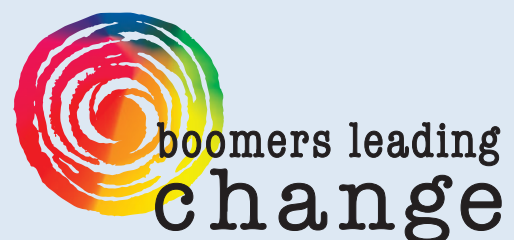


BOOMER INNOVATION GRANTS

At the first Boomers Leading Change Forum in June 2007, Rose Community Foundation announced the Boomer Innovation Grants program. The purpose was to provide seed money for creative approaches of engaging the metro Denver baby boom generation in four "next steps" identified in a comprehensive community assessment:

- Boomer Connecting Points and Networks—physical and virtual places where boomers can get information and resources to help them stay engaged
- Restructuring Institutions and Employment—ways to make employment and volunteer service more appealing, flexible and meaningful to boomers
- A Health Initiative—engaging boomers as health care workers, volunteers, exchanging service for health coverage, or as health policy advocates
- Work Force Development—assistance for boomers in seeking new career paths, becoming entrepreneurs, or retraining to remain productive and earn income

In October 2007, Rose Community Foundation awarded 12 Boomer Innovation Grants of \$5,000 each from a field of 39 applicants. Recipients included nonprofit organizations, government agencies, consultants and entrepreneurs. The following are summaries of their work.



CONNECTING POINTS AND NETWORKS

Colorado Experience Bank

Organization

State of Colorado Department of Human Services
coloradoexperiencebank.com

Contact

Jeanette Hensley, jeanette.hensley@state.co.us

Project Name

Colorado Experience Bank—Connect. Contribute. Create.



Jeanette Hensley, Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services

Project Overview

Colorado Experience Bank is the catalyst and entry point of a web-based, virtual community and navigational tool to connect boomers/older adults to employment, and to volunteer and educational opportunities. It is recognized that not only do boomers have much to offer their communities, but to each other as well, as they chart a new course in their second half of life. The target audience is any Colorado citizen between the age of 50 and 65 years old, who is entering a period of transition and is seeking resources for fulfilling life experiences including volunteering, employment and/or lifelong learning opportunities. Metrics for success during the first 12 months will include 100,000 visits to the website, the number of referrals through VolunteerMatch.org for volunteer opportunities, the number of referrals to Connecting Colorado for work opportunities, and the number of referrals to eColorado for lifelong learning opportunities. Other metrics discussed for future consideration include the number of profiles created, number of nonprofits that join, number of additional employers and number of colleges that participate.



Current Status

A statistical sample of boomers who have recently retired or are close to retiring and entering the transition stage between work and retirement has been completed. A survey of stakeholders was completed as well. The group met with the consulting and marketing firm of X2M for a half-day brainstorming meeting to determine the name of the website, the target audience, the metrics for success and the content that needs to be on the website. Contracts and agreements have been obtained with the three websites on the back end that Colorado Experience Bank will connect with to access volunteering, lifelong learning and the Colorado job repository.

Successes and Challenges

Challenges included working with limited funding to design and build a website, determining the name and developing a marketing plan. However, successes have included obtaining some funding and/or in-kind support from other entities as well as working with private/public partnerships to successfully reduce the cost of the project.

Next Steps

The website coloradoexperiencebank.com went live on May 19 at the *EngAge in an Encore Career* breakfast hosted by Governor Bill Ritter. Once the site has been up for a year, it may be time to consider adding other areas of interest to boomers, such as health care or how to plan for retirement.

CONNECTING POINTS AND NETWORKS

The Center for Life Renewal

Organization

University of Denver
universitycollege.du.edu

Contact

Jim Davis, jdavis@du.edu

Project Name

University College—The Center for Life Renewal

Project Overview

University College is the University of Denver's (DU) school for professional and continuing studies.

The mission of University College (UCOL) is to provide affordable courses that explore engaging and timely subjects in formats convenient for working adults. DU has been offering educational programming to the 50+ community for over a decade and has established a reputation for excellent services and lifelong learning opportunities in its Enrichment Program and Osher

Lifelong Learning Institute. Repeated requests for increased 50+ programming coupled with Denver's burgeoning baby boomer population have lead UCOL to begin creating *The Center for Life Renewal* ("The Center"), a multidimensional hub that will offer transition counseling, lifelong learning, job training, networking, and connections to key community partners.



