TEACHING ARTIST TRAINING

IN CREATIVE AGING:

A NATIONAL SURVEY

Aroha
PHILANTHROPIES

Lifetime Arts

TEACHING ARTIST TRAINING IN CREATIVE AGING: A NATIONAL SURVEY

Author: Lifetime Arts, Inc.
Lead Investigator: Hollis Headrick, Arts & Cultural Strategies, Inc.

Cover Image: Group photo of Hassan El-Amin (Teaching Artist) and participants from *Exploring Shakespeare* at the Skillman Southwestern Branch of the Dallas Public Library.

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ABOUT LIFETIME ARTS

Founded in 2008 as an arts service organization, Lifetime Arts is dedicated to improving the lives of older adults through arts education and is nationally recognized as a major contributor to the development of creative aging policies, best practices, training resources, technical assistance, and advocacy. www.lifetimearts.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a service to the emerging field of Creative Aging, Lifetime Arts conducted a national survey to investigate and disseminate a more complete picture of teaching artist training in the field. We sought to uncover successful models; identify the gaps in service; and help to set an agenda to establish best practices, funding priorities, and broad access. The survey was conducted between February 23, 2015 and April 13, 2015.

Disseminated to 150 arts organizations, the survey asked about their programming for older adults and whether and how they provide professional development for teaching artists. Fifty organizations from around the country responded, and of those, twenty-four participated in in-depth follow-up phone interviews.

The high percentage of respondents and the enthusiasm of the interviewees suggests a strong desire of those working in this field to talk about their work and to connect to other practitioners to share information.

RESULTS

In gathering and analyzing responses from 50 individuals, a few themes surfaced repeatedly across organization size, location and mission.

Ageism is pervasive and insidious. It exists even in those organizations committed to serving older adults. In our youth-centric culture, the needs and interests of older adults are simply not a priority. Ageism contributes the lack of progress in developing programs and artist training in Creative Aging.

> *Stereotyping—the assumption that all members of a group are the same—underlies ageism (as it does all "isms"). Stereotyping is always a mistake, but especially when it comes to age, because the older we get, the more different from one another we become.*
>
> *-Ashton Applewhite, www.thischairrocks.com*

There is no common language used among organizations that develop and deliver arts-based programs for older adults. Interview respondents reported that the general public does not use or understand the various terms that "Creative" or "Artful" Aging practitioners use. Further, and more importantly, the general public does not understand or value arts engagement for older adults.

As a parallel, there is no consensus on a standard approach to artist training. Rather, there is a continuum of training topics and formats offered by organizations to support artists working with a wide range of older adults. These include active and independent older adults, institutionalized frail elderly, intergenerational groups, and people with cognitive and/or physical challenges. There are no shared standards.

The vast majority of survey respondents (above 88%) agreed that the top five core competencies for teaching artists in the field are:

- Ability to plan programs.
- Ability to design a lesson plan; including modeling, demonstration, or differentiated instruction.
- Ability to collaborate with administrators or host organizations.
- Ability to work with a range of older adult populations (e.g. Active, independent, cognitively impaired, physically frail, etc.)
- Knowledge of and experience in a specific arts discipline.

However, through the follow-up interviews, a slightly different list of core competencies emerged:

- Professional arts experiences.
- Ability to collaborate with administrators or host organizations.
- An affinity for older adults.
- Knowledge and experience in a specific arts discipline.
- An understanding of the creative process.

Though more organizations are offering training, there is a shortage of employment opportunities for teaching artists in Creative Aging.

Insufficient and inconsistent funding is the biggest challenge to the growth of artist training in Creative Aging.

