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## **Increasing Volunteerism Among Older Adults: Benefits and Strategies for States**

### **Summary**

The percentage of the U.S. population that is 65 years of age and older is expected to increase by nearly 60 percent during the next four decades.<sup>1</sup> This demographic shift will have important implications for state action, including helping to ensure older adults remain healthy and active as they age. Engaging older adults through meaningful volunteer activities is one way states can promote wellness while also realizing benefits for communities and businesses.

Volunteering activities have unique personal benefits.<sup>2</sup> Older volunteers experience fewer health issues with advancing age and report diminishing symptoms for existing health conditions. The mental health benefits of volunteering also are well documented. Volunteering reduces feelings of depression among older adults.

Moreover, the benefits of volunteering are not limited to personal well-being. Volunteerism by older Americans can bring substantial benefits to communities, such as an increase in economic productivity and the strengthening of intergenerational relationships. Volunteering among older adults generates approximately \$162 billion annually for the U.S. economy.<sup>3</sup> As more and more adults reach retirement age and begin to look for ways to donate their time and expertise, the economic productivity level of volunteers can only be expected to increase.

Expanding volunteer opportunities for older adults requires states to address several challenges. Oftentimes, it is difficult for potential volunteers to find unpaid positions that are commensurate with their interests and abilities. Although resources to match volunteers with volunteer opportunities are widely available online, these services often cannot tailor searches to the unique profile of older adults. Older adults who manage to find volunteer positions often report professional settings that lack the capacity and training opportunities to fully use their skills. These issues can be compounded by insufficient volunteer management systems to recruit and oversee volunteers. Financial costs and a lack of reliable transportation can also pose formidable barriers for even the most motivated volunteers.

States can effectively address these challenges to fully realize the benefits that older volunteers offer organizations and communities. They can:

- create networks to connect older adults to volunteer opportunities that are appropriate by age, interest, and expertise;
- encourage volunteerism among state employees before they reach retirement age;
- lower transportation and cost barriers to volunteering;

- improve volunteer management and training capacity in organizations to increase volunteer productivity and satisfaction; and
- support volunteer programs that build intergenerational bonds to encourage the sharing of experience, enthusiasm, and culture among age groups.

## **Introduction**

Older adults' desire to remain active and give back to their communities is well documented. Between 60 percent and 70 percent of older adults engage in formal or informal volunteer activities. Nearly two-thirds of older adults not currently volunteering express an interest in donating their time in the future.<sup>4</sup> This interest, coupled with the large demographic shift occurring in the United States, could result in a substantial increase in the number of older adults willing to donate their time and expertise through volunteerism.<sup>5</sup> The dramatic increase in the number of retirement-age Americans affords states unique opportunities to tap a large, highly skilled, and motivated pool of older adults as potential volunteers. Such an increase in volunteering could bring sizeable benefits to older adults' physical and mental well-being as well as benefits to states in terms of stronger communities and reduced health care costs. Yet, for these potential benefits to become a reality, older adults must be able to find positions that suit their skills, interests, and lifestyle. States can play a vital role in lowering the barriers that make it difficult for older adults to find and accept those positions.

States have substantial incentives to promote volunteering opportunities among older adults. As Americans live longer, continued civic engagement and community activity are keys to maintaining their physical and mental health. Improving the well-being of older adults could have a major impact on future health care costs. At the same time, volunteerism has direct economic benefits for state and communities. The time older adults donate to unpaid positions is valued at \$17 per hour and generates billions of dollars annually for the U.S. economy.<sup>6</sup> Although most volunteering activities entail some form of family care, volunteering outside the home accounts for nearly 40 percent of the value of unpaid work in the U.S. economy.<sup>7</sup>

Increasing volunteerism rates among older adults, however, can be challenging for state policymakers. One challenge is to modernize traditional concepts of volunteerism within organizations. Older adults are increasingly looking to use their professional skills in volunteer settings and typically want to continue developing their knowledge and expertise. Unfortunately, in many cases, volunteering involves roles with lower skill and responsibility levels. States must encourage organizations to rethink how volunteers and their skills are used.

Another challenge is helping match older adults to available volunteering opportunities. Without formal or comprehensive systems that connect individuals to opportunities well suited to their skills, older adults may be discouraged from engaging in volunteer programs. Still other barriers to volunteerism exist, such as a lack of transportation, difficulties in scheduling, and mismatches in expectations.

