

New MAVA Initiative on Engaging Older Citizens as Volunteers

MAVA is starting an initiative to help leaders of volunteers gain expertise to engage the wave of Baby Boomers as volunteers. This initiative will include:

- Two symposiums on turning the research on civic engagement and Baby Boomers into practical tips for leaders of volunteers.
- Training sessions in communities around the state on engaging Boomers as volunteers. MAVA will be offering this training, and other advanced topics using the statewide training delivery system developed by the Volunteer Resources Leadership project.

This initiative is supported through funding received from the Bigelow Foundation, St. Paul Foundation and Morgan Family Foundation. It will be done in collaboration with the Invisible Force Task Force and the Vital Aging Network.

MAVA member Terry Straub is chairing a task force who will be guiding MAVA's efforts.

For more information, contact office@mavanetwork.org or call 651-255-0469

Tips on Engaging Boomers as Volunteers from the May 7, 2008 workshop on Baby Boomers and Civic Engagement Sponsored by Harvard School of Public Health, Met Life and the Invisible Sector Task Force

The PowerPoint presentations from the workshop will be available soon at:
<http://www.reinventingaging.org>

Workshop participants shared tips on best practices for engaging boomers as volunteers and ideas for new ways. Here are some of the ideas offered.

What Boomers are looking for in volunteer positions:

- Use professional skills have and have the opportunity to build new skills
- Good time management by agency – their time is valued and organization there so it is well spent
- Use skills without having to deal with bureaucracy and politics
- Make a difference in lives of people
- Being fulfilled by work done
- Being appreciated
- Able to volunteer as a group
- Having fun
- Flexibility
- Autonomy
- Often interested in out doors activities
- For some, access to benefits before Medicare would be a big draw
- Leaving a legacy

Challenges/opportunities for nonprofits to address creatively:

- Finding meaningful work episodic volunteer
- How to stay connected with people gone 3-4 months
- Use the concept of “reintegration” (as do with people returning from armed services), to get people who have not had time to volunteer when working more engaged in community activities after retiring.
- Try to find common purpose with other organizations and be able to recruit volunteers together and “refer” volunteers if fit is better for another agency.

Creative ideas:

- Job share by volunteers to cover for each other when gone
- Develop a skills bank of what volunteers have to offer that agencies can go to.

Mary Quirk

MAVA Volunteer Resources Leadership Project Manager