

Helping Older Adults Recareer

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The North Carolina Collaboration on Lifelong Learning and Engagement (NCCoLLE) is a partnership of libraries, library science educators, agencies on aging, and others interested in helping older adults remain active and engaged in their communities.

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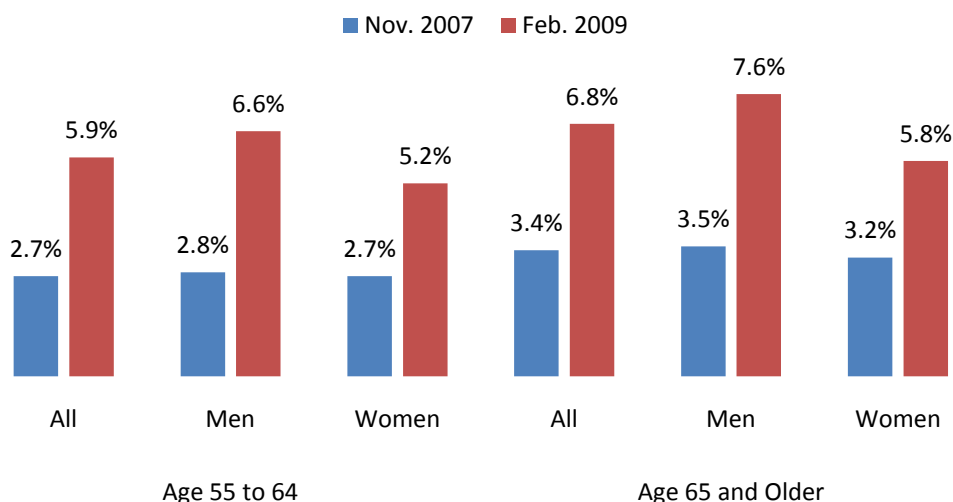
The Institute on Aging is an interinstitutional program of the University of North Carolina

March 2009

Employment trends for older adults

The economy has taken its toll on North Carolina workers, and older workers have not escaped job losses or reductions in retirement savings. Some former retirees who lost savings in the market downturn must seek employment to ensure financial stability. According to a March 2009 Urban Institute report, nationally 1.7 million adults 55 and older were unemployed in February 2009, more than twice as many as one year ago. Unemployment reached 5.9 percent for adults aged 55-64 and 6.8 percent for those 65 and older. Older workers in construction, manufacturing, and hospitality have suffered disproportionately, as have those with less education and African-American and Hispanic men. The trends shown below will only worsen, as many more layoffs have been announced for early 2009.

Older Adult Unemployment



Source: www.urban.org/retirement_policy/url.cfm?ID=411846 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2009b data)

Help with retooling and job seeking

Some tips to keep in mind as you assist older adults in finding new employment:

- Many adults do not want to retire early or even at 65; they see staying active and engaged as critical to health and well-being. Non-financial "major reasons to keep working" according to a 2008 AARP survey include: enjoying the job/working (cited by 70%), feeling useful (52%), interacting with people (46%), and keeping busy (38%). (assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/econ/workcareer_08_2.pdf)
- In the same AARP survey, 76% keep working out of financial need. Some older adults may still be making mortgage payments. Health care is also a factor; 61% will keep working to maintain health insurance coverage and 56% need to pay health costs for themselves or family members.
- Most adults are healthy; 80% of those 55-64 and 66% of those 85+ reported "excellent or good" health in a CDC poll. (www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad370.pdf)
- Those with little formal education or with long careers in manufacturing may require updates/upgrades to their skills, including job-seeking skills. We should be ready to help these workers investigate potential careers and community college courses to retool for new roles. (www.nccommunitycolleges.edu)
- In particular, some older workers may require computer training so that they can search Internet job listings, type a resume, and submit applications online.