

Old School

A hub for age
equity + ageism
awareness

Five Year Strategic Plan

BUILDING AN ANTI-AGEIST FUTURE
WITH EVERYONE IN MIND

JANUARY
2026

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Table of Contents



- 1 Executive Summary
- 2 The Team & Ecosystem
- 3 Purpose & Direction
- 4 History & Evolution
- 5 Strategic Context
- 5-7 Strategic Priorities & Programmatic Strategy by Time Horizon (2026-2031)
- 8 Biennial Conference
- 9 Leadership, Learning, and Accountability & Organizational Sustainability Model
- 10 Conclusion

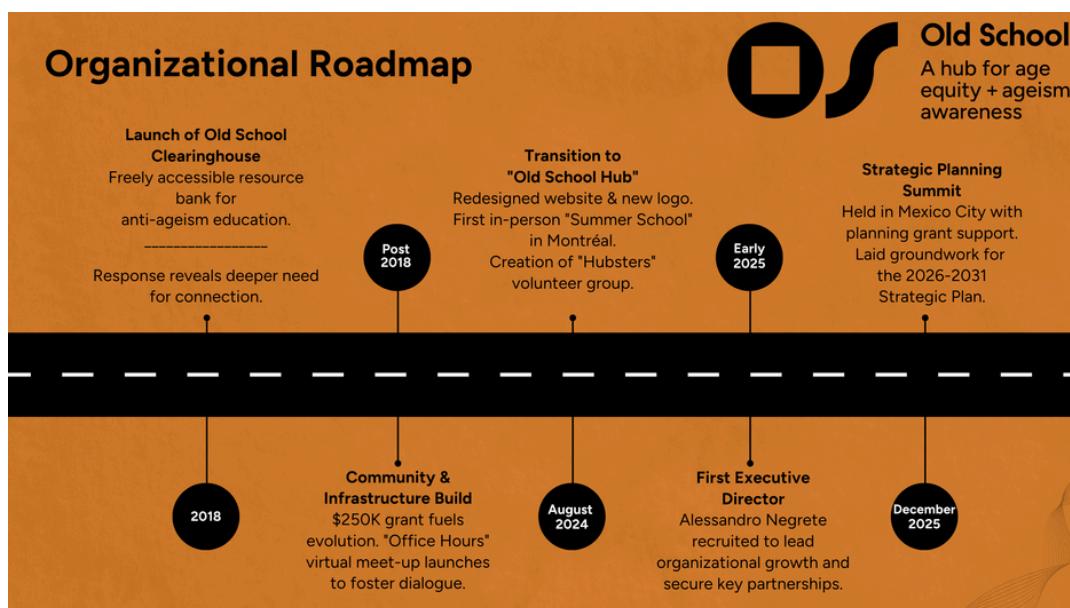
Executive Summary

The Vision: Age Equity as Collective Liberation

Old School Hub is entering a transformative five-year period (2026–2031) dedicated to dismantling ageism through radical inclusion, intersectional advocacy, and community-led action. In a world where one in two people holds ageist beliefs, Old School Hub serves as the critical infrastructure for the age-equity movement. We believe that because everyone is aging, ageism is a "gateway" to understanding the intersectional nature of all oppression. Our goal is to ensure that aging is no longer a privilege, but a move through life defined by purpose and dignity for all—particularly for BIPOC, disabled, and historically marginalized communities.

The Evolution: From Clearinghouse to Movement Hub

What began in 2018 as a practical resource bank (the Old School Clearinghouse) has evolved into a global Hub for Age Equity and Ageism Awareness. Following a successful transition in 2024 and the appointment of our first Executive Director, Alessandro Negrete, in 2025, this plan marks our shift from simple program delivery to field-building and ecosystem development.



The Team (in alphabetical order)

all of our work has someone behind it



Alessandro Negrete | Executive Director

Ale has spent his life advancing racial justice, climate resilience, housing equity, and community power building. He is excited to guide the Hub into its next phase as a trusted grassroots force confronting ageism and transforming how people see and value aging.



