

Population

Indicator 1: **Number of Older Americans**

Indicator 2: **Racial and Ethnic Composition**

Indicator 3: **Marital Status**

Indicator 4: **Educational Attainment**

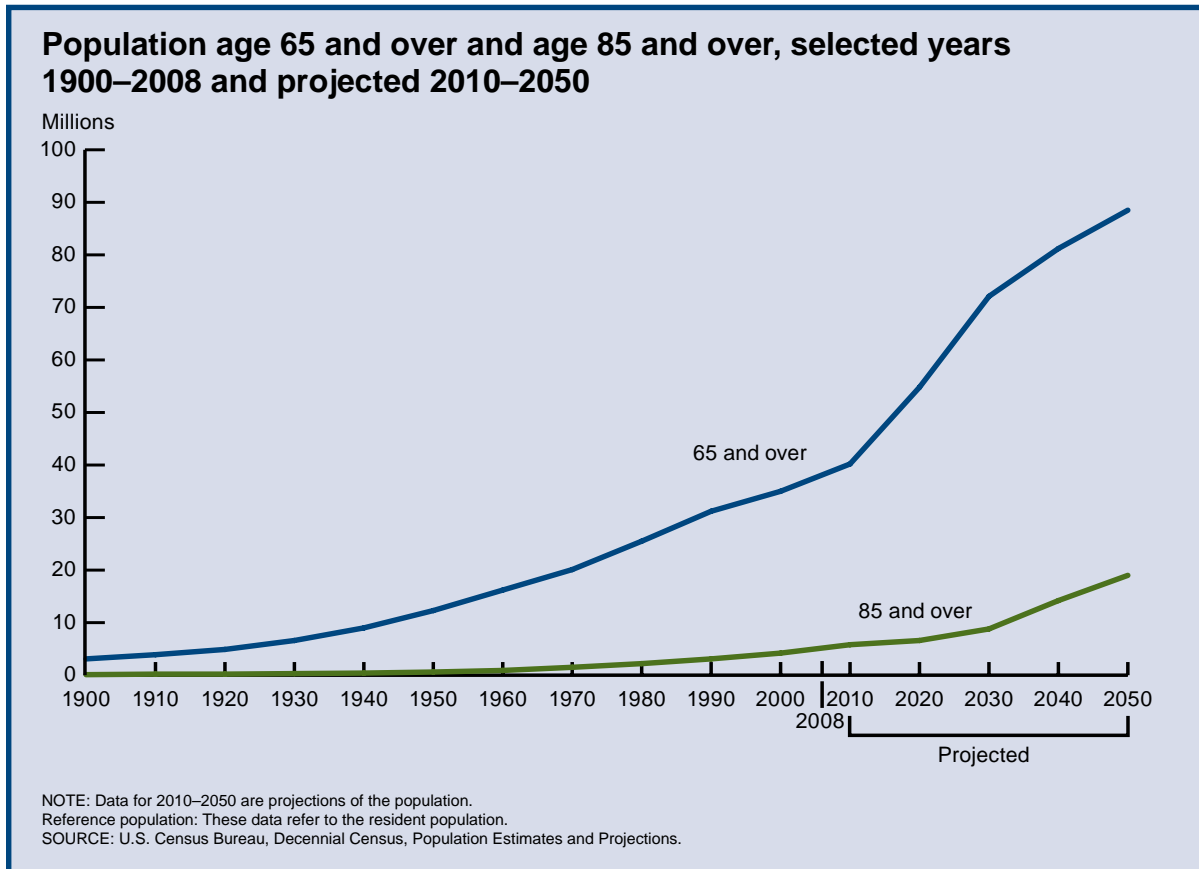
Indicator 5: **Living Arrangements**

Indicator 6: **Older Veterans**

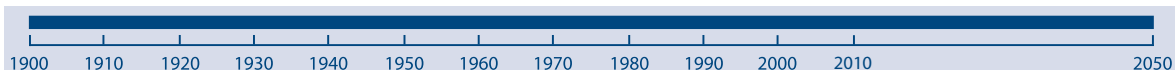
INDICATOR 1

Number of Older Americans

The growth of the population age 65 and over affects many aspects of our society, challenging policymakers, families, businesses, and health care providers, among others, to meet the needs of aging individuals.

