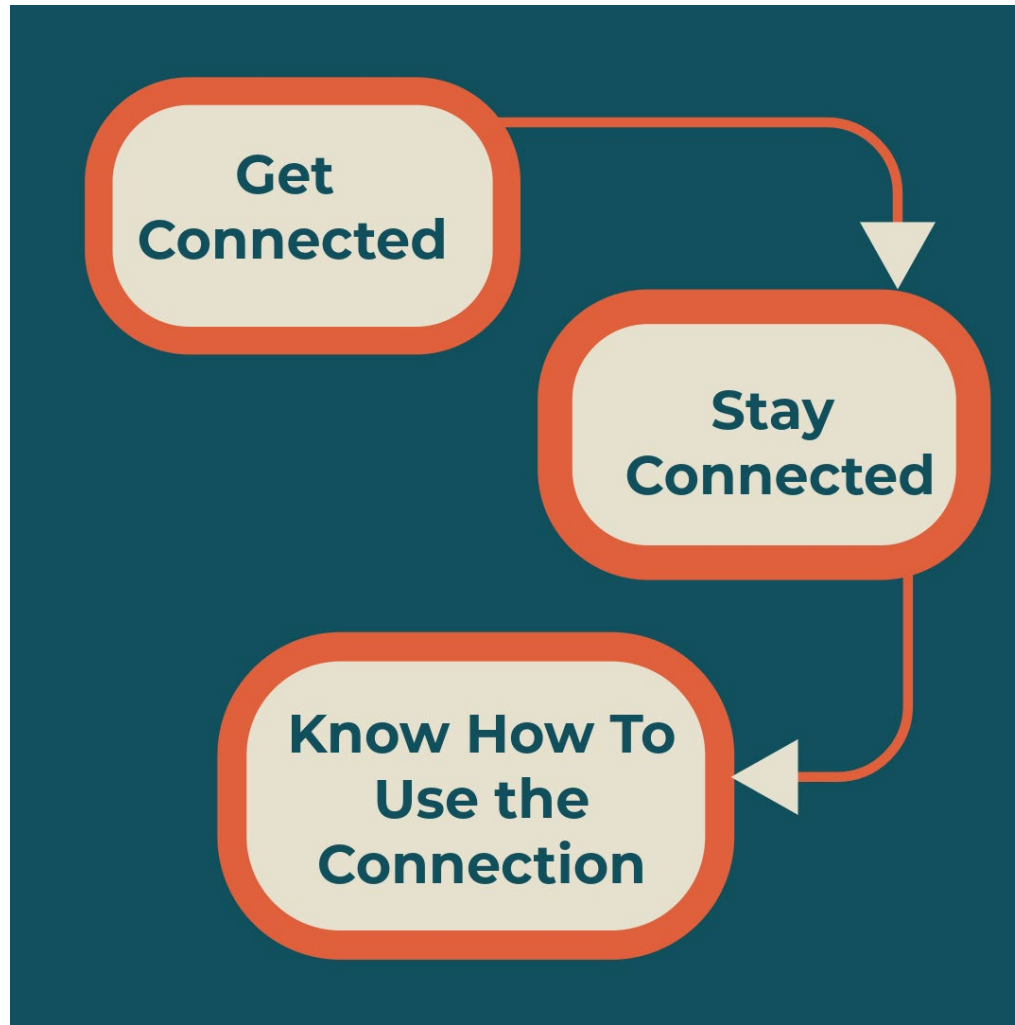
Older Adults' Device Access Is Growing



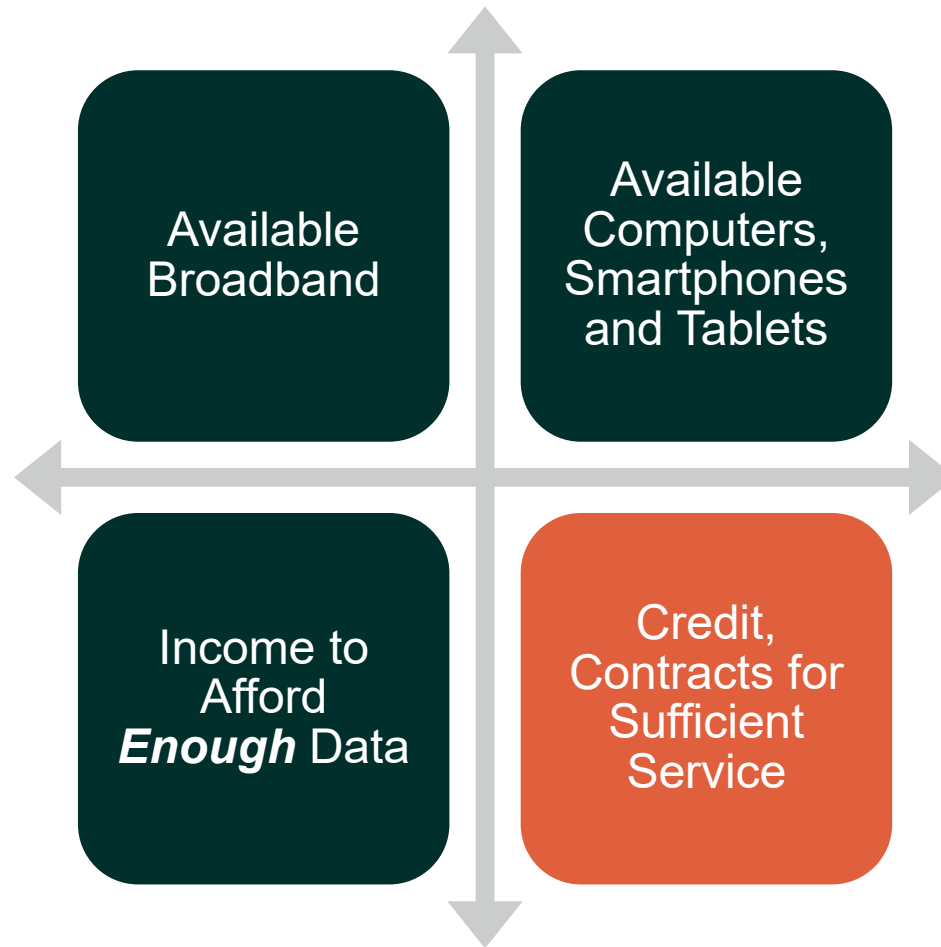
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Get Connected

