

Impact of Eligibility Age on Elder Camping Passes

Introductory Statement

Members of the Budget Committee have asked the Elders Committee to consider increasing the age of eligibility for becoming OCF Elders to 60 years of age, either immediately or through a phased-in approach. The current requirement established by the OCF Board of Directors is 55 years of age and requires the applicant to have completed at least 20 years of service.

The Elders Committee appointed a sub-committee to study the impact of this change on OCF members and the effectiveness of the policy change on the problem identified by the Budget Committee, specifically the large number of overnight campers at the event.

The subcommittee has gathered data and supporting information from various sources and our findings are summarized in this presentation.

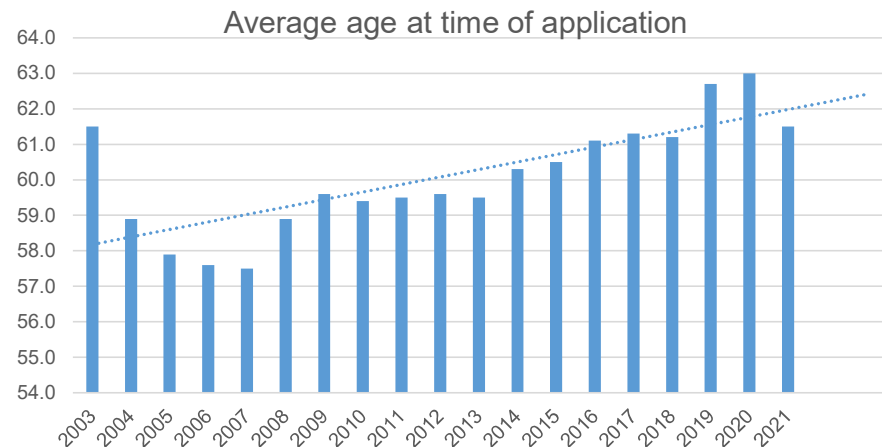
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Increasing the Elder eligibility age reduces potential camping passes for 5 years then offers no reduction going forward. The principal applies to any 5 year period. This data shows approved status only, actual Mean wristbands requested are in the range of 62-65% of total Elders.

Calendar Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2010-2018 Total
Average age of applicants	59.4	59.5	59.6	59.5	60.3	60.5	61.1	61.3	61.2	
Year total applicants	87	95	99	119	61	94	99	113	93	
55	20	22	25	37	13	23	18	24	6	
56	8	13	4	12	4	9	8	7	7	
57	9	4	15	5	1	6	7	11	12	
58	8	6	6	9	7	4	6	6	10	
59	7	14	9	8	7	3	3	5	10	
Total applicants 55-59	52	59	59	71	32	45	42	53	45	458
Increase to 60 in 2010	0	0	0	0	0	318	42	53	45	458

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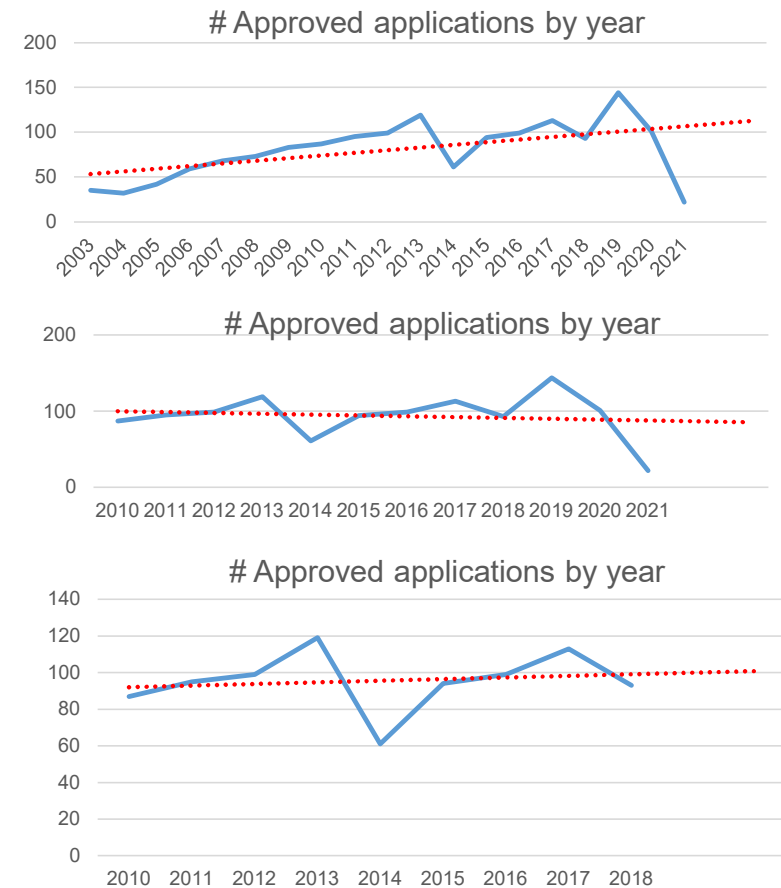
- The average number of applications received annually for Elder status over the period from 2003 to 2020 is 80. Omitting the early years from 2003 to 2009 the average rises to 100 for the period 2010 - 2020
- The mean age of application since inception is 60.1 years
- In 2003 the mean age of application was 61.5. The lowest mean age of application was in 2007 at 57.5 years
- Elders who applied at the beginning of the program are now at least 75 years of age
- The average life expectancy in the US is 78.2 years*



