



**Age Friendly Workplaces**  
**In the Nonprofit Sector**  
**Final Report**  
**March 2012**

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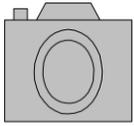
**A Project Sponsored by Community Links**

*This project was funded by the Voluntary Sector Professional Capacity Trust Fund*

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
1. Introduction	
1a. Project Objectives .....	4
1b. Methodology .....	5
2. Summary of Key Findings .....	7
3. Project Findings	
3a. Literature Review .....	9
3b. Online Surveys .....	13
3c. Focus Groups .....	17
3d. Provincial Forum .....	22
4. Recommendations:	
Moving Forward to Age Friendly Workplaces in the Nonprofit Sector ...	22
5. Bibliography .....	25

## Executive Summary



Age Friendly Workplaces in the Nonprofit Sector is a project of Community Links, a provincial nonprofit association of over 280 senior and senior-serving member organizations. As a seven month project generating data from 257 participants via online surveys, focus groups and a provincial forum, this report presents a “SNAPSHOT” of age-friendly workplace practices and contains considerations for the nonprofit sector and governments.

Canada’s population is aging. The baby boomer generation, now aged 45 – 64, make up 40% of our population and seniors aged 65+ constitute another 14%. The numbers are higher in Nova Scotia, a province that has the oldest population in the country. An aging population means an aging workforce. Starting in 2012, the labour force in Canada will experience workers retiring at unprecedented numbers. Attracting and retaining older workers is a key challenge recognized by labour sector, including the nonprofit sector. This project was designed to examine how to attract older workers to the nonprofit sector, perhaps as a second career, and how to create age-friendly workplaces so as to increase the sector’s capacity to retain our older workers.

The project’s findings largely reflect the opinions and responses of nonprofit sector employees and employers (80%) with about 15% of the responses coming from public sector employees and the remaining five percent of participants from the private sector. The engagement of employees from government and businesses offered unique insights and perspectives on the nonprofit sector and ideas on how to position this sector as an age-friendly workplace of choice for older workers.

### **There are consistent descriptors of what makes a workplace age-friendly:**

- Fair compensation and benefits package
- Flexibility in the workplace (hours, workload, job-sharing, location)
- Access to training and technology
- Access to promotions and new types of work
- Physical and workplace accommodations
- Intergenerational collaborations encouraged at work (mentorship)
- Respectful workplaces, supported by HR policies and good leadership

### **To attract older workers to the nonprofit sector**

1. Improve public perception of the sector and position the sector as a great place to work.
2. Provide visible career pathways into the sector.
3. Offer fair compensation and benefit packages.
4. Advertise flexible work arrangements and an interesting variety of work.
5. Present employment opportunities in the sector at pre-retirement sessions to public sector employees and business organizations.
6. Explore employee exchange programs between the public and the nonprofit sectors.

## Introduction

Community Links, a provincial non-profit association of over 280 senior and senior-serving member organization, has been active in promoting seniors well-being in Nova Scotia for over twenty years. Its mandate is to promote healthy, age friendly communities and quality of life for Nova Scotian seniors through community development and volunteer action.

Aware of the demographics of an aging population, Community Links identified an opportunity to study age-friendly workplaces in Nova Scotia, with a focus on the non-profit sector. In the fall of 2011, Community Links launched a provincial research project on Age-Friendly Workplaces in the Nonprofit Sector, with the financial support of the Voluntary Sector Professional Capacity Trust Fund. The dual objectives of this project are to ascertain what nonprofits can do to mitigate the impact of an aging workforce, and to identify what might induce and support older workers to stay employed in the nonprofit sector or to explore a second career in the nonprofit sector.

### Why?

The demographic picture of the Canadian population has clearly been described as an “aging population” where approximately 14% of Canadians are age 65 and older and more than 1 in 5 workers in Canada are between the ages of 50 – 64<sup>1</sup>. Nova Scotia has the oldest population in the country at 15.4% seniors.<sup>2</sup> This number will rise sharply by 2026 when 1 in 4 Nova Scotians (25%) will be seniors.

All sectors of the economy are competing for skilled workers at a time when more Canadians than ever are retiring. The non-profit sector is already challenged in its ability to offer competitive salary and benefit packages to attract and retain workers. In addition, business and public sectors have increasingly shown a capacity to address the labour issues that an aging workforce can bring, such as benefits and pensions, pre-retirement seminars, job sharing and greater workplace flexibility.

