



**INDIANA ARTS
COMMISSION**

Lifelong Arts INDIANA

YOUR GUIDE FOR DESIGNING AND HOSTING ARTS
EXPERIENCES FOR OLDER ADULTS

How to Implement a Successful Creative Aging Program



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Lifelong Arts Returning Artists



Lifelong Arts Indiana - ArtMix

Welcome

Are you a librarian, nonprofit community organizer, aging services provider, arts organization or other interested creative? Have you come looking for ways to engage your older population with creative arts activities that are informed by research and field tested in real communities?

From 2021-2025, the Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) and its partners collected stories and data to understand how arts impact the lives of older adults through the Lifelong Arts Indiana program. This guidebook is grounded in experiences from programs, workshops, and trainings led by artists and presented in communities across Indiana.

From creating practical budgets to understanding the science, this guidebook provides a variety of useful tools to help you along your creative aging journey. We hope you use this information to build your own unique programs while having fun.

About Lifelong Arts Indiana

Lifelong Arts Indiana is an initiative to support creative aging training and programming across the state.

The Lifelong Arts Indiana initiative, from the Indiana Arts Commission, provided training and funding to more than 165 sites across the state.

These sites included libraries, churches, community centers, adult day services, assisted living facilities, and community art centers. Lifelong Arts Indiana involved a two-step experience, starting with training for artists and providers of services to older adults on a participatory arts framework designed by the IAC in consultation with national experts on creative aging. The second step of the initiative awarded funding to trained participants for the implementation of programming of their own designs within their own communities. In total, \$514,600 was awarded to a total of 107 individual artists, older adult-serving organizations, and libraries. Programming took place across 44 Indiana counties and impacted more than 2,000 older adult participants. This guidebook pulls together the knowledge and lessons learned from this initiative.

More information about Lifelong Arts Indiana can be found on the Indiana Arts Commission website www.in.gov/arts.

A Study on the Effectiveness of the Lifelong Arts Indiana Model

The Lifelong Arts Indiana model was a major success by all measures of its reach and impact on older adults. In addition to participant satisfaction and anecdotal stories, the Indiana Arts Commission engaged a professional evaluation team from 2022-2024 to quantify the impact of the program over time on older participants.

In partnership with Indiana Family and Social Services Administration’s Division of Aging and Division of Mental Health, the IAC engaged the University of Indianapolis Center for Aging and Community (UIndy CAC) to conduct a rigorous evaluation process resulting in some of the most robust research findings on creative aging programming in the country. The full report is available on the IAC website at in.gov/arts. A summary of the findings follows.

Findings

Lifelong Arts Indiana:

- Improves the mental health of older adults.
- Has even more significant impacts on well-being in rural communities.
- Creates meaningful employment opportunities for artists.
- Creates sustainable community partnerships.
- Is a solution for the issues impacting older adults’ well-being.

UIndy CAC conducted their evaluation using a variety of research methods, including interviews with participants, artists, and site

partners; surveys of training participants and older adult project participants; site observations; and document review. The evaluation scope was robust with input from many participants representing diverse perspectives: 18 project facilitators were interviewed one-on-one; 18 project sites were observed in person by trained evaluators; 36 final report documents were analyzed; and 322 surveys were collected.

Notable within this valuable data is a nationally validated survey of health: the short-form-12 health survey (SF-12). The data from the SF-12 forms indicates that participants in the Lifelong Arts program reported higher levels of well-being in both physical and mental health compared to the national average. These statistically significant changes indicate that the improvements in well-being are a result of participating in Lifelong Arts Indiana.

“Without these programs, exposure to the creative arts for older adults doesn’t exist for some areas.”

- Lifelong Arts Program Participant

An evaluation of this size and scope on a creative aging program has not been done nationally in nearly two decades. This research contributes critical new knowledge to the field of creative aging. It provides evidence to support the case that high-quality, sequential arts activities led by trained artists significantly improves the mental health of older adult participants. This opens up an exciting new pathway of potential health interventions that can improve quality of life at a fraction of the cost of most medical treatments. This research also serves to bolster the growing national movement toward creative aging initiatives as a meaningful way to support this vulnerable and growing population.



Lifelong Arts Indiana - Art Barn

What is Art?

Throughout this guide, we discuss “art” and “creativity,” which is interpreted broadly. In this guide we recognize that art is not just in a gallery or concert stage, but also can be a part of our daily lives. Taking pictures with your cell phone, telling a story to a grandchild, and singing in the shower can be as meaningful as seeing the *Mona Lisa* or listening to Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*.

When thinking of art, keep an open mind. The arts include dance, theatre, storytelling, performing arts, vocal music, instrumental music, visual arts, culturally-specific arts, media arts, and more. Each of these artforms have their own universes beyond these basic categories. You will find many options when you dig deeper.

Who is This Guidebook For?

This guidebook is written for anyone currently working with older adults or anyone who wants to work with older adults in the future. You could be working at a senior center, a library, an Area Agency on Aging, or another Aging Services Provider. Perhaps your organization provides programs for all ages and now is looking to do something more targeted to your older adult community.

What about artists and arts organizations? If they are planning on expanding their work for older adults, arts professionals may also gain insight from this publication. This guidebook speaks to non-arts program sites more directly, but anyone can find great tips throughout.

This guidebook will lead you step-by-step on your creative aging journey. When read from start to finish, you will learn how to plan and host a program inspired by the Indiana Arts Commission’s Lifelong Arts Indiana initiative. You might also start reading this guide in the middle and pick out some tips to improve your current programming. Everyone will have their own approach; choose the pieces that feel right for your situation.

Defining Creative Aging

“Older adults” is a term used broadly to describe people ages sixty-five and older. Creative aging is a process in which arts activities are specifically designed to meet the unique needs and interests of older adults. This includes understanding the vast life experiences elders bring to each learning situation, designing the creative activity with that in mind, and implementing the program with the considerations of the physical space, time, and location needed by the participants.

Creative aging is an arts-based program designed to improve and/or maintain older adult wellbeing.

Why Creative Aging? Why Now?

Globally, people sixty-five years old and older, now outnumber children under the age of five for the first time in human history. It is predicted that by 2050, the number of people aged eighty and older will surpass 425 million. In response to this major demographic change, many artists and arts providers started offering “creative aging” programs to maintain and improve the quality of life of older adults.

As demographics shift, we need new strategies to support the wellbeing of our growing aging population. Creative aging programs and the arts in general may hold the answer. Because artists and arts providers are embedded in many communities and are trusted allies in community development, they are natural partners in serving this vulnerable population. Most arts organizations serve older adults through their primary programming, and many excel in providing learning activities in their community. Artists and arts organizations have a natural pathway for older adults to deepen their social connectedness and sense of purpose.



About the Authors

This guidebook was written by a team of creative aging professionals with the guidance of the Indiana Arts Commission. Credit also must be given to the many artists, aging services providers, and organizations who hosted programs and shared their experiences to help shape this guidebook.

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Mary Ardery is the author of *Level Watch* (June Road Press, September 2025). Her poems appear in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Best New Poets*, *Poet Lore*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Missouri Review* online, and elsewhere. Her prose and photography appear in publications such as *The Sun*, *DIAGRAM*, *The Indianapolis Review*, and *The Cincinnati Review* online. She earned a BA from DePauw University and an MFA from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where she won an Academy of American Poets Prize. Mary Ardery is a recipient of a Lifelong Arts Fellowship grant from the Indiana Arts Commission. Visit her online at maryardery.com.



Lifelong Arts Indiana - Art Barn



Simple Ways to Get Started

Creative Aging programs can range from year-long multi-disciplinary arts projects to a simple one-hour show-and-tell event; one program approach is not better than another. Each program type has its own purpose and place. This isn't a "win" or "lose" situation. Any step in the direction of supporting older adults in your community is a step in the right direction.

Creating an arts activity for older adults might initially feel overwhelming. You may find yourself wondering, "Where do I find an artist?" "Will the participants want to join?" "How do I even begin?" The key is to start simple and, more importantly, simply start!

Fun Activities for a First Step

The activities shared below are low-barrier, low-cost or free, and easy to organize. They are a great way to ease into the longer creative aging residencies that take more planning and partnership. When you are ready to move to another level by inviting a professional artist to conduct professional-level workshops, the rest of this guidebook leads you through that process.

Show-and-Tell Activity

Remember show-and-tells from when you were a kid? You may have brought something precious from home to tell your peers in class all about what it means to you. Consider organizing a show-and-tell with your older adults. Ask them to bring examples of their artwork, a song to sing, or a personal possession to show. One by one, have participants present and tell the story of their item to the group. Follow up with questions such as: “What does a quilt from your home mean to you?” “How did you carve this wooden animal?” “How long have you been playing this instrument?” You can also ask them deeper questions: “How does this object make you feel?” “Who do you do this craft with?” “Who do you do it for?” These questions reinforce the positive impact these activities have had on their lives. Asking older adults from your community to gather and bring one creative item from their home that they want to share with others, can be a simple, fun and powerful way to build excitement for creative aging at your site.

How:

- 1 Advertise a show-and-tell to your older adult community - use simple, straightforward language with as little limitation as possible.
- 2 Prepare to have a facilitator who leads the show-and-tell and is comfortable asking follow up questions as needed or comfortable politely concluding a long explanation to move on to the next person.
- 3 Plan for 5-10 minutes per person, but don't be surprised if some people go longer.

How long have you been playing this instrument?

What does a quilt from your home mean to you?

Who do you do this craft with?



Talk Stage

Talk Stages or “narrative stages” are like live talk shows, where a host interviews someone about their art, life, experiences, etc. These are effective ways to create a program just by asking a few simple questions. In this experience type, an older adult is asked to be on ‘stage’ with an interviewer and is asked a series of questions about their art work, skills, and experiences, in front of an audience of peers. A Talk Stage experience takes very little preparation for the older adult artist, which is what makes it an approachable activity for some. It also allows the elder participant to experience a sense of mastery. They have a story to share!

How:

- 1 Select an older adult in your community who has a special artistic practice or personal experience. When considering who you might ask to do this, we encourage you to think expansively with creative experiences such as:
 - a. “Fine Arts” are often thought of as visual arts (drawing, painting, sculpting, pottery, photography), performing arts (dancing, theatre, storytelling, music/singing), and literary arts (creative writing and poetry) but there are many more ideas to consider.
 - b. Folk arts/crafts such as woodworking, blacksmithing, quilting, or playing music.
 - c. The art forms that are more ‘behind the scenes’ such as playwriting, choreography, stage lighting, set design, and more.
 - d. “Contemporary” art forms such as motorcycle customizing, videography, and other digital arts.
 - e. Culturally specific arts happening in your community.
- 2 Invite your artist to join you for an ‘interview session’ and advertise the event for people to join the audience. This is also a great add-on activity for an already scheduled event.
- 3 Select a facilitator who can prepare some questions for the artist.
- 4 Tell the interviewee about the topics you hope to discuss, to help them feel at ease.
- 5 Set up two chairs in front of the audience, somewhat facing each other.
- 6 For the interview, begin a conversation and be prepared to respond in the moment to either elaborate on a thought or utilize the pre-prepared questions. Allow people to ask questions and/or meet with the artist after the event.



Make-and-Take

Offering an easy-to-make, quick-to-finish experience is a great way to give a taste for a longer creative aging experience. Asking an artist to set up a table and invite older adult community members to engage in a simple creative activity as they walk by can be just the invitation someone needs to explore creative endeavors further.

