

# Jobs available for boomers when economy rebounds | Fifty Plus Advocates

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A new study suggests that when the country comes out of its current economic malaise, there's the likelihood of there being more jobs than people to fill them. That's good news for baby boomers looking to get back into the job market and exploring "encore careers."

Seven are in health care: registered nurses, home health aides, personal and home care aides, nursing aides, orderlies and attendants, medical assistants, licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses and medical and health service managers.

Three are in education: teachers, teacher assistants and child care workers. Other jobs are in the nonprofit and government sectors, including business operations specialists, general and operations managers, receptionists and information clerks. A need for clergy and social and human service assistants is also expected.

The report is based on the expectation that the economy will return to a healthy state of growth by 2018, the baby boomer generation will continue to retire at the same rate current older workers do and that there would be no change in the current labor force or immigration rates. That would leave an estimated 5 million potential job vacancies in the United States.

Discovering What's Next, a non-profit organization based at the Newton Cultural Center, assists those 50 and over in exploring new career options through one-on-one sessions and informational programs, including an Encore Career Summit Nov. 6 at Lasell College in Newton.

"The key for an encore career search is having confidence in yourself and the ability to embrace uncertainty and being adaptable to new technology that's necessary for that particular job," said Discovering What's Next founder Carol Greenfield. "It requires a certain kind of person. We try to get people thinking, 'Yes they can,' instead of all these obstacles they foresee."

People investigating encore careers do so for pay, for personal meaning and for social impact, Greenfield said.

Over the past year, Discovering What's Next began expanding its reach outside its original Newton base, thanks to a Tufts Health Care Foundation grant. Its recently announced Encore Career Initiative is aimed at bringing its programs to interested organizations, schools and groups throughout the state.

"If the demand and resources are available, we can bring them to other communities," Greenfield said. "We're creating services that are flexible. They can be one-on-one evaluations or 'Let's Talk About Encore

Careers' discussion groups." The organization is looking for ways to fund these programs as well as prospective partners.

The organization doesn't conduct job training or provide resume writing assistance. What it does do is hook people up with those who can assist them in those areas. "We get them oriented toward it and figure out what they want to do," Greenfield said. "We evaluate his or her past employment resources and talk to them about moving forward and figure out if they can move forward into their desired area."

Discovering What's Next recently teamed up with JVS Career Moves to present a program on how to use LinkedIn, an online networking site that encourages people to reconnect with former colleagues and friends not for social purposes, like Facebook, but to expand their opportunities for learning about potential employment opportunities.

Having the company of others looking to re-enter the work force has proven to be a beneficial part of the encore career search process. "At this stage of life, people find it helpful to have other people to share and network with," Greenfield said. "We understand there are some doomsayers and address their issues, but there are opportunities we want to hook them up with. We have a positive outlook about this stage of life."

Depending on what profession someone is interested in entering, some skills retraining may be necessary. Community colleges around the country are starting to offer programs, both in-house and online, designed specifically for older retired adults and retiring business professionals and to assist current health care professionals in expanding their area of knowledge in anticipation of needs in the industry.

Civic Ventures, a San Francisco-based think tank focused on boomers, work and social purpose, recently awarded Middlesex Community College in Bedford a grant to allow it to begin offering a semester-long certificate program in training for adjunct teaching jobs in developmental English, math and clinical nursing at state community colleges.

"There may be some financial commitment needed but we're not asking people to go to medical school," Greenfield said. "It'll vary depending on what kind of profession it is."