

EngAGEment Initiative's Research Results: *Aging in Arizona: A Summary of Grantmaker Perspectives*

Presentation for :
Connecting Caring Communities
Greater Phoenix Area Aging in Place Conference
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EngAGEment Vision:
*Creating Arizona as a
Great Place to Grow Older*

EngAGEment Sponsors

The Engagement Initiative is supported by a grant from **Grantmakers in Aging** with matching funds provided by local partners:

- **Arizona Community Foundation**
- **BHHS Legacy Foundation**
- **St. Luke's Health Initiatives**
- **Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust**

Purpose of the Research

1. What are funders' underlying decision making and organizational priorities and how older adults factor in?
2. How do funders make funding decisions for their communities?
3. In what ways would funders like to improve Arizona communities to better support people of all ages?
4. How can older adults impact community building efforts when...
 - bringing their assets and contributions to bear on community growth
 - they have growing needs for care, support and resources?



Research Methodology

Study Design:

1. Initial inquiry of funders regarding their organizations' funding priorities, decision making strategies and view of "community."
2. Review of exhibits with information to raise funders' awareness of the rapid changes in the population demographics and growing social impact of older adults in America.
3. Dialogue with funders regarding their perceptions of the information, whether it was new knowledge for them and how it might influence their actions in the future.



Research Methodology

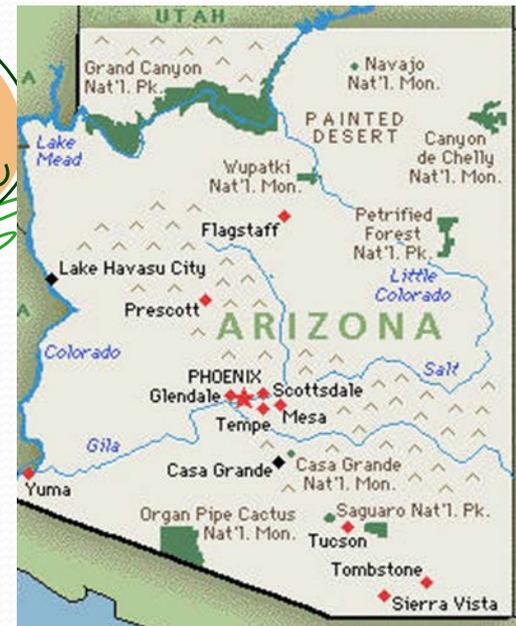
Methods:

1. Design Team Oversight and Review
2. Sample selection of 35 Arizona-based funders
3. Introductory letter of invitation
4. Phone calls to set appointment
5. 30 Arizona-based funders were included
 - Nine (9) one-on-one interviews
 - Two (2) focus group discussions
 - Phoenix (n=9 and Tucson (n=12)



Respondent Demographics

- The 30 respondents represent 37 Arizona foundations
 - with combined assets of \$1.52 billion
 - with charitable giving in 2010 of \$204.62 million.
- Type of Funders:
 - 19 family foundations
 - 7 public charities
 - 7 independent foundations
 - 2 corporation-funded foundations
 - 1 private foundation.
- 11 funders that were organizational members of Arizona Grantmakers Forum





Key Findings



Funder Profiles

Four basic “prototypes” of funders emerged:

1. **Community-oriented, big-picture-thinker funders**
2. **Ready, willing but-not-yet-able funders**
3. **Grantees-must-take-the-lead funders**
4. **Priorities do-not-include-older-adults funders**



Funders' Priorities Drive Decision Making

- Clear priorities were the norm across the board
- Decision making tactics varied widely
- Expanding strategic goals with broader community in mind were emergent trends for forward-thinking funders



Funders' Perspective on Intergenerational Community Building

- Intergenerational program building has more appeal than an “aging-only” perspective.
- Grantees must take the lead on incorporating intergenerational concepts into program design and planning - don't wait for funders to bring it up!
- Build systems change models that go beyond isolated programmatic funding to initiate to the movement from within the nonprofit sector.
- Collaborative partnerships are essential in funding community-building initiatives.
- Do funding for intergenerational programs in collaboration with the community.