To garner the benefits of an aging workforce, it is important that the thousands of nonprofit agencies in Nova Scotia that employ over 35,000 workers explore strategies that can position this sector as an age-friendly place to work.

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<sup>1</sup> Seniors and the Labour Force (draft), May 2011, The Graham Lowe Group.

<sup>2</sup> Seniors Statistical Profile 2009, NS Dept of Seniors

## **Project Objectives**

Community Links designed the Age Friendly Workplaces in the Nonprofit Sector project to explore ways for aging Nova Scotians, who wish to maintain a connection to the paid workforce, to do so in the nonprofit sector, and ways that the nonprofit sector can adapt to capitalize on this potential workforce. The specific objectives of the project are:

1. To ascertain what nonprofit and voluntary organizations in Nova Scotia can accomplish to mitigate the impact of an aging workforce through adapting human resource structures and policies to encourage existing staff to remain or to actively recruit retirees from other sectors.
2. To ascertain what might induce or support individuals approaching retirement from the voluntary/nonprofit, business and government sectors to seek post retirement employment in the voluntary sector.
3. To share the research with voluntary sector organizations in Nova Scotia and potential post retirement employees.
4. To produce information on age friendly workplaces that can be used by sector organizations in framing their human resource policies.

## **Methodology**

As the project sponsor, Community Links recruited a **Provincial Advisory Committee** to provide general oversight and guidance for the design and implementation of the project. Members of the Advisory Committee also provided knowledge of existing research and key contacts in the promotion and dissemination of research tools and events. Community Links also contracted the services of a Project Coordinator to implement the action steps of the project and draft the project's summary report.

An extensive **literature search** reviewed existing research and articles on the aging population and older workers in the economy, in order to validate the project's assumptions about an aging population and some of the implications for workplaces. The bibliography of this report identifies the literature sources.

**Two online surveys** were designed and used for this project and promoted to nonprofits, government and some private businesses during December 2011. One survey was designed for employees of any workplace, and the second survey was designed for employers in the non-profit sector and was completed by either an Executive Director or a Board chairperson.

1. Employees Survey

This online survey was available to any employee who received it. One hundred completed surveys were received, with 80% from employees within the nonprofit sector and the remainder from government and private sector workplaces.

2. Employer Survey

This survey was available to employers in the nonprofit sector, either Executive Directors or Board chairpersons. Sixty-three completed surveys were received.

### **Focus Groups**

Five focus groups were conducted across Nova Scotia during January and February 2012 in the communities of Halifax, Kentville and New Glasgow. One of the Halifax focus groups was hosted for public sector employees in order to gain an employee perspective from outside the nonprofit sector.

### **Provincial Forum**

On Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012, over 50 participants from the nonprofit and government sectors gathered in Truro to hear the highlights of the project's findings and to develop some directions for next steps in creating age-friendly workplaces for the nonprofit sector.

### **Engagement with the Business Sector**

The online survey component of this study received the highest engagement from the business sector, with 5 percent of the surveys coming from private sector employees. The focus groups and the provincial forum did not reflect any noticeable participation from the private sector, perhaps with exception of the perspective of nonprofit employees who used to work in private business and offered some insights.

## **Summary of Key Findings**

### **Why keep working beyond the age of 55?**

Two main themes were expressed by workers who wanted to continue working beyond the age of 55;

1. A financial need: Many older workers in the nonprofit sector cannot afford to retire as they approach or work beyond the age of 55.
2. A personal desire: Many older workers wish to remain engaged and active in work life and other areas of personal interest. This was identified as a crucial factor in maintaining health.

The goal expressed by many workers was the desire for a better work-life balance, with ability to work fewer hours, flexibility in scheduling work and more time to spend on personal pursuits.

### **Why employ an older worker?**

Very consistent responses indicate employers view older workers as having many positive workplace characteristics beyond specific skills, such as a strong work ethic, dependability, reliability, employer loyalty, and a lifetime of work experience.

### **Good Workplaces for Older Workers**

Participants described some excellent workplace practices that are keeping them engaged at work while addressing their health and stress issues.