How:

- 1 You can do a Make-and-Take on your own or with the partnership of a local artist.
- 2 Select a simple activity that takes 5-15 minutes to complete.
 - a. If you're thinking of visual arts, there are many options using simple or recycled materials.
 - b. If you're wanting to do something more complex, there are options for a drop-in type drum circle or improv games that can start and finish quickly with any number of people.
- 3 Make sure you offer some way for participants to provide feedback such as a simple survey with smiley faces or a sign up sheet.
- 4 Set up a table with necessary materials and an instruction sheet and invite people to join as they pass by.



Lifelong Arts Indiana - Art Barn



Collections Exhibit

Empty walls and unused display cases can be repurposed to display prized collections from elders in your community. Perhaps they share examples of their artwork, show off their special collection, or work with others to curate an interesting subject. Involving older adults as both makers and curators is an effective strategy to deeply engage older adults and create a meaningful display for your community. Exhibitions can be a great way to start a conversation about art and find out which types resonate with your patrons.

How:

- 1 Advertise an opportunity to exhibit collections and/or ask your staff if anyone comes to mind who speaks of a collection of artwork or artifacts.
- 2 Ask the artist to arrange the artwork in the space how they would like.
- 3 It might require some basic supplies for hanging or displaying such as a wood pedestal or wire and nails. There are many resources online for creative solutions to displaying art.
- 4 Create written descriptions of the items in partnership with the artist.
- 5 Create opportunities for viewers to respond to the artwork or submit questions.



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists

Building a Creative Aging Program

This section outlines the basic steps of building a full creative aging residency program, breaks down each step into more detail, and gives you a long list of different ways to implement creative aging programming.

Basic Steps for Building a Creative Aging Program:

- 1 Gather Input From Potential Participants
- 2 Build Your Team
- 3 Create a Program Plan (timeline, activities, venue, materials, etc)
- 4 Implement the Program
- 5 Evaluate, Reflect, and Share Out (and Repeat...!)

1. Gathering Input from Potential Participants

Understanding participants’ interests and abilities is foundational to building a creative aging program that is meaningful for all. Older adults have interests and needs that are different from other age groups. Getting to know who your potential attendees are and what they want, helps to define areas of focus and plan your program.

To make the process more approachable, we suggest taking an inventory of the creative practices already happening within your group. You may discover that there is a quilter, woodworker, or musician who you didn’t even know about. Other elders may build birdhouses, bake brownies, or grow flowers—creative outlets they might not even recognize as “creative” or an “art”, it’s just what they enjoy doing. By recognizing and appreciating these existing creative practices, you can begin to tap into pursuits already familiar to them.

After the initial inventory of what people are already doing, the next step is to start to introduce new artforms to your community and gauge what resonates with them. It can be something simple like a survey, but also there are other creative ways to gather input.



Creative Ways to Gather Input:

- Offer a one-time workshop to test out a new arts area. Often, one arts activity can spark interest in another.

Tip: Make sure to ask for thoughts and feedback from anyone who attends. In fact, if someone peeks in, ask them what intrigues them or turns them away. Do participants want more programs like the one offered? Do they want something different?

- Invite a local artist to set up a table at an upcoming event and see how your community gets excited by it.

At the table, ask for suggestions for what to do next: workshops, demonstrations, residencies, etc.

- Host a show-and-tell activity which may help reveal individual and group interests. See more about show-and-tell activities on page 11.

Offer a checklist of potential activities for them to consider and rank.



Your Experience is Part of the Input Too

Questions to ask yourself when planning a creative aging program:

- What programs have worked in the past and what led to their success? (even non-arts programs can help give clues)
- What did participants like about the program?
- Was the session about making, watching, sharing, talking, or a combination of these?
- Did participants of past classes know each other, or did they attend to meet new people?
- Did participants continue to work at home and bring their progress back to the group?
- Were there any additional outcomes that participants appreciated such as a dance program resulting in movement and exercise?
- Was there a culminating activity or event? Who came to it?
- What's going to sustain your interest over time? Will you enjoy it as the organizer?

Elements to Consider for New Programs

- Who will the program serve? People you know or a group new to your organization?
- What will make the program meaningful for older adults?
 - What generational themes or shared memories can be incorporated?
 - How can the program offer new experiences?
 - How can it help forge new skills?
 - How can it help build friendships and social connections?
 - When should you offer the program?
 - What is the best day and time?
 - How long should a session be?
 - How often should you offer them based on participants' interests, needs, and schedules?
 - What accommodations or adaptations should be considered for participants with differing abilities and preferences, including cognitive challenges, physical and mobility limitations, and restroom breaks? Find more about accessibility on page 52.



CASE STUDY

Sheep to Cloth

Using Patrons’ Input in a Successful Program Design.

Mary Ardery

As Faith Connell, Graphic Design Specialist at the Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library (EVPL), brainstormed what kind of arts program to pitch for the Lifelong Arts grant, she looked at the data. What kinds of programs had people requested in the past? What were patrons’ known interests? She noticed interest really leaned toward fiber arts—which made sense, given that the library already hosted many casual fiber arts programs like crochet and knitting groups. Before the idea for the program was even fully formed, EVPL was hearing from eager community members.

The program idea evolved to eventually become “Sheep to Cloth,” a six-week session of two-hour classes where participants learned the fundamentals of weaving. The goal was to offer a unique experience for people who already had an interest in fiber arts, giving them an opportunity to learn new or more advanced skills. In keeping with the best practices of quality arts programming for older adults, a goal was also to bring together a group of people who share common interests and might enjoy spending time with one another. The library’s pre-existing fiber arts groups met at different branches throughout the library system; “Sheep to Cloth” would be a reason for everyone to gather in one place.

As Faith searched for potential fiber arts instructors, Peggy Taylor was an easy choice to teach the class. Through her business, Loom Hall, Peggy creates handwoven textiles inspired by those of the 18th century. She is well-versed in natural dyes and works with a variety of textiles including wool, linen, and cotton. Beyond her own artistic abilities, she is an experienced

teacher and demonstrator of the craft. Before “Sheep to Cloth,” Peggy had even previously taught a different Lifelong Arts program. Her teaching experience was evident throughout the program’s duration, but especially when one class overlapped with the area’s annual fall festival; class attendance was unexpectedly low. At a moment’s notice, Peggy was able to adjust that day’s lesson plan to accommodate a class with only two participants. Partnering with an experienced and flexible teaching artist will help keep any program running smoothly.

To reach as many participants as possible, Faith collaborated with the EVPL’s programming manager. They discussed where the library wanted to grow their relationships with community partners. “Instead of starting from scratch, I leaned into what we’d already started,” Faith said, which is how the library also partnered with the Southwestern Indiana Regional Council on Aging (SWIRCA), an agency whose mission is to empower older adults and people with disabilities to remain living safely in their homes. The EVPL gave promotional materials to SWIRCA, and SWIRCA had many clients who wanted to participate in “Sheep to Cloth.” After the program ended, a SWIRCA manager reached back out to Faith to let her know that a participant had loved the class so much that they had purchased their own loom.

After the conclusion of the program, Faith said one potential change would be to extend the program’s timeline and host the class every other week instead of weekly. About a third of the participants attended regularly, and two-thirds attended more occasionally. Faith believes one reason may have been that participants didn’t

have enough time to complete the weaving homework with only a week between classes.

Regardless, the effects of a quality arts program outlast the session dates. During “Sheep to Cloth,” Faith said she was able to re-introduce people to the library and engage

them in the library’s community. As a result of this program, attendance is up, patrons are requesting new programs they want to see, and wanting to participate in the next fiber arts offering.

PRO-TIP
– Partner to Promote the Arts

The Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library has an art committee, and part of their mission is to promote local artists. They display local artists’ work throughout the library’s locations. With eight branches that make up the EVPL system, this partnership benefits many artists in the community without requiring too much work on the part of the library or the artists themselves. In addition to the efforts you may already put in to actively promoting the arts, consider any potentially overlooked ways that may also accomplish this goal in a time- and energy-efficient manner.



Working Men's Institute-
New Harmony, IN,
Woven Together



This worksheet can help you consider who you want to bring to your creative aging dream team.

During the Initial Brainstorming Phase:

People Inside Your Organization

- Administrators/Directors
- Co-workers
- Facility managers
- Volunteers

Potential Participants

- Representative older adults
- Current patrons
- Friends and family

During the Program Planning Phase:

Artist Partners or Orgs

- Local arts organizations
- Art guilds and hobby groups
- Individual artists

Organizations Serving Older Adults

- Day services organizations
- Advocacy groups
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing Facilities

During the Program Implementation Phase:

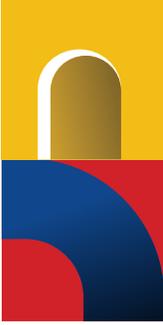
Community Leaders

- City council members
- Mayor’s office
- Elected officials
- Local Business Leaders
- Current or Potential Funders

Potential Participants

- Newspapers
- Online media
- Community Social Media groups
- TV stations





2. Build Your Team

Along with getting input from participants, launching a new creative aging program usually takes a team of people to create a successful event. Whether internal to your organization or external partners, gathering your team at the start will lead to greater success.

Who is an Artist?

At its core, artmaking is an intrinsic part of what it means to be human—to create, to arrange, to display, and to share with others. Everyone is an artist of some type. Professional artists have spent time and focus to learn an artform’s skills, tools, history, and context. Whether in their living room or in a university, professional artists have explored an artform to a point that they are able to share it confidently with others.

How a Teaching Artist Can Help

When artists gain specialized skills in teaching an artform, they become ‘teaching artists.’ Teaching artists know how to develop a curriculum based on the skill level of the participants and the outcomes desired for the sessions. Teaching artists also understand group dynamics and have skills managing a room full of learners. Teaching artists are also adept at knowing how to utilize the materials and space needed to create. They are educators dedicated to fostering creativity and growth in the participants and take on the role of a coach, guiding and encouraging a participant through their artistic journey. A good teaching artist recognizes that their role goes beyond teaching technical skills. They work to foster a social connection and instill a sense of community among participants.

Utilizing a professional teaching artist to lead a creative aging program can enrich the experience for you as a partner and for the participants.



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists

Many Hands Make Light Work

For some people, planning a simple art experience is difficult to envision. Inviting a local artist to be part of your team provides art expertise and contributes to the development of a high quality program. In this section we walk you through the role of the artist, how to find an artist, and what questions to ask at your planning meeting. It is important to remember that artists’ time and work are valuable; they are professionals with years of training and experience. Paying an artist for their time, even for a few hours consulting on an art plan, acknowledges their value.



How do I Find a Teaching Artist/Creative Partner?

If you're trying to connect in-person, the arts community can be often found at:

- **Community gatherings** - Performances, festivals, farmers markets, art openings, etc.
- **Colleges and Universities** - Both faculty and students at a college can be a good place to look for a teaching artist or creative partner.
- **Local schools (any age)** - Art teachers are great resources for teaching artist activities especially for summers and weekends.
- **Local stores specializing in handmade goods** - The store owners will have a list of their artist suppliers who can either help you directly or point you in the right direction.

If you're looking online, start your search:

- **On social media** - Ask your friends to give you links to their favorite local artists or arts galleries/local shops.
- **Internet search** - Use the key words of your location and art or artist and see if there are any new art collectives or performance groups you didn't know about to help in your search.