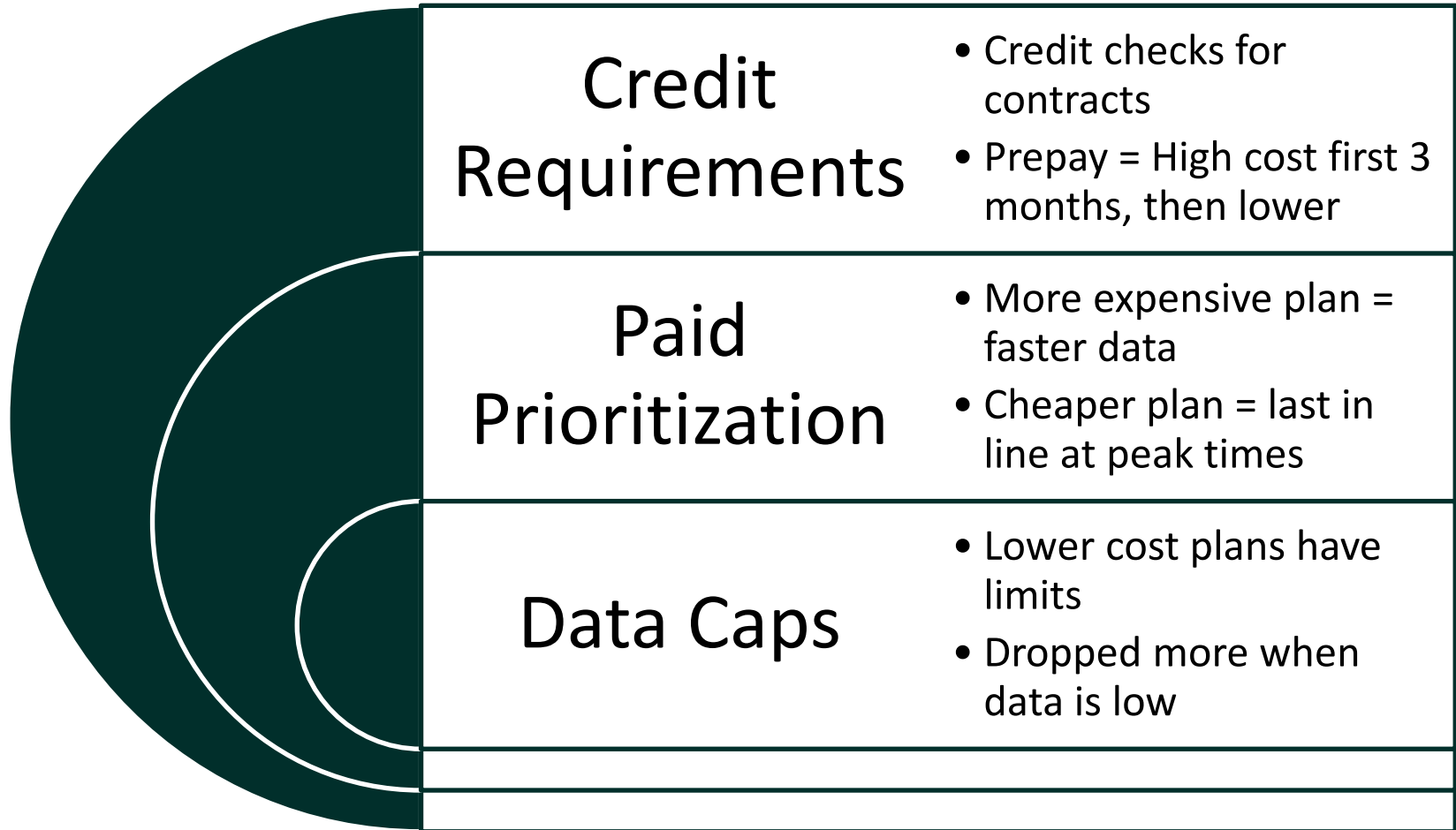
Cycle Of Online Opportunity™



Get Connected



Get Connected: Credit, Contracts for Service



Credit Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Credit checks for contracts• Prepay = High cost first 3 months, then lower
Paid Prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More expensive plan = faster data• Cheaper plan = last in line at peak times
Data Caps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower cost plans have limits• Dropped more when data is low