Foundations are the primary source of support for artist training, followed by government (state arts agencies, National Endowment for the Arts, other public sources).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was difficult for respondents to talk about artist training in a vacuum. Most talked about other issues in the field as well as the specifics of artist training. In order to strengthen the field of Creative Aging, respondents called for specific actions. These include:

- Increased advocacy and public awareness around the benefits of arts learning for an aging population.
- Consistent, frequent artist training based on agreed upon field-wide standards.
- Training opportunities that include mentoring and peer to peer networking.
- The inclusion of high quality instructional arts programs in the cultural plans of cities, states, and regions.
- A call to the philanthropic community to help catalyze artist training, increase in the number of creative aging programs and support new research and its dissemination.

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Karen Fitzgerald (Teaching Artist) poses for gesture drawing. Photo credit: Madlyn Scheider

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the nation's older population has grown dramatically. Each day, 10,000 Americans turn 65. New scholarship and new views on aging have emerged. As Americans are living longer and healthier lives, the perception of aging as a period of inevitable decline and loss has changed.

"Positive Aging" proponents celebrate growing older as a time ripe with the potential for personal growth, enhanced well-being, and civic engagement. Service providers, educators, government agencies, foundations and community organizations across the country are responding to these new views and transforming their services accordingly. Encore careers, Age-Friendly Communities, 50+ products, social media, and efforts to rethink senior centers are just a few initiatives that reflect the new emphasis on positive aging. Increasingly recognized as an important contributor to positive aging efforts, the field of Creative Aging focuses on the beneficial and powerful role of arts education in enhancing the quality of life for older adults.

Walter Perez (Teaching Artist) and participant dance at a culminating event for 'Movement, Memories, & Merengue' at the United Senior Citizen Center of Sunset Park in Brooklyn, NY. Photo credit: Herb Scher

Researchers are discovering that the aging brain is far more plastic than previously believed, and that structured learning – especially through the arts – has multiple benefits. A landmark 2006 study by Dr. Gene Cohen, *The Creativity and Aging Study* demonstrated that professionally conducted sequential arts-learning programs foster skills mastery and promote social engagement – two key ingredients for positive aging. Despite the importance of the new views on aging and creativity, a majority of arts and cultural organizations adhere to a traditional view of "senior services" that doesn't address the potential for creativity, learning, and social interaction to improve the quality of life for older adults.

> *Because an aging population is a new phenomenon, it's time for new knowledge, new practice, and new policy. In fact, what we need to do, is to reconceptualize our life courses to take into account the fact that we're going to live 80 or 90 years, and we all want do that well.*

> *–Dr. Ruth Finkelstein, Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center*

Organizations and institutions providing services to older adults have, concentrated their efforts in the social service sector, focusing on deficits or losses. What is missing from this approach are the needs and interests of mid-life or active older adults, many of whom are shifting into new phases of life and seeking ideas, activities, and resources for positive engagement.

When arts and cultural organizations do offer "arts" programs for older adults, they tend to be passive entertainment, rather than active, sustained learning opportunities, that are key to positive aging. In addition, organizations and individuals are influenced by longstanding traditions and learned attitudes about older adults that make it difficult to perceive this clientele as diverse and active creators, explorers and learners. The demand for new types of programs for older adults is increasing. There is a critical need to develop the capacity of arts and cultural organizations to respond to the needs and interests of today's older adults.

Skilled teaching artists are key to the quality and effectiveness of Creative Aging programming. They are being asked to design and deliver programs that address the potential for creativity, learning, and social engagement to improve the quality of life for older adults.

In order for Creative Aging programs to effectively transmit the principles of mastery and meaningful social engagement, teaching artists must be equipped with the skills that allow them to do so.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Our goals for the Survey were to investigate and disseminate a more complete national picture of teaching artist training in the field of Creative Aging; to uncover successful models, identify the gaps in service for best practices in the field; and to establish an agenda for funding priorities, and broad access.

Because little is known about how teaching artists are being prepared to work with older adults, the survey asked the following questions, among others:

- Who trains teaching artists to work with older adults?
- What specialized skills and knowledge are taught?
- How much does training cost and how are training programs supported?
- What are the employment prospects for teaching artists are in this field?
- What are the most pressing challenges to improving artist training?