* Source: [Mortality in the United States, 2020](#) CDC/National Center for Health Statistics

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- Overall applications accepted are at top right
- The middle chart shows the data with early formation years omitted
- The lower chart shows the data with anomalous years 2019 (50th Anniversary – high of 144) and 2021 (COVID -19 depression, low of 21) omitted
- Red dotted line is the linear statistical trend
- Data suggests application numbers are stabilizing and reaching a plateau
- Wristbands are historically requested by approximately 65%



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Qualitative considerations

- Mean age for applications for Elder status is 60.1, but minimum age of 55 allows for new elders with health or other extenuating circumstances to enroll and volunteer for Elder service at a younger age
- Most, but not all, younger Elders continue to receive wristbands from crews, booths or other groups as they always have
- There is a need for younger Elders to keep up with the workload of managing Elder-related infrastructure and continue to make significant contributions to the OCF (see Appendix)
- Elder wristband and companion passes represent approximately 7.6% of total overnight passes
- Elders work as independently as possible – We administer our own pass distribution, work the sticker booth. We set up, staff, decon and store the Still Living Room exhibit. We manage our own Camp
- Almost no Elders require overnight passes for children

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Qualitative considerations (continued)

- Elders moving out of volunteer positions open opportunities to fulfill diversity and inclusion efforts. Raising the eligibility age works against those efforts
- Elders have lower impact on infrastructure. Elders don't receive extra perks like food vouchers and no Elder receives a staff T-shirt – we buy our own
- We pay for our passes and parking. Total revenue generated by Elders in 2019 was \$100,000.00
- The Elders' situation is unique. Elders are Fair veterans who come from crews/entertainment/booths or educational enclaves such as the Community Village, Energy Park or Arc-Park and have made a career's worth of contributions to the OCF.
- Our ranks only grow in direct relation to expansion.

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Closing considerations

We do not bring up these points because we feel singled out or picked on; we completely understand the need to control the growth of our amazing event. Hindsight points out that growth and overpopulation have been an increasing problem for the last two-plus decades. Remember when you could actually see the stage from the back at the Midnight Show?

We understand that concessions are being asked of all the crews and groups that make up the OCF. We need to come up with fair and equitable ways to deal with the problem to remain in compliance with State law and manage our impact on the land.

Elders are, and always have been, willing and able to help. Please help us to understand how changing the age of eligibility established by the BOD will do more than postpone the problem for a few years. We do have a list of suggestions ready for discussion.

The only way to permanently control the overall non-public, camping population is to control crew, vendor and entertainment numbers. In that way, Elder's populations are controlled automatically.

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It has been suggested that the age requirement needs to increase similarly to the increase in Social Security eligibility. It is easy to understand why a similar policy change might be suggested in the Elder's eligibility discussion. However, the comparison to Social Security age increases fails for a couple of reasons:

First, SS eligibility age requirements were in response to the increasing average lifespan in the United States. Life expectancy actually dropped from 2017 to 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes to human lifespan happen slowly and most medical professionals agree appear to be reaching a plateau, with further advances coming more and more slowly as we approach inescapable biological realities.

Secondly, this change in SS age requirements was driven by a perceived increase in the financial burden to taxpayers. Elders not only do not increase the financial burden, but actually contribute financially, and in a big way.

Appendix

Contributions to the OCF by Elders since inception

- Self-contained and managed Elder Camp
- The Still Living Room Timeline project, photo exhibit, memorial kiosk and “rest stop”
- FARTS – Fair Area Rapid Transit System
- Low Power FM – KOCF
- The “Meet n’ Greet” welcome party
- A significant financial contribution every year
- For the 2022 Fair, Elders established a list of other Elders willing to help out crews that found themselves short-handed
- Self-funding of compassion passes for disadvantaged Elders
- Cedar showers at Alice’s, Zen Acres and Shower Central to replace rented trailers
- The “Geezer Pleezer” transportation cart for altered Elders (and others!)
- The Archives Project
- In several election cycles, Elder Committee members have taken on the job of holding the Candidate’s forum to acquaint members with candidates for BOD positions