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LeadingAge California and Lighthouse for Older Adults Partner to Bridge Digital Generation Gap

The partnership seeks to increase digital literacy for older adults and improve their quality of life

Sacramento, Calif – LeadingAge California announced its partnership with [Lighthouse for Older Adults](#) to bridge the digital generation gap, increasing older adult digital literacy and improving the overall wellbeing of the aging population, especially in affordable housing communities. The program was developed in collaboration with Eskaton, Front Porch and the University of California Center for Information Technology Research (CITRIS) Health.

[Lighthouse for Older Adults](#) provides a detailed approach to boosting digital literacy and increasing broadband access while dismantling existing barriers for older adults. It was developed with six driving principles to achieve its mission: equity, empathy, inclusivity, flexibility, persistence and reflection through peer-lead training.

As the premiere program partner, LeadingAge California will shepherd older adult communities across the state through their implementation of the newly launched [Lighthouse Playbook](#), a step-by-step guide produced by the program to help bridge the digital generation gap, especially for those living in affordable housing communities..

“We are excited to partner with Lighthouse for Older Adults because it’s a transformative program that empowers older adults to develop the technological skills needed to navigate the digital world,” said Jeannee Parker Martin, President & CEO of LeadingAge California. “Together with these leading collaborators, the program provides a unique peer-led training and support approach tailored to meet older adults where they are and encourages them to lean in and overcome any sense of intimidation they might feel toward learning new skills and using technology.”

In California, [83% of households headed by adults 65 and older](#) are less likely to have broadband access at home and are more likely to be offline and experience increased levels of social isolation, an [increasingly deadly, yet treatable experience](#). With California projected to age faster than any other state in the nation, [doubling its 65 and older population](#) from 4.3 million residents to 8.4 million by 2030, [Lighthouse for Older Adults](#) is critical in expanding broadband access and improving digital literacy to meet the needs of this rapidly growing population.

“CITRIS Health is proud to have worked on this groundbreaking initiative to overcome the digital barriers for older adults and provide the necessary infrastructure to thrive in the modern era,” said CITRIS Health Executive Director, David Lindeman. “Our results so far have shown that this project has the power to revolutionize care, social interaction and overall well-being for our state’s older adult population.”

When asked, 90% of respondents agreed that technology helps them feel more connected to family and friends and participants of the Lighthouse for Older Adults program reported an average improvement of 10% in overall physical and emotional health after being enrolled in the program. In addition to helping improve participants emotional and physical wellbeing, the program also helped participants learn new skills and improve their comfort with using technology.

“Advancing creative solutions to improve well-being and strengthen community for California’s older adults is a top priority,” said Front Porch Center for Innovation & Wellbeing President, Kari Olson. “We are honored to collaborate with Lighthouse for Older Adults and excited by the results showing this approach can significantly improve quality of life, enhance connection to loved ones and community, and access to resources and services.”

During its pilot, in the height of the COVID pandemic, [Lighthouse for Older Adults](#) was adopted in over 14 languages in affordable housing communities across California. The pilot has proven successful with initial findings pointing to [70% resident participation](#) coupled with a substantial uptick in technology familiarization, with [76% of residents reporting usage of new technologies](#), such as tablets, at least twice per week. The success of this pilot and its commitment to equitable access shows promise for increasing access to resources for the diverse communities within California.

“True to our name, we’ve been honored to partner on this initiative as the ‘dawn of a new day’ for older adults across the state,” said Eskaton President and CEO, Sheri Peifer. “By encouraging individuals to learn more about technology and how to integrate it into everyday life, Lighthouse for Older Adults has already proven to empower our older adult communities, improve their overall wellbeing and help them thrive.”

As state and federal leaders continue to prioritize investments that ensure vulnerable populations like the aging community have the critical resources necessary to age with dignity, LeadingAge California remains committed to advocating for its members and the communities they represent.

To learn more about [Lighthouse for Older Adults](#) and how it can benefit your community, please visit the [LeadingAge California website](#).

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[LeadingAge California](#) represents California’s broadest spectrum of nonprofit providers of older adult living and care, serving hundreds of thousands of older adults and nearly 800 providers of care. It launched the [Age On. Rage On.](#) campaign to spotlight the urgent need to develop a Master Plan for Aging in California. [Click here to read the latest news by LeadingAge California.](#)