



# Grantmakers In Aging



## A Funder's Toolkit on Aging: A Preview

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

Carol A. Farquhar, Executive Director, Grantmakers In Aging

The United States is in the midst of a major demographic shift. The number of people age 55 and older will almost double between now and 2030 – from 60 million to 108 million, nearly 31 percent of the total US population. By 2020, 16 percent of Americans will be over 65. The population is not only growing older, it is also growing more diverse.

With our older population growing at an unprecedented rate, aging can no longer be ignored. As funders you now have a unique opportunity to become leaders of change. The opportunities are two-fold: How to meet the needs of the aging population and, with the largest, healthiest and most active group of older adults in history, how to foster their full participation as employees, volunteers, donors and civic leaders to benefit our communities.

### A Funder's Toolkit on Aging

GIA's revised toolkit will provide:

- Strategies to incorporate aging into your existing programs and priorities
- Ideas for how to use older adults as community resources
- Examples of innovative programs in civic engagement and social justice
- Models for funding aging at the local level
- Resources on aging and civic engagement
- Demographic trends

This publication is a preview of GIA's new Toolkit, designed to help funders translate the opportunities and challenges of our aging population into meaningful grantmaking, that can enhance and complement your current philanthropic goals.

***The number of foundations, which ought to be concerned with aging is almost infinite, for no funder ought to get away with saying “we don’t do aging.” Any issue that our colleague foundations deal with – health or democracy or education or immigration or lesbian and gay rights or housing or community development, and on and on – affects and is affected by the role of older adults. And any foundation that is not taking that account in its strategies is not doing its job, not seeing the whole picture.***

Gara LaMarche, CEO, The Atlantic Philanthropies

## **Building Aging into Existing Program Areas**

Funders have diverse focus areas and priorities for grantmaking and the vast majority are not focused specifically on aging. However, there are many ways in which a funder can incorporate aging into their existing program areas, be it education, health, community revitalization or public policy and advocacy. The Toolkit will provide funders with templates and resources to help you evaluate your internal strategies and learn more about your community’s demographics, trends, programs serving older adults and other foundations and organizations funding aging.

### **First steps to integrate aging into your grantmaking**

- As you review requests for funding, ask what it would take to include older people in the proposed activities.
- Convene current grantees to brainstorm ways to involve older adults in their programs, either as resources or as a population whose needs should be included in their work.
- Provide capacity-building funding to current grantees to address the needs of older adults within their programs or engage older adults in meaningful paid or volunteer work.
- Commission a study to conduct an external scan that ties aging to a current interest of your foundation.
- Participate in regional associations active in the aging field.
- Convene leaders of underserved communities to identify the unique challenges facing older adults in their own community and explore possibilities for funding.
- Fund planning grants or a planning session of other funders, nonprofits and community leaders to map your community’s demographic trends, older adults’ needs, resources and gaps in services, and potential funding partners for future initiatives and community efforts.



The Rapides Foundation in Louisiana, which funds chronic disease prevention programs, commissioned the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine to conduct a needs assessment focusing on older people, including chronic disease, care giving and access to medication. The Foundation incorporated the findings into its grantmaking, adding health promotion for older adults as one of its five areas of interest within health.

## At a Glance: Incorporating Aging within Existing Funding Priorities

The revised Toolkit will provide a plethora of ideas for how funders can address the needs of older adults within their own funding areas. Below are only a few examples to illustrate how aging overlaps with a variety of program areas.

Funding priority	Rational	What to fund
<b>Intergenerational programs</b>	As our nation continues to age, more families will be affected: Boomers caring for aging parents, grandparents raising grandchildren.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational grants to support programs that bring together youth and older adults through mentoring, tutoring, fitness, health, civic engagement or other activities</li> <li>• Youth services serving older adults (e.g. chores, recording oral histories, teaching technology, helping homebound seniors)</li> <li>• Services to help grandparents serving as parents (e.g. support groups, legal guidance, mental health services, housing assistance)</li> <li>• Childcare centers providing day care for older adults requiring special services</li> </ul>
<b>Health and healthy aging</b>	Health and aging are inextricably linked. There are a myriad of opportunities for health promotion, improving access to healthcare, serving older adults who are vulnerable due to poor health or poverty, and supporting programs that focus on aging with dignity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic disease management targeting older adults</li> <li>• Training healthcare professionals to recognize mental health problems in older adults</li> <li>• Health promotion, fitness and wellness for older adults</li> <li>• Aging in place initiatives, e.g., home modification and repair services, fall prevention and home care</li> <li>• Palliative care and end-of-life issues for individuals, families and caregivers</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	Older adults are increasingly critical to the success of our public schools and to the education our children receive. They also want opportunities to pursue new careers through workforce development.	<p>Older adults are valuable resources for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring and mentoring children</li> <li>• Teaching job skills</li> <li>• Teaching in schools</li> <li>• Lifelong learning programs</li> <li>• Career education and job training</li> </ul>
<b>Public policy and advocacy</b>	Public policy spans a wide range of issues most of which impact older adults in one way or another.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy reform to integrate financing of acute and long-term care</li> <li>• Advocating for healthcare reform</li> </ul>

## Older Adults as Resources: Creating New Community Impact

The first of 78 million Baby Boomers will turn 65 starting in 2011. Neither young nor old, they represent an extraordinary pool of social and human capital; they have much to contribute and more options than ever in how they choose to invest their time, talent, knowledge and experience. As the Boomers reinvent aging, they will challenge America's institutions to remove barriers, change perceptions and adapt to the changing reality of aging. This generation poses a new challenge to funders to find different ways to engage them in meaningful ways through work, service, learning and leadership. Moreover, giving back to one's community may slow the aging process in ways that lead to a higher quality of life in older adults.

**Propelled largely by the Baby Boomers, the number of volunteers age 65 and older will increase 50 percent by 2020 to over 13 million.** (Corporation for National & Community Service)

GIA's Toolkit will include model programs that engage older adults, such as Experience Corps ([www.experiencecorps.org](http://www.experiencecorps.org)), a program of Civic Ventures that recruits adults 55+ as volunteers to improve literacy skills of elementary school children. The program has increased student-reading scores as well as improved the health of the volunteers.

### Older artists lend a hand

The Kenneth A. Picerne Foundation's mission is *to develop innovative programs that promote human development*. Yet, it has creatively combined using the talent of older adults to give back to their community, including seniors in need. Through its Artist Outreach Project, the Foundation awards grants to visual, performing and literary artists, age 55 and older. Each artist spends six to eight hours a week with underserved groups and nonprofit organizations sharing their talent in arts-based services that are both educational and therapeutic.

One artist taught art classes to homebound elderly and low-income seniors. Another taught knitting to low-income seniors in a senior center. Their hats were then donated to cancer patients. To date, the artists have contributed 14,000 hours of service to the community; served 5,400 in-need clients at 75 nonprofits; and, 65 percent of the artists have continued their service beyond the grant period. The Foundation is now looking to help other funders replicate this model. [www.picernefoundation.org](http://www.picernefoundation.org)



The Toolkit, available in 2011 through GIA, will include a broad range of resources to help funders learn about where to go to learn more about aging trends and programs in their communities as well as national resources on aging and civic engagement.

**Grantmakers In Aging** is an international professional membership organization of funders dedicated to promoting and strengthening grantmaking for an aging society.

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