

Older-Americans

The month of May was first designated by President Kennedy in 1963 as "Senior Citizens Month." In 1980, however, President Carter's proclamation changed the name to "Older Americans Month," a time to celebrate those age 65 and older through ceremonies, events and fairs. This report celebrates older Americans by presenting selected data on the 65 years and older age group, with data taken from the U.S. Census Bureau releases, surveys and archives products.

Population

- There were 36.8 million people 65 years and older in the United States on July 1, 2005. This age group accounted for 12 percent of the total population. Between 2004 and 2005, this age group increased by 457,000 people. There were 71,251 people 65 years and older in the District of Columbia on July 1, 2005, representing 12.2 percent of the population.
- The population of people 65 years and over is projected to increase to 86.7 million in 2050, a 147 percent increase between 2000 and 2050. People in this age group would comprise 21 percent of the total population at that time. By comparison, the population as a whole would have increased by only 49 percent over the same period.
- The current world population 65 years and older is 495 million and projections indicate the number will increase to 997 million by 2030.
- The number of people 65 years and older who are military veterans was estimated at 9 million.
- There were 72 men 65 years and older on July 1, 2005, for every 100 women in this age group. For those 85 and older, it drops to 46 men per 100 women.
- The number of people 85 and older in the United States on July 1, 2005 was 5.1 million.
- Estimated number of centenarians in the United States on Nov. 1, 2006 was 79,682. This number is projected to increase to 580,605 by 2040.
- California had the largest number of people (3.9 million) 65 years and older on July 1, 2005, the highest total of any state. Florida, with 3 million, had the second highest. The 65 years and older is projected to increase to 20 percent of Florida's population by 2015 and Florida will then lead the nation in older resident population.

Income and Wealth

- The median household income of the 65 years and older population was \$26,036 in 2005. This was an increase

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of 2.8 percent, in real terms, from the previous year.

- The poverty rate for people 65 years and older in 2005 was 10 percent, statistically unchanged from the previous year. There were 3.6 million seniors in poverty.
- Thirty-nine percent of total annual personal income of people 65 years and older in 2001 came from Social Security payments.
- Median net worth for families in 2004 who were headed by people between ages 65 and 74 was \$190,100. For those headed by people over 75 years, the corresponding figure was \$163,100.
- The number of people 65 years and older who were in the labor force in 2005 was estimated at 5.3 million. Projections indicate that by 2014, this number will increase to 8.7 million.
- Eleven percent of the nation's business owners were 65 years and older in 2005.
- Seventy-five percent of households with a householder 65 years and older owned a motor vehicle. About 3 percent of these households have three or more cars.
- In 2006, 81 percent of householders 65 years and older owned their homes.

This compares with 43 percent for householders at the other end of the age spectrum - younger than 35.

Education

- Seventy-two percent of the population 65 years and older had at least a high school diploma in 2005.
- Eighteen percent of the population 65 years and older had earned a bachelor's degree or higher in 2005
- The number of people 66 years and older taking adult education courses was estimated at 7.3 million in 2005. About 8 percent of all lifelong learners are in this age group.
- Sixty-nine thousand people 65 years and older were enrolled in regular school (specifically, high school or college) in October 2005.

Marital Status

- Fifty-four percentage of people 65 years and older were married with a spouse present in 2005.
- In 2005, 30 percent of the widowed population were 65 years and older.

Voting

- Seventy-nine percent of citizens 65 years and older registered to vote in the 2004 presidential election. Seventy-one percent of citizens in this age group reported actually casting a ballot.
- In the 2004 election, people 65 years and older cast 19 percent of the votes.

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