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Contact: Bill Cospers, Executive Service Corps of Chicago
312-580-1840 x 322 / bill.cospers@esc-chicago.org

Executive Service Corps of Chicago Wins *Encore Opportunity Award* for Innovatively Engaging “Over 50” Professionals in Service to Nonprofits

MetLife Foundation and Civic Ventures Honor Eight Nonprofit and Public Sector for Creatively Helping People Over 50 Find and Thrive in Encore Careers

[CHICAGO] – Civic Ventures and MetLife Foundation have awarded one of eight national *Encore Opportunity Awards* to Executive Service Corps of Chicago (ESC). These awards honor organizations that are making it easier for experienced leaders and other workers over 50 years of age to transition into encore careers –paid jobs that offer meaning and the chance to make a social impact, utilizing their skills, knowledge and expertise.

ESC was selected for its new ‘Interim Executive Director (InterimED) Service’, which features a pool of highly-experienced men and women coming from longtime leadership positions in the nonprofit sector who now provide temporary professional leadership for other nonprofit organizations that are experiencing leadership transition.

“This year’s *Encore Opportunity Award* winners are innovative, adaptable and smart – and clearly recognize the need to take advantage of the windfall of talented older Americans,” said Dennis White, CEO and president of MetLife Foundation. “These trailblazing employers can serve as a model for others to follow.”

While layoffs and hiring freezes remain the norm in most industries, experts still project talent shortages in some health care, education, nonprofit and government jobs. Meanwhile, surveys show that millions of boomers want to find encore careers where they can give back and have an impact. But it is not always easy.

“For those in midlife and beyond, looking for a job these days is often a do-it-yourself project made all the worse by exhaustion, isolation, and high unemployment,” said Phyllis N. Segal, vice president of Civic Ventures, a think tank on boomers, work and social purpose. “But some nonprofit and public sector organizations are hiring and retaining people over 50 to meet community needs – and doing so in an exemplary fashion.”

ESC knew the potential for launching a high-quality interim leadership program from both national research and its own experience of more than 30 years of service to the Chicago region’s nonprofit and public service sectors. The Boomer retirement wave represents the biggest surge of talent entering ‘encore careers’ ever, and ESC developed the InterimED service to take advantage of this unparalleled opportunity to put these skills, experiences and knowledge to work. The InterimED pool consists of over 30 deeply seasoned leaders who are all individuals

with substantial experience as nonprofit executive directors from a wide variety of sectors and organizations. Having now retired or otherwise stepped back from their prior full-time engagement, the InterimED pool members work individually with client organizations, helping them ensure program stability, operational continuity and organizational focus while they recruit and bring on a new permanent leader. The InterimED members receive intensive training, support services and ongoing professional development from ESC, which also provides project coordination and oversight for the client organizations they serve. Within even the first year of the InterimED service, results have far outstripped expectations, and clients report great satisfaction with their results.

“The success of the Interim ED service underscores how important it is for the nonprofit sector to retain and benefit from all the incredible skills and knowledge that over 50 leaders have – talent and expertise that might go unused without opportunities like this,” noted Marcia Lipetz, President & CEO of Executive Service Corps of Chicago.

About The MetLife Foundation & Civic Ventures Partnership

In 2007, MetLife Foundation and Civic Ventures first honored nonprofit and public sector employers with what was then called the BreakThrough Awards. The [inaugural winners](#) similarly exhibited successful strategies for finding, hiring and maximizing workers over 50. The other 2009 Encore Opportunity winners include:

- [Alliance of Early Childhood Professionals](#) (Minneapolis, MN)—This nonprofit created a youth development program that pays “elders”– Native Americans over 50 who know the Dakota or Ojibwe languages – to work with children ages 16 months to 5 years old. The language immersion experience aims to pass along native languages and a sense of culture.
- [Civitan Foundation Inc.](#) (Phoenix, AZ)—This organization designed its Caring Connections program to engage encore workers as direct caregivers for its programs serving people with disabilities of all ages. In its first eight months, the project trained 50 older Americans and placed 20 in caregiver roles with clients.
- [Gwinnett County Sheriff’s Department](#) (Lawrenceville, GA)—This public safety agency recruits and employs encore workers to fill jobs at all levels. One-fourth of the department’s civilian and sworn work force is over 50, coming from previous careers in government, retail and business.
- [Habitat for Humanity of Lake-Sumter Florida Inc.](#) (Eustis, FL.)—To provide homes to people living in substandard and overcrowded conditions, this Habitat for Humanity affiliate has enlisted a multigenerational work force. Half of its staff is over 50.
- [National Center for Appropriate Technology](#) (Butte, MT)—This organization helps people nationally – through offices in Montana, Arkansas, California, Iowa, Louisiana and Pennsylvania – use environmentally sound, energy-efficient methods in farming. More than 40 percent of its employees are 50-plus, thanks to a recruitment strategy that seeks their skills and experience, and a retention strategy offering flexible schedules.
- [Orleans Technical Institute a division of JEVS Human Services](#) (Philadelphia, PA)—This technical training school employs retirees from the building trades as instructors to provide training and individualized support to an “at-risk” student population. More than half of the school’s employees are 50-plus, including full- and part-time instructors, support staff, recruiters and counselors.
- [Umbrella of the Capital District](#) (Schenectady, NY)—To help older adults and persons with disabilities live independently in their own homes, this nonprofit intentionally recruits 50-plus workers with the appropriate technical skills. More than 130 “handypeople” are paid an hourly stipend for light carpentry, lawn and garden maintenance, house cleaning and transportation to appointments.

About the Organizations

Civic Ventures (www.encore.org)

Civic Ventures is a national think tank on boomers, work and social purpose.

MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its long-standing tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation has been involved in a variety of aging-related initiatives addressing issues of caregiving, intergenerational activities, mental fitness, health and wellness programs and civic involvement. More information about the Foundation is available at www.metlife.org.

Executive Service Corps of Chicago

ESC is the Chicago metropolitan region's largest nonprofit provider of direct capacity-building services to the nonprofit and public service sectors. Since its founding in 1978, ESC has helped more than 1,600 organizations of every size and type improve their efficiency and effectiveness, manage growth, overcome challenges, and build for the future. Currently serving an average of 150+ client organizations every year, ESC delivers its services through the efforts of more than 280 highly-trained and motivated volunteer consultants who donate more than 23,000 hours per year of their expertise, time and insights to the service of our clients. Our consultants are men and women who come to ESC from long-time successful leadership careers in the business, professional, academic, nonprofit and civic sectors, all motivated by a desire to be actively engaged in improving the quality of life for local residents and their communities.

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