



Fast facts on aging in the United States

- 10,000 people are turning 65 every day
- The fastest-growing age group is women 85 and older
- A child born today has a high probability of living to 100
- Life expectancy in the United States has increased from 45 years in 1900 to 79 years in 2000
- People alive today have better education, nutrition, and healthcare
- Despite significant poverty levels among older adults, people 50+ hold a large share of wealth

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) have [published a report](#) from the May 2015 Summit on Creativity and Aging in America, with recommendations on how to foster healthy aging across three areas: health and wellness in the arts, lifelong learning in the arts, and age-friendly community design.

Recommendations from [The Summit on Creativity and Aging in America](#)

Work to eliminate ageism across all federal policies in the arts, healthcare, education, and community design. Reframe issues to focus on opportunities that longevity provides to all generations and include arts and design in a continuum of service across the lifespan. Possible solutions:

- A White House spokesperson and federal campaign to combat ageism and promote intergenerational programs and services, linked to private sector efforts by national organizations serving older Americans.

Federal funding of interdisciplinary research and collaborations to expand the evidence and in turn support funding and more informed policy. Find a common language for working partnerships among artists, biomedical and behavioral researchers, public health policymakers, and social entrepreneurs. Possible solutions:

- More research on:
 - arts and wellbeing in older people
 - arts and brain health
 - arts effects on managing chronic disease
 - benefits of age-friendly community design and services

More federal incentives for the private sector to encourage the creation of high-quality programs and services in the arts and design to meet growing demand from people living longer, healthier lives in communities of their choice.

Possible solutions:

- Financial tools such as challenge grants, seed grants, and tax credits may encourage age-friendly community design, transportation, and home design and renovation.
- Better application of existing federal laws on health, housing, and transportation.

Collaborative public and private leadership among arts, aging, health, and community service organizations can help expand evidence-based programs across healthcare systems and community services. Possible solutions:

- A summit of social entrepreneurs in technology and community service to help scale up evidence-based arts and design services and products.
- The new [NEA Creativity Connects initiative](#) will map the arts ecosystem and offer resources for understanding types of artistic practices, how they're expanding, and key resources that artists need in order to produce their best work.
- Another mapping model is the Comprehensive Environment Survey of Arts Resources (CESAR) from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

NEA research and resources on the arts and aging

[Creativity and the Brain](#) (2015) This report encourages neuroscientists, cognitive psychologists, artists, and arts educators to work together to build the field of neuroscience by integrating research on arts and creativity. This neuroscience research may have huge implications for diseases of the aging brain, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

[When Going Gets Tough](#) (2015) The greatest barrier to arts attendance for retirees is difficulty getting to the exhibit or location. This report offers valuable market research to arts organizations to make their offerings accessible to arts fans of all ages.

[A Matter of Choice? Arts Participation Patterns of Disabled Americans](#) (2015) Forty-five percent of people with disabilities are older adults (65+years old). This report offers the first, nationally representative analysis of arts-participation patterns among people with disabilities.

[The Arts and Aging: Building the Science](#) (2013) calls for a research framework on the arts and aging that may inform decisions about future NIH research funding. Research topics included music therapy and cognitive function, cost-benefit analysis for arts programs in healthcare settings, and the value of design in long-term care facilities.

[Creativity & Aging Study: The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults \(2006\)](#)

This landmark study reveals how ongoing, community-based arts programs improve the quality of life for older Americans. The NEA initiated the study, directed by the late Dr. Gene Cohen.

The NEA Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development is working to foster more and better research on how the arts can help people reach their full potential at all stages of life. [Webinars include: Alzheimer's and the Arts](#) and [Music Therapy, Music Listening, and the Cancer Experience](#).

[The Office of Accessibility](#) is the advocacy-technical assistance arm of the National Endowment for the Arts, helping to make the arts accessible for people with disabilities, older adults, veterans, and people living in institutions.

Expert perspectives on creativity and aging

[How the Arts Can Help Us Live Longer, Healthier Lives](#), a pre-summit conversation with Beth Bienvenu and Gay Hanna

[Taking Note: Stress, Music, and Epigenetics in Heart Disease Patients](#), by NEA Director of Research and Analysis Sunil Iyengar

[Create and Relate](#) by Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Aging, Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

[The Effects of Singing on Older Adults](#) by Dr. Julene K. Johnson, Institute for Health & Aging at University of California, San Francisco

[Consequential Design](#) by Valerie Fletcher, Institute for Human Centered Design

[Spotlight on Elders Share the Arts and History Alive!](#)

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