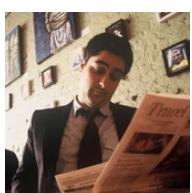
Ashton Applewhite | Co-Founder

The author of *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*, Ashton is at the forefront of the movement for age equity. In 2022 the United Nations named her one of the Healthy Aging 50: 50 leaders transforming the world to be a better place to grow older.



Christina Peoples | Social Media Manager

Christina holds a Master of Science degree in Gerontology. She is the creator of Gero-what?!, a blog related to aging. She is enthusiastic and passionate about discussing all things related to aging with others. Christina loves working with Old School and is happy to be a part of the movement to #ExposeAgeism.



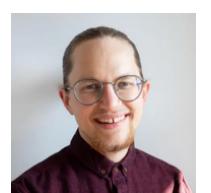
Dan Visel | Developer & Designer

Dan makes Old School's technical operations work.



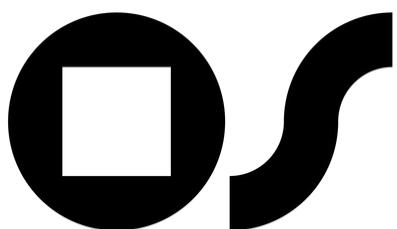
David Wilson | Facilitator

David is an educator and movement coach. He uses social media and classes in embodied movement to help people see aging accurately, realistically and positively.

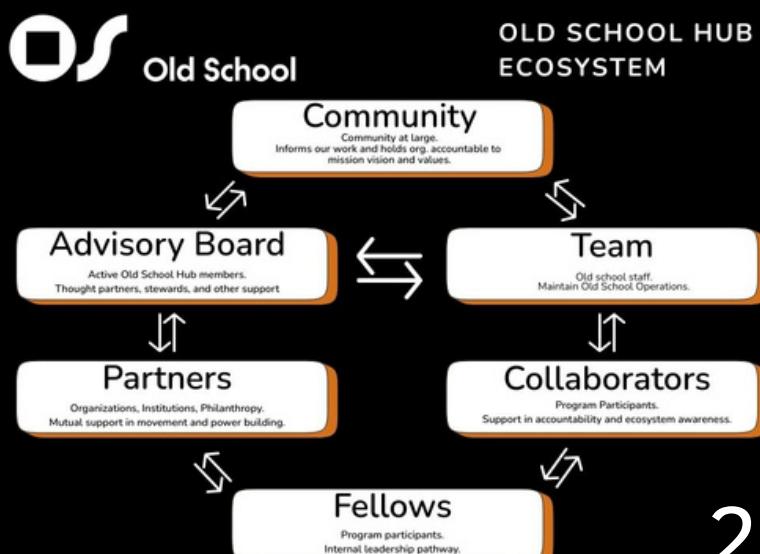


Ryan Backer | Co-Founder & Program Coordinator

Ryan is a writer, educator, and 'old person in training'. They offer an array of educational opportunities and consulting services with the goal of supporting those of all ages to ease suffering caused by the social constructs of aging.



Old School



Purpose & Direction

Mission

Old School works to end ageism by convening people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities who share this goal. We are particularly committed to fostering an inclusive space for historically marginalized groups, and supporting their paths to age advocacy. We create, curate, and widely disseminate free educational material about ageism and how to undo it. Through community dialogue and innovative collaborations, we raise individual awareness of ageism and inspire collective action to dismantle it in every sphere of life.

Vision

Old School is advancing a world where aging is no longer a privilege, and everyone has the opportunity to move through life with purpose and dignity. We believe in the power of the collective, and show up for other social justice movements, ensuring our advocacy centers the lived experience of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, and other marginalized groups. Our work is grounded in powerful truths that demand elevation: everyone is aging, and everyone experiences being treated unfairly because of their age. This makes ageism a gateway to understanding the intersectional nature of all oppression, and of all activism. This paves the way for genuine equity and collective liberation.