1. Employer support of workplace accommodations to create better workplace environments.
2. Flexible pensions and benefit plans.
3. Fair compensation packages for employees
4. Job sharing options.
5. Ability to work flexible time and/or reduced hours, and take a leave of absence to travel or spend time with family.
6. Mentoring processes to transfer skills from experienced workers to new workers
7. Stimulating work.

8. Access to training dollars for professional development.
9. Inclusion of older workers in the succession planning process.
10. Older workers are valued by the employer for their experience, loyalty and strong work ethic.

#### **What more can be done to keep older workers?**

1. Pre-retirement programs in the nonprofit sector
2. Address ageism in the workplace openly – organizational policies and practices that promote respectful workplaces
3. Short-term contract work and more flexible work options
4. Short-term contract work was not ideal for all. Some workers need to know they have a job beyond a six month contract and indicated job stress and lack of benefits associated with short-term contracts.
5. More job sharing options
6. Access to training dollars to keep skills current or develop new ones
7. Lower tax rate for employees of non-profit organizations
8. A central online non-profit employment website so job opportunities in this sector can be easily accessed by the public
9. Competitive wages and benefit packages
10. Many nonprofit employers (65%) do not offer pension plans and over 30% do not offer benefit packages and this directly impacts the financial ability of some workers to retire.
11. Portable pension and benefit packages that can move with the employee as they change jobs from one non-profit to another

#### **What more can be done in addition to attract workers from other sectors?**

1. Public awareness campaign on the whole nonprofit sector as a place of employment.
2. Short-term or shared contracts may be a strategy to hire specific skill sets, ie: legal, accounting, marketing, etc.
3. A central online non-profit employment website so job opportunities in this sector can be easily accessed by the public.

# Project Findings

## (A) Literature Review

### The Nation's Demographics

The demographic picture of the Canadian population has clearly been described as an “aging population”. Today almost 14% of Canadians are age 65 and older and this will rise dramatically to 22% in just 14 years (2026)<sup>3</sup>.

### POPULATION (%) OF SENIORS (65+) BY PROVINCE BY SEX, 2008

Province	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>15.4</b>
<b>New Brunswick</b>	13.6	16.8	15.2
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	13.6	16.5	15.1
Saskatchewan	13.2	16.6	15.0
Quebec	12.8	16.4	14.6
British Columbia	13.4	15.7	14.5
Newfoundland	13.3	15.5	14.4
Manitoba	11.9	15.6	13.8
Ontario	12.0	15.0	13.5
Alberta	9.2	11.8	10.4
<b>Canada</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>13.7</b>

Source: Statistics Canada. *Table 051-0001*

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<sup>3</sup> Seniors Statistical Profile 2009, NS Dept of Seniors

**Canada's baby boomer generation** (1946-1965) are now between the ages of 46-65 years and form 40% of our population – **the largest segment of our population**<sup>4</sup>. This large segment of the Canadian population is now starting to retire in great numbers and will continue to do so at increasingly numbers over the next two decades.

### **National Labour Force Participation (1976-2008)**

- 23% increase among older women
- 6% decrease among older men
- Self employment increases with age
- more than 1 in 5 workers in Canada are between the ages of 50 – 64

### **Retirement Trends**

The average retirement age for men is 62, and for women it is 60. This increases in both genders for self-employed workers to age 65.<sup>5</sup>

The reasons workers cited for retirement are:

- 30% financially ready
- 20% unplanned retirement due to layoff, closure or downsizing
- 12% health issues
- 10% job dissatisfaction

### **Federal Initiatives**

- 2011-2013 Targeted Initiatives for Older Workers (TIOWS)  
A Federal initiative delivered in partnership with provinces to provide employment assistance services and employability improvement activities such as skills upgrading and work experience to assist unemployed workers aged 55-64 with their return to work.
- 2011 The Canadian government repeals the section of the Canadian Human Rights Legislation that requires workers to retire at age 65 (or 60 in some professions).
- 2012 The Canadian government tables legislation to phase in an increase in the age of eligibility for Old Age Security to 67 from the current age 65.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada 2009

<sup>5</sup> Monthly Labour Force Survey from 2006-2010



## Nova Scotia’s Demographics

Nova Scotia has the oldest population in the country at 15.4% seniors.<sup>6</sup> This number will rise sharply by 2026 when 1 in 4 Nova Scotians (25%) will be seniors.