Funders' Perspective on Intergenerational Community Building

However...

- Some attitudes among funders and nonprofits alike about older adults mitigate against intergenerational community building.
- Supporting programs that benefit older adults do not fit some funders' priorities.
- Unanswered questions remain on how to achieve the ideal intergenerational models.

Exhibits Overview (see handout)

Exhibit 1. Trends in Aging in America, Arizona and in AZ Counties

Exhibit 2. Facts and Figures About the Aging Population Trends in America

Exhibit 3. A Portrait of the Older Adult Population in America

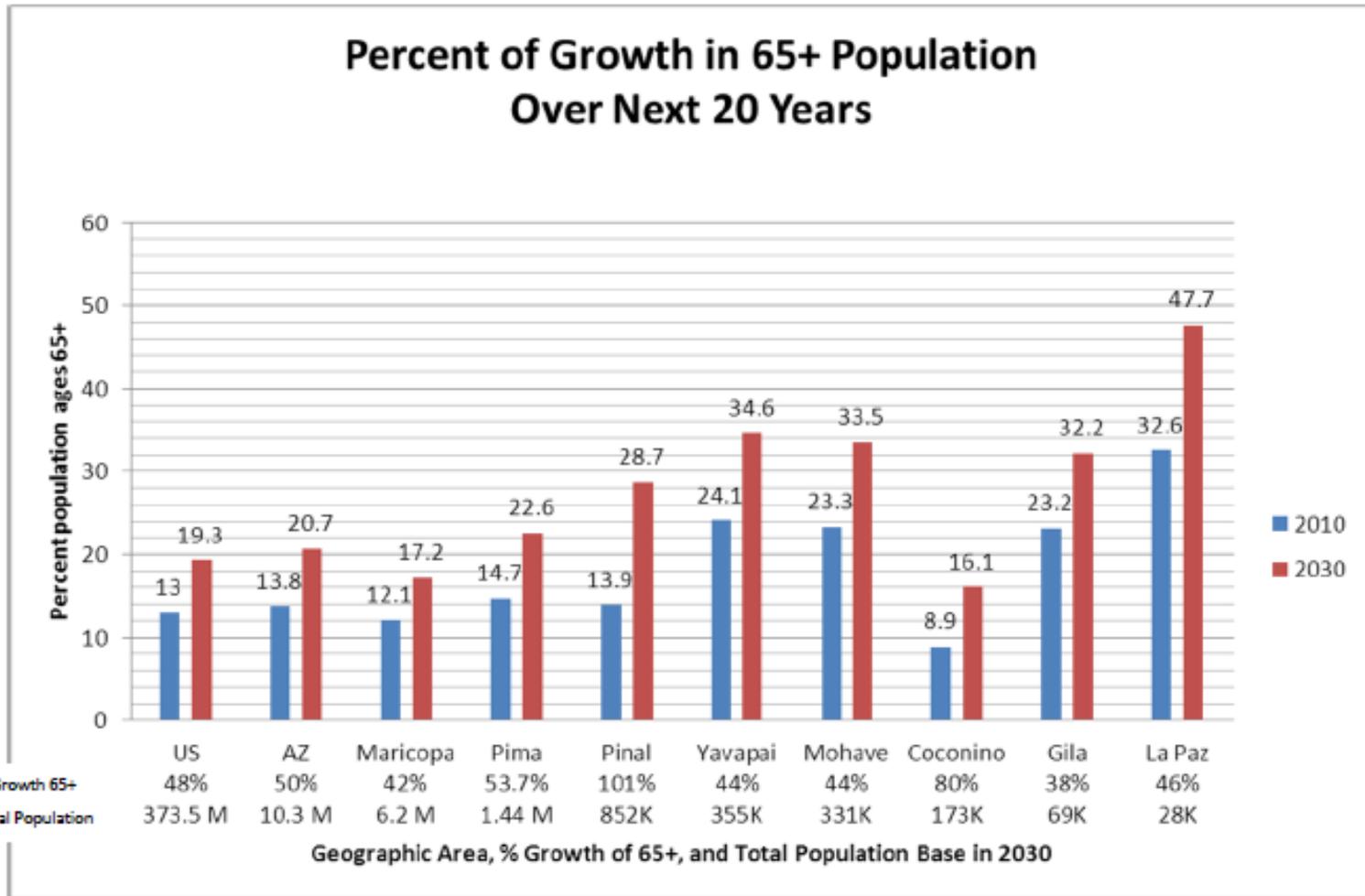
Exhibit 4. Harness a Powerful and Growing Natural Resource – Older Adults

