

10

STEPS FOR ENGAGING ADULTS

50+

**A RESOURCE OF THE
GEN2GEN LEARNING HUB**

Developed by

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and

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**STEP 6:
VETTING &
SELECTING**



STEP 6

VETTING & SELECTING

For some 50+ adults, it may have been a long time since we have gone through a job application and interview process. Regardless of how qualified we are, our confidence and familiarity with the process may be shaky. Reducing ambiguity and encouraging communication can make the process more comfortable for adults 50+ and can also improve your chances of making a hire.

WELCOMING

Creating an organizational climate welcoming to adults 50+ begins with the first interactions — like responding to questions, acknowledging applications, laying out the steps in the process and explaining how long it will take at each stage.

You can:

- Consider creating a checklist of requirements, indicating a timeframe for each and identifying a point of contact for questions.
- Clearly state the need for health, criminal background, and other checks; how long they take; their purpose and how they fit into the process. This may be especially critical in immigrant and other communities where sensitivity may be high about sharing personal information.
- Offer translations to prevent misunderstanding among multilingual applicants.



STEP 6

Vetting & Selecting (continued)

INTERVIEWING

Interviewing adults 50+ is similar to interviewing other candidates. Behavioral interview questions are particularly useful with this age group. These questions usually begin with “Tell me about a time when...” and they ask an individual to respond with a story from their experience that relates to the point of your question.

Unlike answers to hypothetical (“If you were in a situation like this..., what would you do?”) or abstract (What do you think about a situation like this...?) questions, stories show concrete actions in specific situations. You can follow up with clarifying questions about these stories to better understand how the person is likely to react in a similar situation in your organization or with one of your clients.

Open-ended interview questions also encourage stories and avoid the possibility of dead-end Yes or No answers. If stated broadly, they can encourage adults 50+ to share non-work experiences, which may turn out to be more relevant to your decision. Here are a few examples of questions you might ask:

- (To understand motivation) Tell me the story about how you found out about this role and why it interests you.
- (To gauge empathy and compassion) Tell me about a time when you personally saw something happening that you felt was unfair. What did you do about it or what did you wish you could do?
- (To get at judgment and self-control) Please describe a time when you wanted to take an action but then thought better of it. Why did you hold back and what did you do instead?
- (To understand resourcefulness) Can you give me an example of a situation in which you had to find a creative way around an obstacle or problem?
- (To assess resilience) Describe a time when you got really stressed. How did you handle it?



STEP 6

Vetting & Selecting (continued)

DETERMINING FIT

Organizational fit can be a loaded term for some who have experienced it used as an excuse for not hiring those who are different (with regard to age, race, disability status, etc.). But the concept can be helpful when based on the premise that the organization can fulfill its mission more effectively when its work and volunteer force leverage a diverse pool of perspectives, skills and experiences. Exploring organizational fit from this starting point increases the chances that employees representing a range of identities and experiences add value to your organization for a long time to come.

Before you make an offer, use these questions to guide your understanding of fit between the role, the organization and the individual:

- Are the applicant's skills aligned with the defined role and can any gaps be readily filled?
- If the applicant is coming from another sector, are their skills transferable? Can you map them to those required for this role?
- Is there a full understanding of, alignment with and commitment to your mission?
- Have you discussed your organization's values, how people interact and what might be different about your organization from their recent work or volunteer environments?
- Are expectations clear? What about flexibility, hours, training, transportation and other logistical details, compensation, supervision/reporting structure, or other features of your work environment?
- Are there additional assets the applicant has that might benefit your organization? How could you leverage them?



STEP 6

Vetting & Selecting (continued)

TAKING ACTION

Ask yourself these questions in thinking about how you vet and select adults 50+ for staff and volunteer roles. If you can't answer Yes, you may need to consider making changes.

VETTING & SELECTING CHECKLIST

INTAKE

- Does your website clearly state the sequence of steps in the application and review process? Is it available in print and in other languages for those who request it?
- Does it establish a timeframe for each step? Can you ensure the time frames will be met?
- Do you have communication methods in place – phone, email, text – that match the needs and preferences of your candidates?

VETTING

- Are all background and other checks clearly listed, along with the timeframes, costs and actions required of the applicant for each one?
- Have you developed strategies for waiving or subsidizing background check costs for lower-income applicants?
- Have you defined and communicated who will interview the applicant and when?
- Will an adult 50+ be part of the vetting and interview process?
- Does your pre-service orientation give people a good sense of what working together in the program will look and feel like?

SELECTING

- Is it clear how the applicant's skills, qualifications and temperament will be assessed to determine whether there is a good fit?
- Who in the organization will make the final determination?
- How will the final acceptance or rejection be communicated to the applicant? Remember, adults 50+ may prefer personal communication (via phone call) to voicemail or email messages.



STEP 6

Vetting & Selecting (continued)

MATCHING

- If there is close alignment with some but not all requirements, how can the gaps be closed?
- Is there a match with the communities served in terms of language, cultural sensitivity, knowledge of the local community?
- Have team members, depending on role, had a chance to interact with the applicant?
- Have you considered how you might adapt or adjust roles to take full advantage of the talent that has come your way?

AGREEMENT

- Have you created clear expectations, ideally in writing, about work schedule, role requirements, salary and benefits (if any), HR policies, reporting/supervision structure, etc.?
- Is there a clear understanding among staff, volunteers, partners and others about this role and upcoming work, including an opportunity for any questions or concerns to be raised?

MORE INFORMATION

- [Coming of Age Recruitment Strategies](http://bit.ly/gen2gen50plus) (bit.ly/gen2gen50plus)
- [Boomer Volunteer Engagement Guide](http://bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer) (bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer)
 - Chapter 7: Creating the Collaboration: Interviewing & Finding the Fit. pages 97-109
- [Encore Talent Works Toolkit](http://bit.ly/gen2gentoolkit) (bit.ly/gen2gentoolkit)
 - [Tap Volunteers: Select](http://bit.ly/gen2genselect) (bit.ly/gen2genselect)
 - [Hire Encore: Select](http://bit.ly/gen2genselect2) (bit.ly/gen2genselect2)