Values

We believe kindness is essential. We prioritize care-centered practice grounded not in compliance but in reflection and true consent. We know dismantling ageism means confronting sexism (aging is gendered), ableism (disability is stigmatized), and racism (which denies multitudes the chance to age at all). We understand trust takes time. We reject proprietary mindsets and think an open-source mentality is essential to movement-building. We recognize lived experience as a critical form of knowledge, and design programs that elevate community leadership and collective decision-making. We support initiatives that are necessary for some and good for all. We think addressing the relation between age and power is essential. We prioritize free or low-cost offerings so access is not gated by institutions, price, or credentials. We reject hierarchy, and operate by consensus. We are transparent: what we say is what you get.



Old School



History & Evolution

Old School began not with a grand plan but as a practical response to an absence: there was no central resource bank for the emerging anti-ageism movement. People who wanted to learn about ageism—from educators and researchers to organizers and artists—had a hard time finding what little knowledge was out there. In 2018, that gap led three advocates to launch the Old School Clearinghouse: a freely accessible collection of books, articles, videos, workshops, and tools dedicated to educating people about ageism and how to undo it.

The response was remarkable, taking the founders by surprise and immediately revealing a deeper need. Visitors wanted more than resources; they wanted connection and community. As engagement grew, so did awareness that ageism was not a niche issue. Everyone is aging, and ageism affects how each of us moves through life from childhood on.

In response, Old School evolved, thanks in part to a \$250K grant from a private philanthropist. While the resource bank remains a central offering, the organization began convening people across generations and geographies. These early gatherings laid the groundwork for what would become Office Hours, a weekly, open-to-all, “let’s talk about ageism” virtual meet-up.

As participation increased and a group of smart, committed regulars developed, Old School’s role within the anti-ageism ecosystem expanded. The team began creating infrastructure: connecting people, amplifying grassroots ideas, and supporting experimentation.

In August, 2024, the Old School Clearinghouse became the Old School Hub for Age Equity and Ageism Awareness with a redesigned website and new logo. This transition reflected what the community had made clear: the age-equity movement needed ways for people and organizations working to end ageism to find and support each other’s efforts, and Old School was that place. The team announced the transition in Montréal at Summer School, the organization’s first in-person convening. This gathering led to the creation of the Hubsters, Old School’s volunteer working group, which evaluates and informs projects submitted to the Hub. We chose the name “Hub” to reflect our ability to connect those doing this work to each other.

In early 2025, Old School entered a new chapter by recruiting its first Executive Director. The organization sought a visionary leader who understood philanthropy, could secure a seat at key tables, and would build thoughtfully on a strong foundation. Over a hundred people applied for the position, which required a proven track record in organizational growth, strong financial management skills, fundraising and relationship-building talent, and a willingness to lead by consensus. Old School found that person in Alessandro Negrete. He brings extensive tenure in the nonprofit and movement ecosystem to the task of honoring where Old School has been while charting a path toward deeper impact, broader participation, and lasting change. With the support of a planning grant, the Old School team met in Mexico City in December 2025 for a Strategic Planning Summit, which laid the groundwork for this document.

This Strategic Plan lays out an ambitious agenda: one that the movement for age equity demands and deserves. We’re making it public, because transparency is a core value, and so the community can hold Old School accountable. The organization’s small team, nimble structure, and low overhead enables it to respond quickly and pivot strategically—like a hub. We’ll exceed some goals, fail at others, adapt, and share what we’ve learned. Like Old School itself, this plan will evolve as we deepen and expand our network.

Strategic Context

According to the World Health Organization, one in two people worldwide holds ageist beliefs. This underscores how deeply normalized ageism remains. Global awareness is growing, yet meaningful infrastructure to confront it remains lacking. So do the voices of BIPOC communities, people from the majority world, disabled people, and young people, all of whom are underrepresented in the movement for age equity. Changing this is not just an agenda item for Old School. It is a top priority, integral to making age a criterion for diversity and fostering solidarity across different identities and life stages.

