#GEN2GEN CITIES

A guide to intergenerational strategies for public sector innovators seeking solutions to community challenges

By Corita Brown, Ph.D.

encore.org®

About the author
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About Encore.org
Encore.org is an innovation hub working to realize the potential of longer lives and intergenerational connection to solve our most pressing social problems.

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We don't have all the financial resources we need to solve these problems — no city does. But we are rich in human resources.

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San Jose Mayor, Sam Liccardo

FOREWORD

Gen2Gen is thriving in the city of San Jose

By Sam Liccardo
Sam Liccardo is the mayor of San Jose, California.

Like so many other cities across America, we have a growing, renewable resource in San Jose — talented people over 50 who want to give back. While some see only the burden of a growing number of older adults, we see the challenges and the opportunities.

Opportunities like those made available to Vishnu Kamataki — a retired mechanical engineer who moved to our city to be closer to family. Now he's an active volunteer at his grandchildren's school. He's secured funding to modernize the computer lab at the Cypress Community Center. And he's busy recruiting high school students to teach computer skills to older neighbors.

In 2017, we launched Gen2Gen San Jose to apply the talents of tens of thousands of people like Vishnu to our community's most pressing needs.

We live in an incredibly wealthy community called Silicon Valley, but within that prosperity is real poverty, financial and otherwise. One out of every three of our youth doesn't have a consistent, caring adult in their life — and, statewide, there is now only one guidance counselor for every 1,000 high school students. Sixty percent of African-American and Latino boys in Santa Clara County entering kindergarten have not been adequately prepared to learn. Older and younger generations are facing an epidemic of social isolation, many struggling with trauma, depression and substance abuse.

We don't have all the financial resources we need to solve these problems — no city does. But we are rich in human resources. Through Gen2Gen San Jose, we're tapping our older neighbors' time and talent to support preschoolers in family resource centers, to coach teens through first jobs, to help young adults take their first steps toward careers, even to make our city government work better.

We tip our hats to those who launched this work 20 years ago in San Diego County, showing what's possible when local governments apply Gen2Gen approaches to early care and education, workforce development, civic engagement, health and wellness. Today we're proud to be among a growing group of cities and counties whose efforts to leverage the assets of older generations are featured in this indispensable guide.

In the years ahead, there will be many Gen2Gen breakthroughs supporting the health and well-being of all ages. Wherever you are, please join us in exploring new, innovative strategies that connect the generations, make the best use of financial and human resources, and reweave the social fabric.

Let's make every city Gen2Gen!

INTRODUCTION
Is your city ready for Gen2Gen solutions?

Across the country, cities and counties are becoming a proving ground for intergenerational strategies that help meet multiple challenges with a single intervention.

- In New York City, nonprofit and city leaders launched an effort to pair youth living in homeless shelters with low-income older adults who have an extra room. The goal: to help stabilize two of the city's most vulnerable populations.

- The County of San Diego's Intergenerational Games promote healthy behaviors in the face of the growing issues of social isolation, obesity, diabetes and heart disease in both older adults and youth.

- In Springfield, Missouri, a program city officials launched to increase nonprofit capacity and provide older adults with purpose and connection is so successful that adults eager to find a volunteer opportunity sign up more than a month in advance, and area nonprofits are on a waiting list to speak to them.

- In San Jose public libraries, bilingual grandmas are working to improve kindergarten readiness and support culturally specific early education programming for children 0-5 and caregivers.

- In a public library 500 miles south in El Dorado Hills, California, high school students and retired adults jointly run a 3D print lab, creating prosthetic hands for a nonprofit that distributes them to people around the world who need them.

- And, in a nod to the power of city innovation, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership created Mayors for Mentors to showcase what mayors across the country are doing to expand mentoring opportunities for young people in their communities.

This guide is designed to support an emerging community of practice made up of public sector innovators who are leveraging the assets of older and younger people to produce a new era of generational connection and social progress.

By leveraging the assets of residents of all ages and connecting the generations, these leaders are helping to build stronger ties, foster greater empathy, make better use of public spaces, increase volunteerism and save money, all while improving outcomes for residents of all ages.

In these pages, you will learn about all of the innovations above and dozens more taking place in 17 different cities and counties, coast to coast. You'll get tips from the public servants who got the ball rolling. And you'll get recommendations for how to get started on intergenerational solutions of your own.

We hope that *#Gen2Gen Cities* will help city and county leaders like you create cost-effective, creative solutions to local challenges, while addressing the deep need in all of our communities to build meaningful relationships, bridge historic divides, and combat a national epidemic of loneliness and isolation.

There's no time to lose.

Photo: Talking Eyes Media / Encore.org

> **These leaders are helping to build stronger ties,
> foster greater empathy,
> make better use of public spaces,
> increase volunteerism and save money,
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> for residents of all ages.**

PILOTING

7 ideas for those ready
to try new approaches

Photo: Ed Kashi

Build community with intergenerational events and activities

Activities and events that bring the generations together can help foster empathy, build a stronger sense of community, and increase community ownership among all generations.

WHY DO THIS?

- Events designed to build connections, relationships and understanding across generations contribute to an increased sense of belonging and reduced isolation for all ages.
- Engaging all ages in event design and planning builds Gen2Gen community leadership — and can increase turnout and engagement.
- Multigenerational events can provide a good-news angle for local media covering your town.

SPOTLIGHTS

Intergenerational Games / San Diego County, CA

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency joined with multiple community partners to establish the Intergenerational Games, an event designed to promote healthy behaviors and relationships across generations as an antidote to the growing issues of social isolation, obesity, diabetes and heart disease in both older adults and youth.

At the annual event, active adults age 50+ and local students pair up for a half-day of education-al and physical activities in locations around the county. Small intergenerational teams move through different activity stations and engage in a variety of fun, non-competitive and educational activities, followed by a shared meal.

Multigenerational survey teams / Charlottesville, VA

To help develop Charlottesville's 2020 aging plan, staffers at the Jefferson Area Board on Aging (JABA) engaged high school students and older adults to conduct surveys and focus groups with their peers about what would make the city age friendly.

Above: Gen2Gen San Jose members celebrate the Lunar New Year with crafts and food at the Roosevelt Community Center. Photo: Gen2Gen San Jose and Age-Friendly San Jose

The students wrote a chapter entitled "Strengthening Intergenerational Connections" for the final report, which produced immediate results, as more than 20 older adults signed up to volunteer in seven elementary schools and in the county's local libraries.

PRO TIPS

Donna Baker, director of operations,
Jefferson Area Board on Aging, Charlottesville, VA
Whenever possible, include community residents of all ages in the planning and design process. This has been so important to our success. We don't assume that organizations always know best. There's a lot of creativity among residents. Talk to them. They may surprise you with their passion.

When you design any event, keep the idea of building intergenerational connection top of mind. It may change how you think about a lot of things. For example, you may be organizing an event related to senior housing, but you could invite a local school or childcare center to explore common concerns or opportunities for collaboration. You don't have to just pick one age group to be part of that conversation.

Pam Plimpton, intergenerational coordinator,
County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, CA
When organizing events, focus on how intergenerational strategies can help your community address key concerns, like educational outcomes for youth and workforce development, rather than as something 'nice' for the community. This framing helped our intergenerational efforts garner more media attention and capture the interest of community partners and county employees, who understood how the events aligned with their priorities.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Include youth and older adults on planning committees to help design intergenerational activities.
- Recruit intergenerational teams for citywide or neighborhood events featuring friendly team competitions.
- Invite older and younger pairs to share perspectives on specific topics at public meetings.

The Intergenerational Games are sponsored by the County of San Diego and multiple community partners.

Increase volunteerism by tailoring opportunities for adults 50+

Civic matchmaking brings together two important pieces of a puzzle — older adults looking for ways to connect and contribute, and social-purpose organizations strapped for resources and capacity. Volunteer opportunities and intergenerational service teams can be both virtual and in person, include direct service and capacity-building roles, and vary in scope and level of commitment.

WHY DO THIS?

- Older volunteers bring decades of experience that can strengthen nonprofit capacity.
- Volunteer experiences create more deeply engaged and connected citizens.
- Volunteer experiences can help bridge historic divides across age, race and income.
- Intergenerational service teams can tap the talents of older and younger generations, help people of all ages learn from one another, and illustrate the power of connection.

SPOTLIGHTS

Grandpas United, White Plains, NY

Grandpas United is a grassroots organization sponsored by a city agency, the White Plains Youth Bureau. Created in 2018 to promote intergenerational activities for boys and men, Grandpas United has 60 members who work closely with the local schools, the public library, and the city's Recreation & Parks Department.

The program sponsors regular activities, including Grandpas Go to School, where older men mentor elementary school students twice a month; Sports Night, where retired college and professional athletes meet regularly with a local teen group at the library; and Coffee with Grandpas, where older men meet with nonprofit staff to talk about how older male mentors can contribute to their programming. Many more intergenerational activities have taken place, and others are in the works.