Get Connected: Stories

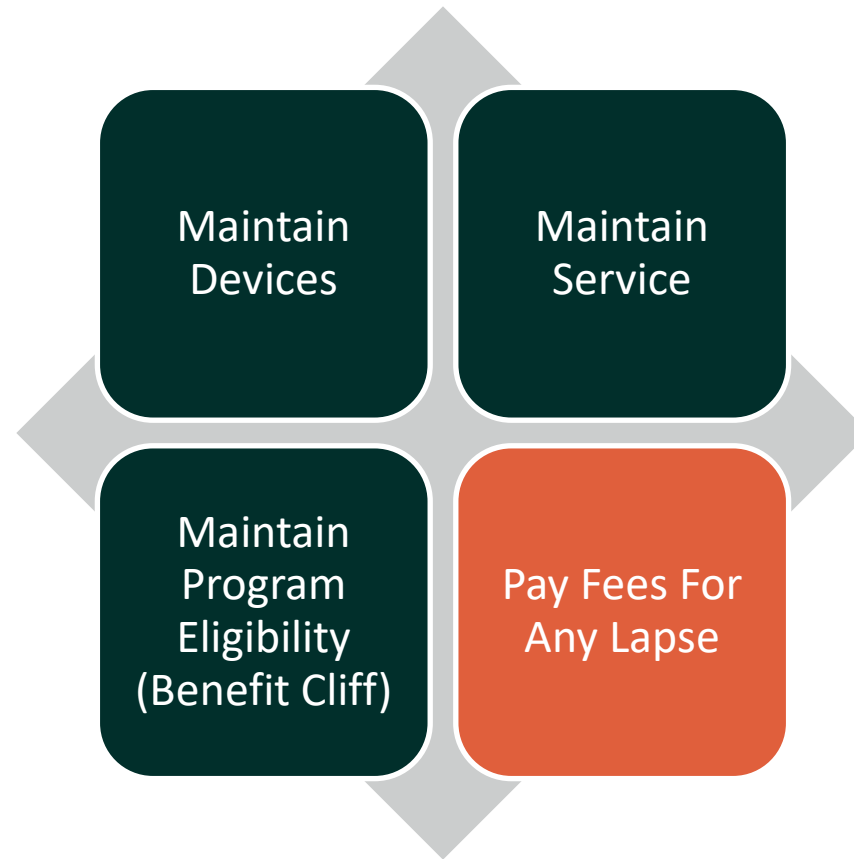
*“The **people who are most isolated and could probably benefit the most from [telehealth] may be the least likely to have both the digital literacy and the devices ready to go.** And sometimes they don't even have internet, so it can be a big challenge in that regard. We have a grant for tech and connectivity that we're [using to help] people get devices and get training.”* – Community-Based Advocate

