



Encore Fellowships Questions & Answers

Encore Careers

Q: What are encore careers?

A: Encore careers combine social impact with personal meaning and continued income, enabling people who have finished their midlife careers to put their passion and skills to work for the greater good. As millions of boomers enter their 50s and 60s, the goal of decades of leisure time is giving way to a new form of practical idealism: real jobs tackling real problems, making real impact.

Q: Who is interested in encore careers?

A: In a recent survey of adults age 44-70, more than half said they wanted encore careers – work that helps meet the human and social needs of their communities and provides personal meaning and continued pay.

Encore Fellowships

Q: What are encore fellowships?

A: Encore fellowships are an innovative way for corporate employees to transition from midlife careers to encore careers. They provide a compelling model for bringing corporate talent to nonprofits through yearlong, paid leaderships and management roles. The result is an alluring triple win: bringing new talent to nonprofits and the public sector; opening doors for boomers ready to contribute; and creating a new way for corporations to invest in their employees, nonprofits, and the community.

Q: What makes fellowships different from other corporate volunteer and community initiatives?

A: The idea is to go beyond traditional volunteer and board roles often accorded to the older population. Encore fellowships focus on the transition to encore careers and the talent available to boost nonprofit capacity and better serve communities.

Q: How do encore fellowships benefit corporate partners?

A: Encore fellowships leverage talent developed during corporate careers and expand the ways in which corporations can show their commitment to social causes – to benefit the community. This option burnishes the company's reputation among potential new employees, customers, and the broader public. It also builds on the company's portfolio of volunteer, philanthropic, community relations, and human resources activities.

Q: What's the benefit for nonprofit sponsors?

A: Encore fellowships provide a high value-to-cost ratio for nonprofits by bringing experienced, affordable talent to improve their effectiveness; scale their work; or launch new projects. Fellows help build organizational capacity to increase the impact of nonprofit work.

Q: Is there evidence of local success?

A: Yes. During a 2009 pilot of encore fellowships, all of the nonprofit sponsors requested another encore fellow for the following year. Five of the 10 fellows in the pilot have been offered longer-term staff roles with their host nonprofits.

Q: Is there evidence of national impact?

A: Yes. Although the idea is new, it is already gaining momentum:

- Encore fellowships were included in the Serve America Act signed by President Obama in 2009.
- *Fast Company* named encore fellowships one of the 10 best new ideas of the year.
- Coverage of encore fellowships has appeared in major national media, including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and National Public Radio.
- There is growing interest from states, corporations, organizations, communities, and individuals.

Q: Why is a new social innovation like encore fellowships needed?

A: Bringing the talent pool of the over-50 population together with a growing nonprofit sector in need of increased capacity makes good common sense. Switching from the private to nonprofit sector, however, is not always smooth or straightforward, and few pathways are in place to support this transition. We need new vehicles that connect nonprofits with talented boomers. Encore fellowships help experienced corporate employees make the transition.

Silicon Valley Encore Fellows Pilot

Q: What is the Silicon Valley Encore Fellows Pilot?

A: Launched in early 2009, the pilot is testing the encore fellowship idea in California's Silicon Valley. The 10 fellows who served during 2009 – highly skilled former corporate employees experienced in marketing, financial planning, human resources, and management – made an immediate impact at area nonprofits. At the same time, the fellows gained experience that will help them launch long-term encore careers.

Q: What is the pilot model?

A: The pilot model includes rigorous selection and matching, commitment from nonprofits, compensation, peer learning, high-impact work, support to nonprofit hosts, and help for fellows transitioning to encore careers.

Q: Who is funding the Silicon Valley pilot?

A: The David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Hewlett Packard Company have provided grants to Civic Ventures to run the pilot program.

Q: Will the pilot continue in 2010?

A: Work is underway to launch a second pilot phase in 2010 that will build on the success of the 2009 pilot; expand its size; refine the model; and create a prototype for others. Details will be firmed up considering available funding; corporate sponsorships; and nonprofit involvement.

Serve America Act and Encore Fellowships

Q: What are federal encore fellowships?

A: The Serve America Act, signed by President Obama in April 2009, included a provision to establish yearlong encore fellowships – 10 in each state – for people 55 and older. The fellowships are meant to allow individuals to carry out projects in areas of national need, while receiving training to help them transition to work in the nonprofit or public sectors.

Q: What is the status of the federal program?

A: While encore fellowships are part of the Serve America Act, Congress has not authorized funding to start them in the 2010 fiscal year. The Corporation for National and Community Service, which will implement the program, has not yet issued guidelines.

Q: Is there a connection between the Silicon Valley and federal encore fellowships?

A: The Silicon Valley Encore Fellows Pilot provides a model for the federal encore fellowship program, demonstrating the validity of the concept and identifying key ingredients for success. The Silicon Valley pilot is not funded federally, however, nor is it affiliated with the federal program.

For More Information

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