

# Lane County Community Resilience Toolkit: Older Adults and People with Disabilities Executive Summary



## Introduction:

The Older Adults and People with Disabilities Team consists of representatives from community-based and governmental organizations, including primary care and behavioral health providers, community advocacy organizations, local Coordinated Care Organizations, Senior and Disability Services, and Lane County Health & Human Services. The Team identified both strengths and needs associated with recovery from COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn, as well as resources and recommended practices. The Team also identified the stresses and loss points that most affect this population. The work of the Team will continue with periodic updates and additional material added to the Toolkit as the pandemic continues.

## Major Conclusions:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and 2020 economic downturn have impacted older adults and people with disabilities in a variety of ways, with isolation and loneliness increased and coping skills stretched to capacity, as caregivers and visitors are minimized in homes and assisted living facilities.
2. People with the fewest resources have the greatest need for services and supports with basic needs for food, shelter, and utilities primary.
3. Technology resource and skill disparities (such as lack of hardware, adequate broadband, expertise in using technology) are impacting the use of these devices for telehealth and social connection in this population.
4. Age-related and disability-related frailty and underlying health conditions make this population especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and more prone to mortal infections.
5. The pressures of quarantine and social distancing may result in elevated anxiety and depression symptoms and in traumatic stress responses.
6. Behavioral health issues may be exacerbated by alcohol or other substance use.

## Identified Stress/Loss Points for Older Adults and People with Disabilities:

- Basic needs for food, shelter, utilities, and healthcare may not be met
- Social isolation due to quarantine and Governor Brown's Stay at Home order result in lost social connections, limited caregivers, decreased friendly visits, limited activities
- Employment loss due to reduced gig economy based opportunities used to supplement fixed incomes

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- Libraries, stores, malls, and senior centers closed or minimized programming
- Racism and oppression affect older adults and people with disabilities in many ways
- Trauma may be experienced in many different ways, including numbness to emotional stress
- Faith based institutions closed or limiting programming
- Missed family events and lifecycle celebrations such as weddings, graduations, birthdays
- Technology challenges for this population may be insurmountable without caregiver support
- Loss of support groups for grief, bereavement, recovery and healthcare
- Loss of friends/family who have passed away or gotten very ill due to COVID-19
- Long Term Care Facilities are especially vulnerable to COVID-19, with restrictions on visitation and required testing of all visitors.