

Methodology: Older Adults Workforce Focus Groups

Pew contracted with SSRS, an independent research company based in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, to conduct focus groups with Philadelphians age 65 or older to better understand the experiences of aging in the city, both for those who are retired and for those who are still working for pay. The goal was to recruit participants from varied backgrounds.

Originally, 30 individuals participated in the focus groups. However, four participants were ultimately excluded from the analysis; these participants had said in the recruitment screener that they lived within the city limits but were later identified as living in areas surrounding Philadelphia. As such, a total of 26 participants—ranging in age from 67 to 84—were included in this analysis.

The 26 participants were separated by employment status into four focus groups, two of which consisted of individuals who are still working or considering returning to work, and two of which included individuals no longer working for pay, referred to as the “retired” groups.

All groups convened in September 2025. Two met in person—one at Sago, a market research facility in Center City, and one at Logan Library in North Philadelphia. And two groups met virtually via Zoom.

Table 1: Focus Group Composition

Work status/category	Meeting details	Number of participants	Age range
Working for pay or returning to work	In person, at Sago Philadelphia Sept. 4, 2025	6	67-71
	Virtual, via Zoom Sept. 9, 2025	5	67-77
Retired/no longer working for pay	In person, at Logan Library Sept. 4, 2025	7	68-77
	Virtual, via Zoom Sept. 9, 2025	8	70-84

Focus groups are qualitative in nature, offering unique and valuable insights into individual experiences. But findings are not intended to be generalizable to the full population of older adults in Philadelphia. As such, efforts were made to diversify the experiences represented by focus group participants to the extent possible. Still, there were groups of older adults that were inadvertently unrepresented in the focus groups, including Asian and Hispanic or Latino participants. Additionally, older individuals living in non-independent settings, such as long-term care facilities, were not included in the

scope of the research. We acknowledge that participants from one or more of these groups may have unique experiences not reflected in the findings.

Throughout the report, direct quotes from participants are included, along with details about the individuals, while remaining anonymized. In some cases, quotes were edited for clarity and brevity.

Table 2: Focus Group Participant Characteristics

Demographic	Category	N=26
Gender	Female	18
	Male	8
Age	65-69	10
	70-74	10
	75-80	4
	Over 80	2
Race and ethnicity	White	9
	Black or African American	16
	Hispanic or Latino	0
	Asian	0
	American Indian or Alaska Native and Black or African American	1
Neighborhood	Center City	4
	North Philadelphia—upper and lower	2
	Northeast Philadelphia	4
	Northwest Philadelphia/Mt. Airy	9
	South Philadelphia	3
	West Philadelphia	4
Work status	Working full time	1
	Working part time	7
	Retired but looking for work	3
	Retired and not looking for work	15
Homeownership status	Owns a home	16
	Rents a home	10
Level of financial stability	Very well off financially	2
	Doing well, with a high level of financial security	2
	Comfortable and financially stable	6
	Getting by, but with limited financial security	15
	Struggling to make ends meet	1