With the aging of the American population, states have begun to encourage older adults to remain in or return to the workplace. Less attention has been paid to promoting volunteerism, but volunteerism affords many benefits, including improving individual health, raising economic productivity, and building stronger communities. States can take specific policy and program actions to reduce some of the more prominent barriers that often dissuade older adults from volunteering.

## **The Benefits of Engaging Older Adults in Volunteerism**

Adopting policies to encourage volunteering among older adults is promising given recent evidence of the benefits such activities bring to individuals and communities. Older adults consistently express a strong desire to stay active and give back to the community, whether or not they currently donate their time. These older volunteers report substantial improvements to their personal health and well-being. In addition, intergenerational volunteering provides unique benefits for both young and old participants.

### ***Health and Well-Being***

Remaining engaged in social activities is a key to staying physically and mentally healthy. Engaging older adults in unpaid activities is just as effective as engaging them in paid work for maintaining community and social engagement. The mental health benefits of engagement are clear for older adults. Volunteerism can soften the effects of aging on mortality rates, help offset the loss of purpose felt by many older adults, and lead to an overall improved quality of life. Volunteerism also reduces despair and depression, two conditions strongly linked to heart disease and worsening physical health in older adults.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, volunteering can result in fewer physical health problems with advancing age. Older adults who volunteer more than 100 hours per year are two-thirds less likely to report health problems, even when previous health concerns are taken into account.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, volunteerism can reduce negative symptoms related to chronic pain conditions. In fact, the benefits of participating in volunteering and other productive community activities equal those of increased exercise and physical fitness activities in terms of long-term health benefits.<sup>10</sup> During a five-year period, older adults who volunteered with two or more organizations experienced a mortality rate 44 percent lower than that of their non-volunteering peers with similar health and family factors.<sup>11</sup>

Positive health and wellness indicators associated with volunteering are not limited to the individual. The rising cost of caring for older adults is well documented, and this cost is projected to increase rapidly as more workers retire. Long-term care for older adults is one of the most costly components of the nation's rising health care expenditures. In 2000, 3.7 million Americans either lived in a nursing home or received paid home care. This number is expected to more than double during the next 30 years.<sup>12</sup> Volunteering by older adults improves their mental health and life satisfaction and reduces the occurrence and severity of physical disabilities. For these reasons, volunteerism among older adults holds considerable potential to reduce the need for and duration of long-term care among these adults.

### ***Public Benefits***

Various engagement activities for older adults can result in public benefits. States can take advantage of the higher skills and potential productivity levels of older adults by supporting opportunities for them to remain actively engaged in volunteer opportunities in public, private, and nonprofit organizations. More than 90 percent of organizations that use volunteers report that these individuals increase the quality of services or programs; nearly 70 percent of these organizations also report cost savings as a result of the volunteerism. Other commonly cited benefits are more comprehensive attention for outreach services, increased public support for programs, and access to specialized skills.<sup>13</sup>

Older adults also provide substantial public benefits by assisting family members in need. By caring for their spouses, peers, and grandchildren, this population contributes time and resources to the economy. Importantly, the increasing number of older adults and the high skill level many of them possess can further increase the economic benefits derived from volunteerism.

Volunteerism is especially beneficial for health and education organizations, two sectors that are now facing labor shortages. For example, older volunteers have proven effective in reducing hospitalization rates and improving family well-being as a result of their involvement in home visitation programs for the disabled and chronically ill.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, programs that link older adults with school-age children afford benefits for both age groups. Older adults report high levels of satisfaction from volunteering, while children, particularly younger school-age children, respond positively to the meaningful relationships they forge with older adults.<sup>15</sup> In communities where young people lack positive relationships with adult figures, intergenerational volunteer programs can provide an alternative source of values, culture, and history handed down from an older generation.<sup>16</sup>

### **Challenges to Promoting Older Adult Civic Engagement**

Several challenges can confound state efforts to increase volunteerism among older adults and provide them with rewarding experiences. These challenges include insufficient connections between older adults and potential volunteer opportunities, outdated models for volunteering, and transportation and cost barriers.

#### ***Insufficient Volunteer Connections***

Most nonprofit and philanthropic organizations would like more volunteers. However, without an easily accessible resource that describes volunteering opportunities and available positions, older adults often find it difficult to find positions suited to their needs and abilities. In addition, many communities lack the capacity to catalog the need for volunteers, which can exacerbate the difficulty that many older adults have in finding the right opportunity for their skills and interests.<sup>17</sup> Some volunteer matching databases exist, but they are not typically designed with older adults in mind. Volunteer databases that do enable users to specify their age range rarely provide specialized positions for older volunteers.

