



#### **BOSTON COLLEGE**

School of Social Work

# Interests and experiences of older workers:

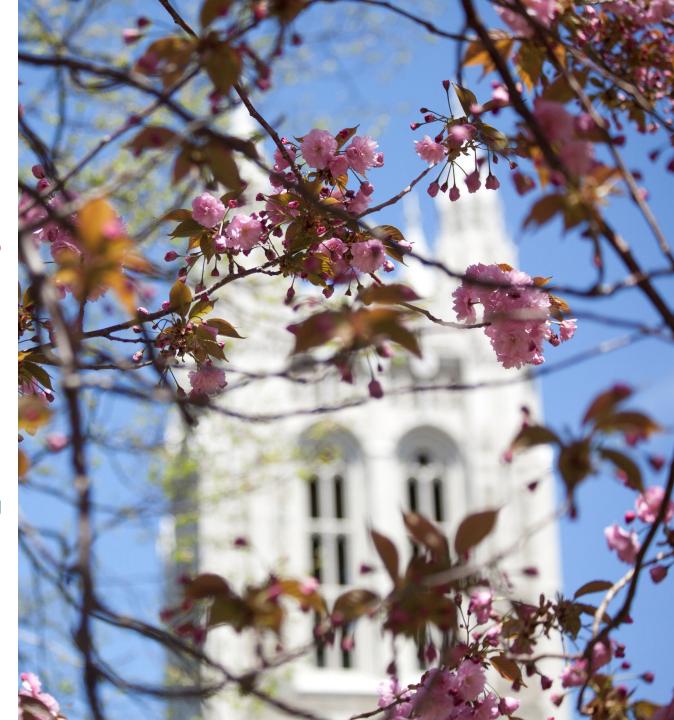
Evidence from multiple nationally representative studies

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STEM60+ Workshop *for*The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

September 28, 2023



### Slides and citations

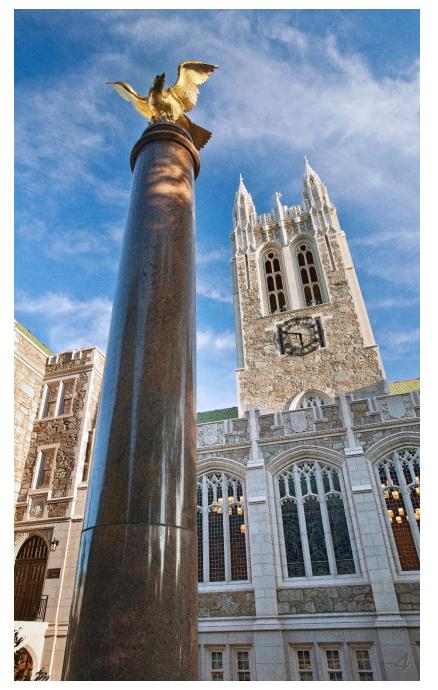
- My slides are posted to the STEM60+ Workshop website.
- After downloading the slides, you can click the hyperlinks wherever you see the link icon.



