

Older Americans Month Celebrated in May

Older Americans Month originated with a presidential proclamation in May 1963. It has been proclaimed by presidents every year since then. Last year, President Bush stated, "Older Americans help others to understand the past, and they teach timeless lessons of courage, endurance and love. Through their legacy of patriotism, service, and responsibility, America's seniors also unite families and communities and serve as role models for younger generations."

36.3 million

The number of [people 65 and over](#) in the United States on July 1, 2004. This age group accounts for 12 percent of the total population. Between 2003 and 2004, 351,000 people moved into this age group.

4.9 million

The number of [people 85 and over](#) in the United States on July 1, 2004.

86.7 million

[Projected population](#) of people 65 and over in the year 2050. People in this age group would comprise 21 percent of the total population at that time.

147%

Projected percentage [increase in the 65-and-over population](#) between 2000 and 2050. By comparison, the population as a whole would have increased by only 49 percent over the same period.



Education

77%

Proportion of people ages 65 to 69 who [graduated from high school](#). Seventy-three percent of people ages 70 to 74 and 68 percent of those 75 and over are also high school graduates.

20%

Percentage of the population ages 65 to 69 who have a [bachelor's degree or higher education](#). Among people ages 70 to 74, 19 percent have achieved this level of education; for those 75 and over, 15 percent are college graduates.

73,000

Number of [people 65 and over enrolled in college](#) [PDF] in October 2002.



Jobs

4.6 million

Number of [people age 65 and over who are still employed](#) [PDF] — this amounts to 13 percent of all people in this age group.

Voting

65%

Percentage of registered voters ages 65 to 74 who voted in the 2002 Congressional election. Seventy-two percent of people ages 65 to 74 voted in the [2000 presidential election](#). This age group had the highest rate of voter participation in both the 2000 and 2002 elections.

Marital Status and Living Arrangements

44%

Percent of women age 65 and over who are widowed, greater than the 41 percent who are [married and living with their spouses](#). Women age 65 and older are three times more likely to be widowed than their male counterparts. Among men in the same age group, 71 percent are married and living with their spouses and only 14 percent are widowed.



Income and Wealth

\$108,885

[Median net worth \[PDF\]](#) in 2000 of households with householders 65 and over. In contrast, householders under the age of 35 had a median household net worth of \$7,240.

\$23,787

[Median 2003 income](#) of households with householders 65 and over, statistically unchanged, in real terms, from the previous year.

10.2%

[Poverty rate](#) for people 65 and over in 2003.

Sports Activities

12.4 million

Number of [people 65 and over who engage in exercise walking \[PDF\]](#), by far the most popular sports activity for this age group, at least six times a year. The next most popular forms of exercise for this age group are exercising with equipment, net fishing and swimming.

Homeownership

81%

Proportion of householders age 65 and over who [own their homes \[PDF\]](#). This compares with 68 percent for all householders.



Serving Our Nation

9.7 million

Estimated number of people age 65 and over who are [military veterans \[PDF\]](#).

Coming to America

3.7 million

Number of U.S. residents 65 and over in 2004 who were [foreign-born](#).

Population Distribution

World

880,000

The unprecedented number of people added each month to [the world's population of people 65 and over](#). More than one-third of the world's oldest people (80 and above) lived in three countries: China (14.8 million), the United States (10.7 million) and India (7.5 million).

Nation

71

Overall, the number of [men age 65 and over](#) on July 1, 2003, for every 100 women in this age group. For those in the 65 to 74 age group, the ratio is 83 men for every 100 women. For those 85 and over, it drops to 44 men per 100 women.

64,658

Estimated number of centenarians in the United States on August 1, 2004.

States and Counties

17%

Percentage of Florida's population that was 65 and over on July 1, 2004. Florida led all states in this category. West Virginia, Pennsylvania, North Dakota and Iowa followed closely, at 15 percent each.

4.2%

Percentage increase in the number of people age 65 and over in Nevada between July 1, 2003, and July 1, 2004. Alaska closely followed at 3.8 percent.

3.8 million

Number of people 65 and over living in California on July 1, 2004, the highest total of any state. Florida, with 2.9 million, was the runner-up.

29%

The highest percentage increase among counties in the 65 and over population between 2000 and 2003. This distinction belongs to Douglas, Colo. Following Douglas were Collin, Texas; Prince William, Va.; Fort Bend, Texas; and Henry, Ga. (The findings pertain to counties with minimum populations of 100,000.) The five largest numerical gainers over the period were Los Angeles, Calif.; Clark (Las Vegas), Nev.; Orange (Anaheim), Calif.; Maricopa (Phoenix), Ariz.; and Miami-Dade, Fla.



Following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau Facts for Features series:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Jan. 17) & African-American History Month (February)
- Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)
- Women's History Month (March)
- St. Patrick's Day (March 17)
- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (May)
- Older Americans Month (May)
- Mother's Day (May 8)
- Father's Day (June 19)
- The Fourth of July (July 4)
- Anniversary of Americans With Disabilities Act (July 26)
- Back to School (August)
- Labor Day (Sept. 5)
- Grandparents Day (Sept. 11)
- Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
- Halloween (Oct. 31)
- American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month (November)
- Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
- Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 24)
- The Holiday Season (December)

Individual source links for each statement herein may be accessed on the Internet at http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/004210.html.

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Editor's note: Some of the preceding data were collected in surveys and, therefore, are subject to sampling error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office at (301) 763-3030; fax (301) 457-3670; or e-mail pio@census.gov.