*“[Telehealth] has been very beneficial to folks who live in an isolated spot or who don't have good transportation....as long as they are hooked up to the broadband that works well for them. **There are folks who either can't afford or aren't interested in hooking up to broadband. And then because we have such an elderly population, there is a large chunk of that elderly population who just doesn't have high trust with telehealth [and] finds it cumbersome.**”* –Small Community-Centered Clinic

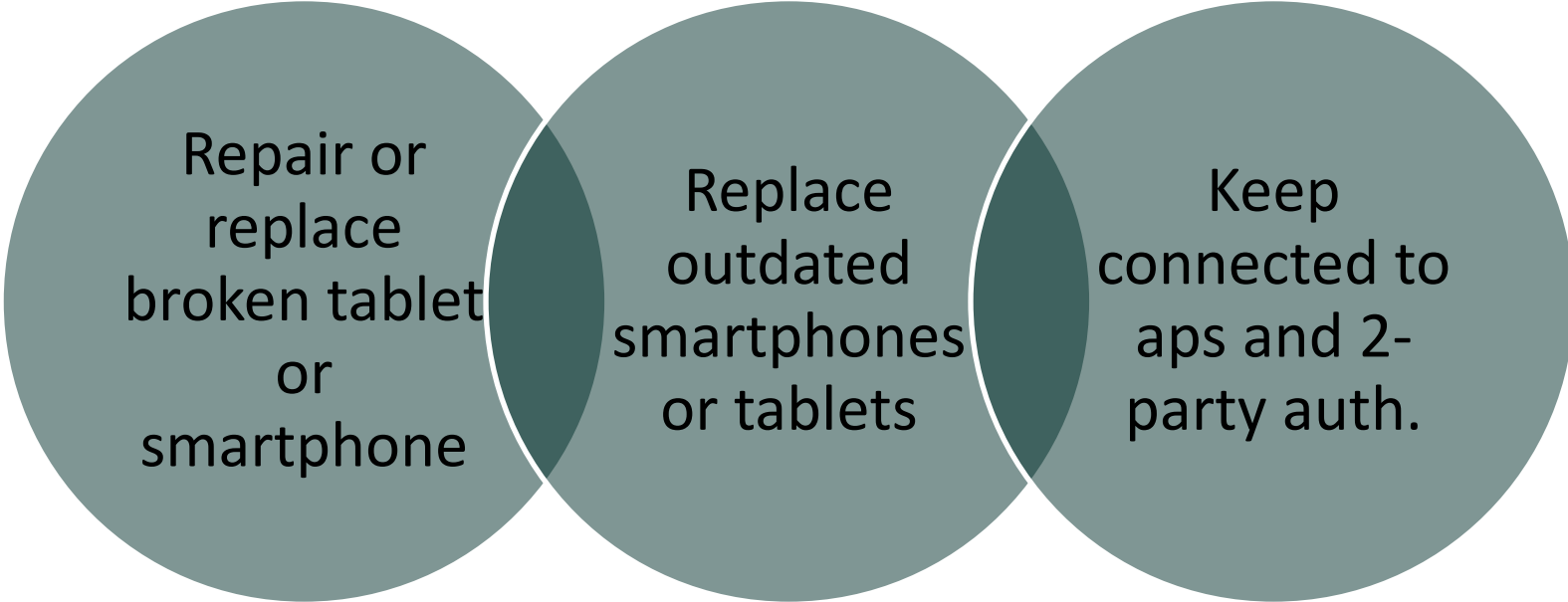
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Stay Connected

