

Verizon Digital Wellness Initiative Case Study

Helping Older Adults Build Digital Confidence

Introduction

Despite the growing importance of digital tools, many older adults face persistent barriers to confident and secure technology use. Nearly one-quarter of adults age 65 and older are socially isolated, and 43% of adults age 60 and older report feeling lonely.¹ Concerns about privacy and scams can limit technology adoption and engagement and further deepen social isolation. Older adults are disproportionately targeted for scams and fraud, with 25% of adults ages 50 and older citing lack of trust and privacy as their greatest source of technology-related purchase stress.²

Digital wellness offers a framework for helping older adults use technology safely and confidently, supporting social connection and overall well-being. When older adults receive guidance that emphasizes practical skills, reassurance, and trust, the impact can be immediate and meaningful. Recognizing the disadvantages many older adults face in this digital world, Verizon partnered with Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP, the nonprofit organization behind Senior Planet, to deliver co-branded technology education focused on digital wellness for adults ages 50 and older. Programming spanned eight major locations: New York, Miami, Denver, Fresno, Dallas, Boston, Houston, and Philadelphia with additional events in North Carolina and South Carolina. Through a combination of in-person, virtual, and multi-week courses at affiliate partners, the Verizon Digital Wellness Initiative aimed to transform fear into confidence, equipping older adults with practical digital skills they could immediately apply in their lives.

This case study examines the design, implementation, and outcomes of the Verizon Digital Wellness program, drawing on quantitative survey data and qualitative feedback from participants and trainers. The qualitative insights presented here are drawn from in-depth interviews with six participants and six trainers across in-person and virtual delivery channels, including both English and Spanish speakers. While these perspectives are not statistically representative of all participants, they provide important context for understanding how observed outcomes took shape.

The Strategy

Launched in 2025, the Verizon Digital Wellness initiative centers on a national partnership with OATS, combining Verizon's commitment to empowering every generation with the tools and knowledge to build healthier relationships with technology with Senior Planet's decades of experience teaching technology to older adults. Verizon's support enabled programming at scale, including sessions hosted in select Verizon retail locations, lending visibility, credibility, and trusted brand presence to the learning experience.

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. [Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System](#). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

² Kakulla, Brittnie. 2026 Tech Trends and Adults 50-Plus. Washington, DC: AARP Research, December 2025. <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.01020.001>

The program focused on helping older adults embrace technology with confidence, delivering co-branded, instructor-led technology sessions that emphasized practical skills, repetition, and supportive learning environments. Programming was offered across multiple channels:

- In-person instruction at Senior Planet centers and select Verizon retail stores
- Virtual workshops delivered nationally via Senior Planet’s online platforms
- Multi-week courses implemented by affiliate partner organizations using Senior Planet curriculum

This multi-channel strategy allowed the Digital Wellness initiative to reach older adults with varying access needs, schedules, and comfort levels while maintaining consistent quality and learning goals.

Curriculum and Delivery Model

The initiative featured both single-session lectures and multi-week courses, with a strong emphasis on smartphone use and online safety. Core topics included smartphone basics, passwords and passkeys, scam awareness, privacy settings, artificial intelligence, and app navigation.

Senior Planet trainers, many of whom were bilingual, adapted content in real time to meet participants where they were. Trainers routinely slowed pacing, simplified technical language, and incorporated hands-on practice. As one trainer reflected, the goal was to “reduce fear of technology, because it’s everyone’s duty to help make sure our loved ones are connected” (Senior Planet trainer, in-store Verizon retail programming).

Participants consistently noticed this instructional approach. One interviewee emphasized that their instructor “never seemed to get overwhelmed or annoyed...no question was too dumb,” creating an environment where learners felt comfortable asking questions and practicing new skills without judgment (In-person participant, Denver Senior Planet Center, Using Your iPhone course). This emphasis on patience and responsiveness emerged as a defining feature of the program’s success.

The Results

In 2025, the Verizon Digital Wellness initiative reached older adults at scale through Senior Planet programs delivered nationwide. Over the course of the year, 1,874 Verizon-supported technology sessions were delivered, resulting in 29,838 total participant engagements across virtual, in-person, and affiliate program formats (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of Verizon-Supported Sessions and Engagements by Channel (2025)

Channel	No. of Sessions	Engagements
Virtual	199	23,139
In-Person	652	4,217
Affiliate	1,023	2,482
Total	1,874	29,838

Rather than relying solely on one-time touchpoints, the initiative engaged many participants repeatedly, particularly through multi-week courses that allowed learners to return, practice new skills, and build

confidence over time. High levels of participation were accompanied by strong satisfaction and learning outcomes, as reflected in post-program survey data across all delivery formats.

