

# Engaging Baby Boomers in Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

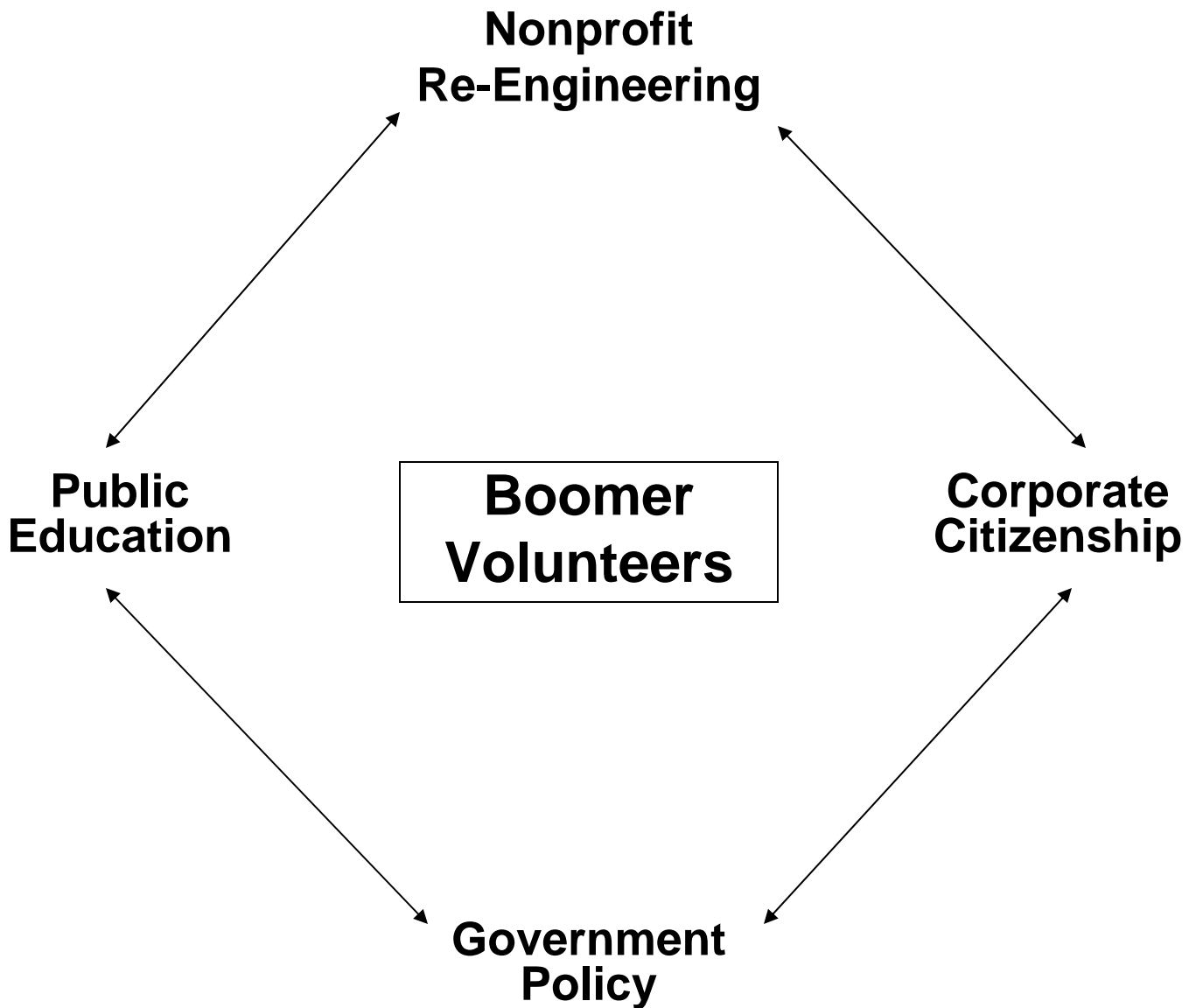
White House Conference on Aging  
Policy Recommendations

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# Connecting the Sectors to Engage Baby Boomers



## Solution 1: Nonprofit Re-Engineering

- Nonprofits must create alternative models of service for older Americans that take fullest advantage of baby boomers' professional skills and experience. This includes creating roles that allow boomers to serve intensively (15-20 hours a week) and that charge them with high levels of responsibility.
- Alternative models of service for older Americans should also include flexible, one-time, project-based projects that can introduce older Americans to an organization or cause.
- Training and technical assistance must be made broadly available to nonprofits to develop more sophisticated volunteer management techniques that allow them to effectively reach, use, and retain older adults.
- A new online media clearinghouse should link up baby boomers with meaningful opportunities to contribute to their communities, and a "best practices" database should be developed on ways to effectively engage baby boomers.
- Business, government, and public education need to support the goal of re-engineering nonprofits. In particular, nonprofits need to be funded to test innovative models of engaging boomers in intensive service in such areas as tutoring, mentoring, and independent living, and effective models of engagement need to be brought to scale as quickly as possible.



