

Introduction

As most community leaders know, our societal make-up is shifting. The older adult population is growing faster than ever before. Within twenty years, it will be the largest segment of the nation's population. Libraries face the challenge of developing strategic plans to serve the evolving, diverse generation of baby boomers who will move into their sixties during the first decade of this century.

Library planners must address many issues. What makes planning for older adults different from planning for other adults? How will library collections address the needs of older adults? How can technology be used to expand services and resources? How do we market library services to the 60+ audience? Can we turn a 70-year-old non-library user into a library user and advocate? How can the library contribute to successful aging?

The task of planning for this diverse, burgeoning population is great, and the benefits to the community, the library and, most importantly, older adults and their families are greater. Working as partners with community agencies and businesses that serve citizens over 60, libraries can build connections with seniors, enhance the quality of life, and strengthen the community.

Use this publication as a springboard to help you organize your efforts to plan, brainstorm ideas with community partners and library colleagues, motivate staff and board members to recognize the potential for serving the senior population, and develop new relationships to pave the way to develop services.