Sometimes you need a third-party to help guide you:

- **Local Arts Councils** - A great conduit for all things local art scene. Big and small, if you have an arts council somewhere near you they will be a hub of information about artists in your area.
- **State Arts Agencies** - Can help look at the bigger picture. They can tell you what is in your region or state that might fit the bill of the creative partner you're hoping to find.
- **Arts Organizations** - Your local community theatre or art museum can't function without having a full roster of artists connected to them. They will know many people to suggest if you reach out.

How to Plan With an Artist, Step-by-Step

This step-by-step list helps you lead productive planning meetings. It may take two or three meetings to work through the details necessary to plan a successful program. Begin the planning process at least 4-5 months before you want the project to start.

Step 1: Share Contact Information

You will want to be able to contact each other leading up to the first workshop and in-between.

- The artist's name, email, phone number are important to have.
- Host site contact information including emergency phone numbers.



Step 2: Get to Know Each Other

- Tell the artist about your site and the group of participants.
- What are some of the activities the artist can do and has done in the past?
- What activities might be a good fit for these participants?
- Are there any disability accommodations the artist should be aware of in designing the program?
- Are there any important safety or facility procedures the artist should know of?

Step 3: Set Goals Together

Don't forget to include goals for both arts learning and social interaction.

- What are the artist's goals and program outcomes?
- What are the goals of the host site?
- What are some common goals and outcomes?

Step 4: Start to Nail Down the Program Logistics

- How many weeks?
- What time of year?
- What is the artist's fee?
- What could be the culminating event and where?
- Will there be a fee charged to participants?
- What is the event's schedule of sessions?
- Do you have alternate dates planned in case of a cancellation?
- How many sessions will the program have?
- How long will the sessions be?
- Where on the host site will this event take place? Is it inside or outside?
- What is the event's budget? Do you need outside funding?
- Will the artist need any assistance with transporting art supplies to and from car to facility and culminating event? Will they need a cart or hand dolly? Where do they park?

- Who will set up the room or space for the event?
- How much time does the artist need to set up and tear down before each session?
- Can art items or projects be stored safely at the facility if needed?
- How will you communicate when a session is cancelled?

Step 5: Create a Written Document or Agreement Between Artist and Host Site

- Artist payment contract
- W-9 form
- Payment timelines
- Determine what happens if the artist or host site cancels the program or one of the sessions?
- What supplies or equipment will the artist provide for the activity? What equipment will the host site provide? What equipment will you provide?
- Are there any special equipment needs for the sessions (e.g. special lighting, electricity, water, etc.)?
- Are there any special seating or seating arrangements required (armless chairs, stools, etc.)?

Lifelong Arts Indiana - Honeywell Foundation



Step 6: Getting Ready to Launch

- Who will coordinate the registration and communication with participants?
- Who will publicize and create marketing materials for the arts learning activities and the final culminating event (including logos and funding recognition)?
- Who will follow up with participants in the event they are absent to ensure they are okay and are returning next session? Can the artist provide materials for those who may be absent?
- Will there be a host site representative at the activities (list names and contact)?
- What is the best form(s) of documentation of the activities and culminating event?
- What type of evaluation and assessment tools will be used during the program?
- Obtain logos and correct wording for all marketing, publicity, print materials (artist, host site, and funders)

These six steps will take you far towards successful and efficient planning communication with your artist partner.



Lifelong Arts Indiana - Art Barn



CASE STUDY

Create and Celebrate Arts with Cultural Traditions Paper Flowers In Bloom

How thoughtful planning leads to memorable experiences and valuable partnerships.

Delores Thornton

If you talk to artist Emily Guerrero, you will be drawn to her love of flowers as she speaks of dahlias, Mexico’s national flower. Or her pride in other native Mexican flowers such as marigolds, orchids, sunflowers, and yucca flowers. As was the case with the older adult participants in the “Create and Celebrate Arts with Flowers” program. Emily Guerrero, a native Chicagoan currently residing in Fort Wayne, Indiana, who previously taught high school before becoming a self-taught paper flower artist, was the lead artist for several Lifelong Arts creative aging programs between 2022-2024.

In “Create and Celebrate Arts with Flowers” Guerrero invited elders to engage in the art of colorful paper flower making. Various themes included cultural traditions such as May Day, Cinco de Mayo and Mother’s Day featuring a well-known artist each week. The goal was to gather elders in the community to create and celebrate arts traditions involving diverse cultures, knowing that socialization and community connection are vital to a healthy older adult community for any city. In the workshops participants engaged in creating beautiful flowers like the ones that withstand the heat of summer days and grow through cracks in concrete on city streets. The participants reminisced of days spent with family and friends in flower gardens where they relished the captivating beauty. Some participants brought memories of lived experiences of visits to parents’ and even grandparents’ roses on trellises. It was as if the crafting process produced seeds which blossomed into a beautiful flower bed.

This free, five-part series of 60–90-minute weekly workshops ran on Thursday mornings in the spring of 2022 and culminated in a community event featuring a paper flower showcase in the window of a local business, facing the Huntington County courthouse. “Create and Celebrate Arts with Flowers” took place in the downtown district of Huntington, Indiana at the Huntington Arts & Entrepreneurial Center (HAEC). A hub of arts and culture, the HAEC boasts calligraphy and muralists workshops and short-term series as well as sessions and workshops throughout the year.

The workshop was a memorable experience for the participants, the project leader, and the Huntington, Indiana community at large. Each week participants showed increased confidence and social engagement. Participants were pleased with the display of their beautiful floral displays which were showcased in the gallery. Through thoughtful planning, Guerrero was able to harness partnerships with LaFontaine Arts Council and the Huntington Arts Entrepreneurial Center, leading to a more sustainable program experience. Building on this success, Guerrero continues to host flower making workshops in Huntington and across the region.





PRO-TIP

To create more interest in the art project, the teaching artist used patience and love to engage the older adults in significant experiences. At the conclusion of the sessions “Create and Celebrate Arts with Cultural Traditions,” participants were ready to expand their paper flower displays as the gallery which hosted the culminating event requested of them. By setting the tone and introducing the mechanics of “recall and association” other organizations may incorporate this formula to enhance programs for older adults in arts projects in their areas.



Lifelong Arts
Returning Artists





3. Create a Program Plan

Having completed the first two steps, you should already have much of what you need to start your program plan. Now is the time to write it all down and consider timing and details. The Lifelong Arts Indiana model encourages sequential learning in five or more sessions. This section describes how to create detailed written plans according to that evidence-based model.

What is Sequential Learning aka “a Residency”?

In creative aging programs, a “sequential learning experience” or “a residency” refers to an arts activity that spans several sessions. Each day of instruction offers new content and experiences that build on the previous learning. Sequential learning experiences build toward a single goal- learning to form, glaze and fire a clay piece, for example. Along the way participants gain the skills necessary to attain that goal.

How Long is a Typical Residency Session?

One session can last anywhere from thirty minutes to two hours, depending on the artform you’re working on. For example, if you’re doing a rigorous dance workshop, thirty minutes may be the most your participants can do. However, if you’re doing a painting session, it may take fifteen to twenty minutes just to set up your supplies and another twenty minutes to clean up at the end of the session, so a much longer time is necessary to make progress on the art project.

How Many Sessions are Needed for a Residency?

Residencies can vary in length. They can be three sessions or years long. This will depend on the outcomes you hope to achieve and the timeline that it takes to achieve them.

How Often do the Sessions Need to Happen? Daily, Weekly, Monthly?

This is entirely up to the site and the artist, however the artform may play a major part in the decision. Dance artists generally prefer the sessions close together so that participants can retain choreography learned. Other artforms, such as ceramics, need time between sessions to prepare materials.

What Does the Research Tell us About the ‘Perfect’ Design?

Research into what makes an effective creative aging residency program has already been done. We’ve compiled some of the key tips for creating an effective creative aging experience on the next page. In addition, there is a resources section at the end of this guidebook that includes links to research articles and websites with more information.

Evidence-Based Tips

→ Sustained experiences offer increased impact

- An experience that builds on one goal over many sessions results in a deeper impact. Single sessions are great places to start, but most research shows longer experiences have higher impact.

→ Incorporating personal connections is important

- Encourage the participants to add their own personal reflections and life experiences into the creative project.

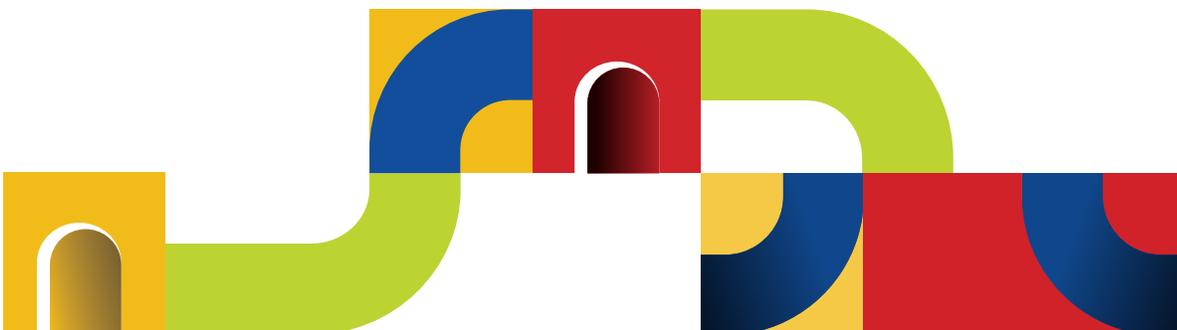
→ Almost every type of program has positive impacts on participants' mental health and quality of life

- Research has been done on a variety of artistic disciplines (music, visual, theatre, etc) and all have shown positive outcomes on mental health and quality of life. In all of these instances the way the program was delivered varied (length of sessions, types of classes). This tells us that doing something creative with older adults can happen in numerous ways and still make an impact.

Planning is a Team Effort

Much of the planning for a sequential learning experience should come from the artist. There are pieces of planning a site coordinator will be responsible for, such as knowing their community's priorities, and providing the site's goals, but the day-to-day specifics are most easily put together by an artist who has the expertise to choose meaningful activities to build skills of the artform and accomplish the social or health goals simultaneously.

The planning meeting is essential to lay out the roles and expectations. After the planning meeting, separate work can be done to put together the daily lesson plans and make plans for marketing, outreach and logistics. When you come back together, finalize any lingering questions, consider funding needs, and set final dates. If you have an outside funder, through a grant or sponsorship, you may need to consider their goals and reporting requirements as you finalize your plans.



Step 1 **Set the Stage: Initial Planning Meeting**

<p>Teaching Artist: Name, Email, Phone/Text Role/Responsibilities</p>	
<p>Site Coordinator: Name, Email, Phone/Text Role/Responsibilities</p>	
<p>Other Site Administrator: Name, Email, Phone/Text Role/Responsibilities</p>	
<p>Program Summary (in 500 words or less) (helpful for marketing)</p>	
<p>Primary Goal/s:</p>	
<p>Budget Notes: Who is handling the budget? Any funding restrictions?</p>	
<p>Culminating event? YES/NO: If yes, add notes on details:</p>	
<p>Meetings Scheduled - planning meeting, pre-workshop phone call for last minute check in, and debrief meeting</p>	

Step 2 Get to Know Each Other

Does the artist need to see the space ahead of time? Or meet any people?	
List any of the site's schedules, routines, or customs to note:	
Will there be any volunteers needed or available?	

