

CITRA's Retirees in Service to the Environment (RISE) Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the goal of the RISE Program?

The goal of the RISE Program is to create a new pool of environmental leaders who will play an active role in addressing environmental issues in their own communities. The RISE Program provides retirees with several different 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.

2. Who should run the RISE Program?

Any environmental education organization or aging services organization can run the program in their community. We recommend considering a partnership between an environmental education organization and an aging services organization to share implementation efforts. Sponsoring organizations should have experience in conducting community-based educational programs, including participant and speaker recruitment. They should also have familiarity with older adult learning styles.

3. Who can participate in the program?

The RISE Program is intended for retirees over the age of 60. The workshops can be held in accessible locations and the activities can be modified to make it easier for participants with limited mobility to take part in all aspects of the program. It may also be possible to make components of the program virtual based on the needs of participants and/or speakers.

4. What is the structure of the RISE Program?

The RISE Program consists of three components, beginning with an introductory workshop focused on leadership and communication skill building. The workshop is followed by environmental workshops where expert speakers provide factual knowledge on pressing environmental issues. The program culminates in a capstone stewardship project in the community where participants use what they have learned to engage in an environmental volunteer project of their choice.

5. What are the expected benefits of the program?

Participating in a volunteer program like RISE offers multiple health and wellness benefits to participating volunteers. Research suggests that volunteering in later life leads to better physical functioning, improved psychological well-being, and increased life expectancy. The program also provides participants with leadership and communication skill training and factual knowledge from expert speakers about environmental issues. There are also benefits to local communities since participants engage in a capstone stewardship project in the community and become active environmental volunteers.

6. How much does the RISE Program cost to implement?

Direct costs for the program are relatively small. Environmental speakers typically volunteer their time, and meeting space is usually donated by a sponsoring organization. The most significant potential costs are for transportation for any field trips during the training sessions. We estimate that the program can be implemented for approximately \$500. This includes the cost for transportation, refreshments, and any handouts.

7. How to get more information?

For more information about the RISE Program, contact the Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA) by email at citrainfo@cornell.edu. You can also find more information and training materials online at <http://citra-rise.human.cornell.edu/>.