Stay Connected



Maintain Devices + Services

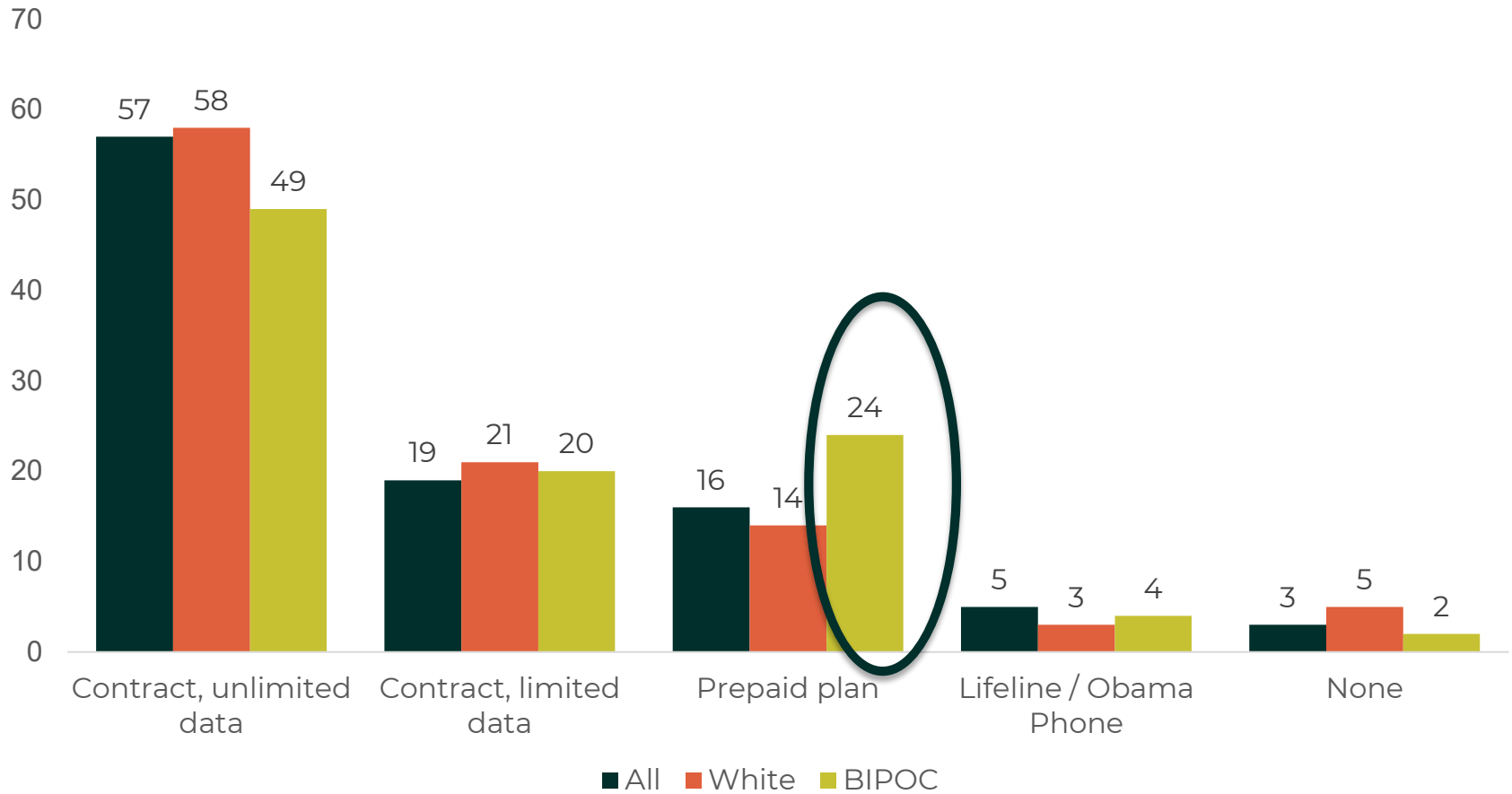


Repair or
replace
broken tablet
or
smartphone

Replace
outdated
smartphones
or tablets

Keep
connected to
aps and 2-
party auth.