Step 3 Finalize the Project Details

Any evaluations, surveys, or assessments? Who will be documenting the process for reports or future marketing?	
Known Accessibility needs or general Accessibility to prioritize	
Total # of sessions: # of minutes/ session:	
Frequency of sessions: (e.g. twice/week) Dates:	
Supplies/Materials needed? Who will provide them?	
Budget details: How much for artist fees, travel, planning, and supplies?	
Will there be any volunteers needed or available?	

Step 4 Get Ready: Residency Preparation

<p>Any special room setup needed? Does anyone else need to be contacted for this? Facilities manager, event staff, custodian?</p>	
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Step 5 Make it Happen: Residency Visits

<p>Communication plan: How often will you keep in touch and provide feedback? In what ways do you prefer to communicate?</p>	
<p>Residency Day 1 - Outline</p>	
<p>Residency Day 2 - Outline</p>	
<p>Residency Day 3 - Outline</p>	
<p>Residency Day 4 - Outline</p>	
<p>Residency Day 5 - Outline (add more as needed)</p>	

Step 6 How Did it Go: Debrief Meeting

<p>Evaluation and reflection plan: What will success look like and how will you measure it? It does not have to be a formal evaluation.</p>	
<p>Share out plan: Who needs to know about this awesome program after it's done?</p>	



What Makes Adult Learning Different?

What makes adult learning different from other ages? First, it focuses on the experience of the older participant. In retirement some older adults are looking for reasons to get out into the community or opportunities to make new friends, creative aging classes often provide participants with an opportunity to socialize as a main focus. Additionally, designing an adult learning program with an understanding that adults have vast life experiences and an internal motivation to join the learning sessions, can be different than planning other arts experiences.

Adult Learning Principles

An entire field of study exists examining how adults learn differently than young people (andragogy). Educator Malcolm Knowles developed specific principles to consider when designing adult learning experiences. Since their inception in 1950, many other educators have built on Knowles’ work. Here are our adapted principles for adult learning:

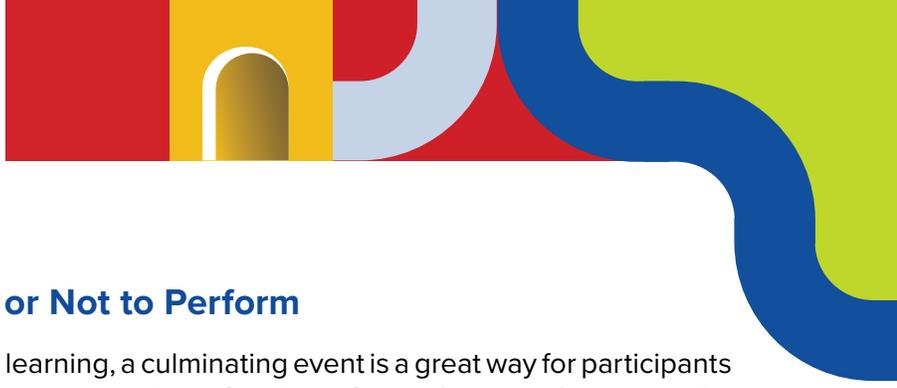
- 1 Adult learners are internally motivated, self-directed, and come with a readiness to learn.
- 2 Adult learners appreciate programs that draw upon their own life experiences and knowledge.
- 3 Adult learners are goal-oriented and practical. Give them the opportunity to develop solutions that fit their needs and goals.
- 4 Adult learners expect to be shown respect, adult to adult.

Using these adult learning principles as you design your arts experience will help you create an impactful and successful creative aging program.

Leave Room for Personal Expression

It’s important for older adult participants to have an opportunity to express themselves through their artwork. Ensure every planned creative aging activity has time to share individual ideas. One strategy that is commonly used by teaching artists is to schedule times in the workshop for participants to share memories related to the art. Do they have memories of dancing as a child? Do they have thoughts to share about the places in their lives where they have sung songs? Can they share a story about drawing figures or writing stories in their lives? Not only do these sharing opportunities foster greater buy-in from participants, but they can also help the teaching artist understand better the participants’ reasons for joining the session. Future sessions can then be tweaked to allow participants to get the most out of this experience.

Another important consideration is to allow flexibility with the “rules of art” when appropriate. If the session is about drawing a historic structure in their community, but a participant wants to instead draw a river they played in when they were young, consider if it is feasible for the project plan to allow the participant to go their own direction. At all times possible you want to leave room for individuals to express their own identity, experiences, and views. This will make it more enriching for the individual participant and the group.



Culminating Events - To Perform or Not to Perform

As part of an artist residency with sequential learning, a culminating event is a great way for participants to share accomplishments with others. There are a variety of options, from a large-scale community event to a small exhibit. It could be as simple as inviting family and caregivers to the final session to experience the artwork or performance. The visitors can listen to elders’ stories about the art and learning journey, meet other participants and family members, and enjoy viewing the end result of the project together.

Culminating events can take place in a variety of accessible public spaces including a library, community center, art gallery, theatre, church, care facility, sponsor’s office space, restaurant, or at the host organization’s space. A video or story about the program or event could be broadcast on a local TV station, or shared on social media in place of an in-person event. Even publishing all the finished work online can be a type of culminating event.

Recent Lifelong Arts Indiana Programs

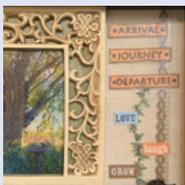
Visual Art



Textiles

In the course “Felted Anthology”, each participant creatively captured a memory or event from their life story, as a handmade felt wall hanging. Participants learned several enjoyable fiber art processes, including needle felting, wet felting, and techniques that form wool into 3D felted shapes. This course encouraged a new look at sharing life stories through fiber, empathy, and creative joy.

Artist: Paula Scott-Frantz



Collage

Through “Story in Three Dimensions: A Multi-Medium Collage Experience”, participants learned important steps to creating a work of art from concept to completion by exploring the principles of collage. Working alongside others, they explored ways to express themselves through imagery, learned to incorporate elements of design, and how to choose materials and engage in creative exchange, all of which can be applied to future visual art and storytelling endeavors.

Artist: Jennifer Weinart



Painting and Creative Writing

In the class “Life Portraits through Painting and Story,” participants brought in a photograph of themselves from a significant moment in their past. Over the course of 6 weeks, they were guided in painting that photo, and in writing a short story to share why that time was significant. Students learned skills such as paint mixing, brushwork, and other tips and tricks for painting a portrait, as well as tips for memoir writing, such as narrative structure, plot, pacing, and voice.

Artist: Angie Andriot



Creative Writing

The goal for the "This Is My Story" project was to enable and equip older adults with the necessary tools to write, publish, and share their stories. “This Is My Story” instructed participants on journaling and also taught older adults the skills necessary to write a story and how to share their story with family, friends, and the community at large. This residency also included instructions on publication, promotion, book sales, and signings.

Artist: Delores Thornton



Storytelling

The “Comfort and Joy” sessions allowed participants to create personal stories based on their favorite recipes while learning storytelling performance techniques. The final session of “Comfort and Joy” showcased the participants’ stories and prepared recipes.

Artist: Portia Jackson



Filmmaking

The “Silver Screen Filmmakers Club” met in person on a weekly basis for six Saturdays. Members learned how to shoot short documentary films on their phones and work as production teams. Additionally, participants learned a brief history of filmmaking, how to use editing software, and how to decide which online platform is the best fit for their film.

Artist: Jessica Renslow



Theatre

Acting



The “POCA Power” project guided participants, who ranged in age from 68 - 92, through the rigors and joy of performing. The project mantra was: Start where you are, Use what you have, Do what you can...and laugh as much as you can along the way. The sessions involved strength training, movement for the actor, breathing exercises, and memory skills. The project informed participants about performing and producing a theatre production.

Artist: Sandra Gay

Playwriting



“The Second Act Project” taught participants the art of playwriting by helping them develop their own 5-10 minute plays. The workshops were conducted by two award-winning authors/playwrights.

Artists: Lillie Barnett Evans and Crystal V. Rhodes

Dance

Tap



“Golden Groovers” focused on fostering physical activity, creativity, and community engagement through movement. Over multiple sessions, participants gradually developed their dance skills while exploring various styles and techniques in a supportive environment. This programming was structured to meet all ability levels so that all experienced the joy and benefits of dance.

Artist: Jill Mires

Modern



Fort Wayne Dance Collective worked with the YMCA to provide 8 week dance sessions designed specifically for adults ages 55 and up. Each dance session focused on creating a welcoming and fun environment where participants learned a variety of basic dance steps in different styles, while having input on music selection, and the chance to work as a group to create movement inspired by their lives.

Artist: Fort Wayne Dance Collective



Music

Instrumental

The “Rhythm of Life” program introduced the elements of drumming, rhythm, and music to older adults in the Boone County Public Library. Over six enriching sessions, older adults delved into the world of percussion, learning various drumming techniques and rhythms from diverse cultures. Through this shared musical journey, participants not only developed their artistic skills but also forged meaningful connections with their peers, promoting social engagement and well-being. The program culminated in a grand drum circle event where participants showcased their newfound rhythmic talents and celebrated the joy of making music together.

Artist: Elijah Stephen



Vocal

Through communal singing, older adult singers saw improved well-being in areas of their lives such as their cognitive function and memory, respiratory and heart health, human connection and socialization, and musicianship skills. By taking the steps to prepare music and a performance, participants addressed these multiple areas and health needs to have a successful culminating performance.

Artist: Heartland Sings

These are only a few of the project topics and art types in the creative aging universe. We encourage you to look to your own community to find similarly inspiring artists.



Lifelong Arts
Returning Artists

CASE STUDY

Silver Screen Filmmakers Club

Taking Advantage of Available Resources to Plan for a Filmmaking Class.

Mary Ardery

Silver Screen Filmmakers Club sounded like an ambitious project—teaching a group of older adults how to make and edit documentaries on their phones—but multimedia teaching artists Gretchen Sipp and Jessica Renslow were up to the challenge. Because both women were already affiliated with the Volunteer Office for Community Accessibility, Resource, and Training (VOCART) in Gary, IN, they were familiar with the needs of their community and, specifically, the interests of the older adult population.

Silver Screen Filmmakers Club was designed as a hybrid class. Over the course of sixteen weeks, participants met for four in-person sessions, four live virtual sessions, four asynchronous sessions, and four office hours with the teaching artists. Each week focused on a different technical aspect of the filmmaking process. There was also an in-person showcase at the end of the program. Participants shared their documentaries and discussed their work in front of a “live studio audience.”

To host the in-person sessions, VOCART partnered with Indiana University Northwest’s Center for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE). CURE provided a computer lab—free of charge—for the class to meet. CURE also provided a tablet on loan for participants who didn’t have their own personal device. Rental fees could have eaten up a large portion of the budget, but with this in-kind donation of a meeting space, Gretchen and Jessica were able to allocate more money toward their time as teaching artists as well as toward technology expenses.



Silver Screen Filmmakers Club (Summer/Fall 2024 Cohort Showcase)

For a hybrid filmmaking class, they needed to budget for a variety of software memberships. They built a website to promote the class and used a separate Learning Management System (LMS) to host instructional materials. Gretchen and Jessica utilized their professional connections to find a deal for the LMS. When considering which software to use for film editing, they opted for the free service, Canva. While Canva's permissions changed during the course, causing confusion and frustration, in the end, it was still worth it because participants could continue to use Canva even after the program finished.

