



SCHEDULE



TAILOR



REVIEW



SUPPORT

# BLAZE A TRAIL TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the lives of community members. Community service and volunteering are common ways to refer to this engagement. No matter what you call it, older Americans are doing it, and in higher numbers than ever before.

Beyond helping and the people around you, being involved in your community benefits you. From preventing mental health issues by engaging in meaningful work to the physical benefits of being active and social, civic engagement is a win-win. It is never too late to give back!

 **1 IN 4**  
older Americans makes  
a positive impact  
through volunteering.

## THE BENEFITS:

- Volunteering can lead to improved physical and mental health.
- Older volunteers report greater life satisfaction than non-volunteers.
- New relationships and making a difference provide a greater sense of purpose.
- Research suggests that those who volunteer are more likely to live longer.



## GETTING INVOLVED

**Schedule service that fits your lifestyle** and determine how much time you want to give. If you are a morning person, the early shift at an animal shelter or reading to kids might be a good fit. 10-20 hours per week is common for many retirees.



**Find the right opportunities.** Volunteering works best when you involve your interests and skills. If you are handy, a Habitat for Humanity project may be most rewarding. If you enjoy working with kids, contact a local school to talk about ways you can help. Need inspiration? Visit <http://serve.gov/> for more tips and ideas.



**Check out the do-it-yourself guides** at <http://serve.gov/site-page/toolkits> if you have trouble finding the right opportunity or you have an idea for a new project. These toolkits will help to turn your concept into a successful activity.



**If you want to help others more informally**, think about driving neighbors to appointments, babysitting for working parents, or tutoring kids in your neighborhood. If you are a member of a spiritual community or club, ask if there are outreach programs that need help.

## TIP: ASK FRIENDS OR FAMILY TO JOIN YOU!

Or check with other older adults in your community. Studies show that being asked to get involved is a great motivator.



BLAZE A TRAIL: MAY 2016

More resources:  
<http://oam.acl.gov/resources.html>