Many organizations also cite an inability to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteers as a chief problem they face in terms of implementing effective volunteer programs.<sup>18</sup> Traditionally, many organizations have relied on a few key volunteers for the bulk of their volunteering time. As the profile of volunteerism shifts to a broader pool of adults donating fewer hours, recruitment strategies will have to undergo a similar transformation.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, staff training on how to effectively use and manage older volunteers is limited in many organizations. Strong management skills are important in creating effective volunteer programs. A trained volunteer coordinator is one way organizations can manage and train volunteers, which can benefit both the organization and the individual. However, less than two-thirds of organizations typically employ volunteer coordinators.<sup>20</sup> Even when an organization employs a volunteer coordinator, rarely is it a full-time position.

#### ***Outdated Volunteer Models and Opportunities***

The volunteering models many organizations use frequently do not meet the needs of older volunteers, particularly individuals who have recently retired and would like to continue to use

their skills and expertise in a professional setting. Although most nonprofit and faith-based organizations use and value volunteers, older adults often do not feel their time is used efficiently.<sup>21</sup> Typically, adults who feel underutilized and unproductive are less likely to develop strong ties to unpaid activities and, in turn, less likely to remain engaged in their community. “Feeling valued and needed,” along with wanting to stay active, are chief reasons why many older adults decide to remain in the workforce.<sup>22</sup> These are the same benefits that attract older adults to volunteering opportunities and keep them there. Consequently, organizations should strive to update the types of activities they offer volunteers in order to meet volunteers’ expectations and enable older adults to contribute their knowledge and skills. Older volunteers, on average, possess greater professional skills than their younger colleagues; yet, in nearly every skill area, they report being underutilized.<sup>23</sup> Older volunteers often report low satisfaction in volunteer positions they believe do not take advantage of the experience and abilities they bring to the organization.

A related challenge is helping organizations create a positive environment for older adults through volunteer training. More than 60 percent of nonprofit and faith-based organizations report they have insufficient resources to train volunteers. This situation exists despite the fact that older adults are much more likely to consider training as an important component in having a positive volunteer experience. With just more than one-quarter of organizations offering formal training or professional development opportunities to their volunteers, many organizations need programs that can lead to a more effective use of volunteers’ time and expertise.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Transportation and Cost Barriers***

Next to scheduling and family commitments, one of the largest obstacles to volunteering among older adults is the lack of transportation.<sup>25</sup> This barrier is most prominent in rural communities without a public transportation infrastructure. Older residents in rural areas are at high risk for being isolated, so transportation to facilitate volunteering is important.

Volunteers also face incidental costs for donating their time. Travel expenses, as well as small purchases associated with volunteering, can become costly for some. Although volunteers donate their time without expectation of remuneration, they also expect that their volunteerism will not result in a substantial cost to them. Among older adults who

### **Corporate Volunteering**

Corporate volunteer initiatives provide another potential resource for connecting mature adults to suitable volunteer opportunities. In most corporate volunteer programs, employees are given paid leave or other incentives to participate in company-sponsored volunteer programs. Many companies effectively use Web-based clearinghouses for volunteer opportunities to help match individuals with particular skills to programs. Corporate volunteer programs are a way to also connect retirees to volunteer opportunities; by encouraging volunteerism during the career of an employee, that person is far more likely to continue a strong volunteering commitment in retirement. Richmond, Virginia-based Bon Secours Health System offers an example of a private organization with a successful corporate volunteer program. The company’s department of mission services aims to create a strong volunteer ethic among employees, former employees, and the community. The department sponsors different community engagement activities, including projects to provide books to low-income children, operate mobile health care units, and mentor at-risk middle school girls.

are interested in volunteering but do not do so, one-fifth cite cost as one of the major barriers that prevents them from donating their time.<sup>26</sup>

### **State Policy and Program Options**

States can pursue several policy and program options to encourage volunteerism among older adults. Effective state strategies focus on improving the connections for older adults to suitable volunteer opportunities, encouraging a commitment to volunteering among the workforce that will continue in retirement, addressing common practical barriers to volunteering, and emphasizing the importance of volunteer programs that bond different generations. Existing state and local policies and programs illustrate approaches that can be adopted to leverage the benefits of volunteerism among older adults.

