

The logo features a stylized 'AZ' in white with a blue brushstroke background behind it. Below this, the words 'CREATIVE AGING' are written in a large, blue, sans-serif font.

AZ CREATIVE AGING

Introduction

Creative Aging is a national movement to advance understanding of the vital relationship between creative expression and healthy aging. Our nation is home to a growing older adult population; in Arizona, U.S. Census Bureau data estimates that by the year 2020, more than 1 in 4 people will be over age 60. This 'graying' of America has precipitated dramatic changes in the field of aging, and as a society, we're redefining our perspective and understanding of later life. Creative Aging utilizes the unique ability of the arts to advance this shift away from a deficits approach to aging, that stresses losses, to an assets approach that stresses strengths, potential and achievements.

While arts programming is uniquely positioned to support an "assets approach" to aging, many Arizona residents do not have access to opportunities which would allow them to experience the arts in active, meaningful and participatory ways. This dearth of relevant programming is not due to lack of desire within the arts or aging service sectors, but lack of familiarity, capacity and access to local opportunities for expert training and learning.

Recognizing this need for professional development and network building support, the Arizona Commission on the Arts, with generous support by Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, developed *AZ Creative Aging*, a three-year initiative to embed creative aging knowledge and best practices in the community, build an infrastructure for high-quality arts and aging programs, and enhance quality of life for older Arizonans.

Program Summary

AZ Creative Aging represents the largest and most comprehensive programmatic investment in creative aging in the Arts Commission's recent history. The initiative will deploy strategic programming for which the Arts Commission has a proven success record: professional development and related network building. Over three years, *AZ Creative Aging* will provide an expansive learning platform, which includes:

- **Practical Training:** Includes the development and implementation of a comprehensive teaching artist institute, an arts organization capacity-building program, and training workshops for aging service provider staff.
- **Network Building:** The initiative's professional development components will serve as an organic springboard for complementary networking opportunities and relationship-building between the arts and aging/healthcare service sectors. In addition, a statewide leadership summit on arts and aging will be held twice during the three-year period.
- **Pilot Programs:** With aging and healthcare service organizations, the initiative will focus on piloting arts-based educational and capacity-building offerings with a cohort of 5-7 capable and willing partners, allowing partners to field test models and gauge efficacy before taking those programs to scale.

Delivery Agents and Beneficiaries:

In service to the ultimate beneficiary, Arizona's older adults, the initiative will engage three "delivery agent" groups:

- **Arts organizations:** Nonprofit performing arts, visual arts, literary arts and other cultural institutions.
- **Teaching artists:** Practicing professional artists with the complementary skills and sensibilities of educators, working independently or on contract with arts organizations.
- **Aging and healthcare service providers:** Senior living facilities, neighborhood centers, adult day facilities, government entities, hospitals, hospice organizations, rehabilitation facilities, etcetera.

Delivery agents will directly benefit as an infrastructure for creative aging professional development is created, and as delivery agents are then provided with formal opportunities to network and connect with each other.

Complementary Grant Programming

The agency's existing Lifelong Arts Engagement Grant program provides funding support for nonprofit aging and healthcare service organizations to engage artists or arts organizations in the development of arts-based programming, and Arts Commission staff will investigate the development of other targeted funding opportunities throughout the initiative's three years.

Desired Outcomes

Strengthened skills and expertise within the arts sector in the area of creative aging program development and partnership.

Teaching artists and arts organizations develop the specialized tools and knowledge required to work with aging and healthcare service providers and the older adult recipients of their services. Teaching artists receive training and learn skills allowing them to market their arts-based services to new sectors, broadening potential fields of employment and advancing careers.

Increased implementation of robust creative aging programs by arts organizations.

Arts organizations develop skills that engage new participants and retain elder patrons, increasing their breadth of service and opening doors to new communities.

Exploration of effective program/service models for aging and healthcare service providers in the area of creative aging, and integration of the arts into established aging and healthcare service organizations and infrastructures.

Aging and healthcare service providers will develop strong relationships with artists and arts organizations, and learn to utilize arts-based processes and arts engagement in the delivery of services.

Long-term, this initiative aims to create an infrastructure for networked communities of practice and multi-sector partnerships where none yet exist, and to create greater awareness on the part of the general public about the impact of quality, participatory arts experiences on health, wellness and quality of life for older adults.

Major Programs, Year 1 and 2

AZ Creative Aging Teaching Artist Institute

<http://azarts.gov/news/call-for-teaching-artists-az-creative-aging-teaching-artist-institute/>

Generation(s) Lab

<http://azarts.gov/az-creative-aging/az-creative-aging-generations-lab-call-applications/>

Create/Change: AZ Institute

<http://azarts.gov/programs/create-change/>

