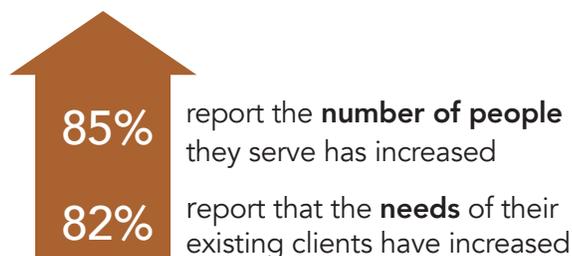


## The Impact of COVID-19 on Title VI Native American Aging Programs and Services

More than 270 Title VI Native American aging programs (Title VI programs), funded by the federal Older Americans Act, provide nutrition, supportive and caregiver services to American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian elders across the United States.

Tribal communities have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to health and socioeconomic disparities resulting from racial inequity and historical trauma.<sup>1</sup> To learn about the impact COVID-19 has had on American Indian elders, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) asked Title VI program directors how their programs and services have been affected since the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020.

### A Dramatic Increase in Elders' Needs as a Result of COVID-19



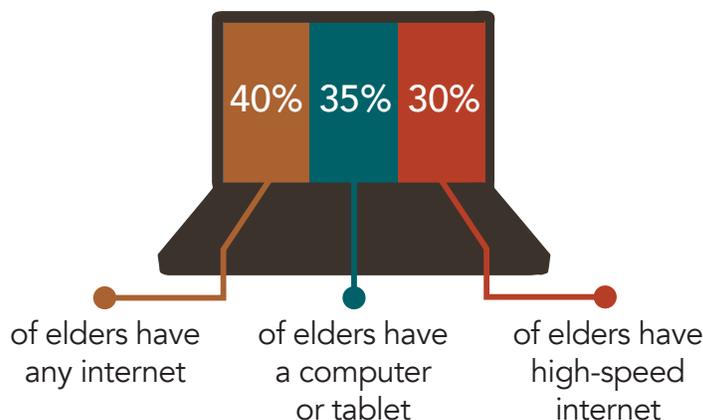
The pandemic created several **workforce issues** for Title VI programs:



Title VI program directors say COVID-19 has resulted in greater **technical assistance** and **support needs** in the following areas:

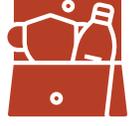


The social isolation of elders became a critical concern of Title VI programs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. To access social engagement supports, elders need access to technology to communicate and connect with others. However, Title VI program directors estimate that in the majority of cases, that access is lacking. On average, Title VI program directors estimate that only:



<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC data show disproportionate COVID-19 impact in American Indian/Alaska Native populations, August 19, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0819-covid-19-impact-american-indian-alaska-native.html>.

Immediate impacts of the pandemic included closure of congregate meal sites, cancellation of in-person activities, with many Tribes implementing stay-at-home or hunker-down orders. To continue meeting their elders' needs, Title VI programs **added or expanded the following programs:**

 <b>89%</b> Home-delivered meals	<b>76%</b> Delivery of groceries and essential supplies 	 <b>75%</b> Telephone reassurance or wellness check-ins	<b>71%</b> Providing PPE to elders 	 <b>54%</b> Providing elders with activities to engage them at home
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Title VI programs have shown **resilience** in the face of these new challenges.



“ I love how our community became closer and more caring of one another. I think this impact of the pandemic opened eyes as to not take every day in general for granted. This also brought programs closer and the willingness to work together was automatic from day one. ”  
 —Title VI program director

“ We are proud we were able to coordinate resources and keep our program functional even with illnesses and limited staff. We had to be innovative in meeting the needs of our elders with no electricity, running water or ability to fix meals. Our elders did not miss any meals and got additional meals during COVID-19 where infection numbers were especially high. ”  
 —Title VI program director

Note: The survey of Title VI programs was conducted by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging in 2020 with a response rate of 84 percent. The full Title VI Survey Report will be available in summer 2021 at [www.n4a.org/publications](http://www.n4a.org/publications).



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