**About Me The How Background The What Discussion** 

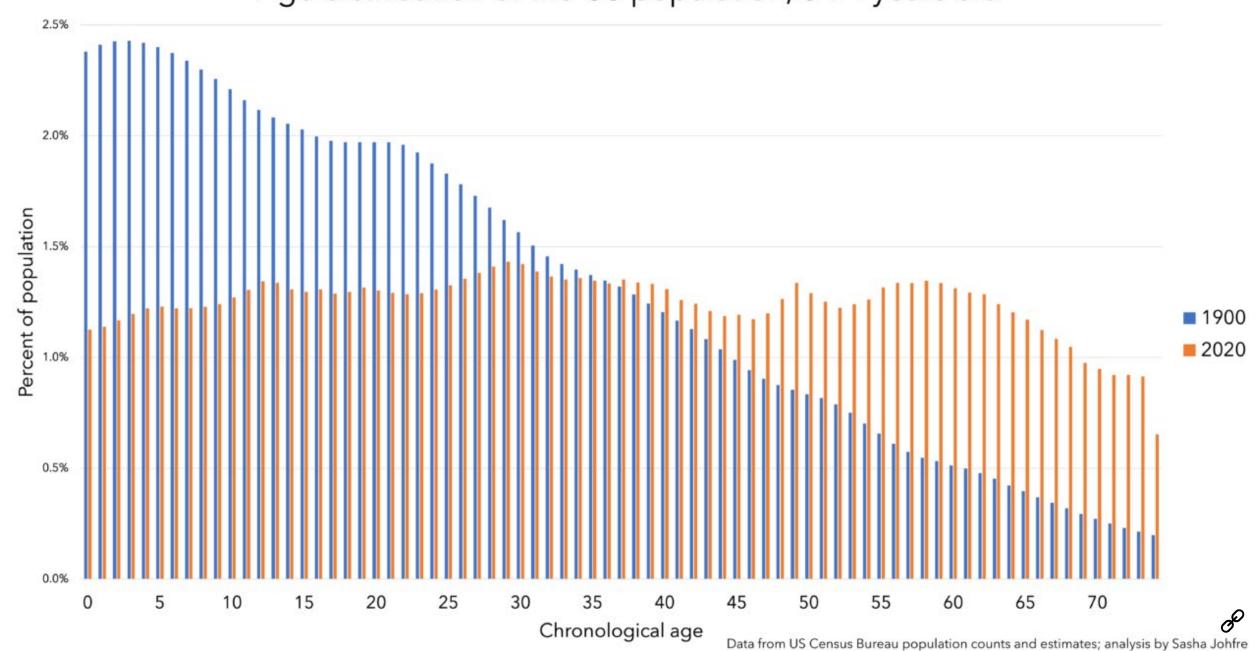


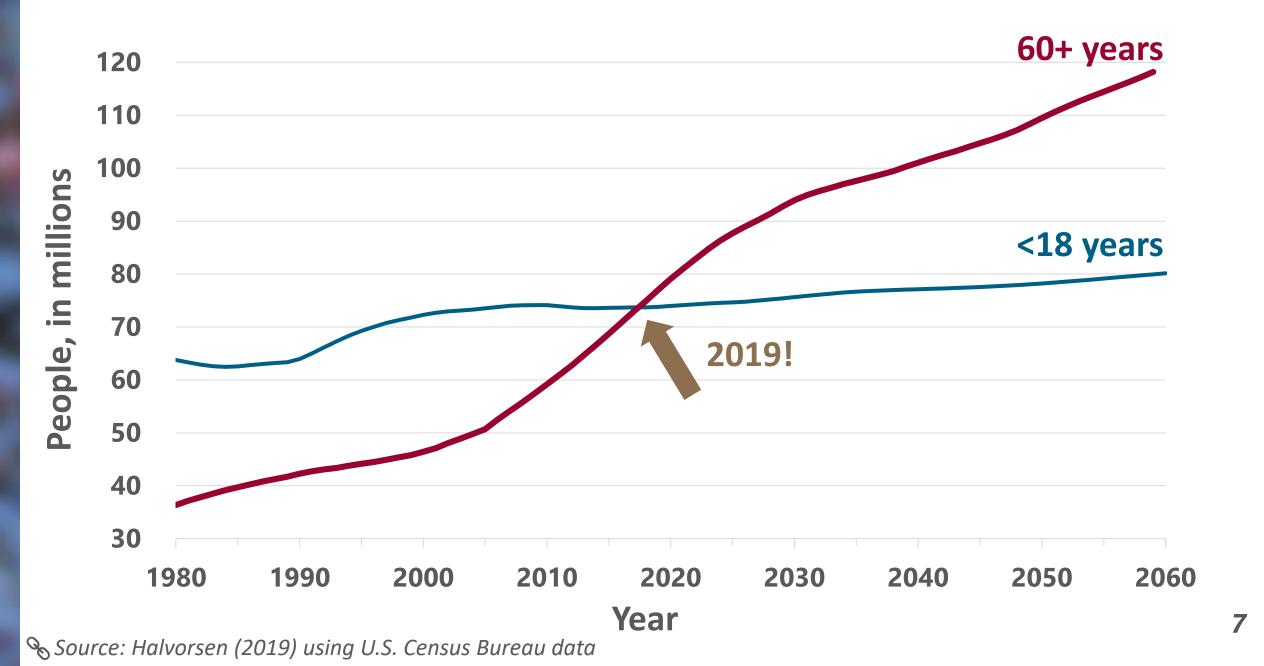


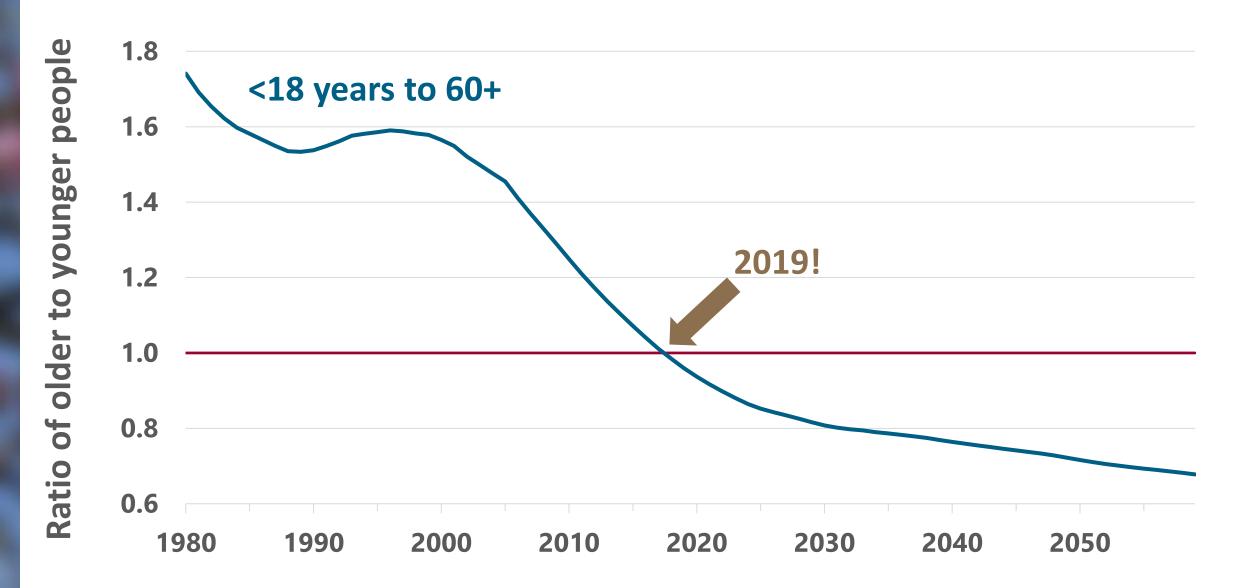


# BACKGROUND: An older, increasingly age-diverse country

#### Age distribution of the US population, 0-74 years old







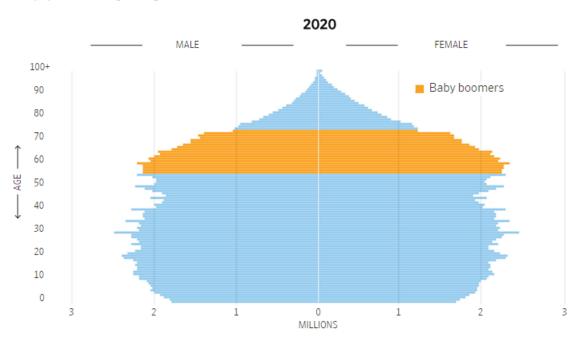
#### THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

ECONOMY JOBS

#### Why America Has a Long-Term Labor Crisis, in Six Charts

While the hot pandemic-era job market is cooling, it is set to remain tight for years

U.S. population by age and gender in 2000, 2010 and 2020



Note: Generational age defined by the Census Bureau Source: Census Bureau

By Lauren Weber Follow and Alana Pipe Follow Sept. 25, 2023 5:30 am ET

# The New York Times



A SPECIAL PROJECT FROM TIMES OPINION



An aging America needs...