Jim Davis, Dean of University College, University of Denver



Current Status

Grant support was used to develop two important aspects of the proposed Center: career retooling courses and civic engagement. The career retooling program will consist of non-credit courses that give baby boomers the critical, cutting edge skills needed by the most relevant economic sectors: nonprofit, government, for-profit, and the emerging for-benefit section. Detailed outlines, procedures and outcome assessments were developed by outstanding faculty for these introductory courses: Financial Management, Basic Information Technology, Maintaining Your New Business, Knowledge Management, eCommerce, Project Management, Strategic Planning for Fundraising, The New Entrepreneurship, and Today's Workplace Law and HR Policy. Eric Fretz, DU's Director of Community Engagement and Service Learning, developed a detailed plan outlining ways in which UCOL will partner with DU's Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement to tailor existing DU civic engagement programs to the interests and priorities of older adults. Well developed and successful partnerships between the University of Denver and nonprofit organizations already exist on the local, national and international levels.

Successes and Challenges

As a result of this innovation grant, UCOL has been able to identify many potential partners for "The Center" including Karen Newman's Boomer Innovation Grant project dedicated to re-employment of retired persons. The greatest challenge will be to market, fund and sustain The Center.

Next Steps

The next step is to solicit reaction to these plans from focus groups comprised of Enrichment Program and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute participants.

CONNECTING POINTS AND NETWORKS

Veterans Helping Veterans Now

Organization

Veterans Helping Veterans Now
vhvnow.org

Contact

Ray Meyers, info@vhvnow.org

Project Name

Veterans Helping Veterans Now (VHVnow)

Project Overview

The mission of Veterans Helping Veterans Now (VHVnow) is to connect veterans who need assistance to veteran volunteers. The purpose of this grant was to provide start-up funds for this project. The goal is to empower Vietnam-era veterans to contribute to their communities with their unique skills and experience. The specific objective is to provide training and support for Vietnam veterans so that they can assist other veterans.

Current Status

VHVnow has the fiscal sponsorship of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center, as well as a small governing board and a large advisory board comprised of Vietnam veterans, other veterans, veteran service providers and community members. Seven Vietnam veterans have received training. A licensed therapist facilitates twice monthly support groups for them. Additional programs have already emerged. A support group for women with military relationships meets twice monthly. VHVnow Vietnam volunteers have begun interactions with younger veterans. Several volunteers are supporting veterans in other ways—two veterans have helped homeless veterans register for benefits. Several older veterans have received rides to medical appointments. Vietnam veterans have already participated in speaking engagements for venues as diverse as a middle school, an interfaith forum, the American Legion, a military officers association, and a local church. VHVnow just got permission for two volunteer Vietnam veterans to visit veteran inmates at the Boulder County Jail.



Successes and Challenges

VHVnow has received additional funding support including personal donations. VHVnow has been asked to participate in meetings with other nonprofits sponsored by the Boulder County Commissioners. With little outreach, calls and emails are increasing. Another success is the pleasant surprise that VHVnow is helping the older veterans as much as the younger veterans.

One challenge is to meet needs without any staff. The other challenge is the need for a small storefront - a gathering place for veterans with a few tiny offices in the back. There are places for veterans to gather in Boulder County already, but they all serve alcohol.

Next Steps

VHVnow is hosting a fundraiser luncheon in June 2008 and a community picnic to honor veterans in July. VHVnow plans to increase outreach and publicity to raise community awareness, attract more veteran volunteers and veterans who need assistance. New programs will be initiated as needs emerge and as VHVnow develops the capacity to meet those needs.



Ray Meyers, VHVnow founder



Judy Nogg, VHVnow advisor

RESTRUCTURING INSTITUTIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

Baby Boomer Affinity Group

Organization

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado

biglittlcolorado.org

Contact

Sally Stoker, sallys@biglittlcolorado.org

Project Name

Baby Boomer Affinity Group

Project Overview

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado (BBBSC) seeks to help children reach their full potential through professionally supported one-to-one volunteer mentoring relationships with measurable impact. The purpose of the project was to develop an "affinity group" to better support boomers and to enhance their satisfaction with the mentoring experience; increase the length of matches through enhanced utilization of older, more "stable" adults; make adjustments to program supervision to overcome stereotypes of staff, mentors, children and families; and to increase recruitment outreach to boomers as volunteers and staff. BBBSC specifically tried to address the following:

under-representation of older mentors (75% of 930 active volunteer mentors in August 2007 were under the age of 39); difficulty recruiting sufficient numbers of male volunteers and people of color to meet the needs of the kids; stereotypes among staff, families and volunteers about effectiveness of boomers as staff members/volunteers; and potential supervision issues between boomer volunteers and much younger supervisors regarding anecdotal evidence of resistance by current boomer volunteers in accepting direction, guidance and supervision by very young staff.