To assess program effectiveness, OATS collected post-program surveys across all delivery channels. Results reveal high satisfaction, strong learning gains, and meaningful improvements in confidence and digital safety.

Single-Session Programs

(In-Person Lectures and Virtual Workshops)

Table 2. Key Outcomes (Single-Session Programs)

Outcome	In-Person Lecture	Virtual
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	92	78
Confident creating secure passwords	91%	—*
Confident recognizing scams	92%	79%
Connected to the world	83%	74%
Confident connecting with friends & family	83%	84%
Less alone	55%	56%
Better equipped to find resources online	75%	90%

**This outcome was collected for in-person programs only in 2025. Beginning in 2026, the post-program surveys will include this measure across all delivery channels.*

Survey results show high satisfaction across single-session programs, with Net Promoter Scores of 78 or higher and strong gains in confidence related to online safety, connection, and everyday digital skills among both in-person and virtual participants.

Multi-Week Programs

(In-Person Courses and Affiliate Programs)

Table 3. Key Outcomes (Multi-Week Programs - Net Change)

Net change reflects the percentage-point difference between retrospective pre- and post-program survey responses.

Outcome	In-Person 5-Week Courses	Affiliate Multi-Week
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	93	100
Comfortable using a device	+50%	+50%
Confident creating secure passwords	+41%	—*
Confident recognizing scams	+43%	+41%

Connected to the world	+34%	+10%
Confident connecting with friends & family	+42%	+48%
Less alone	+33%	+7%
Better equipped to find resources online	+41%	+56%

**This outcome was collected for in-person programs only in 2025. Beginning in 2026, the post-program surveys will include this measure across all delivery channels.*

Survey results indicate substantial net gains among multi-week participants, with Net Promoter Scores above 90 and large improvements in device comfort, scam recognition, connection, and ability to find resources online, highlighting the added impact of sustained, repeated learning.

Impact on Older Adults

The Verizon Digital Wellness initiative supported meaningful changes in participants' daily lives. Participants described greater confidence using their phones, improved safety behaviors related to scams and passwords, and increased connection to people and resources.

Building Confidence Through Everyday Skills

Across delivery formats, interviewees described increased confidence tied to mastering everyday phone behaviors. They talked about learning to navigate icons, access the control center, and understand what apps were pre-installed on their devices. Participants described their increased knowledge base:

"I have a total grasp of the iPhone" (In-person participant, Miami Senior Planet Center, Spanish Using Your iPhone course).

"[I learned how to] swipe down, find the control center, [and] know what each symbol/icon means." (In-person participant, North Country Senior Planet Center, Using Your iPhone course)

"[The class] made me feel that I am able to use the tools that I need." (In-person participant, North Country Senior Planet Center, Using Your iPhone course)

Trainers observed similar changes, describing participants who began proactively updating passwords or practicing skills between sessions. One trainer noted that "many did homework and said they successfully changed a few of their passwords to be more secure" (Licensing trainer, in-store Verizon retail lecture).

Safety and Scam Awareness as Core Outcomes

Online safety emerged as one of the most consistently discussed topics in interviews. Participants frequently referenced learning how to identify spam messages, avoid suspicious links, and use password managers. One participant explained that scam recognition instruction "helped quite a bit, because I was getting more spam than I knew what to do with," while another shared that they "did not realize that [the phone] stores and keeps track of all passwords" (In-person participant, Denver Senior Planet Center, Using Your iPhone course).

Trainers echoed the importance of this content, noting that "spam and scam messaging is something that people are always concerned about" (Virtual trainer, Safe & Savvy Smartphone Habits lecture). These

qualitative insights align with survey results showing strong gains in scam confidence across both single-session and multi-week formats.

Instructor Support and the Learning Environment

Participants repeatedly emphasized instructor quality as a key factor in their learning. Interviews highlighted patience, clarity, and responsiveness as defining characteristics of effective sessions. One participant described an instructor who “had incredible patience,” while others praised instructors for slowing down, re-explaining concepts, and supporting learners individually (In-person participant, Denver Senior Planet Center, Using Your iPhone course).