Exhibit 5. Older Adults Offer a Nearly Limitless Supply of Ready and Able Volunteers, Mentors, Activists, and Community Leaders

Exhibit 6. Frailty and Chronic Illnesses Affect a *Small Percentage* of Older Adults But A Rapidly Growing Group in *Sheer Numbers*

Exhibit 7. *An Idea to Consider: An Arizona Initiative to Build Livable Communities for Children, Youth, Families and Older Adults*

Exhibit 1. Trends in Aging in America, Arizona and in AZ Counties



<http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html>

<http://azstats.gov/population-projections.aspx>

Capitalize on Assets of Aging to Build Community Capacity

- Focus on assets, skills and talents of older adults, not only on the deficits and dependencies.
- Establish ways to connect skilled, motivated older adults with community needs.
- Educate grantmakers and nonprofits alike to understand and capitalize on assets of aging.

Incorporate an Aging Lens in all Philanthropic Work

- Every funder will inevitably face the social and economic ramifications of the changing aging demographic.
- All funders ultimately touch the lives of older adults, whether they fund aging or not.
- Older adults are commandeering a major share of the countries' economic resources on both ends of the wealth spectrum.
- Support social enterprise and entrepreneurial efforts to meet the needs of older adults.

Nonprofits Must Take the Lead in Proposing Intergenerational Community Solutions.

- Nonprofit organizations are in a pivotal position to move the needle on aging awareness among their funding partners.
- Strengthen nonprofits' ability to successfully propose intergenerational solutions.
- Educate nonprofits on the characteristics funders are seeking in grantees.

Collaboration is Key for Productive Community Building

- When people build community together, they build intergenerational understanding.
- Frame community building as a collaborative process to help people of all ages, not as isolated programs that benefit different age groups.
- Generate a collaborative model for healthy communities that engage all.

What Does This Mean for Funders?

- Sponsor “think tanks” and collaborative discussions on community building initiatives. Help grantees expand their thinking beyond programmatic funding requests. Invite other funders to participate so they can hear grantees ideas for change.
- Ask for intergenerational components to be built into grantees proposals. As you change your requirements, you grantees will learn that community building is a desired outcome... A subtle change that will begin to influence grantees thinking and planning.
- Partner with others that are supporting intergenerational efforts. As you ask grantees to collaborate with their peers more and more, so might your foundation work with other funders to devise a broad community-building framework that will benefit all generations for years to come.



What Does This Mean for Non-Profits?

- Collaborations are Essential. Establish collaborations with other nonprofits, community members, businesses and other stakeholders to focus combined efforts on building healthy, vibrant communities.
- Nonprofits Dare to Take the Lead: Step up and bring community building initiatives and ideas to funders for their input and consideration.
- Capitalize on Intergenerational Assets and Possibilities. The potential benefits generated by interactions between generations is unlimited.
- Think "systems change" that makes a long-term difference. Challenge your organization to move beyond individual unifocal programs to efforts that include multiple audiences helping each other - as they help themselves.



What Does This Mean for Arizona Grantmakers Forum?

- Education: Continue to prepare and disseminate materials to AGF's constituencies
- Facilitation: Continue to sponsor networking opportunities, foster collaboration and encourage leadership among AGF members and non-members
- Communication: Apprise AGF members of developments in intergenerational community work



Arizona Grantmakers Forum

OUR MISSION: To increase, enhance and improve philanthropy in Arizona.

OUR VISION: Arizona's expanding philanthropic community, working collaboratively, invests their resources wisely to make a profound positive difference for Arizona's communities.

OUR LEADER: Marissa Theisen, President & CEO

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