



Center for Social Development

GEORGE WARREN BROWN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



Washington University in St. Louis



Advance Long and Productive Lives

Optimize engagement of the older adults in productive roles:
Working, Volunteering and Caregiving.



Age Drain

At the population level

- Bankrupt national budget
- Strain health care system
- Overburden younger population

At the individual level

- Dependency
- Depression
- Dementia



Another Reality: Age as Asset



Age as Asset

- Capacity of older adults is increasing
- Society can not afford “age drain” perspective; productive engagement is necessity, not a luxury
- This capacity is part of a solution to demands of population aging; untapped resource

Inequity and Disparities

- Health, social, and economic persist
- Eliminating disparities is critical to ensure productive engagement across the life course



Positive outcomes: older adults, families, communities, society



- More experienced workers, volunteers, & caregivers
- Less reliance on post-employment income
- Stronger civic society through increased involvement in civic service & volunteering
- Bolster health (postpone physical, psychological, and cognitive declines)
- Fulfill desire for generativity and purpose
- Intergenerational reciprocity
- Highlights the need for improving health and economic trajectories among younger generations



Policy Recommendations

Employment	Caregiving	Volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote flexible work arrangements, especially via evidence• Support job transitions: In and out of market• Strengthen Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)• Target older adults for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand participant-directed Medicaid LTSS (enable direct payment to caregivers)• Pass the Social Security Caregiving Credit Act• Strengthen Family and Medical Leave Act• Strengthen Employee Assistance Programs to support caregivers in the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen Senior Corps via CNCS• Fully implement Serve America Act's call to increase older AmeriCorps members• Provide incentives to volunteers (tax breaks, stipends): private and religious organizations• Establish new norms for being involved in service as a phase of retirement



Cross-Cutting Issues

Life-course Perspective
on Social Determinants of Productive Engagement

Discrimination:
Ageism, Racism, Sexism
Homophobia

Inequity

Transition
Between
Roles

Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations



Partnerships

- **Active Academic Centers to date**
 - Center for Social Development & Center for Aging, Washington University
 - Center for Innovation in Social Work & Health, Boston University
 - Center on Aging & Work, Boston College
- **National Policy & Practice Leaders to date**
 - Brian Lindberg, Public Policy Advisor, GSA consultant
 - Linda Harootyan, National Strategist, Harootyan²
 - Bob Harootyan, Senior Service America, Inc.
 - Michelle Putnam, Simmons College



Emerging Products

- Lough, Sherraden, & McBride (2016). Advancing Long and Productive Lives Grand Challenge: Service across the life course
 1. A five-fold increase in the size of volunteer service programs—such as AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, the U.S. Peace Corps, and YouthBuild—over the next decade.
 2. Public investments in volunteer infrastructure to enhance participation by low-income and minority populations of all ages.
 3. Rigorous research to document impacts of volunteer programs on the health, social, and economic conditions of volunteers as well as the people served.
- Gonzales, et al.: Integrating healthy equity and productive aging perspectives to guide efforts to improve health of an aging population, *AJPH*
 1. Policies and practices to improve health across life-span
 2. Implications for social workers, public health & allied professions