Photo: All Hands and Hearts

The two founders have offered to advise other men looking to create grandpa groups (no actual grandchildren required) in towns and cities across the country.

Give 5, Springfield, MO

The city of Springfield launched Give 5 in 2017 to match recently retired adults with volunteer opportunities in local nonprofits. Funding came from the Greene County Senior Citizens' Service Fund (a tax that supports programming for older adults) and seed money from the city.

Each class of up to 25 participants attends five weekly sessions, meeting different nonprofits eager for their expertise at each one. At the end of the last session, participants choose where they'd like to volunteer. It's caught on quickly — classes now fill up over a month in advance, and nonprofits are on a waiting list to speak to participants.

An evaluation of Give 5 conducted by a retired dean and retired head of gerontology from Missouri State University found that the program contributed to strong volunteer retention, increased philanthropic donations, and an increased sense of purpose and community ownership among participants.

Now hosted by United Way of the Ozarks, Give 5 licenses the customizable, scalable and flexible program, which can be adjusted to address specific challenges and to account for each community's assets, strengths and weaknesses.

Jim O'Neal, Springfield's former mayor, said the program helped him plug back in after retiring. "If a former mayor can feel isolated, anyone can," says Greg Burris, the city leader who launched Give 5.

Inspiring Service, Cincinnati, OH

A few years ago, Inspiring Service, a local nonprofit and parent organization to Cincinnati Cares, partnered with the mayor's office and community leaders to create an innovative, easy-to-use, mobile-friendly technology that helps match city residents — including older adults — with volunteer opportunities in local nonprofits.

Launched in 2017, the website connects hundreds of volunteers per month to more than 500 nonprofit organizations and showcases thousands of ways to help. Craig Young, the founder and executive director of Inspiring Service, describes the platform as "simple and frictionless, like the 'Yelp' of civic matchmaking. You don't have to provide lots of personal information to quickly find a match with the right organization for you."

The platform includes a one-click feature called "Helping Youth Thrive," that supports intergenerational connections between prospective volunteers and nearly 100 organizations in Greater Cincinnati working with youth. It also includes new artificial intelligence technology to quickly and efficiently connect volunteers to nonprofit boards. Just a few months after the launch of this feature, more than 250 nonprofits signed up to find board members through the site.

Inspiring Service's digital platform is now being used in Boston, Los Angeles, Nevada, and other locations.

PRO TIPS

Greg Burris, former Springfield city manager and co-founder, Give 5
Make sure you develop a broad menu of volunteer opportunities — one size does not fit all. The first volunteer opportunities nonprofits often think of are classic roles like stuffing envelopes and answering phones. Some people enjoy that, but others may want different types of opportunities. Step back and think if you had a retired nurse, teacher, engineer or CEO interested in helping out, what kinds of roles could best leverage their interests, skills and talents?

A broad menu goes beyond a range of roles. It also includes a range in structure, from episodic opportunities to a regimented weekly day and time. Some people are very drawn to flexibility, while others want to have a concrete schedule.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Review the language and images of current civic-matching platforms or volunteer recruitment materials to make sure they represent all ages.
- Get messaging tips from Encore.org's 10 Steps for Engaging Adults 50+.
- To amplify volunteer opportunities for older adults, partner with local programs for adults 50+, like RSVP.
- Send email to explore replication of these models in your community.
  - Grandpas United whiteplainsyouthbureau@whiteplainsny.gov.
  - Give 5 info@give5program.org
  - Inspiring Service https://cincinnaticares.org/contact-us/

Members of Grandpas United support youth in White Plains, New York.

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Greg Burris, former Springfield city manager
and co-founder, Give 5

Activate public spaces with intergenerational programming

There is power in public spaces — like libraries, community centers and parks — to bring generations together.

As Carol Coletta, president and CEO of the Memphis River Parks Partnership, says, "We increasingly live in segregated ways with people who are at the same life stage. The problem is that's a heck of a challenge to the development of empathy. The notion that we're going to isolate older adults diminishes the richness of community and diminishes our ability to empathize and see ourselves as part of a community....The power of public space can bring us together again." Colleta is a senior fellow at the Kresge Foundation, serving as a loaned executive to Memphis River Parks Partnership.

WHY DO THIS?

- Sharing public spaces can decrease social isolation and increase purpose for young and old while building empathy across generations.
- Activating public spaces can save city dollars; expand creative offerings at community centers, parks and libraries; and generate data to make the case for investment in intergenerational shared sites.

SPOTLIGHTS

Intergenerational arts camp and cooking class, San Jose, CA
When the economic downturn of 2008 hit, with many public services reduced or facing closure, San Jose's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department combined stand-alone senior centers with community centers to reduce costs and maintain programming.

At first, even though all generations used the same spaces, the programming was essentially still age segregated. Typically older adults were there in the mornings, while kids arrived after school, and younger adults attended at night. When San Jose began the Gen2Gen campaign, a light bulb went on. City leaders realized that the new multigenerational centers could do more than just

Photo: 8 80 Cities

help save money, they also had the potential to bridge generational divides and increase community connection.

In 2018, two centers, funded by the Health Trust, piloted new intergenerational programming. One center engaged older adults in art and culture activities at a children's camp during spring break week. The second piloted a 10-week cooking and nutrition workshop with a local charter school, offered during lunch periods every other week. Older adults taught students healthy versions of traditional Mexican dishes, followed by a shared meal where the students and adults talked about their lives.

As a result of the programming, young people reported a shift in their perceptions of older adults, viewing them more as resources instead of feeling scared of them. Older adults reported an increased sense of purpose and value. And staff members were excited to introduce new and creative ideas, while breaking down long-standing silos between aging and youth services.

Makerspaces, El Dorado Hills Library, CA
Makerspaces are part of a growing movement in libraries to create immersive, hands-on spaces where people can tinker, invent, collaborate, experiment, create and learn. In many communities, makerspaces have become organic intergenerational hubs. Older adults share traditional skills with young people — such as woodworking, repairs, weaving and quilting — and collaborate on digital and tech projects.

At El Dorado Hills Library in California, a volunteer team of high school students and retired older adults run the 3D print lab and provide free community access to technology. They also print prosthetic hands for a nonprofit that distributes hands throughout the world and help community members of different generations build their own 3D printers. Now in its sixth year, the program has become an integral part of the community.

"The kids are thrilled to practice new skills, and the older adults are thrilled to share their knowledge," says Carolyn Brooks, library programs consultant for the California State Library Association. "It's social connections, it's tech connections, it's knowledge sharing across generations — all the things you would want to happen in a library."

Viva Calles, San Jose, CA
Twice a year people of all ages and abilities come out to enjoy activities along a six-mile stretch of car-free streets in San Jose. "Open street programs are an amazing use of public space for all generations," notes Ed Solis, recreation superintendent for the City of San Jose. "Think about it — the streets are one of our largest public spaces, but are generally only used for driving cars. We turn these six miles into our longest linear park, and it intentionally connects all different types of neighborhoods."

A "senior hub" on the route, sponsored by AARP, connects older residents with children ages 5-13 from local community centers, as they explore the open streets together.

Solis and his staff have developed intentional outreach strategies for different generations, cultural groups and neighborhoods. "Recruitment needs to focus explicitly on equity and accessibility with all age groups in mind," he says. "Public space is for everyone."

PRO TIPS

Josué Covarrubias, recreation supervisor, San Jose Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services
Anticipate common challenges — like these — and develop plans to deal with them:

- **Timing.** Older adults typically show up in the morning and children after school. Staff need to create programs at times that work for both, like weekends, school breaks and summer. Engaging older adults in early childhood programs (morning time) can work.
- **Language barriers.** Centers can manage language barriers by designing arts, science, technology and movement-based activities that enable people to participate without a common language.
- **Staff coordination.** If youth and aging services staff have no prior experience with intergenerational work and/or cross-departmental collaboration, they may need extra time upfront to build capacity and relationships.

Gil Penalosa, founder and chair, 8 80 Cities; Ambassador, World Urban Parks
Parks are an important public space we can leverage more. In the United States, people over 60 are approximately 20 percent of the population but only about 5 percent of park users. Many parks are designed with only children and youth in mind, so there isn't much for older people to do and very few organized programs they would find appealing. Public parks would benefit from design and programming that engages all generations.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Hold activities for young children, parents and older adults (like exercise classes, community gardening or walking clubs) at a time when everyone can join in.
- Bring generations together for a meal or a shared activity and provide suggested conversation starters. Collect ideas from all ages on how to connect the generations in public spaces.
- Identify older adults and/or teen volunteers at libraries, parks or community centers who are interested in taking a lead on developing intergenerational opportunities.

