



Community Colleges
&
Pathways to Significant Service for Post-Midlife Adults

Report to Atlantic Philanthropies on the March 26-27, 2006 Meeting

May 2006

A New Stage of Life, A New Force for Service

As the first of America's 77 million baby boomers turn 60 in 2006, they become pioneers in a new stage of life, spanning the decades between the end of a midlife career and the onset of true old age. Neither young nor old, they represent an extraordinary pool of social and human capital. And, in significant numbers, they want to do work that serves a greater good. But too often, that individual enthusiasm is stymied by perceptions, policies, and practices that discourage their contribution. As a result, this growing number of Americans with time, talent and experience represents a largely untapped resource in a nation with many critical unmet needs.

To unleash this potential and transform the aging of America into a source of individual and social renewal, we will need to develop a full spectrum of innovative pathways. The possibilities are unlimited for social contributions from this growing generation.

Civic Ventures is calling for the recognition of the emergence of a new life stage between midlife and true old age that may be as long in duration as midlife itself. Our research tells us that many people are looking for what we are calling "Encore Careers" – opportunities that combine the spirit of service with the benefits of work. Encore Careers are long enough to accomplish a significant body of work but not so long (or inflexible) as midlife careers. Significant service roles include a range from paid to stipended or unpaid opportunities. Most importantly, they contribute to addressing important social problems.

Existing institutions will need to rethink and retool to help this generation connect with these opportunities and help the social/public sector prepare for their engagement. Community colleges are particularly well positioned to create such new pathways to significant service because they bring to the table a commitment to workforce development, community connections, learning options, and innovation.

This report explores the potential intersection between community colleges and this trend toward significant work and service. It includes ideas, insights and information that were shared and generated at a March 2006 meeting of leaders from community colleges, Atlantic Philanthropies, Civic Ventures and The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust (See Attachment 1 for a list of meeting participants). The meeting was held in Tempe, Arizona and included college presidents and key staff from the American Association of Community Colleges, Community College National Center for Community Engagement, Council for Adult & Experiential Learning, and League for Innovation in the Community College.

"Colleges and universities could find a new market in giving accomplished Americans of traditional retirement age the credentials to leap from business careers or child-rearing pauses into human service and community leadership. Hospitals, public schools, museums, and community agencies could find an experienced workforce if they rethink their workplace models. Boomers want to enter at the top. They want to call the shots, to work on their own flexible rhythm. They expect to have an impact."

Rosabeth Moss Kanter
New Face of Work Survey
Baby Boomers still want to change the world
June 2005

The Intersection with Community Colleges: Pathways to Significant Service

Community colleges can help bring the potential windfall of talent from older Americans to bear on key segments of the society in desperate need of human resources: most notably, the social and public sectors, including education, healthcare and non-profit management — areas where vast labor shortages already exist and are projected to grow in coming years. They have the potential to prepare this changing generation for pathways to significant service.

Within higher education, community colleges are uniquely suited to this role. They have successfully pursued a community-based approach, open access, diverse student population, comprehensive program offerings with many career links, and commitment to older adult learning. Responding to significant demographic change, particularly change brought about by the baby boomer generation, is nothing new for community colleges. In fact, the last four decades of community college history is closely tied to the education of this generation.

“Community colleges became a national network in the 1960s with the opening of 457 public community colleges - more than the total in existence before that decade. Baby boomers coming of age fueled enrollment growth. . . The number of community colleges has steadily grown since the 1960s. At present, there are 1,166 community colleges in the United States. When the branch campuses of community colleges are included, the number totals about 1,600.”

American Association of Community Colleges
Community Colleges Past to Present

Today, there is an opportunity for community colleges to help adults make the transition to a new life stage and to prepare them for meaningful service in both paid and unpaid roles. However, this opportunity will not be realized with existing community college older adult learning programs, which are often geared to enrichment, rather than transitions to a next chapter that includes both work and service. Community colleges need to look at older adults through a new lens – a lens that illuminates the promise of their contributions to society.