Sally Stoker, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado



Current Status

Focus groups helped shape current efforts. The Boomer Initiative is now part of an agency-wide Inclusiveness Initiative plan with specific subcommittee members. Plus, selected boomer mentors are being utilized as presenters, with panel members in training. BBBSC is also exploring possibilities of creating flexible, part-time employment opportunities for boomers.

Successes and Challenges

BBBSC has successfully increased marketing efforts to recruit volunteers for Sports Buddies which has yielded more boomer men. Valuable information gathered through focus groups is being used to inform strategic planning. Focus groups also clarified assumptions about boomer preferences and interests in certain activities. An opportunity for developing part-time employment has not arisen due to staff retention in the last eight months. This may change with future staff changes.

Next Steps

Next steps include additional work on developing part-time staff positions, development of a menu of volunteer opportunities for boomers, and determining boomer goals and objectives that will be included in the agency's Inclusiveness strategic plan.



Ann Kusic, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado

RESTRUCTURING INSTITUTIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today, Thrive Tomorrow

Organization

JFFixler & Associates,
jffixler.com

Contact

Jill Freidman Fixler, jff@fixler.com

Project Name

*Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today,
Thrive Tomorrow*



Jill Friedman Fixler, JFFixler & Associates

Project Overview

Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today; Thrive Tomorrow by Jill Friedman Fixler and Sandie Eichberg with Gail Lorenz, CVA, is a guide for nonprofit leaders on engaging baby boomers as volunteers to build organizational capacity. Readers will learn to recognize boomer volunteers as an abundant resource for high level skills, talent, passion, and renewed energy for the sector. The book provides a step-by-step tool to reframe a nonprofit's relationships with its boomer volunteers while shifting from a culture of volunteer management to one of volunteer engagement. The project goals were to: distill research on boomers and relate the findings to engaging boomers in the nonprofit sector; provide information and tools for creating a plan for boomer volunteer engagement, and to help nonprofit organizations gain a competitive edge in developing strategies to reach boomers.

Current Status

The book went on sale May 15, 2008 through several distribution channels.



Successes and Challenges

With VolunteerMatch (the world's largest volunteer matching search engine) as a partner, the book will be marketed widely through VolunteerMatch and other large national volunteer and service organizations. This strong built-in marketing network addressed concerns previously held about self-publishing with Author House, a print-on-demand publisher. The authors worked with Beth Steinhorn, a skilled local editor, and Lisa McGuire, a talented local book designer. The Foreword was written by Marc Freedman, author of *Prime Time: How Baby Boomers Will Revolutionize Retirement and Transform America*, and *Encore: Finding Work That Matters in the Second Half of Life*. Marc is the CEO of Civic Ventures and co-founder of the Purpose Prize and Experience Corps. Endorsements have been secured by David Eisner, CEO, Corporation for National and Community Service; Michelle Nunn, CEO, Points of Light & Hands on Network; Tom Endress, VP, Civic Engagement at the National Council on Aging; Katie Campbell, Executive Director, Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration; and Laverne Campbell, National Director Volunteer Services, Volunteers of America.

Next Steps

VolunteerMatch will distribute the book through its network of 57,000 nonprofits. The book will debut in June 2008 at the National Conference on Volunteering and Service in Atlanta. Marketing plans include a pre-release and "Buy It Now" announcements to 57,000 nonprofit organizations, announcements to all volunteer centers and Hands On Network projects, release through several distributors (as yet to be determined), advertisements in publications such as *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, and sales and presentations at large nonprofit conferences.



RESTRUCTURING INSTITUTIONS AND EMPLOYMENT

Home Chore Help

Organization

SouthWest Improvement Council (SWIC)
swic-denver.org

Contact

Jan Marie Belle, janswic@hotmail.com

Project Name

Home Chore Help

Project Overview

Funding of \$5,000 from Rose Foundation and \$60,000 from The Colorado Trust supported SouthWest Improvement Council (SWIC) staff in organizing volunteer chore help teams, assisting homebound elders living with financial limitations, tracking project outcomes, and setting up a data base recording client and volunteer demographics.