METHODOLOGY

Via SurveyMonkey, Lifetime Arts disseminated a Survey (Appendix II) to 150 arts organizations in Spring 2015 asking about their programming for older adults and whether or not and how they provide professional development for teaching artists. Fifty organizations from around the country responded (Appendix I) and of those, twenty-four participated in detailed follow-up phone interviews (Appendix III).

150	50	24
Surveys Sent	Survey Responses	Phone Interviews

KEY FINDINGS

THE FIELD

Overlaying and exacerbating all the challenges of this work is the pervasiveness of ageism, which extends from institutional policies to the older adults themselves.

> *I don't think people outside the field understand or see the merits of engaging with older people. They think of it as being "nice" but not a serious endeavor – it's charity. Ageism is the issue.*
>
> ***-Respondent***

There is no common language used among organizations that develop and deliver arts based programs for older adults. The libraries, adult living communities or health care facilities that host these programs use a variety of terms. The most common is "Creative Aging," which is used to describe everything from art therapy in nursing homes to intensive skill-building programs in professional theaters. Recently, "Artful Aging" is being used more specifically to describe skills-based, instructional learning – or arts education types of programs. Interview respondents reported that the general public does not use or understand either of these terms. Further, and more importantly, the general public does not understand the value of arts engagement for older adults.

> *No, most people don't understand – they don't distinguish between art making and crafts; programmers are slow adopters and have biases; activity directors think about RECREATION, not creative expression.*
>
> ***-Respondent***

TRAINING

As a parallel, there is no consensus on a standard approach to artist training. Rather, there is a continuum of training topics and formats offered by organizations to support artists working with a wide range of older adults. These include active and independent older adults, institutionalized frail elderly, intergenerational groups, and people with cognitive and/or physical challenges. Training formats range from one-hour introductions to the field to multi-day intensives.

> *One shot is not enough – it's important to set the bar high for artists. We must have an effective way to supervise and mentor teaching artists. Training needs to be more than just a tool in a tool box. It requires an approach that is more long-term.*
>
> ***-Respondent***

The vast majority of survey respondents (above 88%) agreed that the top five core competencies for teaching artists in the field are:

- Ability to plan programs.
- Ability to design a lesson plan; including modeling, demonstration, or differentiated instruction.
- Ability to collaborate with administrators or host organizations.
- Ability to work with a range of older adult populations (e.g. Active, independent, cognitively impaired, physically frail, etc.)
- Knowledge of and experience in a specific arts discipline.

However, through the follow-up interviews, a slightly different list of core competencies emerged:

- Professional arts experiences.
- Ability to collaborate with administrators or host organizations.
- An affinity for older adults.
- Knowledge and experience in a specific arts discipline.
- An understanding of the creative process.

From left to right: 1) Participant performing "My Cheating Heart" at the Eastchester Public Library in Westchester County, NY. 2) Participant reading original story, crafted at the Parkslope Branch Library in Brooklyn NY. Photo credit: David Kumin 3) Participant writing at the Park Slope Branch Library in Brooklyn, NY. Photo credit: David Kumin 4) Teaching Artist, Annie Montgomery, giving feedback to a participant. Photo credit: Herb Scher. 5) Participant displaying her gesture drawing. Photo credit: Madlyn Schneider

Two-thirds of responding organizations offer creative aging training for teaching artists or staff, and some offer training as a service to the field. 78% train artists from their own roster or staff.

> *After you train people, how do you support them? – the follow-up is key – how do we do that? The virtual community, and online groups are not very effective – there must be new information and a reason to participate online.*
>
> *-Respondent*

Most organizations (60%) do not charge a fee for training. Some service-oriented organizations charge for training that is open to interested community artists. Very few (20%) organizations offer a training certificate once training is complete.

