

## ***65+ in the United States: 2005***

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### **Lead Agency:**

Staff of the Population Division within the U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, conducted the research for the *65+ in the United States: 2005*.

### **Agency Mission:**

The mission of the Census Bureau is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the Nation's people and economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by our strong and capable workforce, our readiness to innovate, and our abiding commitment to our customers.

In addition, the specific mission of the Population Division is to provide regularly updated information on the population of the United States and countries around the world, and their demographic, geographic, and other characteristics. We share our expertise globally.

### **Principal Investigator:**

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### **Partner agency:**

The National Institute on Aging

### **General description:**

The report *65+ in the United States: 2005* provides a comprehensive description of the older population in the United States to foster a better understanding of their experiences and challenges.

The dynamics of aging are affected by many interrelated factors, including demographic, social, economic, and medical influences. The growth of the older population has been dramatic. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this group increased from 3.1 million to over 35 million, and its size is projected to double between 2000 and 2030. This substantial growth will challenge society on a range of issues, many of which are highlighted in this report.

Diversity is a distinguishing feature of the older population in the United States and is highly likely to increase in the future on at least some dimensions. This report discusses diversity of age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, health, economic status, geographic distribution, marital status, living arrangements, and educational attainment among those aged 65 and older.

The older population of tomorrow will differ from the older population of today in many ways. They will most likely be better educated and more racially and ethnically diverse than today's older population. While the older population will grow over the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the size of this growth is not certain. For example, if mortality decreases faster than projected, the older population of the future could be much larger than currently projected.

How people experience aging depends on a variety of factors, including social and economic characteristics and health status, which are discussed in the chapters in this report. The second chapter of this report looks at the growth of the older population over the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and includes data on race and Hispanic origin. The last section of this chapter provides a global context on population aging. The third chapter focuses on the health status of the older population. Trends in mortality are examined, and chronic diseases and disability are discussed. The fourth chapter covers economic characteristics of the older population, including trends in labor force participation and retirement. Data on wealth, income, and poverty are also presented. In the fifth chapter, geographic distribution and mobility of the older population are discussed. The sixth chapter examines social characteristics of the older population, such as marital status, living arrangements, and educational attainment.

This report used data from a variety of sources. Data used in this report are primarily from Census 2000 and previous censuses; nationally-representative surveys such as the Current Population Survey, the Survey of Income and Program Participation, the National Health Interview Survey, the Longitudinal Study on Aging, and the American Housing Survey; recent population projections; and data compiled by other federal agencies, including the National Center for Health Statistics. This report also draws on information on the older population in numerous reports prepared by the Census Bureau, other federal agencies, and private researchers.

The report *65+ in the United States: 2005* is exceptional because it provides a comprehensive portrait of the older population in the United States using multiple data sources. It presents demographic, social, and economic data on the older population in a manner that is accessible to a wide range of audiences.

Population aging is one of the most important demographic dynamics affecting families and societies throughout the world. People are living longer and healthier lives. According to Census Bureau projections, a massive increase in the number of older people will occur when the Baby-Boom generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) begin to turn 65 in 2011. The older population is projected to double from 36 million in 2003 to 72 million in 2030, and to increase from 12 percent to 20 percent of the population.

The growth of the population aged 65 and over is challenging policymakers, families, businesses, and health care providers, among others, to meet the needs of aging individuals. Policymakers need to understand the characteristics of older populations, their strengths, and their requirements. Understanding the dynamics of aging requires accurate descriptions of older populations from interrelated perspectives, including demographic, social, and economic. This report is an effort to contribute to an accurate description of the older population in the United States.

How people experience aging depends on a variety of factors, including social and economic characteristics and health status, which are discussed in this report. The growth of the older population over the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century is presented, and data on race and Hispanic origin are included. The report also provides a global context on population aging. The health status of the older population is examined in the report, and trends in mortality, chronic diseases and disability are discussed. Information on the economic characteristics of the older population, including trends in labor force participation and retirement are presented, as well as data on wealth, income, and poverty. The geographic distribution and mobility of the older population are discussed. Finally, social characteristics of the older population, such as marital status, living arrangements, and educational attainment that impact how people experience aging are presented and discussed.