

**generations
united**

Because we're stronger together



Executive Summary



*out of many, **one**: uniting the changing faces of america*



The
Generations
Initiative
IGNITING THE POWER OF WE

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About Generations United

For nearly three decades, Generations United has been the catalyst for policies and practices stimulating cooperation and collaboration among generations, evoking the vibrancy, energy and sheer productivity that result when people of all ages come together. We believe that we can only be successful in the face of our complex future if generational diversity is regarded as a national asset and fully leveraged. www.gu.org

About The Generations Initiative

Generations Initiative is a network of leaders, organizations, and communities that work together to raise awareness and promote solutions to harness America's current demographic revolution to our country's advantage. It aims to build on the strengths of each generation to ensure our democratic and economic vitality. The goal is to catalyze action that transforms these demographic shifts into an asset for our collective future. Learn more at www.generationsinitiative.org.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for The Harris Poll®, Harris offers proprietary solutions in the areas of market and customer insight, corporate brand and reputation strategy, and marketing, advertising, public relations and communications research across a wide range of industries. Additionally, Harris has a portfolio of multi-client offerings that complement our custom solutions while maximizing a client's research investment. Serving clients worldwide through our North American and European offices, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help our clients stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States between September 17-19, 2013 among 2,044 adults (aged 18 and over) by Harris Interactive via its QuickQuery omnibus product. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact Generations United at gu@gu.org.

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Disclaimers

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E Pluribus Unum: Out of Many, One

The United States has a powerful founding narrative: E Pluribus Unum, “out of many, one.” This has been both the story of our history and our aspirations.

Today we are experiencing a demographic transformation that pushes this narrative further. First, we are living longer and healthier lives. By 2043, one in five U.S. residents will be age 65 or older. Second, we are more racially and ethnically diverse. By 2042, more than half of the nation will be people of color. Third, there is a growing racial generation gap. Today, more than half of Americans under the age of five are people of color compared to less than one in five Americans over 65.

This chapter in our national story demands a new vocabulary. What do the terms “senior citizen” and “retirement age” mean now that the average American lives to be 78 years old? With peoples of color making up more than half of the population, what does the word “minority” mean? In today’s fluid knowledge economy, can we still divide life into strict stages and ages—childhood and education, adulthood and work, seniority and retirement?

How we answer these questions will have powerful ramifications for our nation’s cultural cohesion and economic success in the 21st century. The past decade has put another foundational national story, “the American Dream,” under pressure. The Great Recession, high unemployment, skyrocketing healthcare and education costs, and burst housing bubble have shaken our confidence that the younger generation will live better than their parents.

These hardships have fed an underlying fear that we are in a zero-sum game, a struggle for jobs and resources between older generations and younger. In a time of budget crisis, do we fund Social Security and Medicare for Americans over 65, or do we address college debt and youth unemployment?

After decades in which there was little discernible difference in party preference between younger and

older voters, the generations are voting increasingly differently. In the 2012 presidential election, the majority of voters under age 44 voted for President Obama and the majority over age 45 voted for Mitt Romney. The majority of voters of color voted for Obama, while the majority of white voters chose Romney. What’s more, younger generations are growing up with very different ideas about family, marriage, and success than their grandparents did. States where the new racial generation gap is most evident (such as Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, and Texas) provide a glimpse of the sharp political divides and decreased spending on education and social services that can accompany such a gap, and illustrates the need for a shared framework for setting priorities and balancing the needs of all generations.

These generational differences are real—and we are at risk of allowing them to blind us to the basic interconnection of all our fates. In our intensely age-segregated society with its tendency either to disparage or elevate groups based on their age (from adolescents to older adults), the zero-sum framework sets up a false conflict between keeping promises from the past and making investments in the future. Every generation is part of the future. As the following sections on work, civic engagement, transportation, and housing show, our fates are intertwined in concrete and urgent ways.

Our demographic diversity—in both age and race—is our greatest asset. Like other developed countries, our average age is rising. But unlike China, Japan, and much of Europe, our young population will still continue to grow in the decades ahead. The extension of working life means we benefit from the long expertise and experience of older workers at the same time that our younger generation forges ties to nearly every language and country in the world. The success of these generations is intimately connected. Young people of color will drive the future growth in our workforce, and their ability to earn good livings will strengthen Social Security and the safety net on which our older generations depend—and younger generations in turn

*Brittany Johnson and Columbia Community **Exchange***

Brittany Johnson needed a break. As a single mom, she had a full plate with school and her five-year-old son. She needed time to refocus and get her life in balance. “There are so many things I can do if I had a little bit of assistance,” the 24-year-old said.

Johnson’s assistance came through the Columbia Community Exchange (CCE) of Howard County, Maryland a member of TimeBanks USA that promotes an exchange system of rewarding “decency, caring, and a passion for justice.” Instead of dollars, an hour’s help earns a member one credit. No service is valued over another. Johnson, whose habit of helping others springs from her outgoing personality, liked the sound of that.

