

## Possible Pools of Direct Care Workers: Older Workers

What we learned...	What it means to you...
<p>Mature workers (55+) said they are interested in direct care, want to work at least 30 hours a week, are willing to attend training and are willing to work in nursing homes and clients' homes. (Operation ABLE)</p>	<p>Mature workers are a potential pool of direct care workers.</p>
<p>Employers said they view older workers as more stable and better able to provide quality care than younger workers. (Operation ABLE)</p>	<p>Long-term care employers interested in hiring older workers should explore two federal programs to help offset their training costs, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and the Workforce Investment Act.</p>
<p>While mature workers said they are seeking job opportunities in the same places employers advertise, they also seek jobs in places employers are unlikely to advertise.</p> <p>These include senior centers, employment guides, employment and training organizations, unemployment offices and places of worship. (Operation ABLE)</p>	<p>Long-term care employers wanting to hire mature workers should consider new avenues for recruiting (e.g., senior centers, places of worship).</p>
<p>Older workers said they are more interested in working as activity aides, medication assistants or rehabilitation aides than as direct care workers. These limited positions in nursing homes are often given as “perks” to frontline workers with seniority. (Operation ABLE)</p>	<p>Consider ways to re-structure jobs to appeal to older workers. Focus recruitment efforts for older workers on the positions of most interest to them.</p> <p>This finding also highlights the importance of offering specialized training and career lattices.</p>
<p>Home health agencies are generally in the best position to provide older workers with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Opportunities to engage in their preferred tasks (emotional support and supervision of clients rather than hands-on care)</li> <li>◆ Flexibility in assignments based on the worker's physical ability</li> </ul> <p>(Operation ABLE)</p>	<p>Home health agencies may be more successful than facility-based service providers in recruiting older workers.</p> <p>Agencies can often provide more opportunity for part-time work.</p>
<p>More than half of older workers surveyed reported having the functional capacity needed for direct care work, such as lifting 25 pounds, walking a mile, stooping to the floor and reaching overhead. (Operation ABLE)</p>	<p>Stereotypes about the physical capacity of older workers should not dissuade providers from looking at mature workers for frontline work.</p> <p>When asked about possible limitations, employers said that many limitations could be minimized by the use of mechanical aids. Employers also talked about the importance of mechanical aids to mitigate employee injury, regardless of age.</p>