- 16.9% of women are age 65+
- 13.8% of men are age 65+

## Nova Scotia Labour Force Participation

- Provincial rate 64.2%
- Nova Scotians age 55-64 55.2%
- Nova Scotians age 65+ 7.9%
- There is a growing trend among seniors to be self-employed (25%).

***There are more older women and fewer older men staying longer in the workforce.***

Among Nova Scotians age 55-64, employment rates jumped 52% between 2001 – 2006<sup>7</sup>. Many of these workers may now be retired.

**Nova Scotia’s Nonprofit Sector Labour Market Study (2010):** a groundbreaking study that generated a snapshot of the workforce of the nonprofit sector in Nova Scotia and provided a benchmark to measure future changes in the labour force. This study is cited as it reinforces some of the aging trends identified in this report.

In 2010, the nonprofit sector in Nova Scotia (over 6000 agencies) employed 35,000 full-time employees with about 87% being women and two-thirds of them earning less than \$40,000 a year. Only 40% have pension plans through work and 33% have no health benefits. Almost half are poised to retire over the next 20 years and include a significant portion of senior workers and leadership staff.



**“This sector (nonprofit) is confronting an aging workforce about to retire in greater numbers than ever, and is also facing significant competition from the private and public sectors for employees.” (NS Nonprofit Sector Labour market Study, 2010).**

<sup>6</sup> Seniors Statistical Profile 2009, NS Dept of Seniors

<sup>7</sup> Seniors Statistical Profile 2009, NS Dept of Seniors

## Nova Scotia Initiatives

### 2005 Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia, NS Seniors Secretariat

Identifies the need for policies and practices that

- Accommodate workers physical needs,
- Accommodate flexible work arrangements
- Support mid-career learning
- Support volunteering and family/child care leave

Recommends a strategy to

1. Encourage employers to **recognize contribution** of older workers
2. Encourage **HR, pension and tax policies** that support employment of older workers
3. Encourage development of programs to help older people **secure more challenging positions**
4. **Collaborate with unions** re: age-friendly agreements
5. Develop workplace policies for **flexible working arrangements**
6. Encourage **barrier-free design**

### 2010 Jobs Here Strategy: The Plan to Grow our Economy, Government of Nova Scotia

***The workforce strategy will retain older workers in the labour force.***

- *Focus on skills development for all workers.*
- *Recognition of prior learning*
- *Worker transition programs, such as retraining.*
- *More diversity in the workplace*
- *Voluntary Sector Professional Improvement Initiative*

## Online Surveys

**Two online surveys** were designed and used for this project and promoted to nonprofits, government and some private businesses during December 2011. One survey was designed for employees of any workplace, and the second survey was designed for employers in the non-profit sector and was completed by either an Executive Director or a Board chairperson.

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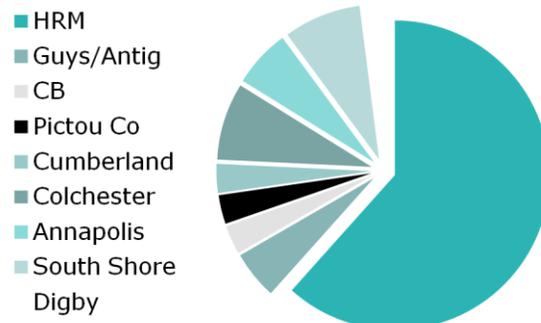
### 2. Employees Survey

This online survey was available to any employee who received it. One hundred completed surveys were received, with 80% from employees working in nonprofit agencies, 15% from public sector employees and 5% from private sector employees

## Provincial Engagement

*Almost two-thirds of the online surveys were completed from the Halifax Regional Municipality area.*

**Surveys**



## EMPLOYERS SAID...

**Sixty-one nonprofit agencies completed the Employer Survey**, reporting a total of 1030 paid staff and identifying 191 workers age 55 or older, or 18.5%, in keeping with the national average of 20% of the workforce age 50-64.

