

Potential Encore Talent and Their Interest in Helping Children and Youth

Confidential: Encore.org is presenting this preview of a forthcoming set of briefs that will be released later in the summer. Please do not circulate this preview to anyone not attending the Pass It On Conference. Thank you.

How many people are already in, or interested in transitioning to, an encore?

Encore.org has been tracking the pulse of encore interest through nationally representative surveys in 2008, 2011, and 2014. These surveys define an encore career as a significant body of work in the second half of adulthood that makes a positive social impact and may provide continued income.

Research findings in 2011 revealed that nine percent of adults between the ages of 44 and 70 – or about nine million Americans in that age group – were in encore careers, working after midlife in roles that served important social needs.ⁱ Approximately two-thirds of those in encore careers were primarily motivated by the desire to make a positive social impact and pursue roles with personal significance – or six percent of the total. The 2011 findings also revealed that 31 million Americans, ages 44 to 70, were interested in moving into their encores.

The research focus was narrowed in 2014 to better understand this group of Americans primarily driven by social impact and personal significance, and to focus on the age range of Americans between 50 and 70. What we learned reaffirmed our 2011 conclusions: Six percent of Americans ages 50 to 70 describe themselves as in paid or unpaid encore careers with the primary purpose of having a positive social impact. Translated into numbers, this represents more than 4.5 million people in this age group. And 21 million Americans ages 50 to 70, or 28 percent, are interested in moving into work for the primary purpose of making a positive social impact.

A subgroup describe themselves as working in paid or unpaid roles in an education-related field or in roles that make a positive impact on children, youth, or young adults: Fully one-quarter (25%) of those in encore careers are in these roles, totaling more than 1.1 million Americans currently working to benefit younger generations in their encores.

More than one-quarter (27%) of those interested in an encore career say that they would like to move into these roles, translating into a talent pool of nearly 6 million Americans, ages 50 to 70, who want to pursue work that benefits younger generations.ⁱⁱ This research brief focuses on this group of potential talent.

When do they expect to move into their encores?

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) believe they would make this transition after the age of 60.
- Over half (55%) indicate it is very likely (answering an 8, 9, or 10 on a ten-point scale) that they would transition to this work in the next five years.

Who are they?

- **Age:** 58 years, on average
- **Gender:** More men (58%) than women (42%)
- **Where they live:** Almost one-third live in the South (32%), about one-quarter each in the Midwest (27%) and West (26%), and the fewest in the Northeast (15%)
- **Education:** Fully half (50%) have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, nearly two in ten (19%) have earned an associate's degree or an occupational certificate or license, and about the same number (22%) have completed some college. Nearly one in ten (9%) say their highest level of education is having completed high school or the equivalent.

- **Household income:** Four in ten (40%) report that their annual household income is \$60,000 or more. Nearly two in ten (19%) report an annual household income of between \$45,000 and \$59,999, with over four in ten (41%) reporting less than \$45,000 per year.

What are they doing now?

- Most are currently working for pay or are self-employed (45%), and almost all of these people are employed full-time, working an average of about 38 hours per week. Thirty percent describe themselves as currently retired.
- Of those who are working, the majority (67%) are working in the for-profit sector, with nearly two in ten (18%) working in the public sector and over one in ten (12%) working for a nonprofit organization. Another question found that over one-quarter (27%) are already working in the field of education.

How do they describe their future encores?

- Nearly one-third (31%) see themselves working 30 or more hours per week, and about two in ten (21%) envision working less than 20 hours each week in their encores. The average expectation is to work part-time, at about 24 hours per week.
- For more than half of these (55%), their encores would involve a new role, and for the remainder (45%) it would be a continuation of a current role.
- About four in ten (39%) expect to work for pay, about one in seven (14%) expect to be self-employed, and nearly one-quarter (23%) expect their encore roles to be as volunteers or in pro-bono roles. About one in six (16%) aren't sure what type of work they would pursue.
- The vast majority (93%) plan to work 5 years or more with an average duration of nearly 11 years.

What are their concerns?

- Fully half (50%) are somewhat or very concerned that they will be subject to age discrimination in hiring or in the workplace.
- Forty-five percent are somewhat or very concerned that this kind of work won't provide the amount of income they need.
- Thirty-eight percent are somewhat or very concerned that it will be hard to find this type of work. The same percent are concerned that their health or physical condition will make it difficult to do this type of work, and that they can't afford the time or money needed for the necessary training or education to make the transition.
- Twenty-one percent are somewhat or very concerned that this type of work would be a step down in status from their earlier roles.

Methodology

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

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ⁱ Visit www.encore.org/research to learn more.

ⁱⁱ A larger group – 61% – of those interested in encore careers say that they envision their work impacting persons from multiple generations. This makes it likely that there is an even larger future talent pool of encore seekers interested in transitioning to work that benefits the lives of younger generations.