#### ***Create Networks to Connect Older Adults to Volunteer Opportunities***

Organizations seeking volunteers and older adults looking for rewarding unpaid work often struggle to find the right fit. To facilitate volunteer matching, state governments can create online clearinghouses of volunteer opportunities. Databases with information on positions, skills, and availability provided by both volunteers and organizations are not uncommon. For these databases to effectively reach older adults, however, they must include user-friendly interfaces and be tailored to the needs of this population.

In 2006, **California** launched the [California Volunteer Matching Network](#) to connect individuals to quality volunteer opportunities. A database of volunteer opportunities can be accessed through the state's [California Volunteers](#) website. Through the database, individuals can search for volunteer opportunities by location, type of work, time commitment, and whether or not the opportunity is suitable for older adults. California Volunteers has also released a report, [California's Aging Opportunity: Building a Legacy of Good Works](#), that outlines potential state strategies for ensuring older adults interested in volunteering their time can find opportunities that are right for them.

The **Maine** Commission for Community Service has partnered with United Way of Maine to oversee the automated [VolunteerMaine](#) database. Prospective volunteers can specifically search for opportunities designed for adults ages 55 and older. Since its launch in fall 2005, VolunteerMaine has referred close to 15,000 Maine residents for volunteer opportunities. Organizations in need of volunteers register for the Web site and include information on volunteer duties, volunteer skill requirements, and appropriate age groups for potential volunteers. At any given time, more than 700 volunteer opportunities for older adults are posted on the Web site. Through the Web site, users can get a detailed description of each opportunity as well as contact information to learn more.

[PennServe](#) is an online Web-based tool in **Pennsylvania** that provides general resources and contact information for all citizens in the state who want to volunteer. PennServe provides grant notice and application information for nonprofit and volunteer organizations interested in seeking state support for their programs. Although the site does not include a searchable list of volunteer opportunities within the state, it does link users to private volunteer search engines.

### ***Encourage Volunteerism Among State Employees***

States can model the practice of encouraging volunteerism among older adults by instituting policies that make volunteering easier for public employees. Older adults who have a strong commitment to volunteering frequently begin these efforts while still part of the workforce. Creating a work environment that encourages employees to take advantage of volunteering opportunities is one of the most effective means of promoting volunteerism among older adults. Incentives that can create a strong culture of volunteerism at work often revolve around crediting employees with service time for days spent volunteering. While neither the Massachusetts nor Delaware initiative profiled in this brief is designed specifically for older adults, both instill a volunteer ethic in adults as they make the transition to retirement.

Soon after taking office, **Massachusetts** Governor Deval Patrick announced a [State Employees Responding as Volunteers Program](#) (SERV). Through SERV, state employees can volunteer up to eight hours per month during working hours and be compensated by the state for their time. Volunteer activities approved under the program are mentoring, such as through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program; volunteering in a school; and participating in foster care preparation classes. Employees interested in participating in the program first contact the organization with which they want to volunteer and then seek approval from their supervisor to ensure the volunteer time commitment is consistent with their work duties. Through this program, the state hopes to remove barriers that employees believe hinder their ability to volunteer.

**Delaware**'s [Mentoring Initiative](#) also aims to instill the value of volunteering in state employees by lowering barriers to donating time. Many state employees who volunteer to mentor school-age children can use flexible scheduling to accommodate their volunteer work. Under this system, these state employees can volunteer during normal business hours and then make up that time through a nonstandard work schedule with supervisory approval.

States have also used limited financial inducements to attract volunteers with specific skills. The **Arizona** Department of Public Safety uses retired law enforcement officers to conduct background checks for potential officers. In state fiscal year 2006, almost one-third of all background investigations for new officers were undertaken by retired officers working on a contractual basis.<sup>27</sup> By using retired officers as contractors to conduct some of these investigations, the state has been able to ease the backlog of candidates and devote active officers to more pressing law enforcement duties. Volunteering programs that are based on this model and offer a small stipend could meet similar organizational needs while addressing cost issues that make volunteering prohibitive for some older adults.

#### **Volunteering for Educational Credits**

In 2001 and 2002, a Silver Scholarship program was proposed at the federal level to encourage volunteering among older adults. Although the proposal has not yet been enacted into law, it offers an innovative approach to encouraging volunteering among older adults. Under the Silver Scholarship proposal, older adults who volunteer at least 500 hours per year for mentoring, tutoring, or caregiving could receive a \$1,000 transferable tuition credit. As proposed, recipients could use this credit for themselves or for their children or grandchildren. The future of this program is unclear at the federal level, but it provides an interesting avenue at the state level for how government can act to stimulate volunteering.