Johnson, a computer science major at the University of Maryland Baltimore County, is using her chosen field to provide service to older residents in her community. Since Johnson started with the CCE, she’s installed printers for older residents and helped them copy family DVDs.

In return, Johnson earned her break when an older adult provided childcare for her young son. “Whether it’s doing errands or going to grab a bite to eat, getting away for that little bit of time – an hour or two – allows me to decompress,” she said. “Before the time bank, I didn’t have that opportunity.” She is also tutored by an older adult in Calculus.

But the help also comes in more unexpected ways. Through CCE, Johnson has connected with many different community members. Early in the school year, her son was having trouble adjusting to Kindergarten. One of the older adult members of the time bank offered advice to Johnson that helped her son successfully adapt to school.

The surprising part was that this woman’s profile listed her talent as decorating and told Johnson “I’m older. I have nothing to give.” She failed to share that she had a background in behavioral psychology – a skill that was very useful to Johnson.

“If I hadn’t sat down with her and got to know what her life was like before she retired, I would not have known she had that service to offer,” Johnson said. “That’s one of the things, as a time bank member, I still like: getting to know my neighbors for who they really are.”

While the activities may seem like nice gestures, they’re necessary – especially for Johnson, who now has time to recharge her batteries, is developing her parenting skills, and is enjoying a sense of community she once hoped for but missed out on most of her life.



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will depend one day. Preserving this safety net is critical to young people who will be challenged to support and care for older people in the future. By investing now in a shared intergenerational plan for the future, we can set ourselves on track for widespread prosperity. If we do not act now, we will continue kicking the can down the road. By the time we get there, our problems will only be bigger and harder to solve.

Goals and Key Findings of this Report

This report explores ways these demographic changes can catalyze the opportunities for all generations. Many of our policy and action frameworks are still based on siloed group identities that separate ages and races whose fates are, in reality, interdependent. Capturing the opportunities for new growth – in emerging civic or market opportunities – will require shifting our lens so that we see individuals, families, and communities as the dynamic, interconnected systems they are, and avoid fragmenting our impact by continuing to apply outdated categorical approaches.

Today more than ever, we have no talent to waste. It is crucial to equalize opportunity in education and work—to plug all communities into the “prosperity grid” of institutions like banks, schools, and home and business ownership programs that make success possible. It is long past time to eradicate differences in opportunity based on race and class. Our increasing diversity makes it more true than ever that our success as a nation depends on the success of every community.

To find out what Americans experience, think, and feel about demographic changes, we commissioned a national survey of diverse Americans by Harris Interactive. The results are encouraging. Americans of all generations recognize that the make up of society is changing and they are remarkably accepting of the changes. Young people feel especially positive about these changes, but so do older people. Their responses suggest that our national narrative of “E pluribus unum” is still strong and as a nation, we are ready to embrace demographic change as an asset. The full discussion of the results is included in the next section.

With these results in mind, this report offers ideas and recommendations to thoughtfully begin to change

policies and programs in order to integrate generations, solidify the bond of mutual support between increasingly diverse age groups, and maximize the assets inherent in our demographic future. We focus on four areas that, together, catalyze economic vitality—and unite the interests of the generations. These areas are work, civic engagement, transportation and housing.

To develop these ideas, we took a unique intergenerational approach. We invited a group of leading policy thinkers to apply an intergenerational frame to the issues on which they focus, to summarize key trends, and to brainstorm policy ideas that would bring the generations together to advance a common future. Then we invited an emerging research or policy expert from the millennial generation to respond. We asked all of the writers for bold ideas that attempt to “see around the corner”—to envision new possibilities, not necessarily to advance proposals that would be immediately actionable in the current policy and political environment. The goal is to spark disruptive thinking—to break out of habitual approaches and generate new ways forward that leverage the assets of our growing diversity.

Imagine the opportunities:

How we think about work: What does “retirement age” mean now that the average American lives to be 78? What would happen to student debt and young adult employment if it were possible to “learn and earn” on a flexible work schedule? What if you could share your job with someone else? How can we change the ways we approach education, benefits, and work to match the new flexibility in our life stages?

Anthony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, examines changing employment trends for both people at the beginning and near the end of their careers to identify new ideas for an evolving workforce and for innovative approaches to flexible or shared employment.

Aaron Smith, co-founder and executive director of Young Invincibles, responds with ideas for strengthening the school-to-work transition: career internships for students that link them with an employer

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as part of their educational program, apprenticeships, and common sense steps to make education affordable.

How we think about civic engagement: What if we could crowd-source living expenses for national service participants so that giving a year of service could be an option for everyone regardless of economic status? What if you could exchange services with other people in your community without using money? What if “intergenerational programs” didn’t just mean one generation serving another, but many generations working together?

Shirley Sagawa, acting chief certification officer for the National Conference on Citizenship, promotes volunteering as a strategy for culturally linking the generations - by stimulating the use of time banks and envisioning a new type of national service that encourages and fosters new ideas.