This supportive environment helped participants feel comfortable practicing skills that previously felt intimidating, reinforcing confidence and encouraging continued engagement.

Many participants emphasized independence, no longer needing to rely on family members for basic tasks, and in some cases helping friends troubleshoot their own devices. Others highlighted the social aspects of learning, describing Senior Planet classes as welcoming spaces and sharing that they plan to encourage friends to attend. Some already have, as one participant said, “Yes, I already brought a friend with me” (In-person participant, Miami Senior Planet Center, Spanish Using Your iPhone course).

In addition to participant and trainer feedback, the initiative received external validation through local and national media coverage, including a Denver-based news feature highlighting participant experiences in Verizon-supported Senior Planet classes. The Denver coverage emphasized older adults’ increased confidence using smartphones, greater awareness of scams, and growing independence in managing everyday digital tasks. This external attention reinforced survey findings and interview insights, underscoring the program’s relevance and resonance beyond the classroom.

Verizon Brand Perception

The initiative had a measurable and meaningful impact on how participants viewed Verizon. Analysis of the interviews conducted shows that nearly 72% of participants reported a positive shift in their opinion of Verizon after attending a workshop. Only 3% reported a less positive opinion, suggesting minimal brand risk.

Table 4. Change in Opinion of Verizon (Interviewed Participants)

Change in Opinion	% of Participants
Much more positive	37%
Somewhat more positive	37%
No change	22%
Less positive	3%

Qualitative feedback reinforces these findings. One participant explained that Verizon’s support “made it possible for me to learn,” (In-person participant, Denver Senior Planet Center, Using Your iPhone course), while another said simply, “I am very grateful to Verizon” (In-person participant, Miami Senior Planet Center, Spanish Using Your iPhone course). Licensing trainers also noted that participants were excited to learn in Verizon retail spaces, which added visibility and credibility to the program.

What Could Have Been Better?

While overall feedback was strongly positive, participants and trainers also identified opportunities to further strengthen the learning experience. These reflections point to areas where additional time, tailoring, or follow-up could deepen impact rather than indicating dissatisfaction.

Participant and trainer interviewees noted that complex topics, such as passwords, privacy settings, and newer device features, could benefit from additional time and repetition, particularly in single-session virtual formats. One virtual trainer observed that “there’s a lot coming at them all at once.” In-person survey responses echoed these same themes, reinforcing the value of more support on high-anxiety topics. One participant shared in their survey feedback that while instructors covered “everything possible in the time we had,” certain features would benefit from deeper, follow-up coverage. Device differences and language considerations also surfaced, suggesting opportunities for even more tailored examples and translated materials.

Many participants expressed interest in continued learning, including returning for additional sessions or attending informal “how-to” opportunities on the various smartphone capabilities. In-person participants also expressed curiosity about additional, topic-specific features that extend beyond the scope of foundational classes, including WhatsApp, Siri, deleting duplicate contacts, leaving group texts, bulk deleting emails, and downloading music. These insights suggest pathways for refining and expanding the program while preserving its core strengths.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The Verizon Digital Wellness initiative demonstrates that well-designed, co-branded digital education can produce strong outcomes for older adults while reinforcing corporate commitment to community impact. Key lessons include:

1. Meet learners where they are, in language, pacing, and skill level
2. Invest in patient, adaptable instructors
3. Pair outcome data with participant voices to capture real impact

The initiative also highlighted the value of expanding beyond Senior Planet center locations through affiliate partner organizations: an approach strengthened by Verizon’s support. Funding enabled OATS to deliver high-quality programming in communities where we do not have a physical presence, demonstrating that the licensing model can effectively extend reach while maintaining instructional quality. In addition to instructional programming, the initiative also offered structured volunteer engagement opportunities for Verizon employees to support older adults during select sessions, providing an additional pathway for Verizon to contribute directly to community impact.

Building on these results, Verizon’s renewed funding for 2026 enables the partnership to grow more intentionally. Upcoming work will include expanding multilingual access, including the addition of Mandarin-language training, and continuing to deepen reach in regions served through affiliate partners.

With continued investment, the partnership between Verizon and Senior Planet is well positioned to expand its reach, helping more older adults participate fully and confidently in today’s digital world.