How to Replicate 2Life's
Digital Device Lending Library Model

Part #1:

About the Digital Device Lending Library (DDLL) Program at 2Life Communities

Part #2:

How to Replicate the 2Life Virtual Instruction Program Model

- Infrastructure Guidelines with links to resources that support your ability to replicate the technology infrastructure for a DDLL

- Instruction Guidelines with links to resources that support your ability to replicate the instructional component of the DDLL

Part 1: About the DDLL Program at 2Life Communities

2Life Communities, a nonprofit organization founded in 1965, operates on the belief that all seniors should have the opportunity to live a full life of connection and purpose in a dynamic, supportive environment – a model called *aging in community*, which directly combats the growing public health crisis of social isolation and loneliness among older adults. At 2Life Communities, residents can step out the doors of their own apartments and find friendship, community, physical and intellectual stimulation, and a helping hand day or night. Serving a diverse population of nearly 1,600 older adults, 2Life creates communities with a laser sharp focus on affordability – a

tremendous concern in Massachusetts, the state with the largest gap in the U.S. between seniors' median income and the cost of living.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored that access to technology is an issue of equity and a social determinant of health, while clearly illustrating that internet access must be provided as a public utility. In response to the pandemic, 2Life Communities built an accessible, community-supported, user-friendly Digital Device Lending Library (DDLL) for low-income elders who have little to no experience with technology. At the core of this project has been the shared commitment to move communities toward age-friendly practices, so that older adults have the resources and access they need for healthy living and healthy aging.

Our primary goal in creating the DDLL was to enable 2Life seniors to participate in 2Life and our partners' programming, access programming offered in the community at large, forge relationships with their peers and staff, establish intergenerational connections with members of the larger community, and stay in touch with their families and friends. Our secondary goals were to provide 2Life seniors with technical skills that are essential for functioning in an increasingly digitized world and to instill a sense of empowerment. Our DDLL Program has a strong intergenerational and volunteer-based component that benefits seniors by providing opportunities for intergenerational connections and engagement.

We provided seniors with Chromebooks and Tab A's that they could keep in their apartments, connected these devices to a designated in-house wireless internet network, trained multilingual seniors on using the DDLL devices, and offered virtual coursework over Zoom that they have accessed on their DDLL and personal devices. 2Life partnered with the Boston Chapter of Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly (LBFE) in order to design, develop and
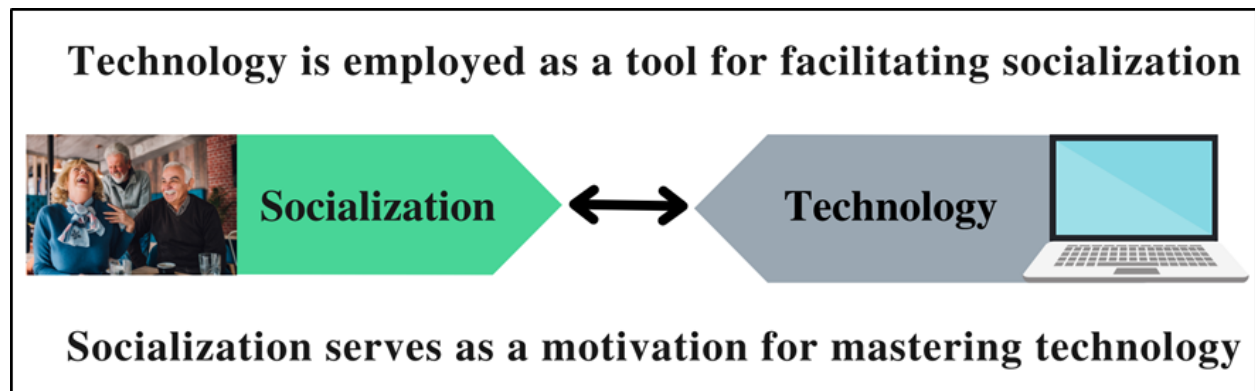
teach a virtual curriculum of technology and general interest courses. Intergenerational connections with college students recruited by LBFE as well as connections with volunteers have greatly benefited 2Life seniors. Providing our seniors with social opportunities through technology has helped reduce social isolation and feelings of loneliness, and increased resident engagement and satisfaction as well as seniors' social networks. The DDLL Program has improved seniors' overall quality of life. Moreover, the Program has increased staff efficiencies by enabling 2Life staff to offer residents a variety of high-quality virtual programming created by 2Life and its community partners.

