

# Civic Participation and Employment

**Goal:** Connect older adults seeking paid employment with a diverse array of job opportunities.

**Objective 1:** Create effective pathways for older adults to secure meaningful, fairly compensated employment, including traditional, alternative, and entrepreneurial options.

## Strategies

- Create a champion for older adults who focuses on expanding employment opportunities by promoting the value of having older adults in a work place and fostering communication between older adults and younger members of the workforce.
  - There need to be partnerships in place for this to happen (e.g., need to work with OC Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, Society of Human Resource Management, etc.).
  - This person could act as a representative for older adults at quarterly Chamber meetings.
- Support and highlight programs like Act 2 at MetLife, which offers a paid internship to older adults with the promise of employment after completion if it is a good fit for both parties.
- Promote less traditional employment opportunities (e.g., Etsy, Uber, self-employment, etc.).
- Utilize a “retire, rehire” model.
- Build off of Fearrington Village model ([Fearrington Cares](#)) as a job source instead of solely volunteer.
- Create internship that pairs a student with an older adult (possibly at the Department on Aging?).
- Host a “Speed dating” event to connect older adults with businesses so that each could learn about what the other has to offer (making older adults aware of roles available and businesses aware of availability and interests of older adults).
- Expand volunteer work at Senior Centers to include paid work.
- Work with nonprofits and organizations that utilize volunteers to create pathways to employment (like internship or apprenticeship program).
- Establish an employment hub at the Senior Centers at which people can post employment opportunities and have access to standardized applications and vetting.
- Connect and support AARP in their Encore Entrepreneurship program.
- Partner with temp agencies to increase their pool of possible employees who are older adults.

**Objective 2:** Expand opportunities for older adults to gain both job seeking and job performance skills.

## Strategies

- Support and continue resources that are already available (e.g., at Durham Tech; Job Search Strategies for Mature Professionals; Orange County and Chapel Hill Public Libraries; Community college courses; Skills Center through Orange County; Orange County DSS Durham Tech Navigator; online sources like [www.lynda.com](http://www.lynda.com) and <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/>).
- Offer classes and speakers around employment out of the Senior Centers.
- Identify and define “skill clusters” so that there are diverse needs are addressed (e.g., to make sure that not all training opportunities are about white collar jobs or work-from-home opportunities).
- Connect with or start a 40Plus chapter in the Triangle (<http://www.40plus-dc.org/40plus-our-mission>).
- Start a “Launch OC” (six week course for entrepreneurs; provides business training, microloans, networking, mentor to provide support and advice).
- Bring a Dress for Success chapter to Orange County.

**Objective 3:** Prepare Orange County employers to recognize and capitalize on the value of an experienced workforce.

### Strategies

- Provide training and education opportunities to the community at large so that they are able and willing to better serve an older adult workforce (e.g., offering flexible positions; creating a job shuttle as a transportation option).
- Create public campaign that can change the discourse on seniors in the work force. Focus on older adults as productive, entrepreneurial members of the labor force
- Create relationships with businesses so that they are encouraged to focus on Age-Friendliness. For example, the ambassador model from Chamber of Commerce. They can add questions about supporting older adults looking for employment to that questionnaire.
- Work with Rotary Clubs around marketing (look at what they were able to do for Dementia Friendly Businesses!).
- Highlight organizations that are creating age-friendly positions.

**Goal:** Engage older adults in meaningful volunteer opportunities.

**Objective 4:** Create and expand substantive, skills-based, and meaningful volunteer opportunities in which volunteers are supported and recognized.

### Strategies

- Support and promote Service Enterprise Initiative out of Triangle Nonprofit & Volunteer Leadership Center.
- Increase the knowledge around Hands-On Network's volunteer matching platform.
- Expand the strong volunteer program at Department on Aging (Volunteer Connect 55+). As more older adults want to age in place, there are more opportunities for people to improve the lives of others.