Jan Marie Belle, SouthWest Improvement Council

Current Status

Boomer volunteers working as a "Tool Time Committee" are providing home chore help for elders. SWIC is recruiting projects in Westwood, the neighborhood of greatest need, by taking information packets door-to-door with a bilingual elder volunteer. Nine elder households were helped, each housing two to three occupants. The chores completed to date have included building a shed, yard work, cleaning gutters, trimming shrubbery, raking leaves, snow removal, ceiling fan installation, shower stall repair, performing a Home Safety Assessment, and addressing plumbing concerns.

Successes and Challenges

SWIC has successfully recruited enthusiastic, skilled volunteers. However, volunteers and staff are challenged by the necessity to set boundaries; that is to say, struggling with expectations regarding the meaning of and the capacity for "chore help." Some clients have expectations that "housecleaning" chore help means a regular housekeeper/housecleaner on a weekly or monthly basis. SWIC is therefore revising its promotional literature to clarify that housecleaning help is for a temporary period of time while someone recovers from hospitalization or during convalescent care. Another challenge: elders of this generation are reluctant to part with anything. They feel a need for "things" on hand



to "make do" in the event of a shortage. For some elders, anything might, at some point, be useful. Some elders need help tossing away old newspapers and magazines, getting rid of clutter, giving away mementos to family and friends, and clearing out broken, inoperable and unneeded furniture. However, staff and volunteers are not here to judge. Help clearing cluttered living environments is gently offered and provided when invited. Just having that conversation is a challenge requiring sensitivity and exquisite diplomacy. Trust must develop before having that conversation. The present economic climate is reinforcing the notion that elders need to save things that younger people see as useless obstacles. Some elders are saying that the present signs of economic distress are similar to the red flags they saw or heard about during the Great Depression. They are "saving up" for future hard times and encouraging younger folk to do the same. In respect of our elders' wisdom, they may be on to something.

Next Steps

SWIC projects an increase in the number of households served over time. A data base for client tracking has been developed that will track volunteer project outcomes and participant demographics. SWIC is paying attention to what is happening in the political economy and to changes in the value of property and currency. These factors greatly affect elder households living with poverty. Things ARE changing. Whatever happens, SWIC will be ready to help.

HEALTH INITIATIVES

KidzBlitz

BOOMER INNOVATION GRANTS

Organization

Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved (CCMU)

ccmu.org

Contact

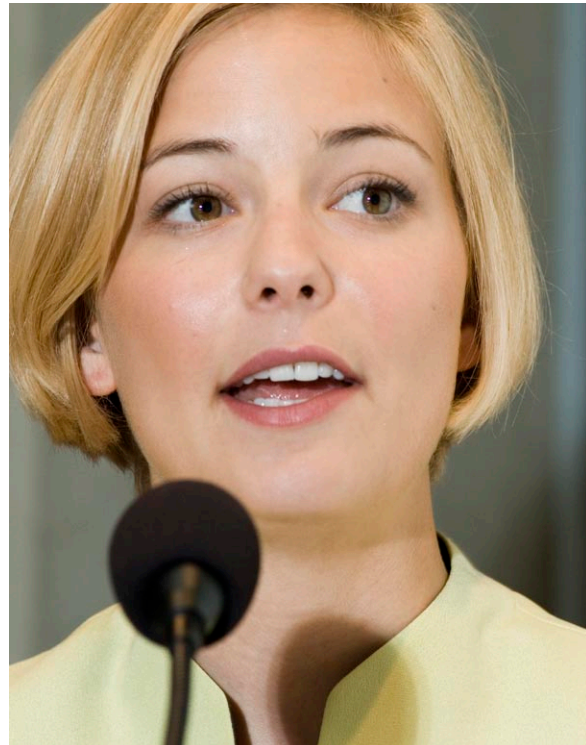
Katherine Blair, katherine.blair@ccmu.org

Project Name

KidzBlitz

Project Overview

Nearly 160,000 children in Colorado are uninsured; however approximately 100,000 of those children qualify for existing public health care programs such as Medicaid and the Child Health Plan *Plus* (CHP+). KidzBlitz, a program of the Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved, was founded in 2007 as a volunteer-based effort to help families learn about Medicaid and CHP+. KidzBlitz began actively recruiting volunteers in mid-2007, primarily through faith-based organizations in the Denver metro area. Volunteers are trained by KidzBlitz staff to engage low-income families and help them work through the complicated process of applying for and retaining coverage through Medicaid and CHP+. The specific goal of the innovation grant was support to train boomer volunteers and provide follow up assistance for them and their sponsoring organizations or churches.