Gen2Gen pilot project at the Mayfair Community Center.
Photo: Gen2Gen San Jose and Age Friendly San Jose

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It's social connections, it's tech connections, it's knowledge sharing across generations — all the things you would want to happen in a library.

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Carolyn Brooks, California State Library Association

Advance early care and education by engaging more adults 50+

A two-generation approach to early care and education provides services and opportunities for young children age 0-5 and their parents and caregivers — articulating and tracking outcomes for both simultaneously. Adding grandparents and older caregivers to this model makes it a three-generation approach, leveraging the talent and experience of adults 50+ to support children, families and early care centers.

WHY DO THIS?

- Engaging adults 50+ provides a meaningful extra layer of support for young parents, teachers and child care workers and encourages interdependence across generations.
- Adults 50+ can add another caring, consistent adult to early care and education settings, improving outcomes for young children.
- Engagement with young children and families contributes to improved outcomes (physical and mental health, social connectedness and purpose) for older adults.
- Adults 50+ can help reduce the nation's shortage of early care and education workers.

SPOTLIGHTS

Family Resource Centers, Santa Clara County, CA
A partnership between FIRST 5 Santa Clara County in California and Encore.org's Gen2Gen initiative to engage more older adults in early care and education produced significant results and has the potential to become a national model.

In 2017, six Family Resource Centers were chosen to test a three-generation approach to early care, intentionally recruiting older adults to support programming. This short video describes the pilot. (Note: FIRST 5 Santa Clara receives funding from a statewide tobacco tax in California, then distributes it to a network of organizations that operate Family Resource Centers, providing support for vulnerable young children and families.)

Photo: S. Smith Patrick

In the first year, pilot sites recruited and placed 60 older adults — grandparent caregivers and others from the community — as stipended volunteers serving approximately 425 children. The pilot triggered a cascade of benefits for the community and for three generations — the children, their parents and teachers, and the older adults themselves.

- The volunteers led reading circles and songs, built garden boxes, planted with the kids, and wrote grants. They helped expand programming and enabled staff to focus their attention where it was most needed.
- Volunteers reflected the cultural backgrounds of the children, passing on traditions, rituals and home language.
- The older adults forged connections between the Family Resource Centers and broader community by encouraging disconnected young families they met while shopping or at church to attend.
- Volunteers reported a deeper sense of purpose, improved physical health and decreased social isolation.

Based on the pilot's success, FIRST 5 expanded funding for the stipended volunteer program to all 26 sites in the county and is exploring further expansion into early childhood programs at city-run community centers.

Library Link Volunteers, San Jose, CA
In San Jose, more than half of households speak languages other than English. The San Jose Public Library Early Education department has been piloting new ways to build inclusive and welcoming programming for caregivers of young children who don't speak English.

In 2019, Early Education leveraged the talents of an AmeriCorp VISTA member to develop and pilot a new Library Link volunteer role based on a promotora model. Library Links are trusted, bilingual volunteers of all ages (many of them are adults 50+) who support culturally specific programming for caregivers through translation, interpretation, mentoring, advocacy and peer education.

So far, the results are impressive.

- 92 percent of participants said the Library Link volunteer helped them learn more.
- 62 percent said they participated more because of the Library Link's involvement.
- 42 percent said the Library Link made them feel more comfortable reaching out to library staff.

Based on early success, staff plan to expand the Library Link pilot to support bilingual storytimes at multiple branches.

PRO TIPS

Keith Morales, deputy chief, Family Strengthening, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County
It's important to train early learning staff on effective practices for engaging adults 50+, especially younger staff used to working primarily with young parents. FIRST 5 contracted with a consultant to provide volunteer management training, with a segment tailored to engagement of adults over 50.

And it's important to adopt a new mindset. During any encounter with adults 50+, early learning staff can ask the question, "How could this person become engaged with our work and the children?" This helps build creative and organic engagement.

As an example, one Family Resource Center staffer noticed older adults practicing tai chi and fan dancing in the park. Rather than seeing seniors exercising in the park, the staffer saw potential for intergenerational, cross-cultural connection and invited the older adults to perform for the children.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Engage older adults in city- and county-wide efforts to support quality improvements in formal care.
- Test out a range of roles for older adults in early care and education settings, including class room helpers, office workers and mentors.
- For more ideas, watch for the release of an Encore.org proposal for an intergenerational national service corps that engages older adults in helping our youngest children thrive.

Amelia Vargas, 64, volunteers with Catholic Charities Family Resource Center at Educare in San Jose. Photo courtesy of the Irvine Foundation

> **"**
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> **When I first came [to this country], I didn't know anyone. I used to cry and cry, but then I started volunteering with this program and they are everything to me. Here they care about us.**
>
> **Now I feel like I have a purpose.**
>
> **It's like I'm *me* again.**
>
> **"**

Amelia Vargas, volunteer at a Family Resource Center

IDEA #5

Improve outcomes for youth and older adults through mentoring

Cities and counties, in partnership with nonprofits across the country, are working to launch and expand tutoring and mentoring programs that help young people succeed in school, college and the workplace. In fact, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership recently launched a national campaign, Mayors for Mentors, to showcase what mayors are doing to expand the quality and quantity of mentoring opportunities for young people in their communities.

Some of the mentors in these programs are over 50, but few intentionally recruit adults 50+. Those who do are reaping big dividends.

WHY DO THIS?

- Experienced adults often have the knowledge and interpersonal skills to help youth build meaningful relationships, set goals, advocate for themselves, expand social networks and develop self-confidence.
- On average, mentors age 50+ serve longer than their younger counterparts, often maintaining stable, long-term relationships with mentees.
- Research indicates multiple benefits. Students benefit personally and academically. Older adults find meaningful experiences known to improve physical and mental health. And teachers, youth programs and schools gain community support.

SPOTLIGHTS

AARP Experience Corps
AARP Experience Corps, an evidenced-based, intergenerational tutoring program, partners with under-resourced public elementary schools in more than 20 cities. Every year 2,000 highly-trained tutors and mentors over age 50 help 30,000 K-3 students learn to read. In many cities, public schools contribute to the costs of the program.

Photo: Ed Kashi

Earl Robinson, a volunteer tutor with Experience Corps DC Metro, recalls meeting a student's father. "I don't know why they're trying to make my son read, because he's slow," the man said. Shocked, Robinson turned to the child and asked him if he wanted to read. "I don't know how," the boy answered. So Robinson dug in, working with his young charge twice a week to build his skills and confidence in reading. Later that school year, the father came back to see Robinson, a big smile on his face. "My son read a book to me last night!" he said. Thrilled, Robinson signed up for another year of tutoring.

Research studies from Washington University/Mathematica Policy Research and John Hopkins University over the past 15 years proves that Experience Corps makes a big difference for both younger and older participants. Results show that participation in the program has improved reading and readiness skills of K-3 students, student behavior and school climate, and the mental and physical health of the older volunteers.

I-Promise Mentoring Program, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC)
College promise programs are generally state-funded, income-based scholarship programs for students who maintain their grades in high school. They are designed as incentives to finish high school and stay in-state for college. Many include a mentoring component to help students, often the first in their families to attend college, navigate their new environment.

The I-Promise Mentoring Program at UIUC began in 2008. At that time, a third of the students requesting mentors chose to have peer mentors; the rest selected graduate students, faculty, retired faculty and community residents ranging in age from their late 20s to their 80s. Over the years, adults 50+ have comprised 30-60 percent of the mentor pool.

Susan Gershenfeld, the founder of the program, collected data on retention and GPA and found that students with older mentors had better outcomes than I-Promise students with near-peer mentors or no mentors at all. The adult mentors also stayed longer, helped recruit others into the program, and sometimes picked up a second mentee over time.

By the time Gershenfeld left her role in 2015, students were choosing adult mentors over peer mentors by a ratio of 9 to 1. More recently, the program shifted to an exclusively adult mentor model based on student feedback.

Members of UIUC's I Promise mentoring program.

Students often highlight the mentoring component as the aspect of their I-Promise experience they appreciate most. "My wonderful mentor and friend, Marjorie Mizes, with her sincere investment in my well-being, education, and growth, has transformed me into the go-getter that I am today," Bianca Flowers, class of 2013, says. "Our shared values formed our bond, and what we've learned from each other has made it unbreakable."

San Pasqual Academy, San Diego, CA

The County of San Diego ran a job training program, the San Pasqual Academy, for 10 years, graduating 225 youth. The goal: to help youth aging out of foster care manage the transition to self-sufficiency by offering them a six-month paid internship. Each intern received individual mentoring support and an older life skills coach who provided encouragement for their efforts in school and on the job. One student called his coach "caring, compassionate, and encouraging" and "a great role model." The county stopped running the program in 2016 and now fund other agencies that place opportunity youth in internships with support from adult mentors.

