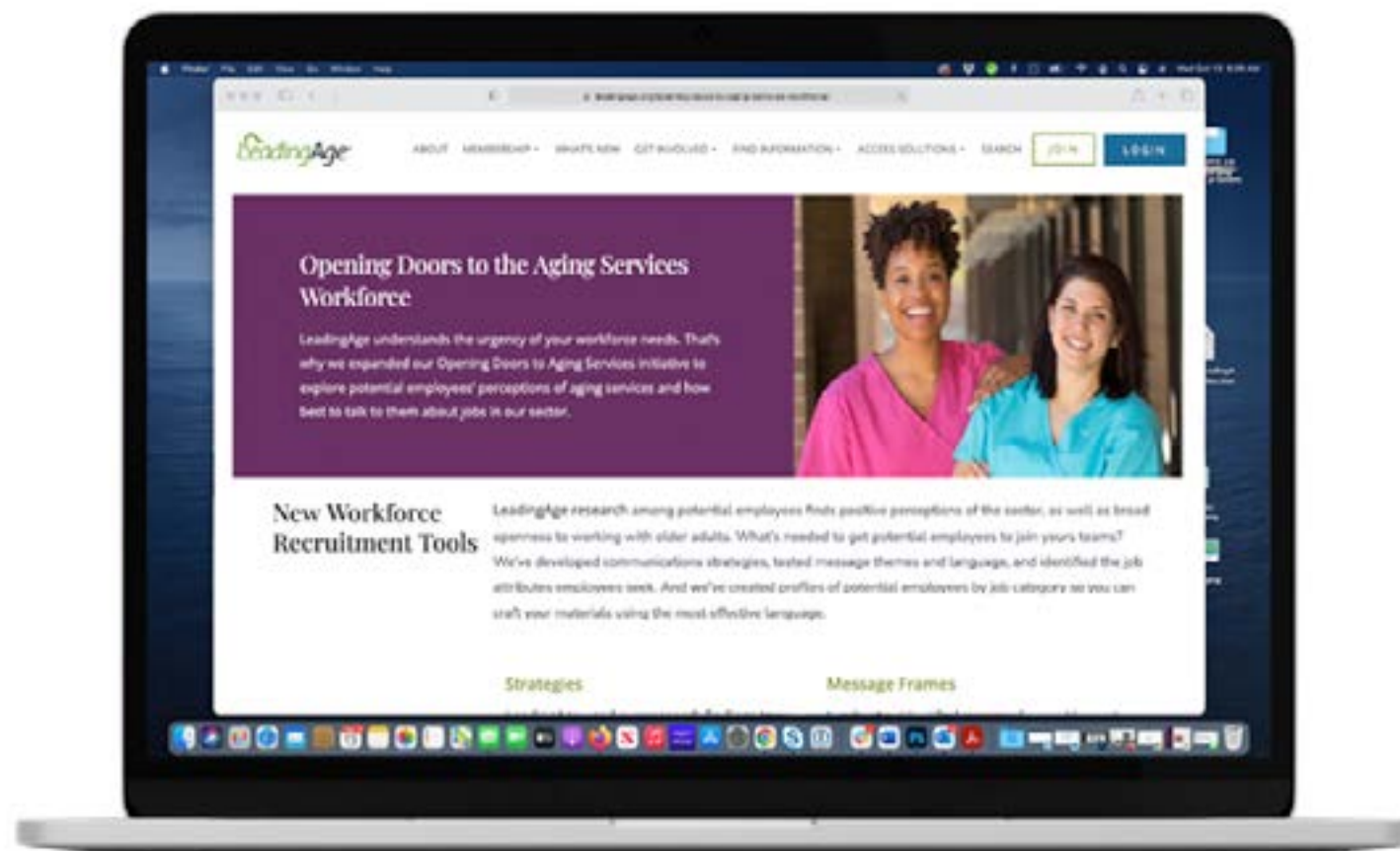


Opening Doors to the Aging Services Workforce

TOOLKIT FOR RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATIONS

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WHAT IS OPENING DOORS?

[Opening Doors to Aging Services](#) is a research-based communications initiative to help providers introduce the public to the full continuum of quality aging services. This multi-year, national-local effort was developed for LeadingAge members and the entire field to help improve public perceptions of our sector.

