

Older workers (1958)

# BREAKING THROUGH THE AGE BARRIER



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Pennsylvania

BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY

ADVISORY BOARD ON PROBLEMS OF OLDER WORKERS

III

= Harrisburg =

**B R E A K I N G   T H R O U G H   T H E  
A G E   B A R R I E R**

**MAY  
1958**

**Bureau of Employment Security  
Advisory Board on Problems of  
Older Workers**

**Department of Labor and Industry  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	WHAT IS THE AGE BARRIER ? . . . . .	1
	Legal Aspects . . . . .	1
	The Task Ahead . . . . .	2
2	WHY MUST THE AGE BARRIER BE BROKEN? . . . . .	3
	Human Needs . . . . .	4
3	SEPARATING FACT FROM FANCY . . . . .	7
	The Productivity of Older Workers . . . . .	8
	Attendance Records . . . . .	8
	Accidents . . . . .	9
	Cost of Pensions . . . . .	9
	Cost of Workmen's Compensation . . . . .	11
	Cost of Sickness and Accident Insur- ance and Group Life Insurance . . . . .	11
	The "Fringe Benefits" Package . . . . .	12
	Psychological Factors in Hiring Older Workers . . . . .	13
	The Case for Hiring Older Workers . . . . .	14
4	TYPICAL REMARKS AND SUGGESTED REPLIES . . . . .	15
	By Employers . . . . .	15
	By Older Workers . . . . .	17
5	WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE . . . . .	19
	By Older Workers . . . . .	19
	By Employers . . . . .	20
	By Unions . . . . .	21
	By Communities . . . . .	21
6	WHAT THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENN- SYLVANIA IS DOING . . . . .	23
	Job Finding Assistance . . . . .	23
	Financial Services . . . . .	24
	Miscellaneous Services . . . . .	25
	Intensive New Programs . . . . .	25
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	28

## P R E F A C E

The greatest single unused economic resource in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may well be the dormant skills of its older workers. It is essential that we learn how to put those skills back to work, not only because the individual older person needs the opportunity, but also because our economy needs the productivity of older persons.

This is a task for government, labor, business and voluntary community action. Each should make his unique contribution to the effort and all should work together.

The Department of Labor and Industry has developed an older worker program through the joint efforts of the Bureau of Employment Security and the Advisory Board on Problems of Older Workers. Special counseling and placement services are available to older workers at virtually all of the State Employment Offices; intensive research studies are being conducted; a highly significant pilot project has been established in Philadelphia; efforts to stimulate practical community programs have started; and a wide-ranging information and education program designed to acquaint the people of Pennsylvania with the facts about employment of older workers is under way.

This booklet is one part of the information and education program. It is designed to present a quick, easily readable summary of the best current thinking on the employment of older workers. It is written primarily for the general reader, with a minimum of figures and statistics. Sources providing more complete and more technical information are indicated where appropriate.

The Department of Labor and Industry solicits the cooperation of groups throughout the Commonwealth who wish to work to help our economy learn to use the skills of our older workers. In turn, the Department

pledges its own cooperation to all such groups. Putting the unused skills of our older workers back to work may well be a difficult task, but if we undertake it with intelligence, good will and persistence, and if we learn to work with each other toward the common goal, we can be confident of success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William L. Batt, Jr." in a cursive style.

William L. Batt, Jr.  
Secretary of Labor and Industry

## CHAPTER ONE

### WHAT IS THE AGE BARRIER?

Stated simply, age barriers to employment result when employers set arbitrary age limits in deciding whether individuals are capable of filling jobs. George W., machinist, age 65, whose eyes are still keen, whose hands are still steady, but who must retire on a pension, is facing the age barrier. Jane R., office worker, age 36, who cannot get a job because she is too "old," must also break the age barrier.

Between these two groups, there is a growing number of workers, roughly between the ages of 40 to 64, who are not yet eligible for old age pensions. Many of these find themselves out of the main streams of employment primarily because they are considered too old. In many cases these workers may have skills which are no longer needed, and they are considered too old to enter training programs to give them new skills. In others, age-old prejudices about the employment of older workers constitute the main barrier which must be overcome.

The existence of age barriers to employment makes it necessary for government, labor, industry and community leaders to cooperate to work out new programs that will make it possible for our economy to use the skills of all its workers, young and old, to the fullest extent.

#### Legal Aspects

The Pennsylvania Fair Employment Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment on the basis of age against persons between the ages 40 to 62. This law has been useful in placing the legal weight of the Commonwealth behind the effort to remove age barriers. Specifications which discriminate against persons because of age are disappearing from employment advertising. However, the Fair Employment Act is difficult to enforce, especially in regard to its age provisions.