PRO TIPS

Mary Gunn, former executive director of Generations Incorporated, which runs Experience Corps in Boston

- When bringing older volunteers to a school or other setting, bring them as a group. It will be less intimidating for them to enter the school if they see other older adults in the building. And students will get used to the presence of older volunteers more quickly if there's a critical mass of caring older adults around.
- Create a sense of camaraderie and "team" amongst the volunteers. This will create natural connections for shared learning and increase volunteer satisfaction and retention.

Susan Gershenfeld, founding director, I-Promise Mentoring Program and Sarah Watson, director of Scholar Support Programs, I-Promise

- The work of bridging differences such as age, race and/or class in the mentor relationship is more likely if students are engaged in the matching process.
- It's important to invest time in recruiting older mentors who reflect the student population. We're currently working with the African American and Latinx alumni associations to recruit mentors.
- Make sure to identify expectations up front for both mentors and mentees. We've created a written agreement both parties sign and a guide for the first meeting to spur conversation about expectations.
- Develop an orientation for both mentors and mentees.
- Don't expect that once a mentoring match is complete, all is good. It's important to listen to, understand and be respectful of the hopes and fears of the students as well as the mentors.

Pam Plimpton, intergenerational coordinator, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

When appropriate, help mentors learn about how trauma and structural challenges may impact young people's experience, and teach about trauma-informed mentoring. It's important that mentors understand how lack of childcare, interactions with the criminal justice system, and lack of adequate housing can impact a young person's ability to meet the expectations of their employers.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Encourage the mayor to write an op-ed about the importance of intergenerational mentoring.
- Examine marketing and outreach plans for your mentor programs to make sure they include images and language that will make older adults feel welcome.
- Check out Encore.org's 10 Steps for Engaging Adults 50+ for help in designing more age-inclusive outreach and engagement strategies.
- Organize a citywide recognition of older volunteers in schools to encourage increased visibility and engagement.
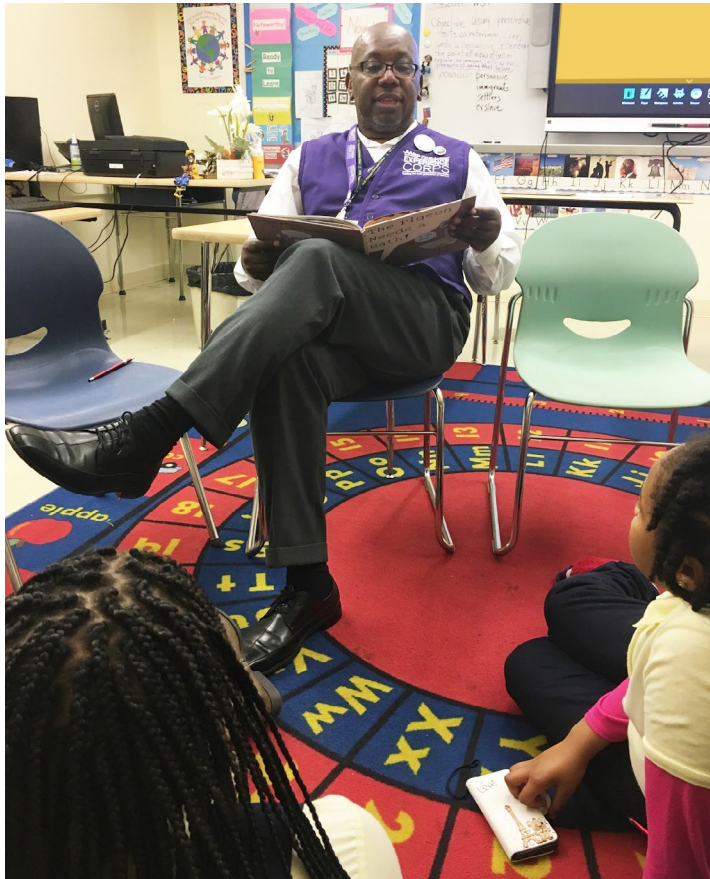
AARP Experience Corps volunteer Earl Robinson tutoring a group of students.

Increase affordable housing by expanding intergenerational housing options

Today in the U.S., 20 percent of Americans live in homes with two or more adult generations, up from just 12 percent in 1980. Also on the rise: three and four generations living together, intergenerational homesharing, younger people living in senior facilities, and housing developments that include both senior living and single-family homes. Local governments are exploring intergenerational housing options — particularly ones that can be piloted without significant investment, like homesharing in exchange for caregiving, and students living rent-free in retirement homes.

WHY DO THIS?

- Homesharing can help older citizens age in place.
- Homesharing can make housing more affordable, particularly for young people.
- Intergenerational solutions can reduce loneliness and disconnection for both older and younger populations, improving mental and physical health.
- Homesharing can provide affordable housing options for young people participating in national service programs like Teach For America and City Year.

SPOTLIGHTS

Intergenerational homesharing, Boston, MA

In 2017, Boston's Age Strong Commission and the Mayor's Housing Innovation Lab teamed up with Nesterly, a local startup, to pilot a service to match graduate students in need of affordable housing with older homeowners looking for companionship and help around the house.

"Boston is home to a growing number of seniors and students. We know that many of our older residents want to stay in their homes — but need companionship and some simple home mainte-nance," Mayor Marty Walsh said in announcing the partnership. "By matching established adults with extra space with students who are eager to engage with their communities, we're creating an innovative housing pilot that provides more affordable options for everyone."

Photo: All Hands and Hearts

Today, approximately 300 Nesterly hosts rent rooms in the Boston area, and Nesterly is expanding in Massachusetts to include Medford, Somerville and Newton. Nesterly is also partnering with the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging and [Age-Friendly Columbus and Franklin County](#) to bring its services to the Columbus area.

Students seeking rooms pay a one-time matching fee ranging from $95 to $195 depending on length of stay. Nesterly charges the homeowner 2.5 percent of monthly rent for ongoing use of its tech platform, including background checks, a secure online payment system, and a service team that helps address challenges as they arise.

**Intergenerational homesharing for national service members, Denver, Miami,
the Bay Area and San Jose**
In 2019, [Silvernest](#), a homesharing platform, and Encore.org launched a four-city pilot to provide more affordable housing to young people serving their communities as AmeriCorps members. In San Francisco, Silvernest joined forces with Teach For America. In San Jose, Denver and Miami, Silvernest and Encore.org teamed up with Service Year Alliance.

Average housing costs are often out of reach for young people working in schools and nonprofits. At the same time, many homeowners have space to share at rates well below market rental prices. The matches provide national service members with affordable rent, while homeowners get extra income and companionship, along with the satisfaction of supporting young people who are working to strengthen their community.

Intergenerational homesharing for youth experiencing homelessness, New York City
The City of New York and the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens just launched a homesharing effort that pairs youth living in New York City shelters with low-income older adults who have extra room. Youth have the option of subsidizing their rent by helping older hosts with household tasks.

The program benefits both populations, Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez, commissioner of the city's Department for the Aging, told the [Daily News](#). "The program partnership will transition youth from shelters into stable homes while also helping older adults on fixed incomes reduce housing costs and social isolation, helping to support and stabilize two of the most vulnerable city populations."

PRO TIPS

Noelle Marcus, founder and CEO, Nesterly
- Create a robust marketing strategy to engage hosts. This is a new experience for many and takes some intentional engagement efforts.
- To build trust and increase participation, showcase successful examples, offer workshops so those interested can ask questions, and provide information about best practices.
- Engage volunteers to help hosts get their homes ready for guests.
- To engage more hosts, consider offering homeowners help with their online applications.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Read about intergenerational housing models.
- Contact homesharing sites to explore piloting homesharing in your city:
    - hello@nesterly.io
    - hello@silvernest.com
- Check out Generations United's toolkit, designed "to help senior housing organizations plan and implement high-quality intergenerational programs that will benefit residents and young people in their communities."

*Brenda Atchison — one of Nesterly's first homeshare hosts — with Pheobus, her first housemate.
Photo: Gary Battiston, Department of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston*

"

By matching established adults with extra space with students who are eager to engage with their communities, we're creating an innovative housing pilot that provides more affordable options for everyone.

"

Boston Mayor Marty Walsh

Build city staffing capacity with Encore Fellows

Over the past three years, 13 Encore Fellows have worked in high-impact, paid assignments in the San Jose city government. These experienced professionals — think midlife interns — have done or are doing important work for the city while building skills and networks for their own encore careers in the nonprofit and public sectors.

WHY DO THIS?

- Encore Fellows provide a cost-effective way to promote innovation and expand capacity in city departments and initiatives.
- Fellows have decades of professional experience, bringing with them valuable skills and an outsider's perspective.
- Fellows may be able to help cities reach new audiences, develop corporate partnerships and raise funds.
- Encore Fellowships may inspire more people to consider stints in government service over the course of their careers.

