Careers in Leisure & Aging Services

Individuals who work in leisure and aging services focus on enhancing the quality of life for individuals aged 55 and over. These individuals represent a variety of different life stages and a wide range of interests, needs, and strengths. On the one hand, this group of individuals represents the most well-educated, fit and economically independent group of elders in history. They want active, engaged lifestyles and expect high quality recreation and leisure experiences. Many have little interest in traditional public programs, and instead create their own experiences or join formal and informal groups. On the other hand, many elders in the later stages of life begin to require additional support to maintain a high quality of life.

Leisure and aging services serve older adults along this continuum. These services encompass federal, state, and municipal agencies, non-profit agencies, and, increasingly, commercial recreation.

Agencies that focus on leisure and aging exist in almost every community, regardless of its size.

The Department
The Department of Recreation and Sport Management prepares students for careers in the leisure service industry, including leisure and aging services careers. The curriculum consists of the recreation management core, university general-education requirements, specialized concentrations, and electives. In addition, students culminate their degrees with a full-semester, 40 hour-per-week professional internship. At the completion of the degree program, students will also have satisfied all of the requirements for the UNLV Certificate of Gerontology.

Employment Opportunities
Graduates who earn a major in recreation with a concentration in leisure and aging will be prepared to begin careers in a variety of areas. A sampling of the types of positions available is provided on the following page.

Entry-level jobs offer a variety of starting salaries and offer excellent opportunities for advancement. Entry-level, full-time positions usually require prior experience. The experiences frequently come as part of a student’s academic program.

To be successful, students must be able to:

- Apply principles of positive adult programming.
- Establish constructive and supportive relationships with older adults.
• Plan and facilitate activities that promote positive development and maintenance of skills.
• Evaluate effectiveness and efficiency of services.
• Understand and respect cultural and human diversity.
• Work with families and communities.
• Secure and manage financial and human resources.

Public Parks and Recreation
• Las Vegas Department of Leisure Services
• Clark County Parks and Recreation
• Henderson Parks and Recreation
• North Las Vegas Parks and Recreation

Senior Retirement Communities
• Recreation Director
• Travel Director
• Activities Director
• Recreation Center Manager
• Recreation Supervisor

Non-Profits
• Elderhostel
• Senior Olympics
• Adult Day Care
• Group Homes
• Elder Volunteer Programs

Commercial
• Senior Travel and Tourism
• Assisted Living Facilities - Atria, Life Care Centers of America, Loyalton, Prestige, Willow Creek
• Nursing Homes - Delmar Gardens, Las Ventanas, Silver Sky, Torrey Pine Care Center

Non-Profits
• Elderhostel
• Senior Olympics - Nevada Senior Games
• Adult Day Care - Adult Day Care Centers of Las Vegas, Nevada Adult Day Care Center
• Group Homes - Alebris Care Home, Golden Palomino Care Home, Jory Trail Home Care, The Elderly Aristocrat
• Elder Volunteer Programs - Las Vegas Senior Lifeline