Size of paid workforce	Percentage of Workers 50-64
National Figures	
1-4 employees	25%
5-9 employees	33%
10-14 employees	3%
15-24 employees	19%
25+ employees	20%

## **Recruiting & Retaining Older Workers to the Nonprofit Sector**

### **Challenges:**

The majority of nonprofit employers (84%) did not report significant challenges in recruiting and retaining older workers in comparison with workers in general. However, when asked further, employers did report greater challenge in retaining older workers versus recruiting older workers. Employers reported that older and more skilled workers tend to leave nonprofit employment for three main reasons:

- Employer cannot offer a competitive wage and/or benefit package
- The demands of the job are too stressful
- Employer cannot offer flexible work arrangements

### **Strategies:**

While agencies did not report any specific recruitment strategies targeting older candidates, there were consistent retention strategies that were identified as successful in keeping older workers employed longer.

#### The retention strategies include:

1. Flexibility around work schedules
2. Options to work from home
3. Extended health benefits
4. Matching pension plans
5. Workplace accommodations specific to employee need

### **Employers identify strengths of older workers**

Employers consistently identified the following work characteristics in older employees:

- Dependability
- A strong work ethic
- Reliability
- Employer loyalty
- A lifetime of work experience and skill

### **Age Friendly Workplace policies**

An impressive 80% of agencies reported having written Human Resource policies, but only 25% reported having specific policies supporting older workers, such as flexible work arrangements, workplace accommodations and physical supports.

### **Employers also identified a need for**

- Agency funding sufficient to support the capacity for competitive wage and benefit packages to employees in the nonprofit sector.
- Funding that supports the ongoing training and development of employees.
- Support in the development of mentorship programs and practices in work to promote intergenerational learning.

## EMPLOYEES SAID...

One hundred employees completed an online survey; 80% from nonprofit agencies, 15% from the public sector and 5% from the private sector.

*Of the 20% of employees not currently employed in the nonprofit sector, almost 60% indicated an interest in exploring job opportunities in this sector in the future.*

The vast majority of employees indicated a plan to continue working beyond the age of 55.

92% of employees indicated a plan to work beyond the age of 55, with many indicating they are already over that age and still plan to continue working.

### Demographics of employees completing surveys:

67% Age 46-65  
14% Age 65+  
11% Age 36-45  
8% Under age 35

### Why keep working beyond the age of 55?

Two main themes were expressed by workers who wanted to continue working beyond the age of 55;

1. Financial need: Many older workers in the nonprofit sector cannot afford to retire as they approach or work beyond the age of 55.
2. A personal desire: Many older workers wish to remain engaged and active in work life and other areas of personal interest. This was identified as a crucial factor in maintaining health.

The goal expressed by many workers was the desire for a better work-life balance, with ability to work fewer hours, flexibility in scheduling work and more time to spend on personal pursuits.

**There are age friendly workplaces in the nonprofit sector.**

67% of employees indicated specific characteristics that made their current workplaces age friendly

- ✓ Flexible work schedules
- ✓ Benefits and pension plans
- ✓ Respect for experience
- ✓ Great leadership
- ✓ Collaborative workplace environment

**Supports to keep employees working longer:**

- Flexible work situations, such as employee input into hours and workloads
- Fair compensation and benefit packages
- Updated technology training and investment in skills development
- Ergonomic workplaces and accommodations when needed

**Concerns expressed for older workers in the nonprofit sector**

Many respondents identified concern for older workers retiring from the nonprofit sector with inadequate pension and income sources. This particularly affects women as over three-quarters of nonprofit sector employees are female.

Other concerns included worker fatigue, stress and burnout that can be brought about by a lack of flexibility in work arrangements and a supportive work-life balance.

## Focus Groups

In January and February, 2012, five focus groups were conducted in the Nova Scotian communities of Halifax (2), Kentville (2) and New Glasgow (1), in order to garner more in-depth knowledge around four key questions listed below. The development of these focus group questions was informed by a review of the online survey responses from December 2011. There were 41 participants overall, largely from the nonprofit sector, with a few business and government individuals participating as well. One focus group in Halifax was hosted exclusively for public sector employees in order to gain perspective from outside the nonprofit sector.

### Focus Group Questions

1. What do you need to keep working beyond 55?
2. What is already available in organizations to support older workers?
3. What more can be done to make the sector more age friendly?
4. How can the sector attract older workers?