Two programs in **New Mexico** encourage older adults to donate their time to provide mentoring and advice to individuals and businesses receiving government services. Through the state’s Golden Opportunities for Lifelong Development program (GOLD), persons above age 50 may receive a small stipend to mentor at-risk youth in the state. GOLD mentees also include welfare recipients. Under a similar state-run program, Business Opportunities for Liaison Development program (BOLD), retired and semiretired businesspeople are eligible for a stipend to mentor small business and industry on using one-stop career centers and hiring older workers. By providing financial incentives, these programs have been able to attract volunteers with unique skills to important programs.

### ***Lower Transportation and Cost Barriers to Volunteering***

In many cases, state action can be useful in helping older adults address common obstacles that inhibit volunteering. Focusing on programs that provide safe and reliable transportation can help older adults facing transportation barriers maintain civic engagement.

Communities in **Maine** have begun to partner with the nonprofit [Independent Transportation Network](#) (ITN) to enhance transportation choices for older adults. The network was founded to provide older adults with safe transportation alternatives to driving themselves. ITN is premised on the belief that safe and affordable transportation is necessary for many older adults to remain active and engaged, especially in rural areas. Transportation is needed to access medical care or complete daily errands, but ITN also recognizes that transportation is needed to help adults remain active in work and volunteering.

Under the Community Road Scholarship Program, local governments publicize the availability of ITN in their community. In return for the support of local government, ITN drivers can donate their driving mileage to a local “scholarship” for low-income older adults who need transportation. The ITN transportation model, which has been replicated in communities nationwide, demonstrates that civic engagement and volunteering programs can complement more traditional senior service programs that focus on health and well-being. The Community Road Scholarship Program also provides an example of how a state can improve transportation options for older adults interested in volunteering by partnering with ride share programs dedicated to providing services for older adults in need.

**Illinois** will begin offering free public transportation to all senior citizens in the state. The [Seniors Ride Free](#) program applies to all main-line and fixed-route public transit services; these services operate in communities with approximately 1.3 million seniors. The state estimates that seniors who use public transportation just twice per week will save between \$150 and \$400 annually through the new program. Such a service could make it much easier for older adults in Illinois to stay engaged in their communities through volunteerism.

Both Arizona and New Mexico use stipends to encourage the participation of older adults in high-need areas such as law enforcement and workforce preparation. Through stipends, states can eliminate cost barriers that volunteers may face in donating their time.

### ***Improve Volunteer Management and Training Capacity***

One of the key challenges that states face in fully engaging older adults is ensuring available opportunities adequately reflect the skills and energy of this population. Many nonprofit organizations traditionally have assigned volunteers to more low-skilled duties and often do not

tailor volunteering roles to the specific talents, skills, and interests of the individual. Changing organizations' views on proper roles for older volunteers is essential to creating fulfilling opportunities.

**Maryland** has taken a vital first step in reassessing and reshaping the role of older adults in the community through a Baby Boomer Initiative it launched in 2007. Under the guidance of a governing council, one of the primary charges of the Baby Boomer Initiative is to explore how to encourage the active engagement of this population and make recommendations for the development of appropriate volunteer and community activities. A large part of this task lies in determining what aspects of volunteer positions are most attractive to older adults and working with organizations that use volunteers to determine how they can more actively engage individuals. The council will release a report on findings and recommendations late in 2008 that will inform future state policy in civic engagement. Part of the work of the Baby Boomer Initiative will also entail developing public-private volunteering partnerships, based on the successful relationship the city of Baltimore has enjoyed with the [Experience Corps](#) program.

The **Virginia** Department of Social Services' [Faith Based and Community Initiative](#) (FBCI) provides technical assistance and best practices information to community- and faith-based organizations looking to create or improve volunteer programs. By helping programs that use volunteers build management and training capacity, FBCI encourages the replication of models that most effectively tap the full potential of volunteers. Through a network of local social services offices and community action agencies, FBCI helps community groups partner with public entities to receive the support and assistance they need to improve their local services. Since its creation in 1999, FBCI has encouraged the creation of new organizations that rely on volunteers and helped existing community organizations build volunteer capacity and training programs.

