

2nd Annual Forum on Boomers and Civic Engagement
2nd Set of Discussion Questions
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**Question: How has the economic downturn affected boomer engagement:
What are the problems with this?**

Responses:

- Some have had to go back to work.
- They are staying in their jobs longer—I think we have postponed the age wave by 2 years
- More people are looking for paying jobs, instead of volunteering
- Need money
- Less money
- Many boomers may have to delay or defer retirement for financial reasons
- Time pressures- some feel they need to make looking for a job their new full time occupation
- Emotional-too 'down' to commit
- Need to work longer
- Need supplement income to bridge gap between income and expenses
- Need stable health care
- Have to take advantage of opportunities, avoid problems, and be home for supper by 6
- Concern about layoffs (self or children may have added expense of raising grandchildren)...some boomers do not feel as though they have what many perceive as having the luxury to volunteer
- Rapid increase of volunteers who are looking for volunteer opportunities until they find employment..it could be a short turn around which might result in more time for staff to train in volunteers over a short period of time
- Work harder and longer during employment
- Working for pay..so limited time to volunteer
- Looking for meaningful work
- Short term volunteers rather than long term
- Volunteering closer to home to minimize driving expenses
- Many have to return to work
- Can't afford fuel to volunteer
- Having to move in with their children so now many children can't volunteer because they are taking care of their parents
- Less time for involvement (2 jobs)
- Money
- More volunteers needing to fulfill other needs such as babysitting grandchildren, care giving adults, etc
- Lost money in their investments
- Created fear of funding and enjoying a fulfilling retirement
- Running out of money
- Enabling independent living
- How to engage boomers at a higher level
- More people looking for work
- Fear, uncertainty
- Sometimes people are less available

- People who are expected to volunteer after retirement are staying in the workplace
- Lowers the spirit and energy
- Fear of loosing job
- Mileage/transportation
- Saving loss
- Depression and mental health issues
- Feeling of competition from volunteers
- Many volunteers would like some sort or reimbursement, gas, mileage, stipend, tax reduction, etc
- More applications coming in from people being laid off
- Less time available
- Less disposable time and income to donate
- Screening to make sure the potential volunteer meets your organizations needs and you meet the potential volunteers needs
- For our company, volunteers can't afford to take our clients out on activities
- Focuses need to create and deepen community engagement among all generations
- Boomers who are too young to retire are shifting to work that would offer some income but not working at same level
- Fear of current resources being cut
- Not able to hire more staff to support higher number of volunteers
- They are waiting to be invited, engaged, and wanted
- Boomers still want others to do the dirty work because they are so highly educated
- Pushing for more funding/employment opportunities from government
- No funding
- Costs of volunteering
- Looking for real specific (skill based) volunteer opportunities that nonprofits either don't have or do not have organized yet
- Position description vs. volunteer driver project description
- Fewer donations
- People are so focused on money and their own needs rather than needs of others
- Volunteer hours can affect your unemployment benefits
- Not enough time to prepare/coordinate more volunteer opportunities... will the increase in volunteers continue or is it short lived?
- More poverty
- Harder for non-profits to get funding/laying off staff
- Preoccupation of self security needs
- Capacity of organization...staff preparedness/awareness and staff comfort with paradigm shift
- Where are communities of color in this equation?
- How to get boomers engaged/interested in your organization in the first place
- Lower 401k...benefits
- More responsibility with less employees now
- Displaced people before they were ready

- MFIP forces people to volunteer and they develop a negative attitude towards volunteerism as they become boomers
- Looking for meaningful work.
- Short term volunteer opportunities instead of long term ones
- Volunteering close to home to minimize driving expenses.
- May have had to return to work. Many can't afford the fuel to volunteer, or can no longer afford a car. So many other senior volunteers can't volunteer because they are taking care of their parents and working.
- Boomers have to re-think their retirement date- delay
- Boomers lost money in their investments. May need to work longer than 1st planned.
- Question as to length of time can serve- continue to look for work.
- Create fear of funding and enjoying fulfilling retirement.
- Sometimes people are less available.
- Retired people go back to work because their 401k/ 4036's have been affected.
- People expected to contribute to the volunteer pool often retirement are staying in the work place.
- Underemployed or unemployed need is people not retiring fear of losing your job.
- Issues of security
- Fear that even if they have income, they may not. Sense of crisis energizes people.
- Feeling of competition from volunteers
- Have seen more application coming in from people who are laid off
- Focus needs to create a deeper community engagement among all generations
- They are waiting to be invited, to be engaged and wanted.
- They are pushing more funding, employment opportunities from the government. Boomers still want others to do the "dirty" work because they are so highly educated.
- Seeking employment rather than to volunteer.
- People working later in life
- Fewer donations, economic impact on volunteers.
- Not enough time to prepare/ coordinate more volunteer opportunities. Will the increase/ spike in volunteers continue or is it short lived?

