

# The 65 Years and Over Population: 2000

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## Census 2000 Brief

C2KBR/01-10

In 2000, 35.0 million people 65 years of age and over were counted in the United States.<sup>1</sup> This represents a 12.0-percent increase since 1990, when 31.2 million older people were counted.<sup>2</sup> Although the number of people 65 years and over increased between 1990 and 2000, their proportion of the total population dropped from 12.6 percent in 1990 to 12.4 percent in 2000.

This report, part of a series that analyzes population and housing data collected from Census 2000, provides a portrait of the 65 years and over population in the United States and discusses its distribution at the national and subnational levels. The report also highlights comparisons with data from the 1990 census.<sup>3</sup>

A question on age has been asked since the first census of the population in 1790, and data on the 65 years and over population was first published in 1870. The Census 2000 age data were derived from a two-part question that was asked of all people. The first part asked for the age

Figure 1.

### Reproduction of the Question on Age From Census 2000

**4. What is this person's age and what is this person's date of birth?**  
*Print numbers in boxes.*

Age on April 1, 2000	Month	Day	Year of birth
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 questionnaire.

of the person, and the second part asked for the date of birth (see Figure 1).<sup>4</sup>

### The 65 years and over population grew slower than the total population.

Census 2000 was the first time in the history of the census that the 65 years and over population did not grow faster than the total population. Between 1990 and 2000, the total population increased by 13.2 percent, from 248.7 million to 281.4 million people. In contrast, the population 65 years and over increased by only 12.0 percent.

### Among the older population, those 85 years and over showed the highest percentage increase.

In 2000, there were 18.4 million people ages 65 to 74 years old, representing 53 percent of the older population

<sup>1</sup> The text of this report discusses data for the 50 states and the District of Columbia, but not the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Island Areas.

<sup>2</sup> For this brief, the older population is defined as people 65 years and over.

<sup>3</sup> 1990 populations shown in this report were originally published in 1990 census reports and do not include subsequent revisions resulting from boundary or other changes.

<sup>4</sup> For more Census 2000 age information, see U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, *Age: 2000*, by Julie Meyer, Census 2000 Brief, C2KBR/01-12, Washington, DC.

By  
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Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

United States  
Census  
2000

Table 1.  
**Population 65 Years and Over by Age: 1990 and 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

Age	1990		2000		Percent of U.S. total		Percent change, 1990 to 2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	1990	2000	
<b>65 years and over</b> .....	<b>31,241,831</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>34,991,753</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>12.0</b>
65 to 74 years .....	18,106,558	58.0	18,390,986	52.6	7.3	6.5	1.6
65 to 69 years .....	10,111,735	32.4	9,533,545	27.2	4.1	3.4	-5.7
70 to 74 years .....	7,994,823	25.6	8,857,441	25.3	3.2	3.1	10.8
75 to 84 years .....	10,055,108	32.2	12,361,180	35.3	4.0	4.4	22.9
75 to 79 years .....	6,121,369	19.6	7,415,813	21.2	2.5	2.6	21.1
80 to 84 years .....	3,933,739	12.6	4,945,367	14.1	1.6	1.8	25.7
85 to 94 years .....	2,829,728	9.1	3,902,349	11.2	1.1	1.4	37.9
85 to 89 years .....	2,060,247	6.6	2,789,818	8.0	0.8	1.0	35.4
90 to 94 years .....	769,481	2.5	1,112,531	3.2	0.3	0.4	44.6
95 years and over .....	250,437	0.8	337,238	1.0	0.1	0.1	34.7