Heather McGhee, vice president of policy and outreach of Dēmos, focuses on the political component of civic engagement. She discusses such possibilities as making it our goal to have 100% voter participation; invalidating elections unless a threshold percentage of people voted; expanding very successful same day voter registration reforms already available in 10 states and the District of Columbia nationwide; and encouraging greater participation of community residents of all ages and races in the local government budgeting process.

How we think about transportation: What if Americans no longer depended on cars to get around? What if public transportation were flexible and responsive to the routes and times that travelers need in real-time? What if every mode of public transportation—buses, trams, trains, light rails, ferries, you name it—were integrated into one flexible system you could tap into from your phone? Could bikesharing, carsharing, and ridesharing change the definition of public transportation? What do we already have the technology to accomplish?

James Corless, director of Transportation for America, envisions a new role for “mobility providers”—

transportation that adapts as consumer needs change, empowered by information technology that could allow robot-driven cars to take older adults to grocery stores and doctors’ appointments; shared cars for Millennials—all available when needed. This could both improve service and reduce the need for street parking and garages—freeing up community space for other, more productive developments.

Anita Hairston, associate director of PolicyLink responds with a rubric for assessing transportation options through three questions: who benefits, who pays, and who decides; and proposes a way to promote broader public engagement in these decisions.

How we think about housing: How does our built environment—buildings, transportation systems, parks, sidewalks—influence the way we interact with each other? What would it look like if we intentionally created a built environment that encourages people to connect? How do the housing needs of the millennial and baby boomer generations relate to each other? How can we change the way we think about housing to bring people together in multigenerational communities?

Erika Poethig, director of urban policy initiatives at The Urban Institute, chronicles the ways in which changing consumer demand and federal housing policy have shaped our built environment and argues for a targeted federal role to fuel innovation.

Megan Bolton of the National Low Income Housing Coalition proposes tax reforms that promote the affordability of rental housing and argues for greater emphasis on building sustainable, mixed income and mixed age communities.

These unique intergenerational explorations of the topics are included in the full report. The full report and extended versions of the papers are available for download at www.gu.org.

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Recommendations

From these bold ideas, we present our top eight recommendations to catalyze the opportunities provided by demographic changes to strengthen our families, communities, and economy.

Employment

1. **Jumpstart broad implementation of flexible work arrangements by demonstrating their impact on worker and firm productivity.** Flexible work arrangements (such as job sharing, work sharing, part-time work, flex-time, compressed week schedules, contract work, and telecommuting) have potential to improve productivity, job performance, absenteeism, turnover and employee satisfaction. Yet, roughly only one-third of employers already offer some form of flexible arrangements. For younger workers, flexibility can make it easier to learn and earn — to develop work experience relevant to their field of study while earning a wage. For older workers, the practice can help smooth the transition to retirement by allowing them to balance job demands, family responsibilities, health care needs, and civic engagement. The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) should commission a study on the effects of flexible work arrangements on worker and firm productivity, as well as the best practices for implementing these arrangements, and disseminate the findings to employers, industry associations, labor organizations, and the public. The Department of Labor should develop a competitive demonstration program for employers in diverse regions of the country who make proposals to apply the study's findings.
2. **Encourage innovation and incentivize the most effective internship, apprenticeship, fellowship, and workforce development programs.** From "enclave careers" to registered apprentices, to "career internships," a wide range of promising practices abound to strengthen the labor market and effectively engage people of all ages. The Government Accounting Office should conduct a cost benefit analysis of leading public and private model programs and design and implement a strategy to incentivize taking the most effective programs to

scale. Any strategy should incorporate a plan to simultaneously encourage innovation.

Civic Engagement

3. **Increase the use of time banks to address issues affecting all ages.** Time banks allow people to earn time credits by providing service to those who ask. In turn, they can spend their credits by requesting services from others. For example, an hour of babysitting by a retired person might be repaid by an hour of driving by a young adult or an hour of errands for a homebound older adult might be repaid by an hour of reading to a child. Time banks can be a low cost strategy that relies heavily on volunteers of all ages and technology. They offer significant returns, since they can build stronger communities by connecting people to one another. Policymakers could significantly expand time bank use in the United States by supporting them through a variety of authorities such as AmeriCorps VISTA, Medicaid/Medicare, and the Obama Administration's Pay for Success program. Existing effective cutting edge models should be taken to scale, such as those that have been shown to reduce recidivism among youth offenders, reduce medical costs, encourage "aging in place," improve child test scores, and reduce bullying.
4. **Allow same-day registration for voting nationwide.** Low voter turnout undermines the basic premise of self-governance and self-representation. In many states, the majority of eligible voters do not vote. Forty-six million young adults under 30 are eligible to vote, actually surpassing the 39 million eligible older adults, and yet the turnout rate is 72 percent among older adults and just 45 percent among youth (The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement and U.S. Census Bureau). Registration is the biggest hurdle to voting among young people. They vote at rates similar to older Americans once they are registered. To clear this unnecessary roadblock, the federal government could adopt a uniform standard allowing eligible voters to register to vote and cast their ballots on the same day: Same-Day Registration (SDR). States that allow SDR consistently lead the nation in voter participation—and have a nar-



Encore Careers

Never ones to shy away from the spotlight, baby boomers are finding yet another way to leave their imprint on American culture: by investing in a new phase of work – the encore career. According to Marc Freedman, author of the book, *Encore*, “If the old golden years’ dream was the freedom from work, the dream of this new wave is the freedom to work – in new ways, on new terms, to new and even more important ends.”