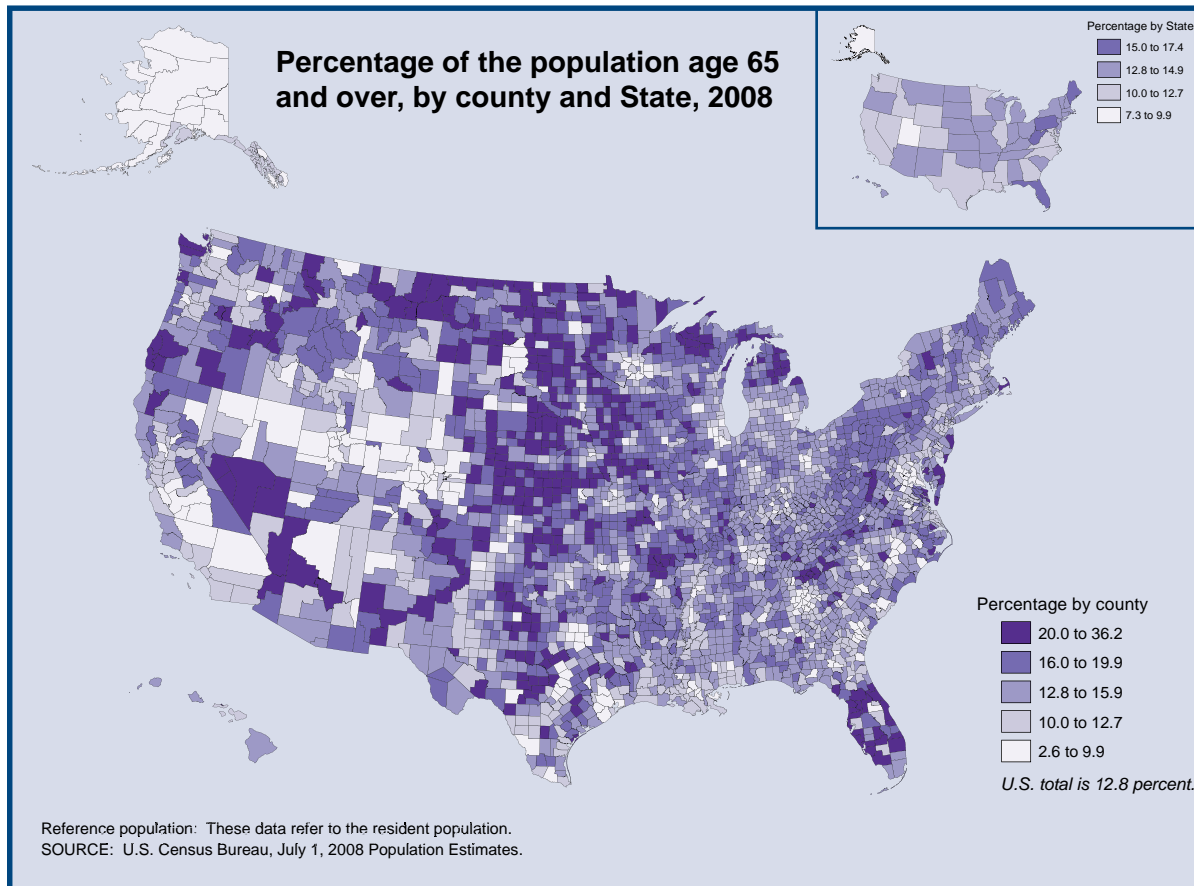


- ◆ In 2008, 39 million people age 65 and over lived in the United States, accounting for 13 percent of the total population. The older population grew from 3 million in 1900 to 39 million in 2008. The oldest-old population (those age 85 and over) grew from just over 100,000 in 1900 to 5.7 million in 2008.
- ◆ The baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) will start turning 65 in 2011, and the number of older people will increase dramatically during the 2010–2030 period. The older population in 2030 is projected to be twice as large as their counterparts in 2000, growing from 35 million to 72 million and representing nearly 20 percent of the total U.S. population.
- ◆ The growth rate of the older population is projected to slow after 2030, when the last baby boomers enter the ranks of the older population. From 2030 onward, the proportion age 65 and over will be relatively stable, at around 20 percent, even though the absolute number of people age 65 and over is projected to continue to grow. The oldest-old population, however, is projected to grow rapidly after 2030, when the baby boomers move into this age group.
- ◆ The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the population age 85 and over could grow from 5.7 million in 2008 to 19 million by 2050. Some researchers predict that death rates at older ages will decline more rapidly than is reflected in the U.S. Census Bureau’s projections, which could lead to faster growth of this population.^{1–3}