SPOTLIGHTS

Encore Fellows, San Jose, CA
San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo is expanding the city's capacity and adding a new dimension to the public sector workforce by tapping experienced professionals in Silicon Valley as Encore Fellows. Funding comes from philanthropic and city resources along with local corporations that have covered the cost of the fellowships as a benefit for retiring employees.

Encore Fellows typically work 1,000 hours over six to 12 months on a scoped project that increases city capacity, expands current programs, investigates new services or increases organizational effectiveness. They are paid $15,000 to $35,000 annually, depending on geography. The city pays a $5,000 placement fee for an Encore.org program operator who recruits, matches and supports the Fellow.

Photo: S. Smith Patrick

"We are one of the most thinly staffed large cities in the country," explains Nick Almeida, chief service officer for the City of San Jose. "We lost many positions during the recession, so we need to be as creative as we can to develop and maintain a quality workforce that moves new and innovative projects forward. It would be a huge missed opportunity if we did not leverage retiring leaders as an asset for the city."

Encore Fellows have taken on a variety of tasks. One Fellow developed a framework for managing citywide volunteer programs for the city manager's office. Other Fellows created advisory boards, guided implementation of a technology initiative, and promoted intergenerational volunteer work for the mayor's office. In 2019, one Encore Fellow is working on the city's age-friendly initiative, while another is designing and testing a mentoring component for the city's youth workforce development program.

The City is currently exploring various approaches that would make it easier for city departments to take advantage of fellowships, especially those encouraging year-long service commitments from all generations and all career stages.

"Encore Fellows have provided tremendous impact to San Jose — within city hall and in our community," says Almeida. "Without their added capacity and expertise, we would have never made progress on a number of meaningful projects. It has been a joy to work with such committed and knowledgeable experts in their respective fields."

PRO TIPS

Nicholas Almeida, chief service officer, City of San Jose
- Set Encore Fellows up for success by creating a reasonable scope of work and staying mindful of the level of effort and buy-in required for them to succeed.
- Don't use Encore Fellows to fill existing roles. Develop a clear, time-limited scope with a focus on creating something new.
- Be aware that as new and temporary team members, Fellows may not have the relationships necessary to handle substantial change management as part of their project. Scope projects accordingly.

IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Get more information at Encore.org/fellowships/impact.
- Begin identifying priority projects and opportunities that require additional bandwidth and might be well-suited to an Encore Fellow.
- Identify departments that are interested in working with an Encore Fellow.

"

We need to be as creative as we can to develop and maintain a quality workforce that moves new and innovative projects forward. It would be a huge missed opportunity if we did not leverage retiring leaders as an asset for the city.
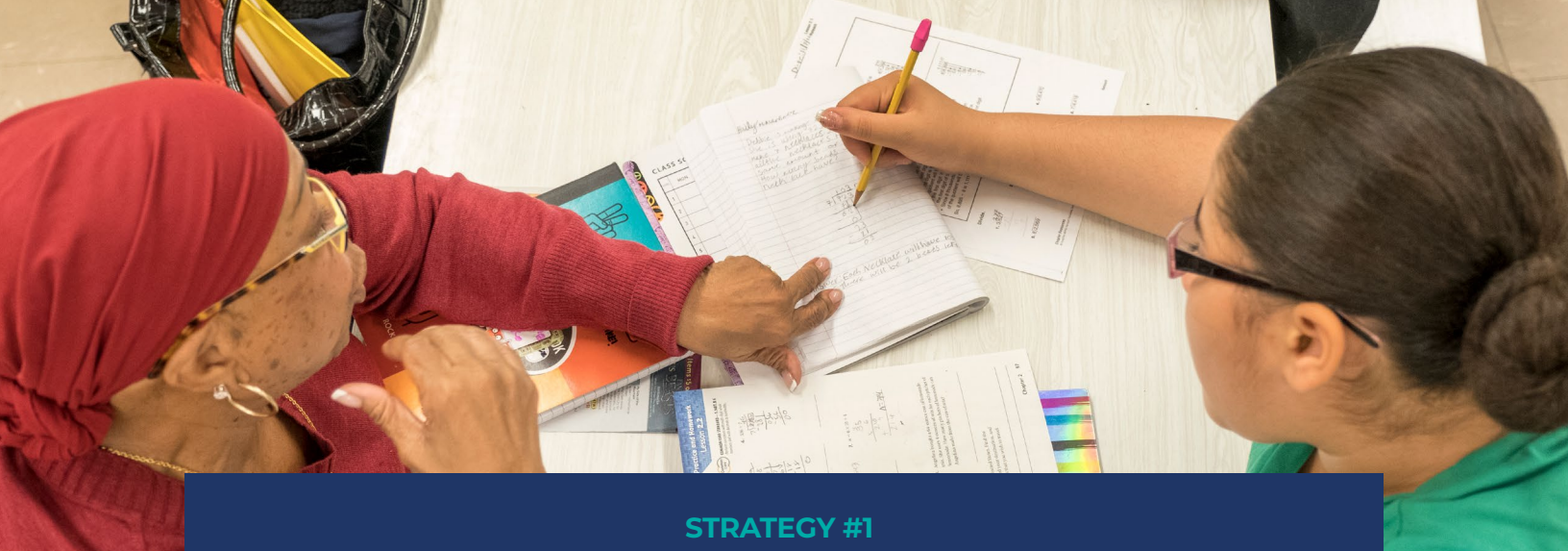
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Nicholas Almeida, chief service officer, City of San Jose

BUILDING

6 strategies to help set the stage for experimentation

Photo: Woodwalk

Activate leadership

San Jose and San Diego both have the strong support of local leaders with influence, credibility and a high profile who encourage intergenerational innovation, speak out on the topic and inspire others to rally to the cause.

Mayor Sam Liccardo's sponsorship of Gen2Gen San Jose, which focuses on mixing the generations and leveraging the talent of older adults, has been crucial to its success. Liccardo uses his bully pulpit to build awareness and engage city employees, nonprofit partners and local residents. He helps open doors to partners and funders, and rallies key members of his administration.

A staff member from the city's parks and rec department explains how the mayor's attention to their efforts to connect the generations increased buy-in from other community centers:

> "With the mayor coming to and highlighting [intergenerational events], it definitely gets posted on social media. Our city manager runs a weekly newsletter, and it also gets highlighted in that. This brings us some notoriety with other community centers....I think seeing all these things makes people more likely to want to try [intergenerational strategies] at their centers."

In San Diego, Pam Smith, then director of Aging & Independence Services, a division of the County's Health and Human Services Agency, became a leading innovator and advocate for intergenerational strategies in 2002 when she saw how much attention the topic got at a local aging summit.

"The intergenerational work really resonated with so many people," she said. "That got my interest! I could clearly see the benefit of connecting the generations, but the key at that point was to get the support of elected officials."

Smith immediately got to work. "We had two selling points. One, I didn't talk about intergenerational strategies as something that would be cute and nice. I only talked about intergenerational

Photo: Ed Kashi

work as an approach to help tackle some of our community's biggest concerns. And second, I talked about how when intergenerational strategies work, they create a win for everyone, at all stages of life."

Smith used research to make the case about the value and importance of engaging adults 50+ and connecting the generations. She also cultivated champions by helping them see intergenerational work in action. With funding from Health and Human Services discretionary funds, San Diego's earliest intergenerational efforts supported immigrant families, collected oral histories from African American elders, and engaged African American teens to interview Holocaust survivors. Stories from the work were then shared at a community gathering.

Once elected officials saw intergenerational programming work, they could understand it — and they were hooked.

Back row, from left to right:
SOMOS Mayfair Executive Director Camille Llanes-Fontanilla,
Encore.org VP Eunice Lin Nichols, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo,
Gen2Gen San Jose Campaign Director Dima Khoury.
Front row: Assemblymember Ash Kalra and Health Trust CEO Michele Lew.

STRATEGY #2
Map existing efforts

Although connecting generations was a relatively new practice for San Jose city employees when the mayor's office launched Gen2Gen, some intergenerational activity was already underway. An intern for the parks and recreation department identified several city-run community centers that had implemented activities like intergenerational sewing camps and exercise classes. She also identified several community-based organizations intentionally engaging older volunteers in youth-serving roles.

Mapping existing intergenerational activities in city departments and with nonprofit partners allowed the San Jose team to build on what was already in place, identify potential champions and make the case to others.

Dima Khoury, Encore Fellow and Gen2Gen San Jose campaign director, offers the following tips:

- Highlight and widely publicize existing efforts in the city to connect the generations and leverage the talent of older adults.
- Make sure to capture the age of volunteers so city departments can map the current land scape and identify benchmarks for growth. Library staff in San Jose expected that some volunteers would object to giving their age, but so far none have.
- Get an intern or volunteer to document your efforts through photos, videos, articles, etc. And collect testimonials from younger and older participants as well as from program staff.
- Share these widely to city staff and outside audiences to increase engagement and buy-in, show evidence of success, and celebrate all those who are participating in the work.

