

Executive summary

By Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

Part one of this research, the *MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures Encore Career Survey* of more than 3,500 adults between the ages of 44 and 70, found that millions of Americans have already launched encore careers combining personal meaning, social impact and continuing income. It also found that tens of millions of people in this age group are interested in launching encore careers of their own in the future.

Part two of this research, *Tapping Encore Talent: A MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures Survey of Nonprofit Employers*, takes a look at the job prospects for these tens of millions of boomers. A nationwide telephone survey of 427 nonprofit employers² conducted earlier this year explored two key questions: Are nonprofit employers, so used to hiring young people at the start of their careers, interested in hiring employees who have finished their midlife careers? And what makes nonprofit employers more or less eager to give encore workers a try?

Here are the main findings:

Nonprofit employers find encore workers at least as appealing as workers in other stages of life. Half of nonprofit employers (50%) see encore workers as highly appealing (rating them 8-10 on a 10-point scale), with an additional 39 percent finding them moderately appealing (rating them 5-7). Only 10 percent said that the idea of hiring encore workers was not appealing (rating them 0-4).

Most nonprofits have employed late-career or previously retired workers in the recent past. More than two out of three nonprofit employers (70%) say they have hired encore workers, while nearly all (95%) have employed younger workers just starting out in their careers.

Interest in encore workers is fueled by growing concerns about finding talented staff and managing skilled labor shortages. More than four in 10 nonprofit employers (42%) see recruiting and hiring talent as a top human resource concern. Nearly six in 10 (59%) see recruiting skilled employees as a big challenge. Very few nonprofit employers (9%) expect it will get easier to find the talent they need.

²The sample includes nonprofit employers in the fields of social services, health care/health services, education/youth development (not including schools), plus community agencies, crisis intervention agencies, and advocacy groups working on environmental and other causes. For details, turn to Appendix B, "Profile of Employers Surveyed," on page 35.

Nonprofit employers see the benefits of hiring encore workers. Nearly seven in 10 nonprofit employers (69%) rate the valuable experience encore workers bring to the job as a significant benefit, and 67 percent say the same about encore workers' commitment and reliability. (These percentages include only the "significant benefit" category; if "some benefit" is included, these categories are both at or above 95 percent.)

Nonprofits have concerns about the encore workforce, but no more than one in four sees any of the concerns as "serious." Between one-fifth and one-quarter of nonprofit employers have "serious concerns" that encore workers will demand higher salaries (25%), will be reluctant to learn or adapt to new technology (23%), will lack technical or professional skills (20%), will have higher insurance or benefit costs (19%), or will not stay in the job long (19%).

The perceived cost of encore workers affects their appeal. Only 25 percent of those employers that expect higher costs see encore workers as highly appealing. In contrast, encore workers are highly appealing to 45 percent of the employers that don't anticipate higher costs.

Nonprofits with experience employing late-career or recently retired workers are the most positive about hiring more. Employers with such recent experience are more likely than other nonprofits to view encore workers as very appealing—by a margin of 53 to 40 percent—and are less likely to express serious or moderate concerns. They are also more positive about encore workers who have switched from business to the nonprofit sector (40% to 29%).

Most nonprofits say they already offer a key workplace characteristic important to encore workers—flexible work arrangements. Nine in 10 nonprofit employers (90%) say that they offer part-time work, and 86 percent say they offer flexible schedules to all or some employees. But just 40 percent say they offer employees the flexibility to do work from a mobile office or at home.

A majority of nonprofit employers say they would like help hiring and retaining encore workers. In addition, some nonprofit employers say they would like help finding and screening encore workers (48%), preparing and training encore workers (25%), and providing health insurance or other benefits (22%).

Together, parts one and two of the MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures research find a congruence of interests between nonprofits with serious recruitment and hiring challenges and baby boomers looking for ways to continue working in jobs that offer meaning and a chance to help others. The fundamentals of supply and demand are present, but will those seeking jobs meet nonprofit employers needing talent? If yes, there will be a massive and multiple payoff—for the nonprofits and their important missions, the encore seekers and our nation. ■