Income to Afford Enough Data *(Smartphone Example)*



Programs, Tools Keep Older Adults Connected

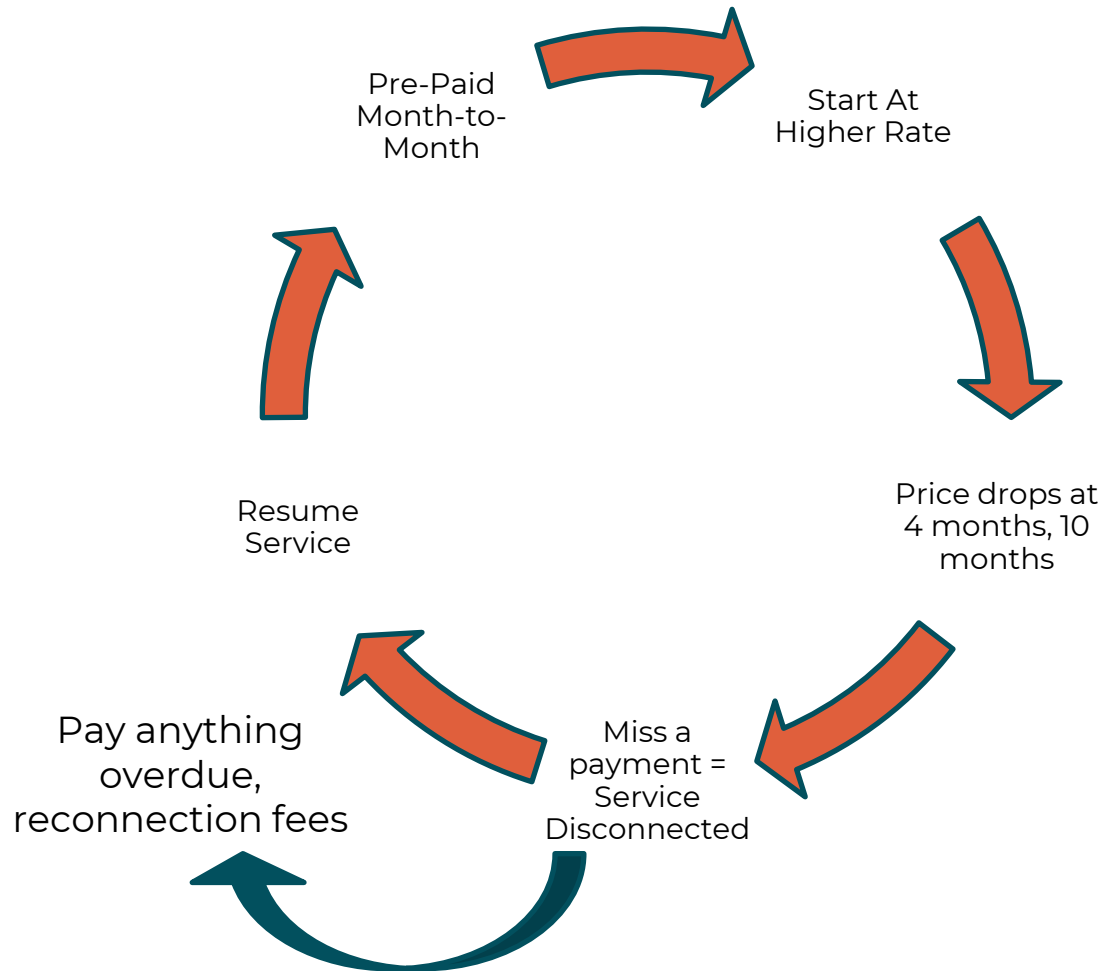
Programs

- 10 million old adults lost ACP benefits in May
- Internet connections harder to maintain on fixed income

Tools

- Audio or AV supports help some older adults use technology
- Specialized aps, like for telehealth, require keeping passwords and two-party authentication

