

Back to School for Encore Talent

In its 2014 Encore Career Survey, Encore.org learned that more than 4.5 million Americans are already part of the encore movement, sharing their skills, passion and expertise in social-impact encores – and another 21 million are ready to join them, most within the next five years.

Additionally, Encore.org surveyed in depth a particular group of people with a high level of interest in an encore career, those with at least some education beyond high school, who represented 40 percent of the total survey cohort.

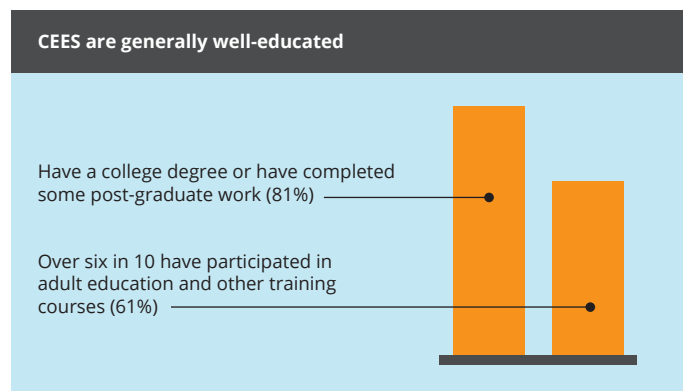
Of that subset, two-thirds expressed interest in training and education to advance their encores.

College-educated encore-seekers (CEES) **constitute the majority of encore career-seekers** (88 percent of the total), so it's particularly important to understand what drives their interest and what might be holding them back.

Interest in education persists well beyond the traditional college years. We observed that CEES are likely to turn to institutions of higher education for resources and support as they make post-midlife encore transitions. This makes sense, since they are already familiar with the resources these key institutions provide. For that reason, we explored a range of questions about how CEES might access higher ed for support in an encore transition.

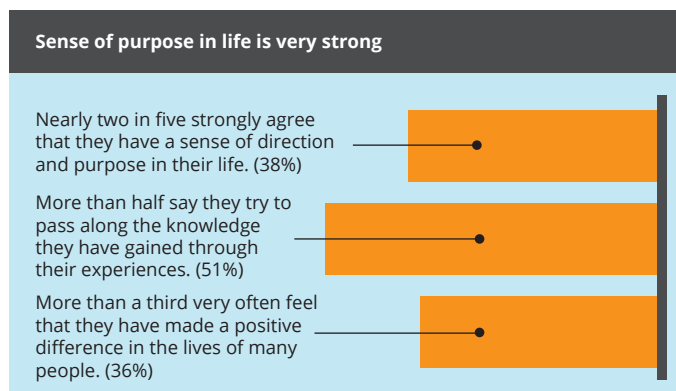
1 Who are CEES?

- **Women outnumber men** in this group, with 61 percent female compared to 39 percent male.
- **Most CEES are not yet 60** (average age, 58 and a half) and fewer than one in four (23 percent) are retired.
- **As a group, CEES are quite healthy**, with 54 percent saying their health is excellent or very good.
- **CEES are generally well-educated.** A whopping 81 percent have a college degree or have completed some post-graduate work. Over six in 10 (61 percent) have participated in adult education and other training courses.



2 What are CEES' encore career interests?

- **CEES' sense of purpose in life is very strong:**
 - Nearly two in five (38 percent) strongly agree that they have a sense of direction and purpose in their life.
 - More than half (51 percent) say they try to pass along the knowledge they have gained through their experiences.
 - More than a third (36 percent) very often feel that they have made a positive difference in the lives of many people.



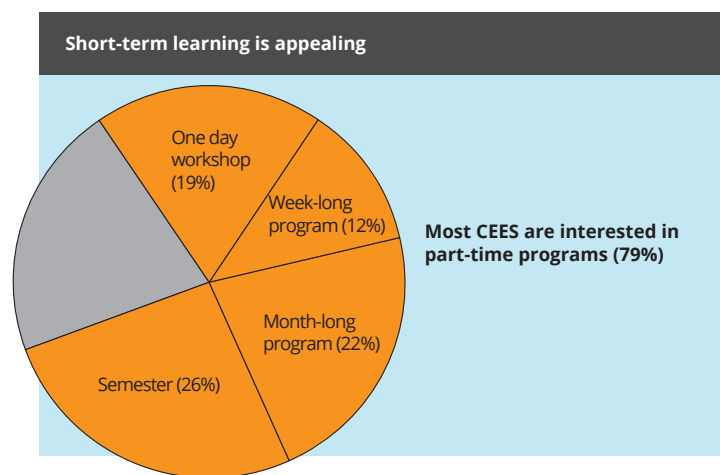
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- **Social services hold the highest level of interest**, with 31 percent saying that social services would be their primary encore focus, followed closely by education, identified by 28 percent. Other prominent interests include healthcare (13 percent) and the environment (11 percent).
- **They anticipate a significant commitment to their encore work.** CEES' expected age of retirement, 68.63 years of age, on average, is the oldest of all groups surveyed in the current research.
- CEES say that the **best reasons for working longer**, other than financial compensation, are staying active and healthy (34 percent) and contributing to the common good

3 What's important in designing encore-attuned programs in higher ed?

- **CEES want to learn more about their options.** More than two-thirds (68 percent) of CEES expressed active interest in learning more about education and training programs that would help them find an encore career.
- **What's offered seems to matter more than where it's offered:** Only 25 percent showed more interest in the programs offered by an alma mater.
- **CEES express broad higher-ed goals**, demonstrating interest in general academic learning and field-specific practical applications, with stronger interest in the latter.
 - Half seek programs that lead to certificates or professional credentials.
 - Only about one in four (28 percent) seek degree-granting programs.
- **The means of learning makes a difference.** Nearly half of CEES (48 percent) say they would prefer classes that have both in-person and online components. Online interest was strongest among CEES who favored programs offered by their alma mater (64 percent), perhaps a feature of geography as much as pedagogy.

- **Short-term learning is appealing.** Most CEES (79 percent) are interested in part-time programs, from a one-day workshop (19 percent), a week-long program (12 percent), classes spread over a month (22 percent) or a semester (26 percent). A minority (21 percent) say they would consider a program of a year or longer.
- CEES seek programs where they can **learn from mentors or others in encore careers.** They value hearing from people in social sector encores who can show them how their current skills can be applied.
- CEES also favor programs that prepare them to **earn continued or supplemental income.**



These responses outline new directions for higher education leaders, in order to reach a growing demographic and respond to the rising needs of encore talent who seek to advance social impact.

Colleges and universities can enroll new swaths of students – and serve an entirely new swath of adult learners – if they:

- Develop certificates/credentialing programs for adult students,
- Provide in-person and online ‘blended’ learning models and
- Offer short-term education programs that prepare encore seekers to earn continued or supplemental income.

Methodology

Encore.org, in collaboration with Penn Schoen Berland, conducted an online survey of a representative sample of 1,694 adults ages 50 to 70 in the United States. The survey was conducted between February 5 and 19, 2014, and March 19 and 25, 2014. The margin of error for the general population is ±3.1 percent at the 95 percent confidence level, and larger for subgroups.