People don't often expect older adults and digital arts to go together, but there was so much interest in Silver Screen Filmmakers' Club that Gretchen and Jessica accepted more participants than they'd originally planned to

accommodate—and still, they had a waitlist. When asked to give advice to other organizations that want to plan arts programs for older adults, Jessica said, “Don't let preconceived notions tell you not to do something.”

Jessica will be running the class again, in a slightly abbreviated format. As she revises the course design, she will cut some of the hyper-specialized technical topics and, instead, allocate more one-on-one time with participants who want to take their work to the next level. Some of the continuing participants even plan to enter their documentaries into film festivals.

Silver Screen Filmmakers Club (Summer/Fall 2024 Cohort Showcase)



PRO-TIP – Don't Reinvent the Wheel

There are a lot of resources out there if you are strategic about where to look and who to ask. Using Canva's free documentary templates, beginner filmmakers don't have to build their projects from scratch. Similarly, partnering with Indiana University Northwest's Center for Urban and Regional Excellence was like using a template for a meeting space.

It's important to look around and see who you can partner with in your community. Jessica also made sure to emphasize that, when the time comes, you should be a good community member and pay it back.

Planning a Practical Budget

What You Need to Know About the Costs of Artist-led Sessions

Budgets for arts workshops, performances, and residencies vary based on many factors including:

- The art discipline (some arts practices utilize more materials, some utilize more time, some require hauling large items or bringing an assistant/apprentice/accompanist. All of these factor into an artist's proposed budget.)
- The Artist's experience level
- The number of participants
- The available space and materials onsite
- The travel required
- The length of the session

Budget Conversations

Generally speaking, artists know what materials they want to use to get the best results for the participants and should be able to bring a clear budget to you as the site leader/project designer. Here are some things you could discuss with an artist that can change a budget.

- Can the site order any of the materials on their tax exempt account? Or are the materials only available at specialized art stores?
- Does the site have reliable access to blank paper, pens, pencils, or other office materials that the artist could utilize without charge?
- Does the site have volunteers or extra staff that could help as extra hands for preparation?
- Does the site want to have a culminating experience for the work? (a final performance or exhibition). If so, what help can the site provide and what space will that take place in?



Third Dimension
Worship Church,
Community Mural
Project

Example Budgets

#1 - MULTI-SESSION RESIDENCY

Project Art Discipline: Poetry Writing

Big Idea: Through reading and writing poetry, participants will see value and beauty in their daily lives and build community by sharing their work with others. The course is designed to begin with introductory poetic techniques and build to more advanced elements of craft, in addition to writing more personally about life stories.

What you need to know about the costs of artist-led sessions

Stats:

- 6 hands-on art-making sessions, each 90 minutes
- 1 culminating event to exhibit the writing, 2 hours

Key elements:

- This budget is based on hiring a professional teaching artist to lead a multi-workshop experience.
- This budget only has two main categories: “Artist Fee” and “Materials”. They have helpfully provided sub-items to show the breakdown of the two main areas.
- The site was a library and had free space to use.
- This was a ‘beginner’ artist that is early-career, so they are on the lower end of the pay scale.
- This project was on the small to medium size of a creative aging experience.
- This project was intended for beginner writers.

ARTIST EXPENSES - Poetry Writing Residency Example These are things the artist will provide	Cash Expenses
Artist Fee Total (the four lines below are the elements that make the total)	\$780
-Curriculum Development Time	\$115
-Workshop Teaching Time, Six (1.5 hour) Sessions @ \$40/hr	\$360
-Culminating Event Time (2 hours) @ \$40/hr	\$80

-Weekly Prep, (1.5 hours) @\$25/hr	\$225
Materials Total	\$220
-Printing of Weekly Poem Packets	\$50
-15 Wide-Ruled Notebooks	\$150
-Pens and Pencils With Varying Colors, Grip Sizes, and Diameter	\$20
Project Total Cash Expense:	\$1,000

SITE EXPENSES - Poetry Writing Residency Example <i>These are things the site will provide</i>	Value of In-kind (not cash expenses)
Marketing & Registration	\$50
Supplies Already on Site	\$100
Studio Space & Culminating Event Space	\$300
Total Value of In-Kind:	\$450

What is an “In-kind” expense: In-kind is putting a number value to the things offered without charge or exchanged without cash being used. This often includes volunteer hours, use of space and tables/ chairs, materials already onsite like scissors or paper, or staff time not accounted for in cash.

Income - Poetry Writing Residency Example <i>How this example covers the cost</i>	
• In this example, the artist received a grant for \$1,000 to cover their expenses. The site paid nothing, only provided the free space and assisted with marketing as “in-kind”	
Artist Grant	\$1,000
Center Budget - Wellness/Activity	\$0
Total Cash Income	\$1,000

#2 - MULTI-DAY RESIDENCY

Project Art Discipline: Steel Drum Music

Big Idea: Participants will get hands-on with real steel drums, make music, and play simple songs together as an ensemble.

Stats:

5 sessions, each 60 minutes

Key elements:

- This budget is based on hiring a professional teaching artist to lead a multi-workshop experience.
- Visual arts projects will often be more costly on materials.
- The artist in this budget is a mid-career artist.
- This project had no culminating event.
- For visual arts projects, you may need access to a sink for clean up.
- This project was on the small to medium size of a creative aging experience.
- This project was intended for beginners.
- In this example, the artist received a grant for \$1,000 to cover their expenses. The site paid nothing, only provided the free space and assisted with marketing as “in-kind.”

ARTIST EXPENSES - Steel Drum Residency Example <i>These are things the artist will provide</i>	Cash Expenses
Artist Fee Total (the four lines below are the elements that make the total)	\$850
-Customized Curriculum, Planning Time - 3 hrs @ \$35/hr	\$105
-Workshop Teaching Time, Five (45 min) Sessions @ \$95/Session	\$475
-Packing of Instruments Daily	\$70
-Transportation of Instruments	\$200
Materials Total (artist supplies specialty materials sourced from local supplier)	\$150

Materials (wood and rubber for sticks (mallets), notecards, and paper)	\$150
Documentation	\$100
Photographer For One Session	\$100
Marketing	\$100
Flyers For Final Event	\$100
Site Coordination (staff needed on-site for all sessions, paid to center)	\$225
Project Total Cash Expense:	\$1,425

SITE EXPENSES - Steel Drum Residency Example <i>These are things the site will provide</i>	Value of In-kind (not cash expenses)
Marketing & Registration	\$0
Supplies Already on Site	\$0
Studio Space & Culminating Event Space	\$300
Volunteer to Help Unload & Setup Instruments	\$150
Total Value of In-Kind:	\$450

Income - Steel Drum Residency Example <i>How this example covers the cost</i>	
Community Foundation Grant	\$1,425
Center Budget - Wellness/Activity	\$0
Total Cash Income	\$1,425

#3 - SINGLE-DAY PERFORMANCE

Project Art Discipline: Ballet Folklórico Dancing

Big Idea: A performance of a unique dancing style to expose audience members to new music and dance as well as provoke interest in a longer dance residency program upcoming.

Stats:

- 1 session, 50 minutes

Key elements:

- This budget is based on hiring a local dance ensemble with five dancers and five musicians in the ensemble in full costume on a stage or a large open space.
- This is for an audience to watch only.
- This is a good early step to entice people to sign up for longer residency experiences in which one of the dancers teaches the choreography over several sessions.

ARTIST EXPENSES - Ballet Folklórico Performance Example <i>These are things the artist will provide</i>	Cash Expenses
Artist Fee Total (the four lines below are the elements that make the total)	\$2,050
-Performance Fee for ensemble	\$1,800
-Travel Costs	\$250
Materials Total (artist supplies specialty materials sourced from local supplier)	\$200
Sound System Provided by Ensemble	\$200
Documentation	\$0
No Photographer Needed	\$0
Marketing	\$0
None by Ensemble	\$0
Project Total Cash Expense:	\$2,250

SITE EXPENSES - Ballet Folklórico Performance Example <i>These are things the site will provide</i>	Value of In-kind (not cash expenses)
Marketing & Registration - Newsletters, Social Media, Posters	\$100
Supplies Already on Site	\$0
Stage/Large Open Room for Performance	\$500
Volunteers to Help Unload & Setup	\$150
Total Value of In-Kind:	\$750

Income - Ballet Folklórico Performance Example <i>How this example covers the cost</i>	
Community Foundation Grant	\$500
Center Budget - Wellness/Activity	\$1,250
Sponsorship From Local Bank	\$500
Total Cash Income	\$2,250



How to Fund a Project

Whether a site facilitator or a teaching artist, you may be wondering how to fund a creative aging program. There are a range of options.

1. **Facility Budget** - Some nonprofits, elder care facilities, and community centers have a designated quality-of-life or wellness budget to support activities, programs, and services. An artist or a site facilitator may want to inquire about these when they start the conversation about hosting a creative aging program.
2. **Grants** - Community foundations and other charitable organizations may offer grants for creative aging arts programming. There are also state and local arts agencies that may have grants or be able to guide you on where to find available funding. Be sure you understand the timeline for applying and receiving funds and the limitations on the funding's use before pursuing a grant.
3. **Corporate Sponsorship** - Creative aging programs improve the quality of life of not just individual elders but the whole community. Like sponsoring Little League or Scouts, a corporate sponsor may view the investment in creative aging arts programming as an investment in their community.
4. **Participant Fees** - Across the United States, participants regularly pay for clogging classes, quilt club dues, and music lessons. You want to make sure you don't have a participant fee that creates a barrier for older adults, who may have limited income, but some participant investment in the program is a good way to ensure buy-in from attendees.
 - a. If your program is collecting participant fees you might consider using an 80/20 split model. The teaching artists get 80% of the proceeds, and the host site might take up to 20% to cover room rental, facility needs, advertising, and registration.
 - b. Materials should be calculated separately from instructional fees, even if they are included in the advertised price. If registration costs \$125, and the materials for the course cost \$25, then the teaching artist should get \$80. If the teaching artist provides the materials, the total amount they would receive would be \$105 out of the \$125 registration fee.
5. **The Combo Platter** - Almost all creative aging programs use some combination of these income streams. You might get a grant to cover materials, but it doesn't allow payment to the artist. The participants' fees help cover some of the artist fee, but it's not quite enough. The facility then provides the last few hundred dollars to ensure all costs are covered.





Still Life Drawing Class - Perceptions Yoga, Mindfulness & Art, "Still Life Drawing Class"



Westminster Village, "Lest We Forget: Voices of American Women Yesterday and Today"



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists



CASE STUDY

Art Within Reach

Increasing Accessibility to Creative Aging Programs Can Benefit Community Organizations as Well as Participants.

Mary Ardery

A 2022 county needs assessment showed that Porter County has a larger demographic of older adults compared to the population of Indiana at-large. Maybe that is why, when the press release went out about “Art Within Reach,” the phone at Art Barn School of Art started ringing nonstop. Everyone wanted to register for the eight-week program designed to teach the fundamentals of drawing and



Art Barn School of Art- Valparaiso, IN, Golden Years Arts Club

watercolor to the older adult population.