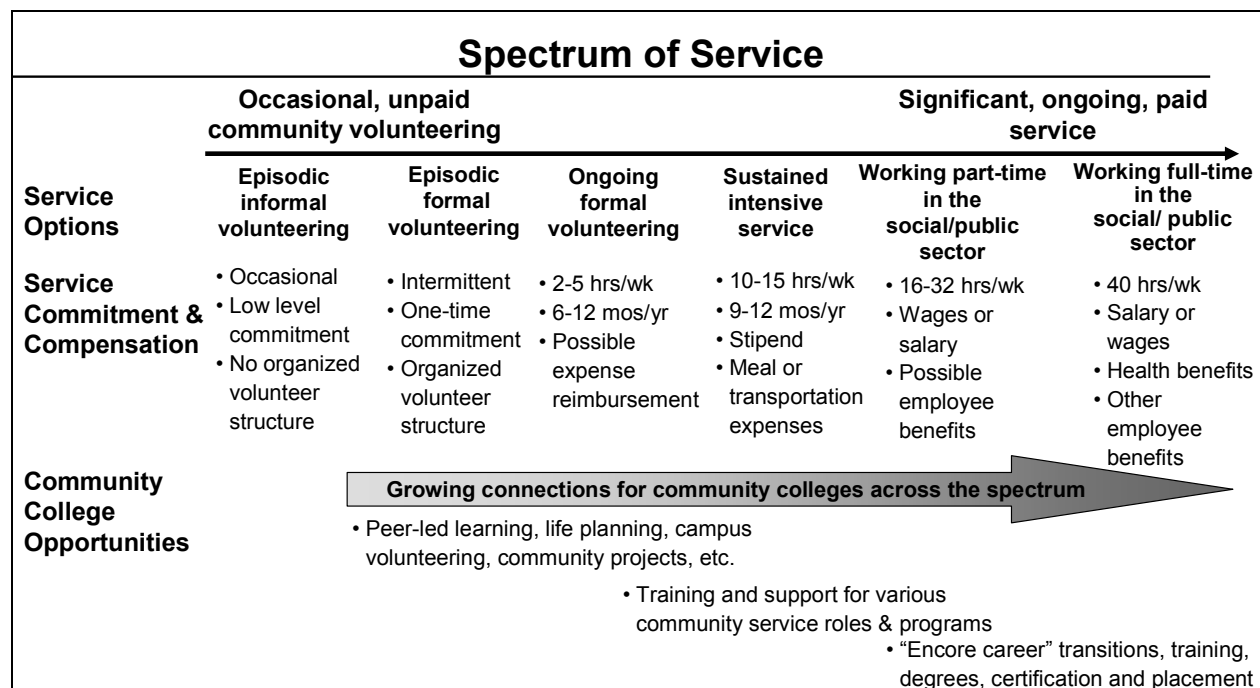
Many existing community college programs provide a promising platform for creating pathways to service roles. There are potential intersections throughout their academic divisions:

General Education	{ Credit courses, degree programs. Service-learning
Occupational Education	{ Career transition support Encore Career services Certification in allied health, gerontology, education, social work, environment, non profit management, etc. Partnerships with government, nonprofits, business
Community Education	{ Non-credit courses Lifelong learning programs Life planning Leadership development Community projects
Developmental Education	{ Mentoring and tutoring community college students (including older students) to increase academic success

Community Colleges: Developing Pathways to a Spectrum of Service

There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to individuals seeking to contribute to the public good as part of a redefined period between middle and late life. They have different interests, experience, skills, access, financial resources, willingness to take on new challenges, and flexibility requirements. There is a wide spectrum of ways in which older adults can contribute to community needs, and community colleges can serve as pathways to many of these opportunities.

In fact, many community colleges are already engaging older adults in service through peer-led lifelong learning, campus support, and other community-based activities. However, one of the areas for greatest potential growth is building pathways to significant, ongoing, paid part-time or full-time service, as envisioned in the “Encore Career” concept. By retooling existing credit and occupational courses and services, such pathways could become an integral part of community colleges.



Paving the Way: The Emergence of Promising Practices

Some community colleges have already paved the way for engaging older adults. A 2005 survey conducted by the League for Innovation in the Community College found that 69% of responding community college CEO’s indicated that they have targeted programs for adults age 50 and over. The two most common are special noncredit programs (76% of respondents) and reduced or free tuition (73%). Additionally, 96% indicated that they make services available to older adults, with the most common being library access (91%), cultural/recreational offerings (83%), academic counseling (77%) and career counseling (67%). (See Attachment 2 for Survey results.)

However, community colleges will need to go well beyond these traditional approaches, craft new messages and develop new programs to create pathways to significant service for the emerging generation of older adults.