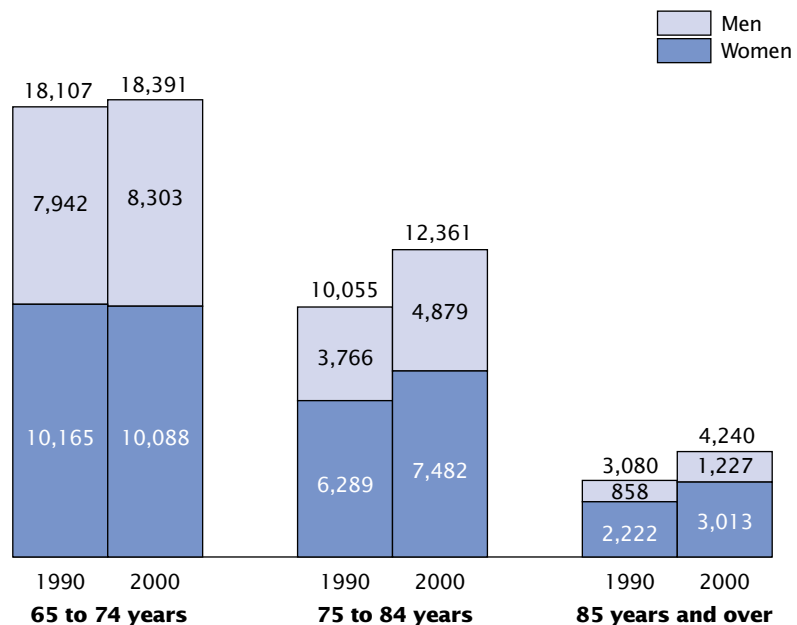
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1; 1990 Census of Population, *General Population Characteristics, United States* (1990 CP-1-1).

(see Table 1). The 75-to-84-year-olds numbered 12.4 million people (35 percent of the older population), and those ages 85 and over numbered 4.2 million people (12 percent of the older population). These age groups represented 6.5 percent, 4.4 percent, and 1.5 percent of the total population, respectively.

During the 1990s, the most rapid growth of the older population occurred in the oldest age groups. The population 85 years and over increased by 38 percent, from 3.1 million to 4.2 million. In contrast, the population 75 to 84 years old increased by 23 percent, and the population 65 to 74 years old increased by less than 2 percent, from 18.1 million to 18.4 million. Within the 65-to-74 age group, the number of people 65 to 69 years old declined by 6 percent, compared with an increase of 11 percent in the number of people 70 to 74 years old. The changes in the 65-to-74 age group reflect the relatively low number of births in the

Figure 2.  
**Population 65 Years and Over by Age and Sex: 1990 and 2000**

(Numbers in thousands. For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1; 1990 Census of Population, *General Population Characteristics, United States* (1990 CP-1-1).

Table 2.  
**Number of Men per 100 Women by Age, for the 65 Years and Over Population: 1990 and 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

Age	1990	2000
<b>65 years and over</b> .....	<b>67</b>	<b>70</b>
65 to 74 years .....	78	82
75 to 84 years.....	60	65
85 years and over .....	39	41

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1; 1990 Census of Population, *General Population Characteristics, United States* (1990 CP-1-1).

late 1920s and early 1930s, which in turn led to a relatively small number of people reaching age 65 during the decade of 1990 to 2000. This trend is expected to reverse as baby boomers (born from 1946 through 1964) reach age 65, starting in 2011.

### Women outnumbered men in the 65 years and over population.

In 2000, there were 14.4 million men and 20.6 million women aged 65 and over, yielding a male-female ratio (the number who were male times 100 divided by the number who were female) of 70 (see Figure 2 and Table 2).<sup>5</sup> The male-female ratio drops steadily with age group. In the 65-to-74 age group, the male-female ratio was 82; in the 75-to-84 age group, the male-female ratio was 65, and in the group 85 years and over, the ratio was 41. The male-female ratio for each age group in the older population has risen since 1990. In 1990, the ratios were 78, 60, and 39, respectively.

### The West and South regions had the most growth in the total population and in the older population.

The regional pattern of growth of the older population matched the

<sup>5</sup> For more Census 2000 information about the male and female populations, see U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, *Gender: 2000*, by Denise I. Smith and Renee E. Spraggins, Census 2000 Brief, C2KBR/01-9, Washington, DC.

regional growth of the total population. Between 1990 and 2000, the West and South regions grew the fastest (see Table 3).<sup>6</sup> The West experienced the highest percent increase of the older population, at 20 percent, and the South's older population grew by 16 percent. In contrast, the older population grew at a much lower rate in the Midwest (7 percent) and Northeast (5 percent).