70% of organizations offer training for program partners such as librarians, adult care providers, recreation directors or educational staff.

Because artists typically work part-time for several employers, time for professional development is scarce. Artists are often faced with choosing between training or employment.

FUNDING

Insufficient funding is described by the majority of the respondents as the biggest challenge to the growth of artist training.

Foundations are the primary source of support (40%) for artist training, followed by government (25% i.e., state arts agencies, National Endowment for the Arts, other pubic sources).

55% of respondents use teaching artists on their roster or staff, or contract independent artists to facilitate programs. Other facilitators come from the ranks of artists without training in arts education, amateur artists, recreation personnel, and untrained volunteers

There is no dominant background shared by most artists. They work in K-12 and higher education, after school programs, community arts schools, and adult evening programs.

Though more organizations are offering training, there is a shortage of employment opportunities for teaching artists in Creative Aging.
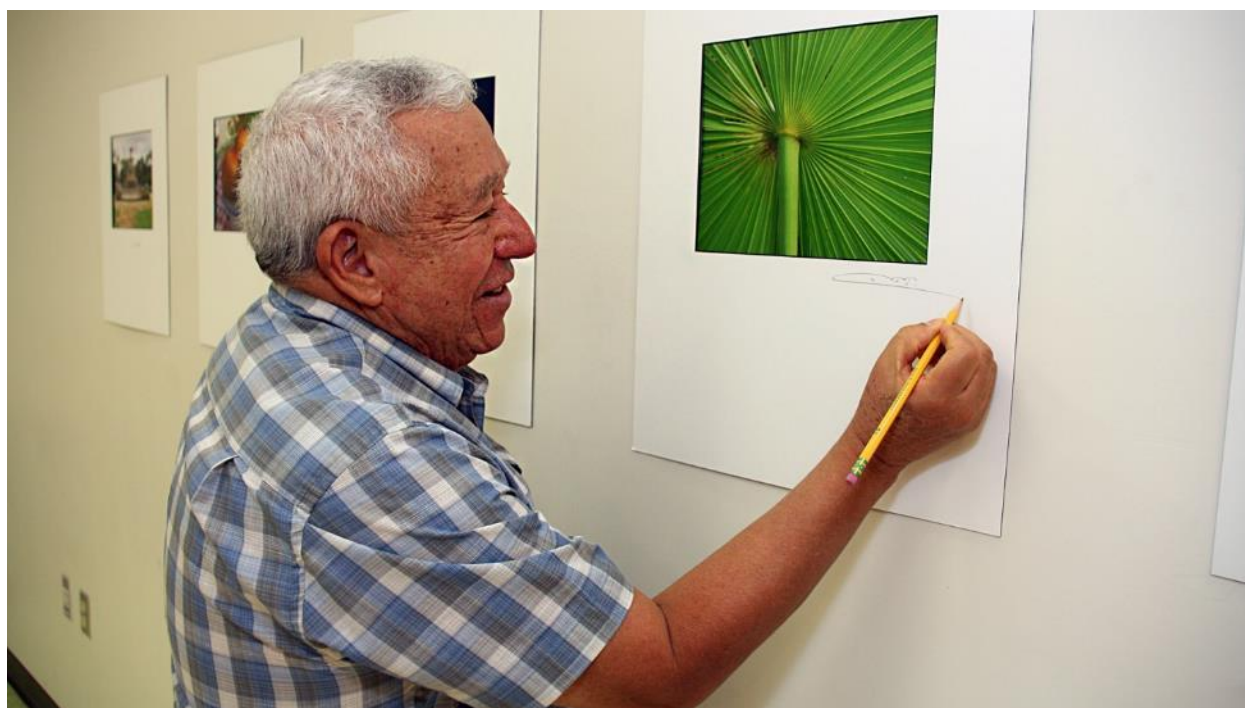
Participant signs his artwork at the Arcola Lakes Branch of the Miami-Dade Public Library System.