## Solution 2: Corporate Citizenship

- Companies should implement or expand corporate volunteer programs for their employees, including for baby boomers still in the workplace.
- Retirees and former employees should be more involved in community-serving activities, including by informing all retiring employees about volunteer service opportunities.
- Employers should adapt to the changing nature of retirement – including boomers’ desire to work into their later years, at least part-time – by offering flexible work options such as job sharing, sabbaticals, and paid/unpaid leave for volunteering.
- Older executives could be “lent” to nonprofit groups to help nonprofits increase their administrative and management capacity and create ways to effectively use older Americans.
- Businesses should provide financial and in-kind support for nonprofits that use employee/retiree volunteers age 55 and older to help offset costs and to help with volunteer recognition.
- Nonprofits, government, and public education need to support broadening the notions of corporate citizenship



## Solution 3: Government Policy

- Charge the Corporation for National and Community Service with bringing baby boomers into prominence in America's civic activities.
- Facilitate collaboration at the national, state, and local levels of organizations that involve older adult volunteers and paid workers – such as the Area Agencies on Aging, Volunteer Action Centers, the National Council on Aging programs, and AARP – especially as it concerns long-term care and independent living.
- Provide seed funding to nonprofit agencies to foster the growth of new models to engage older Americans in their communities.
- Identify and remove barriers to engagement of baby boomers in providing professional services such as medical and legal assistance on a volunteer basis.
- Subsidize use of public transit to enable seniors to overcome one of the most significant barriers to their participation: getting to and from volunteer activities.
- Provide subsidies, tax credits, and other incentives to nonprofits that substantially engage more seniors, to seniors who volunteer significant amounts of time, and to companies that provide older employees with time off for volunteering.
- Encourage states to explore Medicare reimbursement for volunteer projects that provide independent living services.
- Nonprofits, business, and public education should reinforce the importance of policies that encourage the engagement of baby boomers.



