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## Recommendations to Recruit and Retain Older Adults in Southern Maine

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Recommendations to Recruit and Retain Older Volunteers In Southern Maine

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## **Introduction**

In retirement, older adults often decide to devote their time and skills to the needs of others. Much is known about who older volunteers are demographically, and what they can gain from the experience. At the same time many organizations who rely on volunteers, especially smaller ones with fewer resources, fail to attract committed older adult volunteers. This capstone presents insights found in the literature and collected from interviews with local volunteer managers, and offers a list of recommendations synthesized from those sources. The list of recommended strategies can be used by organizations to increase the number of older volunteers who volunteer and stay invested over the long term.

## **Background Literature**

### **Volunteerism Health Benefits**

Volunteerism in older adults has been shown to improve many aspects of health, especially when volunteering takes place over the long term. Health benefits to volunteering include increased quality of life, social integration, better self-rated health, greater ability to cope with stress, increased confidence and increased number of social connections (Morrow-Howell, 2014; Pilkington 2012 and Warner, 2014). There is an increased potential for loneliness and social isolation among older adults who age at home alone (Dury, 2016; Morrow-Howell, 2014 and Okun, 2007), and volunteerism has the potential to play an important role in relieving both by creating a greater number of, and more varied social contacts for the individual (Johnson, 2015 and Okun, 2007). Volunteerism may also allow older adults to expand their skill set, explore new interests, and invest in their own future (Brown 2012; Butrica, 2009 and Shen, 2016). The benefits of volunteerism for older adults are well supported by the literature and can be cited by organizations seeking to motivate individuals to volunteer.

### **Volunteer Characteristics**

Older adults who volunteer tend to be educated, financially stable, white or African American, homeowners, and more socially connected or integrated (Cramm 2015 and Sundeen, 2008).

Volunteering allows individuals to put knowledge and expertise to use after retirement or learn a desired new skill. In addition, older volunteers have been found to have a positive attitude toward volunteering; have confidence that the tasks will be easy; and have confidence that they can navigate the volunteer system (Greenslade, 2005; McNamara, 2011 and Okun 2014).

### **Volunteer Motivation**

The motivations for older adults to volunteer are varied and are often related to social connections. Older adults who are part of a social group such as a church or club are more likely to volunteer in a group activity (McNamara, 2011). The resources that people gain from social connections as measured by the size of an individual's social network is referred to as social capital and has an impact on motivation to volunteer. Social capital and volunteerism among older adults are closely linked in the literature in a circular relationship (Cramm 2015; Johnson, 2015; McNamara, 2011 and Okun, 2007). Older adults are more likely to volunteer if they have high social capital because they are more connected and learn about opportunities. However, it can also be said that older adults who volunteer with low social capital are likely to gain social capital as they become more connected (Durry, 2016 and Morrow-Howell, 2014).

### **Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers**

Best practices for recruiting and retaining volunteers are well represented in the literature but they are not focused solely on older adults. A few studies have looked into how the principles of volunteer recruitment and retention change pertaining to older or retired individuals. McNamara (2011) concluded that recruiting individuals to volunteer before they retire could be an ideal way to insure they will volunteer after retirement. Group-based and face to face interventions can be successful in recruiting new volunteers (Warner, 2014). Peer recommendation has been cited by a few authors as a successful way to recruit new volunteers (Kerkman, 2003 and Whitehall, 2016). Sellon (2014) found that personal invitation, role flexibility, connection to the role, and goal setting are crucial to recruiting and maintaining volunteers. Strategies on how older adults may be recruited or retained as volunteers come from examining national programs. The Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) offers opportunities for retired professionals to keep

working in an advisory capacity and help out new nonprofits (SCORE, 2016). The Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP), and the Senior Corps recruit and coordinate volunteers 55 and older by promoting social interaction, using peer encouragement, and volunteer mentoring strategies (Senior Corps, 2017).