INDICATOR 1

Number of Older Americans continued

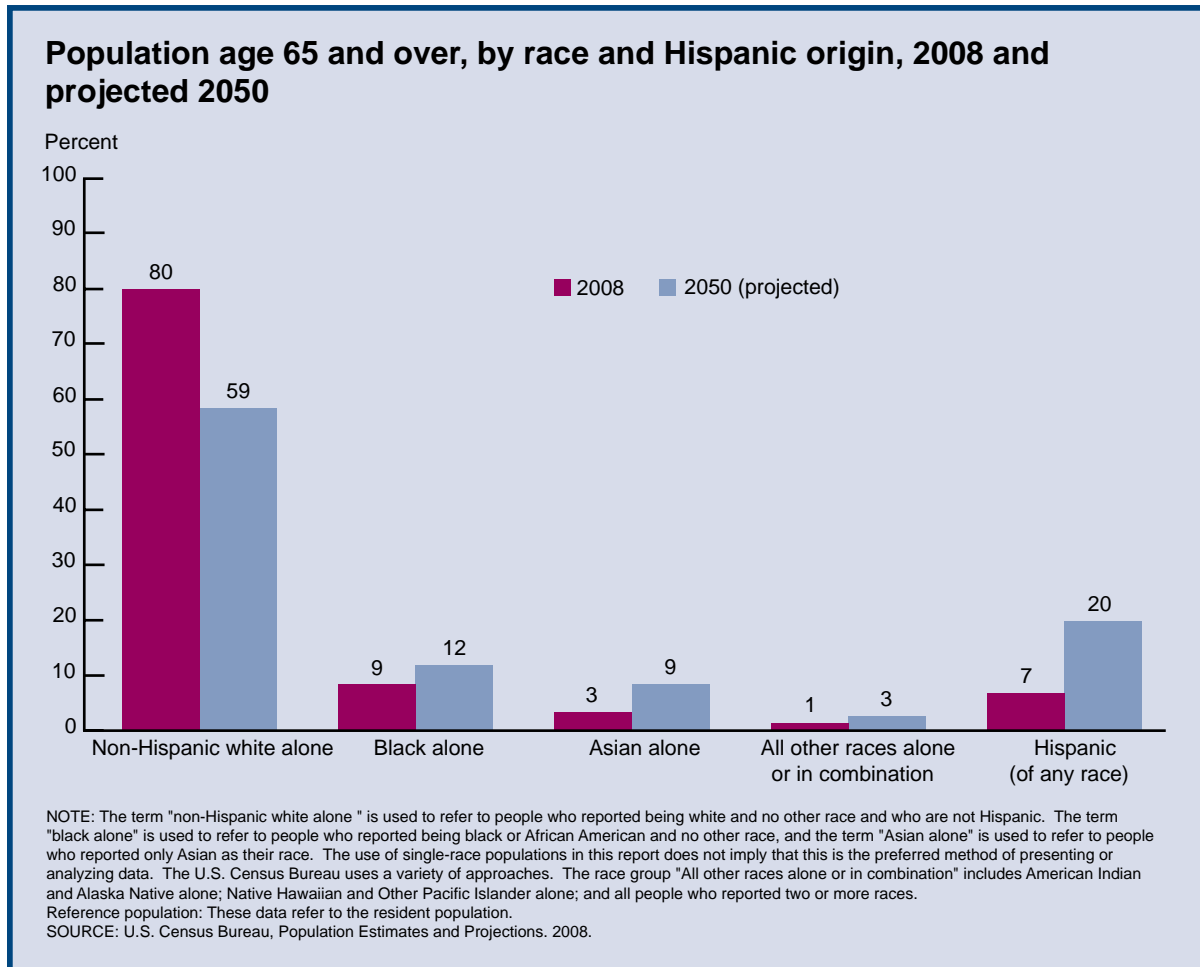


- ◆ The proportion of the population age 65 and over varies by state. This proportion is partly affected by the state fertility and mortality levels and partly by the number of older and younger people who migrate to and from the state. In 2008, Florida had the highest proportion of people age 65 and over, 17 percent. Maine, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia also had high proportions, over 15 percent.
 - ◆ The proportion of the population age 65 and over varies even more by county. In 2008, 36 percent of McIntosh County, North Dakota, was age 65 and over, the highest proportion in the country. In several Florida counties, the proportion was over 30 percent. At the other end of the spectrum was Chattahoochee County, Georgia, with only 3 percent of its population age 65 and over.
 - ◆ Older women outnumbered older men in the United States, and the proportion that is female increased with age. In 2008, women accounted for 58 percent of the population age 65 and over and for 67 percent of the population 85 and over.
 - ◆ The United States is fairly young for a developed country, with 13 percent of its population aged 65 and over in 2008. Japan had the highest percent of 65 and over (22 percent) among countries with at least 100,000 population. The older population made up more than 15 percent of the population in most European countries, 20 percent in Germany and Italy.