Every state's older population grew between 1990 and 2000, ranging from a 1-percent increase in Rhode Island to a 72-percent increase in Nevada. After Nevada, the next highest increases in the older population were found in Alaska (60 percent), Arizona (39 percent), and New Mexico (30 percent). Only the District of Columbia showed a decline in the 65-years-and-over population.<sup>7</sup> Between 1990 and 2000, the older population in the

<sup>6</sup> The West includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The South includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Midwest includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Northeast region includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

<sup>7</sup> Washington, DC, is treated as a state equivalent for statistical purposes.

District of Columbia decreased by 10 percent, or 8,000 people.

### People 65 years and over represented a smaller proportion of the total population in 2000 than in 1990.

Unlike previous decades, during the 1990s, the proportion of the population composed of people 65 years and over declined nationally, in two regions of the country, and in over half of the states. In the Midwest, the proportion 65 years and over declined from 13.0 percent of its total population in 1990 to 12.8 percent in 2000, and the proportion in the South declined from 12.6 percent to 12.4 percent. This proportion remained at 13.8 percent in the Northeast, but in the West, the proportion of people 65 years and over increased slightly from 10.9 percent in 1990 to 11.0 percent in 2000.

In over half of the states (29, including the District of Columbia), the proportion 65 years and over of the total population declined. Nineteen of these states are in the Midwest and South. The states with the largest declines in the proportion 65 years and over were Oregon, Arkansas, and Idaho, which each declined about 1 percentage point between 1990 and 2000 to proportions of 12.8 percent, 14.0 percent, and 11.3 percent, respectively. Although Florida continued to have the highest proportion 65 years and over (17.6 percent), Florida experienced a similar decline in this proportion since 1990.