A community center staff member highlighted the importance of telling your story:

> "The folks working at the other centers, they were saying that they didn't believe this would work, they were skeptical. When you're not around kids all the time, you may not remember the smiles, the laughing and the joy....[The older adults] just loved having that experience, and then they wanted to be there all week long with the kids...giving

Photo: Elzora Douglas - Oasis Institute

testimonials about how much the program participants have loved it, how effective it's been for the community center....I think the other sites are now kind of like...wow! They're getting excited about intergenerational programs now. So sharing the stories of the successes and some of the challenges of other centers is important."

Irv Katz, a senior fellow at Generations United, suggests using a different kind of mapping to find places ripe for intergenerational pilots. He recommends targeting city and county geographies where intergenerational strategies can be adapted to local conditions and can have the most impact.

"You can assemble data by census tract from public sources (Census, Health Department, social welfare agencies) and overlay maps of the data over one another to identify where there are indicators of substantial challenges experienced by children, youth and older adults," Katz says, "like grandparents raising grandchildren or isolated older adults aging in place."

This kind of mapping, Katz says, "is a great way to involve the local government planning agency, human service coalition, designated Census data provider, or other agency or agencies that regularly work with population data."

An intergenerational sewing camp at Seven Trees Community Center in San Jose.
Photo: Gen2Gen San Jose and Age Friendly San Jose

Align with priority areas and resources

After Mayor Sam Liccardo launched Gen2Gen San Jose, his staff spent the early months seeking out city departments open to testing new intergenerational strategies. Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services and the city libraries were logical choices. Together, the two departments engage a large percent of the city's volunteers. Both departments offer programming for all ages and activate public spaces. The parks and recreation department also manages the city's Age-Friendly initiative.

The mayor's office partnered with the parks and recreation department to apply for a grant that supported intergenerational program pilots in two community centers, then developed a toolkit to share best practices with city and county staff.

The mayor's office also worked with staff at city libraries to explore strategies to engage more volunteers age 50+. One library staff member describes the partnership's impact:

> "Partnering shifted our thinking about building inclusive volunteer programs…We want to make sure our programs are welcoming to everyone…including older adults, people with young children, and people for whom English is not a first language. It's taken a lot of coordination [with the mayor's office], examining the whole volunteer process from top to bottom."

Nicholas Almeida, San Jose's chief service officer, recommends these steps:

- Identify innovators (within and outside of city government) who recognize how intergenerational approaches align with their strategic priorities and will invest resources and staff time to pilot new approaches.
- Consider departments and initiatives that seem clearly aligned with intergenerational approaches such as Children and Youth Services, Education, Aging Services, and Age-Friendly city initiatives.

Photo: Talking Eyes Media / Encore.org

- Don't overlook unlikely partners. You may find them, for example, in departments handling immigration, housing or transportation.
- Identify potential nonprofit collaborators that embed intergenerational approaches in their work. Pursue partnerships with community organizations that focus on youth and use a volunteer model for operations and program delivery. These organizations could easily embed an intergenerational approach through intentional recruitment of older volunteers.
- And look for places where older and younger generations gather (or could gather) — like schools or childcare centers in close proximity to senior centers, and multigenerational spaces that older and younger generations both attend, like community centers and libraries.
- Finally, make sure early adopters are willing to invest time in recruiting volunteers 50+. Older volunteers can take longer to recruit up front, but if satisfied with their experience, they're likely to return year after year, help recruit others and assume additional responsibilities.

Three generations at Family Resource Center funded by FIRST 5 Santa Clara.
Photo: S. Smith Patrick

As long as city programming and budgets for aging and youth services remain separate, intergenerational strategies rarely align easily with any one person's job responsibility. To solve the problem and get things going, local governments in San Jose and San Diego hired people to handle intergenerational work as their main, and often sole, responsibility.

A 2002 summit on aging in San Diego opened the door to intergenerational work there, leading to a strategic plan that included intergenerational strategies.

"I did appreciate having intergenerational work added to the plan," recalls one of the effort's leaders, Pam Smith, "but there was no funding connected to it at the time. I thought, it's a good idea, but how do we make it happen if it's no one's job?

"I realized then that we needed an intergenerational coordinator role within County aging services in order to make the action items in the plan someone's job," Smith says. "Eventually we did convince the Health and Human Services Agency to fund it."

An intergenerational coordinator was hired within Aging & Independence Services, and things went well. The County has since adopted intergenerational connection as a core value and funded four additional coordinator positions to support intergenerational work—three to represent the different and very diverse regions of the county and one to represent child welfare services.

Pam Smith, former director of San Diego County's Area Agency on Aging, recommends cultivating ownership of intergenerational work at a community-wide level. "Even though you have a staff person assigned to make sure the work gets done," she advises, "remember to provide opportunities for your community to come up with ideas and share collective opportunities and challenges."

In 2016, the City of San Jose hired Encore Fellow Dima Khoury to be its Gen2Gen campaign director, working out of the mayor's office. Khoury, initially hired for a year-long position, worked to lay the groundwork for the campaign and manage the initial pilots. At the end of the first year, the city extended Khoury's funding for two additional years to continue piloting new approaches and embed intergenerational strategies across city departments.

Photo: Ed Kashi

Older adults and students at the Intergenerational Games hosted by the County of San Diego and multiple community partners.

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>
> **I did appreciate having intergenerational work added to the plan, but there was no funding connected to it at the time. I thought, it's a good idea, but how do we make it happen if it's no one's job?**
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Pam Smith, former director of San Diego County's Area Agency on Aging

Identify potential challenges

Background checks for volunteers are standard practice. But years ago if you wanted to volunteer for the City of San Jose, you had to go to the county sheriff's office to get fingerprinted. Bottleneck! The office is out of the way for many, and there's a waiting list for available appointments.

Chief Service Officer Nicholas Almeida wanted to solve problems like this one. So he convened a cross-departmental team to identify and remove barriers blocking all generations from engaging in city activities and volunteering.

The working group identified problems, including cumbersome background checks, lack of transportation, and a lack of established recruitment pipelines for older volunteers. The city then began testing a range of potential strategies to solve them.

To make background checks easier, for example, the city budgeted for a live scan (fingerprinting) machine in city hall. Almeida hopes to increase the number of city-operated live scan machines, with potential placement in community centers and libraries to make the fingerprinting process even more accessible.

Even groups set up to remove barriers may hit a few of their own. "You may end up with city staff with competing priorities," he says. "It's important to understand the motives that each participant has for joining the team. You may need to help identify common ground before developing solutions."

Almeida also recommends starting with a manageable scope of work. "We began by focusing on specific challenges related to volunteering in community centers and libraries," he says. "They were good places to test out new approaches that we hope to spread to other departments over time."

The San Jose working group — now centralized and led by the city manager's office — continues to remove barriers to civic participation, all while showcasing the power of cross-departmental collaboration and problem-solving.

Photo: Talking Eyes Media / Encore.org

The County of San Diego team of intergenerational coordinators wanted to learn more about opportunities and barriers to connecting the generations within the County library system. So they surveyed all 33 library branch managers.

Survey respondents showed overwhelming interest in developing high quality intergenerational programming, but they cited challenges, including lack of staff capacity, lack of sufficient funding, and difficulty fitting intergenerational programming into the program schedule given other priority activities.

As a next step, the intergenerational coordinators will provide support and assistance to library staff who want to explore specific intergenerational opportunities at their branches.

What barriers exist in your community?

Scrapbooking workshop with Gen2Gen volunteers at Family Resource Center in Santa Clara County. Photo: S. Smith Patrick

STRATEGY #6
Build on best practices

There is no single set formula for fostering intergenerational connection, but there are principles and best practices to follow when developing projects, programs and events.

A community center in San Jose piloted a 10-week intergenerational cooking and nutrition class in collaboration with a local charter school. They modified the pilot to incorporate best practices into their programming, with great results.

The focus on food aligns with a good design principle: Engage older and younger participants based on shared interests. But another design principle was missing: There was no mechanism for the two age groups to learn more about one another and build relationships. Without this, the participants often tended, by habit, to stick to same-age peers.

So the staff, youth and older adults made a course correction. After cooking, participants sat at age-integrated tables, shared a meal together and discussed a set of reflective questions. It worked!

One staff member reflects:

> "Something I've learned through this...it's really meaningful when there is connection and relationship built between the generations. In the past, we had these one-time events where youth and seniors got together...staff would be very involved, and the interactions were limited. In this pilot, we focused on getting youth and seniors talking, getting to know each other, learning from one another. And that really made the difference."