### **Barriers to Volunteering**

Despite many benefits, the literature describes several barriers to volunteering for older adults. Whitehall reported that lack of motivation, confidence and readiness to change were the most common barriers to volunteering in older adults (2016). Transportation, poor health and cost were also cited commonly in the literature as reasons for not participating in volunteer activities (Sundeen, 2008 and Whitehall, 2016). In addition, this research reports that some older adults could not find opportunities to volunteer or were worried that they could not perform the tasks required (Greenslade, 2005). Keeping barriers to volunteering in mind is critical to organizations working to recruit and retain volunteers.

## **Methods**

### **Literature Search and Review**

The literature search and review was completed in the first month of the project. Findings from the search informed the interview questions and final recommendations. Online Journal Databases such as Medline, Pubmed, and CINHALL were used to identify peer reviewed literature on benefits and barriers to volunteering, motivations of volunteers and best practices for recruiting and retaining older adult volunteers. Federal, State and local publications, and gray literature were searched for information on the motivations of older volunteers and best practices in older volunteer recruitment and retention.

### **Sample Selection**

Less well-resourced interviewee organizations were identified based on the organizations' known volunteer recruitment strategies and their desire to recruit a greater number of older adult volunteers. They were from the City of Portland Office of Elder Affairs and Portland Area Villages. To identify the experienced volunteer managers, I did a scan of the organizations in the area involved in recruiting and retaining older adult volunteers. Based on what I found, I reached out to the Senior Corps program at the Opportunity Alliance, the Senior Companions program, the RSVP program at Catholic Charities, and United Way of Greater Portland. All four organizations were willing and able to be interviewed. Names of interviewees are all undisclosed to respect the confidentiality of the individuals and the organizations they represent.

### **Protocol Development**

After completing the literature review, two interview protocols were created. Questions for both protocols were carefully designed to gain appropriate and unbiased information about how organizations recruit and retain older volunteers. One protocol captured needs and current practices of less well-resourced the second sought current practices and advice from more experienced volunteer recruiters. Questions for the less well-resourced organizations were asked about what strategies, if any, they used to recruit and retain older adult volunteers. Themes from

interviews with less well-resourced organizations were considered when crafting the interview protocol for the experienced volunteer managers. The intent was to incorporate the concerns of the first two interviewees to ensure that the recommendations would be meaningful. Both Protocols can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Interviews**

All six individuals were interviewed between March 1 and March 16, 2017. Two interviews were conducted with less well-resourced volunteer reliant organizations trying to develop their capacity to recruit and retain older adult volunteers, and four interviews were conducted with experienced volunteer managers in the greater Portland area. The interviews ranged in time and all but one were recorded, with permission from the interviewee. Five of the six interviews were held in person, and one over the phone. The interview over the phone was not recorded.

### **Data Management**

Immediately after each interview, the recording was used to type up detailed notes on comments. Notes from each interview were reviewed for recurring words and phrases, as identified patterns and concepts were sorted into themes. Once themes were revealed, they were compared and contrasted with findings from the literature and used to develop the final recommendations.

### **Institutional Review Board Plan**

As part of human subjects research, the project plan was submitted for exemption as human subjects research which was granted.

## **Findings**

The following two sections describe the themes which came from analysis of the comments from interviews. Quotes are identified by italics and were taken from personal communications.

### **Interviews with less well-resourced volunteer seekers**

Research questions addressed by interviews with less well-resourced organizations;

1. What strategies do organizations who struggle to recruit and retain older adult volunteers currently use?
2. What resources do organizations who struggle to recruit and retain older adult volunteers think they need?

Themes taken from the interviews were used to answer these questions. They were also used to inform the questions that were asked of the experienced volunteer managers.

### **1. What strategies do organizations who struggle to recruit and retain older adult volunteers currently use?**

Both interviewees had some ideas for strategies to use to recruit and retain older adult volunteers but were unsure of the best strategies because of their lack of experience. Between the two organizations interviewed, common themes and messages arose that indicated their knowledge of strategies used to recruit and retain older volunteers.

