

WHY ARE SETTLEMENT HOUSES PERFECT FOR INTERGENERATIONAL WORK?

Hello! Are you interested in creating an intergenerational community center at your settlement house? These are spaces that intentionally bring together community members of all ages. They offer regular programs building on the resources all generations have to offer and benefit participants of all ages.

Generations Connect, an initiative of United Neighborhood Houses (UNH), helps settlement houses make intergenerational program approaches a core practice. This guide is part of a series of tools to support organizations embarking on the multi-year and iterative process of developing an intergenerational community center. Browse them all here: unhny.org/intergenhub

We believe that settlement houses are perfect sites to do intergenerational work. Why?

They share the same goals

Intergenerational approaches – like settlement houses - are designed to bring community members together across age to learn, to help and support one another, to work together to address community issues, and to build the multi-aged social networks that enable individuals of all ages and the communities they share to thrive.

They have overlapping principles

- Both emphasize a neighborhood-based approach that is deeply **embedded** in the communities they serve
- Both create **multiple points of entry** for community members, regardless of age
- Both emphasize **reciprocity** whereby community members of all ages can contribute their strengths and abilities to the work at hand
- Both invest in **community building** – the creation of bonds and social networks across age and many other differences in ways that unite and empower neighborhoods so they can thrive

They work towards the same outcomes

Settlement houses and intergenerational approaches work to achieve similar outcomes: a greater sense of belonging, efficacy, and possibility for people across all generations - outcomes that positively impact the health and well-being of all age groups and the community at large.