**Question: How has the economic downturn affected boomer engagement:
What are the opportunities of this?**

Responses:

- Others are looking to volunteer or find meaningful things to do.
- Those who have been "right sized" out of a job are searching for resume enhancers like volunteering
- Corporate
- Many highly skilled individuals are volunteering
- They want structure and consistency-volunteering can provide
- Companionship-they've lost their 'work' environment and see non-profit as new home
- Change laws about taxing income after retirement
- Create DBA to change costs to reduce tax liabilities

- More need and resources
- Expectations of retirement
- Experience on resume
- Engage and promote the great work of other organizations, networking with other individuals/corporations
- New skills learned to benefit organization
- Much need in the community that could benefit from volunteerism
- Think outside of the box...listen and follow up
- People are looking to stay busy
- People care about one another in tough times and to help
- Awareness of needs..movement to give
- Open doors may have not been aware of
- Eye opener to needs
- Working collaboratively with other organizations
- Coming together for common good and support
- Shift skill development to 'can do' society
- Chance to go into new kind of work/activities
- Learning from each other
- Quote: AmeriCorps use less than 10% to organizations with plan for boomers
- Silver dollar awards
- No snow birds
- Creating flexibility and balance for ever changing mix of volunteers
- Potential for flowering of community engagement
- Vocational shifts
- Created sense of responsibility to give back to community
- Increase in interest, needs, and opportunities..recipe for growth..need more staff to support
- Union issues..train boomers to take leadership/trainer roles
- Engage volunteers in leadership roles
- Show case volunteering as work experience
- They could have huge political power if they applied themselves...AARP pushes for much and gets it!
- Networking
- Multi-generational volunteering
- Increase need: food shelves, congregate dining, etc
- Retirees form corporations
- Organizations can develop new/stronger programs with the available talent
- Creative thinking
- Green jobs emerging
- Provide the opportunity to retrain
- Boomers have life experiences and will soon realize that fishing all day won't serve them
- Surge of interest
- Own business
- Do it together as a family

- Social health programs available to those who volunteer in their city
- Learn new skills to add to resume
- Listen-follow up (even if they don't want to volunteer with you)
- People have time to volunteer and should volunteer to stay active and keep their skills up to date.
- If boomers are out of work or retired, they may be interested in volunteering their skills.
- Skilled workers who are not working want to keep up skills or gain new skills.
- Shift a skill development into a "can do" society
- Sometimes to many people are looking for opportunities
- If people loose their jobs- they may have more time to volunteer.
- Chance to get a new kind of work... continued use of talents.
- Use volunteering to show active involvement while laid off.
- They have a huge political power if they applied themselves.... AARP pushes for much and gets it!
- Many skills that can be utilized
- Surge in volunteerism- 30.5% in MN
- Program and cuts are resulting in less "interesting" needs for example, transportation cuts have resulted in a need for volunteer drivers
- Recognition of need, igniting desire to give back
- More people calling in asking about opportunities

Question: What needs to happen in our communities to enhance Boomer engagement? Name one action step that you will take this year?

