

Funding Across the Lifespan

Aging influences nearly every aspect of our communities and nation. As individuals, we are affected by our own aging, as well as by our aging families, friends and colleagues. Regardless of your funding interests – the arts, environment, health, neighborhoods, social services, children and youth, families, or education – older adults are increasingly relevant to your work. They may already benefit directly or indirectly from the programs you fund. Conversely, they may serve as critically needed volunteers or supporters for your grantees.

Older Adults Are Powerful Assets

Older adults are a rapidly growing resource. On average, one in every eight people in our communities is over 65. Nationwide, more than 36 million people are 65 or older. In addition, the first wave of 77 million Baby Boomers is now turning 60.

More than 90 percent of older adults are active and well and living in the community. These citizens have a lifetime network of connections as well as years of experience, wisdom, and skills to contribute. Many are already helping. About three-quarters of adults over age 55 volunteer their time or provide unpaid care to spouses, partners and older family members. More than six million children are being raised by grandparents and other older relatives.

Research clearly indicates that maintaining strong social connections and feeling productive are critical factors for continued physical and mental health in older people (and in truth, for people of all

ages and abilities). Promoting older adults' health, well-being, and participation encourages the stability and economic viability of our families, neighborhoods, and communities.

Our communities need older adults. They are often key community problem solvers, active participants in town and city government, and volunteers for cultural organizations, community festivals and events. Neighborhoods benefit from older adults' knowledge and abilities, advocacy and hands-on action addressing such local concerns as hunger, homelessness, crime, recycling, and disaster preparedness. In many neighborhoods, older people are transforming housing, schools, streets, parks, and vacant lots into sources of community pride--places to be enjoyed by people of all ages.

Funding possibilities to add the power of older adults to your grantmaking:

- *Aggressive community-wide campaigns to recruit older volunteers for specific and meaningful jobs.*

*Never before
have so many
people had so much
knowledge and so
much time to use it.*

Civic Ventures

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- *Expanding nonprofits' or schools' capacity to work effectively with older volunteers.*
- *Leadership training to inspire older adults to volunteer and connect them with opportunities.*
- *Local awards to celebrate organizations that effectively engage older adults.*
- *Programs to mobilize older adult teams into action on community concerns.*

Older Adults as Resources

For ideas and examples:

- U.S. Administration on Aging (see "Volunteer Opportunities") www.aoa.gov/eldfam/eldfam.asp
- Generations United www.gu.org
- Civic Ventures www.civicventures.org/nextchapter
- Center for Intergenerational Learning, Temple University www.temple.edu/cil
- Annie E. Casey Foundation (see "Elders as Resources" publications) <http://caseyfoundation.org/initiatives/mc/readingroom/>

Where you can find older volunteers in your community:

- Your local RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)
- Retiree organizations of teachers, unions, or local corporations
- Your local AARP chapter

Older Adults in Our Families

Older members of our families provide care and special attention for children and youth. They often have time for children when working parents do not. In addition, they support their adult children through life transitions such as the loss of a job or a divorce. Finally, older adults caring for frail spouses, partners or siblings, or raising their grandchildren are some of the most extraordinary older volunteers in our communities. Supporting these caregivers is critical to our families. This support also has significant economic benefits, preventing absenteeism and promoting job productivity.

The Duke Endowment made a \$25,000 grant to Salem United Methodist Church, just outside Charlotte, North Carolina, to form and train Care Teams. Comprised of congregants of many ages, Care Teams offer respite for caregivers and practical at-home help for older adults who want to remain in the community.

Most older people prefer to grow old at home in the community with autonomy and choice. Family members can help them remain independent. Still, frail elders and their caregivers often need additional support. Practical assistance with groceries, house cleaning, or transportation to doctor appointments and religious services can be invaluable. Equally important is keeping older adults connected to the community. Social services and opportunities for community connections that are easy to locate and access can help.