Neither the Act nor the Commission can help the older worker who is not being discriminated against--

the worker who has outmoded skills and cannot qualify for training--the worker who has experienced some decline in physical abilities. The Fair Employment Act is both necessary and useful in breaking through the age barrier to employment. But compulsory legislation cannot begin to do the job alone. Much additional effort needs to be devoted to removing time-old prejudices about older workers and in learning how to put the productive skills of older people to work.

#### The Task Ahead

Breaking through the age barrier to employment will involve these separate, but related tasks:

1. Persuade employers to remove arbitrary age barriers to employment so that older workers can compete with younger workers on merit alone.
2. Counsel and help older workers to understand both their skills and their limitations so that they can compete for jobs more effectively.
3. Help labor and management cooperate in the development of jobs that can be filled by older workers.
4. Develop programs for part-time and casual employment of older workers.

The arbitrary age of 65 (or 62 in the case of women), which is the age when old age benefits begin, can also be used as a rough and convenient dividing line for defining certain aspects of these tasks. For instance, the primary target must necessarily be those persons in the age group 40-64 who face discrimination because of age, but who are not yet eligible for social security benefits. (The figure 40 is also rough. Some employers discriminate against applicants over the age of 35.) But we must also help workers 65 or over who wish to continue to contribute their productive skills in gainful employment.

## CHAPTER TWO

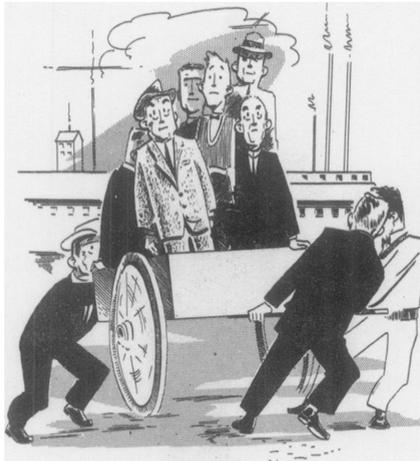
### WHY MUST THE AGE BARRIER BE BROKEN?

The following excerpts from a talk on "Older Worker Placement" by Ewan Clague, Commissioner of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, before the Older Worker Forum in Philadelphia on December 5, 1957, clearly illustrate why we must break the age barrier:

"Middle-aged and older men and women today constitute a very considerable part of our manpower resources, and by 1965 they will constitute an even more important part. We expect a 10 million increase in labor force between 1955 and 1965, and half of the increase will be persons 45 years and over.

"Only if we can make the best possible use of the skills, ability and capacity for continuous work of all of these people, will we be able to produce the goods, both civilian and military. which are needed. . . .

"By 1965 we expect our population in the U.S.A.



**"IF OLDER PEOPLE CANNOT WORK,  
THEY WILL HAVE TO BE SUPPORTED BY YOUNGER PEOPLE."**

to have reached 193.3 million persons. Our labor force is expected to increase from 68.9 million to 79.2 million in 1965. However, the age distribution will be different. We will have many more of the younger age groups (14-24) and a good many more of the older group (45 and over), but hardly any more in the middle age groups from 25-44, than now....

"These projections point up for us...the great importance of the worker over 45 in our factories and service industries of the future. If we practice or introduce the right hiring and personnel policies now, then the gradual change in the composition of our labor force will not produce the waste, shortages or unemployment which might otherwise occur. Since we shall not have a large reservoir of just the preferred age groups, it is all the more important that we learn to make the best possible use of the manpower resources that will be available..."

#### Human Needs

The figures above illustrate the fact that our economy needs to learn how to use the productive skills



"WHICH IS BETTER?"

of our older workers. But there are human needs in addition to economic needs. What about the individual who wants to continue working; who needs to work in order to be happy? Studies show that a great many people want to work after they reach 65, even though they are eligible for old-age pensions.

Unless our society can develop methods by which persons can continue to work as long as they are able to work, we shall be faced with an ever-growing number of discontented and unproductive older persons, who will have to be supported by younger persons economically, emotionally and spiritually.

The problem becomes more acute in periods of depression or recession when there is a labor surplus. Those who do the hiring are more apt to insist on rigid age barriers during such periods because it is easier to find workers with characteristics precisely of the type specified. This makes it even harder to place older workers than is usually the case. Moreover, the increased failure of businesses in depression and recession periods throws more older workers on the labor market. The economy comes out of the recession eventually, but many of the older workers never reach full productivity again.

For those mature people who are able to work, the greatest emotional need they have is to be able to work, to be able to support themselves, to be able to think of themselves as economically useful people.