Responses:

- Listen to needs and motivations of boomers
- Continue to talk with staff about expanding opportunities
- Engage our AmeriCorps group in creating a plan for more involvement
- Step up the rhetoric-create a community wide culture of reaching out
- Increase our capacity to engage volunteers "in their terms"
- Develop ways to reach out and use talents..seek volunteers who can manage other volunteers and projects..speak before my board and staff
- Using the feedback from volunteers to identify situations that would benefit from the experience or effort from other volunteers to expand the role of volunteers
- Work with Medical Reserve Corps volunteer agent
- We must utilize boomers volunteering at a higher level...initiate volunteer effort for the agency I serve
- A shift to project based volunteer opportunities rather than long term commitment
- Create more flexible volunteer opportunities
- Focus on boomer volunteers as quasi-customers..opportunities to volunteers could be viewed as a service
- Blogs and newsletters (e.g. SHIFT online) have regular feature extolling contributions of older citizens

- I will develop and distribute a ‘request for proposal’ to solve ones problem that we want to resolve with boomers..use this current volunteer base to see if employed boomers will respond
- Become more familiar with the successful aging and third chapter... follow up some group discussions to asses any change and develop new hypothesis
- Listing of groups/agencies to create collaborations
- Service education and commitment to all acknowledgment of the work being done by volunteers..I will continue to facilitate engaging and informative sessions for my volunteers as well as solidifying relationships
- “I only hear from corporate lobbyists” Sen. Ellen Anderson said...write a personal letter to your legislators..as few as 4 letters are identified as a trend
- Businesses need to be informed of benefits of utilizing boomers so they are more willing to give time and money needed
- More volunteer opportunities that utilizes the boomers skills
- In non-profits...not be named to job descriptions, rather be project outcome based
- Invite a boomer to a volunteer opportunity that would fit and interest them
- Investigate having staff developing volunteer programs
- Work on a picket project...invite a boomer to work with me on my volunteer mission and then encourage them to offer suggestions for great success and invite them to bring their friends
- Need to work together and with other organizations, trade, money, reimburse mileage
- Outreach to boomers through community ed and churches
- Education, collaboration, transportation, meet them where they are at, responsibility
- Set up reward system for volunteers
- Identify and coordinate needs and match with skills..MAVA/hands on...shared data base ...place to connect to if want to pass on a volunteer...make referrals
- Spotlight older volunteers
- Database...awareness
- Volunteer
- Give ownership to projects and allow a volunteer to become part of the resolution
- Pilot programs, allow volunteer to lead a project and utilize their skills and background
- Continue to connect with corporations to recruit volunteers
- Agencies need to understand how to engage skills, do pilot projects with other agencies and their successes
- Tell people about volunteering
- Turn problems over to a boomer corps, innovative thinking, resources to help boomers discover the answers, project us job, rigid
- I think there should be more media –some 55+ don’t use a computer
- Come up with some project descriptions
- Businessmen and corporate could take a greater role in preparing elder employers for participating on retirement in their communities
- Educate, helping boomers discover who they want to be in their next career
- Project basis
- Funding for the infrastructure

- Solicit and training volunteers for program presentation and participants
- Develop open mindedness/flexibility
- Work to assure that MAAA knows and uses best practices...help our state unit on aging
- Help them help us...educate people in turn for volunteer hours, provide resources/opportunities
- Get information out..we will approach the local cable company about being interested again for broadcast
- Communication..connect with corporations/universities, newspapers, neighborhood news, flyers, schools, PSA's, cable TV show
- Track information...assessment
- Better prepare at volunteer site
- Add boomer volunteerism in place presentations
- Volunteers to return to job opportunities
- Contact Century college and NO St Paul HS to ask for volunteers
- Show results
- Engage volunteers with enthusiastic projects
- Retention of volunteers by showing the results and difference
- Tax incentives
- Economic boarder taken away (ex: volunteer, drivers)...help boomers reconnect with their passion/interest/values
- See boomer volunteers as an investment
- One-on-one encouragement
- I want to contact local corporations to see if I can find one or more willing to provide both human and financial support for my volunteer program
- Culture shifts within agency
- More corporate engagement
- They need to know how much they can offer and are needed because of today's economy
- Allowing volunteers to come in at many levels of an organization
- Meet with staff to discuss a new philosophy regarding volunteers being involved at a higher level
- Media!
- Act on money management program
- We plan to hold a couple forums to seek input
- Pursue encore fellowship...advocacy skills development impact voting..corporate...decisions
- Explore a pilot project to provide policy level volunteer opportunities for late career boomers
- Education, communication, marketing
- Work with team level and leadership on growing awareness and development of skilled volunteer opportunities
- Networking, training
- Olders need to become elders-elders help youngers find their place in the community
- Town hall meetings regarding needs, barriers, support
- I'll volunteer to lead a discussion on the Freedom Book- "Encore" with Shift

