

2017

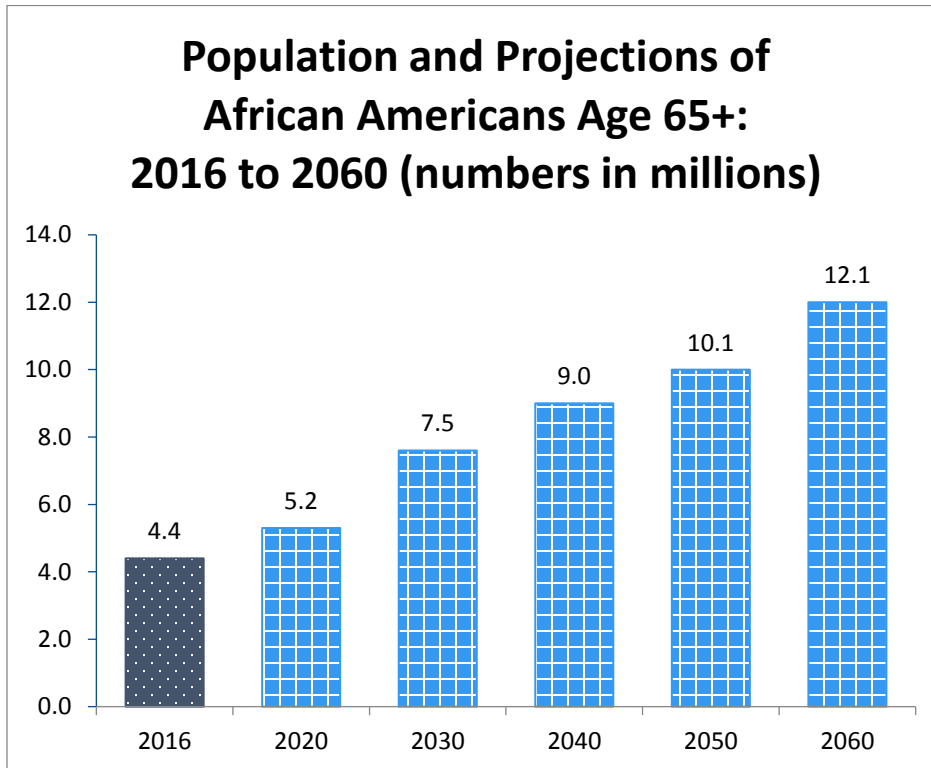
Profile of African Americans Age 65 and Over



The Administration for Community Living, which includes the Administration on Aging, is an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Introduction

In 2016, there were 49.2 million Americans age 65 and over and 6.4 million age 85 and over. The population age 65 and older is expected to increase to 94.7 million in 2060. The population age 85 and older (6.4 million) is expected to almost triple to 19 million during the same period. Among the population age 65 and over, there were 126 women for every 100 men. At age 85 and over, this ratio increased to 187 women for every 100 men. Along with these general trends for America's older population, the African American older population is also growing.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 2016, and Population Projections, 2017

Note: Increments in years are uneven. Lighter bars indicate projections.

The non-Hispanic African American population age 65 and over was 4,392,337 in 2016 and is projected to grow to 12.1 million by 2060. In 2016, African Americans made up 9% of the older population. By 2060, the percentage is projected to be 12.8%.

Centenarians

In 2016, there were 9,476 African Americans age 100 and over (1,783 men and 7,693 women) comprising 12% of all centenarians.

Residence

In 2016, slightly over 50% of older African Americans lived in eight states: New York (363,505), Florida (342,232), Georgia (304,554), Texas (301,416), California (279,019), North Carolina (258,259), Illinois (215,298), and Maryland (208,406).

Education

The past decade has seen a significant increase in educational attainment among older Americans, including African Americans. In 2017, 75% of the African American population age 65 and older had finished high school, and 18% had a bachelor's degree or higher. In 1998, only 44% of older African Americans were high school graduates and 7% had a bachelor's degree or higher. There are still educational differences among racial and ethnic groups. In 2017, 86% of all older persons were high school graduates and 30% had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Marital Status

In 2017, 37% of older African Americans (non-Hispanic) were married, 27% were widowed, 19% were divorced, 5% were separated (including married, spouse absent), and 13% had never been married.

Living Arrangements

In 2015, 50% of older African American men lived with their spouses, 14% lived with other relatives, 6% lived with non-relatives, and 30% lived alone. For older African American women, 24% lived with their spouses, 30% lived with other relatives, 2% lived with non-relatives, and 43% lived alone.

Income and Poverty

In 2016, households containing families headed by African Americans age 65 and over reported a median income of \$43,554. The comparable figure for all older households was \$58,559. The median personal income for older African American men was \$22,177 and \$15,696 for older African American women. The comparable figures for all older persons were \$31,618 for men and \$18,380 for women. The poverty rate in 2016 for African Americans age 65 and older was 18.7%, double the rate of 9.3% for all older Americans.

Self-Rated Health Status

During 2012-2014, 67% of older African American men and 64% of older African American women reported good to excellent health status. Among older non-Hispanic whites, this figure was 80% for men and 81% for women. Positive health evaluations decline with age. Among African American men ages 65-74, 67% reported good to excellent health compared with 56% among those age 85 and older. Among African American women, this rate declined from 68% at ages 65-74 to 55% at age 85 and older.

Chronic Conditions

Most older persons have at least one chronic health condition and many have multiple conditions. Some of the most common conditions among older non-Hispanic African Americans in 2013-2014 were: hypertension (71%), arthritis (51%), heart disease (26%), diabetes (32%), and cancer (17%). The comparable figures for all older persons were: hypertension (56%), arthritis (49%), heart disease (29%), diabetes (21%), and cancer (23%).

Disability Status

In 2016, 40% of older African Americans had one or more disabilities.

Health Insurance

In 2016, 32% of older African Americans had both Medicare and supplemental private health insurance, and 13% were covered by both Medicare and Medicaid. In comparison, 47% of all older adults had both Medicare and supplemental private health insurance, and 7% were covered by both Medicare and Medicaid.

Participation in Older Americans Act (OAA) Programs

In 2016, state and Area Agencies on Aging provided services to a total of 11 million persons age 60 and over. Consistent with requirements of the OAA, considerable emphasis was placed on services to persons with the greatest social and economic need, including members of racial and ethnic minority groups, and especially those who are poor. Among older persons who received Title III OAA home and community-based registered services, 13% were African American.

Notes

The sources for the data in this report come from the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates; Population Projections; Current Population Survey, 2017 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey. Administration for Community Living, State Program Report data.

This report includes data on the age 65 and over population unless otherwise noted. The phrases “older adults” or “older persons” refer to the population age 65 and over.

Numbers in this report may not add up due to rounding.

Age-adjusted estimates are used when available.

The data presented in this report refer to the noninstitutionalized population except where noted.

Profile of African Americans Age 65 and Over: 2017 was developed by the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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