

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

Strategies for Recruiting Older Workers



Tip Sheet No. 1, July 2024

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Workforce development programs support individuals in increasing their skills and gaining permanent employment through educational and training opportunities. This older worker upskilling helps meet current and future labor needs and supports organization productivity while also addressing community needs.

Why is a recruitment strategy needed for older workers?

Labor shortages bring a unique opportunity to focus recruitment strategies on older adults in returning to the workforce. Focused recruitment strategies will attract motivated candidates with the requisite skills, experience, and attitudes to meet labor needs. Focusing on the positive attributes and contributions of older adults creates more effective recruitment strategies. Well-crafted recruitment strategies will attract experienced and well-equipped candidates while fostering a workplace that is adaptable for a multigenerational workforce.

Engaging and Retaining Older Workers

CONSIDER AGE IN RECRUITMENT

- Be aware that approximately one third of workers aged 50-70 say that their age puts them at a disadvantage during job searches.

EMBED AGE IN HIRING POLICIES

- Include age-positive statements in job ads.
- Account for how age interacts with other characteristics in recruitment.

MONITOR AGE DATA

- Collect and analyze age-related data to understand and improve the ranges of ages employed.

EDUCATE ON AGE

- Train staff to recognize and reduce negative actions around age.
- Foster a workplace culture that values contributions from all ages.

BENEFITS OF AGE

- Enhances productivity; businesses with more workers aged 50+ are more productive.
- Promotes knowledge sharing across generations, benefiting the entire workforce.

Project Background

AmeriCorps Seniors funded a three-year research project of seven workforce development programs focused on older adults. These tip sheets reflect topics of interest to program staff, community partners and older workers. For more information on the project at <https://mainecenteronaging.umaine.edu/workforceresearch/>

STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING AND RETAINING OLDER ADULTS

Purposeful Roles	Emphasize meaningful work that goes beyond typical job functions to attract older workers seeking significant careers.
Flexible Schedules	Offer adaptable work hours to support personal needs and health needs to retain older workers.
Soft Skills Focus	Highlight soft skills like customer service and interpersonal abilities in job ads targeting older adults, aligning with positive stereotypes about older workers.
Physical Accommodations	Adjust work environments to suit each individual older worker's capabilities, including ergonomic settings and assistive tools.
Clear Communication	Ensure transparency and effective two-way communication to increase job satisfaction among older workers.
Community Building	Foster a fun and stimulating workplace culture to enhance morale and promote employee engagement.
Continuous Training	Offer ongoing training for all employees, embracing the capability of older workers to learn and adapt.
Older Worker Participation	Actively encourage older worker participation through practice, policy, and recognition of older worker contributions.
Partnerships	Build partnerships with other organizations to benefit from learning from each other.



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