There are also tremendous social costs in denying employment to older workers under 65. There is the cost of supporting such workers, either through public assistance benefits or private help. There is the loss in taxes which would be paid by such workers if they were employed. And finally there are the numberless social services which are often required when families suffer financial reverses.

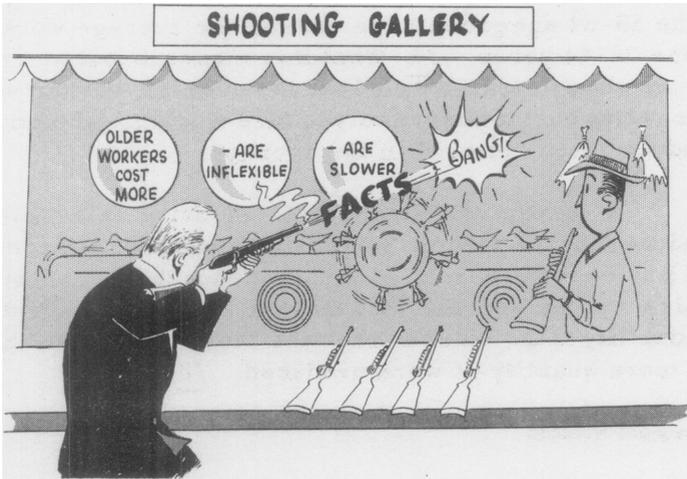
It is plain that we cannot continue to lengthen man's life span and at the same time lower the age at which he is allowed to continue as a productive member of society. Sooner or later we will reach the point where the burden of supporting large numbers of older workers who are not fully productive will become too much for our economy to bear.

Therefore, there are at least three compelling reasons why all citizens of good-will should work to break the age barrier to employment. One is economic--we must do it in order to keep our productivity high and our economy prosperous; a second is social--everyone in our society must help to bear the cost that arises when an individual is denied the opportunity to support himself and his family; a third is human--we must do it to keep our society stable.

## CHAPTER THREE

### SEPARATING FACT FROM FANCY

In order to work intelligently at the job of breaking down the age barriers to employment, we need to understand why older workers sometimes find it more difficult to get jobs. There are three general groups of reasons why employers sometimes hesitate to hire older workers. One group of reasons is concerned with



productivity and includes such statements as: "Older workers don't produce as much." "They don't work as quickly." "They're not strong enough." "They have more accidents." Another group of objections is concerned with the cost of hiring older workers and includes such statements as: "Our health and accident and group life insurance costs would go up." "Our pension costs would become prohibitively high." "Our Workmen's Compensation rates would be increased." A final group of objections to older workers revolves around psychological factors and includes such statements as: "Older workers are more difficult to train." "Older workers are too inflexible." "Company policy is to promote from within," and "We prefer younger workers." Each group of objections to the employment of older workers deserves closer analysis.

## The Productivity of Older Workers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, surveyed the job performance of older workers in the men's footwear and household furniture industries and found that the average productivity of the 45-54 age group was slightly less than that of the 35-44 age group and that the average productivity of the 55-64 group was markedly less. However, individual workers' output within each group varied much more significantly than did the average. In fact, about one-third of those in the 55-64 age group outperformed the average worker in the 35-44 group. 1 What this means is that an employer who arbitrarily ruled out the over-55 worker was also ruling out the opportunity to hire workers who could produce much better than the average.

A survey of Pennsylvania industry in 1952-53, conducted by the Temple University Bureau of Economic and Business Research, showed evidence that some companies recognized the fact that the experience and dependability of the older worker are more important than the mere quantity of work produced. 2

### Attendance Records

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics also surveyed the attendance records of older workers as compared with younger workers 3 and found no relationship whatsoever. Attendance rates were as good for one age group as another. The Temple University study referred to above revealed that 90% of the companies who commented on absenteeism felt that the older workers' records were better than the average for younger workers.

1. "Comparative Job Performance by Age," *Bulletin No. 1223, November 1957, U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 15.*

2. "Proceedings of the Second Joint Conference on the Problem of Making a Living While Growing Old," paper presented by Sylvester Atchele, p. 305, Temple University Press, September 1953.

3. *BLS Bulletin 1223, op. cit., p. 26.*

Also in favor of older workers is the fact that they are more likely to be stable in their jobs. A study of older workers in seven major metropolitan areas in 1956 showed that rates of job turnover were lower among those over 45, and voluntary quits (excluding retirement) were less than half as frequent among the older workers as among those under 45. /4

#### Accidents

The available information on employee accidents and the relationship to age indicates that older workers have relatively fewer accidents than do younger workers, but that older workers tend to lose more time from the job per accident. /5 From the standpoint of cost to the employer, it has not been determined which is more costly, the relatively more careless younger worker who recovers more quickly from his accidents or the relatively more cautious older worker who tends to suffer more serious injuries from his accidents. It is probable that there is little difference.