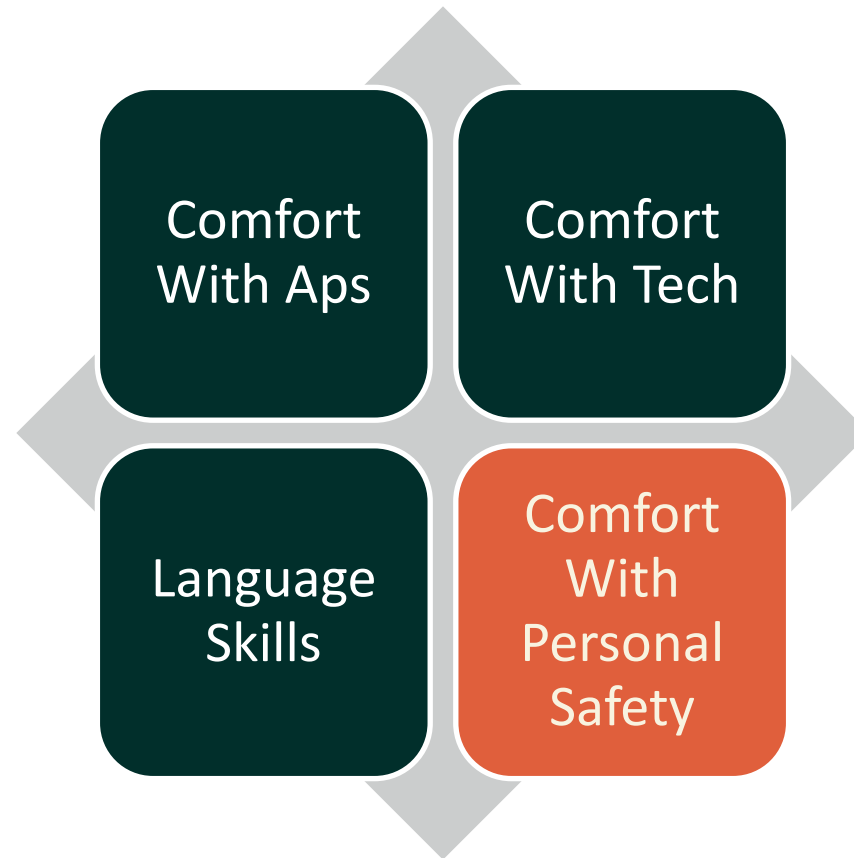
Ability to Pay for Any Lapse In Fees



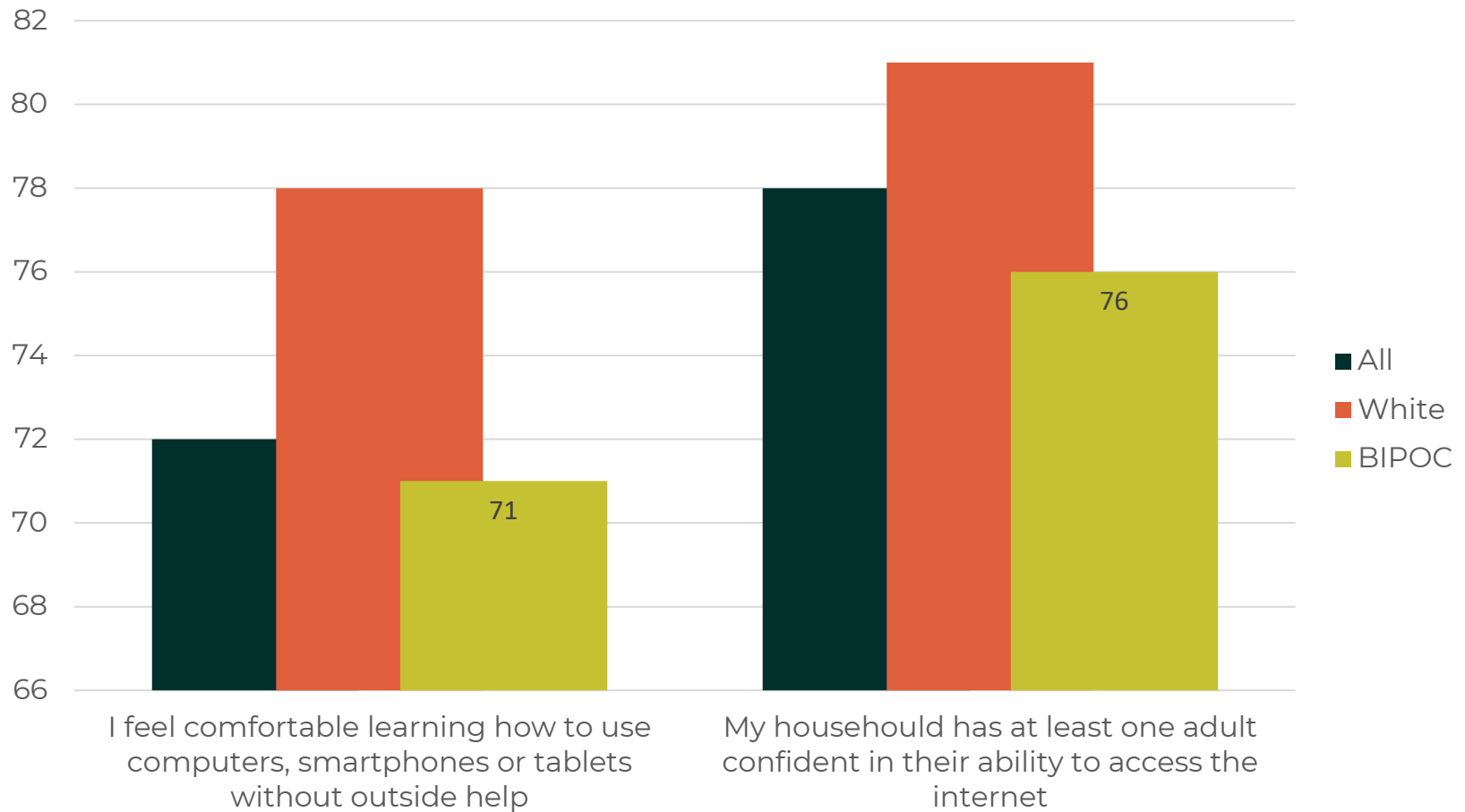
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Know How To Use The Connection

