

# Supporting Older Adults in NYC Without Internet Access: A Guide for Professionals

*While we implement social distancing, those who are not connected online become further isolated. Professionals who work with older adults or others without digital access have a critical role to play: By providing information and resources through the telephone, mail, and home deliveries, we can help ensure that everyone is connected in this time of great need.*



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## Areas of Outreach

**IMAGE: NYC** has maps and data available on the percentage of older adults in NYC, by neighborhood, who have **no computer** or **no internet** access. Additional demographic data and services and resources on IMAGE: NYC can help to inform your outreach.

## Printed Communication

If you are able to send mail through the postal service or through home-delivered services, this [handout](#) provides useful information for older adults and others with chronic conditions about the coronavirus. This [factsheet](#) from the NYC Department of Health provides useful information for all New Yorkers and is available in [22 languages](#).

## Healthcare Access

Since Medicare [relaxed its telehealth service regulations](#), patients can now call their doctor's office to see if their regularly scheduled in-person appointments can take place over the phone instead. Patients can also schedule a [virtual or phone check-in](#) for more urgent or potentially coronavirus-related issues.

For those with supplemental insurance, there is usually a call-in number on the back of the insurance card to speak with a healthcare professional about urgent issues.

## Food Access

The Mayor has instructed all Department for the Aging programs to close, canceling all congregate meal, recreational, and educational services and activities. Please check [LiveOn NY's COVID-19 webpage](#) for updated information on meal pick-up and/or delivery options.

Older adults can call Aging Connect at **212-244-6469** to learn about home-delivered meals and other resources. They can also call **311** or their local senior service provider for assistance.

**Umbrella**, a community platform that helps older adults age in place, is offering grocery delivery and medication pick-up for people age 60+. They are waiving their membership fee and charging just \$6 per order to help defray costs. You can submit an [online form](#) or call **844-402-2480** to place an order.

## Prescription Medications

This [memo](#) provides guidance on early refills for 90-day prescription orders for Medicaid recipients.

Encourage older adults to contact their local pharmacy or [Umbrella](#) to learn about home-delivery options.

## General Support by Phone

For help in finding medical care or learning about other resources and services, call **311**. This service is available to anyone regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

## Emotional Support by Phone

For mental health support 24-hours-a-day and in multiple languages, call [Thrive NYC](#) at **888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355)** or the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) at **800-985-5990**.

## Social Connection

Encourage older adults to pick up the phone and call family and friends – they will likely be home too and they can assist in accessing useful online information.

[DOROT'S University Without Walls](#) offers lifelong learning programs on the arts, news, literature and more – all over the telephone. Register by calling **877-819-9147**.

## Internet Access

If low-income older adults have internet-enabled devices and can benefit from WiFi in their homes, [Comcast](#) at **855-846-8376** is offering two months of free internet service.

For older adults who have children in grades K-12 or in college who are living or staying with them, [Spectrum/Charter](#) at **844-488-8395** and [Optimum/Altice](#) at **866-200-9522** are offering free, 60-day subscriptions for internet service.

To avoid long wait times, call early in the morning or later in the evening.

## News and Updates

Encourage older adults to watch local television stations and to listen to local radio stations for up-to-date information.

## Access-a-Ride

While it is NOT recommended for older adults to leave their homes, Access-a-Ride is operating and booking trips one day in advance. The phone number for Access-a-Ride is **877-337-2017**.

## Aging Services Contact Information

Contact information for Area Agencies on Aging, including phone numbers, can be found [here](#).

LiveOn NY's Benefits Outreach and Assistance Hotline can be reached at **212-398-5045**.