Boomers, Volunteers, and Retirement: Overview & Trends

Boomers and Civic Engagement: Opportunities and Challenges Conference
Minneapolis, MN

Presented by Robert H. Prisuta, Ph.D.
Research Director, AARP
May 7, 2008
Age Trends in Volunteering
Percent of Adults Volunteering By Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age 65+ Volunteer Trends

Trends in Volunteering by Age

(1974 - 2005)

Why Do Older People Not Volunteer?

Boomers & Volunteering
Boomer Demographics

- 76 million: born between 1946 - 1964
- Life expectancy: 83 for women, 79 for men
- Median household income: $62,300
- Married: 69%  Not Married: 31%
- Education: 30% college degree (20% for pre-boomers)
- Working: 68% Full-time, 12% Part-time
- Health: 22% Excellent, 21% Fair/poor
- Race-Ethnicity: 74% White, non-Hispanic (81% for pre-boomers)
- 28% of Americans are boomers

Trends in Boomer Volunteering

Percent of Boomers Volunteering by Year

- 2003: 56%
- 2005: 51%
- 2007: 48%

Extent of Boomer Volunteering

- 37 million boomer volunteers
- Average of 12 hours per month (median = less than 10 hours) or 5.3 billion hours per year
- Estimated value of over $100 billion per year

Source: AARP/ICR Volunteering Survey, March, 2007, boomer n= 600, and Independent Sector
Boomer Volunteers and Demographics

- College Grad: 68%
- Income $70K + per year: 65%
- Female: 63%
- Employed: 59%
- Female: 63%
- 3 Person or more Household: 59%
- Total: 56%
- Male: 51%
- High School Grad: 50%
- One Person Household: 45%
- Not Employed: 45%
- Income <$30 K per Year: 36%

Boomer Volunteers and Their Communities

- **Home Owner**: 63%
- **Registered to Vote**: 63%
- **Expect to Stay in Area**: 62%
- **Total**: 56%
- **Expect to Move**: 41%
- **Renter**: 30%
- **Not Registered to Vote**: 30%

Boomer Volunteers and Attitudes Toward Retirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working/Prefer to Work</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Completely Satisfied” w/retirement savings</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Very Optimistic&quot;</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Not at All Satisfied” w/retirement savings</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Not at All Optimistic” about retirement</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect to Care for Older Relative</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boomer Volunteers and Lifestage

- Excellent Health: 62%
- Child @ Home: 61%
- Total: 56%
- Last Child Out: 54%
- Grandparent: 52%
- Nonparent: 45%
- Death of Spouse/Partner: 45%
- Poor Health: 42%

Volunteering Among Boomers By Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-Americans</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanics</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of Volunteering Among Those 45+

- **Total**
  - Informal: 51%
  - Formal: 36%
  - Total: 87%

- **White Non-Hispanic**
  - Informal: 52%
  - Formal: 36%
  - Total: 88%

- **African-American**
  - Informal: 49%
  - Formal: 41%
  - Total: 90%

- **Hispanic**
  - Informal: 43%
  - Formal: 41%
  - Total: 84%

- **Asian-Pacific**
  - Informal: 53%
  - Formal: 32%
  - Total: 85%

Top Reasons for Volunteering are Similar Across Race and Ethnicity

- Sense of Responsibility
- Life Satisfaction
- Make a Difference
- Reputation of Organization
- Help my Community
- Religious Commitment
- Keep Active

### Where People Volunteer By Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White, Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Asian-Pacific</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood/Community</td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Homelessness/Poverty</td>
<td>Neighborhood/Community</td>
<td>Homelessness/Poverty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness/Poverty</td>
<td>Mentoring/Tutoring</td>
<td>Homelessness/Poverty</td>
<td>Neighborhood/Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children/Teens</td>
<td>Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>Minority Advocacy</td>
<td>Mentoring/Tutoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Neighborhood/Community</td>
<td>Children/Teens</td>
<td>Children/Teens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications for the Future of Boomer Volunteering
More “Life” Happens As Boomers Age

- Fair/Poor Health: 1998 Boomers 11%, 2003 Boomers 17%, 2007 Boomers 21%
- Having a Parent Die: 1998 Boomers 51%, 2003 Boomers 63%, 2007 Boomers 64%
- Becoming responsible for care of parent: 1998 Boomers 26%, 2003 Boomers 35%, 2007 Boomers 37%
- Last child moved out of house: 1998 Boomers 19%, 2003 Boomers 32%, 2007 Boomers 37%
- Becoming a grandparent: 1998 Boomers 34%, 2003 Boomers 41%

Generational Changes in the Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Empty Nesters</th>
<th>Single, No Kids</th>
<th>Married Couple, No Kids</th>
<th>Single Parent, Kids at Home</th>
<th>Married Couple, Kids at Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen Xers</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matures</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boomer Satisfaction by Life Area

- Family and friends: 63
- Mental health: 61
- Religion/spiritual life: 47
- Work/career: 39
- Physical health: 31
- Leisure activities: 29
- Personal finances: 20

Source: Boomers at Midlife, AARP, 2002.
## Boomer Optimism Towards Retirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not too</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Optimistic</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteering Status and Preferences Among Individuals 45+

- Active, Like: 50%
- Active, Dislike: 2%
- Inactive, Like: 23%
- Inactive, Dislike: 25%

Trends: Boomers Who “Completely Agree” That They Will Volunteer More in Retirement

Source:  
- Boomers Envision Retirement I, AARP/Roper, 1998, (n = 2,000) 
- Boomers Envision Retirement II, AARP/Roper, 2003, (n=1,200) 
Boomers Who Agree They Will Volunteer More in Retirement

(By Current Volunteer Status)

Percent of Boomers Who “Completely Agree” They Will Volunteer More When Retired (27%)

Current Volunteers, 67%
Non-Volunteers, 33%

Changes in Volunteer Time Since Retired

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More</th>
<th>Less</th>
<th>Same</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62+</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Better Health?

- Boomers healthier than parents in some ways, less healthy in others
- 25-30% smoke vs. 50% in 1965
- 40% overweight vs. 26% in 1960’s
- Only three in 10 Boomers exercise

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Onset of Disability

Q. At what age did your disability or health condition begin?

- At Birth: 2%
- Childhood (0-11): 2%
- Adolescence (12-19): 2%
- Adulthood (20-39): 13%
- Middle Age (40-64): 53%
- Age 65-74: 17%
- Age 75 and older: 7%

Source: Beyond 50 2003 - A Report to the Nation on Independent Living and Disability, AARP.
Boomers, Work, and Retirement

- 12% of boomers are retired and not working
- Almost half (43%) of these retired boomers expect to return to the work force
- Only 17% of boomers currently working expect to retire completely and not work at all

Source: AARP and ICR, Boomers and Retirement Survey, 2007
Future Boomer Volunteers*
(*Percent who “Completely Agree” with each statement.)

Situational Factors

Characteristics of Those Who Expect to Volunteer More in Retirement (27%)

- Will Have Health Insurance: 53%
- Will Socialize More: 48%
- Will Be Healthier: 44%
- Will Travel: 37%

Source: Baby Boomers Envision Their Retirement II, AARP, 2003, n= 1,200.
Summary

- Boomers are active volunteers who contribute a great deal to their communities.

- Boomers will retire later than their parents did, but this is unlikely to limit their future volunteering.

- The source of future boomer volunteers will be today’s boomer volunteers, not retiring boomer non-volunteers looking for new roles.

- Boomers’ health, economic status, and family situation will impact their volunteering far more than will their employment status.
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