- Go to more of an outcome based program...show results and how volunteers are making a real impact
- Create a volunteer advisory group at my facility
- More programs like the AACCC at Century and elsewhere across the country
- Job descriptions—few, but some would desire to design their own program
- Statistical data to substantiate/validate program
- Encourage my clients to volunteer
- Allow for self-scheduling of volunteer positions
- We need to operationalize the use of volunteers into our agency. An agency wide culture of volunteerism is needed. Two will be meeting with operational managers to discuss the idea
- Communication about the impact of volunteers in the state of MN
- A paradigm shift from its all about us (boomers) and move toward its all about us (all of us)
- We are going to rewrite our program
- Start a time bank
- More active recruitment done
- Let volunteers be a creative voice in organization...allow for innovation..think beyond best practices
- I will attempt to engage my peers in volunteerism by word of mouth and referrals to organizations
- Call it an internship rather than volunteeringunderstand more of what's out there
- Present some of this info at our What's Next seminars
- I believe that all the negative needs to come out as positive
- Need a breakthrough idea in terms of nonprofit capacity and interest of boomers personal actions
- Create best practice process
- Working with VAN in developing opportunities for boomers to engaged with the network
- Match one or two boomers in community corrections
- Develop mentor program at school ...go to the next "Take Action MN"
- Tax breaks for volunteers who donate significant time...increase the dialogue to boomers and focus on project outcomes
- I'm working on Century College's Prime Time 50+ program
- Join the Invincible Force Collaborative
- Contact university retirees
- Human capital needs to be used to maintain a healthy society. I will pledge to utilize volunteers in the Golden Valley community, as a member of the Envision Board, while shaping the Golden Valley Foundations
- Research
- Get a hearing aid and expand my current involvement
- Address administration at Normandale CC to begin a volunteer program
- Inclusion, acceptance, open minds
- Ask our senior center to invite older people to volunteer at different places

- Be willing to put time in, trial period for volunteering, develop a way to move staff along to support new volunteer roles
- Continue to advocate the need
- Engage cross-culturally, advance outreach efforts
- Part time volunteers..vision, survival, building legacy
- Help our AmeriCorps members and host sites to get training and support in engaging boomers in services to youth
- Set up focus groups and talent pools/sharing of skills
- Make sure my recruitment pieces reflect or enhance opportunities boomers might be interested in
- Create an environment so they can work with clients individually
- Commitment to my CEC group project
- Talk about it today
- Our leaders need to make changes in their vision of communities and include the aging population
- Change my program to make it more welcoming to 50+
- PR
- Enhancing the role of responsibility and the ability to respond
- Organizations and communities need to update their technology use and communication
- Expand the concept of seniors to include younger persons at our local senior centers
- Still need peelers and envelope stuffers, message from president that need to do more than golf, use of technology, change terminology
- Invite a boomer to work with me on my volunteer mission and then encourage them to offer suggestions.
- Need to work together with organizations.
- Outreach boomers to the community.
- Pilot programs and allow volunteer to lead a volunteer project and utilize “their skills and backgrounds.
- Do pilot programs with a couple of agencies and share their success with other agencies.
- Make sure I tell people about volunteering
- Project vs. job.
- There should be more media- some 55+ don’t use a computer. Try to come up with some project descriptions.
- Help state unit on aging integrate best practices thinking into their policy formations.
- Educate people in turn for volunteer hours.
- Get out information- news papers, universities, flyers, cable show, schools, ect.
- Trade organization assessment
- See boomer volunteers as an investment.
- One on one encouragement
- Act on money management program
- Allow self scheduling volunteer positions
- Create new marketing for Big Brothers Big Sisters that defies age stereo- types of mentors
- We are going to re-write our program
- How to involve boomers in more high capacity positions

- Ask senior center to invite order people to volunteer at different places

Question: What was the most positive idea or practice for engaging Boomers that you learned today?