### Summary of Responses

#### 1. What do you need to keep working beyond 55?

- A better work-life balance, more time for family and other interests
- Competitive and fair compensation and benefit package
- Options for new learning at work, promotions, accreditations and new work choices
- Engaging work opportunities
- Job supports to address stress and workloads
- Opportunity for job sharing & semi-retirement options, leave of absence
- Flexible work situations regarding hours, workloads and work environment
- Short-term work options such as contracts
- Health benefits beyond age 55, beyond age 65.
- Shifting of RSP contributions to Tax Free Saving contributions as employees neared retirement age.
- Workplace accommodations, such as physical changes, ergonomic chairs, larger fonts
- Targeted employment services for older workers
- Openly address ageism attitudes in the workplace – language, practices, policies
- Collaborative, teambuilding workplaces that values intergenerational learning

#### 2. What is already available in organizations to support older workers?

- Choice of flexible hours available in some organizations
- Job sharing & adjustment of workloads
- Physical accommodations are being made when needed

- Accommodation of health issues
- Board policies in place to support age friendly workplace practices
- Pre – retirement sessions to help identify options
- Succession planning at work
- Mentor programs and cross training encouraged

### **3. What more can be done to make the sector more age friendly?**

- Develop strategic planning and policy frameworks that contribute to age-friendly workplace practices and good HR practices in general.
- Coordinate education opportunities on HR management for nonprofit sector agencies – boards and staff.
- Create employee access to pre-retirement sessions, either in-house or in partnership with the public or private sector, CARP.
- Promote lifelong learning practices through training, skill development and accreditation programs.
- Work with partners such as Human Resource Council of Nova Scotia (HRANS), the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector to help sector agencies develop and manage good HR policies and practices.
- Job-share HR Managers/consultants among multiple agencies.
- Job exchange programs – HR professionals from the public and private sector work in an agency or with a collection of agencies to increase HR capacity. Form of corporate or workplace volunteering.
- Facilitate Job placements for older workers in employment programs seeking work experience and/or a chance to re-enter the workforce.
- Encourage organizations to support employee volunteer programs.
- Develop sector-wide pension plan options for nonprofit employees, particularly for women who have traditionally shorter pension histories.
- Make the connection to healthy communities – it is all part of a larger picture.
- Improve public transportation, particularly in non-urban areas.
- The Sector should target pre-retirement employees at private companies and inform them about the potential of the NGO sector and why it may be attractive to them.

### **4. How can the sector attract older workers?**

- Improve overall visibility and image of nonprofit sector and position it as a workplace of choice. The perception is that most of the hiring in the sector goes to the people who are already in the sector. Be part of the Silver Economy. Sector is a social and economic contributor of society, etc.
- In general, increase public awareness of the work of the sector; that it is a place to volunteer as opposed to work, etc.

- Make it easier for people to find the jobs in the nonprofit sector – improve online employment services for the sector
- Develop some form of sector-wide coordination on employment and HR issues to foster collaboration and sharing of resources.
- Make presentations at pre retirement sessions in other sectors to promote job opportunities in the nonprofit sector. Work with sector industry councils, Greater Halifax Partnership, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Authorities, etc.
- Conduct public awareness campaigns on ageism, particularly in the workplace in order to shift attitudes around hiring and retaining older workers– government also has a role and has assets (i.e. smoking cessation messages).
- Offer fair, competitive pay and benefit options. Government needs to hear that it is important to support salary scales for not-for-profits.
- Advertise flexible work options, such as short-term contracts, flexible hours, adjusted workloads, option to work from home, etc.
- Offer challenging and interesting work – seek out skilled workers.
- Government workforce programs targeted at older workers could be accessed by nonprofit agencies, offering resources to support older workers seeking work experience and/or to reenter the workforce.
- Work with provincial Dept of Labour to improve awareness of labour market programs to nonprofit agencies. Ensure access to government training dollars on the same basis as other sectors.
- Offer tax breaks for employees in non-profit sector.
- Make working affordable for the older worker. Offer flexible work situations to decrease caregiving costs when at work.
- Offer portable pensions for non-profits. This recognizes the high rate of turnover within the nonprofit sector as short-term project staff may move from one agency to another.
- A gender lens needs to be applied to a largely female workforce (87%) and women making 70 cents on the dollars. This is a social policy discussion.

