

A PROFILE OF OLDER AMERICANS: 2005

- The older population (65+) numbered 36.3 million in 2004, an increase of 3.1 million or 9.3% since 1994.
- The number of Americans aged 45-64 – who will reach 65 over the next two decades – increased by 39% during this decade.
- About one in every eight, or 12.4 percent, of the population is an older American.
- Persons reaching age 65 have an average life expectancy of an additional 18.5 years (19.8 years for females and 16.8 years for males).
- Older women outnumber older men at 21.1 million older women to 15.2 million older men.
- In 2004, 18.1% of persons 65+ were minorities--8.2% were African-Americans. Persons of Hispanic origin (who may be of any race) represented 6.0% of the older population. About 2.9% of the elderly were Asian or Pacific Islander, and less than 1% were American Indian or Native Alaskan. In addition, 0.6% of persons 65+ identified themselves as being of two or more races.
- Older men were much more likely to be married than older women--72% of men vs. 42% of women. Almost half of all older women in 2004 were widows (43%).
- About 31 percent (10.7 million) of noninstitutionalized older persons live alone (7.9 million women, 2.8 million men).
- Half of older women age 75+ live alone.
- About 415,000 grandparents aged 65 or more had the primary responsibility for their grandchildren who lived with them.
- The population 65 and over will increase from 35 million in 2000 to 40 million in 2010 (a 15% increase) and then to 55 million in 2020 (a 36% increase for that decade).
- The 85+ population is projected to increase from 4.2 million in 2000 to 6.1 million in 2010 (a 40% increase) and then to 7.3 million in 2020 (a 44% increase for that decade).
- Members of minority groups are projected to increase from 5.7 million in 2000 (16.4% of the elderly population) to 8.1 million in 2010 (20.1% of the elderly) and then to 12.9 million in 2020 (23.6% of the elderly).
- The median income of older persons in 2004 was \$21,102 for males and \$12,080 for females. Median money income of all households headed by older people (after adjusting for inflation) rose by 0.3% from 2003 to 2004. Family households headed by older people reported a median income in 2004 of \$35,825.
- Major sources of income for older people were: Social Security (reported by 90 percent of older persons), income from assets (reported by 56 percent), private pensions (reported by 30 percent), government employee pensions (reported by 14 percent), and earnings (reported by 23 percent).
- For one-third of Americans over 65, Social Security benefits constitute 90% of their income.
- About 3.6 million elderly persons (9.8%) were below the poverty level in 2004 which was a statistically significant decrease from the rate of 10.2% in 2003.
- About 11% (3.7 million) of older Medicare enrollees received personal care from a paid or unpaid source in 1999.

*Principal sources of data for the Profile are the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the National Center on Health Statistics, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Profile incorporates the latest data available but not all items are updated on an annual basis.