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE FIELD

Creative Aging stakeholders need to advocate for and build public awareness around the benefits of arts learning for an aging population.

Community schools of the arts should consider using their facilities for older adult programs before mid-afternoon, when most school-aged students come for lessons.

Adult living communities should consider arts education programming to improve their services and attract new clients.

The arts, aging, philanthropy, community development and government sectors should establish cross-sector partnerships to support Creative Aging.

Elizabeth Anker and the chorus from the Jamaica Plains Branch Library in Boston, MA.

TRAINING

Creative Aging practitioners need to develop comprehensive standards-based artist training that includes recognized best practices in arts education, discipline-specific teaching strategies, as well as on-going support through mentoring and peer to peer sharing.

Creative Aging practitioners need to extend training to host organization partners in order to build sustainable programming.

Creative Aging artist training should become normative, much like the accepted practice of professional development for teaching artists in K-12, after-school, and summer programs.

State, regional, and local arts councils should increase and improve their training programs for teaching artists and/or fund organizations to train artists in Creative Aging.

FUNDING

Foundations, government and other funders should provide general operating support to keep organizations healthy as the field grows.

Creative Aging stakeholders should advocate for Creative Aging programs to be accepted for Medicare reimbursement – like gym memberships.

PROMOTION & ADVOCACY

The philanthropic community should be encouraged to catalyze training, seed creative aging programs, support new research and its dissemination.

Creative Aging practitioners should employ all modes of media to document and broadly disseminate successful Creative Aging programs in order to build public awareness.

Creative Aging stakeholders should advocate for city, county, and regional cultural plans to include arts and creative education for older adults as a public good.

> *Denial, people don't want to talk about it. We need to stress that we are the good news in aging.*
>
> *-Respondent*

Joan Green performing with her students at the Grove Hall Branch Library in Boston, MA.

APPENDIX I: ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED

- Alaska State Council on the Arts
- Alzheimer's Poetry Project
- Arizona Commission on the Arts*
- ArtAge Senior Theatre Resource Center*
- Artful Aging Associates*
- Arts & Minds*
- Arts for Life Network of NJ
- Arts for the Aging, Inc. (AFTA)*
- ArtSage*
- Artstreams: From the Well of Memory
- Brooklyn Arts Council*
- Center for Modern Dance Education
- COMPAS, Inc.*
- Creative Aging Cincinnati
- Dance Exchange*
- Danceworks, Inc.
- Elders Share the Arts*
- Encore Creativity for Older Adults*
- EngAGE*
- Executive Director
- Goddard House
- Golden Tones Inc.
- GoldMind Arts LLC
- Heritage Theatre Artists' Consortium
- Intergeneration Orchestra of Omaha
- Iona Senior Services*
- JF&CS
- Kairos Alive!*
- Lifetime Arts
- Lutheran Senior Life Passavant Community
- MacPhail Center for Music, Music for Life™
- Mesa Arts Center
- MoMA
- Museum of Photographic Arts*
- National Center for Creative Aging*
- National Guild for Community Arts Education*
- NCJW New York
- Oklahoma Arts Council*
- Resounding Joy
- Opening Minds Through Art*
- Stagebridge*
- The Creative Center at University Settlement*
- The Music and Motion Company
- The PALETTE Program
- Tidewater Arts Outreach*
- TimeSlips*
- Unforgettable Art Programs
- Wartburg Adult Care Community*

*Participated in phone interview

APPENDIX II: SURVEY QUESTIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

1. Contact Information

2. May we contact you to arrange a follow- up interview?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Type of Organization (check all that apply)
   - Creative aging organization
   - Arts & education organization
   - State arts council
   - Local arts council
   - Community school of the arts
   - Arts service organization
   - Museum
   - Visual arts organization
   - Performing arts organization
   - Literary arts organization
   - Other (please specify)