**Public Sector Employee focus group, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 —12 participants**

**1. What do you need to keep working beyond age 55?**

- Job satisfaction and meaningful work
- Working with motivated people
- Flexibility – workload, hours of work, etc.
- Less stress from job demands
- Working with good leadership and opportunities to assume leadership
- Access to ongoing training and upgrading of skills
- Respectful workplaces, where imagination is valued

## **2. What's already available in your workplace to support older workers?**

- Support for physical health – flexibility to walk to meetings, time for exercise during the day
- Accessible by transit
- Creative work options – teleconferencing, working from home
- Mobility within the workplace – move into new positions
- Job sharing
- Employer support to volunteer in the community
- Cross generational learning and listening
- Access to technology training
- Recognition of managers of the value of older workers – “valuable freight”
- Awareness of work-life balance by managers

## **3. What more can be done to make the non-profit sector an age friendly workplace?**

- Improve HR practices, such as performance reviews that promote respect and value of older worker.
- Foster more recognition and thanks of employees and the contributions to the workforce and mission of the agency.
- Promote teamwork – attractive to many older workers. Foster intergenerational and inclusive workplaces.
- Develop workplace values.
- Be open to entrepreneurial ideas from older workers.
- Organize pre-retirement seminars across the sector to include small and medium organizations.

## **4. How can the non-profit sector attract older workers?**

- The nonprofit sector should make job opportunities and benefits more visible and address stereotypes such as the sector offers few opportunities for advancement.
- Promote the ability to learn new skills and meet people
- Older workers look for clear job descriptions and job expectations.
- Have FUN.
- Focus on mission – use this as a draw – promote the outcomes that workers and volunteers are pursuing.
- Utilize prior learning – in the recruitment process and with existing workers.

- NGO employers need to be educated on possible financial penalties for older workers in receipt of existing pensions taking on work in retirement. There may be disincentives for pensioners to take on work.
- Increase public awareness of the NGO sector – mainly on fundraising now. Have an online visibility.
- Offer employment services in rural areas.
- Develop a Government-NGO exchange program. Like the United Way program.
- Provide options for short term and contract work.

## Provincial Forum

On February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012, fifty-three participants from the nonprofit and government sectors attended a day-long gathering in Truro, NS, to hear the initial findings of the Age-Friendly Workplaces Project and discuss its potential implications for the sector. The morning began with remarks from the provincial Minister of Labour, the Honourable Marilyn More. The project findings were then presented followed by an interactive three-person panel that broadened the audience's perspectives of age-friendly workplace issues. Remaining time before lunch allowed for a question and answer period between the audience and all the morning presenters. The afternoon was designed in small table formats that allowed participants to discuss potential action steps that could promote age-friendly workplaces throughout the nonprofit sector. Each table was asked to discuss the following 3 questions:

1. What can nonprofit agencies do to make their workplaces age-friendly?
2. What can the nonprofit sector do to make the sector more age-friendly?
3. What can the nonprofit sector recommend to government to address this labour issue?

### **Recommendations in Moving Forward**

#### **Creating Age Friendly Workplaces in the Nonprofit Sector**

##### **1. What can nonprofit agencies do to make their workplaces age-friendly?**

- Recognize that an age friendly workplace benefits more than older people – it creates respectful intergenerational communication, and fosters life-long learning and collaborative approaches.
- Offer flexible work time arrangements for employees that accommodate family care needs.
- Offer job-sharing options and support.
- Create a climate of lifelong learning, providing access to training, accreditation, promotions and new work opportunities.
- Allow unpaid leave of absences to help with work-life balance.
- Promote workplace flexibility on health accommodations so that employees feel safe to speak up on the need for accommodations, rather than quit.
- Offer mentorship programs to promote knowledge transfer in workplaces.
- Provide older workers with technology upgrades and social media training.
- Reduce ageism with diversity training, mentorships, etc.
- Ensure client programs and services are age-friendly.
- Recognize prior learning as an avenue to help older workers match their skills to opportunities within the sector.
- Review HR policies and procedures for ageism that may be reflected in language and practices.
- Promote multi-generational workplaces.
- Promote job opportunities outside of nonprofit networks.

