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By [Martha Wagner](#)

Is There a New Business Venture, Career or Volunteer Role in Your Future?

## [Encore Careers Are Re-energizing People 50 and Over](#)



*Tim Hahn (center) found a second career by teaching kids how to garden.*

Who hasn't been affected by the economic decline of the past few years? Not too many of us. People 55 and over have been especially hard-hit, with historically high unemployment, collapsing pension plans, and shrinking investment portfolios dashing retirement dreams for many.

Less visible in the public eye have been the growing numbers of people in their fifties and sixties starting new businesses, training for new careers, entering the Peace Corps, or joining the Experience Corps, a national program that engages people over 55 as tutors and mentors in low-performing elementary schools in 20 cities, including [Portland](#). Some of these people have retired, some have been laid off, and others are just ready for a change.

[Civic Ventures](#), a national nonprofit founded and led by Marc Freedman, author of *Encore: Finding Work that Matters in the Second Half of Life*, popularized the term **encore careers** to describe new directions inspired by a desire to give back. [Life by Design NW](#), a Portland-based nonprofit, uses the term more broadly. "We think of it more like an encore after a band plays," says Tami Matthews, a Life by Design NW supporter and formerly its communications director. "The band has been plugging away, playing some great tunes. Then they come back after a lot of applause to do some of their best numbers. That work might be a passion, a hobby, starting a business, social entrepreneurship, perhaps moving into a career you've always wanted to. And people may have more than one encore career."