Educating Our Children

Older adults are increasingly important to our children's education. Many communities engage the support of older adults by involving them directly in schools. They not only recruit them to volunteer, but invite them to school events, offer adult education programs, or locate a senior center or program in a school. In addition, service learning programs offer students the opportunity to serve older people while learning about aging. For some students these are life-changing experiences that build their self-confidence and expose them to careers in the helping professions.

Families with school-age children are in the minority in many communities. To ensure sufficient resources, schools need the support of the larger community, especially older adults, who tend to be regular voters. This is particularly true when schools attempt to pass bond measures or referenda.

(See charts at end of document)

People over 55 years of age provided unpaid care to other family members valued at nearly \$100 billion in 2002.

Urban Institute



Photo courtesy of The John A. Hartford Foundation Institute for Geriatric Nursing, New York University, College of Nursing. Photograph by James Schuck.

Today, nearly two-thirds of all nursing services are for the care of older adults.

Health and Aging

Most older adults continue to lead active lives while routinely juggling chronic health conditions, such as arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, high blood pressure, hearing or vision impairments. Physical health challenges and isolation can result in depression in older people. Keeping older adults active and engaged promotes their good health which in turn benefits their families and communities.

Unfortunately, few health and social work professionals are “aging-savvy.” Training doctors, nurses, and social workers to be

Grand Rapids Community Foundation

in Michigan went from focusing on child welfare to seeing the value of adding older adults to the mix as community problem solvers. Partnering with other funders, the Foundation helped start Traveling Grannies and Grandpas. Low-income older adults work as in-home mentors to at-risk, pregnant and parenting teens and their infants.

The Elias Foundation focuses its grantmaking on community organizing and activist training. Recently, this Armonk, New York, foundation granted \$20,000 to Family Service Society of Yonkers for GrandPower, an older adult group that advocates for improvements in state and local public policies affecting grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising.

aging-prepared is essential. In addition, families need to receive information about how to help older relatives manage their chronic illnesses.

Because older adults are the largest consumers of health care resources, it is in everyone’s best interest for them to be as healthy and independent as possible.

Interest in Art and Culture Grows

As the education level of older people increases (one-third of those over 65 today have some higher education), their interest in art and culture grows. Older adults are important patrons and donors. A growing number fill critical volunteer roles as board and committee members of artistic organizations, as well as day-to-day ushers and docents. In some communities, trained older volunteers are bringing art-related curricula into schools.

In addition, a growing number of older people are discovering and developing their own artistic abilities. Research now clearly indicates that older adults actively engaged in creative activities have significantly better overall mental and physical health. This includes fewer falls and doctors’ visits, decreased use of medications, fewer vision problems, less loneliness and depression, and increased levels of involvement in other activities.

Neighborhoods for All Ages

The quality of life in our neighborhoods is directly connected to the health and well-being of all the people who live there.

(See charts at end of document)

When we pay attention to their powerful assets and attitudes, we discover that elders can and do provide support, skills, leadership, and social capital that improve the lives of children.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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Older adults play vital roles in making our neighborhoods good places to come home to at the end of the day, as well as good places in which to grow up and grow old. Fostering interaction among residents of all ages builds community and mutual support.

A growing number of urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods are becoming NORCs (naturally occurring retirement communities). NORCs are housing complexes or neighborhoods where a large proportion of the residents are older adults living in housing not designed or planned with older people in mind. Often residents still live in the homes they raised their families in many years ago. In more than 80 NORCs around the country, public-private partnerships provide supportive services and programs. They offer older residents health and social services as well as enriching educational and social activities that promote

“I’d like to apply the skills and knowledge I’ve acquired over a lifetime and use them to help someone.”

*a retiree,
“Recasting Retirement”*



Groundwork Yonkers kids and older adults planting in their neighborhood.

The EngAGEment Initiative, funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, is a pilot program to introduce new funders to aging through a partnership between GIA and Regional Associations of Grantmakers.