#### Cost of Pensions

One of the most frequently mentioned factors affecting the hiring of older workers is the cost of pensions. In order to determine how such costs might be influential in decisions to hire older workers, the U. S. Secretary of Labor appointed a committee of distinguished experts to study the problem, and they concluded that:

"The costs of private pension provisions ought no longer to be considered a real obstacle to the employment of older workers." /6

- /4. "Older Worker Adjustment to Labor Market Practices," *Bulletin No. R151, September 1956, U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Security, pp. 19 and 20.*
- /5. Aichele, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-302.
- /6. "Pensions Costs. . . In Relation to the Hiring of Older Workers," *Bulletin No. E150, September 1956, U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Security, p. 4.*

Many pension plans, it is true, bar older workers from membership by requirements based on age and length of service. Such requirements may have been interpreted by the personnel office to bar older applicants not only from the pension plan but from consideration for employment at all. These interpretations may be based on the assumption that an employer who permitted an older new employee to waive pension rights would be criticized for turning the older employee out at retirement without adequate subsistence.

But in the last few years most full-time older workers have earned Old Age and Survivors' Insurance benefits which will protect them from destitution if they can continue in covered employment. The employer, the applicant and the community are much better off when the older worker is given an opportunity to maintain his OASI earnings and to contribute to the economic welfare as a worker than they are when the worker is forced to become a dependent simply because he cannot qualify for a pension plan.

It is also true, according to the Secretary of Labor's Committee on Pension Costs and the Older Worker, that "under pension plans covering most workers today the costs of pension benefits actually paid to retired workers in the future will not be substantially increased if the employer hires a fair and reasonable proportion of older new applicants. The comparative current costs or charges for pensions as affected by the entry age of new employees are not necessarily fixed and definite. They are subject to considerable future change, especially for the younger ages; and the effect of such changes will apparently be to reduce, or possibly wipe out, the current differential between older and younger entry ages over a period of time. Whether the amounts charged by the employer to current operations are increased will depend on the terms of the particular plan and on the employer's policy in the current financing of his future commitments." 7

7. *BES Bulletin No. E150, op. cit., pp. 4-5.*

## Cost of Workmen's Compensation

Various authorities have testified that Workmen's Compensation rates do not increase when older workers are hired. For instance, John J. Corson and John W. McConnell write: "Older employees affect the insurance rate of a plant only if they are responsible for more or for more serious accidents in that plant or for greater loss of time there because of accidents. . . . Certainly there is no clear evidence that the employment of older workers raises Workmen's Compensation costs."

8

Another authority points out that the costs of occupational death and disability benefits are determined first by reference to a rate manual which classifies occupations according to the hazards involved rather than on personal characteristics of employees (such as age) and that the ultimate cost is determined by the accident experience of the firm. Accident frequency, it is pointed out declines with age. This offsets the tendency for the period of disability to increase with age and leads to the likely conclusion that age has no noticeable influence on Workmen's Compensation costs. 9

## Cost of Sickness and Accident Insurance and Group Life Insurance

Premiums for group coverage for employees and their dependents against sickness and accident are, in general, independent of the ages of the employees. As in Workmen's Compensation, the ultimate cost will depend upon the loss experience of the employer. In this case the higher rate of sickness for older workers is undoubtedly offset by the higher costs of dependent benefits for younger workers, who tend to have more depend-

8. "Economic Needs of Older People;" New York, *The Twentieth Century Fund*, 1956, p. 64.

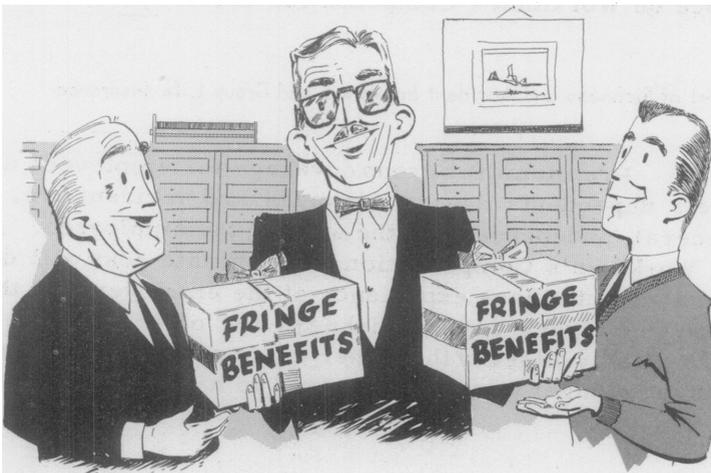
9. "Proceedings of the Second Joint Conference," *op. cit.*, paper presented by Dan M. McGill, Ph. D., p. 136.

ents. Where female workers are involved and maternity benefits are included, the normally higher sickness rate of the older worker is bound to be offset.