Several community colleges have begun to test different practices. To prepare this report Civic Ventures looked at seven community colleges that have either transformed traditional services or invented new approaches. This was not intended as a comprehensive review of all community college initiatives, but rather to illustrate the range of innovations that are taking place. While each community college has developed its own approach and programs, together they begin to demonstrate several promising practices in which community colleges:

- **Serve as lead partners for new comprehensive, community-wide initiatives.** Several community colleges are helping post-midlife adults to plan for and carry out a new vision for their next stage of life. These initiatives provide opportunities for life planning, meaningful engagement through work and service, continued learning for new directions, and peer and community connections. They are part of a national initiative called The Next Chapter™, which was launched by Civic Ventures in 2001.
- **Increase the active involvement of midlife adults in community college programs, campuses and centers.** Community colleges have added value in support of their missions from opportunities that 1) bring people together across generations, 2) build a broader constituency of older adults who understand and support community colleges, 3) capture the interests of a cohort with time and resources to participate in community college programs, and 4) tap the human resources to help out as volunteers, organizers, part-time instructors.
- **Retool community education and lifelong learning.** Many of these community colleges are building on and reinventing their non-credit and peer-led adult learning programs to target the emerging needs and interests of baby boomers and adults already over age 60 who are interested in exploring life options, civic engagement, and continued learning. They are reaching out to this new group through focus groups, new class offerings, special programs, websites, and new physical places.
- **Establish new entry points, messages and workplace connections around existing community college degree and certificate programs.** Some community colleges are working on several fronts to align their social sector programs (e.g., health, education, gerontology, technology, nonprofit studies) with adult learner services: 1) retooling career counseling and re-entry services to attract older adults who are interested in public service careers, 2) forging new internal partnerships with faculty, 3) expanding connections with local businesses and employers to identify public service workforce shortages that could be filled by re-trained older adults, and 4) collaborating with the non-profit sector and employers to prepare them for working with older adults.
- **Promote older adult civic involvement through multiple strategies and programs.** Although many community colleges have a history of civic engagement through service-

learning and community service strategies, public policy and community issues forums, community surveys, and active campus volunteer forces, they primarily focus on younger students. Some community colleges are now expanding these practices by hosting older adult volunteer programs (e.g., RSVP), developing new ways to incorporate older adults in academic service-learning programs, creating new links to community service opportunities, and expanding opportunities for older adults to be engaged on campus and in the community.

Areas of Alignment: Community Colleges and Pathways to Service for Older Adults

To delve more deeply into the idea of tapping community colleges as pathways to significant service for older adults, participants in the March meeting in Tempe explored where community college capacity and interests are aligned with the changing worlds of civic engagement and adult learning. They identified several areas of alignment that provide a starting point:

“More than any other generation, today's older workers intend to remain engaged in meaningful work. Savvy employers recognize the value such experienced workers bring to the workplace and are developing strategies to capitalize on their interest, their skills and their work ethic. Because of their convenience, broad array of programs and low cost, community colleges are often the first choice for adult learners who need to brush up on their skills or launch whole new careers.”

Dr. George R. Boggs, President and CEO
American Association of Community Colleges
February 22, 2006

- **Community-driven missions** – Community colleges have a long tradition of commitment to responding to community needs and circumstances. Their community-driven mission means that colleges have evolved over time to take on new programs and agendas as community needs develop and crystallize.
- **“Big issue” focus** – They are well positioned to focus their “service pathways” initiatives on a particular area or areas of community need where they have expertise in preparing workers and/or building public awareness.
- **Transition resources** – Community colleges have re-entry services, career counseling and skill development opportunities that could be adapted to connect older adults with work that serves community needs.
- **Workforce development know-how and connections** – While much of their workforce development is in the private sector, it can support or be translated to public service and other forms of socially important work.
- **Entrepreneurial approaches and partnerships** – Most community colleges have extensive external links with the community, business, government, education and others. These links give them “access” to Boomers currently working in businesses and governments in their service areas.
- **Intrapreneurial approaches** – Some have begun to create new internal connections and innovations that could support the type of links that would facilitate a pathway to service that proceeds from re-entry and initial transition to retraining and job placement.

- **Accessibility for diverse populations** – Community colleges provide an accessible, low cost community-based higher education alternative for people of different ages, economic status, educational levels, cultural and racial backgrounds.
- **Community and political backing** – To survive and thrive, community colleges depend on their local communities for participation in programs and for support of funding. As older adults engage in community colleges, a side benefit can be strengthened community support.

