MARKETING YOUR CREATIVE AGING PROGRAM TO OLDER ADULTS

A Practical Guide for Teaching Artists and Program Administrators

How To Use This Guide

This practical guide is designed to support teaching artists and program administrators in promoting creative aging programs to older adults and encouraging them to register and participate. **Covering everything from marketing channels and accessible visual examples to photography tips, this resource will help jumpstart your recruitment efforts and strengthen your ability to engage older adults both online and in person.**

Table of Contents

1. Marketing Methods

When marketing creative aging programs or engagement to older adults in your community, we encourage you to use all the outlets appropriate to your community: email, personal phone calls, and even placing paper flyers in places where older adults live or regularly visit like libraries, senior centers, community bulletin boards, and local cafes. You can even utilize meal services—delivery and pick-up—as a way to advertise and market an upcoming opportunity.

Consider how to combine these methods strategically to best engage your community:

✉ Email/Mail

📱 Phone Calls (to both participants and/or people in your network)

💬 Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)*

🚚 Meals on Wheels: Delivery and Pick-Up

📰 Local Newspapers

🎙 Local Radio/TV

📄 Flyers

*Yes, older adults are on social media! If you need to focus on one platform, Facebook is often the most widely used among older adults. Keep in mind that platform popularity can shift quickly, especially as new platforms emerge. Prioritize the platform where your organization is most active and seeing the strongest engagement.

What to Keep in Mind...

Use multiple outreach methods together for greater impact. For example, you might share paper flyers, follow up by email, and then call folks if they prefer that. **Multiple touchpoints can reinforce the invitation and increase the likelihood they will register and attend.**

TIPS + TRICKS
Lean into Your Network!

Let other organizations serving older adults know about your program and ask them to help promote it—by posting a flyer, sharing on social media, or including it in their newsletter. You might also partner to co-host a program, share costs, and reach a wider audience. Make it easy by providing ready-to-use images, program details, and registration information.

Marketing Example: Social Media

As mentioned earlier, many people—including older adults—are active on social media. Be sure to take advantage of this by promoting your program across multiple platforms to expand your reach and visibility. We created the following example using **Canva**. Canva's basic platform is always free, with a premium subscription for advanced tools. **However, the premium account is also free for registered nonprofits**; if you've not signed up, it is a great asset!

Facebook Example

Example caption:

Ready to cut, layer, and create? Join us for Just Collage It!, a 6-week hands-on workshop where you'll explore the art of collage and design your own original piece inspired by a creative prompt. Guided by seasoned teaching artist **[insert name]**, you'll learn practical collage techniques in a supportive, inspiring environment. No experience? No problem! All skill levels are welcome.

🗓️ April 15 – May 27, 2026; Mondays from 4–6 PM
📍 Site name + address

As a special finale, your completed artwork will be featured in a public exhibition at **[site name]**—a chance to celebrate your creativity with the community! Spots are limited. Register at **[insert link or contact info]**.

#CreativeAging #HealthyAging #Collage #OlderAdults #SocialConnection #Workshop

Marketing Example: Printed Flyer

Sometimes a physical reminder—such as a printed flyer—can be especially effective in encouraging registration. Many people appreciate having a tangible document they can hold onto and refer back to later. Again, we created the following examples using **Canva**. You can also use other applications like **Adobe**, or even Google Docs or Microsoft Word if your options are limited.

TIPS + TRICKS
Making an Accessible Flyer

- **Large titles + clean fonts:** For 8.5" x 11" flyers, use 24–36pt+ for titles and at least 12pt for body text. Choose clean, modern fonts like Arial, Verdana, or Roboto for smaller text.
- **Color contrast/readability:** Make sure the background and text colors you choose are easy to read and meet accessibility standards. To check color contrast, you can use free color accessibility tools such as Coolors, or the built-in accessibility checker in Adobe Acrobat Pro if you have access to it.
- **Dates + times:** This info should include the program start and end date, the day(s) of the week in which the classes take place, and the start/end time of each class.
- **Description:** Keep it short and simple, and have it appeal to both beginner and more experienced artists.
- **Registration process:** Make sure the registration 'call to action' is eye-catching and that the process is clear and easy to follow. Including a QR code that links to an online page or form is a nice add-on!
- **Captivating images:** See our section below for capturing the best promotional imagery.
- **Credits + logos:** Provide a brief introduction about your organization, program background, and partners involved.