- Data for this indicator's charts and bullets can be found in Tables 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, and 1f on pages 72–76.*

INDICATOR 2

Racial and Ethnic Composition

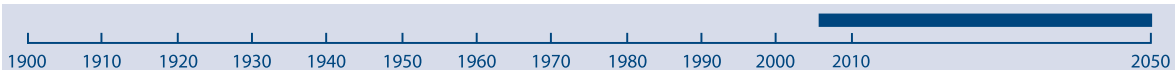
As the older population grows larger, it will also grow more diverse, reflecting the demographic changes in the U.S. population as a whole over the last several decades. By 2050, programs and services for older people will require greater flexibility to meet the needs of a more diverse population.



- ◆ In 2008, non-Hispanic whites accounted for 80 percent of the U.S. older population. Blacks made up 9 percent, Asians made up 3 percent, and Hispanics (of any race) accounted for 7 percent of the older population.
- ◆ Projections indicate that by 2050 the composition of the older population will be 59 percent non-Hispanic white, 20 percent Hispanic, 12 percent black, and 9 percent Asian.

- ◆ The older population among all racial and ethnic groups will grow; however, the older Hispanic population is projected to grow the fastest, from just under 3 million in 2008 to 17.5 million in 2050, and to be larger than the older black population. The older Asian population is also projected to experience a large increase. In 2008, just over 1 million older Asians lived in the United States; by 2050 this population is projected to be almost 7.5 million.