An honest conversation about growing old.

Safer streets. Sustainable caregiving.

Flexible housing. Entrepreneurs who pay attention. To see and be seen.





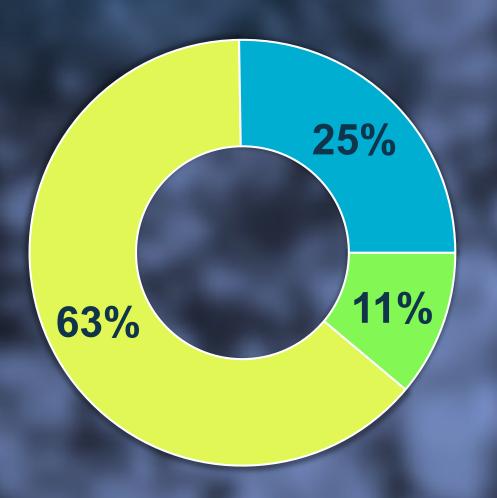






# THE WHAT: People both *need* and *want* to work longer, in new ways

# Intentions to work past traditional retirement age



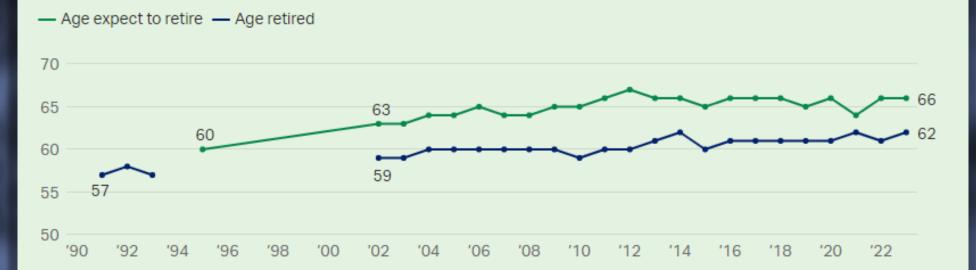
# **Employed Americans'** work plans past age 65

- Work part time
- Work full time
- Stop working altogether

## Average Expected Retirement Age for U.S. Nonretirees and Average Retirement Age for U.S. Retirees

Asked of nonretirees: At what age do you expect to retire?

Asked of retirees: At what age did you retire?





Get the data

GALLUP'

# Retirement savings of American workers, aged 55+

February 2023



## Reasons for working longer (30%+)

#### **Financial**

- Want to have more money for retirement (56%)
- Need money to cover expenses now or in retirement (43%)
- To access benefits like health insurance and 401(k) (30%)

#### **Non-financial**

- Still healthy and able to work (60%)
- To keep your mind active (58%)
- Working gives you a sense of purpose (56%)
- You like working (53%)
- To stay busy (50%)
- To stay physically active (46%)
- For social aspects (34%)



140/0 "Enjoy a well-deserved rest."

20% "Retire and live within my means."

31% "Beginning of a new chapter to be active and involved."

33% "Keep working as long as I am able to cover my expenses."

#### encore career

Work that combines personal meaning and social impact with continued income in the second half of life.

*In other words,* 

purpose, passion and a paycheck.



















