

# Careers in Aging: Where to Begin?

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## Careers in an Older America

The aging of the nation is creating a demand for products and services—and specialized knowledge and skills—to meet the needs of middle-aged and older adults.

### The Field of Aging: Roles

- Conducting research on the aging process and diseases associated with aging, such as Alzheimer's disease
- Analyzing issues related to older adults, such as retirement decisions, health disparities, housing options, transportation needs
- Planning, administering, and evaluating community-based services and service delivery systems for older adults
- Teaching courses on aging to college and university students, health care professionals, and older adults
- Advocating with or on behalf of older adults before legislative bodies or in institutional settings
- Designing products to meet the special needs of older persons
- Advising business, industry, and labor regarding older workers and consumers

Source: Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE), *Careers in Aging* (2004)

### The Field of Aging: Pathways

- **Associations** (e.g., American Society on Aging [www.asaging.org](http://www.asaging.org), Alzheimer's Association <http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers>, National Association of Social Workers [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org), Generations United [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org), The National Council on the Aging [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org))

- **Research and Policy Institutes** (e.g., Alliance for Aging Research [www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org), International Longevity Center [www.ilcusa.org](http://www.ilcusa.org), Families USA [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org))
- **Senior Citizen Membership Groups** (AARP [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org), <http://www.aarpjobs.com/jobs/>)
- **Academia**
- **Health Care and Long-term Care Institutions**
  - Adult day care facilities
  - Assisted living facilities
  - Hospital and outpatient facilities
  - Nursing homes
  - Mental health facilities
  - Senior living facilities
- **Federal, State, and Local Government Agencies, including “The Aging Network”** (the system of service delivery to older adults established by *The Older Americans Act*)
  - U.S. Administration on Aging [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov)
  - State Units on Aging (see links from [aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov))
  - Area Agencies on Aging (see links from [aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov))
  - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
  - Department of Veterans Affairs
  - National Institute on Aging
  - Social Security Administration

### **The Field of Aging: (New) Pathways**

- **Business and Industry:**
  - Health Care Corporations
  - Insurance Companies
  - Retailers
  - Law
  - Architecture

### **Job Search Strategies**

- **Your Network of Contacts**
  - University faculty (Advisory Board, Steering Committee, Work Group, Consultant)

- Professional association membership (American Society on Aging, The Gerontological Society of America, National Council on the Aging, American Geriatrics Society, Generations United)
- **Campus Career Center Resources**
  - “Insider” (restricted access) resources
  - Alumni connections
- **Job Banks**
  - Annual Meeting: ASA, GSA
- **Monthly or Quarterly E-Newsletters**
  - ASA’s *Employment Bulletin* [www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)
  - GSA’s *Gerontology News* [www.geron.org](http://www.geron.org)
  - Population Association of America *Affairs* [www.popassoc.org](http://www.popassoc.org)
- **Association Websites**
  - GSA [www.AgeWork.com](http://www.AgeWork.com)
  - American Psychological Association [www.psyccareers.com](http://www.psyccareers.com)
  - American Counseling Association [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)
  - National Association of Social Workers [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)
  - The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (50!) [www.lcao.org](http://www.lcao.org)

## Online Job Sites

- **The Chronicle of Higher Education** [www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com)
  - The most comprehensive listing of Academic/Non-academic opportunities
- **Idealist.org** <http://www.idealist.org/>
  - Job listings for nonprofit and community organizations
- **The Electronic Policy Network** [www.movingideas.org](http://www.movingideas.org)
  - Network of policy and research institutions with job bank
- **Roll Call** [www.rcjobs.com](http://www.rcjobs.com)
  - Leading source for Congressional news and job postings

## “Informational Interviews” and Internships

- Proven “Foot-in-the-door” strategies
- [www.Washingtonpost.com](http://www.Washingtonpost.com)
  - See “First Jobs” link for wealth of internship resources
- [www.Wetfeet.com](http://www.Wetfeet.com)
  - Internship positions and background publications

- The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging [www.aging.senate.gov](http://www.aging.senate.gov)

## A New Image of Aging

- Unlike any previous generation, today's 65+ have:
  - **Better health:** Nearly 9 in 10 ages 65-74 have no disability.
  - **More time:** Those already 65 can expect to live to 83.
  - **More education:** From 1970 through 2002, percent with HS diploma or higher jumped from 28% to 70%. Nearly one-third of 60-64 were involved in some form of adult education in 1999, up from 17% in 1991.
  - **Better financial status:** Today, 10% live in poverty (vs. 35% in 1950)
- Baby boomers have:
  - **More youthful attitudes:** Nearly 2/3 say they feel younger today than their actual age, up from just under half in 1998.
  - **More interest in continued work:** According to a recent AARP survey, 79% expect to work in some capacity in their retirement.
  - **More interest in public service:** AARP's survey notes half expect to devote more time to community service and volunteering in retirement.
  - **Numbers:** 77 million born 1946 to 1964—about 26 million more than during prior 18-year period, and about 10 million more than in the 18 years following.