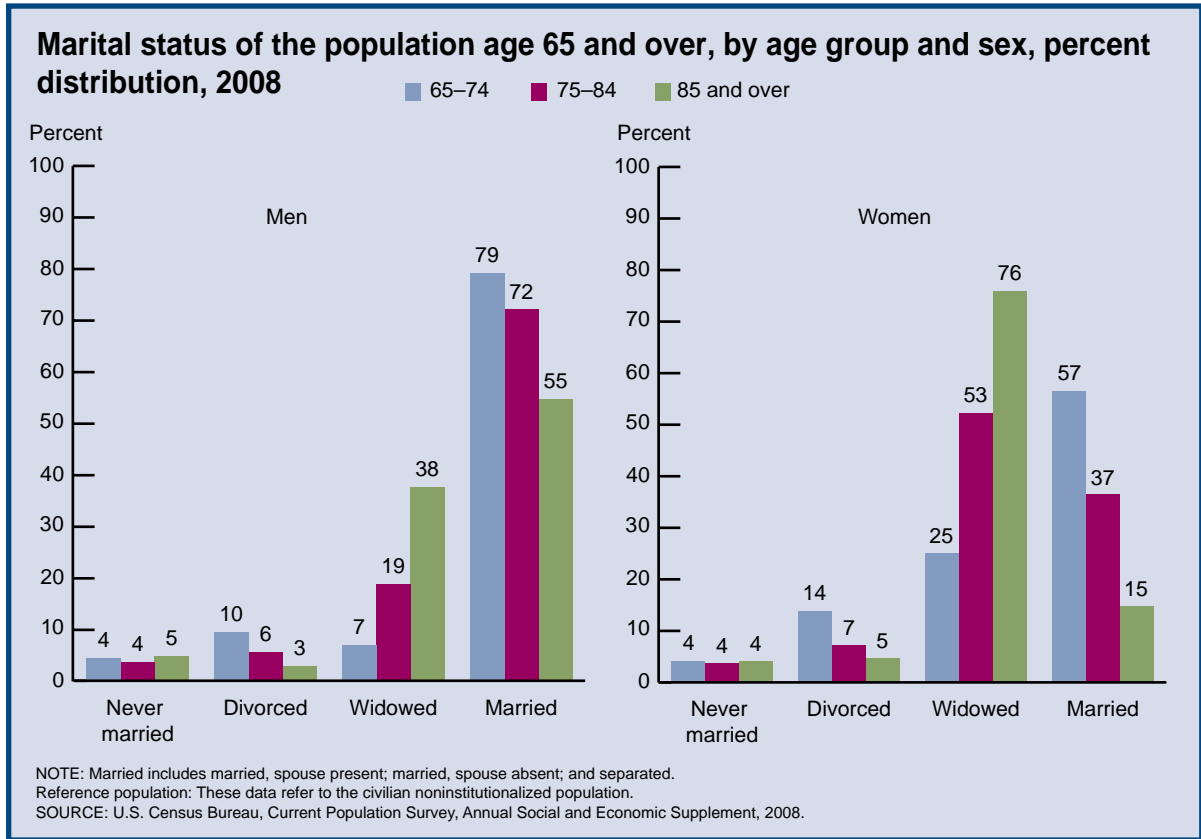
Data for this indicator's charts and bullets can be found in Table 2 on page 76.



INDICATOR 3

Marital Status

Marital status can strongly affect one’s emotional and economic well-being. Among other factors, it influences living arrangements and the availability of caregivers for older Americans with an illness or disability.



◆ In 2008, older men were much more likely than older women to be married. Over three-quarters of men age 65–74 were married, compared with over one-half (57 percent) of women in the same age group. The proportion married is lower at older ages: 37 percent of women age 75–84 and 15 percent of women age 85 and over were married. For men, the proportion married also is lower at older ages but not as low as for older women. Even among the oldest old, the majority of men were married (55 percent).

◆ Widowhood is more common among older women than older men. Women age 65 and over were three times as likely as men of the same age to be widowed, 42 percent compared with 14 percent. In 2008, 76 percent of women age 85 and over were widowed, compared with 38 percent of men.