#### *Common themes.*

**Use of materials like mailing lists, a website or door to door messengers are good strategies for informing older adults about volunteer opportunities.** Interviewees agreed that a variety of materials placed in locations where they would be visible to older adults would reach potential volunteers. They recognized that older adults are more likely to respond to sources that they trust, such as AARP or a member of a neighborhood association coming to their door. *“These committees [from neighborhood associations] are made up of volunteers who are going around neighbor to neighbor talking in order to recruit volunteers.”*

**Collaborating with other organizations in the community to share resources is a strategy for recruitment and retention of older adults.** Both interviewees mentioned that they have plans to or already do work with other organizations to reduce barriers to older adult volunteers. Barriers to low income volunteers that were listed by the interviewees were transportation, meals and expenses. Volunteers qualify for the RSVP and Senior Corps programs based on low income level and needed assistance buying fuel and meals for the day.

*“The volunteers that we use are older adults who volunteer through the Opportunity Alliance Senior Companions program. So we have an agreement with Opportunity Alliance, where those volunteers receive a stipend through the program and we reimburse Opportunity Alliance for a portion of that.”*

**Placing volunteers in a position they are passionate about will improve the chances of them staying committed over the long term.** Conversations with these two organizations revealed a belief that passion and inspiration are directly tied to volunteers’ level of commitment. *“Plug volunteers into something that they are passionate about.”* In addition, it was reported that a pre-established commitment helps volunteers understand their purpose. *“I think it’s a good idea to have a finite period of time for the volunteer experience so they can know what they have signed on to.”*

**Appreciate volunteers by holding events and engaging in regular communication.** Both interviewees brought up the importance of recognizing volunteer’s efforts. They also expressed that the volunteer needs to feel valued in the community and for some it is the only reason to get up in the morning. *“Think about what motivates seniors to volunteer, [it is] less about what their skills are; focus instead on what their passion and energy is like.”*

## **2. What resources do organizations who struggle to recruit and retain older adult volunteers think they need?**

Each organization that was interviewed had its own expectations on what resources might be required for recruitment and retention of older adult volunteers.

*Common themes.*

**Lack of a staff member committed to volunteers is a barrier to recruiting and retaining older adult volunteers.** Both organizations interviewed agreed that having a staff member who deals with the volunteers would allow the organization to increase recruitment and retention strategies. They also agreed that allocating resources or finding funding for a volunteer manager would be difficult.

**Collecting data from volunteers as the program grows can provide data to improve recruitment and retention strategies.** The interviewees agreed that collecting feedback can help volunteers feel heard and involved. “*We don’t know what we don’t know.*” Collecting other data such as, number of volunteers per site and length of commitment would allow the organizations to find out which strategies were working the best.

**Interviews with experienced volunteer managers**

Research Questions answered by interviews with experienced volunteer managers:

1. How can an organization get older adults interested in volunteering?
2. How can an organization get older adults interested in volunteering with their specific organization?
3. How can an organization get older adult volunteers to commit to a volunteer position for an extended period of time?

Themes taken from the four interviewees are used to answer these questions. The themes also inform the list of recommendations for the less well-resourced organizations.

**1. How can an organization get older adults interested in volunteering?***Common themes.*

**Using healthcare practitioner’s offices provides an opportunity to share recruitment materials from a trusted source.** This enables the practitioners to share information about the

health benefits of volunteering with their patients. Interviewees agreed that healthcare professionals are a newer way to reach volunteers, but have been successful so far.

**Getting information to potential volunteers before they retire via human resources departments.** Interviewees expressed that promotion through local organizations can attract potential volunteers. *“The purpose is to share volunteer and retirement options with professionals before they retire. Usually the individuals do not respond for a few years, but later they realize they are looking for more”* after retirement.