With greater longevity and better health, today’s older adults are embracing this new phase of life as a time to continue working but in areas where they feel personally fulfilled and where they can use their experience and wisdom to contribute to the common good.

Nancy Gregory, a fifty-something woman living in Lincoln, Nebraska, personifies the new older adult. After years in health care administration for Veterans Affairs, Gregory “retired” and began searching for a way to bring new meaning to her later years. Well before grandson Michael was born six months ago, Gregory decided to become a daycare provider. Gregory figured she could earn extra income while helping Michael and other young children get off to a good start in life.

Gregory prepared for her new career by reading about early childhood development and taking classes so she could earn her daycare license. Today she gets to spend time every weekday with Michael and three toddlers, who are thriving under her care.

Gregory has been equally busy taking classes to become certified as a health care administrator of elders. As she explains, “I have two passions in life:

children and elder care. When I was a career woman, I was a health-care administrator with Veterans Affairs, working primarily with older adults,” she notes. “Now that I’m retired I get to indulge my other passion, working with children.”

Once Gregory takes her certification exam, she intends to blend her two passions by finding ways to connect older and younger generations through her work and volunteerism.

“I would love to see more connection and involvement between generations. My kids grew up away from their grandparents; it wasn’t until they were teenagers that my sons became close to their grandparents. They missed out on a lot of years of sharing time with their elders. I know I learned my most important life lessons from my grandpa.”

And to further her goal of fostering intergenerational connections, Gregory devotes some of her spare time to volunteering for Nebraska Early Childhood Grandparent Network. Part of Generations United’s Seniors4Kids project, the Network engages older adults as advocates for policies and programs that promote quality early learning and care.

Says Gregory, “I joined the Network because I passionately believe that older adults’ life experience is critical to their ability to effectively advocate on behalf of children and youth. They can reflect on what they’ve learned over the years and put that experience to good use. Furthermore, older adults tend to have the time to devote to being strong advocates for youth.”

For more information visit www.encore.org and www.seniors4kids.org.

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rower age-based gap in voting. As a nation committed to democracy, we need strategies like same-day registration that aim for 100 percent voter turnout to ensure the voices of eligible voters of all ages and races are heard.

Transportation

5. **Incentivize innovative coordinated transportation models such as “mobility providers.”** Similar to signing up for a utility provider for your electricity or water, this model would allow people to select a “mobility provider”, i.e., a company that provides a service to get an individual from point A to point B by any variety of modes of transportation. This could be accomplished by providing incentives for public transportation operators, nonprofit organizations, and local communities to coordinate among existing programs and services, establish public-private partnerships, expand outreach and education programs, and more widely deploy “intelligent transportation” technology that can help make transportation systems more efficient and customer-friendly.
6. **Reward creative, successful practices that address ambitious goals through a “Transportation Race to the Top.”** Dedicate a portion of funding for competitive transportation grants, rather than typical formula funding for states. These competitive grants could be modeled on the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top program, with programs created at both the federal and state levels. Grants would reward applicants for innovation and hitting milestones toward ambitious goals to reduce age and race disparities. Examples of ambitious goals that would encompass the needs of all ages and races might include reducing pedestrian death to zero or making 100 percent of low- and middle-skill jobs in a region accessible via a 60-minute one-way transit trip.

Housing

7. **Promote greater affordability of home-ownership and rental housing through mortgage interest deduction reform that encourages mixed-age units and communities.** Without access to affordable credit, younger people cannot buy the



homes that the baby boomers need to sell in order to facilitate their next life stage. At the same time, there is increasing demand for rental housing by both older and younger adults—adding to pressure on rents. Rebalancing the housing finance system should support greater affordability of home-ownership and rental housing through strategies such as: reforming the mortgage interest deduction so more middle-income Americans benefit from the subsidy; reducing the mortgage interest tax break from \$1 million to \$500,000 and using the savings to assist first-time homebuyers and to increase and preserve rental housing for low income households; and encouraging states to use mortgage interest deduction savings to support projects that promote more opportunities for mixed-age units and communities.