Areas of Non-Alignment: Challenges and Other Considerations

Meeting participants also discussed areas where community colleges are not yet aligned, or where there is more work to be done to forge points of alignment. This discussion identified several challenges for community colleges as they pursue the idea of creating pathways to significant service for older adults within their institutions. These challenges include:

- **Economic considerations** – For community college leaders, funding is the number one priority and number one issue. In most cases, general state and federal revenues are decreasing and being replaced by targeted local revenues such as increased tuition and levies, contract revenue and fundraising. This results in fewer flexible dollars to invest in new programs with unknown future sustainability and support.
- **Communication and awareness** – To develop buy-in at all community college levels (presidents, faculty, support services, community education), there will need to be a clear message about the value of a focus on older adults, how their talent and experience can be tapped to address community problems, and how community colleges can be a key player in making this match. Right now, the message is unclear, has limited visibility, and doesn't reflect the targeted audience of today's and tomorrow's older adults.
- **An existing divide between adult non-credit education and credit offerings** – Many older adults are drawn to community colleges through non-credit continuing education courses, life long learning institutes, transition centers, and other programs that exist outside the general and occupational education divisions. While these entry points can help bring older adults into a broader range of community college offerings, there is some reluctance by faculty to associate more closely with these non-credit activities.
- **Inappropriate conflation with existing senior programs** – All community colleges offer various types of programs for seniors. These potentially obstruct colleges' ability to design new programs and services for boomers.
- **Program planning and design** – As yet, the role of community colleges as pathways to significant service for older adults is not clear enough for many community colleges to take action on their own. At the local level, the concept needs to be more fully defined. Community colleges need to build a fact base, explore older adults' willingness and interest

to participate in community college offerings, develop an overall concept that is tailored to local situations and populations, align it with areas of acute service workforce shortages, and create a fit with existing services.

Moving Forward: Next Steps for Community Colleges and Potential National Initiative

The goal of the March meeting was to exchange information about the worlds of civic engagement and adult learning in community colleges. The group discussed steps that might be taken toward a planning and implementation process that would inspire and enable the wider community college network to become engaged in this work. While it was clear from the discussion that community colleges see an intersection between their institutions and preparing older adults for deep engagement opportunities, the best way to build momentum and interest was less apparent. The following next steps were suggested by the community college leaders:

- **Raise awareness among community colleges.** Reach out to other community college presidents, faculty, staff, and trustees to increase their understanding of the issues and the potential. Explain how pathways to significant service fit into the mission of community colleges. Specific suggestions included using community college communications vehicles, such as the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Journal, League for Innovation in the Community College abstracts, American Community College Trustee magazine and association meetings, the Council for Adult & Experiential Learning news and conferences, peer communications, and key national community college meetings. As a follow-up to the meeting, Tony Zeiss, President of Central Piedmont Community College, has written an article titled “Baby Boomers: An Encore Opportunity,” for the *AACC Journal*
- **Expand the information base and refine potential concepts.** Build on information and research presented at the March meeting and delve more deeply into specifics around areas of greatest relevance to community colleges. For example, encourage colleges to begin dialogue with business and government agencies for whom they currently offer training about offering programs to assist their employees in transition to the next chapter of their lives. Test the willingness of community colleges to chart a new course around older adults and service. One possible information gathering strategy would be a follow-up survey by The League for Innovation in the Community College sent to community college CEO’s; it would assess awareness of issues, readiness, and capacity. Leaders at the national and local levels could be engaged to consider and recommend how a national initiative could be further explored – both on a national level and in local projects.
- **Build a network of community colleges engaged in this work.** Consider a combination of special convenings, publications and online connections to share best practices, lessons learned and overcoming challenges.
- **Explore approaches for structured planning and thinking.** The following is a possible national initiative route. It is based on an eight-step process used by the League for Innovation in the Community College in its national initiatives:

1. Identify potential partners and sponsors at the national level.
2. Develop an overall national concept or proposal for review and approval of key national players. This concept would include goals, objectives, structure, implementation, timeline, evaluation, funding, budget, etc.
3. Identify local community college participants through some type of selection process or request-for-proposals
4. Establish an advisory board to provide local and national guidance.
5. Initiate start up, track progress through meetings and other means, and assist project implementation with participants.
6. Provide constant feedback and evaluation.
7. Capture, share, and disseminate outcomes, models and best practices among project participants and the broader community college field.
8. Expand the network for further sharing, refining models, and taking the work to scale.