Part of Art Barn’s mission is to fill art gaps in the community and to reach audiences who have less access to the arts. The “Art Within Reach” program was offered three separate times, and the first session was hosted at the Portage Branch of the Porter County Public Library. This location was an intentional choice to bring more arts education to an area that is further from the county seat of Valparaiso and therefore tends to receive less programming.

When Art Barn approached the library, it took a little convincing to convey the importance of a sequential class as opposed to the drop-in model that many libraries utilize. Creative aging is not just about making art but making art with people. Ideally, this means coming into class and seeing the same people every week. For the 65+ population, often retired and sometimes living alone, social connection can require more intention than in previous phases of life. Taking a sequentially designed art program is one way for older adults to meet their social needs. The library agreed to pilot the program and see how it would work for their patrons.

In addition to hosting the session at a well-known community site like a library, transportation access was another integral part of Art Barn’s program design. Compared to other demographics, older



Lifelong Arts Indiana - Art Barn

adults can have less access to transportation, which creates a barrier to consistent attendance. To remove this barrier, Art Barn partnered with Porter County Aging and Community Services (PCACS). PCACS provided a free bus service for participants who needed transportation to the classes, and in general, PCACS offers door-to-door transportation at the low cost of \$1 per ride,

In a mutually beneficial relationship, this also helped Art Barn long-term. Art Barn is located on 69 acres of land outside the city limits. It is not on a public transit route. With PCACS, older adults can enjoy easier access to Art Barn’s location, and in turn, Art Barn receives higher registration numbers that help sustain their programs. In the end, Art Barn became a connector, advertising PCACS services to participants and thereby increasing accessibility to all community offerings.

Amy Navaurdaskas, Art Barn’s Executive Director, and Melissa Washburn, Program Director, both believe in the value of not just providing programs for people but with people. Know the population you are trying to reach and ask them for feedback. Leslie Cefali started out as an “Art Within Reach” student and has now become a teaching artist herself. Leslie’s session is the third and final session to be funded by the Lifelong Arts grant. In a continued partnership, it is hosted at the library’s Portage Branch. After witnessing the benefit of a sequential class design, the library was on board to offer it again. Throughout Porter County, organizations are partnering to achieve the shared goal—and many benefits—of creative aging.

PRO-TIP – Communicate Expectations and Give Reminders

A library is an ideal location to host a program for older adults, but if most of the library’s programming has a casual or drop-in atmosphere, that is what patrons will expect. If you’re looking for consistent weekly attendance, Art Barn recommends phone-call reminders. Staff at Art Barn made calls before the initial class of each session. They reminded participants about the start date and answered questions as needed. When they occasionally learned that a registered participant could no longer come, someone from the waitlist could then be notified in a timely manner to attend instead.



Accessibility, Accommodations, and Common Modifications

We often don't recognize the barriers to the programs and services created for older adults. Embarking on creative aging services requires attention to the accessibility needs of this unique audience. Not only will it increase participation, it will also lead to more meaningful experiences for participants. Some adaptations can be identified by your staff based on their knowledge of the participants that frequently engage with your organization. Other adaptations will need to be developed based on a case-by-case basis tailored to the participants' individual needs. With a clear understanding of the participants' needs, artists can modify activities, materials, and tools to create the best outcome. For example, a dance instructor may modify activities to include wheelchair movement or a painting instructor might provide a different paint brush handle that is more suitable for people who experience difficulty with arthritis or fine motor control.

While it's true that older adults often require accommodations, we are cautious not to assume someone is unable to do something before they tell us. The best way to avoid assuming incorrectly is to approach planning your program and space with universal design.

Universal design is a philosophy that designers and inventors use to create products and environments that are accessible to all no matter their age or ability. There is extensive information online about the details of universal design, but here are a few of the most applicable principles to consider.

- 1 Provide choice so the participants can select the best approach for them.
- 2 Eliminate unnecessary complexities in instructions and technique.
- 3 Consider adaptive devices such as sound and sight supports from the start.

All decisions about accommodations and modifications in a creative aging program should be made in consultation with participants. Participants will know what works best for them. Something as simple as adding more time, changing workspace, or improving lighting might be all that it takes to create an inclusive experience.

Thinking Through Your Site's Accessibility

Walking through this checklist will help you identify some common barriers.

What is the distance from the parking lot to the entrance?

Is there a ramp available in the drop off area and entrance?

Is there a route that avoids stairs?

Can you remove trip hazards such as small rugs or boxes on the floor?

Is there an easy and clear walking route between the program room and restroom?

Can you provide multiple seating options? i.e. chairs with and without arms, chairs at varying heights, chairs that are padded and non-padded.

Is there large print signage and materials/instructions?

Are there ways to vary the lighting? i.e. more light to see details and text, or dimmer for those who are light-sensitive.

Can you enhance the sound quality? i.e. reduce echoing, sound bleed from other spaces, background noise, or need for amplification.

Do you have adaptive tools such as a foam grip for a paint brush or props for seated elders to use during standing theatre sessions?

Ways to Improve Your Accessibility:

- Determine participant accessibility issues early in planning
 - Ask via a sign up or registration form: “Do you have any accessibility or mobility issues that you would like us to know?” “Do you need any type of assistance to participate in this program?”
- Consult with elder care experts to determine safe solutions and adaptations if needed.
- Engage specifically trained volunteers if the need exists.
- Share any relevant information about participant accessibility with the teaching artist in advance. Artists are great at creatively adapting the movements and actions needed to create art.

While this is not a comprehensive list, being aware of and responsive to older adults’ accessibility issues will lead to successful art-making and participation. Some accessibility adjustments may not be evident until the program begins! Adaptability is essential.



Wise Up! Class

As You Have These Conversations, Consider The Role of Ageism

Treating older adults with respect is essential. Take some time to consider how you might avoid actions that reinforce ageism in your community.

Ageism is the discrimination and stigmatization of someone based on their age. Ageism is not just a problem for older adults; negative bias against young people based on age also happens. Ageism associated with later life is especially widespread and deceptive. Our attitudes toward age are cultivated over a lifetime, and some people retain their negative feelings about aging even as they become older adults. This can conjure a range of negative feelings including insecurity. The arts can help older adults resist ageism, providing them with a positive self-image.

Ageism Self-Reflection Checklist:

- When I think about aging I am excited at the possibilities.
- I don't want my age to limit my abilities or impact how someone perceives me.
- No matter my age, the words others use to describe me should be positive.
- I appreciate when people treat me as capable and with respect.
- If there is ever a time in which my body isn't as nimble, I hope people don't count me out.
- I intend to always be curious and keep learning, no matter my age.

The questions above are a gentle reminder to examine if we're holding any biases against our own aging or the aging of others. Working to reprogram our brains against long-held biases takes time and patience. When you're designing a creative aging program, ask yourself questions about how your view on aging is influencing the program design. With our attention on our words and actions, we can push back against ageism and create programs that enhance joy and improve lives.



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists



Botanical Prints on Fabrics



Laura Krentz Art+ Education

Success Might Look Different Than You Think

As you design your program, you will want to consider what your end goal will be. What will “success” look like when all is said and done?

Often in arts learning experiences, having a ‘perfect’ art piece/performance/experience is the end goal. Something at a professional level that shows the world what you’ve accomplished.

With creative aging, success looks much different.

We’re looking at things like:

- How many new people entered our space that otherwise may not have?
- How many people made a new friend?
- How many people tried something new?
- How many people have a newfound confidence at the end of the session?
- How many people are continuing to try new things when they go home?

Think about what success metrics most align with what you would like to see and design your program to fit that goal.



Creative Expression with Watercolor and Mixed Media



Advice from Libraries, Community Sites, and Artists Themselves

After completing a Lifelong Arts Residency, site leaders, artists and participants were asked to share their advice of what they learned and why they would do it again. We found that most of the general feedback fell into four broad categories: Recruiting/Attendance, Timing/Length of sessions, Materials/Space, and Wanting More. Specific tips are listed below.

Advice on Recruiting/Attendance

“While we had many new faces attend, there were multiple scheduling conflicts with participants. Many of them were unavoidable. I think if we had been able to have it during the winter months when many are searching for something to do, we might have had better attendance.”

“If we were to do this again, we would also be more clear about attendance expectations, now knowing that a waitlist may be involved. By the third week we were down to half of the class capacity, but it was too late in the series to add new participants since it was a progressive workshop, building over six weeks.”

“Sometimes text or phone reminders were necessary for a couple participants...find out who needs those!”

“Invite community officials to the reception to hear the participants speak about how healthy this is for them to have things like this to do!”

“I think next time I would make sure to set up any visits by staff, admin, or donors who might have a stake in sustaining the program.”

“I might consider narrowing the focus (i.e. make it just for beginners or for advanced writers or a specific topic like marketing). If it's too narrow, people might not attend who could benefit from the class. This class was broad for that reason--to find out what people most wanted. Next time, I might make it a class for beginners (based on the needs of the majority of people who attended).”

“If I were to do the project again (which I would love!)I would take more initiative in promoting my classes. I realize now I should have done more to advertise the class publicly. Perhaps enrollments were down due to the recent pandemic. However, I do think the small class size made the women feel a lot more comfortable sharing their writing, which was a real benefit.”



Lifelong Arts Fort Wayne
Training 2023



Advice on Timing/Length of Sessions

“Our organization would benefit from taking more time with our partners at the initial introductory meeting to troubleshoot potential obstacles with their specific population of residents. For example, better understanding their calendar of events to ensure there were no/fewer conflicts during our scheduled class times, or obtaining a bit of background information on any particular participant's needs ahead of the first day of class.”

“I look forward to doing this again, and some things I would update are:

- Have extra items available to paint just in case someone gets done early with what we are painting during a particular session.
- Dedicate more time to talk/reflect about their art during our sessions.
- Go bigger for the final art show with discussing ways to display their art, naming their art pieces, and creating an artist bio.
- Bring music into our sessions; something to be quietly playing to give the space a bit homier feel, especially since it was a large room for our group.
- Include the additional time spent for clean-up, room set-up, and documentation in my total hours of work.”

Advice on Materials/Space

“This group was more responsive to pictures than to text. I now know to keep this in mind with how materials are laid out and presented. And when text is used, I learned that font size is far more important than keeping standard margins. It was also good to have the alternative to respond to questions by drawing pictures of the answers rather than just having the option to answer with a written statement. I learned to incorporate this option more consistently throughout the materials I provide.”

“We’ve also learned that having [arts] instructors trained specifically to work with older adults makes a significant difference in maintaining engagement and helping participants feel confident and successful. Moving forward, all instructors will either be trained or supported in understanding the best practices for creative aging instruction.”

“I was very happy with how it went. I think I would ask the artist to bring some more examples of complete projects, which was the only feedback for improvement I received from participants. I do see where that could influence the participants, however. I may consider extending the time from two hours to a three hour window. I think the extra time for socializing would have been enjoyed by participants.”



Advice on Wanting More

“The Creative Aging project had such an impact on participants, and we're incredibly proud of the results. The main objectives of the project to build community, develop skills, and allow for self-expression, were met. The only change we'd consider is offering more workshops to accommodate the demand. We gave surveys at the end of the workshop and discovered that participants wanted more opportunities to meet with their peers and explore art specifically.”

“If I were to do this again, I would have prepared ahead for the possibility that everyone would want to continue beyond the 5 weeks. They all would very much like to continue as soon as possible, so now I am trying to figure out the logistics to keep going before they lose that creative momentum.”