Premiums for group life insurance during employment are customarily based on the average age of employees covered, and the addition of one or two older workers will not appreciably affect the premiums. Even where the average age is increased, the net increase to the employer is usually so small as to be negligible. /10

#### The "Fringe Benefits" Package

The question of age differentials should really be considered in relationship to an entire package of so-called "fringe benefits"--pensions, Workmen's Compensation, sickness and accident insurance and group life insurance. The impression that these related benefits cost a great deal more for older workers is mistaken, according to the Secretary of Labor's Committee on Pension Costs and the Older Worker. In fact the committee points out that where benefits for dependents in-



"COSTS JUST ABOUT THE SAME."

/10. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138.

clude maternity care, the package cost may even be less for the older man

The Committee also points out that pension and insurance costs need not stand in the way of the traditionally sound policy of hiring on the basis of ability to do the job without regard to age. Moreover, "Selective hiring of older new workers from the community can hardly add more than a small fraction of one percent to the current annual charge (for the ' fringe benefits ' package). But it might well add significantly to the basic purposes of the pension-welfare program"--that is, improved performance for the whole working force through better industrial and community relations. 11

#### Psychological Factors in Hiring Older Workers

Psychological objections to hiring older workers relate largely to individual cases. Many young people turn out to be difficult to supervise, thereby emphasizing the need to hire on an individual basis rather than on an arbitrary age barrier. A recent study made by the Bureau of Employment Security cites the following favorable attributes of older workers as mentioned by employers who have had experience hiring older workers.

1. They have the stability that comes with maturity.
2. Less time is wasted on the job by older workers.
3. They are more reliable and have a definite desire to work.
4. They have consistently less absenteeism and are more apt to stay on the job.
5. They have a sense of responsibility and loyalty to their job and to their employer.
6. They generally have steady work habits and have a serious attitude toward their job.

11. *BES Bulletin No. E150, op. cit., p. 22.*

7. They usually require less supervision once they are oriented on the job.
8. They are less inclined to make trouble.
9. They are less distracted by outside interests or influences, they generally have fewer domestic troubles, and they are capable of greater concentration.
10. Older married women are less apt to take time off to bear and take care of children.

An interesting thought advanced by one employer was that he would like to have at least one older worker in every working group because of the favorable atmosphere and stabilizing influences his presence has on the group. 12

#### The Case for Hiring Older Workers

When we look at the facts it is clear that older workers deserve to receive as fair consideration in the hiring process as all others. The facts show:

1. Many older workers are more productive than the average younger worker. Older workers make up in steadiness, reliability and accuracy what they may lack in speed and physical power.
2. It doesn't cost appreciably more in "fringe benefits" to hire older workers; it sometimes costs less; and when all things are considered such costs should not be considered a real obstacle to the hiring of older workers.
3. On psychological grounds, it's good to have older workers around because their steady work habits and serious attitude have a good influence on the work force.

12. "Counseling and Placement Services for Older Workers," BES Bulletin No. E152, September 1956, U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Security, p. 47-48.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TYPICAL REMARKS AND SUGGESTED REPLIES

#### By Employers

1. Older workers cannot meet our physical requirements. ● Chronological age is not a true measure of physical ability. A better way to determine whether a prospective newemployee is able to meet the physical requirements of a job is to require a physical examination.

2. Older workers are too slow. ● Many individual older workers are faster than the average younger worker. Therefore, employers who set an arbitrary age limit are ruling out their chances of employing workers who can produce faster than the average. Some workers often make up in reliability and accuracy for what they lack in speed.

3. Older workers are more prone to accidents. ● Studies indicate that older workers have fewer accidents than younger workers. They tend to lose more time per accident, thus balancing the fact that they have fewer accidents. The accident factor cannot properly be used either for or against hiring older workers.

4. Older workers looking for jobs tend to be drifters. ● Just the opposite is true. An outstanding quality of older job seekers is their dependability. They are not job hoppers. They are less inclined to change jobs than younger workers.

5. It doesn't pay to invest in training older workers because they will only work for a few more years. (See Number 4 above.) ● Work histories show longer job tenure for the older group. The employer who invests in the training of an older worker will, on the average, get more years of service in return from the older worker than he will from a younger worker.