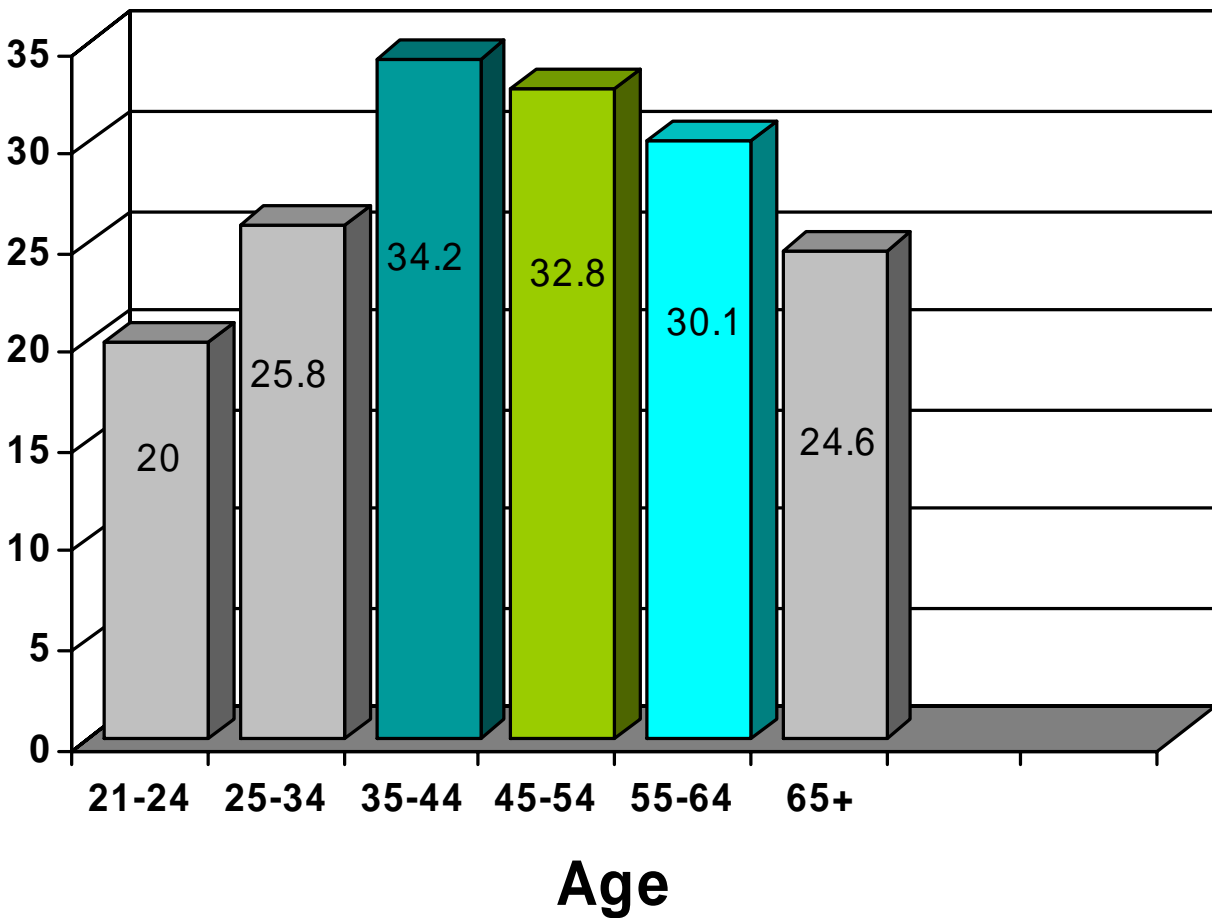
## Solution 4: Public Education

Nonprofits, foundations, government, and business should be encouraged to support a large-scale, national public service advertising campaign to:

- Promote the image of older Americans as a resource that is helping to solve community problems of national significance in a cost-effective way.
- Stimulate a national discussion about opportunities and options available for older adults
- Promote the physical and mental health benefits of volunteering and civic engagement by older Americans.
- Recruit boomers as volunteers and as active citizens in their communities
- Fight ageism and other negative attitudes toward seniors.

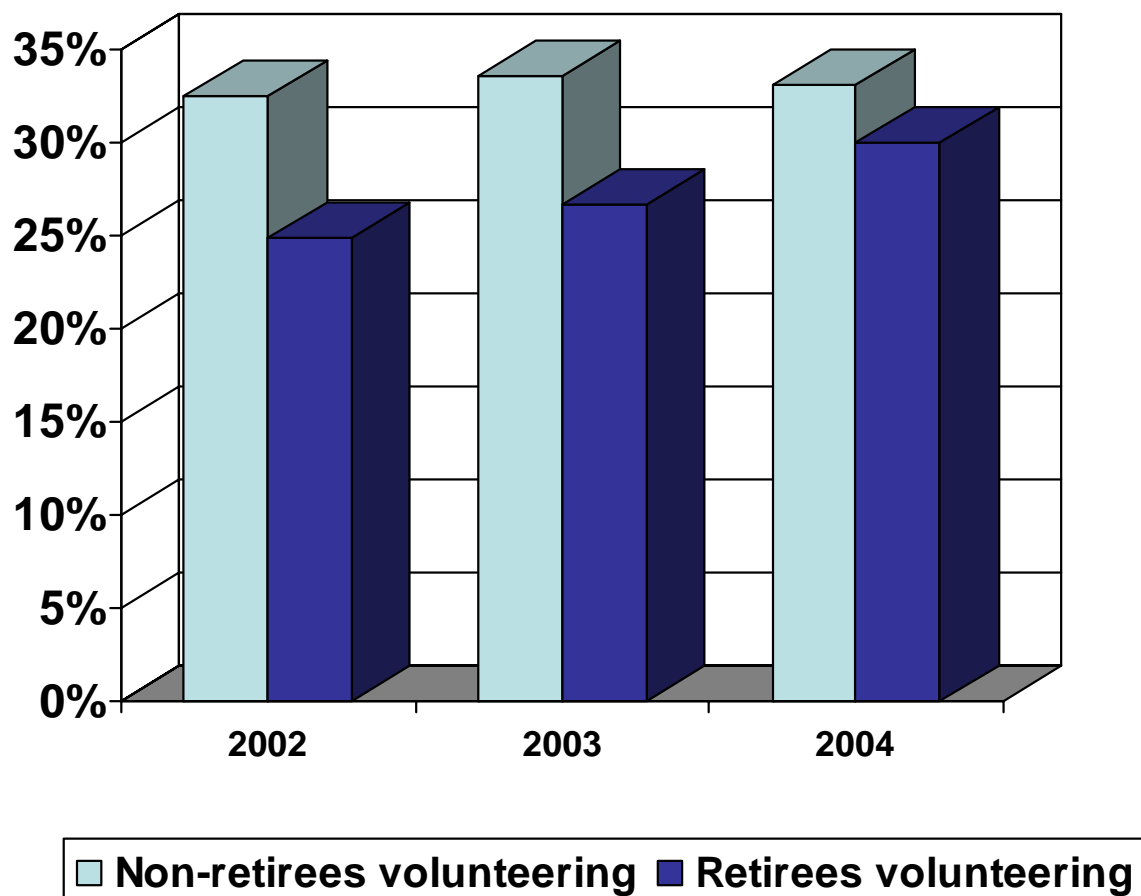


## Percent of Adults Volunteering by Age



Source: 2004 Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Volunteer Rates for Non-Retired and Retired Baby Boomers



Source: Current Population Surveys (2002-2004), Bureau of Labor Statistics