## **2. How can an organization recruit older adults to volunteer with their specific organization?**

### ***Common themes.***

**Current volunteers are the best way to recruit future volunteers.** The organizations use the resources they have available to them, which includes current volunteers. The volunteer managers agreed that word of mouth from a volunteer to friends or neighbors is a powerful recruitment technique. One organization expressed *“[d]efinitely volunteers are the best way to recruit other volunteers, because they enjoy what they are doing and their enthusiasm and passion convinces others to join.”* Another echoed this statement by saying *“[e]ach volunteer is an advertisement for the program so we want to treat them well”*

**Use of promotional materials like flyers and brochures in locations that are known and frequented by older adults is a successful strategy for recruiting and retaining older adult volunteers.** Getting materials into numerous locations was agreed upon as a good way to reach a larger community of potential volunteers. One manager expressed the intention of advertising in many locations by saying *“if you can get a foothold in a rural area with just one person responding to the ads, then their experience can be spread by word of mouth.”* Promotional materials are believed to be most impactful in recruiting when they are placed in areas that are frequented by older adults.

**Interacting with potential volunteers face to face is important to getting them to participate.** All representatives expressed that communicating with potential volunteers face to face is a good way to get them to volunteer. Practicing the *“in person face to face ask”* is part of a successful recruitment strategy. There are many ways to achieve this including *“going out to speak to area senior centers or rotary clubs helps because you get the face to face interaction”*

**Trust is very important to older adult volunteers.** The volunteer managers interviewed expressed that trust of the organization by the older adult is crucial to volunteer recruitment. Most of the volunteer managers felt that coming from well-known organizations improved their place in the community and the willingness of older adults to engage with them. *“Personal presence is very important, older adults need to know and trust your organization, once you are seen and heard around, and your materials regularly noticed they begin to see you as part of the community.”* Lack of trust leads to missed opportunities. *“Older adults are told not to trust the mail - always in danger of getting scammed so they will most likely throw away something they don’t recognize.”*

**Focusing on the passion and energy of the volunteer when attempting to engage them leads to positive volunteer experiences.** Before they place volunteers in a site, many of the managers spend time with the volunteer figuring out what would best suit them. *“In the interview process, don’t focus on skills or experience but instead what they want to do.”* All of the volunteer managers know that a good placement relies on understanding what the volunteer wants out of the experience.

**An organization can encourage older adults to volunteer by reducing economic and other barriers.** Providing stipends, travel and or meal vouchers are examples of strategies for reducing economic barriers for older adult volunteers. *“The goal is to make it as easy as possible for volunteers to participate and keep participating.”* One manager emphasized the importance of reducing access barriers like lack of internet; *“...not assuming that seniors have access to technology, and finding other ways to connect with them.”* Generally, the volunteer managers

thought that the barriers to volunteering for older adults were not substantial and that they could be overcome with solutions like stipends. A few of the organizations mentioned that collaboration with other organizations is a way to reduce barriers for more volunteers. For example, one program connects their volunteers that qualify to another program that will pay for travel stipends based on income.

### **3. How can an organization get older adult volunteers to commit to a volunteer position for an extended period of time?**

#### *Common themes.*

**Personal experience and connection are important to older adults and result in lasting relationships between volunteers and organizations.** All the organizations brought up the power of connection and personal experience when aiming to get volunteers to commit for the long term. *“The one-on-one relationship is an investment and gives ownership”* The volunteer managers all strive to ensure that each volunteer gets to make a personal connection because that drives an individual’s own investment in the program. *“Give volunteers a sense of purpose, no matter what the role.”*

**Investing in volunteer coordination contributes to retaining older adult volunteers.** Each of the organizations described the importance of the duties of the volunteer manager. *“The volunteer coordinators do all the work with volunteers from recruitment to vetting and placement”* Importance was placed on this role because the older adult volunteers need someone to connect with at the organization. The volunteer manager is the person who should start and sustain the relationship with each volunteer. Another option mentioned by an interviewee was that the duties of volunteer management can be shared by a team. *“Often the responsibility falls to someone in addition to their current duties.”*