Katherine Blair, Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved

Current Status

Since its inception, KidzBlitz has developed strong partnerships with stakeholders in public health care programs for kids, including state- and county-based government offices, nonprofits, insurance companies, medical providers, and faith-based communities. Through our partnerships, we have trained nearly 100 volunteers that work directly with families to find avenues to coverage for their children. Volunteers in the boomer age range are terrific assets for two reasons.



First, they tend to have flexible schedules that allow them to be an active part of KidzBlitz's activities on a regular basis, including meeting with families during the day. Second, boomer volunteers have been able to integrate their life experiences into their volunteer work, and at the same time have the technology experience to stay up-to-date with ever-changing policies and procedures.

Successes and Challenges

Since the beginning of 2008, there have been significant changes in the application process that have affected KidzBlitz's ability to effectively serve families. While some of these changes will be positive in the long term, they have caused a bottleneck effect for organizations on which families rely on to process applications, often resulting in multi-week wait times for families trying to apply for Medicaid and CHP+. This puts KidzBlitz in a tenuous position of encouraging families to apply for coverage, but also trying to calm their frustrations with a sluggish and often unresponsive system. KidzBlitz has also identified a number of populations that are highly vulnerable but face complex circumstances discouraging them from applying for public programs such as immigrant parents who are often afraid to apply for public assistance even if their children may qualify. In addition, KidzBlitz has had challenges recruiting enough Spanish-speaking volunteers to meet the program's needs, as 72% of the eligible-but-not-insured population in Colorado is Hispanic, and many families do not speak English.

Next Steps

KidzBlitz has begun to incorporate strategies, such as refining its training syllabus to better adapt to system change. Building new partnerships with nonprofits and establishing relationships with the low-income community is an ongoing process as well as providing feedback for stakeholders in the system on family experiences.

HEALTH INITIATIVES

Boomers Volunteer Certified Nursing Assistant Program

Organization

Denver Health Volunteers Association of
Denver Health Foundation
denverhealth.org

Contact

Dafna Michaelson, dafna.michaelson@dhha.org

Project Name

Boomers Volunteer Certified Nursing Assistant Program

Project Overview

There is a critical and growing shortage of all levels of nurses in the U.S. in general and in Colorado in particular. This program is designed to train 50 baby boomers to become Certified Nurses Assistants (CNA) to help ease that crisis. The baby boomers will sign a one-year volunteer agreement and in exchange will be trained, certified/licensed at Denver Health as CNAs. The 50 program participants will be split in to teams of five. Each team of five will be responsible for volunteering a total of 40 hours per week for one year (1 team= 1 FTE). The teams will develop their own schedules and independently determine who works when to fill the 40-hour shift.

Current Status

Currently there are five volunteers who are interested in participating. At least 20 more volunteers are needed to bring the CNA training to the hospital.



Dafna Michaelson, Denver Health Foundation
Volunteer Services



Successes and Challenges

The major challenge has been recruiting participants. There has been a "full court press" to recruit candidates for the program. Denver Health Volunteers Association of Denver Health Foundation has identified and contacted numerous metro area churches, other volunteer organizations (RSVP, DIA Volunteers, etc.) and programs for seniors (AARP) to describe, promote, and recruit for the program. There has been a tremendous response and indication of interest in the program. However, together with these expressions of interest, potential prospects indicated that they are still working either full-time in their careers or have retired and taken on part-time jobs to meet their financial needs and obligations. The one-year time frame was also a barrier to entry. Some individuals mentioned that they would be more interested in one-time programs that they could participate in when they had availability and that offered them more flexibility. Putting the practical components into place for the program has been completed. The hospital is eager for the involvement of boomers in the volunteer corps.

Next Steps

Denver Health Volunteers Association of Denver Health Foundation has determined that the pool of available boomers is smaller than originally anticipated, yet believes there are sufficient numbers of volunteer prospects if they are approached in a more exciting way. In order to enhance recruitment, therefore, the plan is to incorporate the entire corps of volunteers into the Emergency Department calling them "Denver Health Angels in the ED" (modeled after an existing program, not yet in Denver, called Angels in the ER). The same model of scheduling as in the original program concept will be utilized along with the Emergency Department Specific education into the CNA training. The hope is that by assigning all the volunteers to the "Angels in the ED" the project will be more appealing and more boomers can be recruited.