[Silver Print Colorado](#) is a partnership of public, private, and nonprofit entities dedicated to establishing a statewide culture of positive aging. One of the major focuses of the project is civic engagement through volunteerism. This work has led to the creation of volunteer positions that value older adults for the interests and skills they bring to an organization. The initiative is designed to connect organizations interested in improving opportunities for older adults and to work strategically to enhance existing offerings and develop new programs that better fit the profile of older adults. Silver Print Colorado is designed primarily to bring public attention to the issues of an aging population and to ensure stakeholders work collaboratively to improve how the state supports its older adult population.

### ***Support Intergenerational Volunteer Programs***

Both older adults and young adults receive more benefits from volunteering when they are involved in intergenerational programs. The ability to mentor youth and share experiences with them is a singularly gratifying experience for many older adults. In turn, many young adults derive great benefit from the influence of a responsible and caring older adult in their life. Given the benefits of this type of activity, state programs that highlight and capitalize on intergenerational volunteering can be very effective in attracting older adults to volunteer programs and in creating lasting attachments to volunteering.

In **Illinois**, the [Intergenerational Initiative](#), located at Southern Illinois University, was created in 1986 to encourage older adults to devote time to mentoring, tutoring, and other volunteer programs that target school-age children. The initiative uses an online directory to provide resources on intergenerational programs available in the state. In addition, the Intergenerational Initiative provides awards to programs and individuals best exemplifying the qualities that make intergenerational volunteering so powerful. The initiative also brings together school officials and volunteer organizers to share best practices on recruiting and retaining volunteers in meaningful, replicable projects. Publications produced by the Intergenerational Initiative are available free of charge and aim to support ongoing volunteer programs and generate interest in volunteering among older adults. The volunteer efforts run and supported through this initiative could be replicated by using outreach and referral programs at area agencies on aging or by partnering with the governor's office.

States have an opportunity to promote other intergenerational volunteering opportunities by providing public awareness and technical support for programs such as the Older Teachers Training Early Readers program (OTTER) in Central **Florida**. OTTER uses the expertise of retired teachers to improve literacy outcomes among underserved youth while strengthening intergenerational relationships. The program is supported by local government and administered through the [Foster Grandparent Program of Central Florida](#). It recruits volunteers 50 years of age and older to work with preschool-age children on early literacy. Older volunteers receive training on literacy techniques, reading aloud, and cultural consciousness. Volunteers work with the same children for two hours each week. OTTER currently receives funding support through philanthropic grants.

The Experience Corps program has created a volunteering model in 19 cities that uses the skills of older adults to improve literacy outcomes for urban youth. Since the program's creation, more than 2,000 Experience Corps members have donated approximately 500,000 hours of volunteer time to help more than 20,000 students. The program is especially effective because it encourages a substantial time commitment from adult participants, up to 15 hours per week, while relying on the organizational and leadership skills of the mature volunteers to lead and direct the program. This intensive effort to connect older adults with their community in a meaningful way has had substantial benefits for the children who receive Experience Corps tutoring. Of the school principals involved with the Experience Corps program, 90 percent of them report significant improvement in student performance and attitude toward work. While Experience Corps is run through a private organization, its work connecting older adults with children and schools demonstrates the positive impact of volunteer programs.

## **Conclusion**

Increasing volunteerism among older adults can produce important benefits for individuals, communities, and states, such as improving the health of older adults and strengthening community ties. These benefits could increase dramatically as the number of retirement-age adults continues to rise. Many states, communities, and organizations have begun developing initiatives to encourage volunteerism among older adults and address the barriers that prevent this population from engaging in volunteer activities. Governors and other state leaders can pursue several strategies to promote the civic engagement of older adults through volunteerism. State policy and program options include creating early connections to volunteering, helping older adults find suitable volunteer positions, and encouraging nonprofit organizations to tailor

volunteer programs to older adults' skills. Given the increasing number of Americans approaching retirement age, states that implement these strategies stand to reap large economic and community dividends.

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## Notes

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<sup>19</sup> See <http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/OlderAdults-Eng.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>22</sup> Laura B. Wilson and Jack Steele, *Marketing Volunteer Opportunities to Baby Boomers: A Blue Print from the Field* (College Park, Md.: University of Maryland, Center on Aging, n.d.). Available at: <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/727/boomers.pdf>>.

<sup>23</sup> VolunteerMatch.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Harvard School of Public Health and MetLife Foundation Initiative on Retirement and Civic Engagement, *Reinventing Aging: Baby Boomers and Civic Engagement* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard School of Public Health, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> VolunteerMatch.

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