

Change Statement

If immigrant boomers develop civic knowledge and problem-solving skills, they will become civically involved to create positive change in their communities.

Evidence and Assumptions

- Studies show boomers as they age want to remain meaningfully engaged, continually learning and socially connected
- Studies show improved health (physical, cognitive, emotional) in older adults who are civically engaged in their communities
- Boomers--the healthiest, best educated group of older adults in history--represent an untapped resource for solving community problems and shifting perceptions of aging to reflect current realities (older adults as assets to their communities)
- Older adults of all backgrounds (including low-income and immigrant) are important resources for solving community problems
- Immigrants desire to become full members of their communities and the broader social system, but need the civic knowledge, skills and opportunity to do so
- Studies show communities & nonprofits are not prepared to take advantage of older adults as resources & don't offer meaningful roles in community problem solving

Community Needs/Assets

Needs

- LA County's diverse communities have many unsolved/unaddressed problems: non-literate Spanish speakers, poverty/lack of economic upward mobility; chronic diseases prevalent in elders in communities of color; inter-group conflicts; isolation from broader community

Assets

- Nonprofits providing services to older adults want to develop new paradigms for responding to the different needs of a new aging generation
- Shared themes of immigrants' civic engagement histories in their home countries can be adapted/built on to engage them in community problem-solving in LA

Contextual Factors

- Significant increase in # of older adults as baby boomers hit retirement age coupled with increased life expectancy
- Economic troubles reduce available funding for addressing pressing social issues
- CCF Community Assessment identifies 50% of LA County boomers are immigrants
- Local nonprofit interest: 10 nonprofits working with older & immigrant populations in specific communities applied
- The 3 selected NPOs showed prior history of success in related work
- More foundations are supporting civic engagement
- Higher # of low-income immigrant boomers than middle income, native-born mainstream boomers live in LA County

Strategies

- Community organizing (examples: ACORN, Industrial Areas Foundation)
- Volunteer and leadership development (example: Experience Corps)
- Promotoras model of community health education

Desired Results (Outputs, Outcomes and Impact)

- Create examples of culturally-responsive civic engagement opportunities for immigrant boomers
- Low-income immigrant boomers acquire new skills for community problem solving
- More immigrant boomers are achieving results in solving community-specific problems
- Immigrant boomers are widely recognized as an asset for community problem solving
- Other communities replicate civic engagement strategies for immigrant boomers