The initiative, which debuted in 2021, addresses long-standing member concerns about public views and understanding of aging services, which the COVID pandemic eroded. Opening Doors strategies help LeadingAge members serve as the trusted voice for aging—and to make America a better place to grow old.

Now, with members intently focused on recruiting additional employees, LeadingAge developed [Opening Doors to the Aging Services Workforce](#). Built on national market research of potential employees, the new resources provide members communications strategies and insights on what potential employees seek and how to prepare recruitment communications to better capture prospects' attention.

The two phases of this initiative advance our work to find dedicated employees to deliver the quality care and services older adults and their families need. We hope you find the resources useful!



MESSAGE TO LEADINGAGE MEMBERS



DEAR LEADINGAGE MEMBERS,

LeadingAge understands that workforce strains are *the* most pressing priority for our mission-driven members. That's why we've enhanced our work supporting your recruitment and retention efforts across LeadingAge programs and events.

We are pleased to share that we expanded our groundbreaking [Opening Doors to Aging Services](#) initiative to explore potential employees' perceptions of aging services jobs and provide communications tools on how best to talk to them about employment in our field.

Informed by national market research, [Opening Doors to the Aging Services Workforce](#) provides you easy-to-use strategies, messages, messenger recommendations, and job profiles to boost your efforts. These tools will help you craft job postings that catch the attention of potential employees open to jobs in our field.

Understanding potential aging services employees and how to communicate with them is critical to increasing applicants and getting new team members on board. We hope these tools help you reach your staffing goals as you deliver excellent, essential services to older adults and their families.



Susan Donley
Senior Vice President
Marketing and Communications

FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

Understanding potential aging services employees is more important than ever, as LeadingAge provider members are in dire need of staff in all roles. That's why LeadingAge expanded our [Opening Doors to Aging Services](#) initiative to explore potential employees' perceptions of aging services jobs and identify how best to communicate with them about employment in our field.

This new [Opening Doors to the Aging Services Workforce](#) research, including focus groups and a national survey, finds strong openness to work in a range of jobs at aging services organizations and identifies potential employees' preferred job attributes and benefits, beyond wages. Through a national survey of potential employees (U.S. adults 18-54, less than a college degree, and are open to a new job working with older adults), LeadingAge found:

- Seventy-five percent of potential employees would apply for a job in the sector today.
- More than four times as many potential employees hold positive perceptions of the aging services field than negative: 58% positive, 13% negative, with 29% neither positive nor negative.
- That number increases among potential employees who are previous consumers of aging services: 62% hold positive views (which is nine points higher than potential employees who have not been a consumer, 53% positive).

To help providers turn interest into action, LeadingAge explored the attributes and benefits potential employees value beyond wages. Important findings include:

- 64% of potential employees would consider a job with lower wages than desired—if the job offered better benefits and attributes.
- Top attributes that potential employees seek include practical work-life balance considerations, such as stability, flexibility, consistent work hours, and transportation; benefits include paid time off and affordable health care.
- [The findings](#) are available to review.



“Opening Doors to the Aging Services Workforce is an extremely strategic, impactful and practical resource to all Member organizations. The well-researched and timely information should enable immediate integration into existing human resources plans, as well as in constructing entirely new approaches to the universally important priority of workforce recruitment and development. I’m very grateful to LeadingAge for the investment made on behalf of its membership in this critical initiative and encourage all Members to take full advantage of the numerous insights and tools that are provided.”

— Roger L. Myers

President & CEO, Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, Southfield

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

LeadingAge applied our findings to prepare a suite of tools to support your recruitment efforts. Craft your workforce communications around these core strategies and use our tested messages to capture potential candidates' attention.

LEAD WITH THE JOBS; NOT THE FIELD.

Many potential employees may not be *seeking* a job in aging services, but are *open* to it. What attracts potential employees may not be the field—it may be that sector jobs fit in their life or their ability to apply their skill set. To pique the interest of potential employees, lead your communications with info about the jobs you seek to fill.

SPEAK TO BOTH UNEMPLOYED AND CURRENTLY EMPLOYED POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES.

Seventy percent of potential employees already have a job, so it is important that your job announcements appeal to and reach them.

Those who are already employed need to see your job as a *better* job, and lifestyle attributes and benefits are core to motivating them to make a switch. Ensure your job announcements convey this.

FOCUS ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF “GOOD JOBS.”

Potential employees view “good jobs” as those that meet their core needs and offer practical attributes. Ensure that information is front-and-center in your ads, recruitment language and job descriptions.