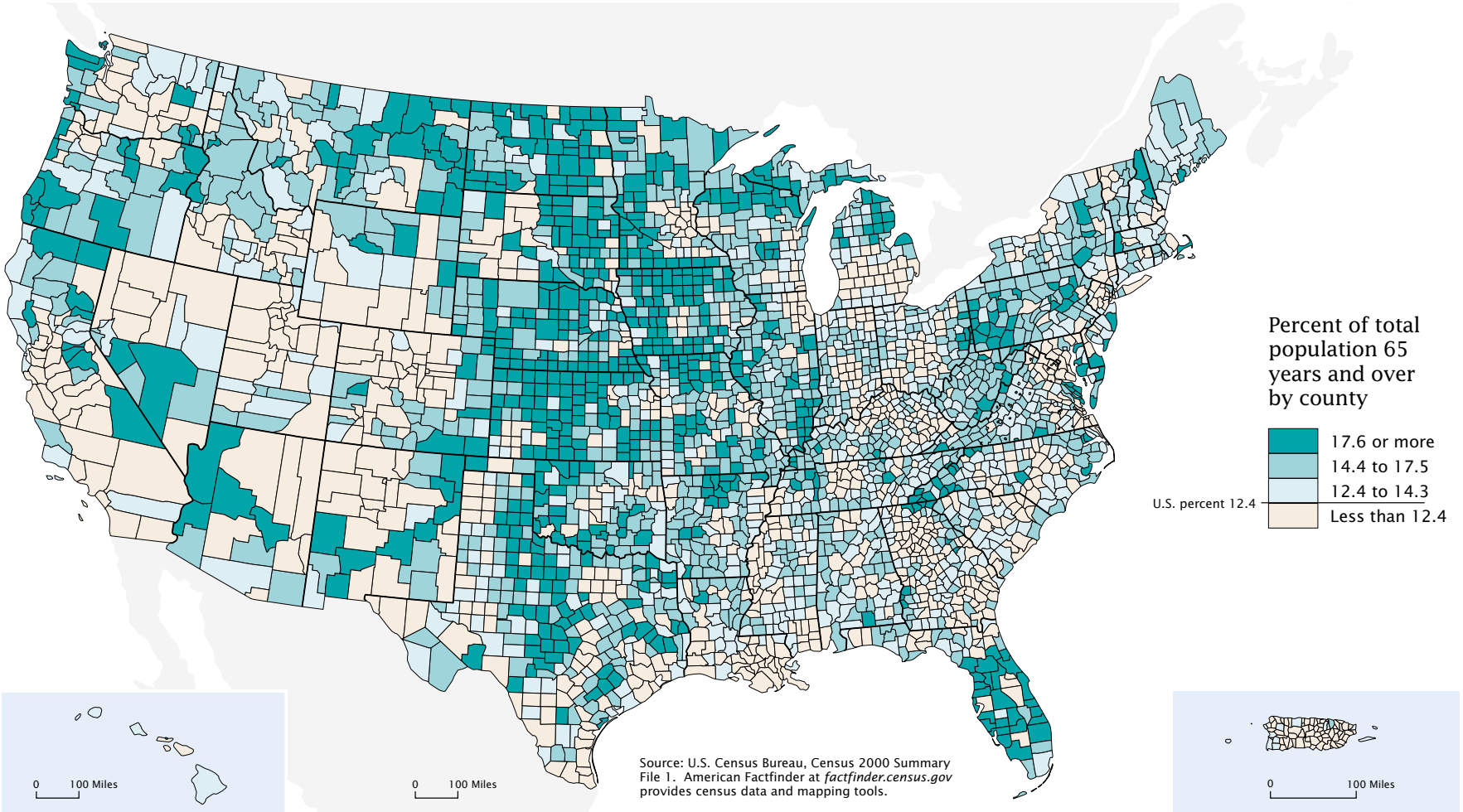
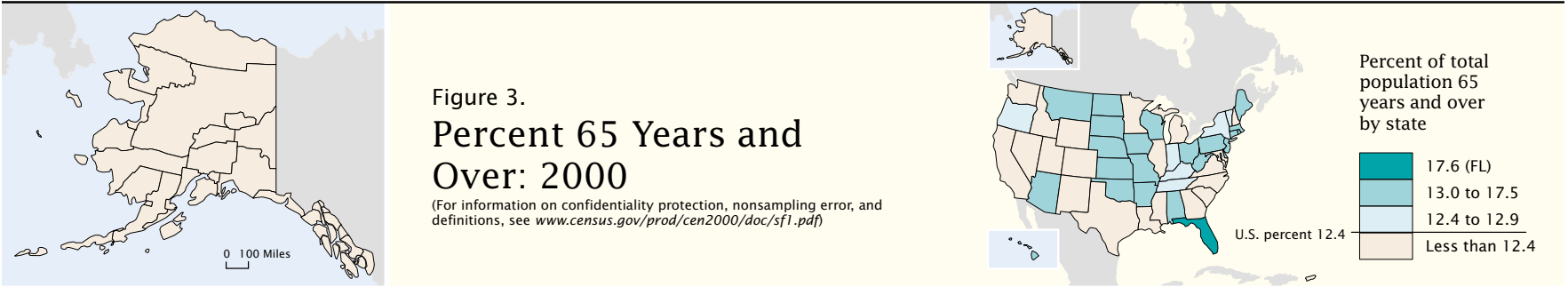
A total of 29 states had a proportion of population 65 years and over that equaled or exceeded the national value of 12.4 percent. Florida's high proportion of population 65 years and over was followed by Pennsylvania and

Table 3.  
**Population 65 Years and Over for the United States, Regions, and States,  
 and for Puerto Rico: 1990 and 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