This plan describes how Old School is responding to these challenges and opportunities: by strengthening core programs and adding new ones, investing in leadership development, building infrastructure, becoming financially sustainable, and continuing to find joy in this work.



Strategic Priorities (2026–2031)

Old School's strategic priorities reflect a deliberate shift from program delivery alone toward field-building and infrastructure development within the age-equity ecosystem.

1. Movement Infrastructure & Convening

Provide a reliable platform for connection, shared learning, and collaboration

2. Knowledge Creation, Curation & Narrative Shift

Produce accessible, high-quality materials and events that advance public understanding of ageism and counter discriminatory narratives and stereotypes

3. Leadership Development & Participation Pathways

Develop clear pathways that support individuals and organizations in moving from awareness to leadership positions

4. Equity, Inclusion & Global Reach

Center historically marginalized communities and expand international participation

5. Organizational Sustainability & Capacity

Build the governance, staffing, and financial systems necessary for institutional resilience and long-term impact

Programmatic Strategy by Time Horizon

THE LIBRARY

We created Old School so people could find all the best resources about ageism in one place. That collection—over 300 free, carefully curated, regularly updated items—remains central to our mission.

1-Year Goals (Stabilize & Improve Access) - Improve UX (User eXperience) and search function · Create a “Staff Picks” archive · Continue to review and add new materials · Implement annual check for broken links

3-Year Goals (Shared Stewardship & Reflection) - Establish a working group to conduct a gap analysis to determine what the collection is lacking · Locate and solicit resources that fill those gaps

5-Year Goals (Transformation & Creation) - Develop a pro-aging resource bank · Create conversation guides for individuals and organizations · Hire or contract a paid librarian or knowledge steward · Produce and/or commission more original Old School content · Expand multilingual offerings

OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours is Old School’s weekly, virtual entry point for anyone curious about ageism and looking for ways to undo it. It is an intentional shared learning and conversation space where skilled facilitators invite participants to share how ageism shows up in their lives. The tone is informal and welcoming. The meetup, which does not require prior knowledge or regular attendance, has attracted a committed following.

Moving forward, Office Hours will offer introductory “Ageism 101” sessions to educate new participants and provide refreshers for more experienced ones. Ageism 101 will build their capacity to engage with mission and vision alignment, within and beyond our organization. Old School will also introduce a Fellows Program: an external-facing role that enables participants to share in and amplify Old School’s work. Fellows’ participation in Old Schools “The Old School team will encourage and support Fellows in hosting Office Hours, as well as facilitating sibling Office Hours meet-ups in other time zones. This pathway builds capacity and supports sustained participation, shared leadership, and a values-aligned approach to movement building.

1-Year Goals (Strengthen the On-Ramp & Seed AgEd) - Clarify Office Hours as the primary entry point into the movement · Develop a loose and responsive curriculum · Establish practices to support long term participants · Begin conversations and outreach with hyper-local, base-building organizations · Pilot learning conversations that inform the design of AgEd, Old School’s age-equity academy

3-Year Goals (Deepen Engagement) - Welcome special guests and offer meetings with themes, such as “Ask Ashton” · Strengthen facilitation capacity among participants · Launch AgEd in partnership with cohort of 5–10 organizations from different regions

5-Year Goals (Scale & Diversify) - Expand outreach and participation globally · Offer multiple Office Hours times to accommodate varied schedules · Continue progress toward racial, geographic, and age diversity

Programmatic Strategy by Time Horizon

HUBSTERS

Hubsters is Old School's community of practice for age advocates. Born from the organization's first in-person convening, Hubsters centers peer connection and collaborations on any scale.