Attachments:

1. Meeting Participants
2. League for Innovation in the Community College CEO Survey

March 26-27, 2006 Meeting Participants

American Association of Community Colleges

- Norma Kent, Vice President for Communications, American Association of Community Colleges, Washington, DC
- Ed Coulter, Chancellor, Arkansas South College, Mountain Home, AR

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning

- Karen Steinberg, Executive Vice President, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, Chicago, IL
- Wayne Giles, Chancellor Emeritus, Metropolitan Community College, Lee's Summit, MO

Community College National Center for Community Engagement

- Lyvier Conss, Executive Director, Community College National Center for Community Engagement, Mesa, AZ
- Lynn Suydam, President, St. Louis Community College-Meramec, St. Louis, MO

League for Innovation in the Community College

- Gerardo E. De Los Santos, President and CEO, League for Innovation in the Community College, Gilbert, AZ
- Tony Zeiss, President, Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, NC

Maricopa Community College

- Rufus Glasper, Chancellor
- Bernie Ronan, Director for Civic Participation, Maricopa Community College Center for Civic Engagement

Atlantic Philanthropies

- Laura Robbins, Program Executive

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

- Carol Kratz, Senior Program Officer

Civic Ventures

- Marc Freedman, President
- Judy Goggin, Senior Vice President
- Nancy Peterson, Senior Advisor



What Do CEOs Want to Know About. . .
Programs & Services for Older Adults (50+)
A Survey of and for League Alliance CEOs

These survey results are composed of the responses submitted by your fellow CEOs as part of the Alliance quarterly CEO survey service. The response rate for this survey was 29% (n=166).

A summary of findings will be mailed directly to all Alliance CEOs, but all individual responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

1. What age segments describe your older adult students?	
<u>20%</u> = 50 Years Old <u>17%</u> = 65+ Years Old	<u>30%</u> = 55+ Years Old <u>40%</u> = We do not specify age as a qualifier
<u>21%</u> = 60+ Years Old <u>4%</u> = Other	
2. Have you developed targeted programs for older adults (50+)?	<u>69%</u> (Y) <u>31%</u> (N)
3. If you answered “yes” to question 2, what types of targeted programs have you developed?	
<u>76%</u> Special noncredit program (e.g. “Senior College,” Lifelong Learning Institute)	
<u>4%</u> Special certificate programs	<u>8%</u> Service learning programs
<u>73%</u> Reduced or free tuition	<u>5%</u> Accelerated degree completion options
<u>6%</u> Leadership training programs	<u>15%</u> Other
4. Do older adults have access to college services?	<u>96%</u> (Y) <u>4%</u> (N)
5. If you answered “yes” to question 4, which services are available to older adults?	
<u>77%</u> Academic counseling	<u>91%</u> Library access
<u>83%</u> Cultural/recreational offerings	<u>31%</u> Internships
<u>67%</u> Career counseling <u>17%</u> Other	
6. Do you conduct special marketing and outreach to older adults?	<u>49%</u> (Y) <u>51%</u> (N)
7. If you answered “yes” to question 6, which marketing or outreach techniques do you use?	
<u>66%</u> Targeted mailings	<u>41%</u> Special publications
<u>72%</u> Outreach to senior groups or organizations	<u>34%</u> Targeted media ads
<u>29%</u> Special recruitment events <u>11%</u> Other	
8. Have you developed programs that help adults to make the transition into retirement?	<u>39%</u> (Y) <u>61%</u> (N)
9. If you answered “yes” to question 8, what types of programs do you provide?	
<u>60%</u> Life planning	<u>25%</u> Employment
<u>27%</u> Civic engagement/service	<u>11%</u> Leadership
<u>16%</u> Re-entry advising	<u>6%</u> Targeted scholarships
<u>78%</u> Financial planning <u>56%</u> Health assessment/education <u>5%</u> Other	
10. Have you developed programs that assist college employees to make the transition into retirement?	<u>43%</u> (Y) <u>57%</u> (N)
11. If you answered “yes” to question 10, what types of programs do you provide?	
<u>49%</u> Life planning	<u>43%</u> Flexible work options
<u>25%</u> Volunteer options	<u>13%</u> Mentoring options
<u>36%</u> Tuition discounts	<u>10%</u> Other
<u>92%</u> Financial and benefits planning <u>15%</u> Peer support groups	
12. Have you developed, or are you interested in developing, a campus-based retirement community?	<u>27%</u> (Y) <u>73%</u> (N)