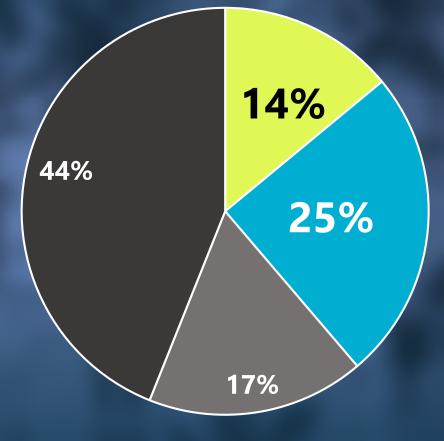




# Interest in entrepreneurship

Among Americans aged 50 to 70:

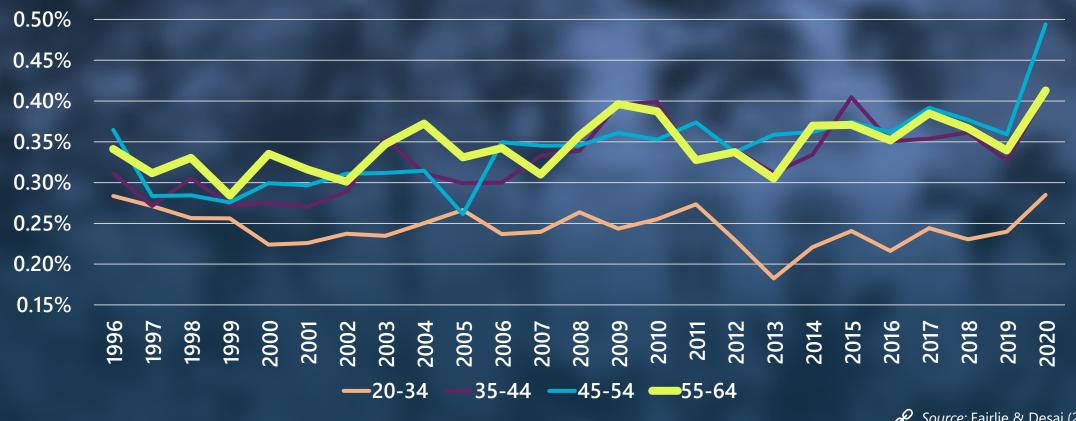
"How interested would you be in starting your own business or nonprofit venture in the next 5 to 10 years?"



- Very interested
- Not too interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not at all interested

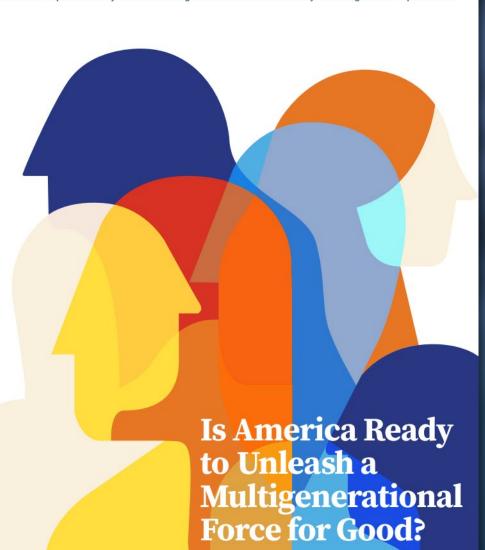
# Self-employment in later life

The percentage of *newly self-employed* aged 55 – 64 has slightly increased over the past 20+ years:



### **COGENERATION**

A National Opinion Survey from Encore.org with NORC at the University of Chicago's AmeriSpeak Panel



Survey of 1,549 respondents, aged 18 to 94, online and by phone, in March 2022 using the NORC AmeriSpeak® Panel



# People of all ages want to work across generations to help others and improve the world around them.

Working across generations can help America better solve its problems.