**Recognition and appreciation of volunteers contributes to retention of older adult volunteers.** The organizations agreed that taking the time to appreciate all the volunteers was a crucial strategy for retaining volunteers. A variety of strategies were suggested by the

organizations *“Appreciation week dinner, thank you cards, acknowledge birthdays.”* and *“Try to do a little bit of everything - from personal messages and thank yous to larger events so they can appeal to all different volunteers.”* Volunteer managers made it clear that even with limited budget or resources, appreciation of the volunteers is critical. *“Recognition ceremonies and other efforts to make volunteers feel valued and needed.”*

**Build constant communication into each volunteer relationship to help them feel heard and understand their impact.** The importance of communication was mentioned often by the interviewees. Especially in the beginning to make sure the volunteer is happy in their placement and getting what they want out of the experience. As stated by one volunteer manager *“Confront challenges together, make sure they are getting the experience they want and need.”* The volunteer managers agreed about the importance of clear roles, and that everyone needs to *“know the expectations, feel heard and feel a partnership.”* It was stressed that communication also means asking for feedback about all aspects of the program. *“Feedback from site manager and volunteer help to make everyone feel heard and valued.”*

## **Analysis**

Successful programs for older adult volunteers like the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP) and the Senior Corps programs are valuable resources (RSVP, 2017 & Senior Corps, 2017). Volunteer managers interviewed from these programs in the Southern Maine area demonstrated their knowledge of strategies for recruiting and retaining older adult volunteers. The themes drawn from interviews with these experienced organizations can be used by the less well-resourced organizations to increase the number of older adult volunteers committed to their programs.

### ***Recruitment strategies.***

Parallels between the interviews with experienced volunteer managers and the literature are evident. There is agreement that current volunteers are a valuable asset in recruiting new volunteers (Kerkman, 2003 and Whitehall, 2016). Interviewees and the literature report that as older adults talk about their experience to friends or others in their community they build trust in an organization. Older adults are often overwhelmed with the number of solicitations, and are more likely to rely on friends and trusted resources for advice. Collaboration with other organizations benefits organizations with fewer resources in recruiting and retaining older adult volunteers. Such partnerships are particularly beneficial in providing funding for stipends or access to resources for training volunteers.

### ***Retention Strategies.***

Connection to the volunteer experience as an important retention strategy for older adult volunteers is echoed in the literature (Sellon, 2014). Experienced volunteer managers all focused on the importance of clear and consistent communication in retaining older adult volunteers. Older adult volunteers want to know what they are committing to and what is expected of them. This helps them understand their work and their impact on the organization. Communication also allows older adults the opportunity to evaluate the program. This feeds back into their feelings of being understood and appreciated. Appreciation and recognition efforts were stressed as critical by the experienced volunteer managers. Investment in expressions of appreciation of volunteers

provides the sense that what they do matters and puts their volunteer work into larger context.

***Barriers.***

While barriers to volunteering were not addressed through the questions in the interview protocol with either group of interviewees, the issue of financial and transportation barriers were raised by the interviewees. It was stated that the federal programs like RSVP and Senior Corps have the ability to offer travel and monthly stipends but that many smaller organizations cannot afford to offer those benefits. One organization screens older adult volunteers for eligibility for federal programs to determine if they are eligible for stipends. Volunteer managers who did not offer financial compensation worked hard to align the older adult with an opportunity that was convenient to ensure that there were no barriers. None of the organizations had programs to transport volunteers to opportunities.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

It is clear from conversations with less well-resourced volunteer seekers that the need for volunteers is increasing. Common strategies for recruitment and retention outlined by these two interviewees included use of promotional resources, collaborating with other organizations, drawing on the passion of the volunteer and appreciating the volunteers. These interviewees also expressed limited capacity to manage volunteers to effectively recruit and retain older adult volunteers. These comments reveal that while these organizations are not experienced in recruitment and retention of older adult volunteers, they are aware of many strategies that might be successful. They admitted there is a lot they do not know, but that they are eager to learn and build up a much needed supply of older adult volunteers.