Responses:

- Trying small pilot projects
- Celebrate success
- Matching the talent of the volunteer better with opportunities
- I want to attend the Boomer Ready Boot Camp
- Be ready when they come to do work...ask on application (skills, talents, interests)
- Engaging volunteers in activities of a higher level and allowing for innovation on their parts
- Training agency execs regarding boomer expectations
- Build collaborations to recruit volunteers
- Get corporations on board in recruiting volunteers
- Better measure volunteer impact
- I was especially interested in the silver scholar opportunity
- More volunteers from position descriptions to project management
- Service America
- Organizations are aware of the need to match a person's motivation and skill sets to the work
- National service opportunities for those in poverty, similar to CCC of 1930's
- Studies and scientific data
- Project us task descriptions
- There are fears in each generation from boomers and down
- Volunteering isn't free
- Personal relationships must be developed to engage volunteers and tap into enlightened self interest
- Think about 'pay for service'
- Communicating through emails and hand written cards
- Interview volunteers for the job
- Understanding all of the resources available and local community needs
- Find their passion
- Think out of the box
- Know your volunteers
- MAVA
- Getting advice from other boomers
- Legacy planning, purposeful
- Utilizing another agency to serve as a bridge for bringing in those specific/skilled volunteers
- Serve American Act Legislation and program planning
- Great awareness and exposure to this quiet evolution of the boomer retirement
- Provide money for infrastructure

- Focus on projects vs. positions description
- Keep in mind you will eventually hire again
- Learning about an assessment tool that can be used to guide people toward volunteer opportunities
- Kennedy serve America Act information
- Motivation of the volunteer
- Knowing that volunteers need to feel valued, using skilled volunteering
- Find out what would be the perfect job as perceived by the volunteer
- Find ways to combine boomers passion on self interest with desire to make a contribution
- The Service Act in more detail and how it translates to our agency
- That there are initiatives being formed to assist agencies for preparing for this shift
- Use of their wisdom and experience
- Measure and communicate success
- The boomer approach to a job description/recruitment according to MAVVA
- Targeted training for volunteer managers and agencies to prepare for work with boomers
- Have a veteran volunteer bring a newbie
- Kennedy Act—transfer of funds to children and grand children at volunteers completion of service
- Silver scholar
- Hand off some department responsibilities to volunteers
- Just being aware of the organizations and resources out there to connect me with volunteers
- There is reason to hope
- More attentions
- Taproot foundations
- Liked learning about the fellowship
- Pilot programs up on IF website
- Incentives to engage boomers in grant proposals
- Start small and share success
- Develop volunteers while working so they'll volunteer after retirement
- Tax credit or deduction for volunteer hours
- Use school buses for transportation
- Encouragement
- Many
- That it's a national movement
- Need to prepare for abundance of volunteers
- Encouraging volunteerism while still working so a retiree will be used to the idea
- Corporate volunteerism
- Workshops are pivotal
- Move from nice to necessary
- Get people involved with volunteering before they reach age 50
- National coalition on how to engage older adults..we need critical mass in this discussion
- Education of the businesses and their employees or acceptance of skilled volunteers
- Think about “pay services”

- Educate staff/ founders
- Educate boomers about needs of organizations
- Establish a pilot program on a small scale and then grow it.
- Get advise from boomers
- Legacy planning
- Utilizing other agencies to serve as a bridge for bringing in those specific/ skilled volunteers.
- Focus on projects vs. position description
- If you lay people off of have a volunteer who was laid off elsewhere, keep in mind when you eventually hire again.
- Learning a lot about assessment tool that can be used to guide people toward volunteer opportunities.
- Motivation of the volunteer.
- Moving from job description to project description.
- The service act in more detail and how it translates to our agency
- There is a reason to hope.
- Project based volunteerism.
- Working with them to find right opportunity
- I believe that all the negative needs to come out as positive i.e. we are in a tough economy but this is allowing people that have not had the time to volunteer to try new things and bringing new energy and ideas for those agencies that need volunteers as well as giving the volunteer and opportunity to add to their resume.
- Working with VAN developing opportunity for boomers to be engaged with the network
- Committed coalition of people and institutions working together toward a common purpose
- Contact corporations to see if they need volunteer opportunities- inform them about handiworks
- Need to prepare for onslaught of volunteers (we've been functioning out of scarcity mindset up to now)
- Encouraging volunteerism while still working so a retiree will be "use to" the idea.