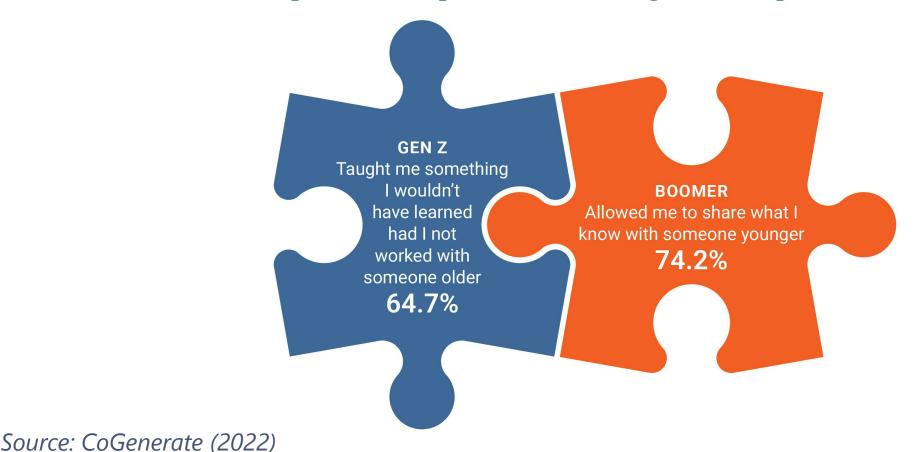
Working across generations can reduce divisions in our society.





# The fit is a powerful one: Young people want to learn from older ones; older people want to share what they know. And vice versa.

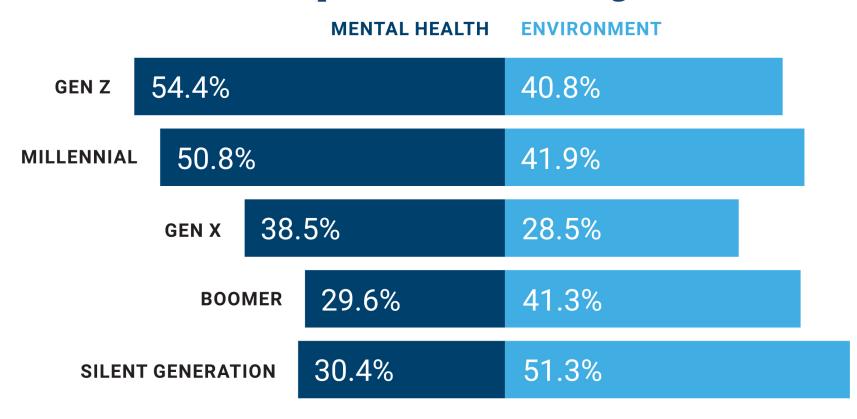
Top reasons respondents found cogeneration positive



23

# Older and younger people want to work together on some of the same issues.

#### Top issues to work on together





Despite strong interest in working across generations, fully half of respondents cited a range of obstacles preventing them from acting on it.

What's preventing you from cogenerating?

I don't know how to get started working with people of different generations.

