

# Retirees In Service to the Environment

# RISE

## What is the RISE Program?

The Retirees in Service to the Environment (RISE) Program responds to the intersection of two critical trends – mounting concern about environmental sustainability and the growing aging population. Retirees are an underutilized resource who have the time, talent, and skills to help address issues like climate change, air and water pollution, waste management, and the protection of natural resources.

The RISE Program is an evidence-based **environmental education and leadership training program** for adults over 60 created by the Cornell Institute for Translation Research on Aging (CITRA). Run by local sponsoring organizations, the RISE Program provides participants with leadership and communication skill training and environmental education, and it culminates in a capstone stewardship project to benefit the community.

*“A chance to learn. A chance to give back. A chance to help the future generations...”*

*- RISE participant*

*“This is a rare opportunity to get a concentrated overview of many environmental issues & some of the people involved in the solutions!”*

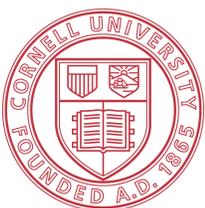
*- RISE participant*



Participants learn about water quality on a floating classroom

## Education and Volunteerism

- Sponsored by local organizations
- Leadership and communication skill training
- Workshops from experts on environmental issues
- Rewarding volunteer stewardship opportunities



Cornell University

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Participants learn about solar energy and tour a solar-powered home

## Components of RISE

The RISE Program consists of three components, all critical to the success of the program:

***Introductory workshop*** to introduce participants to the program and develop leadership and communication skills that will help them be successful environmental volunteers.

***Environmental education workshops*** led by expert speakers. Varied format from traditional lectures to fieldtrips.

***Capstone stewardship project*** to benefit the local community. RISE culminates in a group or individual environmental volunteer projects, and encourages participants to become active environmental volunteers.

## What is the goal of RISE?

The primary goal of RISE is to create a new pool of environmental leaders (also known as environmental stewards) who will play an active role in addressing environmental issues in their communities. The program provides participants with several different types of learning experiences to strengthen their leadership capabilities and encourage community engagement. The program also strives to promote active aging to improve the health and well-being of older adults.

### Environmental Leadership

RISE provides leadership and communication skill training to improve participants' confidence and effectiveness as environmental volunteers.

### Expert Factual Knowledge

The program provides factual knowledge from expert speakers about pressing environmental issues such as climate change, water quality, soil contaminants, waste management, and energy use.

### Benefits to the Local Community

RISE is a hands-on learning experience, including field trips and a capstone stewardship project in the community related to environmental sustainability. The program also promotes ongoing environmental volunteerism following the program.



Participants attend introductory workshop

# Sponsor Roles

Sponsoring organizations who run the RISE Program should have experience in conducting community-based educational programs, including participant and speaker recruitment.

They should also have familiarity with older adult learning styles.

The role of the sponsoring organizations include:

- Recruiting RISE participants
- Recruiting scientific experts for the environmental education workshops
- Facilitating the leadership and communication skill training
- Coordinating field trips, as needed
- Supporting participants' capstone stewardship projects
- Encouraging ongoing environmental volunteerism



Participants engage in stream cleanup as part of a capstone stewardship project

## Who should sponsor RISE?

The program can be successfully run by organizations serving older adults or organizations dedicated to environmental education. Aging services organizations could include senior centers, senior housing organizations, Area Agencies on Aging, or Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs. Environmental education organizations could include conservation or sustainability organizations, nature centers, or environmental programs at colleges or universities.

We recommend that sponsors consider a partnership between an aging services organization and an environmental organization. This partnership approach gives all the members of the implementation team greater opportunities to expand community involvement, recruit a larger and more diverse group of participants, and divide key roles and responsibilities in its delivery.

The RISE Program is based on the best available research evidence and practices in the field, including an extensive program evaluation conducted at Cornell University. The program materials provide guidance and best practices that make it easy to run the program for any organization.

# How do you sponsor RISE?

For those interested in running the RISE Program in their own community, a detailed **training manual** is available for no cost at:

<http://citra-rise.human.cornell.edu>

The manual provides an overview of the goals and activities of the RISE Program and describes all the exercises in detail. It also includes handouts and other resources and materials designed to help with the delivery of the program.

Although the manual provides all the information needed to conduct the program, we strongly encourage you to contact us as you begin planning RISE. Our staff are available to advise you and answer any questions you might have about the program.

## About CITRA

The Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA) promotes translational research on aging, including the development, implementation, and dissemination of innovative, evidence-based intervention programs.

CITRA was founded in 1993 as an Edward R. Roybal Center funded by the National Institute on Aging. CITRA is located in the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research at Cornell University.

## Contact Us

We strongly encourage you to **contact us** if you are interested in sponsoring the RISE Program in your own community.

Please contact us at:

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Visit us on the web at:

<http://citra-rise.human.cornell.edu>

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*“The RISE Program brought back people to thinking about the environment, that it does matter for them, their children, their grandchildren.” - RISE sponsor*

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