

Money isn't everything....

Services for Boomers  
at Multnomah County Library

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# About Multnomah County

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- Demographics
  - Portland and eastern suburbs
  - Almost 700,000 in Multnomah County
  - 199,487 people 50+ in Multnomah County
  - 1.9 million people in greater Metro area
- Great public transportation
- Vibrant downtown

# A great place to live

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- AARP One of the Top Five Places to Live (and Retire)
- #3 on Best Places to Live
- #2 in Best Cities for Dogs
- #1 Bicycling City
- Food Network Delicious Destination of the Year
- WHO Age-Friendly City

# Great programs for Boomers

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- Life By Design provides workshops on personal goal setting, financial planning and exploring future options
- Portland State University allows people 65+ to attend classes at no charge.
- Vibrant cultural scene

# About Multnomah County Library

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- Our patrons love us!
- 17 Locations with 2 more coming soon
- Some of the busiest libraries in country
- Nationally recognized youth programs
- Currently well-funded through local levy
- But.....staff and space are stretched to their limits!

# Why? How? The Challenge

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- Great groups are already serving Boomers
- Library already too busy
- So why should the library focus on serving Boomers?
  - Library is welcoming, safe, conveniently located, good hours
  - Library offers programs and collections for all ages; intergenerational

# How to begin

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1. Invite yourself to the table
2. Make connections within community
3. Find out what's needed
4. Convince library leadership
5. Jump over hurdles

# Inviting yourself

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- AARP
- Arts boards
- Genealogists
- Business associations
- Neighborhood associations
- PTA
- Cultural, Arts and History committees
- University task forces
- Park and recreation
- Aging & disabilities agency
- Condo welcome committees
- Local non-profit networking groups
- Local telecommuter networking groups
- Wellness programs
- Book discussion groups, knitting, crafts, gardening.....



# How to find partners?

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- Get on mailing lists
- Read newspapers
- Join groups & offer to speak
- Bring flyers and business cards everywhere
- Ask people who you should meet

# Find out what they want

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- Invite yourself to programs, resource fairs, board meetings, conferences, regular meetings— what are they discussing?
- Ask how you can help? Brainstorm with the group.
- Emphasize what library does besides books.
- Do informational interviews
- See what other libraries are doing

# Build relationships

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- Serve on committees
- Write content for group's newsletter or website
- Distribute materials for other groups
- Write letters of support for other organization's grant applications
- Connect with groups that will support your efforts to serve Boomers

# Now, turning inward

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- MCL is trying to figure out what to STOP doing, so it's a tough time to start a new program
- Assumptions about Boomers and Retired People
  - It's not that many people
  - Group is monolithic
    - Don't recognize diversity within group
    - Don't recognize the "third age"

# Jumping over hurdles

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- Educate your administrators
  - Demographics: Scare them!
  - Share facts at each opportunity
- Identify community allies— you've already made relationships with them
- Submit proposals
  - Menu of options
  - Indicate the expected costs and results
  - Phased implementation of programs

# Internal Resources

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- Recruit Boomer Staff to the project
  - Test your program ideas on them
  - Use their connections
- Use your volunteers
  - Many are Boomers
  - Well-educated and experienced

# What's next for us?

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- Continue making the case for Boomers
- Marketing our existing programs to Boomers
- Offering first programs specifically targeted to Boomers this year
- Planning to take some of our programs out of library to our partners