



A Statistical Profile of Older Americans

INTRODUCTION

In 2014, there were 46.2 million Americans aged 65 and over and 6.2 million aged 85 and over. By 2060, the number of people aged 65 and older is expected to more than double to 98.2 million and the number of people aged 85 and older is expected to triple to 19.7 million. Among the population age 65 and over, there are 127 women for every 100 men. At age 85 and over this ratio increases to 192 women for every 100 men. In 2014, there were 75.4 million baby boomers (people born between 1946 and 1964) accounting for almost one-quarter of the population. Baby boomers began turning 65 years old in 2011.

CENTENARIANS

Between 1980 and 2014, the centenarian population more than doubled from 32,194 in 1980 to 72,197 in 2014.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

The past decade has seen a significant increase in educational attainment among older Americans. In 2014, 84 percent of the population aged 65 and older had finished high school and 26 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. In 1965, only 24 percent of older Americans were high school graduates and 5 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Nonetheless, there are still educational differences among racial and ethnic groups. In 2014, only 54 percent of older Hispanics were high school graduates and 12 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

In 2014, over half (57 percent) of adults age 65 and over lived with their spouse (approximately 14.2 million or 72 percent of older men, and 11.3 million or 46 percent of older women). About 28 percent (12.5 million) of all older adults in 2014 lived alone (8.8 million women, 3.8 million men). They represented 35 percent of older women and 19 percent of older men. Almost half of women aged 75 and over lived alone.

HOUSING

Of the 26.8 million households headed by older persons in 2013, 81 percent were owners and 19 percent were renters. The median family income of older homeowners was \$34,500. The median family income of older renters was \$17,300. In 2013, almost 45 percent of older householders spent more than one-fourth of their income on housing costs – 39 percent for owners and 69 percent for renters.

INCOME AND POVERTY*

Households containing families headed by persons age 65 and over reported a median income in 2013 of \$54,184. The median personal income for older men was \$29,854 and for older women it was \$17,366. Over the past half century, the poverty rate for older Americans decreased dramatically from 35 percent in 1959 to 10.2 percent in 2013.

**Income and poverty estimates are based on redesigned income questions from the Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.*



LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

In 2014, 8.4 million (18.6 percent) Americans age 65 and over were in the labor force (working or actively seeking work), including 4.6 million men (23 percent) and 3.8 million women (15.1 percent). They constituted 5 percent of the U.S. labor force.

SELF-RATED HEALTH STATUS

During 2011-2013, 43 percent of people age 65 and over assessed their health as very good/excellent (compared to 55 percent for persons aged 45-64 years). Positive health evaluations decline with age. Among men ages 65-74, 47 percent reported very good/excellent health, compared with 31 percent among those aged 85 or older. Similarly, among women, this rate declined from 48 percent at ages 65-74 to 33 percent at age 85 or older.

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Most older persons have at least one chronic condition and many have multiple conditions. Some of the most frequently occurring conditions among older Americans in 2011-2013 were: diagnosed arthritis (49 percent), cancer (25 percent), all types of heart disease (31 percent), diagnosed diabetes (21 percent in 2009-2012), and hypertension (71 percent in 2009-2012).

ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE

In 2013, almost 50 percent of all older adults had both Medicare and supplementary private health insurance and 6 percent were covered by both Medicare and Medicaid. In 2011-2013, 4 percent of older Americans reported they had no usual source of health care.

DISABILITY AND ACTIVITY LIMITATIONS

In 2013, 36 percent of people age 65 and over reported having some type of disability (i.e., difficulty in hearing, vision, cognition, ambulation, self-care, or independent living). The percentages for individual disabilities ranged from almost one quarter (23 percent) having an ambulatory disability to 7 percent having a vision difficulty. Some of these disabilities may be relatively minor but others cause people to require assistance to meet important personal needs.

PARTICIPATION IN OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA) PROGRAMS

In 2013, State and Area Agencies on Aging provided services to a total of 11.1 million persons aged 60 and older. Consistent with the targeting requirements of the OAA, state and area agencies on aging placed considerable emphasis on services to persons with the greatest social and economic need, including members of racial and ethnic minority groups, especially those who are poor.

Principal sources of data for this Profile are the most current information available from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics as of September 30, 2015.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Administration for Community Living

Phone: (202) 401-4634

Email: ACLinfo@acl.hhs.gov

Web: <http://www.ACL.gov>