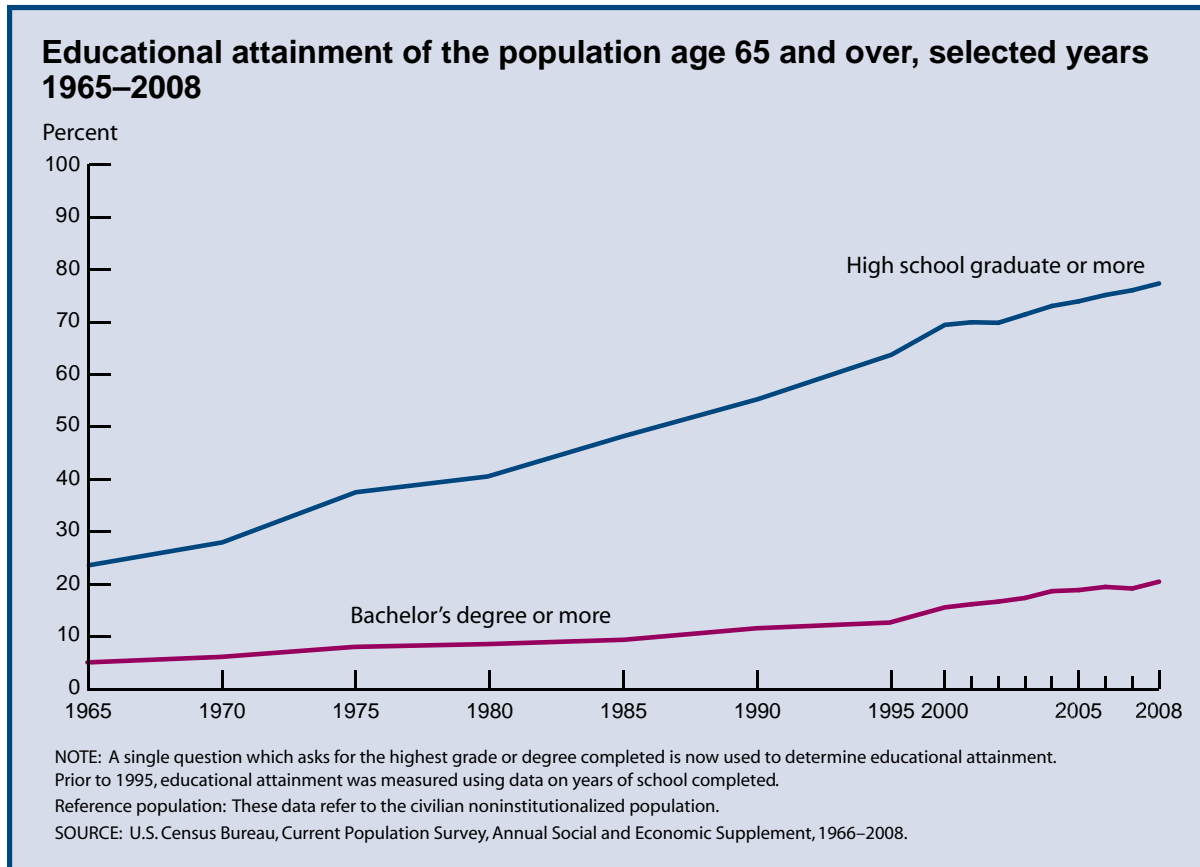
◆ Relatively small proportions of older men (8 percent) and women (10 percent) were divorced in 2008. A smaller proportion (4 percent) of the older population had never married.

All comparisons presented for this indicator are significant at 0.10 confidence level. Data for this indicator’s charts and bullets can be found in Table 3 on page 77.