For example:

- Got part-time roles? Half of potential employees desire part-time positions. Emphasize that option, when available
- Practical attributes like stability and flexibility are important to many potential employees.
- Paid time off is highly desired.
- See How to Talk to Potential Employees for the attributes that are most important to potential employees by job type.

A note on wages: Two-thirds of potential employees will accept jobs with lower pay than desired—if other priority benefits and attributes are available. Given current challenges around increasing wages, aging services providers should use a combination of attributes and benefits to create the “good jobs” potential employees seek.

Crafting your materials this way will help entice unemployed potential employees who are searching for jobs with their desired attributes. It will also be alluring to the 70% of the potential workforce that is already employed to consider making a switch.



COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

ENLIST YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE MESSENGERS: CURRENT EMPLOYEES.

Professional caregivers and others working in aging services are the most trusted messengers about jobs in the field. Current clients/residents and their family members are also highly trusted.

Infuse the words and images of these respected messengers throughout your communications, especially about job opportunities. Show *what* team members do. Let them *tell* how rewarding and meaningful they find their job. Include clients/residents and family members expressing appreciation for the team member. They are so valuable as messengers incentivizing employees to recruit staff will likely be beneficial.

COMMUNICATE WITH AUTHENTICITY: REAL INFORMATION; NOT SLOGANS.

Perceptions among potential employees are generally positive, but awareness is lacking. Be transparent and informative in your communications as you essentially are introducing your organization and the scope of your work.

Direct, information-based communications about the job duties, benefits, and rewards of working in an organization that shares potential employees' values are the most effective. Limit the clever marketing taglines.

“OPEN YOUR DOORS” TO SHOW THE RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR FIELD.

Potential employees are most likely not aware of the variety of jobs available at your organization (and across the sector). Give them information about the opportunities aging services offers, the people who conduct this essential work, the benefits to older adults, and the rewards of carrying out meaningful work.

Individuals already charting their career will see opportunities for themselves in aging services. Those looking for jobs that fit their lifestyle will see the range of jobs that offer the flexibility and other attributes they seek.

Let your heart shine through. Many potential employees seek not just a job—but a job with a purpose. All potential employees should see an opportunity to carry out fulfilling, meaningful work that makes a difference at *your* organization.

PAIR THE PRACTICAL ATTRIBUTES WITH MESSAGES THAT COMMUNICATE YOUR ORGANIZATION VALUES.

Many potential employees value a job that they can feel good about doing. Pair the practical job attributes with messages that convey people can find rewarding jobs/careers in your organization. If you build your communications to reflect your organizational values, employees can envision themselves making a difference—on your team!



MESSAGE FRAMES & SAMPLE MESSAGES

In our national survey and market research, LeadingAge identified multiple message frames (themes) that resonate well with potential employees. We recommend preparing your employment communications using the frames that best align with your organization's values—paired with the job attributes/benefits employees seek.

Text that illustrates the message frame is included for reference. The key phrases that align with each frame are highlighted. We recommend you modify the message text or craft your own language for the frame/s you use, so that your communications are authentic to your community.

NOTE: In our testing, we used language that was most familiar to the audience—even language that LeadingAge recommends avoiding (especially business words to describe nonprofit organizations). Please refer to the LeadingAge [Language Guide](#)

WORKING IN AGING SERVICES OFFERS ...

...the chance to do **Meaningful Work, Make a Difference**

You can **make a difference in someone else's life** when you take a job providing care and services for older adults. Taking care of someone **feels rewarding**—it's **meaningful work**.

...the gift of **Forming Strong Bonds**

Professional caregivers often **build a strong bond** with the older adults they support. You can **create relationships** with the wise, witty and interesting seniors you work with day-to-day. It's a **career that loves you back**.

...opportunities in a **Wide Range of Jobs**

A career in senior care is **much more diverse than you may think**. Whether you are a caretaker, a cook, a driver—you can **apply your skills to support older adults**.

...a way to help **Families Like Yours (Mine)**

For generations, **families have cared for their elders** so they can **live their best lives**. When you take a job providing care or support for older adults, you're **helping families keep the people they love healthy, happy and safe**.

...Flexibility & Benefits that support **Your Life**

Need a job that **works for your busy life**? Senior care companies offer part-time jobs with steady hours—so you can **earn a paycheck and be where you need to for your family**. Many even **offer transportation or childcare to make it just a little easier**.

