In the News


Plus 50 in the News

- “Older Learners Should Pitch Their Work Experience,” Community College Times, July 18, 2011
- “SWIC Expands Services for Older Learners,” Southwestern Illinois College, July 15, 2011
- “NJC Expanding Effort to Re-Educate, Retain Older Learners,” Journal Advocate, July 9, 2011

Tips and Tools

Standards of Excellence Profile: Needs Assessment and Ongoing Evaluation
Understanding the needs of the plus 50 population in your community and conducting regular evaluation are an important Standard of Excellence for plus 50 programs at community colleges. Heather Ellison from St. Louis Community College (STLCC) shared at the 4th Annual Plus 50 Conference that when starting its program for baby boomers, a needs assessment dramatically impacted their planning. Immediately after leaving the first Plus 50 Conference and heading home to St. Louis in 2008, news of several major employers laying off workers in the area dominated the headlines. Instead of structuring the college’s plus 50 program around volunteering and personal enrichment courses, a needs assessment led Ellison and the other staff to design a very different program—one structured to help plus 50 workers needing to update their skills and get rehired. In response to the needs identified in the survey, STLCC created transitional workshops to help plus 50 adults with job hunting. They also offer computer skills classes and short-term job training in home healthcare. One resource available from AACC to help community college plus 50 programs is the Plus 50 Needs Assessment Toolkit. The toolkit can help you design a needs assessment for your college, assess local employer needs, understand market sizing for your plus 50 population, develop and administer a survey, conduct focus groups, analyze the data collected, and write a needs assessment report.
How to Get State and Local Employment Projection Data
You can get data for state and local employment projections online. These projections can help you with career counseling, with planning education and training programs, and with community economic development planning. It can also be helpful when applying for federal grants. See this U.S. Department of Labor website for employment projection data. Both long-term (10 year) and short-term (2 year) projections are available at this site, as well as links to each state’s primary labor market information website. The national employment projection website for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is also accessible through this link. What a handy resource for plus 50 program administrators!

Life Expectancy: How Long Will Your Community’s Baby Boomers Be Active?
This clickable map from The Washington Post breaks down life expectancy by geographical regions, race, and sex. American women live an average of 2.5 years longer than men, but life expectancies vary across the country.

My Next Move: Interactive Website Offers Career-Shifters Help
The My Next Move website is interactive and offers helpful tools for people seeking to shift careers—whether they have already decided on an occupation, know what career paths they want to consider, or aren’t sure where to start. This site by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration is a useful tool for plus 50 student advisors and a great resource to post on a website for your plus 50 program.

Plus 50 Story

Joliet Junior College Helps Unemployed Workers
In this YouTube video, Workforce Skills Manager Kelly Lapetino discusses how Joliet Junior College is helping unemployed workers age 50 and up get back to work. The college offers training and classes to help plus 50 adults figure out their next steps in the job market. The college provides customized advising for plus 50 adults and free career workshops. It’s never too late to go back to school and follow your dreams, says Lapetino. Around the nation, plus 50 adults are increasingly turning to community college for advise on retooling their careers and updating their skills. Joliet Junior College is willing to share with other community colleges what they’ve learned about working with plus 50 students.

Resources to Support Your Plus 50 Program

LEARNING

“Workout Tips for Boomers: Don't Forget the Brain”
Unique cognitive training methods baby boomers can use to keep their mental sharpness are profiled in this Fox Business online column. Brain fitness is as important as other forms of physical fitness for boomers. Studies show that cognitive training is very effective in the middle-aged years and the improvement is sustainable if the person keeps practicing.
TRAINING & RE-TRAINING

“Over 50 and Out of Work” Video
In this online video, AARP offers advice to jobseekers over 50. AARP works with businesses to create job opportunities for older workers. Through AARP’s program, Best Employers for Workers Over 50, companies receive national recognition for hiring older workers and implementing supportive policies for them. The video provides helpful ideas about how to work with employers.

VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE

“Ten Baby Boomer Volunteer Opportunities”
Over the next 13 years, experts predict that the number of volunteers over age 65 could increase by a staggering 50 percent. In this HowStuffWorks article, the authors describe the 10 most popular volunteering options for plus 50 adults who want to give back. Business mentoring, foster grand-parenting, companioning a senior, volunteering with the Peace Corps, assisting a food bank or soup kitchen, helping Habitat for Humanity, and becoming a National Park Service volunteer are just a few of the opportunities profiled.

The American Association of Community Colleges is a national association representing close to 1,200 community, junior and technical colleges nationwide. Community colleges are the largest and fastest-growing sector of higher education, serving 12.4 million students each year. AACC is headquartered in Washington, D.C. See www.aacc.nche.edu.

The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic focuses on four critical social problems: aging, disadvantaged children and youth, population health, and reconciliation and human rights. Programs funded by Atlantic operate in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States and Viet Nam. To learn more, please visit www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.

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