1-Year Goals (Clarify & Support the Model) - Refine processes to solicit, evaluate, and support projects · Increase outreach to potential collaborators · Continue experimenting with self-governance and co-creation

3-Year Goals (Global & Participatory Growth) - Support projects from around the world
· Expand community-based participatory research projects · Work towards a more diverse working group and project selection committee

5-Year Goals (Resourcing & Influence) - Secure grants or pooled funding for Hubsters projects · Create topic-based or project-type committees · Position Hubsters as a recognized incubator for age-equity innovation

IN DEVELOPMENT

AgeEd

AgEd will be Old School's online academy. Designed to go beyond Ageism 101, it will introduce an intersectional, power-informed understanding of age, justice, and undoing ageism.

Youngers and Olders Dismantling Ageism (YODA)

Old School will host conversations and produce tools that examine the relationship between age and power. This ethical and tactical framework is integral to Old School's programming. Participants will engage across differences to challenge age-related hierarchies, and develop alternative ways of thinking and acting in order to advance shared goals.



Old School

Biennial Conference

Origin & Purpose

This program emerges from a pivotal moment in Old School's evolution: Summer School, its first in-person gathering. In August 2024, in Montréal, the organization convened 40 age advocates to envision a world without ageism. It was an "unconference"—an attendee-driven model that prioritizes collective experience over top-down structures, enables shared goals to emerge, and aligns with Old School's commitment to consensus-building. This two-and-a-half days of "mind melding" realized the power and potential of being together in place. The community co-created the [10 Guiding Questions](#) that guide Old School's work. As in Montréal, when the team met in Mexico City to create this strategic northstar, we drew on the joy and power of being together.

Summer School revealed a strong desire for in-person opportunities to connect, and collectively shape what comes next. The next iteration will be Winter School. As in Montréal, facilitators will use Liberating Structures, a proven framework that replaces "expert" presentations with processes that ensure that every voice contributes. These practices are both the method and the learning: participants leave not only with insight, but with tools they can carry back into their own communities and organizations.

Not only a flagship offering, The Biennial Conference will provide a periodic opportunity the global Old School community to come together, surface what the movement needs next, and collectively explore how to dismantle ageism and age-based power across contexts.

3-Year Goals (Repeat & Learn)

- Host Winter School
- Ensure accessibility across geography, age, and ability
- Document themes, questions, and practices emerging from participants
- Use what we learn to inform curriculum development for AgEd

5-Year Goals (Integrate & Sustain)

- Organize a third unconference
- Strengthen partnerships that support participation
- Systematically integrate insights that emerge into program design, evaluation, and strategy