## A New Vision of Aging

- Baby boomers and older adults will enter later life with many healthy, productive years ahead.
- A new, more active retirement, that integrates work, education, community service, and leisure

## The Aging “Opportunity” (Part One)

1. How do we capture this “Mature Market”?

- Americans 50+ control 70 percent of all U.S. wealth
- Account for 50 percent of all discretionary spending
- 55-64 have median net worth of \$112,048 in 2000—15 times the \$7,240 reported for the Under-35 age group
- Target of only about 5 percent of advertising dollars
- Unlike 18-34 year olds, this is a *growing* age group, entering its peak earning years

## **The New Consumer Majority**

*“Boomers interpret longevity not as a multiplication of old age, but rather as an entirely new landscape where they can reinvent themselves, experience new beginnings, and pursue new activities.”*

Ken Dychtwald (*Age Power*, 2002)

*“The Next American Dream is to be healthy, wealthy, and active.”*

*The New Retirement Survey* (Merrill Lynch, 2005)

The gap between this aspiration and reality is likely to be a key factor driving the behavior of baby boomers. Important Sector opportunities include:

- **Retirement/Financial services**
  - “professional” management of assets
  - One-stop shops for retirement products, services, and financial advice (Allstate Financial, Total Merrill)
  - legal services (living wills, advance directives, guardianship, estate planning, long-term care planning, financial exploitation, elder abuse, age discrimination)
  
- **Health Care and Quality of Life**
  - Demand personalized health care partnerships
  - Quality-of-life improvements
  - Maintaining independent living in the residence of their choice (Home Instead, Elder Co-housing)
  - Livable communities (by design)
  - Tele-health (MIT Agelab [web.mit.edu/agelab/](http://web.mit.edu/agelab/), SPRY Foundation [www.spry.org](http://www.spry.org))
  - Geriatric Care Management
  
- **Leisure and Lifelong Learning**
  - Pleasure from additional “experiences” vs. additional “possessions”
  - Eco-tourism, volun-tourism
  - Elderhostel
  - College towns as new retirement destinations

- “Alumni” (university and employer-based) programs as gateway to experiences

## **The Aging “Opportunity” (Part Two)**

### **2. How do we capture the accumulated experience, knowledge, and skills of all older adults?**

- **The Experience Dividend**

- Where are the institutions to support, train, educate and tap the experience, skills, and talent of older Americans?
- The vast majority of our policies and programs related to aging are focused on the needs of older Americans
- Aging society has a dual challenge: give services to the needy and opportunity to the able
- National Service: AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Peace Corps
- Civic Ventures initiatives [www.civicventures.com](http://www.civicventures.com)
  - Experience Corps (mentor program)
  - The Next Chapter (retirement options/career transition resource center)
- The Future of Senior Centers?

### **Additional resources for job or internship opportunities:**

Alzheimer’s Association Internship Programs -  
[http://www.alz.org/about\\_us\\_internship\\_programs.asp](http://www.alz.org/about_us_internship_programs.asp)

National PACE Association Career Center -  
<http://www.npaonline.org/website/article.asp?id=22>

Careers in Aging website lists the following additional website resources -  
[http://www.careersinaging.com/careersinaging/finding\\_your\\_job.htm](http://www.careersinaging.com/careersinaging/finding_your_job.htm)

[www.agework.com](http://www.agework.com)

[www.seniorhousingjobs.com](http://www.seniorhousingjobs.com)

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

[www.hotjobs.com](http://www.hotjobs.com)

[www.flipdog.com](http://www.flipdog.com)

[www.healthjobsusa.com](http://www.healthjobsusa.com)

[www.elderjobs.com](http://www.elderjobs.com)

<http://geriatric.nurse.jobs.topusajobs.com/>

[www.geronurseonline.org/](http://www.geronurseonline.org/)

[www.aahsa.org/careers/job\\_mart/default.asp](http://www.aahsa.org/careers/job_mart/default.asp)

[www.asaging.org/jobs/findjobs.cfm?do=getjobs](http://www.asaging.org/jobs/findjobs.cfm?do=getjobs)

[www.carecareers.net/](http://www.carecareers.net/)

[www.socialworkers.org/joblinks/default.asp](http://www.socialworkers.org/joblinks/default.asp)