

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



STEP 5

ENGAGEMENT

The prior section on outreach focuses on messengers, materials, messages, and methods. Engagement helps you develop a strategy for where to find adults 50+ and what approaches you use to reach them.

Your local senior center may seem like an obvious place to find adults 50+, but keep in mind that many senior centers are likely to serve a relatively narrow population of the older adults in your community. Many in their 50s and 60s are still working full or part time, and others may be keeping a full schedule of community and family activities.

Faith and spirituality are strong motivators for service, so faith communities and interfaith centers can be good places to recruit if you have a messenger who is already affiliated and can help with outreach. Remember, though, that many people 50+ are not formally affiliated with faith communities and would be more likely to connect with you through informal networks.

Direct referral through word-of-mouth (i.e. networking) continues to be the most effective way to find and engage adults 50+, whether in paid or unpaid roles.



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Your strategy for engagement will depend on your organization’s key priorities for the role. This table helps identify your priorities and creates a starting point for engagement activity.

Note: More than one priority and approach may apply to a single engagement effort. These may also be used in combination.

PRIORITY	WHY A PRIORITY?	APPROACH	QUESTIONS TO ASK	METHODS
Geography	Role requires being at a specific location, such as a school, where convenience and transportation are key issues.	Begin by identifying who is already linked to the location (i.e. school) and then spreads out from there.	<p>“Who comes here already?”</p> <p>“Who lives or works nearby?”</p> <p>“Who is related to the children we serve that we could engage?”</p>	Word of mouth, connections with family members, community gatherings, presentations, fliers, local newspapers, door-to-door.
Skills	Role requires specific skills or aptitudes; convenience is less important.	Begin by networking with groups including members with desired skills... with one contact leading to the next.	<p>“What groups have members with this particular skill-set who will care about our cause?”</p> <p>“Where and when can we find these groups – in person or on line?”</p>	Word of mouth, virtual and in-person groups linked to related skills, referrals. For example, members of retired teachers’ associations might be useful for a curriculum development role.



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<p>Shared Interests</p>	<p>Role requires shared interest or connection to a specific mission (i.e., girls in sports, racial equity, civic engagement, etc.).</p>	<p>Begin by finding individuals with shared interests through formal and informal connections (i.e. former athletes to support sports-based mentoring program.</p>	<p>“What groups might have members who would be interested in our mission?”</p> <p>“Who cares about this cause?”</p> <p>“How do we reach them?”</p>	<p>Presentations, networking events, tabling events, referral arrangements (group leader identifies potential recruits and refers them to your organization), newsletters, Facebook groups.</p>
<p>Culturally Specific</p>	<p>Role requires culturally-specific knowledge or language ability.</p>	<p>Begin with trusted community leaders (formal and informal), organizations (i.e. culturally specific organizations), and institutions (i.e. faith-based, libraries, etc.) to reach prospects.</p>	<p>“How do I build trust with local community leaders to get the word out?”</p> <p>“How can we leverage our local connections?”</p> <p>“Who works at this organization who could be a champion for us?”</p>	<p>Word of mouth, partnerships, relationship cultivation, one on one meetings, presentations, events, online postings, reciprocity (supporting organizations and events that are important to the people you want to connect with).</p>



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TAKING ACTION

To expand your engagement of adults 50+, consider a wide range of multigenerational places, networks, portals and events, as suggested in the checklist below.

ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS CHECKLIST

PLACES

- Retirement communities and senior housing
- Neighborhood coffee or ice cream shops
- Barber shops, beauty parlors, nail salons, laundromats
- Gyms or fitness centers with 50+ programs
- Public libraries, community centers and organizations
- Faith organizations, interfaith centers
- Adult or community education programs (e.g. OLLI programs)
- Other: _____

NETWORKS OR GROUPS

- Your current donors and volunteers
- Grandparents of children you serve
- Retired professional associations (teachers, social workers, government workers, etc.)
- University alumni groups, including fraternity and sorority alums
- Social groups (book clubs, etc.)
- Neighborhood associations
- Service groups (Rotary, Lions, etc.)
- Culturally-specific organizations
- Virtual groups (e.g., on Facebook)
- Organizations serving homebound people if you're offering virtual opportunities
- Other: _____



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ONLINE PORTALS

- VolunteerMatch.org
- CreatetheGood.org
- CommonGoodCareers.org
- WorkforGood.org
- PointsofLight.org/HandsOnNetwork
- Idealist.org
- Nonprofit-jobs.org
- RetirementJobs.org
- LinkedIn for Nonprofits
- Nextdoor.com
- Other: _____

EVENTS

- Farmers' markets or street fairs
- Health fairs
- Volunteer or job fairs
- Fundraisers
- Social events at your office or delivery sites
- House parties
- Community meetings
- Other: _____



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MORE INFORMATION

- [Boomer Volunteer Engagement Guide](http://bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer) (bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer)
 - Chapter 6: Capitalizing on Boomer Resources: Motivational Analysis pages 73-85