Photo: Talking Eyes Media / Encore.org

Below are seven key design practices drawn from the work of two leading organizations in intergenerational program development and social integration strategies, Generations United and The Challenge. High quality Gen2Gen programs are:

- **Asset-based.** Program design highlights the strengths and common interests of each generation. Mixing with other generations isn't always enough to attract a diverse group; make sure to give people another reason to join through shared interests.
- **Co-designed.** Community members of all generations provide feedback and input in the design of pilot projects. Ensure that the activity is equally appealing to different age groups and does not favor one generation over another.
- **Culturally specific.** Programming includes opportunities, where relevant, for participants to share and pass on their cultural traditions through arts, language, food, dance, dress, storytelling, collective action, etc.
- **Reciprocal.** Both younger and older participants have opportunities within the program to give and receive, to teach and learn.
- **Relational.** The projects and activities are leveraged as vehicles for intentionally building intergenerational relationships, increasing interaction and understanding similarities and differences across ages.
- **Responsive.** Programming includes a regular feedback loop, allowing participants to reflect on what they're learning and to adapt and improve where possible.
- **Transition-aware.** When possible, programs can capitalize on transitions to drive behavior change. At moments of disruption in our lives, such as starting school, entering adulthood or reaching retirement, we can become more open to forming new habits, identities and relationships.

Try Generations United's Intergenerational Evaluation Toolkit to measure impact and gather data on how to modify and improve your program.

An older adult and student cook Mexican hot chocolate together in San Jose. Photo: Gen2Gen San Jose and Age Friendly San Jose

SUSTAINING

4 strategies for making
Gen2Gen business as usual

STRATEGY #1
Link new strategies to existing city work

Intergenerational strategies are sustained over time when they are included in the visioning, strategic plan, priorities and core values of city and county departments and initiatives.

Gen2Gen San Jose was incubated in the mayor's office, but required a more permanent home to grow. Today the city has integrated Gen2Gen into its Age-Friendly initiative, which lives with Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.

Intergenerational strategies will help the Age-Friendly initiative operationalize two city priorities — improving quality of life and deepening civic engagement — and respond to older adults' priorities as well. A recent Age-Friendly survey found that over 75 percent of older adults are interested in engaging with younger generations.

Intergenerational engagement is now listed as a key strategy within the San Jose Age-Friendly plan and is incorporated into the strategic plan for the city's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.

"To encourage adoption of intergenerational approaches across multiple city departments," explains Nicholas Almeida, the city's chief service office, "it's also helpful to embed the work within matrixed units (such as the city manager's office). These units have a breadth of understanding and authority across multiple departments. If an intergenerational approach is only adopted within a more specialized unit, spread may be more limited."

Intergenerational strategies are a core value of Live Well San Diego, a regional vision adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors to help county residents build better health, live safely, and thrive.

Photo: Woodwalk

"Because intergenerational connection was defined as a core value when we planned the initiative, we kept it in focus," explains Pam Smith, former director of San Diego County's Area Agency on Aging. "And when the County later developed a separate Age Well San Diego initiative [part of the AARP network of age-friendly communities], every element of the County's Age-Friendly plan incorporated an intergenerational component. It has been almost 20 years since we first began developing intergenerational strategies. Staff and leadership have come and gone, but the core values remain."

Irv Katz, a senior fellow at Generations United, recommends including intergenerational considerations in community planning efforts for cities and counties. As a starting point, Katz suggests pointing city planning departments to current American Planning Association's family-friendly community briefing papers on multigenerational planning, and publications by the Planning across Generations Project at Cornell University for examples of the thinking and scholarship that underlie intergenerational planning.

Generations United is working with APA on a guide to integrate intergenerational issues and strategies into city and county planning efforts. The guide stipulates that the well-being of young and old and the connections between them should be critical factors in shaping all aspects of community planning — transportation, housing, parks, schools and more.

Older adults and youth participate in the Five & Fit obesity prevention program hosted by the County of San Diego

STRATEGY #2
Advocate for shared sites

Shared sites are physical spaces that provide services for both younger and older people, and promote relationships across the generations. Examples include daycare or elementary schools located within older adult care facilities or residential communities and senior housing located in libraries and universities. The sites benefit both generations and can produce cost savings by sharing resources such as personnel and rent.

It's a popular idea. A 2018 online Harris Poll commissioned for a Generations United report found that 82 percent of Americans support their tax dollars going toward the creation of facilities that serve both younger and older people at the same time.

Preschools in nursing homes. In two Oklahoma towns — Enid and Jenks — school districts rent preschool classrooms for $1 a year from local nursing homes.

Each day, students spend 30 minutes with the residents, doing art projects, singing, reading and playing games together. At recess, residents can watch the children on the playground through a long wall of windows, and from the physical-therapy room, patients can look right into the classroom.

Susan Lair, a site principal, says children from the intergenerational settings need less reading support when they get to elementary school. "We really attribute that to their one-on-one daily reading with grandmas and grandpas." The programs also improve physical and mental health for the older residents.

There are currently five such programs in Oklahoma and one in nearby Coffeyville, Kansas. All programs are full.

Intergenerational parks. The Broward County, Florida, Parks and Recreation Division has many parks designed to engage and connect all generations. Topeekeegee Yugnee Park, for example, is a large urban park where visitors of all ages are encouraged to use the playing fields, picnic areas, tennis and basketball courts, walking and biking paths, outdoor fitness equipment and fishing pier.

Photo: Ed Kashi

The county, through a partnership with Memorial Healthcare Systems, has expanded the number of outdoor fitness centers where kids and adults can engage in activities together. The centers include wheelchair accessible equipment, a standard at most multigenerational playgrounds.

Cyndy Baker, spokeswoman for Broward's Parks notes that programming in the parks' nature centers has been especially successful in engaging multigenerational families. "We see on average that about 25 percent of the guardians of preschool children [attending programming] are grandparents. When someone brings two kids, a parent and a grandparent will often attend."

As Broward County Parks begins work on its master plan, staffers are exploring additional opportunities for multigenerational programming and facilities.

Co-located housing in libraries. The city of Chicago, Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Library and the Evergreen Real Estate Group recently opened a new library branch that also includes a residential component with 44 one-bedroom apartments for low-income older adults. Thirty of the apartments will be reserved for Chicago Housing Authority residents, and the remainder will serve older adults that meet the age and income eligibility requirements.

"We're proud to play a role in this innovative public-private partnership that provides both much-needed affordable housing for seniors as well as a modern library that benefits the entire community," said David Block, director of development for Evergreen Real Estate Group. "In addition to enhancing the West Ridge neighborhood architecturally, the Northtown Branch will offer critical social and educational opportunities for residents of all ages, including seniors living above in the Northtown Apartments."

Intentional intergenerational communities. Bridge Meadows in Portland, Oregon, is a planned community that provides housing to families raising children in the foster care system and, in separate units, low-income older adults. The resulting community of about 140 people is home to three potentially vulnerable populations — youth in foster care, adoptive parents, and elders with limited means. Their interactions help each group thrive.

Bridge Meadows expanded to a second site in Beaverton, Oregon, in 2017. Denny Doyle, the town's mayor, became a vocal champion of the effort.

> *"The Bridge Meadows Beaverton project has the explicit support of city residents, especially neighbors around the site and is incredibly well aligned with the Beaverton Community Vision Plan. Bringing more affordable housing, particularly for seniors, is a top priority for the city….[This] model of serving families in the process of adopting foster children in an intergenerational complex is all the better."*

Bridge Meadows is modeled after an exemplary program called Hope Meadows in central Illinois that uses retrofitted housing on a converted military base. Other related models include Treehouse Communities in western Massachusetts and Genesis in Washington, D.C.

For more information on shared sites, read:
- The Best of Both Worlds: A Closer Look at Creating Spaces that Connect Young and Old
- All in Together: Creating Spaces Where Young and Old Thrive
- Intergenerational Shared Sites: Saving Dollars While Making Sense

Cultivate intergenerational networks

Intergenerational networks — groups of people and organizations committed to creating communities that value and engage all generations — can support and enhance intergenerational efforts by making the most of members' talents, connections and experiences.

San Diego County supports two regional intergenerational networks, which they call councils. Members include leaders from the community, businesses, schools, government agencies and nonprofits such as senior centers and youth-serving organizations.

Participants engage in networking, resource sharing and collective problem solving on topics like intergenerational programming, recruitment and marketing. Members also contribute to a newsletter that highlights best practices and promotes events.

Meetings are hosted at diverse sites where intergenerational programming takes place, giving members the chance to see what's happening first-hand.

For those interested in starting intergenerational councils, Pam Smith, former director of Aging & Independence Services (San Diego County's Area Agency on Aging), offers this advice.

- Get the right people at the table. If you believe that schools should be key players in community planning for all ages, make sure the right people show up and have the chance to talk with those who have a different focus.
- Make sure that everyone in the group buys into the big vision. When you have different people from different organizations with different priorities around the table, it can be challenging to encourage everyone to share resources. Everyone really wants to make sure they can hang on to what they have. This is where the shared vision, trust and collaboration come in.
- Get regional leadership networks to commit to intergenerational strategies as a priority. This has been a big part of the success and sustainability of our work. When community leaders, businesses, and government entities come together, they can be quite influential, especially with elected officials.