8. **Facilitate homesharing as a way to address the student debt crisis while supporting aging in place.** The homeshare model matches older people who want to stay in their homes, have extra space, and need modest care, companionship, or help with house maintenance with young people who need affordable living spaces and have the time and energy to contribute to maintenance, companionship, and care in exchange for housing. Already popular in Australia and some European countries, homesharing is growing more slowly in the U.S. Given the growing student debt crisis, homesharing could provide students with an affordable housing option while allowing baby boomers to “age in place.” Going a step further, the federal government could reduce student loan debt by offering to lower rates by a point for students who participate in a formal homesharing arrangement that helps older adults in the community.

*Mohammed Abdullah & Geriatric **Career** Development Program*

Mohammed Abdullah needed to refocus. Three years ago, he was a high school student walking the halls with his friends, showing up to class late and talking back to adults. “Because I was distracted, I wasn’t doing as well as I should,” said the 19-year-old.

The Bronx-resident got the focus he needed after learning about the Geriatric Career Development (GCD) Program from flyers posted in Dewitt Clinton High School’s halls, the counselor’s office and the cafeteria. GCD is offered by Jewish Home Lifecare, a New York-based nonprofit elder care system.

Since 2006, the three-year work-based learning curriculum has helped at-risk New York City high school students climb career ladders in health care. “I already knew what I wanted to do,” said Abdullah, who loves nursing and business. “My thing was figuring out how I was going to do it.”

He got some direction through GCD’s internships, where he learned more about geriatric health care. With a 94 percent retention rate, the GCD program has helped students decrease absences and tardiness and achieve better SAT and PSAT scores. “I wanted to change, so I decided to join,” said Abdullah, whose friends laughed at him when he tried to get them involved. “You’re not going to get any money from that,” they told him.

He held fast and, along the way, became a certified technician in patient care, electrocardiography (EKG) and phlebotomy. He’s also a certified nursing assistant and gained certification in CPR. “GCD enhanced my credentials,” Abdullah said. “It made me more of a man.”

Along with that maturity, came better choices. He cut off his friends who weren’t improving themselves. Abdullah also bonded with his elder resident mentor, with whom he spent 6,000 hours over the course of the program. Together, they completed various exercises that enhanced Abdullah’s knowledge of the aging process and promoted heightened awareness and sensitivity to aging issues.

With that experience, Abdullah felt at home. “They treat you like family,” he said. “My mentors talk to me about life.” GCD’s academic support also helped Abdullah keep his B average, with which he graduated high school.

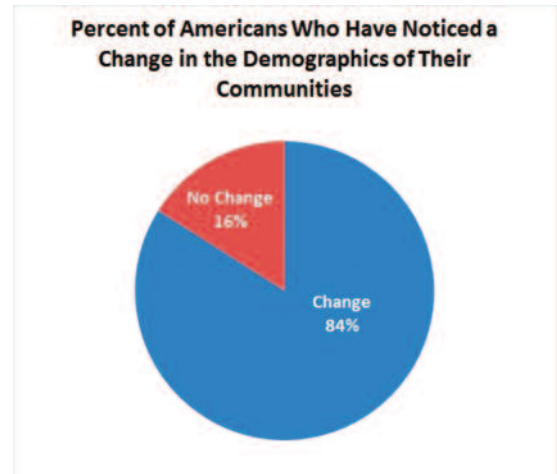
A program objective is that GCD graduates attend college or gain employment in the health care system. Abdullah did both. He’s currently a certified nursing assistant at Jewish Home Lifecare’s Bronx campus and will attend Jersey College School of Nursing in January. “I didn’t think a program like GCD would benefit me,” Abdullah said. “But then when I started, I became more responsible.”

Summary of Poll Results

Are Americans of all ages aware of our changing demographics? Do they see these changes as a positive opportunity or a thing to be feared? Are our policies, leaders, and employers adapting to the needs of the changing face of America? To explore these questions, Generations United and the Generations Initiative recently commissioned a nationwide survey by Harris Interactive. This survey, conducted from September 17 - 19, 2013, found that by and large Americans recognize that the make up of our society is changing and they are remarkably accepting of the changes. About a third report positive emotions. The majority are at least neutral. Relatively few (less than 10%) claim to have a negative reaction to most of the demographic changes. This is an encouraging starting place for efforts to unite a nation with diverse experiences and perspectives; and counters the more negative messages commonly portrayed in the media and politics.

And this acceptance is reported by the majority of respondents across generations. While the younger generation tends to be especially optimistic, older and retired people also generally see new neighbors and change as potentially positive. In fact the youngest and oldest respondents were the most likely of all age groups to feel positive about changes in neighbors. Respondents with children in their household were significantly more likely to feel excited about changes than those without, suggesting the potential for optimism about these changes to be instilled in our nation's next generation.

But knowledge and positive emotions are not enough. How does this translate into action and experience? On the whole Americans seem optimistic about the opportunity presented by the changes and the degree to which their community is prepared to meet the needs presented by the changes. In general respondents were more skeptical about the job elected officials and employers are doing to address the challenges and opportunities the demographic changes present.