Area	1990			2000			Change, 1990 to 2000	
	Total population	Population 65 years and over		Total population	Population 65 years and over		Number	Percent
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		
<b>United States</b> .....	<b>248,709,873</b>	<b>31,241,831</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>281,421,906</b>	<b>34,991,753</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>3,749,922</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Region</b>								
Northeast .....	50,809,229	6,995,156	13.8	53,594,378	7,372,282	13.8	377,126	5.4
Midwest .....	59,668,632	7,749,130	13.0	64,392,776	8,259,075	12.8	509,945	6.6
South .....	85,445,930	10,724,182	12.6	100,236,820	12,438,267	12.4	1,714,085	16.0
West .....	52,786,082	5,773,363	10.9	63,197,932	6,922,129	11.0	1,148,766	19.9
<b>State</b>								
Alabama .....	4,040,587	522,989	12.9	4,447,100	579,798	13.0	56,809	10.9
Alaska .....	550,043	22,369	4.1	626,932	35,699	5.7	13,330	59.6
Arizona .....	3,665,228	478,774	13.1	5,130,632	667,839	13.0	189,065	39.5
Arkansas .....	2,350,725	350,058	14.9	2,673,400	374,019	14.0	23,961	6.8
California .....	29,760,021	3,135,552	10.5	33,871,648	3,595,658	10.6	460,106	14.7
Colorado .....	3,294,394	329,443	10.0	4,301,261	416,073	9.7	86,630	26.3
Connecticut .....	3,287,116	445,907	13.6	3,405,565	470,183	13.8	24,276	5.4
Delaware .....	666,168	80,735	12.1	783,600	101,726	13.0	20,991	26.0
District of Columbia .....	606,900	77,847	12.8	572,059	69,898	12.2	-7,949	-10.2
Florida .....	12,937,926	2,369,431	18.3	15,982,378	2,807,597	17.6	438,166	18.5
Georgia .....	6,478,216	654,270	10.1	8,186,453	785,275	9.6	131,005	20.0
Hawaii .....	1,108,229	125,005	11.3	1,211,537	160,601	13.3	35,596	28.5
Idaho .....	1,006,749	121,265	12.0	1,293,953	145,916	11.3	24,651	20.3
Illinois .....	11,430,602	1,436,545	12.6	12,419,293	1,500,025	12.1	63,480	4.4
Indiana .....	5,544,159	696,196	12.6	6,080,485	752,831	12.4	56,635	8.1
Iowa .....	2,776,755	426,106	15.3	2,926,324	436,213	14.9	10,107	2.4
Kansas .....	2,477,574	342,571	13.8	2,688,418	356,229	13.3	13,658	4.0
Kentucky .....	3,685,296	466,845	12.7	4,041,769	504,793	12.5	37,948	8.1
Louisiana .....	4,219,973	468,991	11.1	4,468,976	516,929	11.6	47,938	10.2
Maine .....	1,227,928	163,373	13.3	1,274,923	183,402	14.4	20,029	12.3
Maryland .....	4,781,468	517,482	10.8	5,296,486	599,307	11.3	81,825	15.8
Massachusetts .....	6,016,425	819,284	13.6	6,349,097	860,162	13.5	40,878	5.0
Michigan .....	9,295,297	1,108,461	11.9	9,938,444	1,219,018	12.3	110,557	10.0
Minnesota .....	4,375,099	546,934	12.5	4,919,479	594,266	12.1	47,332	8.7
Mississippi .....	2,573,216	321,284	12.5	2,844,658	343,523	12.1	22,239	6.9
Missouri .....	5,117,073	717,681	14.0	5,595,211	755,379	13.5	37,698	5.3
Montana .....	799,065	106,497	13.3	902,195	120,949	13.4	14,452	13.6
Nebraska .....	1,578,385	223,068	14.1	1,711,263	232,195	13.6	9,127	4.1
Nevada .....	1,201,833	127,631	10.6	1,998,257	218,929	11.0	91,298	71.5
New Hampshire .....	1,109,252	125,029	11.3	1,235,786	147,970	12.0	22,941	18.3
New Jersey .....	7,730,188	1,032,025	13.4	8,414,350	1,113,136	13.2	81,111	7.9
New Mexico .....	1,515,069	163,062	10.8	1,819,046	212,225	11.7	49,163	30.1
New York .....	17,990,455	2,363,722	13.1	18,976,457	2,448,352	12.9	84,630	3.6
North Carolina .....	6,628,637	804,341	12.1	8,049,313	969,048	12.0	164,707	20.5
North Dakota .....	638,800	91,055	14.3	642,200	94,478	14.7	3,423	3.8
Ohio .....	10,847,115	1,406,961	13.0	11,353,140	1,507,757	13.3	100,796	7.2
Oklahoma .....	3,145,585	424,213	13.5	3,450,654	455,950	13.2	31,737	7.5
Oregon .....	2,842,321	391,324	13.8	3,421,399	438,177	12.8	46,853	12.0
Pennsylvania .....	11,881,643	1,829,106	15.4	12,281,054	1,919,165	15.6	90,059	4.9
Rhode Island .....	1,003,464	150,547	15.0	1,048,319	152,402	14.5	1,855	1.2
South Carolina .....	3,486,703	396,935	11.4	4,012,012	485,333	12.1	88,398	22.3
South Dakota .....	696,004	102,331	14.7	754,844	108,131	14.3	5,800	5.7
Tennessee .....	4,877,185	618,818	12.7	5,689,283	703,311	12.4	84,493	13.7
Texas .....	16,986,510	1,716,576	10.1	20,851,820	2,072,532	9.9	355,956	20.7
Utah .....	1,722,850	149,958	8.7	2,233,169	190,222	8.5	40,264	26.9
Vermont .....	562,758	66,163	11.8	608,827	77,510	12.7	11,347	17.2
Virginia .....	6,187,358	664,470	10.7	7,078,515	792,333	11.2	127,863	19.2
Washington .....	4,866,692	575,288	11.8	5,894,121	662,148	11.2	86,860	15.1
West Virginia .....	1,793,477	268,897	15.0	1,808,344	276,895	15.3	7,998	3.0
Wisconsin .....	4,891,769	651,221	13.3	5,363,675	702,553	13.1	51,332	7.9
Wyoming .....	453,588	47,195	10.4	493,782	57,693	11.7	10,498	22.2
<b>Puerto Rico</b> .....	<b>3,522,037</b>	<b>340,884</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>3,808,610</b>	<b>425,137</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>84,253</b>	<b>24.7</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1; 1990 Census of Population, *General Population Characteristics*, (1990 CP-1).