Donna Baker, director of operations at Jefferson Area Board on Aging (JABA) in Jefferson County, Virginia, stresses the importance of representing aging services in broader cross-sector convenings. "It sometimes means putting ourselves in new or uncomfortable situations, but the payoff is worth it," she says.

As an example, Baker explains that her agency recently participated in a local preschool summit for the first time. "Although a bit out of our comfort zone, the summit was extremely helpful to us as we opened a preschool at JABA with intergenerational programming," she says. "Our participation helped us create high quality programming that has been powerfully important for older adults in the county as well as the children."

JABA also represents aging services in regional planning groups focused on issues such as food deserts, transportation and health.

"What makes our participation in these groups so meaningful," says Baker, "is it demonstrates how advocacy and planning on senior issues and children's issues are more effective when we are connected with each other. Because JABA shows up to collaborate on issues impacting all generations, other county and city departments and community partners don't think of JABA as a place just for older people. They think of us now as an entity that nurtures community connection."

An adult and student at the Intergenerational Games hosted by the County of San Diego and multiple community partners.

Develop innovative financing strategies

By definition, intergenerational approaches exist at the intersection of issues — aging, youth and housing, for example — and that can make funding complicated. Funding streams typically assume facilities and programs serve only one generation. Sustaining intergenerational work will likely require innovative funding approaches.

Decades ago, Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Centers (LHANC), a senior services center for low-income older adults in Miami, Florida, created Rainbow Intergenerational, an accredited child-care center where nearly all staff members (teachers, assistant teachers, food handlers, maintenance and clerical staff) are low-income immigrant elders.

The center's funding comes from private payments from families that use its services, plus a combination of public (federal, state and county) funds. With help from these multiple sources, Rainbow hires a workforce of older adults embedded in the community who share a common culture, language and neighborhood with the Latino immigrant children attending the center.

Rainbow's funding sources include:

- Senior employment for low-income elders (SCSEP) pays older adults a minimum-wage stipend to train at the center for four hours a day for six months. At the end of the training period, if it is a good fit, the older adults often transition to a permanent part-time position at Rainbow.
- State subsidies to support school readiness for low-income families provide a new income stream for the Little Havana senior services center, which had previously only pursued aging-related funding.
- State subsidies for those seeking degrees and certificates in early childhood education are funded primarily by a state's office of early learning.

The San Pasqual Academy in San Diego County used funding from Child Protective Services to engage older adults as mentors at a residential school for youth in the child welfare system. In getting the department to sign off on the budget, Pam Smith, former director of San Diego

Photo: Ed Kashi

County's Area Agency on Aging, recalls how important it was to make the case that the intergenerational strategy helped solve multiple problems in both child welfare and workforce development and to encourage department staff to think outside the box.

Not an easy task.

Nancy Henkin, senior fellow at Generations United, underscores the importance of highlighting the economic and social benefits that result from "economies of scope" or using a single intervention to address multiple challenges.

"From an economic standpoint, combining space and programming can reduce costs related to rent, personnel and programming," she says. "From a social standpoint, you can demonstrate how a single intervention supports positive outcomes for multiple generations."

Phyllis Segal, vice president at Encore.org, recommends exploring federal funding to states to support innovation or to help transform communities into more age-friendly or child-friendly places. For example, the federal innovative approaches to literacy grants for libraries could be used to support new intergenerational strategies, she says.

In addition, Segal suggests exploring federal and state funds to support early care and education. States have some flexibility on funds received under the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) that could be leveraged for innovative, intergenerational ideas. And governors can apply for a federal Preschool Development Grant (with over $200 million appropriated nationally) to fund state-level strategic plans and needs assessments for children age 0-5, including developing an intergenerational approach that serves young children.

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From a social standpoint, you can demonstrate how a single intervention supports positive outcomes for multiple generations.

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Nancy Henkin, senior fellow, Generations United

CONCLUSION

"Communities need to look at their changing demographics. Never have this many people lived this long; many places now have a more old than young population for the first time in history. Also, many people are now living far from their families, more people are living alone, and many are working multiple jobs. All of this is contributing to an epidemic of isolation. City and county government can help with this. We can facilitate strategies to rebuild connection. We can help birth something new. We do the midwifing and then communities can make it their own."

— Pam Smith, former director of San Diego County's Area Agency on Aging

This guide details the work of a growing number of public sector innovators working to develop intergenerational practices within local governments around the country — practices that will help combat loneliness, rebuild community, decrease age segregation, and solve many other problems, too. This guide shares the wisdom of these early adopters to help others follow in their footsteps.

With intentional planning and piloting, many more cities and counties can build on the skills and talents of all ages as assets for the entire community. As Encore.org CEO Marc Freedman writes in his book, *How to Live Forever*: "The stakes couldn't be higher as we choose between two paths forward, prompted by the new demographics and the arrival of our profoundly multigenerational future – one characterized by scarcity, conflict, and loneliness; the other by abundance, interde-pendence, and connection."

Imagine how health, well-being and social connectedness across the lifespan would shift if...

- ...every public library, community center and park was a vibrant intergenerational hub supporting creative programming and making it easy for younger and older people to share activities, build relationships and collaborate on common interests.
- ...every early childcare center, school and public college and university welcomed older adults to help support strong outcomes for children, youth and young families, and increase community support for education.
- ...every housing facility for older adults shared space with an early childhood center, school, university or library, producing cost savings and improved outcomes for both generations.

We hope you will see this guide as an invitation to join other public sector innovators across the country in forging a new path, reweaving a fraying social fabric, and reimagining the social com-pact that holds us all together.

Intergenerational gardening at a Family Resource Center supported by FIRST 5 Santa Clara. Photo: S. Smith Patrick

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> **The stakes couldn't be higher as we choose between two paths forward, prompted by the new demographics and the arrival of our profoundly multigenerational future — one characterized by scarcity, conflict, and loneliness; the other by abundance, interdependence, and connection.**
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Marc Freedman, CEO, Encore.org

Making the Case
- Stanford Center on Longevity, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Encore.org: [Hidden in Plain Sight; How Intergenerational Relationships Can Transform Our Future](#).
- Generations United and Eisner Foundation: [I Need You, You Need Me: The Young, The Old and What We Can Achieve Together](#).
- Harvard Business Review: Overview on [The US Isn't Just Getting Older. It's Getting More Segregated By Age](#): Marc Freedman and Trent Stamp.
- Encore.org, the Boston College School of Social Work, and the Center on Aging & Work at Boston College: [What does it mean to have a society with more older people than younger ones?](#): Cal Halvorsen.
- Citylab: [The Quest for the Multigenerational City](#): Megan Kimble.

Intergenerational Planning
- Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University: [Multi-generational community planning: Linking the needs of children and older adults](#): Mildred Warner, George Homsy, and Esther Greenhouse.
- American Planning Association, Family Friendly Briefing Papers #2: [Using smart growth and universal design to link the needs of children and the aging population](#): Ranu Aba Ghazaleh, George Homsy, Esther Greenhouse and Mildred Warner.
- International City/County Management Association: [The Intergenerational Imperative](#): Irv Katz.

Recruiting Adults 50+ as Volunteers
- Encore.org: [10 Steps for Engaging Adults 50+](#).
- MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership: [Mayors for MENTORING](#).

Shared Sites
- Generations United and the Eisner Foundation: [All in Together: Creating Places Where Old and Young Thrive](#).
- Generations United and the Eisner Foundation: [The Best of Both Worlds: A Closer Look at Creating Spaces that Connect Young and Old](#).
- Generations United and the Eisner Foundation: [Piecing It Together: What We Know About the Funding Puzzle for Places that Connect Young and Old](#).
- Parks and Recreation Business: [Intergenerational Programming](#): June N. Price-Shingles.

Housing
- Generations United and Leading Age: [Connecting Generations in Senior Housing: A Program Implementation Toolkit](#): Nancy Henkin and Taryn Patterson.
- City of Boston Housing Innovation Lab: [Intergenerational Homeshare Pilot](#).

Early Care and Education
- Encore.org: <u>8 roles for adults 50+ in early care and education</u>: Corita Brown.

Age-Friendly
- The <u>AARP Age-Friendly Network</u> includes 400 communities from all 50 states. It supports community change to make cities, towns, counties and states more livable for all ages.
- AARP Livable Communities: <u>7 Ways to Build Bonds Across Generations</u>: Katherine Reynolds Lewis.

Evaluating Intergenerational Programming
- Generations United, Eisner Foundation and Ohio State University: <u>The Intergenerational Evaluation Toolkit</u>.