

# 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 8:  
INTEGRATION AND  
SUPPORT**



## INTEGRATION & SUPPORT

How can you integrate and support adults 50+ in your organization? Many adults 50+, not unlike younger adults, seek support, but also opportunities for collaborative decision-making, personal growth and leadership in our roles as staff and volunteers.

Here are five practical tips for integrating and supporting multiple generations in your organization.

1. **ESTABLISH A COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIP.** Understand and acknowledge strengths, interests, motivators and personal goals for growth and learning. Face-to-face communication and taking time to build rapport can facilitate this. Develop a set schedule of regular check-in meetings. These reinforce mutual respect and understanding, and they may be particularly useful when managing a much older or much younger colleague.
2. **COLLABORATE ON A WORK PLAN.** Many adults 50+ want a plan and a roadmap. We are anxious to use our skills and experience and want to get going. Developing a work plan with clear goals, deliverables and a timeline will provide the accountability you and your team members are seeking.
3. **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ONGOING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT.** Adults 50+ may be looking for ways to enhance existing skills or develop new ones. We may also be a great resource for developing the skills of other staff members or volunteers. You can support team members by offering opportunities for skill development and being open to new options. For example, some adults 50+ may be skilled managers and coaches who can help organize a team or serve as mentors within the organization.
4. **SHARE THE IMPACT.** Adults 50+ have come forward to do this work to make a difference and see the impact their time and actions can have. Make sure you continuously inspire your staff and volunteers by letting them know about the impact they're having. It'll keep them motivated.
5. **ESTABLISH FEEDBACK LOOPS.** Create opportunities for sharing ideas and feedback. This supports continuous improvement and gives everyone a voice. Whether it's through a one-to-one check-in or a staff meeting, make sure you ask and allow time for feedback and for staff and volunteers to share their opinions. Be ready to make modifications where appropriate. Be open to listening and creating a climate of mutual respect.



## STEP 8

### Integration & Support (continued)

If you want to keep 50+ volunteers around for a long time, Mary Gunn, former executive director of Generations Incorporated, offers this advice: “There are three things I’d say are important. First, their experience has to be meaningful. Second, they have to feel appreciated and needed. Third, they need to have opportunities to tell you face-to-face whether their experience is a good one. Show up where they serve on a regular basis and ask them how they’re doing.”

## TAKING ACTION

Use this checklist to assess your capacity to integrate and provide meaningful support to adults 50+.

### INTEGRATION & SUPPORT CHECKLIST

#### ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS

- Set up regular face-to-face meetings.
- Discuss personal goals for growth and learning.
- Discuss motivators, strengths and interests.

#### COLLABORATE ON A WORK PLAN

- Establish goals.
- Create a timeline.
- Agree on deliverables.
- Hold regular meetings to review progress.

#### PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Offer in-service training opportunities.
- Provide opportunities to use existing skills in different roles.
- Provide opportunities for leadership.
- Remain open to ideas that team members bring for their own skill development.



# STEP 8

Integration &  
Support  
(continued)

## SHARE THE IMPACT

- Share stories on your website, in social media and other outlets.
- Share impact in reports to staff and funders and at meetings/conferences.
- Mobilize adults 50+ as ambassadors.

## CREATE FEEDBACK LOOPS

- Offer opportunities to give and receive feedback in an open, accepting forum.
- Create a continuous improvement plan, in the spirit of lifelong learning.



## MORE INFORMATION

- [Boomer Volunteer Engagement Guide](https://bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer) (bit.ly/gen2genvolunteer)
  - Chapter 8: Nurturing the Relationship: Support. pages 111-127
  - Exercise: Individual Volunteer Plan. page 161
- [Energize Inc Website](https://bit.ly/gen2genenergize)—Retention (bit.ly/gen2genenergize)
- [What Works](https://bit.ly/gen2genwhatworks): Developing Successful Multigenerational Leadership, a report from Building Movement Project (bit.ly/gen2genwhatworks)