West Virginia, which had proportions of 15.6 percent and 15.3 percent of their respective total populations. Alaska had the lowest proportion 65 years and over (5.7 percent). Four other states had proportions less than 10 percent — Texas (9.9 percent), Colorado (9.7 percent), Georgia (9.6 percent), and Utah (8.5 percent).

California, the most populous state, was also the state with the largest number of people 65 years and over (3.6 million people). Following California were Florida and New York, with 2.8 million and 2.4 million older people, respectively. Alaska had the fewest number of people 65 years and over, with 36,000 people.

### The proportion 65 years and over in counties followed regional trends.

Figure 3 shows the proportion 65 years and over of each of the country's 3,141 counties and equivalent areas. The broad patterns evident on the map include a high proportion of people 65 years and over in counties extending through the Great Plains and south into central Texas. Many of these counties had a proportion of people 65 years and over that equaled or exceeded the proportion of the older population in the state of Florida (17.6 percent). The presence of this band in the Midwest suggests that the trends of outmigration of the young and aging-in-place have continued in this region. A similar band of counties with high proportions of older people is found in the Northeast region, stretching along Appalachia. By contrast, much of the West region consists of counties with lower proportions 65 years and over than the U.S. proportion of 12.4 percent, in part a result of higher net immigration and fertility.

Table 4.  
**Counties Exceeding the U.S. Proportion 65 Years and Over by Region: 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

Region	Total counties	Counties exceeding U.S. proportion <sup>1</sup>	
		Number	Percent
<b>United States</b> .....	<b>3,141</b>	<b>2,263</b>	<b>72.0</b>
Northeast .....	217	170	78.3
Midwest .....	1,055	869	82.4
South .....	1,424	980	68.8
West .....	445	244	54.8

<sup>1</sup>U.S. proportion 65 years and over was 12.4 percent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

Table 5.  
**Ten Places of 100,000 or More Population With the Highest Proportion of Their Population 65 Years and Over: 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