...Stability

Americans live longer, healthier lives these days—so **opportunity is on the rise in the growing field** of supporting older adults. It's a stable job you can count on.

...the ability to **Support Your Community**

Just like your local businesses, schools and religious congregations, people who care for older adults are **part of how a community stays strong**. A job supporting older adults is a great way to help **keep your community happy, healthy, and moving forward**.

...a **Stepping Stone** to advance

From today's job as a caregiver, **you can grow** to be a certified nursing assistant, a licensed nurse practitioner, and even a director. A job working to provide care and support to older adults is **a job that keeps you advancing**.

...the chance to join an **Organization that Cares**

Mission-driven companies that care for older adults **value integrity, inclusion, and collaboration above the bottom line**. You can feel at home at a **company that cares**.

MESSENGERS

Potential employees most trust people already working in aging services for information about jobs within the sector. Current consumers of aging services are also trusted. Make sure to infuse your communications with these trusted messengers, using their words and images throughout your communications vehicles!

PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVER



PEOPLE WORKING IN AGING SERVICES



PEOPLE CURRENTLY USING AGING SERVICES



FAMILIES OF PEOPLE USING AGING SERVICES



HOW TO TALK TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES

Potential employees express an openness to consider a range of jobs available in the sector. Now we need to inspire potential employees to apply!

LeadingAge identified the attributes and benefits, as well as the message frames, that most resonate with potential employees for each job category. This data can guide you in preparing job descriptions, advertisements, social media posts, and in communicating with job applicants. Because good wages is a top consideration for all employees, these job profiles do not list wages. This list offers the top attributes in addition to good wages. We also share several job description examples that show you how to put it all together!

CAREGIVER

Top attributes:

- Good affordable healthcare
- A stable job
- Paid time off

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Wide range of jobs
- Strong bonds
- Families like yours
- Flexibility and benefits for your life

CULINARY

Top attributes:

- A stable job
- Good affordable healthcare
- Flexible work hours
- Paid time off

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Wide range of jobs
- Families like yours

CLINICAL CARE

Top attributes:

- Good affordable healthcare
- A stable job
- Paid time off

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Wide range of jobs
- Strong bonds
- Families like yours

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Top attributes:

- Good affordable healthcare
- A stable job
- Paid time off

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Wide range of jobs
- Strong bonds
- Families like yours

HOW TO TALK TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS

Top attributes:

- Good affordable healthcare
- A stable job
- Paid time off
- Flexible work hours

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Strong bonds
- Families like yours
- Wide range of jobs
- Flexibility and benefits for your life

LIFESTYLE PROFESSIONALS

Top attributes:

- Good affordable healthcare
- A stable job
- Paid time off
- Flexible work hours

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Strong bonds
- Families like yours
- Wide range of jobs
- Support your community

TRANSPORTATION

Top attributes:

- Good affordable healthcare
- A stable job
- Paid time off
- Flexible work hours

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Strong bonds
- Families like yours
- Wide range of jobs
- Flexibility and benefits for your life