Themes from the experienced volunteer managers were greater in number but reflected many of the same messages. These several themes fit into a few broad categories of what motivates older adults to volunteer and those strategies to recruit older adults to volunteer with an organization, and what are the best strategies to retain older adult volunteers within an organization.

### ***Motivation.***

Getting to the older adults before they retire was suggested by one volunteer manager as a motivation technique because it gets them thinking about it as a part of their retirement plan. Use of practitioner's offices was also suggested to motivate older adults because the practitioner can share the proven health benefits of volunteering.

### ***Recruitment.***

Recruiting older adults relies on use of promotional materials, establishing trust, face to face interactions, focusing on the passion of the volunteer, and reducing barriers. It is clear from the conversations that older adult volunteers are interested in entering into a partnership when they volunteer; trust is among the more important factors when recruiting older adults because it relates to all the other strategies. For example, promotional materials will be more likely to attract older adults if they appear in a trusted location or come from a trusted source. It was

stressed by the experienced volunteer managers that tapping into the passion of the older adult draws them in and supports a connection that is more likely to last.

***Retention.***

Retention considerations revolve around deepening and maintaining the relationship developed during recruitment. Themes include the importance of the personal experience, investing in volunteer coordination, recognition, appreciation, clear and frequent communication and feedback. Each organization talked about clear and regular communication as a critical part of maintaining the volunteer relationship. This allows the volunteer and the organization to be clear on expectations and offers many opportunities for feedback. Providing frequent opportunities for feedback from volunteers helps them to feel heard and valued. Appreciation events are an opportunity to show volunteers their impact on the organization, thereby increasing their involvement and commitment.

All of the themes and concepts identified can be compiled into three categories; motivations of older adult volunteers; recruitment of older adult volunteers; and retention of older adult volunteers. Evaluation of volunteer programs is an ongoing theme which fits into all three categories. A one page summary of these recommendations can be found in Appendix 2.

Recruiting and retaining older adult volunteers takes careful planning and ultimately creates meaningful and lasting relationships. For organizations willing to take the time to build and nourish those relationships, a valuable resource can be gained. Moving forward, managing volunteers through creativity and collaboration with other organizations will be particularly important for less well-resourced organizations. Additionally, finding innovative ways to compensate for transportation to and meals during volunteer opportunities will be beneficial to less well resourced organizations. The goal is to share these recommendations with all the interviewees from the project. The recommendations and full report will also be made available to any organization that is looking to recruit and retain older adult volunteers. Using the recommendations produced by this project could contribute to the development of an organization's robust and lasting volunteer program.

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### Appendix 1: Interview Protocols

Name of interviewer:

Name of Interviewee:

Company:

Date:

Time:

Other notes:

#### Recommendations to recruit and retain older adult volunteers in Southern Maine protocol

<p>Intro &amp; ground rules (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today about recruiting and retaining older volunteers. I will define older volunteers as 55 years of age and over. The purpose of this conversation is to find out what organizations who rely on volunteers are looking to learn about recruitment and retention strategies. I also want to find out what resources you have to recruit and retain older volunteers and what resources you currently have or wish you had.</p> <p>The goal is to identify promising practices and share them with you and the other interviewees. I will treat your answers as confidential, and will not be including any identifying information in my report or list of recommendations.</p> <p>Before we get started, I want to let you know that this interview should last about 45 minutes and will consist of eleven questions. With your permission, I will record the interview on my phone for later use. <b>Y / N?</b></p> <p>Do you have any questions about the interview or project before we start?</p>
<p>Topic 1 (10 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Older volunteers in your organization</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Please tell me a little about the role of older adult volunteers in your organization?</li> <li>2. Are you interested in recruiting more older adult volunteers?</li> </ol>
<p>Topic 2 (10 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Recruitment of older volunteers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Are you doing anything to specifically recruit older adults to volunteer?</li> <li>4. Please describe things that are working well for your org?</li> <li>5. Are there resources you wish you had to help recruit more older adult volunteers?</li> </ol>