4. Service Area (check all that apply)
   - Urban
   - Suburban
   - Rural
   - Local
   - Statewide
   - Regional
   - National

5. Operational Budget
   - <100k
   - 100k-250k
   - 250k-500k
   - 500k-1 mil
   - >1 mil

6. What percentage of the people you serve are older adults 55+?
   - 0%-20%
   - 21%-40%
   - 41%-60%
   - 61%-80%
   - 81%-100%

7. Do you have a Teaching Artist Roster?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Do you offer educational programs?
   - Yes
   - No

9. Who facilitates your educational programs? (Check all that apply)
   - Internal program staff
   - Teaching artists on staff
   - Teaching artists from your roster
   - Outside consultants
   - Independent teaching artists
   - Other (please specify)

10. What populations do your educational programs serve? (Check all that apply)
- Pre-K
- K-12
- Teens
- Higher education
- Adults
- Older adults 55+

11. Are you interested in programming specifically for older adults 55+?
- Yes
- No

12. Which older adult populations do you serve? (Check all that apply)
- Active older adults
- Cognitively impaired/memory loss/Alzheimer's
- Institutionalized frail elderly
- Other (please specify)

13. Which of the following types of programs do you offer? (Check all that apply)
- Art instruction (i.e. visual, dance, theater, music)
- Art therapies
- Intergenerational
- Lectures/performances/ tours/exhibits
- Health & wellness
- Other (please specify)

14. Where do you offer programs?
- On-site
- Off-site
- Both

15. If any programs are offered off-site, please check all that apply.
- Independent living
- Assisted living
- 55+ living sites
- Memory care facility
- Skilled nursing facility
- Naturally occurring retirement community (NORC)
- Public schools
- Higher education
- Public libraries
- Senior centers
- Hospitals
- Other (please specify)

16. Which populations are you interested in serving? (Check all that apply)
- Active older adults
- Cognitively impaired/memory loss/Alzheimer's
- Institutionalized frail elderly
- Senior housing populations
- Other (please specify)

17. What types of programming are you interested in? (Check all that apply)
- Art instruction
- Art therapies
- Intergenerational
- Lectures/performance/tours
- Health & wellness
- Other (please specify)

18. Do you train artists?
- Yes
- No

19. For which groups do you train teaching artists? (Check all that apply)
    - Pre-K
    - K-12
    - Higher education
    - Community
    - Intergenerational
    - Adults
    - Older adults 55+ (creative aging

20. Are you interested in training artists to work with older adults 55+?
    - Yes
    - No

21. If yes, what kind of training do you need?

22. What barriers exist that prevent your organization from training artists to work with older adults 55+?

CREATIVE AGING TRAINING FOR TEACHING ARTISTS

23. Have you identified core competencies for teaching artists working with older adults?
    - Yes
    - No

24. If yes, please check all that apply.
    - Knowledge of and experience in a specific arts discipline including its history, theory, and practice
    - Understanding of the creative process (e.g. inspiration, planning, developing an idea, using materials and techniques, expression)
    - Abilities to manage time and classroom environments
    - Understanding the hallmarks of adult learning and human development
    - Ability to plan programs
    - Ability to work with administrators or host organizations
    - Ability to plan a lesson, including modeling, demonstration, or differentiated instruction
    - Ability to employ evaluation and assessment strategies and practices
    - Ability to work with a range older adult populations (e.g. cognitively impaired, physically frail)
    - Other (please specify)

25. Who delivers the training?
    - Internal staff
    - Outside consultants
    - Both

26. Which artists do you train? (Check all that apply)
    - Artists from our roster
    - Independent artists
    - Artists from other organizations
    - Other (please specify)

27. Are there any prerequisites for participation in creative aging training?
- Yes
- No

28. If yes, check all that apply.
- Teaching experience
- Professional arts experience (e.g. performances, publications, recordings, exhibitions)
- Education/training
- Certifications
- Experience working with older adults
- Other (please specify)