INDICATOR 4

Educational Attainment

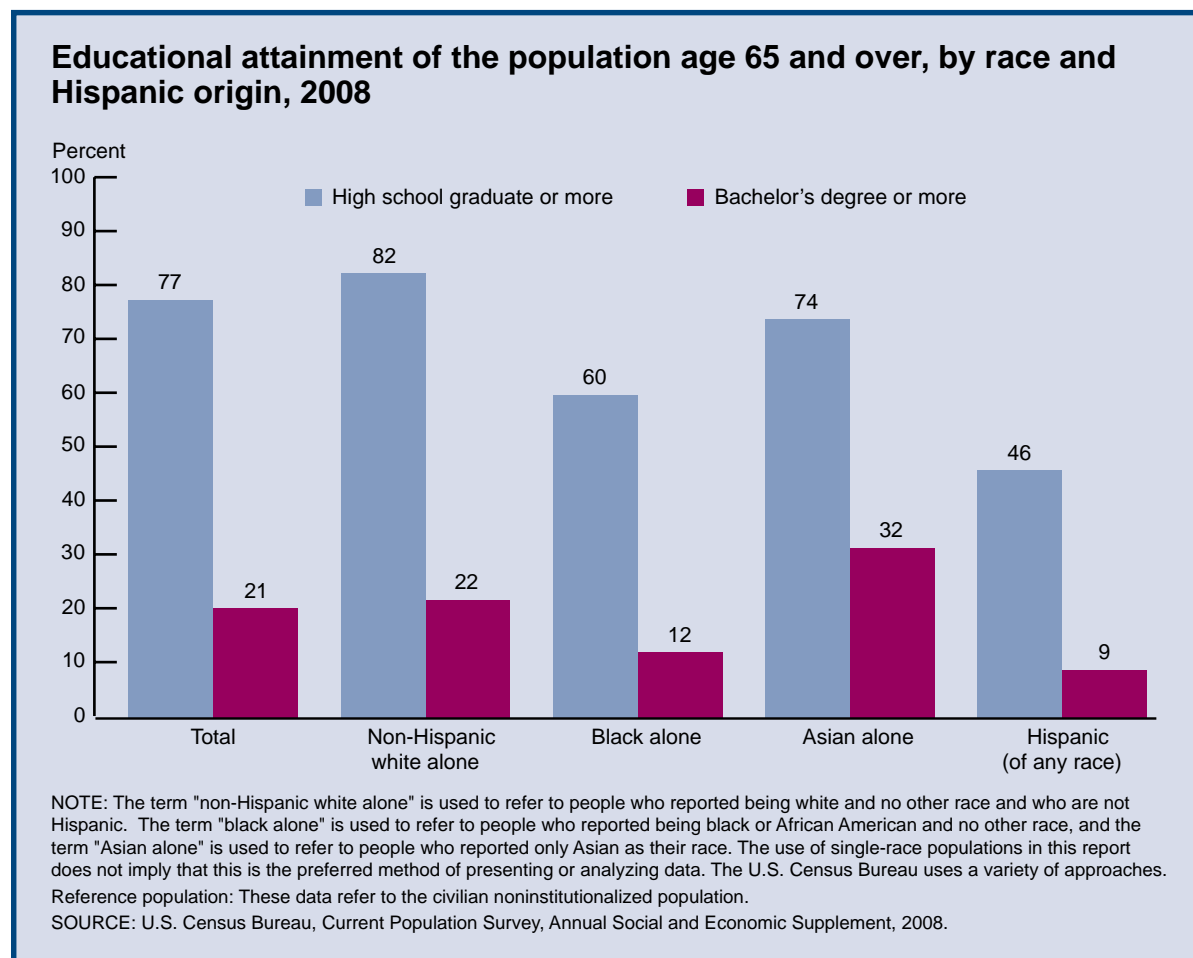
Educational attainment influences socioeconomic status, which in turn plays a role in well-being at older ages. Higher levels of education are usually associated with higher incomes, higher standards of living, and above-average health.



- ◆ In 1965, 24 percent of the older population had graduated from high school, and only 5 percent had at least a Bachelor’s degree. By 2008, 77 percent were high school graduates or more, and 21 percent had a Bachelor’s degree or more.
- ◆ In 2008, about 78 percent of older men and 77 percent of older women had at least a high school diploma. Older men attained at least a Bachelor’s degree more often than older women (27 percent compared with 16 percent).