Good Example

Engaging description sharing objectives and welcoming all learners.

Clear registration call-to-action instruction + details

Logos + crediting statements included.

Fun, creative title + indicator for who this program is for.

Captivating image showcasing artmaking and social connection.

Dates, time, and location of program included and clear.

Flyer (Good Example)

Free Workshop for Adults 55+

Just Collage It!

In this 6-week workshop, you'll learn the practical techniques of collage and create your own piece based off a creative prompt with seasoned teaching artist, [insert name]. Your final piece will be showcased in a public exhibition at the museum. **No collage experience required!**

Registration is required. To sign up, contact the [site name or primary contact] at:

📞 XXX-XXX-1234

✉ emailexample@company.org

Lifetime Arts

Lifetime Arts is a nationally recognized nonprofit transforming the way our society understands and experiences aging through the arts.

April 15th-May 27th, 2026
Mondays
4PM-6PM

Host Site Name
Address

Not So Good Example

Unclear program title and unreadable text against background image.

Program description is hard to read + doesn't include goals, objectives, or experience level.

Registration instruction and details are unclear.

No indication of who this program is for.

Dates and times are not specific + hard to read against this color contrast.

Promotional image does not relate to the program's artform.

No organization logos or crediting included.

Flyer (Not So Good Example)

Creative Workshop

When?
May-April

Where?
Local Library

In this workshop, you'll do fun collage pieces! The program will conclude with a final exhibition at the library.

📞 XXX-XXX-1234

✉ emailexample@company.org

Capturing Promotional Imagery

In any flyer, use images to clearly convey what the program is about and who it is for: **think "show me, don't tell me."** Choose visuals that reflect the diversity of your community so more people feel welcomed and included. **If you use stock photos, make sure they portray older adults in a respectful, non-ageist way. We've provided stock image examples below.**

Good Example

⭐ Shows hands-on artmaking

⭐ Shows joy/social connection

⭐ Avoids visual stereotypes

Not So Good Example

✖ No hands-on artmaking

✖ Lack of positive/confident expressions

✖ Irrelevant context for a creative aging program

Host sites and teaching artists should work together to select strong images from past programs to promote their next program, so be sure to check in regularly during the marketing process. Once programs are underway, remember to take high-quality photos—these can be valuable for marketing future creative aging offerings.

Capturing Quality Program Photos

- **Ensure there is good lighting in the space:** Try to avoid taking a picture facing a window, or in a dimly-lit room.
- **Capture moments of social connection + artmaking in action:** Students interacting with each other or the teaching artist, or engaged with the art materials, are great action shots!
- **Close-ups are better than empty space!** Avoid taking landscape photos that show empty tables/chairs in a classroom. If there's a small group of students in the class, go for close-up or tight shots of them engaged in artmaking.
- **Avoid the back of people's heads as the focal point:** It's more engaging to see the participants' expressions and artmaking. If the teaching artist is the focal point, then showing the back of students' heads is ok!
- **Capture moments of joy:** Smiles and laughs show the true impact of these programs!

Good Example

Not So Good Example

⭐ Good quality/lighting

❌ Can't see participants' faces

⭐ Shows joy/social connection

❌ Can't see artwork from person pictured left

4. Crafting Your Program Description

In your program description, emphasize the elements that matter most to older adults: the chance to learn new skills, meet new people, and share their experiences! Be sure to highlight the teaching artist's background and expertise. And of course, uplift the artform and explain what people will accomplish throughout the program *(i.e. "You will go from learning the basics of leather tooling to making your own custom leather wallet!")*.

Phrases like "**open to all**" and "**beginners welcome**" can also help reassure participants that no prior experience is needed. Finally, include the essential details—when and where the class takes place—and provide a contact number for anyone who has questions.

TIPS + TRICKS
Grow Your Reputation via Stories

One of your best marketing tools are your success stories! People love to share their good experiences. Encourage program participants to tell their friends and family about their experience. Invite local leaders and organizations in your network to culminating events. Contact your local paper to share the story of your program!

Throughout your program and after the culminating event, post pictures, videos, and testimonials on your social media, which will help to drum excitement and support for your next program.

The program expanded my horizons. I did something I never thought I could do. If you have a chance to do something like this, do it. It was fun from day one!

Kay Inslee, Program Participant