HEALTH INITIATIVES

Health Passport Reconnect

Organization

St. Anthony Hospitals Health Passport
myhealthpassport.org

Contact

Jane Barnes, janebarnes@centura.org

Project Name

Health Passport Reconnect

Project Overview

The intended outcome of Health Passport Reconnect is to foster modernization, creativity, service delivery capacity-building and excellence through an innovative approach to unpaid civic service. The strategic objective is to position health systems in Denver for a higher dimension of performance through unprecedented, high quality, cost-effective, volunteer-driven, health-related services. Efforts have included determining just how Connectors (volunteers) can best work within health systems to expand capacity, respond to unmet need, and fill meaningful roles. Connectors will be utilized in an advocate-like role, assisting patients and their families adjust to changing needs and family dynamics both during the hospital stay and when they return home. In addition, Connectors will assist patients and families with nonmedical issues that might arise during their hospital stay.



Jane Barnes, St. Anthony's Hospitals Health Passport



Current Status

To date, the curriculum for Connector training is nearly complete and includes the following:

- Diversity and respect
- Interpersonal communications
- Professionalism
- The aging process
- The health care system and how it works
- Family dynamics
- Leadership development
- Spirituality
- Caring for yourself as a volunteer
- Basic medical terminology and anatomy/physiology

Successes and Challenges

Early in the process, Health Passport decided not to continue with the Legacy Leadership model, but to design a curriculum that would be more cost-effective, flexible, and tailored to patient needs and preferences. This required time to develop some expertise in curriculum design and to determine what exactly should be included in the Connector training. Another challenge in the early days was keeping the volunteer planning team energized and excited as the program slowly emerged. The team has reinvented the program to better reflect the needs of the local community and to respond to questions and concerns and suggestions from health care communities.

Next Steps

Next steps include designing a recruitment plan and application form for Connectors; completing the comprehensive Connector training and leadership development program; recruiting trainers for each curriculum topic; developing follow-up pieces; piloting and evaluating the program; and securing funding to sustain the program.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT/CAREER TRANSITION EDUCATION

WorkSearch Computer Lab

BOOMER INNOVATION GRANTS

Organization

AARP Foundation WorkSearch,
aarpmp.org/worksearch

Contact

Sandra Wagner, swagner@aarp.org

Project Name

WorkSearch Computer Lab

Project Overview

The focus, in the beginning, was to determine how to better serve the senior who was repeatedly slipping through the cracks. To explain, the Title V training program, funded by the Department of Labor, restricts that employment program to individuals 55 and older that live in Adams, Denver and Arapahoe counties and meet the government's income guidelines for low or poverty level. This barrier was leaving a large number of the senior population out of the picture. WorkSearch, as a pilot in Denver, is now nationwide with all of the 90+ AARP Foundation Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP) reaching thousands of seniors that never would have had this opportunity. In November 2007, the \$5,000 Boomer Innovation Grant enabled the opening of a computer lab whereby individuals can

be screened for job skills and personal characteristics, then tested, trained and pointed to an employer. Due to this expanding approach, the Senior Community Service Employment Program is now known as AARP Foundation WorkSearch, which houses the SCSEP program. Additional sponsors include AARP, AARP Foundation, Emily Griffith Opportunity School, Jared Polis Foundation, Bruce Hill Corporation, Denver Housing Authority and National Business Service Alliance.



John Looney, AARP Colorado



Current Status

At the present time, and at no cost to participants, 17 SCSEP enrollees are in training at Emily Griffith Opportunity School (EGOS) to be janitors; 66 WorkSearch seniors have been screened for Medical Office Clerical and/or Medical Office Billing. These seniors are either in a free class or their class will start this summer at EGOS; two seniors are in training at the Commercial Driving License College; four students are enrolled in Universities Advisor Led Training (ALT). These certified training programs are very impressive: technical writer, data programming, etc. Ninety SCSEP enrollees completed a free one day in-house Career Development class; six SCSEP participants completed a Safety and Security training and graduated on April 24, 2008; 35+ seniors participated in computer training classes; and close to 800 older adults have been screened. Currently, four additional training components are in production.