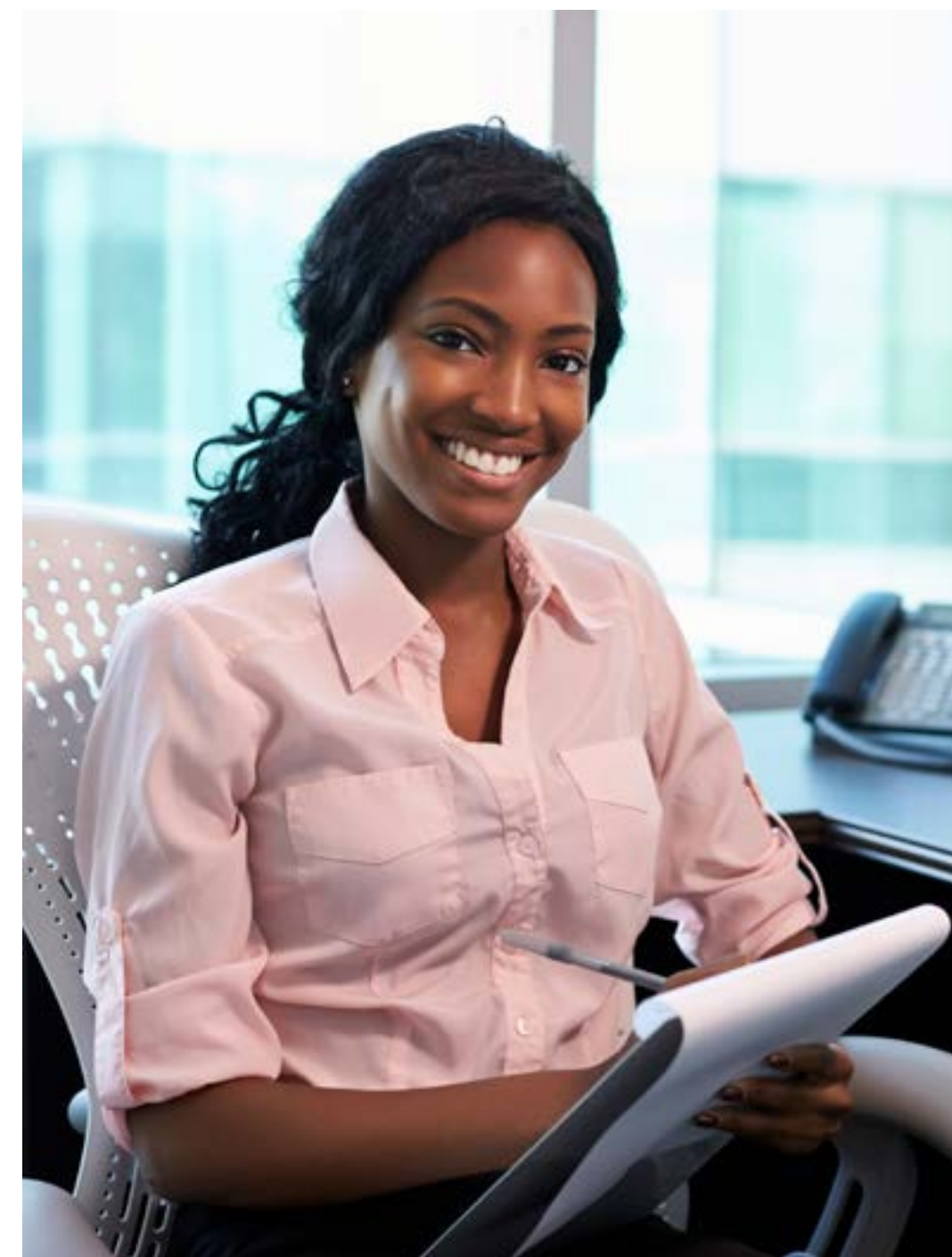
SERVICE COORDINATORS

Top attributes:

- Good affordable healthcare
- A stable job
- Paid time off

Top message frames:

- Meaningful work, make a difference
- Wide range of jobs
- Families like yours
- Strong bonds
- Support your community



HOW TO TALK TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES

SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVER POSTING.

Few jobs offer the opportunity to make a difference in another person's life every day. That's exactly what the professional caregivers at ABC Woods do. Our dedicated caregivers build strong, loving bonds with the older adults they care for, and in return they receive genuine appreciation from residents and their families. We offer these indispensable team members a stable job, with a range of benefits, including affordable health care and paid time off. Apply today!

SAMPLE CULINARY POSTING.

Looking to apply your creativity and personality where it can make a meaningful difference to people every day? Join the ABC Woods' culinary team. Our talented culinary staff use their skills in a wide range of jobs that let them build strong, personal connections with our appreciative residents. The icing on the cake: we offer a stable job, with the flexibility you need, as well as a benefits package including affordable health care. We'd love to talk to you!

SAMPLE HOUSEKEEPING POSTING.

Looking to feel good about your work at the end of the day? Jobs in housekeeping at ABC Woods offer a chance to make a positive difference in our residents' daily lives. Through this meaningful work, our team members form strong, caring connections with our residents. We demonstrate our respect for our essential team members with benefits including affordable health care, paid time off, and a stable job. We'd love to tell you more!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Watch [LeadingAge.org](https://leadingage.org) for the latest on workforce matters:
<https://leadingage.org/topic/workforce/>

For additional information on the aging services workforce, please see this recent research from the LeadingAge LTSS Center @ UMass Boston.

[Making Care Work Pay](#)

[Feeling Valued Because They are Valued](#)

[Creating a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Workplace Culture: An Overview](#)

[Creating a Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Workplace Culture: Perspectives of LeadingAge Members](#)