Know How To Use The Connection



Comfort With Technology



Comfort with Technology and Aps

*“A lot of the providers are using telehealth and **it's the people who are doing the in-home care services and the social workers [who] are training people and actually getting it set up.** [The in-home care provider will] actually have the links right to the provider and that person's provider so that it's easier to use.” – Community Advocate*

“If the front desk staff doesn't connect with the family first and make sure that all the audio is working or the video is working, and for some reason the family didn't do their device check.... Then the provider is having to troubleshoot with the family.” – Health care provider

Comfort with Personal Safety



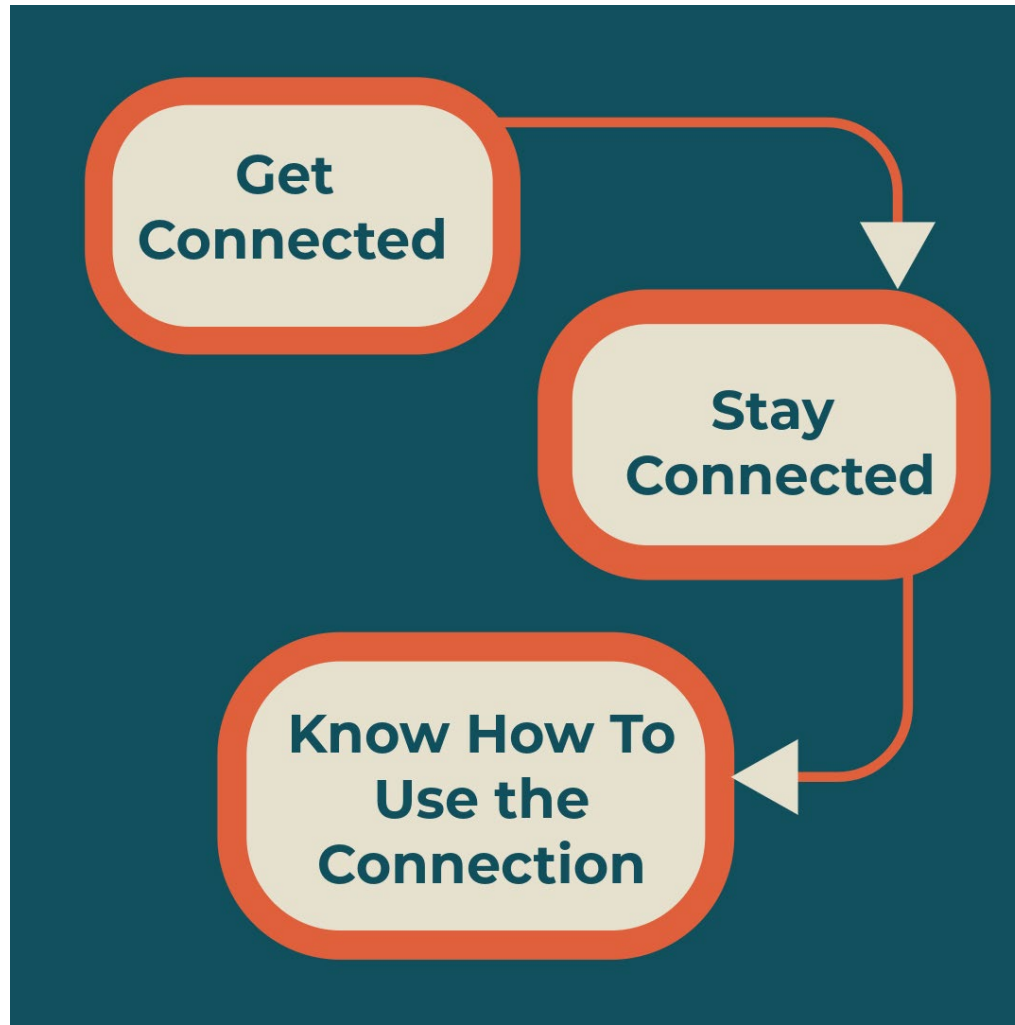
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Key Ideas

Broadband + Telehealth Policy



Cycle Of Online Opportunity™



Final Thought.....