Part #2: How to Replicate the 2Life Virtual Instruction Program Model

Harnessing the power of technology to foster and bolster community bonds, 2Life staff created a replicable model for effectively connecting linguistically diverse, low-income older adults to services, programs, and each other through technology.

Learning how to use technology requires a significant commitment on the senior's part. Even during the height of the pandemic, 2Life staff had to work hard in order to convince 2Life seniors, many of whom had little or no prior experience using computing devices, to participate in the DDLL Program. According to a wide consensus in the digital divide literature, for seniors, the main motivator for using technology is social connectedness. 2Life staff were successful in communicating to our seniors that mastering new technology would open up a world of social opportunities. The 2Life's approach to bridging the digital divide is premised on fostering a symbiotic relationship between socialization and technology.

Technology is employed as a tool for facilitating socialization

Socialization ⟷ Technology

Socialization serves as a motivation for mastering technology

At the same time, creating a motivation for seniors to master technology is only a first step in bridging the digital divide. The generational digital divide exists at three levels:

1. digital access / resources
2. technical skills
3. positive outcomes: offline benefits of using technology

The 2Life DDLL Model contains three main components, each of which tackles a corresponding level of the digital divide:

1. infrastructure
2. instruction
3. socialization

While we have employed socialization as the main offline benefit of utilizing technology, other organizations may choose to emphasize different positive outcomes in order to compel seniors to utilize technology, which include accessing essential services, information and entertainment resources, and using telemedicine. Whereas the DDLL does not contain handouts on creating socialization opportunities, the socialization component is emphasized in our instructional materials.

The library of DDLL documents contains two sections:

- Infrastructure Guidelines that support your ability to replicate the technology infrastructure for a DDLL
- Instruction Guidelines that support your ability to replicate the instructional component of the DDLL

Based on your agency's unique needs and resources, you may choose to replicate only the infrastructure module, the instruction module, or both the infrastructure and instruction modules.

The DDLL Manual is comprised of two types of handouts:

1. Handouts for staff
2. Handouts for seniors.

Handouts for staff provide guidance on how to customize the 2Life's DDLL Model to your specific needs, instructions on configuring devices that are to be lended to users, tips on providing virtual instruction, class handouts, and customizable DDLL templates.

Handouts for seniors include instructions on how to use devices and Zoom, program surveys, and device borrowing agreements. In order to serve the needs of Limited English Proficient persons who reside in subsidized housing for seniors in Greater Boston, we translated these handouts into five languages. We selected these languages based on data about languages that are most commonly spoken at home in Greater Boston (Boston by the Numbers, 2020) and based on data about languages into which the Boston Housing Authority translates its documentation for Limited English Proficient persons. Seventeen handouts for seniors are available in the following five languages in addition to English:

- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Traditional Chinese
- Russian
- Cape Verdean Creole.

We look forward to working with and sharing our knowledge with other organizations who are interested in developing their own virtual instruction program, which would fill the equity gap by providing access, equity, education, and empowerment for all.

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- Creating a Zoom Account and Creating a Zoom Meeting from the Website
- Testing Audio in Zoom

Customizable DDLL Templates
- Device Borrowing Agreement Template
- Survey Templates
- Creating DDLL Labels

A Detailed Description of the DDLL Program at 2Life

The Digital Device Lending Library Program at 2Life