Some of the most important findings of this study include:

- As a whole Americans are aware of the changing age and race demographics in the U.S. and they are generally accepting of them.
- While younger respondents and African Americans are more likely to see the changes as positive compared to older and white respondents, the vast majority across generations and races are positive or at least neutral about the changes. This suggests an environment which is open and ripe for policies to foster connections across age and race.
- If a competition was held today to determine which sector is doing the best job addressing demographic change, local communities would win, employers would come in a distant second, and elected officials would place dead last. Americans do not believe policymakers are providing the leadership needed to address demographic changes. About half of employers are perceived positively in this respect. Americans have the most confidence in their own communities and are most ready for engagement at the local level.
- Support for proven, publically funded programs targeted at younger and older people is strong. The vast majority of Americans view them as investments that benefit all generations, dispelling the "generational conflict" narrative.

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When asked about the changing demographics of people in their communities:

AGE

- 85% of respondents noticed change in the age demographics in their communities
- 36% reported positive emotions regarding the change in age demographics
- Only 6% reported a negative feeling

RACE/ETHNICITY

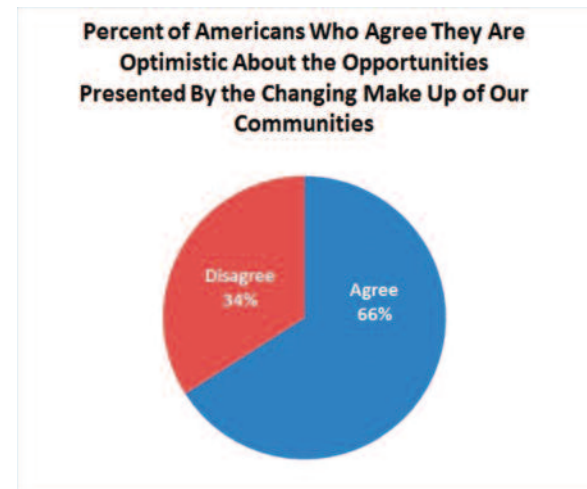
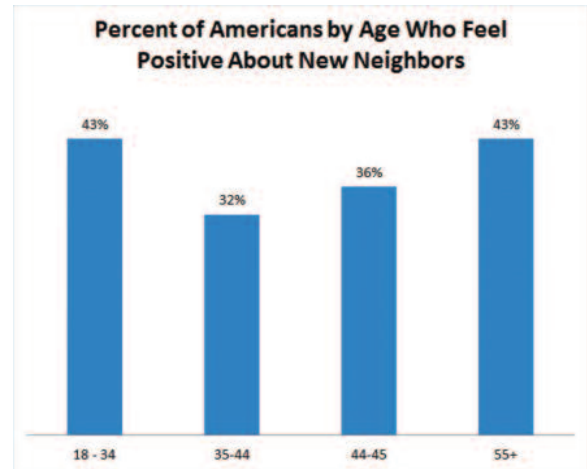
- 81% of respondents noticed change in the racial or ethnic make up of their communities
- 35% reported positive emotions regarding change in their community's race or ethnic make up
- Only 9% reported a negative feeling

NEW NEIGHBORS

- 90% of respondents noticed change in neighbors in their communities
- 40% reported positive emotions regarding changes in their neighbors
- 13% reported a negative feeling
- Younger (18-34) and older people (55+) were the most likely to report a positive emotion

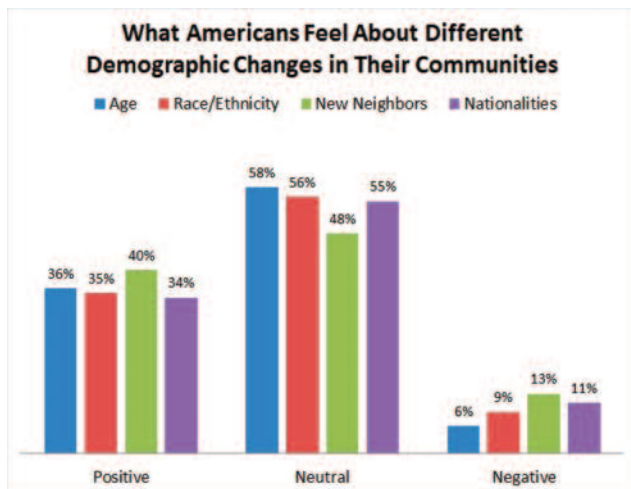
NATIONALITIES

- 81% of respondents noticed change in the nationalities (i.e. people from other countries)
- 34% of respondents reported positive emotions regarding changes in nationalities of people in their communities.
- 11% reported a negative feeling