29. What is the training format? (Check all that apply)
- Online
- In person (e.g. workshops, classes, seminars)
- Mentorship
- Coaching
- Technical assistance
- Peer-to-peer network
- Other (please specify)

30. What is the duration of the training? (Check all that apply)
- Half day
- Full day
- Multi-day
- Ongoing
- Other (please specify)

31. What are the training topics? (Check all that apply)
- Field of creative aging
- Research on creative aging
- Older adult demographics
- Adult learning
- Inter-generational programs
- Discipline specific programs
- Arts and healthcare (e.g. Alzheimer's, cognitive impairment)
- Teaching strategies
- Curriculum development
- Best practices
- Evaluation
- Partnership development
- Marketing/promotion
- Sustainability
- Funding
- Other (please specify)

32. How often do you conduct creative aging training (i.e. weekly, monthly, dependent on funding)?

33. What training resource materials are provided? (Check all that apply)
- Sample lesson plans
- Power point presentations
- Bibliographies
- Videos
- Online resources
- Other (please specify)

34. Is there a fee to participate in the training?
- Yes
- No

35. What is the funding source for the training? (Check all that apply)
   - Government
   - Foundation
   - Sponsorship
   - Registration fees
   - Other (please specify)

36. How do you promote your training? (Check all that apply)
   - Website
   - E-mail blast
   - Print media
   - Paid advertisement
   - Word of mouth
   - Other (please specify)

37. Does your training confer certification or accreditation of any kind?
   - Yes, please explain
   - No

38. Do you provide creative aging training for groups other than teaching artists?
   - Yes
   - No

39. If yes, for whom? (Check all that apply)
   - Administrative staff
   - Educational staff
   - Senior service providers
   - Other (please specify)

40. What are your challenges in training teaching artists to work with older adults?

41. What are your successes in training teaching artists to work with older adults?

42. Additional comments?

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I.   POPULATIONS AND PROGRAMS

- What is the motivation for offering artist training?
- Which older adult populations participate in your creative aging arts programs? Please be specific.
- How would you describe the duration, format, content, and teaching process in your programs?
- In your experience, is there an understanding about the value of creative aging programs for older adults? Also, is there an understanding from your administration, board, constituency, and artists)?
- Is there demand in your area for this type of programming?

IIA.   ARTIST TRAINING (CURRENTLY OFFERING TRAINING)

- What are the most important core competencies for teaching artists and/or staff (refer to survey question #24)?
- Who are the teaching artists or staff members that teach your programs? How do find or recruit them? Do most of them have experience teaching K-12 and/or older adults?
- If you train artists to work with both active older adults and adults with memory loss for example – do you differentiate your training? how?
- How do you articulate the difference between art therapies and creative aging programming?
- What is the motivation for artists to participate in your training and/or to be employed by your organization, (i.e., interest in older adults, lack of teaching opportunities in K-12 or other age groups, etc.)?
- What is the role of experienced teaching artists in the development of the orientation, training, and/or workshop content for new teaching artists or staff?
- What are the funding sources for the training of artists or staff for your creative aging programs? Do you charge a fee for the training?
- How do you evaluate your training?
- Do you get requests for training from artists who want to become teaching artists – specifically to work with older adults? How do you support them?
- What are the challenges to plan and deliver training (i.e., time, funding, recruitment, experienced trainers, etc.)?
- If funding was not an obstacle, what would the training look like? (i.e. How would you staff, how would you recruit, would you charge, would you pay the artists to receive training, etc.) Why?

IIB.   ARTIST TRAINING (NOT CURRENTLY OFFERING TRAINING, BUT INTERESTED)

- If there were no obstacles, what would the training look like? (i.e., How would you staff training, how would you recruit, would you charge, would you pay the artists to receive training, etc.?)
- If you answered that there are no barriers to offering training and you are interested, do you plan to begin artist training in the future?