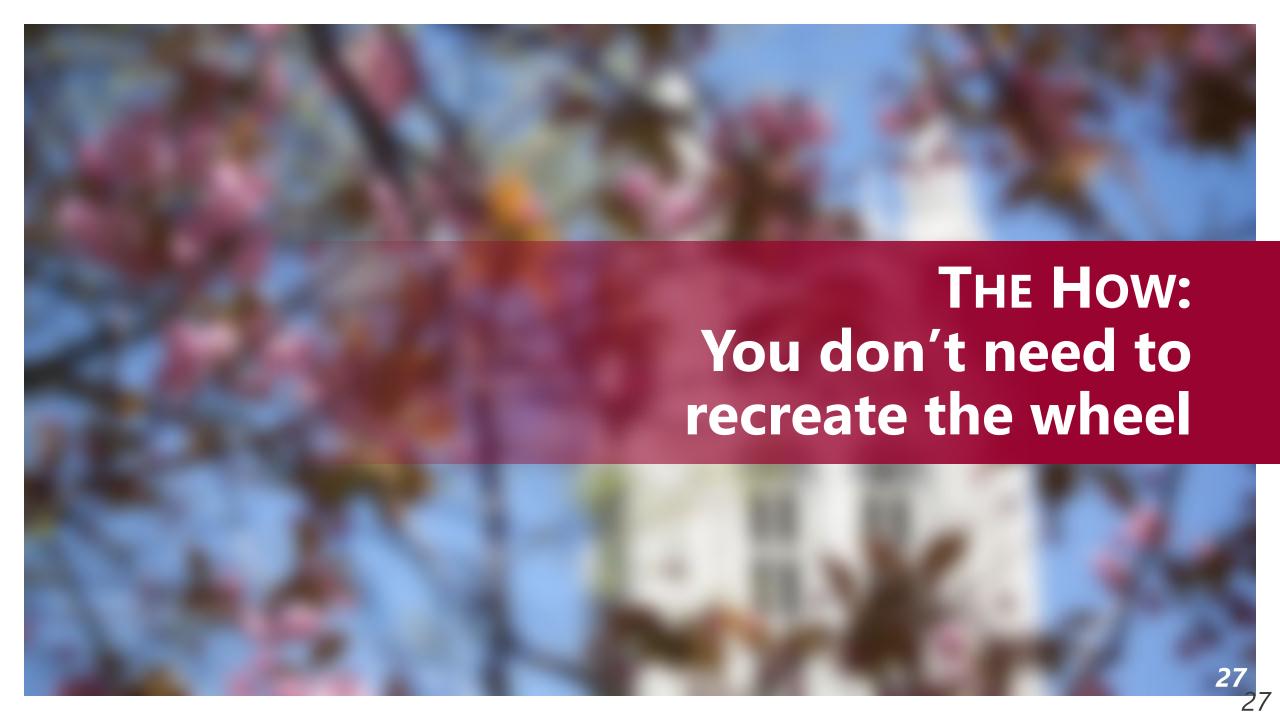
GEN Z MILLENNIAL GEN X BOOMER SG 18.5% 16.0% 14.0% 15.0% 5.0%



## Key takeaways:

- Many people **need to work** past traditional retirement age (i.e., 65).
- Many people want to work, too.
- Money is important, but so are purpose and social engagement.
- Multigenerational work on important social issues is attractive to both younger and older people through paid work and volunteering.

How can STEM education and careers meet this moment?



## At your universities and in your work with employers: Retain the workers you already have

Older workers want nearly the same things that younger ones do, including:

- Fair, attractive, and competitive compensation and benefits
- Opportunities for development, learning, and advancement
- Workplace flexibility, autonomy, and control
- Opportunities for meaningful work

## At your universities: Become an Age-Friendly University

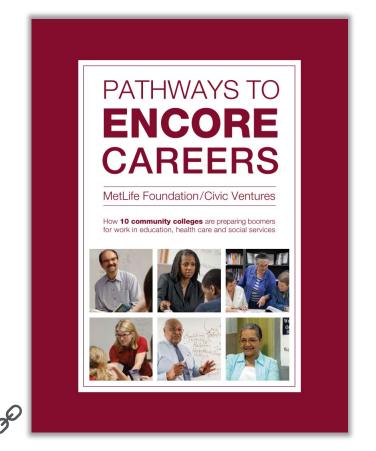
Work with university leadership to promote positive and active aging for students, staff, faculty, and community members through the AFU Global Network:

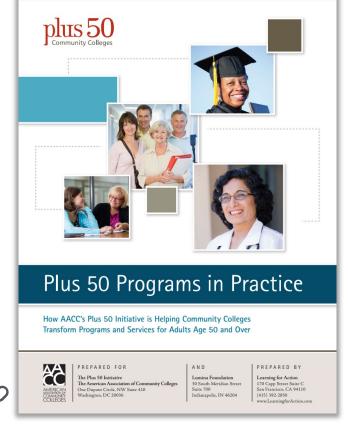
- Began at Dublin City University in 2012
- Global leadership transitioned to Arizona State University in 2023
- Includes 10 principles on topics of teaching, research, HR, and community engagement
- At least 58 member institutions in the U.S.