Credits

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The Arizona Community Foundation, a statewide philanthropy with 11 affiliates, has launched a Community for All Ages initiative. Groups ranging from teens to seniors participate in regional conferences to learn neighborhood-focused techniques and tools for promoting the well-being of children, youth, and older adults, strengthening families, and creating ongoing mutually beneficial interaction among age groups. The Foundation awarded planning and implementation grants of \$10,000 to \$50,000 to nine Arizona communities.

successful aging. Neighborhoods that are evolving into NORCs can benefit from similar approaches.

Older Adults Care About the Environment

Older adults have the time and life experience to serve effectively on community planning and zoning boards, making important decisions about the local environment, economic development, and smart growth.

In many communities older adults are powerful environmental advocates and educators, as well as creators and keepers of community parks, gardens, and green spaces. Many older adults cherish the natural world and possess a strong desire to leave a healthy environment for future generations. Their commitment to their neighborhoods as well as their understanding and stewardship of the environment are powerful influences on the behavior of their children and grandchildren.

(See charts at end of document)

Contact GIA

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ENHANCE GRANTMAKING BY INVOLVING OLDER ADULTS

FAMILIES

Funding Possibilities

- Grandparents raising grandchildren
 - Counseling and support groups
 - Help with legal issues
 - Information and help navigating public systems
- Family members caring for elders
 - Information on caregiver self-care
 - Support through groups and telephone networks
 - Respite care
- Elders needing assistance
 - Home delivery of groceries, books, medications
 - Chore and housekeeping services
 - Assistance with bill paying and insurance
 - Transportation to medical appointments, religious services, volunteer jobs, clubs, events
 - Networks of elders supporting each other
 - Opportunities to feel productive
 - One-call help for support, information, referral

Selected Resources

- Demographics on older people
 - Local Area Agency on Aging (find yours at www.eldercare.gov); and city, county, state planning, health, aging departments
- Grandparent facts by state
 - Generations United www.gu.org
- Grandparents raising grandchildren
 - AARP Grandparent Information Center www.aarp.org/grandparents
 - Relatives as Parents Program www.brookdalefoundation.org/relativesasparents.htm
- Family caregiving
 - National Alliance for Caregiving www.caregiving.org
- Aging at home in the community
 - Partners for Livable Communities <http://aipi.n4a.org>
 - Congregations providing help for older neighbors
 - Faith in Action www.fiavolunteers.org

EDUCATION

Funding Possibilities

- Older adults as school tutors and mentors
- Older volunteers reading to young children
- Older people teaching and enhancing curriculum, especially history
- Curriculum on aging as part of the life cycle
- Service learning in senior centers and residences
- Teens interviewing and recording older adults' personal memories and community history
- Teens teaching older adults to use computers
- Older adults attending school performances
- Training school administrators how to work with older volunteers

Selected Resources

- Local RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program), retired teachers associations, AARP chapter, senior housing facilities, larger senior centers
- School tutors and mentors
 - Experience Corps www.experiencecorps.org
- Examples of service learning
 - Generations United www.gu.org
- Toolkit for Intergenerational Program Planners
 - Center for Intergenerational Learning, Temple University www.templecil.org
- Early childhood education
 - Seniors For Kids www.seniors4kids.org

HEALTH

Funding Possibilities

- Geriatric training for health, allied health, social work professionals
- Scholarships for health and social work students specializing in aging
- Information on community programs for health care providers to share with patients
- Information on self-care of chronic illnesses for patients and families
- Training older volunteers to teach others about Medicare
- Teams of volunteer caregivers
- Group wellness programs (walking clubs, t'ai chi)
- Home safety assessments by older volunteers
- Information and community outreach on mental health issues for older adults
- Palliative care for the seriously ill to improve quality of life

