



Help Us Improve the Employment Picture for San Francisco's Older & Disabled Residents



Many seniors and adults with disabilities have much to offer. They want and need to work but face multiple barriers. San Francisco can do better. Help us:

- ***Provide an accurate measure of unemployment*** among older workers and those with disabilities.
- ***Increase support for programs that offer pathways to meaningful part-time employment.***
- ***Share stories about the value of older workers and those with disabilities*** in our agencies.
- ***Provide new incentives to nonprofits and businesses to hire older adults and those with disabilities.***

Many seniors and adults with disabilities need to work to make ends meet

- A full **61% of older San Franciscans lack basic economic security** and most have fixed incomes that don't keep pace with inflation.
- ***People with disabilities of all ages also struggle to find work and make enough to meet their basic needs.*** In San Francisco, "the unemployment rate for the disabled adult population in the labor force is approximately 16%" (DAAS, 2016) - five times the unemployment rate for non-disabled persons.

Unemployment rates don't reflect the reality for seniors and people with disabilities

- Proud ***pronouncements of San Francisco's low unemployment rate are flawed.*** They overlook a vital population—older adults and people with disabilities who comprise a quarter of SF's population.
- About 29% of adults 60+ are in the SF labor force. This and other labor participation rates are misleading, however. They only measure those currently working or actively seeking work within the last four weeks. ***Unemployment rates don't account for long-term unemployed or those too discouraged to seek work. Often these rates don't even consider those older than 65.***

San Francisco employers miss out on a vast reservoir of skilled workers due to ageism and ableism

- Age- and ability-related prejudice and discrimination pose formidable barriers. Seniors and adults living with disabilities consistently confront stereotypes and workplace practices that confound their job-seeking efforts. Studies show that

employees over 50 cost less than expected, and showed “greater professionalism, a stronger work ethic, greater reliability and lower turnover.” (AARP). Age discrimination is illegal, but most people believe it hits workers when they are in their 50s, if not earlier. Not getting hired is the most common type of age discrimination. (AARP)

- Helping older people and those with disabilities stay in the workforce enables meaningful contributions while also reducing social isolation and the stressors of poverty.

San Francisco can do more to help older adults and people with disabilities find work

- SF Office of Employment and Workforce Development (OEWD) employment programs are largely “sector driven,” not population based. Yet in its most recent Consolidated Plan (2015), OEWD notes that government’s role to “intervene where the market fails the most vulnerable.”
- OEWD acknowledges *the City’s poorest age group as adults 65 and older. But the Consolidated Plan is conspicuously silent about efforts to promote job opportunities for older people.*

SF has a continuum of training, volunteer, and back-to-work programs, but they need to be expanded and reach more people. Nonprofit programs that offer opportunities include:

- **SF ReServe, Community Living Campaign** (paid part-time, 60+ and adults with disabilities of all ages)
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program, Felton and Self Help for the Elderly** (job training for low income, 55+)
- **Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion Programs, Felton** (stipended volunteers for low income, 55+)
- **IHSS programs, including Public Authority and Homebridge** hire older workers.
- A number of health and mental health programs hire older adult health workers and peers.
- **The Lighthouse, the ARC, and Toolworks** help some adults with disabilities find employment.
- Other programs provide job readiness and placement for seniors and adults with disabilities but must focus on pathways that are “sector driven”, like construction, tech, and other growth fields and focus on full time work.

For more information, contact Community Living Campaign 415-821-1003 or info@sfcommunityliving.org.