6. Older workers do not mix well with younger workers. ● Some employers report that just the opposite is true. They are a steadying influence on the younger workers. Their seriousness and concentration on the job is transmitted to other workers in the group.

7. Older workers can't adjust to new job conditions. ● Younger workers have difficulty adjusting to new jobs, as witness the higher turnover rate. The fact that older workers have a more serious attitude toward jobs would lead to the conclusion that they would make a much more marked effort to adjust to a new job.

8. The provisions of our pension plan make it necessary for us to exclude new older workers from the plan. If we hired them under a waiver, we would be subject to criticism for letting them go without a pension later on. ● Most workers are now eligible for OASI benefits on reaching age 65 (or 62), and therefore an employer who let an employee go without a pension can be assured the employee will not be destitute. Employers contribute to community welfare by hiring older workers and could not fairly be subject to criticism for doing so.

9. Older workers are hard to supervise. They won't take directions from younger men. They insist on doing things their own way. ● Chronological age is a poor way to measure a worker's adjustment. Younger workers are frequently hard to supervise. Employers have a right to discipline employees who won't take directions properly, without regard to age.

10. Older workers increase the costs of fringe benefits. Pension costs go up; group life insurance goes up; Workmen's Compensation costs go up; etc. ● See full discussion in Chapter 3, above.

11. Older workers tend to get sick and be absent from work. ● All surveys show that older workers are absent from the job less than younger workers.

12. It is difficult for us to hire older workers because so few of them have experience in our line of work. ● The chances are that younger workers won't have experience and need training. See No. 4 above. Older workers stay on the job longer. It pays to invest in their training.

13. We believe in compulsory retirement. It's too difficult to decide whether a worker should retire on the basis of a physical examination or on a subjective determination of his abilities to do the job. ● Manage-

ment is always making a subjective determination of a worker's ability to do the job, regardless of his age. When a younger worker is not producing satisfactorily, he is either transferred to another job or dismissed. Why should it be more difficult to make such a determination for an older worker? A compulsory retirement policy denies management the right to make the kind of decisions which will produce the most effective labor force.

14. We believe in hiring young and promoting from within. Older workers would interfere with our promotion policies. ● All company policies should be designed to produce efficient results. If there would be no unfairness to a young worker who deserves promotion, and if an older job seeker is clearly more qualified for a job than other young applicants, it is clearly to the best interest of the company to employ the older job seeker. What is important is that the decision should be reached on the basis of fairness, ability and the company's best interests; not on arbitrary age limitations.

15. Our job is run our company profitably. We shouldn't be expected to solve the social problems connected with an aging population. ● A sound policy on hiring older workers can contribute to profitable operations, because such a policy will let the company take the best advantage of the available work force.

#### By Older Workers

1. Employers don't want old fogies like me. I'll never get a job. ● Certainly not with an attitude like that. Employers are interested in making profits. A job seeker who can convince an employer that it will be profitable to hire him will generally get the job despite his age. Make a list of all the things you can do well and make sure the employer knows about them.

2. I've never had to look for a job. I don't know how to go about it. ● Get professional help. Your local office of Employment Security has the know-how when it comes to getting jobs. They'll get leads for you and help you make the best possible presentation of your abilities. If you have special problems, they'll give you special counseling service.

3. My skills are out-of-date, and I'm too old to start learning a new trade. ● Chances are your skills can be put to work in a different occupation, but even if you have to learn a new trade, you're never too old to learn. Talk over your problem with your Employment Service counselor.

4. If I take this job, I'll never get a chance for promotion because of seniority provisions. ● You can't get promoted when you aren't working either.

5. I'm still just as strong and as fast as I ever was. They have no right offering me a less important job. ● Sometimes when people grow old their physical abilities diminish. When there's a doubt, go to your own physician and have him examine you. There's nothing to be ashamed of if you have slowed down, but it's better to adjust one's ambition to his abilities.

6. I found a job, but it's too far from where I live. ● It's approximately twice as hard for an older worker to find employment than it is for a younger worker. The older worker who is out of a job has had a tough break. He should be sensible and make the best of it. When he insists on everything to his complete satisfaction, he may end up worse off than before.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

By Older Workers

1. If employed, start preparing now for retirement. The local library will have much reading material that should prove helpful. Make sure to know about prospective income from old age benefits and company pension plans. Keep in good physical condition and have periodic check-ups.

2. If unemployed, take stock. List activities that interest you. List your knowledge and skills. Make a realistic appraisal of what you can do and then forget about any handicaps you might have.

