

STEP 2:
ROLE DESIGN

10 STEPS FOR ENGAGING ADULTS 50+

A RESOURCE OF THE
GEN2GEN LEARNING HUB

Developed by

Encore.org's Gen2Gen campaign

and

The Alliance for Strong Families
and Communities' Second Acts Initiative



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ROLE DESIGN

There are many ways the talent of adults 50+ can bring value to your organization – as volunteers or paid staff; in program/service delivery, administrative, or capacity building roles; or on an as-needed, short-term or sustained basis.

How you structure each role depends on how you define your needs, and should also reflect the way adults 50+ may want or be ready to engage. Because of time constraints, lack of confidence or questions about fit, some older adults may need an opportunity to try different roles to find the right one. For others, the commitment to an ongoing role may be immediate.

Offering a range of options can make it easier for adults 50+ to engage at different levels of commitment over time. Here is a model for thinking about a continuum of opportunities you could offer. (Model adapted from Inspired Service, Cincinnati.)



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STAGE	DESCRIPTION	ROLE EXAMPLES	HOW TO ENGAGE
STAGE 4: Champion	Adults 50+ who advocate for your cause and bring new recruits to your program	Leading teams, recruiting volunteers, evaluating programs, training staff, fundraising and public speaking	Offer ways to inspire and engage others, reward these contributions
STAGE 3: Committed	Adults 50+ who step into sustained roles that expand and deepen your organization's mission	Tutoring, mentoring, training and on-or off-site administrative support	Recognize service, offer additional training, encourage taking on new responsibilities
STAGE 2: Casual	Adults 50+ who are ready to get more involved and try new ways to engage; commit to projects and short service stints with a clear goal and end date, and potentially repeat these over time	Designing web and print materials, soliciting donations and translating communications	Offer short-term, low-commitment options; ensure high satisfaction; create opportunities to deepen commitment or repeat involvement
STAGE 1: Curious	Aware and interested but not yet sure about commitment, willing to try something easy, may engage in activities more than once	Organizing space for afterschool activities, packing backpacks with back-to-school supplies, painting community murals, preparing school gardens and staffing special events	Provide info, stories, one-time service options; connect to others; create a clear pathway to service options with deeper levels of engagement



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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGNING ROLES:

- You can leverage a wider range of interests and talents if you are able to offer people several options to use their skills.
- You can leverage more people if you are able to offer both short-term and long-term opportunities.
- You can leverage additional talent if some roles can be done virtually or on a flexible schedule, allowing people who can't be on site to contribute.
- You can leverage increased commitment by offering a range of opportunities that allow adults 50+ to start small and build to higher engagement over time.

OTHER DESIGN QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. Can this role be split, combined or reshaped to make it more attractive to people with limited time or needs for flexibility?
2. Can you offer incentives or stipends for certain volunteer roles, especially where you are trying to increase the diversity of your team?
3. Are internships, “mid-ternships” or other transitional roles a possibility?
4. Can you design a role that would attract a career-switcher from the private or public sector?
5. Have you considered **Encore Fellowships** (bit.ly/gen2genfellows) – half-time, year-long positions for adults 50+ who are shifting to the nonprofit sector or who have extensive nonprofit backgrounds and are looking for an alternate role?



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TAKING ACTION

Indicate where the roles you currently have available fit on this chart. Do they fall into more than one category so that individuals have a variety of ways to engage? Can you redesign or add to these roles to make them more attractive to a broader range of adults 50+?

CHARTING THE RANGE OF ROLES YOU OFFER

STAGE	PAID STAFF		UNPAID VOLUNTEER	
	Direct Service*	Capacity Building**	Direct Service*	Capacity Building**
STAGE FOUR: Champion <i>Advocate for your cause and bring new recruits to your program</i>				
STAGE THREE: Committed <i>Step into sustained roles that expand and deepen your organization's mission</i>				



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<p>STAGE TWO: Casual <i>Ready to get more involved and try new ways to engage; commit to projects, short service stints with a clear goal or end date, potentially repeat over time</i></p>				
<p>STAGE ONE: Curious <i>Aware and interested but not yet sure about commitment; willing to try something easy, may engage in activities more than once</i></p>				

* Direct Service = Roles working directly with children and youth

** Capacity Building = Roles that help build the capacity of the organization and further its mission (administrative, strategic, etc.) but do not interact directly with young people



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MORE INFORMATION

- [Boomer Volunteer Engagement Guide](https://bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer) (bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer)
 - Chapter 4: Creating the Opportunity: Position Descriptions, pages 55-66
 - Exercises: pages 148-151
- Encore Talent Works
 - [Get Started: Design](https://bit.ly/gen2gendesign) (bit.ly/gen2gendesign)