Place <sup>1</sup>	Total population	Population 65 years and over	
		Number	Percent
Clearwater, FL .....	108,787	23,357	21.5
Cape Coral, FL .....	102,286	20,020	19.6
Honolulu, HI <sup>2</sup> .....	371,657	66,257	17.8
St. Petersburg, FL .....	248,232	43,173	17.4
Hollywood, FL .....	139,357	24,159	17.3
Warren, MI .....	138,247	23,871	17.3
Miami, FL .....	362,470	61,768	17.0
Livonia, MI .....	100,545	16,988	16.9
Scottsdale, AZ .....	202,705	33,884	16.7
Hialeah, FL .....	226,419	37,679	16.6

<sup>1</sup>Census 2000 showed 245 places in the United States with 100,000 or more population. They included 238 incorporated places (including 4 city-county consolidations) and 7 census designated places that were not legally incorporated. For a list of these places by state, see [www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t6.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t6.html).

<sup>2</sup>Honolulu, Hawaii, is a census designated place and is not legally incorporated.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

The proportion 65 years and over of each county's population ranged from a low of 2 percent in Chattahoochee County, Georgia, which has a large military presence, to a high of 35 percent in Charlotte County, Florida. The older population represented 20 percent or more of the total population in 381 counties of the United States, and 30 percent or more of the total population in 10 counties, half of which were in Florida.

Of all 3,141 counties, 2,263 counties (or 72 percent) had a proportion of people 65 years and over that exceeded the national value of 12.4 percent (see Table 4). The Midwest had the highest percent of counties that exceeded this value (82 percent), followed by the Northeast (78 percent), the South (69 percent), and the West (55 percent).

**Table 6.**  
**Ten Places of 100,000 or More Population With the Lowest Proportion of Their Population 65 Years and Over: 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

Place <sup>1</sup>	Total population	Population 65 years and over	
		Number	Percent
Gilbert, AZ .....	109,697	4,118	3.8
Fontana, CA .....	128,929	6,113	4.7
Plano, TX .....	222,030	10,911	4.9
Carrollton, TX .....	109,576	5,711	5.2
West Valley City, UT .....	108,896	5,858	5.4
Anchorage, AK .....	260,283	14,242	5.5
Moreno Valley, CA .....	142,381	7,809	5.5
Santa Ana, CA .....	337,977	18,565	5.5
Palmdale, CA .....	116,670	6,520	5.6
Provo, UT .....	105,166	6,020	5.7

<sup>1</sup>Census 2000 showed 245 places in the United States with 100,000 or more population. They included 238 incorporated places (including 4 city-county consolidations) and 7 census designated places that were not legally incorporated. For a list of these places by state, see [www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t6.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/phc-t6.html).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

**Table 7.**  
**Percent 65 Years and Over of the Ten Largest Cities: 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

City	Total population	Population 65 years and over	
		Number	Percent
New York, NY .....	8,008,278	937,857	11.7
Los Angeles, CA .....	3,694,820	357,129	9.7
Chicago, IL .....	2,896,016	298,803	10.3
Houston, TX .....	1,953,631	164,065	8.4
Philadelphia, PA .....	1,517,550	213,722	14.1
Phoenix, AZ .....	1,321,045	106,795	8.1
San Diego, CA .....	1,223,400	128,008	10.5
Dallas, TX .....	1,188,580	102,301	8.6
San Antonio, TX .....	1,144,646	119,362	10.4
Detroit, MI .....	951,270	99,056	10.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

A majority of the counties in most states (43) had a proportion of people 65 years and over that exceeded the national value of 12.4 percent. In seven states, more than 90 percent of the counties had proportions 65 years and over that were greater than 12.4 percent. In Rhode Island, all 5 counties had proportions that exceeded 12.4 percent, while in Maine, 15 of 16 counties had proportions exceeding 12.4 percent. The other states were Nebraska, Iowa, West Virginia,

Pennsylvania, and North Dakota. In contrast, in only seven states did the majority of counties have proportions 65 years and over that were less than 12.4 percent. These states were Alaska (in which there were no counties that exceeded the national percentage), Delaware, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, Georgia, and Louisiana.