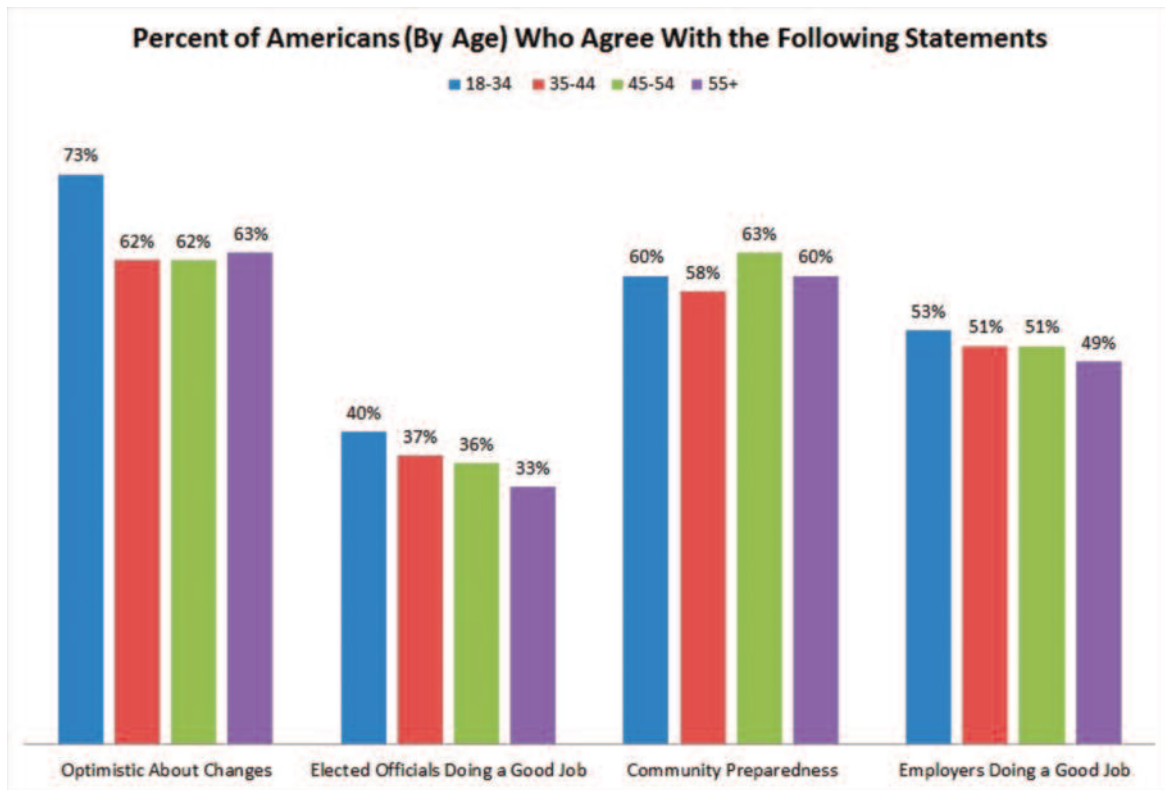


When presented with data that shows 80% of Americans over 65 years old are white and 50% of American under 5 years old are of other races:

- 66% were optimistic about opportunities presented by the changing age and racial make-up of America's communities
- Only 36% agreed that elected officials are doing a good job addressing the changing make-up of our communities.
- 60% agree that their community is prepared to meet the needs of a changing population.
- About half (49%) believe employers are doing a good job offering flexible workplace options to address the needs of caregivers, younger workers and older workers.

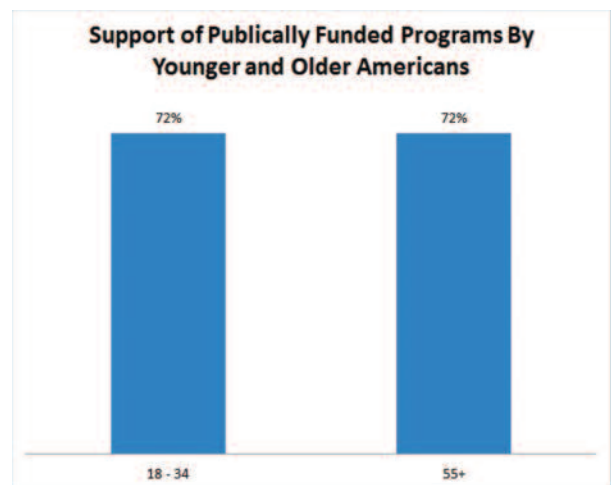


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As we look more closely at generational responses, the youngest respondents were more likely than other age groups to give favorable responses to employers, elected officials and communities with strongest agreement around community preparedness and employer flexibility. Respondents ages 55 and older were significantly more likely than younger respondents to give a negative response to the job elected officials are doing to address demographic change.

More than 2/3 (71%) of respondents believe that publically funded programs targeted at specific age groups such as K-12 education or Social Security are not burdensome responsibilities to certain age groups, but investments that benefit all generations. Perhaps most significantly the youngest and oldest respondents were equally as likely to agree with this statement suggesting that “generational conflict” narrative is neither the majority view nor greater among one of our “bookend” generations.