## 2. What can the nonprofit sector do to make this sector more age-friendly?

- Promote sector-wide recognition of ageism in HR practices and access to “anti-ageism” training. Recognize that ageism affects men and women differently.
- Establish of a Nonprofit Sector Council for the province that can help coordinate training, HR policies, and collaborative opportunities.
- Develop nonprofit sector age-friendly workplace **branding** like an “employer of choice” program.
- Re-brand the nonprofit sector as great place to work; target seniors and youth.
- Promote nonprofit sector branding to the public – not well understood.
- Develop policies around advertising jobs, i.e. workplace flexibility, broaden reach of promotion.
- Promote sector-wide recognition of prior learning as an avenue to help older workers match their skills to opportunities within the sector.
- Offer sector-wide education programs on age-friendly policies and practices.
- Develop sector-wide pension programs, and education on pensions. Examine portability of pensions to reflect the mobility of the labour force within the sector.
- Promote HR standards for the nonprofit sector. Imagine Canada is setting up an accreditation option.
- Hold Job fairs for the sector.
- Offer a sector-wide speaking program to present at pre-retirement seminars in government and corporate sectors.
- Coordinate training opportunities within the sector to allow more small and medium sized agencies to afford access.
- Research and disseminate age-friendly knowledge and practices from the public and private sectors.

### **3. What can the nonprofit sector recommend to government to address this labour issue?**

1. Government funders of nonprofit agencies need to recognize the need for fair market salaries and benefits for nonprofit sector employees in all contract arrangements.
2. Government policy should allow nonprofit agencies to keep a percentage of unused contract funds in government contracts towards increasing HR capacity.
3. Government programs could help subsidize the development of HR capacity in the nonprofit sector to better utilize HR resources and better position the sector as an attractive and competitive employer. This could include cost-sharing HR Managers, mentorship programs, succession planning, and inter-generational development of the workforce.
4. The Public Service Commission could develop ageism programs like the Elder Abuse campaign. There is a need for a public awareness campaign to offset ageism.
5. Affirmative Action/Diversity programs – Government needs to review language, competency assessments and hiring practices with a view to remove ageist language and practices.
6. Government needs to review impacts of earnings on pensions, GIC, OAS, and consider raised limits, income tax credits, etc. for nonprofit employees.
7. Government should consider the development of a nonprofit sector pension program – i.e.: Quebec model.
8. Government resources can be used to alter physical facilities for accommodations.
9. Provide Tax credits for employees of nonprofit sector.
10. Funders should allow adequate transportation expenses for agencies, especially rural agencies that bear a high burden of transportation costs.
11. Provide financial support for inter-generational projects.
12. The government can broadly promote what it is doing for public sector employees, and help education the public and other sectors.

## **Going Forward in Creating Age Friendly Workplaces in the Nonprofit Sector**

The project Advisory Committee met on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 to review the draft report and discuss potential actions that can support the ongoing development of Age Friendly Workplaces in the Nonprofit Sector.

In reflecting upon this project's experience and findings, the project Advisory Committee identifies the following practical strategies, some that may have preliminary work already underway:

### **For Sector consideration**

1. Develop a Nonprofit Sector Council that would provide leadership on many of the HR issues in this sector, such as sector-wide recruitment messages that place the sector as a workplace of choice, an online employment portal, accessible HR toolkits and training, and coordination of health benefit and pension issues.
2. Generate visible career pathways into the nonprofit sector to help promote and navigate career opportunities.
3. Examine the impact of Ageism in our workplaces – our policies and practices may have Ageism messages that may reinforce negative stereotypes of older workers.
4. Coordinate a sector-wide speaker's bureau that can make regular presentations to public and private sector pre-retirement programs on the potential to work in the nonprofit sector as a second career.
5. Develop and coordinate online portal(s) that make finding nonprofit agencies and work opportunities in the sector an easy task. Online portals for the nonprofit sector could be coordinated and linked, providing a one-stop portal for citizens looking for work in the sector, volunteer opportunities, special events and training and education sessions.

### **For Government Consideration:**

1. That the current Federal-Territorial-Provincial Working Group on Seniors in the Labour Force include nonprofit agencies in its target audience to benefit from any policies and/or tools that emerge from this initiative.
2. That all levels of government provide leadership on a public campaign to identify and mitigate the impacts of Ageism on society and in particular, in the workplace.
3. That all levels of government involved in funding nonprofit sector agencies recognize the value of fair-market compensation and benefit packages to ALL employees in the economy, including nonprofit sector employees.
4. That all levels of government consider tax benefits for nonprofit employees.

*It is recognized that the success of any of the above recommendations depends on cooperation and collaboration between the nonprofit sector and government.*

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