Topic 3 (10 minutes)	<b>Retention of older volunteers</b> 6. Does your organization have any strategies specifically designed for retaining older adult volunteers? 7. Please describe any of these strategies you have found to be successful? 8. Are there any resources you know of that help retain older adult volunteers that you wish you had?
Conclusion (5 minutes)	9. Do you have any final comments about recruitment or retention of older volunteers that you would like to offer? 10. Do you mind if I call you at a later point if I have follow up questions for you?

Name of interviewer:

Name of Interviewee:

Company:

Date:

Time:

Other notes:

**Recommendations to recruit and retain older adult volunteers in Southern Maine protocol**

<p>Intro &amp; ground rules (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today about recommendations for recruiting and retaining older volunteers. I will define older volunteers as 55 years of age and over. The purpose of this conversation is to learn what strategies have worked best for your organization and what you recommend that other organizations try. The goal is to share the final product with you and the other individuals I interview. I will treat your answers as confidential, and will not be including any identifying information in my report or list of recommendations.</p> <p>Before we get started, I want to let you know that this interview should last about 45 minutes and will consist of ten questions. With your permission, I will record the interview on my phone for later use. <b>Y / N?</b></p> <p>Do you have any questions about the interview or project before we start?</p>
<p>Topic 1 (10 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Older Volunteers in your organization</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can you tell me the average frequency of participation of older adult volunteers in your organization?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probe: Number of times per week/month?</li> <li>b. Probe: Likelihood to return after first shift?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. What proportion overall are older adult volunteers in your org?</li> </ol>
<p>Topic 2 (10 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Older volunteer recruitment strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Does your organization have any specific strategies designed to recruit older volunteers?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probe: Do these strategies come from the national level?</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Can you describe which strategies you have found to be successful?</li> <li>6. In your experience, what elements are necessary to recruit older volunteers?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probe: Manuals, online resources, training guides?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<p>Topic 3 (10 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Older volunteer retention strategies</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Does your organization have any specific strategies designed to retain older volunteers for an extended and regular period of time?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probe: any from the national level?</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. Can you describe which strategies you have found to be successful?</li> <li>9. In your experience, what elements are necessary to retain older adult volunteers?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probe: Training, leadership roles, appreciation ceremonies?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p>Closing (5) minutes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Do you have any final comments about recruitment or retention of older volunteers?</li> <li>11. Is it okay if I reach out you in the future with any follow up questions?</li> </ol>

Appendix 2 One Page Summary of Recommendations

# Recruiting and Retaining Older Adult Volunteers



**Motivations** ↓ Encourage healthcare professionals to promote benefits of volunteering  
Reach out to potential volunteers before they retire

## Recruitment

**Promotion**

- ▶ Place flyers, brochures, and newspapers in areas frequented by seniors
- ▶ Advertise in newspapers
- ▶ Participate in events like Senior Expo
- ▶ Collaborate with other organizations who work with older adult volunteers

**Building Trust**

- ▶ Recruit volunteers face to face
- ▶ Reach out through trusted organizations
- ▶ Encourage current volunteers to recruit new volunteers

**Reduce financial barriers**

## Retention

**Communication**

- ▶ Create a contract with volunteers based on interests and time commitment
- ▶ Build constant communication into each volunteer relationship

**Maintaining Relationships**

- ▶ Foster a personal experience
- ▶ Focus on the passion and energy of the volunteer
- ▶ Recognize and appreciate volunteers with events and communications
- ▶ Help volunteers understand their impact on the organization
- ▶ Offer leadership roles and additional training
- ▶ Support a volunteer coordinator

**Evaluation** ↑ Evaluate the volunteer experience with regular surveys and opportunities for feedback ↑