3. Go to the nearest office of the Pennsylvania Employment Service for assistance in obtaining work.



**"GET PROFESSIONAL HELP  
FROM THE LOCAL  
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICE."**

**"LET YOUR FRIENDS KNOW  
WHEN YOU ARE LOOKING  
FOR EMPLOYMENT."**

They know about job opportunities and they can advise you on how to get a job.

4. Let your friends know that you are looking for employment. Go to your union or professional association. Watch for newspaper ads. Go to former employers. Check the classified section of the phone book for the names of companies which hire workers with your experience.

5. Don't over-inflate yourself. If you have formerly held big jobs, you may find it hard to adjust to jobs of lesser importance, but it is essential that you do so if you no longer can stand the pace of the top positions.

6. Don't underestimate yourself. You have experience and maturity. Employers are always eager for reliable, experienced employees. Watch your appearance. Be poised, prompt and business-like.

7. Don't be afraid to try something new, if you have to. You are never too old to learn. Employers prize cheerful, a adaptable workers.

8. If unable to work full-time, look about for part-time or casual jobs. Perhaps you can help organize a casual job agency in connection with your retired workers' club or golden age club. Committees of older workers can call on employers for part-time or casual jobs. Your Employment Service local office may be able to suggest possibilities and to help.

#### **By Employers**

1. Make sure that the company's hiring policy is the traditional American policy of hiring on the basis of ability, not some arbitrary age.

2. Make sure that top management's policy is understood and followed by those responsible for hiring and supervising personnel in every department.

3. Analyze jobs to make sure that unrealistic physical requirements are not denying the company a chance to compete for valuable older workers.

4. Eliminate compulsory retirement.

5. Provide adequate retirement plans and help employees to prepare for retirement.

6. Revise age restrictive clauses in pension plans, if these affect hiring policy.

7. Reassign older employers to most suitable work.

8. Study possibility of consolidating jobs with physical demands so as to make possible new jobs without demanding physical requirements.

9. Provide for periodic physical examinations.

10. Study possibility of "part-time" retirement, casual jobs for older workers, and other methods of using older worker skills.

#### **By Unions**

1. Make sure union policy on contracts does not result in discrimination against older workers.

2. Provide pre-retirement counseling for union members.

3. Provide counseling and other services to older union members in need of employment.

4. Join in community efforts to promote more employment for older workers.

5. Work with employers on job analysis and job engineering to provide more opportunities for older workers.

#### **By Communities**

1. Organize a community-wide effort to remove age barriers to employment. Either organize a new committee or establish a sub-committee under some already existing committee.

2. Provide for the following community activities in connection with an older worker program.

a. List opportunities available for older workers.

b. Call upon employers to explain program.

c. Organize institutes and forums.

d. Publicize through articles, radio and television programs, essay and poster contests, and the like.

- e. Provide counseling services for older workers, particularly group counseling for those too hesitant to seek individual help.
- f. Organize employment exchanges for part-time and casual employment for older workers.
- g. Promote demonstration projects where selected older workers are employed in certain occupations hitherto denied to them.
- h. Work with private employment agencies to make sure that older workers are not discriminated against.
- i. Provide awards and recognition to employers who cooperate in older worker program.

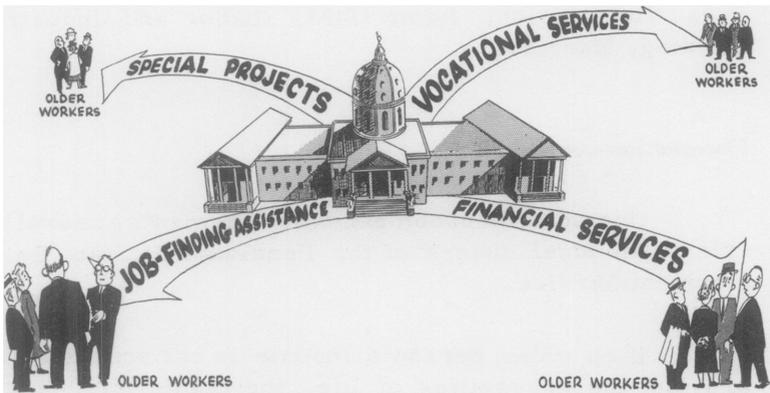
The basic responsibility for breaking through age barriers to employment rests with local communities. Older workers reside in local communities. It is the local communities who are responsible for their welfare when they are unable to take care of themselves. It is in the local communities where they must find employment. State and Federal agencies can provide some assistance. But older worker programs will succeed in direct proportion to the interest and support evidenced by the local community.

The age barrier to employment is not a problem for only one or two groups within a community. It concerns business; it concerns labor; it concerns civic groups, churches and synagogues and educational institutions. In fact it concerns everybody.