Table 5 lists the ten places with populations over 100,000 that had the highest proportion of their total population 65 years and over. Six

of these places are located in Florida, while two are in Michigan, one is in Hawaii, and one is in Arizona. Clearwater, Florida, had the highest proportion 65 years and over, at 21 percent, followed by Cape Coral, Florida (20 percent) and Honolulu, Hawaii (18 percent).

Eight of the ten places with the lowest proportion 65 years and over are located in the West; the remaining two places are located in the South (see Table 6). Gilbert, Arizona, had the lowest proportion 65 years and over (3.8 percent), followed by Fontana, California (4.7 percent) and Plano, Texas (4.9 percent).

Table 7 lists the proportion 65 years and over of the ten largest cities. Of these cities, only Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at 14.1 percent, had a proportion that exceeded the national level of 12.4 percent.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS ON THE 65 YEARS AND OVER POPULATION

### What proportion of the older population lived in nursing homes in 2000?

The percent of people 65 years and over living in nursing homes declined from 5.1 percent in 1990 to 4.5 percent in 2000 (see Table 8). This percent decline occurred for people 65 to 74 years, 75 to 84 years, and especially in the population 85 years and over, where only 18.2 percent lived in nursing homes in 2000, compared with 24.5 percent in 1990. Ninety-one percent of the nursing home population was 65 years and over in 2000, compared with 90 percent in 1990.

### How many centenarians lived in the United States in 2000?

In 2000, there were 50,454 centenarians (people age 100 or over), representing only 1 out of every

Table 8.  
**Population 65 Years and Over in Nursing Homes  
 by Age: 1990 and 2000**

(For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf))

Age	Percent of age group		2000
	1990	2000	
<b>65 years and over . . . . .</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>1,557,800</b>
65 to 74 years . . . . .	1.4	1.1	210,159
75 to 84 years . . . . .	6.1	4.7	574,908
85 years and over . . . . .	24.5	18.2	772,733

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 special tabulation; 1990 Census of Population, *Nursing Home Population: 1990* (CPH-L-137).

5,578 people. In 1990, centenarians numbered 37,306 people (1 out of every 6,667 people). The greatest number of centenarians (5,341) lived in California in 2000, followed by 3,997 centenarians in New York. South Dakota, with 247 centenarians (1 out of every 3,056 people), and Iowa, with 941 centenarians (1 out of every 3,110 people), had the highest proportion of their population 100 years and over.

**WHY DID CENSUS 2000 ASK THE QUESTION ON AGE?**

People who answered the census help their communities obtain federal funds as well as valuable information for planning hospitals, roads, and housing assistance. Many government agencies use data on the older population to implement and evaluate programs and policies. For example, the Department of Veterans

Affairs must plan for nursing homes, hospitals, and veterans' benefits; the Department of Health and Human Services monitors compliance with the Older Americans Act, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission uses data on age in order to enforce the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. The data are also used to forecast the use of social security and medicare benefits.

Private organizations and communities also value data on age for the purposes of planning and assessment. Knowledge about the characteristics of the older population helps businesses select an appropriate mix of merchandise and plan advertising campaigns. Communities also use this information in order to design needed health services and living facilities for the older population.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on the older population in the United States, visit the U.S. Census Bureau's Internet site at [www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age.html#older](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age.html#older).

Data on age from the Census 2000 Summary File 1 were released on a state-by-state basis during the summer of 2001. Census 2000 data are available on the Internet via [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov) and for purchase on CD-ROM and later on DVD.

For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/doc/sf1.pdf) or contact our Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636).

Information on other population and housing topics is presented in the Census 2000 Brief series, located on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site at [www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs.html). This series presents information about race, Hispanic origin, age, sex, household type, housing tenure, and other social, economic, and housing characteristics.

For more information about Census 2000, including data products, call our Customer Services Center at 301-763-INFO (4636) or e-mail [webmaster@census.gov](mailto:webmaster@census.gov).

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