

**COVID-19 Final Report for REACH (Non-RHIP)
“CONNECT - Portable Solar Chargers”****Summary of Results:**

- With these funds, REACH was able to purchase and distribute 32 solar chargers and 51 phones.
- As part of the program, we met with each individual to provide instruction and emergency contact numbers and a referral list for services throughout Deschutes County.
- We followed up with clients to see if they felt safer with reliable communication devices and if they were able to be more successful in communicating and making appointments.
- The cost of the phones ranged from \$19.99 for refurbished phones to \$39.99 for new devices.
- Solar chargers cost \$35-\$45 depending on the capacity of the charger.
- We had 5 clients that would have benefitted from devices that were better suited to those with vision problems but those phones cost \$100-\$150 so we were able to provide some additional education on voice to text.
- The only other challenge reported was related to theft, reminders to watch your phone whenever it was charging and to keep your devices in your possession at all times.

Quote:

“One client has learning challenges, an I.Q. of 55, difficulty with her English and needs lots of ongoing support. Due to the housing shortage and to the pandemic she has been on the housing list for 2 plus years and is still awaiting a safe place to live. Unfortunately, due to her challenges she was unable to navigate the shelter system. The only option for her while she waits for housing was to live on National Forest land, this meant she had no means of communication and was not centrally located. As a transgender woman she is especially vulnerable, having a phone and charger was life changing. We were able to set up a support system that checked in on her daily and empowered her to advocate and communicate on her own behalf.”