## CHAPTER SIX

### WHAT THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA IS DOING

Many agencies of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are performing services for older workers. Some, like those at State Employment Offices, are specifically directed toward helping older people get jobs. Other services are directed toward different needs of older workers.



#### Job Finding Assistance

Older workers who are looking for jobs can get direct help from the nearest local office of the Pennsylvania State Employment Service. Specialists in services to older workers have been designated in virtually all of the 100 employment offices in the Commonwealth. These specialists can help with job counseling advice, and they will have up-to-date information on jobs that are currently available. In appropriate instances they will attempt to persuade employers to raise or eliminate age preferences in job orders.

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation also helps older workers if they have an employment handicap which can be corrected through the Bureau's au-

thorized services. These services include counseling, training, physical restoration and placement. Further information may be secured from the Bureau of Rehabilitation, Labor and Industry Building, Harrisburg, or from one of the district offices located in Altoona, Du-Bois, Erie, Harrisburg, Johnstown, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, Wilkes-Barre and Williamsport.

The Pennsylvania Fair Employment Act prohibits discrimination in employment for persons between the ages of 40 and 62. Further information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Fair Employment Practices Commission, Room 1401, Labor and Industry Building, Harrisburg.

#### Financial Services

Unemployment compensation payments are available from local offices of the Pennsylvania State Employment Service.

If an older person's income is not sufficient to provide the necessities of life, the public assistance program may help pay for food, clothing, shelter and medical assistance. Local offices of public assistance are located in each county.

While not a service of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Old Age and Survivor's Insurance benefits, as provided through the United States Social Security Administration, are available to older workers. Most older workers are entitled to retirement benefits if they have worked in employment covered by the Social Security Law. Payments start for men at age 65 and for women at age 62. Disabled older workers are eligible for benefits between the ages of 50 and 65. Widows, dependent mothers and children are also eligible under certain conditions. The nearest local office of the Social Security Administration can provide complete information.

## Miscellaneous Services

Special programs for the aging are encouraged through the Bureau of Services to the Aging in the Department of Welfare.

For those older workers who are blind, a wide variety of helpful services are available from offices of the State Council for the Blind in Harrisburg, Erie, Pittsburgh, Altoona, Wilkes-Barre and Philadelphia.

Vocational training and general adult education courses are available at many high schools through the Commonwealth under programs subsidized by the Department of Public Instruction.

Information on housing for older people and assistance in setting up specialized recreation programs may be secured from the Department of Commerce.

The Department of Health provides public health education and limited bedside nursing care in addition to special research work on aging.

## Intensive New Programs

In addition to the above programs, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has established intensive new programs to help improve economic opportunities for older workers. These programs are centered in the Department of Labor and Industry and are carried out on a cooperative basis by the Bureau of Employment Security and the Advisory Board on Problems of Older Workers.

The Advisory Board on Problems of Older Workers is a nine-member bi-partisan board, established by Legislative Act No. 475 of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, approved April 11, 1956, to advise the Secretary of Labor and Industry on all questions related to the problems of the aging and the aged. However,

its main current job is to help get more jobs for older workers.

To do this job, the Advisory Board has joined forces with the Bureau of Employment Security in a four-phase program of research, demonstration, education and community organization.

Research projects include investigations into the true costs of hiring older workers and studies to determine how best to help advise older workers with obsolete skills about new fields for which they can be trained.

A special demonstration project, known as the Philadelphia Pilot Project, was started in November, 1957, to determine whether intensive counseling services could actually help get more jobs for older workers. Full-time older worker counselors were hired for each of the 14 employment offices in the Philadelphia area, and these counselors have proved to be outstandingly effective in getting jobs for older workers.

Special educational programs have also been started by the Bureau of Employment Security-Advisory Board team in the Department of Labor and Industry. A series of four monthly luncheon forums culminating in a two-day institute in May, 1958 is one of these educational programs planned specifically to support the Philadelphia Pilot Project. Public appearances by the Advisory Board staff and special informational literature make up other parts of the overall education program.

Staff members of the Advisory Board located in Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh will work closely with local Bureau of Employment Security personnel to help establish and stimulate community programs aimed at improving employment opportunities for older workers.

In summation, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has embarked upon a wide program of services and projects designed to break through age barriers to employment. As these programs move forward, there will be many opportunities for citizens to lend a hand in making them successful. Interested persons with further ideas for ways in which the Commonwealth can contribute to the welfare of its older workers should write to the Advisory Board on Problems of Older Workers, Room 1400, Department of Labor and Industry, Harrisburg.

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