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Lifelong Arts Returning Artists

It's the Journey, Not the Destination

The phrase “Process over Product.” is the equivalent of the common phrase “It’s the journey, not the destination”. “Process over Product” means that the goal of the art experience isn’t to become the next Van Gogh or leave the session with a sculpture that looks like the Venus de Milo. The learning and the experience is the goal. This is even more true with community creative aging classes since the research shows there are significant benefits just from showing up and meeting other people in the art sessions. If a person is truly looking to gain great skills in an art form, conservatories, private lessons, and art centers are all available for deeper arts learning. For most of the creative aging work in the United States, fine arts accomplishments are not the endgame. The process of growth, exploration, creative thinking, and the challenge of trying new things is what is going to be the most impactful.

One of the older adult participants in a Lifelong Arts Indiana program once reflected on their participation in the session with this quote, “Art as a process is good for mental health. When you are in the studio, you are able to let what is happening to you go and just love the process.”



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists

Lifelong Arts Returning Artists

CASE STUDY

Dancing Through the Ages

Building Meaningful Connections Through Memory-Sharing and Dance.

Mary Ardery

“Once they realized I wasn’t going to be making them tango in their lunchroom, more people were wanting to participate,” said Gloria Minnich, a professional dance and drama teacher who has been teaching diverse populations throughout her career. Gloria facilitated two separate groups of “Dancing Through the Ages” in partnership with the Fort Wayne organization Aging and In-Home Services of Northeast Indiana (AIHS). By the end of eight weeks, both cohorts had requested to repeat the program—and their enthusiasm spread throughout the AIHS community.

“Dancing Through the Ages” was a movement class designed specifically for older adults to improve their physical and mental health. AIHS’s congregate meal site offers lunch and a place to connect for older adults, and AIHS knew that Gloria’s class would complement their other health and nutrition programming for this community.

At first, potential participants had been hesitant to join a dance class: would they be able to keep up physically? Would it be too much? Gloria decided the best way to address this was to connect over a



Fort Wayne Dance Collective



warm meal. She arranged for a pre-class visit to the congregate meal site for lunch. Gloria got to know the participants and explained what the class would entail- mainly daily warm-ups and using props like scarves while dancing from a seated position. The outreach worked, and Gloria continued arriving early before each session. Over lunch, she spent time with participants and gauged how everyone was feeling that day.

The idea behind “Dancing Through the Ages” was to reminisce on a different phase of life each session and then to choreograph a final dance based on participants’ memories. One participant remembered loving to roller-skate as a child, so the class took that roller-skating motion and choreographed it into a movement. It was this act of creating together—not simply memorizing dance moves—that made the experience especially meaningful. Or, in the words of Gloria, “what made it magical.”

Enthusiasm for the program was contagious, even reaching AIHS clients who weren’t active participants in the congregate dining sites. “Word had gotten out,” joked Megan Clouse, AIHS’s Vice President of Communications and Resource Development, who reported a marked increase in interactions outside of mealtimes.

Because the class was based on the sharing of memories, it organically led to conversation. One day a woman’s story sparked someone else’s memory, and one of them went to grab a scrapbook. The two women flipped through it together, talking and laughing long after the class was over. Friendships blossomed, and people began making plans to go to other AIHS activities together, too.

For each final performance, Gloria created a montage of songs that includes voiceovers from the participants. “In the beginning,” a voice says as participants dance with scarves in a motion that mimics rocking a baby. “In the beginning,” each voice repeats. The last phrase is, “My life.” It echoes. “My life, my life, my life.” One of the most powerful components of “Dancing Through the Ages” was that participants created something original during the program—something tied to their unique lived experiences, down to the very embodiment of their voices.

PRO-TIP – Prepare For Success

As other organizations consider how to facilitate a meaningful experience, it’s important to build in time for the teaching artist to get to know the participants and their environment. For many participants, this dance class was outside of their comfort zone. They eased into it by meeting Gloria before the class even started so they could learn about the facilitator and what would be asked of them. By the end of the sessions, one participant pitched “Dancing Through the Holidays” as a theme for a future class. What began as one teaching artist encouraging people to try something new, ended as a group of friends brainstorming ideas for the next program.



The Impacts Speak for Themselves - Quotes From Participants

We have found the impacts people mention in their reflections fall into three categories: participants connect with others and find a solution to isolation, participants find new confidence in their artwork, and participants find joy in hobbies from past years.

“Our art program for older adults has been a transformative experience for all participants, fostering creativity and personal growth through the exploration of diverse forms of self-expression. Many participants discovered hidden talents, gained confidence, and found joy in connecting with others through art. This program not only enriched their lives but also strengthened our community, as their artwork inspired conversations, brought neighbors together, and celebrated the unique stories and perspectives of our older adults. It has been a meaningful step toward building a more inclusive and vibrant community.”

On Combating Isolation

“Sharing their enjoyment of art led the participants to interact and discuss so many topics and get to know one another on a personal level that wouldn't have been possible otherwise. Some of those participants were living somewhat isolated lives and being a part of a group really allowed them to blossom.”

“The highlights of [the program] were watching the participants interact with one another. At first the participants were isolated in small groups of two or three but by the 3rd session they were beginning to share stories and encourage one another. The longer we worked together the more engaging and social they became. By the end of the project, we had shared stories and memories, encouraged and helped each other create art, and formed some lasting friendships.”

“They stayed and chatted with each other for nearly an hour after the end of class; it was clear that our time together has brought a sense of both comradery and accomplishment.”

“The bond that was formed between the new members and regular members was priceless and probably could have never happened in such a short time otherwise.”

“In both series, it was wonderful to see friendships form. The patrons commented multiple times on how it was important and helpful for them to be participating in a program with other adults who are in similar stages in life.”



On New Confidence Found

“Our small, rural community has no senior center for the aging population to socialize, participate in physical activities, or take classes. By becoming a participant of the Lifelong Arts Indiana, the Remington Carpenter Township Public Library was able to provide art classes and a socialization opportunity to the aging population of Remington....I watched the participants’ confidence grow as they worked on their art projects and developed new friendships.”

“The story of one of our participants, Wendy, shows how this Lifelong Arts Indiana program was impactful on our community. When the class was in the sign-up stages, we reached out to Wendy. Wendy fit all the boxes for our target audience. Wendy was an older adult whose self-confidence, loneliness, and grieving process was holding her back. When we spoke to her about the class, she initially turned us down because she thought was not talented and she didn’t think she could do it. We expressed that the values of the class were to embrace new experiences, create new friendships, and find new and positive ways to experience the world and cope with the things that she was struggling with. Based on these aspects, she decided to give the program a try. As the drawing sessions progressed, Wendy was showing happiness and sharing how much she looked forward to the class each week. Our favorite thing was when she stated she couldn’t believe it – she could draw! – and she was looking forward to trying it on her own.”

“The arts are not just for the young. They are for everybody. It is a great thing for seniors to have this program. We are often overlooked.”

On Re-igniting Passions and Hobbies From The Past

“One program participant said she would frequently draw and paint as a child and teen, then college and career took over and she hadn’t drawn or painted in two decades or more. This program inspired her to pick up a brush again.”

“During the dance class, participants were asked about their motivation for attending. A common response was a long-standing desire to attend dance classes since childhood, but financial constraints had hindered their dreams. As the grant applicator, planner, and executor of the programs, I had the privilege of witnessing their childhood dreams come true. Seeing their smiling faces every day made my heart full. By the end of the sessions, everyone had formed strong friendships, exchanging phone numbers and organizing social gatherings. These participants have discovered a sense of community, which significantly benefits the mental health of older adults.”





4. Implement Your Program

You've planned down to the last detail. You've got an awesome team in place and a great artist to lead your program. The next step is to focus on recruiting participants and doing outreach.

Outreach and Promotion

A few considerations for outreach and promotion:

- Is it for an external or internal audience?
 - Internal: Are you planning to have participants from a group of people already attending programs or events with your organization?
 - External: Are you trying to bring in brand new people from outside your organization?
- For internal groups - you may find word-of-mouth and personal invitations to be highly effective.
- For external groups - you may need to think ahead and get your program info out well in advance of program dates. A newspaper or other local media might need some time to run the information publicly.
- It may seem obvious, but double check your posters and program descriptions to make sure you're including the date, time, location, and a contact person very clearly.
- Share if the program is for all skill-levels or if special skills or experience is needed.
- If you're adding photos to the promotional pieces, ask the artist to supply relevant pictures and for permission to use them.
- In your advertising, include information about your accessibility features and accommodations. Accessibility can be a determining factor for some older adults. This could include accessible parking, ramp or no-stair access, elevators, large print availability, sound reinforcement availability.
- Ask the artist to review promotional pieces for clarity and accuracy.
- If you have a funder, remember to include their logo or other recognition language as provided.



- If you're doing a registration process, make sure you have a clear open and close date for the registration.
- If you're charging a fee for the program, have a clear policy on refunds and cut off dates.
- You may find it useful to call and follow up with registered participants a week or so before the program to confirm their availability and interest. If they no longer can attend you can invite someone off the waitlist. This also prevents a large number of no-shows which can be even more prevalent if the program is free.



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists



Lifelong Arts Returning Artists





The Ultimate Checklist for Hosting an Artist

Below are some logistics to help you host an artist experience, whether it is a residency or a one day demonstration or performance.

Single-Session Demonstration or Workshop

- Prepare room with clean tables, chairs as requested by artist (request set up diagram if needed)
- Ensure there is enough room for artist performance or demonstration (e.g. 6' x 8' clear space)
- Provide appropriate seating for the artist – some artforms require special seating. e.g. musicians like armless chairs, stools, flat bottom not folding chair, etc.
- Provide appropriate seating for the audience – ask artist how far away they need to be from audience members or what configuration the room should be set up in
- Check that adequate lighting is available for activity
- If electricity is needed, provide a power source (extension cord, power strip, etc.)
- If outdoors, obtain appropriate cover to protect everyone from sun or weather (pop up canopy with weights, outdoor porch, etc.)
- Ensure clear signage on front door and inside building as needed to guide the artist to the right place
- Make sure the artist knows the right door to enter and where to park
- Provide an equipment cart at entrance if requested
- Select one staff person as the host site representative to greet the artist, address any issues or last-minute needs, or if an emergency occurs
- Introduce the artist to the audience at beginning and thank the artist and sponsors at the end
- Create and give out simple participant surveys or observe the reactions from participants to note for assessments



Lifelong Arts Indiana - Art Barn

Residency or Series of Workshops

In addition to the single-session checklist above, additional logistics are needed for multi-session residencies.

- Provide appropriate seating for participants— ask the artist what type of seating is best if they are involved in making art. e.g seats around tables or in circle.
- Provide access to water, and possibly a sink, if needed. There might also be a need for paper towels and cleaning supplies.
- Create a registration or check in space.
- Provide name tags for participants if appropriate.
- Provide storage for artist or participant supplies or artwork between sessions.
- Assist participants if needed at the end of the session with putting items in storage, putting home projects in bags to make it home, etc.
- Make note of any special moments experienced or things to modify for next session.

It's All Underway. Now Watch The Magic Unfold.

You did it. You made a plan, recruited participants, and have officially kicked off your first session. This is the part where you hang back and watch the magic happen. The implementation stage is mostly about cleaning up spills when they happen and adding extra chairs to the room when more people show up than you were expecting.

Enjoy this time as you watch your participants smile, open up to one another, and make new social connections.