Old School

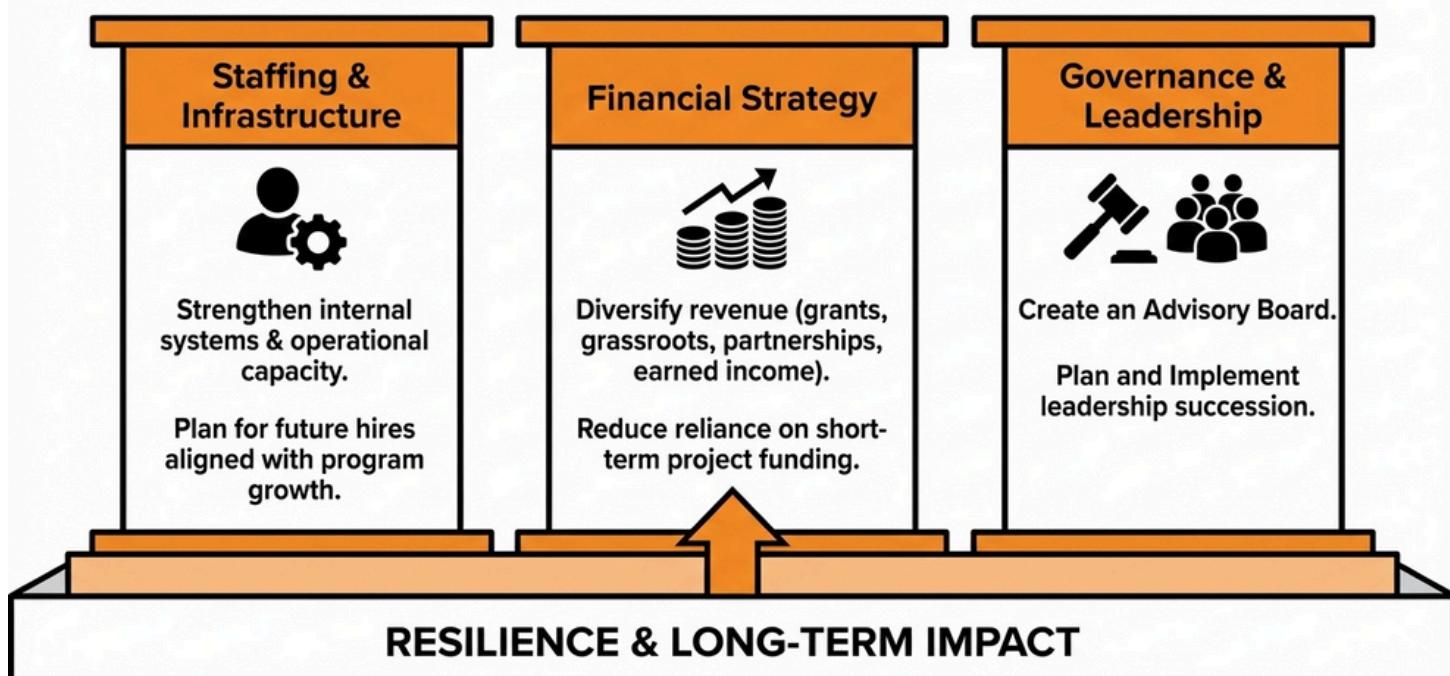
Leadership, Learning, and Accountability

Old School approaches its role with boldness and openness. We recognize that meaningful movement work and effecting change require more than transparency and inclusivity. They require shared power. Rather than making decisions behind closed doors and reporting out after the fact, Old School is committed to including members and community partners in its decision-making processes, ensuring the organization remains responsive, relevant, and grounded in lived experience.

Where many organizations hold their cards close, Old School is different. The organization embraces being seen, challenged, and held accountable—not only by formal governance structures, but by the community itself. This means sharing priorities, tensions, learnings, and course corrections in real time, and treating accountability as a relationship rather than a requirement.

Old School defines success through a combination of collective learning, community narrative, and reflective practice, rather than static metrics alone. The organization will remain in a continuous state of assessment, listening, adapting, and evolving as conditions and needs change. An Advisory Board will serve as thought partners and stewards of this process, informing the organization's strategic direction while reinforcing a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Organizational Sustainability Model



Conclusion

Old School is coming of age. The organization enters the next five-year period positioned for thoughtful, values-aligned growth. This strategic plan describes how Old School is becoming a sustainable organization that offers multiple points of engagement for individuals and institutions alike through a suite of strategically integrated programs. Together, these offerings create a continuous cycle: from learning and dialogue, to experimentation, to applied practice, and “back” to learning.

For funders, institutional partners, and social impact schools, Old School offers a community-rooted platform for advancing age equity. We work alongside communities, advocates, and systems partners to navigate and transform the structures that shape aging, inviting them to be part of this process. For community members and organizers, Old School creates space to learn together, build relationships, and lead change, while engaging funders and institutions as collaborators in this shared effort.

By 2031, Old School aims to be a durable field-building institution. Our goal is to strengthen the age-equity ecosystem, support the next generation of leaders, and contribute meaningfully to a future where age is no longer a barrier. In a world of longer lives, this mission is necessary and urgent. This strategic plan is both a roadmap and an invitation to others who share our vision to join us in advancing it.

