

The National Council on the Aging (NCOA)

- **Goals:** Founded in 1950, The National Council on the Aging is the nation's first charitable organization dedicated to promoting the dignity, independence, well-being and contributions of older Americans. NCOA serves as a national voice and powerful advocate on behalf of older Americans. NCOA is an innovator, developing programs such as BenefitsCheckUp®, Foster Grandparents and Family Friends. NCOA is an activator, working with its 3,500 community organization members nationwide to provide needed services to older people. For more information on NCOA, visit www.ncoa.org.

The National Council on the Aging has recently begun a broad-based, grant-funded effort to increase civic engagement among older Americans. *The Collaborative for Civic Engagement* is a three-year initiative designed to 1) increase awareness and understanding among policymakers, journalists, volunteer organizations and community leaders about the resource potential of older adults; 2) achieve significant advancements in public policies and organizational practices that will result in more older adults becoming involved in volunteer service and work opportunities; and 3) help national non-profits realize enhanced capacity to meet community needs through the effective engagement of older adults.

This initiative will mobilize a Corps of Veteran Journalists to produce an hour-long PBS documentary for national distribution. The documentary will be accompanied by discussion groups at the local level among leaders of community-based organizations to address the barriers issue and identify best practices. In addition to a project Web site, the initiative will produce research to learn what the government and voluntary sectors can do to increase the civic engagement among older adults, and disseminate public policy papers and seek legislative action.

BenefitsCheckUp® is the first of its kind Web-based service designed to help older Americans, their families, caregivers and community organizations determine quickly and easily what benefits they qualify for and how to claim them. Since the service was launched in June 2001, 1 million eligibility reports have been completed. As part of its BenefitsCheckUp® efforts to reach out to seniors nationwide, the NCOA has partnered with AARP in 2003, using their vast volunteer network and communications resources to get the word out, especially to low-income seniors and their families. For example, AARP has produced a video news release and a short video documentary for use in recruiting volunteers and educating community organizations about the free Web-based service for seniors, their families and caregivers.

- **Chapters, affiliates, members:** The NCOA has some 3,500 members including senior centers, congregate meal sites, faith congregations and area agencies on aging. We also have six regional offices in Hempstead, NY; Los Angeles; Maine; Portland, OR; San Francisco and San Jose. These offices primarily handle training and placing seniors as part of our workforce development program.
- **Best way to contact:** National Organization
 - **General questions/media contact:** Scott Parkin, 202-479-6975 scott.parkin@ncoa.org
 - **BenefitsCheckUp:** Deborah Briceland-Betts, 202-479-6618 deborah.briceland-betts@ncoa.org
 - **Civic Engagement:** Sabrina Reilly, 202-479-6680 sabrina.reilly@ncoa.org
 - **NCOA Headquarters**
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 - www.ncoa.org
- **Resources:** Expertise and possible source for programming/PSAs
- **Collaboration with public broadcasting:** Only through "Spotlight On" interviews with CEO James Firman in past year.
- **Local chapter affiliation:** None that we know of.
- **Engagement program areas of interest:** health, elderly and public affairs