#### At your universities: Learn what other institutions have done

Follow the lead of community colleges, which have been leaders in engaging older students.







### At your universities: Make STEM education more accessible

#### How might you:

- Reduce expenses of returning students? Ideas:
  - Scholarships for returning students
  - Providing credits for relevant work experience
- Make a degree more approachable? Ideas:
  - Stackable credits: Building blocks that accumulate to higher credentials over time (e.g., certificates > certifications → practica → degrees)
  - Mid- and late-career programs to help people grow within their careers
  - Promote mini STEM schools, just like mini medical schools





#### An Encore in Social Work? How Our Schools Can Become More Age

Cal J. Halvorsen @ and Erin Emmanuel

At a time when the number of younger students entering our colleges and universities is stagnant, and the number of older people in our society continues to grow by the millions, schools of social work have an opportunity to broaden their student base by intentionally including people past midlife. This article argues that we must recruit and retain encore students, defined as those 35 and older, in our social work programs for schools, students, the profession, and society. It covers key demographic changes in the United States and their relation to social work programs, the imporsocial good, and the current and future shortage of social workers. It then reports on the results of an online search of 20 social work programs' home pages and websites devoted to diversity issues, finding little regarding ageinclusive images and language. The article concludes by offering concrete steps for social work programs to become more age inclusive, including incorporating the principles of andragogy-adult learning theory-into curricula, increasing the accessibility of degrees, and innovating in program designs. By creating more age-inclusive social work programs, we create

ARTICLE HISTORY

Schools of social work have an unprecedented opportunity to become leaders in age inclusivity among institutions of higher education by recruiting and retaining encore students, people who seek to pursue new social-impact careers as social workers at or past midlife - in addition to younger, more traditional-age students.

Scholars have defined age-inclusive practices from a human resources perspective as the presence of shared perceptions among members of organizations on the "fair and nondiscriminatory treatment of employees of all age groups with regard to all relevant organizational practices, policies, procedures, and rewards" (Boehm et al., 2013, p. 671). But what does this mean for schools of social work? To become more age inclusive, they must focus on programs, policies, and procedures that are helpful and welcoming to people in a broad range of ages and life stages in schools' recruitment, teaching, field education, and academic, professional, and financial supports. As a result, schools will recruit and retain a more age-diverse student body, enhancing the student experience for all while training a more diverse and capable group of tomorrow's social workers.

This article argues that schools of social work must become more age inclusive by recruiting and retaining more students over the age of 35, adding to other important areas of diversity that our schools have increasingly focused on, such as racial, ethnic, gender, and economic diversity. We explain the benefits to schools of social work first then the benefits to people at mid- and later life, and finally those to the social work profession and society overall. Using these arguments as a frame, we reveal the results from an examination of age-inclusive examples from the websites of 20 schools of social work. We conclude with specific action steps that schools of social work can take to increase age inclusion and diversity at their institutions.

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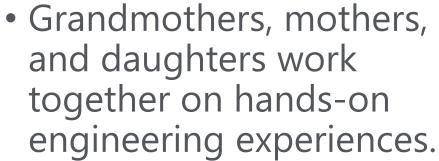
### At your universities: Support STEM entrepreneurship

#### Consider:

- Opening your Makerspaces to older community members
- Connecting STEM graduates throughout their careers to entrepreneurship coaching
- Linking younger STEM students to alumni entrepreneurs

# In your communities: Support older STEM social entrepreneurs





 Goal: Ignite girls' interests in STEAM fields. (The "a" is for the arts.)





Marriade Oxfeeth Childhoog Fghrailou Retirement Older Younger

Childhood Carles Marriage of Family

Younger

Family Time Leisure Volunteering 2<sup>nd</sup> Career Self-Employment Continuing Education Gig Jobs Retirement





Thank you!

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