Selected Resources

- Local colleges that teach health professionals, allied health workers, social workers; local disease-specific organizations (Alzheimer's Association, Diabetes Association, Arthritis Foundation, etc.)
- Social work/physician/nurse education and training
 - John A. Hartford Foundation www.jhartfound.org
- Congregations providing help for older neighbors
 - Faith in Action www.fiavolunteers.org
- Center for Healthy Aging, National Council on Aging
 - <http://healthyagingprograms.org>
- American Society on Aging
 - www.asaging.org/cdc/index.cfm
- National Institute on Aging www.nia.nih.gov
- National Institute on Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Alliance for Caregiving www.caregiving.org
- Center to Advance Palliative Care www.capc.org

ENHANCE GRANTMAKING BY INVOLVING OLDER ADULTS

ARTS AND CULTURE

Funding Possibilities

- Audience-building activities such as daylight and in-the-community performances
- Larger-print publications and good signage
- Older volunteers bringing arts to others
- Public exhibitions of older artists' work
- List of groups offering art for older adults
- List of artists skilled in teaching older adults
- Training artists and social service professionals how to connect older adults and the arts
- Intergenerational theatre troupes or choruses
- Intergenerational teams creating visual art or murals for public spaces
- Intergenerational oral history programs
- Grandparent/grandchildren exhibitions

Selected Resources

- Local museums, theaters, arts organizations, historical societies, associations promoting ethnic culture, colleges with art programs
- Information about life history and story telling
Eldersshare the Arts www.elderssharethearts.org
- To locate Centers for Creative Aging
www.creativeaging.org/ncca_network.html
- Older artist programs by state and type
www.creativeaging.org/ccasearchform.cfm

NEIGHBORHOODS

Funding Possibilities

- Intergenerational planning of a community for all ages
- Surveys to assess neighborhood elder-friendliness
- Asset mapping to identify partnership opportunities with organizations
- Transportation for older and disabled neighbors
- Neighborhood programs, projects and events like intergenerational teams creating community gardens and greening up streets
- College students tutoring older immigrants in language, literacy, and citizenship skills
- Elders sharing community memories
- Older adults teaching cooking, woodworking, crafts, etc. in out-of-school time programs

Selected Resources

- Neighborhood associations, nonprofits, libraries
- Planning and best practices for livable communities
Partners for Livable Communities <http://aipi.n4a.org>
- Assessment of community “elder-friendliness”
Visiting Nurse Association www.vnsny.org/advantage
- Community asset mapping
Northwestern University, ABCD Institute
www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html
- Examples of “Communities for All Ages”
Annie E. Casey Foundation
www.caseyfoundation.org/initiatives/mc/readingroom/
- Transportation for older and disabled people
ITN America www.itnamerica.org
- NORCs (naturally occurring retirement communities)
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/NORCssp.htm>
- Intergenerational programs, information and tools
Temple University www.temple.edu/cil
Generations United www.gu.org
- Elders sharing neighborhood history and memories
Elders Share the Arts www.elderssharethearts.org

ENVIRONMENT

Funding Possibilities

- Training older adults to be leaders and stewards of their community environment
- Engaging older advocates for smart growth, clean air and water, restoration efforts
- Intergenerational “green teams” to create and tend parks, gardens and green spaces
- Intergenerational teams to walk streets, report and monitor repair of potholes, broken sidewalks, graffiti, etc.
- Environmental education in senior centers and assisted living sites
- Designing parks, forests, and gardens for easy access and use by older people

Selected Resources

- Neighborhood associations, city and county park departments, environmental education and action groups, colleges with programs in environmental sciences
- Older volunteer programs by state
Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement
http://easi.org/resource_guide_99.html#op
- Neighborhood street-level assessment
ComNET www.fcny.org/cmgp/comnet.htm
Walkable Communities www.walkable.org
- Neighborhood environment programs
List of local Groundwork programs
www.groundworkusa.org/GW_USA/contact.html
- Intergenerational community science programs
Spry Foundation www.spry.org
Oasis www.oasisnet.org/volunteer/science.htm