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On the whole, this is a positive story. Despite the narrative commonly portrayed in the media and politics which suggests that demographic changes are brewing “generational conflict,” the vast majority of Americans of all ages are aware of the changes taking place in their communities and they are accepting of them. The majority are optimistic about the changes setting them up for approaches that harness this opportunity and strengthen our communities for people of all ages. Younger and older people spend more time closer to home and in their neighborhoods than the middle generations who are more likely to be working and commuting away from their home. They also report the highest levels of optimism and excitement about new neighbors, suggesting they are ripest for engagement given the right opportunities at the community level.

These results suggest:

- A challenge to communities to catalyze the support they have from their residents and develop opportu-

nities for engagement of all ages and all races at a local level. Community leaders can form intergenerational task forces, explore participatory budgeting, and convene intergenerational dialogues to recommend solutions to issues communities face.

- An opening for policymakers to set themselves apart as bold pioneers. Skepticism about how well elected officials are currently addressing demographic changes points to a tremendous opportunity for policymakers to establish themselves as leaders with bold new ideas that set them apart as champions of change.
- An opportunity for businesses to increase their productivity and attractiveness as an employer. Businesses who step up with innovative workplace flexibility policies, and bold internship and apprenticeship approaches could be seen as leaders who set the standard for their markets.



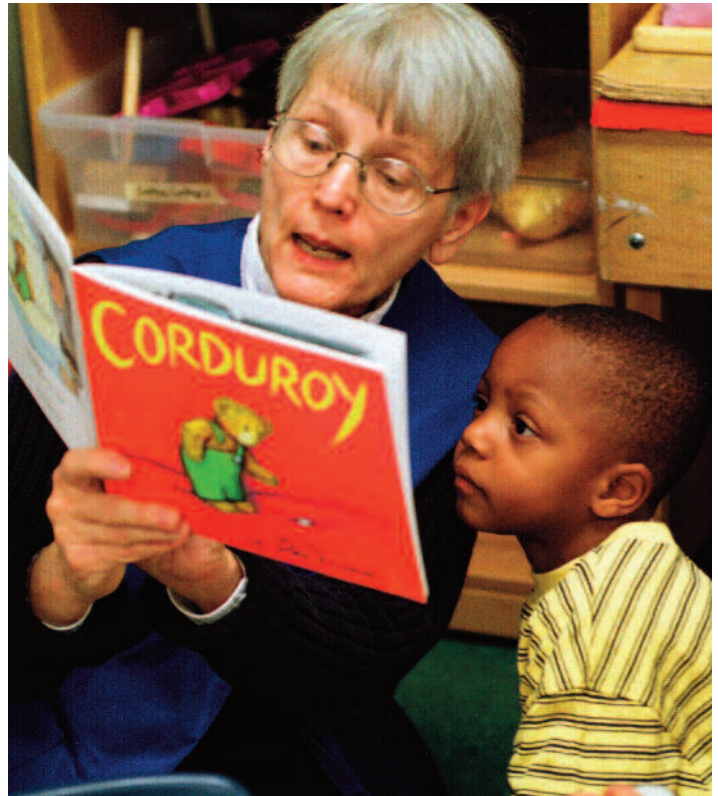
Call to Action: Out of Many, One

The United States is a resilient country, rich with diverse individuals and communities that respond to changes, challenges, and chances. This report and recommendations bring forward innovative ideas for those who aren't afraid to smash the silos in policy and practice that have increasingly led to unhealthy generational segregation. Instead, with intentional planning as our authors point out, we can unleash the untapped energy of all generations to master a complex future together.

The experts who joined us on this journey enriched our thinking and, we hope in return, we expanded theirs. As the poll results indicate, younger and older Americans are aware of changing demographics, and they are remarkably accepting of the changes. While they don't believe policy makers are doing a very good job of addressing demographic change, these bookend generations do believe their local communities are adapting. This is an encouraging place to start – and build upon efforts to unite Americans of all ages today and in the future.

Differences between the generations have always been real, as real as the fact that we are bound together by a web of interdependence in order to survive and thrive. However we are now facing new challenges. We cannot allow a zero-sum frame to set up a false conflict between grandparent and grandchild, neighbor and neighbor. As our founding story states, we are interconnected – E pluribus unum: out of many, one. Each generation represents a human capital asset that is critical to the success of our collective future.

We limited this first cross generational analysis of changing demographics to four key topics. Think about how many other areas are ripe for review and retooling. The possibilities are endless. We must use a strength-based approach – one that is age-maximized to include the voices of all generations and not age-limited. And that encourages us to remember- it's not a fight, it's a family. Or as one of the scholars from our focus groups



said – I just realized we're in the same space and we should be dancing together.

Together Generations United and the The Generations Initiative intend to widely share this report encouraging community and thought leaders to advance the recommendations. We challenge you to join us and pledge to use an all generations lens whenever you consider issues and opportunities. And while you're at it, smash a few silos. Aspire to strengthen the American story – out of many, one.

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