5. Evaluate, Reflect, and Share Out

Now that your program is off the ground, remember to evaluate your efforts. Evaluation is the only way to know whether the program addresses your goals or not! Below we provide guidance on how and why you might evaluate your program, as well as what to do with this data once you have it. If you want to grow a successful creative aging program, we highly recommend evaluating, reflecting, and sharing your findings whenever you can.

Step 1: Decide 1-2 Main Goals for the Program in Addition to the Artmaking Goals

Example Social Engagement Outcomes:

- Participants will engage in increased conversation with peers.
- Participants will choose to attend more community events.
- Participants will spend more time outside of their room.

Example Mental Health Outcomes:

- Participants will demonstrate fewer indicators of loneliness.
- Participants will demonstrate fewer indicators of isolation.

Example Positive Engagement Outcomes:

- Participants will express higher feelings of accomplishment.
- Participants will express increased pride in their abilities.
- Participants will express an interest in continuing the art activity after instruction ends.



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Foundation

Step 2: Decide How You Might Measure Each Goal

Example Social Engagement Measurements:

- How many minutes do participants spend talking before or after the arts activity?
- How many times per week do participants engage in non-required activities?

Example Mental Health Measurements:

- How often do participants seem engaged?
- How often do participants express connectedness?

Step 3: Pick a Style of Evaluation

1 Written Survey

- Participant written feedback: You could ask participants to respond to a written survey after the project is over. They could self-describe how they feel about themselves.
- Pre/Post survey: You could measure growth in the participants and use a pre and a post survey.
 - Example: At the beginning, (pre-survey) 5 out of 10 participants said they felt confident in their arts skills. By the end (post-survey) 9 out of 10 participants said they felt confident in their arts skills.

2 Observation

- Staff or outside party observes the sessions and is able to write down what transformations they see take place. Examples include:
 - Anecdotes overheard, i.e. “Jill described a feeling of uncertainty of their abilities in the first session,” “Jill described excitement at progress in 4th session”
 - The number of times something happens, i.e. “peer conversations occurred spontaneously 3 times in the first session, and 10 times in the last session.”
- How many times per week do participants engage in non-required activities?



Step 4: Put it All Together

Write your survey or put together an observation rubric using your measures.

Survey questions example:

Pre/Post:

- How often do you talk to other older adults in your community?

Survey at the end only (multiple choice):

- Did this class introduce you to any new people with whom you felt connected?
A little / Somewhat / A Lot

Survey at the end only (long answer):

- Describe how this class impacted your feelings of connectedness in your community.

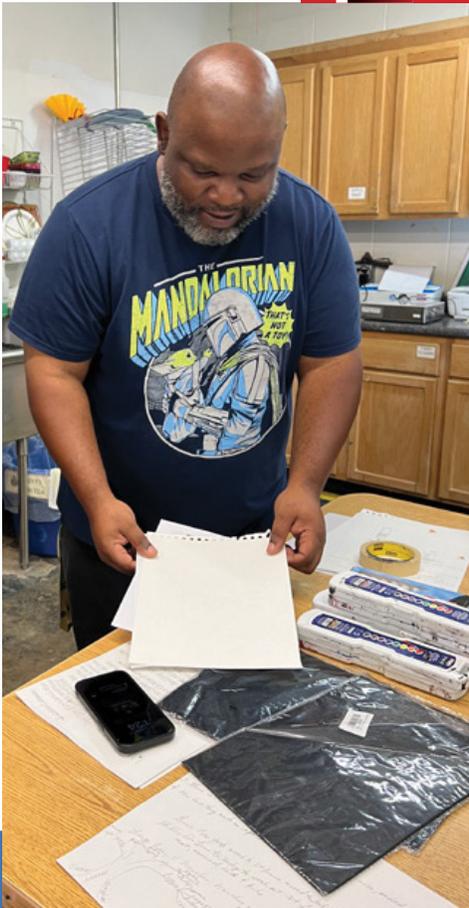
Observation Rubric Example:

JILL S. – 1st Session	Low – 2 pts	Med – 4 pts	High – 6 pts	Total
Positive	No Excitement	Some Excitement	High Excitement	4
Social Engagement	No Conversation	Some Conversation	Talking to Peers Often	6
				10





Lifelong Arts Indiana
- ArtMix



CASE STUDY

The Ukulele O.W.L.'s

A Light-Hearted Environment Makes it Fun to Learn Something New at Any Age.

Mary Ardery

The Brown County Public Library (BCPL) partnered with Kristin Thompson, a local music teacher and owner of Weed Patch Music, to offer “The Ukulele O.W.L.’s: beginning ukulele for Older, Wiser Learners.” Because Kristin had previously taught a youth class at the library, Tess Kean, BCPL’s Marketing and Program Coordinator, had seen the fun environment Kristin created. All the kids had been smiling and laughing. And indeed, the O.W.L.’s had fun, too. They met for a total of ten weeks that concluded with a public performance around Halloween. Together, they played and sang many songs—including the seasonally appropriate “Monster Mash”—but back during week one, the class started with the very basics.

It can be intimidating to learn a new instrument. Kristin believes it’s important to “take some of the mysticism out of it.” First, she introduces participants to the instrument as an object—its different parts, what it’s made of, how to tune it. The first song the class learned together was “Coconut” by Harry Nilsson. It’s a one-chord song, so from that standpoint, it’s practical to teach beginners. But perhaps more importantly, it’s a silly song. A little bit of laughter can go a long way in keeping people engaged and light-hearted as they learn something new.

It was helpful to have an instructor who is comfortable teaching a group with varying experience levels. While the class was geared toward beginners, it welcomed everyone. After a couple introductory classes, Kristin taught songs that had different versions to play: a stripped-down version and a more complicated version. Sometimes beginners would strum on a certain beat of each measure while the more

advanced participants would play the entire song. When the class practiced improvisational jamming together, some participants focused on strumming to keep time while others used a scale to build their own melody. People left the class having learned different things, and Kristin believes that’s the nature of learning an instrument: “There’s no negative outcome here. Whatever happens is a positive.”

To accompany the program, Kristin wrote and compiled a booklet of music. Each week had a lesson with a specific focus as well as materials for participants to practice. At the end of each class, they went over the practice materials together so that people understood what to be working on. For some mediums of art, practicing in between classes might not be necessary—or feasible, depending on access to materials. When it comes to learning an instrument, Kristin tells participants of any age: “I can teach you whatever I can teach you in this hour, but the learning comes in the time in between. You’re the person who is going to make this happen.”

The O.W.L.’s are still out there making it happen. The ukuleles remain in circulation at the BCPL, where Tess says some of the instruments are always checked out. She sees class participants come in to get their books and renew their ukuleles. “So I know they’re still playing at home.”



PRO-TIP – Consider Community Context

When Tess considered applying for the Lifelong Arts grant, she knew that another organization in the county was facilitating a painting class for older adults. She didn't want to compete with another community offering, so she thought about what type of class would be complementary to visual arts. She landed on a music class. An added bonus: ukuleles are reusable. While the program has ended, the ukuleles—purchased with grant funds—are still circulating among library patrons, benefitting the community even beyond those who took the class.



Workshop Participants - Grinco LLC- Indianapolis, Second Act

Program Documentation: Why Document Your Arts Project?

Sometimes we are so engrossed in experiencing creative aging programs, we forget to document the experience. This is your call to action! Set a timer, write a note, assign tasks to dedicated staff or volunteers, or whatever you need to capture documentation. Benefits include:

- Participants have a record of their art learning and activities that can be shared with family and loved ones.
- The community learns about the creative aging arts program.
- Other older adults are inspired to participate in future programs.
- Outcomes, special moments, and stories can be shared with funders (including successes and areas for future improvement if appropriate.)

Be sure to get the participant's permission and a signed media release before sharing anything publicly.



Documentation Methods

You may find that you only need one of the methods below or you may be inspired to utilize a combination of two or more to really capture your program's successes.

#1. Written

Examples:

- Hand out an index card or post-it note with a quick prompt – What was the most fun thing you did today? What did you learn today? What was unexpected or surprising to you?
- Ask participants to write a story they want to share about their artwork or the art activity experiences (may need someone to scribe.)

#2. Observation

Examples:

- Have an outside observer journal after each session to capture participants strengths, areas of growth, unique and fun stories. This can include areas for possible program modifications and improvements.

#3. Photographs

- Snap photos of the activities in process and at the end to share with participants, families, funders.

#4. Video

- Record moments during the process – can be informal and small snippets.
- Hire a videographer for the final showcase or event - the videographer could be a volunteer or student. Share the video with participants and their families.





Program Reflection. What Did You Learn?

Once you have evaluations in hand, consider what they are telling you. As you review the data collected, compare the findings with your stated goals for the work. Did it bring older adults together? Did it improve social connections? Facilitate personal reflections? Whatever your stated goals were, consider these first. Second, look at what positive and negative outcomes your program provided that you didn't expect. Perhaps, there were benefits that you didn't envision when you planned your program. Can you lean into these successes? Finally, consider if the evaluations themselves capture the information you need to make decisions for future programmatic offerings. If not, consider how to reshape your evaluation process for next time.

Sharing Out the Great Work

It's time to shout from the top of the mountains - You did an amazing creative aging program!

There is a long list of people who will be happy to hear about the results of your work.

Those research-based impacts paired with your program's stories and photos will give you all you need to make the case of success. Consider using blogs, social media, or newspaper/radio to share the results of your program!

In Closing

We have said it before, and we will say it again—You can do this!

In this guidebook, you discovered why arts programs for older adults are important, you learned to identify and partner with artists, and you explored how to plan an effective and meaningful creative aging program. Hopefully you have already started to think through what would work in your community.

We also hope that through this guidebook you have come to believe that arts programs are not just for 'artists'. Music, dance, storytelling, craft, and art making are not reserved for the "talented" few, but rather can, and should, be a part of everyone's life. Everyone has creative aptitude and everyone is an artist, especially older adults. The research on arts in later life could not be more clear: older adults do better when they have a creative practice. Arts programs positively impact the lives of older adults by improving social connections, fostering mental and physical engagement, and providing a sense of purpose and meaning in the lives of participants. Increasing access to creative aging is essential for our communities, and we invite you to join us in being a champion for creative aging in your community.



APPENDIX

Works Cited

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The Creativity and Aging Study. The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults by Dr. Gene Cohen, 2006

The Eden Alternative: Nature, Hope and Nursing Homes by Dr. William Thomas, 1994

Untapped Opportunity: Older Americans & the Arts by Culture Track and E.A. Michelson Philanthropy, 2022

What Are Old People For?: How Elders Will Save the World by Dr. William Thomas, 2004

Other Resources to Explore

Gaining Momentum: A FrameWorks Communications Toolkit <https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/resources/gaining-momentum/>

Indiana Arts Commission Accessibility Self-Assessment Checklist https://www.in.gov/arts/files/IAC_Accessibility-Self-Evaluation.pdf

Lifetime Arts - www.lifetimearts.org

National Assembly for State Arts Agencies, Creative Aging Initiative https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-aging/

National Endowment for the Arts Accessibility Resources https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-aging/

The Academy for Creative Aging <https://academyforcreativeaging.org/about/>

The Creative Aging Resource <https://creativeagingresource.lifetimearts.org/>

This Chair Rocks <https://thischairrocks.com/>

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The Expressive Lives of Elders (2018) <https://hdl.handle.net/2022/22075>

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