

# Encore Career Choices:

## Purpose, Passion and a Paycheck in a Tough Economy

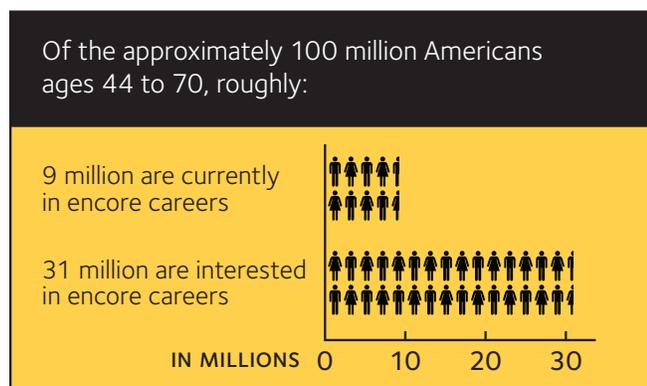
*Tens of millions of Americans in their 40s, 50s and 60s are making decisions about their next stage of work – and life. A 2011 MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures study found that financial insecurity and the economic downturn are shaping boomers' choices in ways that could affect our communities and the nation for years to come. Here is a sampling of the results.*

### 1 Abundant talent. Millions of people already in encore careers make a positive difference in their communities, and tens of millions more want to join them.

- As many as 9 million people, or 9 percent of all people ages 44 to 70, are currently in encore careers, having made a major career change after age 40 or come out of retirement to do work that combines personal meaning, continued income and social purpose. The number of people in encore careers has increased slightly through the economic downturn; the 2008 *MetLife Foundation/Civic Ventures Encore Career Survey* estimated the number of people in encore careers at 8.4 million.
- People in encore careers perform an estimated 16.7 billion hours of labor each year in education (30 percent), health care (25 percent), government (25 percent) and nonprofit organizations (11 percent). For comparison, that's more than double the 8.1 billion hours provided each year by volunteers of all ages.
- As many as 31 million others (31 percent) ages 44 to 70 are interested in encore careers, which they expect to last an average of nine years. Together, those currently in encore careers and those interested in encore careers represent two in five Americans (40 percent) ages 44 to 70.

### 2 Financial insecurity. The shortage of jobs and concerns about income and savings threaten the supply of experienced talent for social needs.

- Among those interested in encore careers, two in five (41 percent) say their financial situations have worsened in the past three years. Nearly three in four (73 percent) are concerned they will not have enough income in retirement.
- More than half of those interested in encore careers (51 percent) say they are very concerned that the state of the economy makes this a difficult time to make a change to an encore career. Still, one in four (27 percent) of those interested in encore careers say they are very likely to make the switch in the next five years.
- The economic downturn has dampened the intensity of interest in encore careers. One in four of all respondents (25 percent) rate their interest at eight or higher on a 10-point scale, down from one in three (34 percent) in the 2008 *Encore Career Survey*.
- While the percentage of those who are most interested in pursuing encore careers has dropped by roughly a quarter, a majority of those who remain very interested (61 percent) state that their interest has grown in the past three years.
- Among those interested in encore careers, nearly three in five (58 percent) of those with an opinion see an encore career as a fully paid job that can enhance their income security.
- However, many of those interested in encore careers are very concerned that they won't receive adequate employer-provided benefits such as health insurance (39 percent), will be subject to age discrimination (35 percent) or won't have adequate income (29 percent).



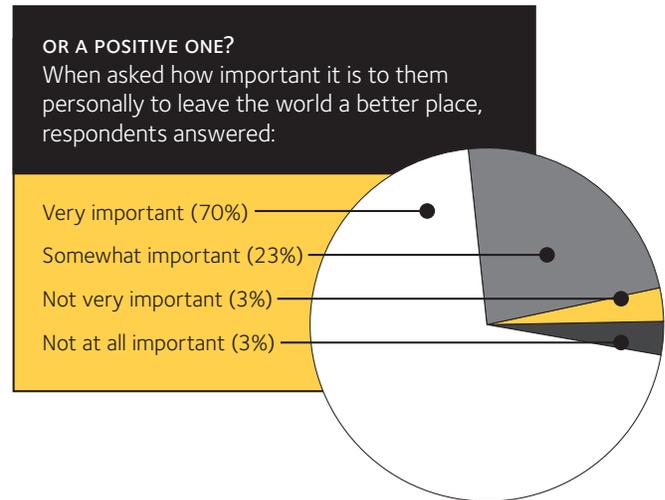
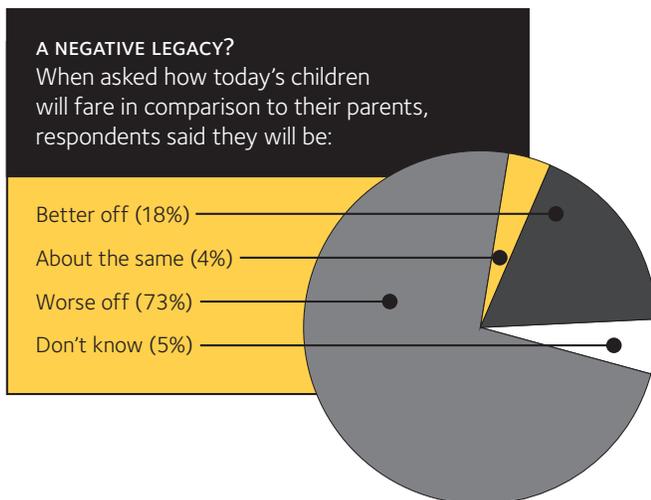
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**3** Attitude matters. It's not a difference in income or assets that separates those interested in encore careers from those who aren't interested; it's a difference in attitude and aspirations.

- There is little difference in economic circumstances between those who are interested in encore careers and those who are not. Both groups have median incomes of \$45,000 to \$59,999 per year. About half of both groups report household assets of less than \$150,000, and roughly one-third in both groups say their assets do not exceed \$50,000.
- Roughly equal numbers of those interested in encore careers and those who are not say their financial situations have worsened in the past three years and express concern about having adequate income in retirement.
- People interested in encore careers are slightly more likely than those not interested to say they have "a sense of direction" and "a clear sense of purpose" in life, and that they are active and vital. Likewise, people in encore careers are more active, forward-looking and purpose-driven than those not in encore careers.

**4** Competing visions. The vision of endless leisure in retirement is in eclipse, but Americans are split over the shape of their next stage of life.

- Only 14 percent of people 44 to 70 say that retirement is a time to "enjoy a well-deserved rest" and "pursue leisure activities." Twenty percent expect a more difficult retirement spent "adjusting my lifestyle to live within my means."
- But nearly two in three people (64 percent) see the next stage of life as a time to keep working, with nearly equal numbers saying it's a time to use their skills and experience to help others in paid or volunteer positions (31 percent) versus a time to simply cover expenses and maintain health insurance (33 percent).



*The study, funded by MetLife Foundation, is based on 2011 research by Penn Schoen Berland that included a nationally representative telephone survey of 930 Americans ages 44 to 70 and a follow-up online survey of 1,408 Americans ages 44 to 70 in or expressing interest in encore careers. For more information, go to [www.encore.org/research](http://www.encore.org/research).*