Successes and Challenges

The only challenge to date is meeting the demand.

Next Steps

Next steps include opening labs throughout the state with several community colleges (Front Range, Emily Griffith, etc.), establishing a WorkSearch lab with AARP Information Center in Pueblo, and implementing a toll-free statewide number.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT/CAREER TRANSITION EDUCATION

Boomer Connections: Project Renew

Organization

Colorado Community College System (CCCS) Foundation
cccs.edu

Contact

Carmen Velasquez, carmen.velasquez@cccs.edu

Project Name

Boomer Connections: Project Renew

Project Overview

The purpose of the project was to determine how the 55+ year olds in the Denver Metro Area were planning to further their education and career opportunities. The emphasis of the research under this grant focused on the existing services at the metro area community colleges, projected need for services, and marketing to assure that educational choices, employment, volunteerism, and personal enrichment opportunities are made available for the boomer generation.

Current Status

Results from the research and discussions with the community colleges staff indicated that a Boomer Resource Center pilot program should be implemented to support the needs of this population. Many partnerships were established, the needs of the physical plant identified, and a commitment by the staff from the Arapahoe Community College (ACC) has been secured. A three-year plan has been drafted by ACC to implement a Center, market and brand the program, evaluate the progress, and share data with any community college interested in replicating a similar program.



Carmen Velasquez, Colorado Community College System Foundation



Successes and Challenges

ACC has demonstrated its commitment to lifelong learning by incorporating new classes aimed at boomers through the Community Education Department. ACC will create a plan to enhance educational opportunities, volunteerism, training, and respond to needs that were identified from the data collected to date. The most challenging result of this effort is the need for additional resources to create a Resource Center at ACC. Once the Center is furnished, in operation, and has enough data to support this effort, ACC is confident that they will be able to sustain the program.

The project has provided the CCCS Foundation with the opportunity to be the catalyst for providing the community colleges with an awareness of the changing student population.

Next Steps

Next steps are to secure at least \$75,000 to implement the Boomer Resource Center at ACC, under the direction of Kim Larson-Cooney and the Community Education Department. The Center will provide a welcoming environment for the older students and provide resources and options for education, volunteerism, employment, career exploration and personal enrichment. The Center will also allow private industry and the corporate world an opportunity to meet the expanding needs of this generation. Next steps also include a plan to collect and share data with other community colleges.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT/CAREER TRANSITION EDUCATION

Boomer Engagement in Work

Organization

Karen Newman, Ph.D.

Contact

Karen Newman, knewman312@gmail.com

Project Name

Boomer Engagement in Work

Project Overview

The problem to be solved is whether boomers can be part of the solution to future workforce shortages rather than a cause of the problem. Some industries and some job classifications will experience severe labor shortages in the next generation. What can be done to address the problem? The goals of the project include confirming and elaborating boomer interest in flexible, meaningful work; determining employer interest in engaging boomers, either in new work arrangements or through contracting arrangements; and answering the question: Is there an opportunity to bring together talented, motivated boomers and businesses with project-related needs?

Current Status

To date, approximately 100 interviews with boomers have been conducted. Their resounding response is high interest in the idea of project-based work that would be meaningful yet flexible. In addition, 20 interviews with company representatives were completed where the consistent message was "We know it is a problem but we have not done anything serious to address it." It is not a burning issue and therefore resources are not being deployed to address it. Dr. Newman is pursuing two options:

- Create intellectual capital concerning boomer engagement in work by writing and speaking. When the issue becomes critical, Dr. Newman will be in a better position to help companies and boomers.
- Ally with an existing firm that already does business with companies that are feeling the heat from boomer transitions and develop services to meet the needs of both.



Karen Newman, Ph.D.



Successes and Challenges

The successes to date are several. First, through 120 interviews, Dr. Newman has raised the visibility of aging workforce issues. Second, she is much more knowledgeable about the issues, having done an exhaustive review of existing information. Employer-based solutions have to be couched in terms of managing a multigenerational workforce rather than accommodating boomers. The challenges are clear. First, everything takes longer than expected. Second, making the positive case for older worker employment is not easy. And third, finding a way to bring the issue to the forefront for most companies is difficult.

Next Steps

Next steps include pursuing both options one and two under current status. Dr. Newman will write and speak on this topic regardless of whether one of the business opportunities works out in option two. At the same time, she is aggressively pursuing two opportunities to ally with existing firms and provide services to employers and boomers.