INDICATOR 4

Educational Attainment continued



Despite the overall increase in educational attainment among older Americans, substantial educational differences exist among racial and ethnic groups. In 2008, 82 percent of non-Hispanic whites age 65 and over had completed high school. Older Asians also had a high proportion with at least a high school education (74 percent). In contrast, 60 percent of older blacks and 46 percent of older Hispanics had completed high school.

In 2008, older Asians had the highest proportion with at least a Bachelor's degree (32 percent). About 22 percent of older non-Hispanic whites had this level of education. The proportions were 12 percent and 9 percent, respectively, for older blacks and Hispanics.

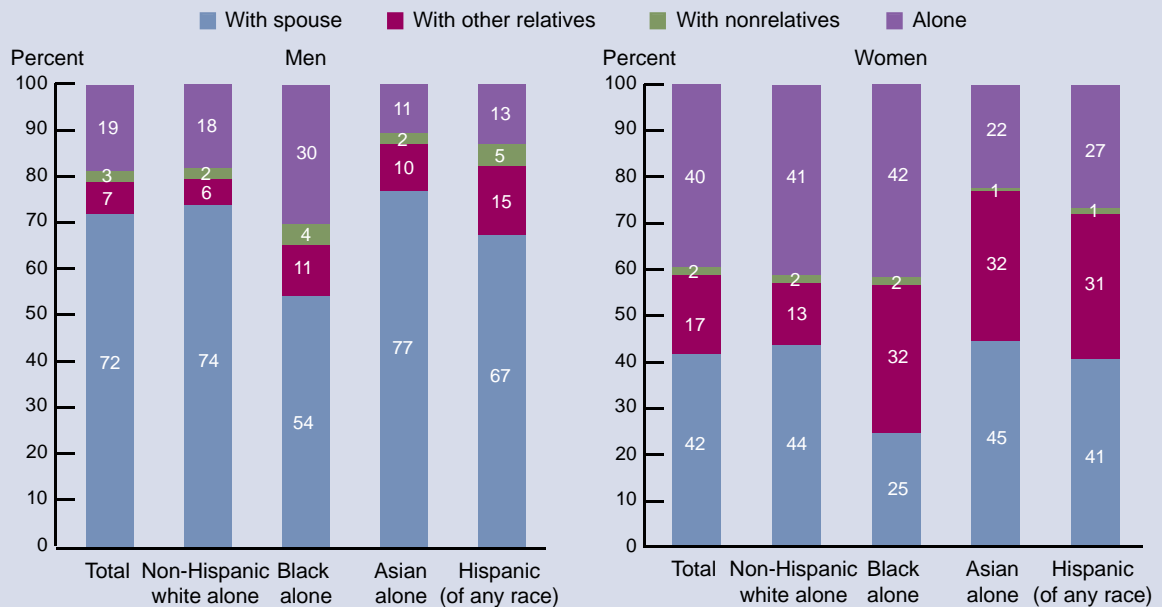
All comparisons presented for this indicator are significant at 0.10 confidence level. Data for this indicator's charts and bullets can be found in Tables 4a and 4b on pages 77–78.

INDICATOR 5

Living Arrangements

The living arrangements of America's older population are linked to income, health status, and the availability of caregivers. Older people who live alone are more likely than older people who live with their spouses to be in poverty.

Living arrangements of the population age 65 and over, by sex and race and Hispanic origin, percent distribution, 2008



NOTE: Living with other relatives indicates no spouse present. Living with nonrelatives indicates no spouse or other relatives present. The term "non-Hispanic white alone" is used to refer to people who reported being white and no other race and who are not Hispanic. The term "black alone" is used to refer to people who reported being black or African American and no other race, and the term "Asian alone" is used to refer to people who reported only Asian as their race. The use of single-race populations in this report does not imply that this is the preferred method of presenting or analyzing data. The U.S. Census Bureau uses a variety of approaches.

Reference population: These data do not include the noninstitutionalized group quarters population.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2008.

◆ In 2008, 72 percent of older men lived with their spouse while less than half (42 percent) of older women did. In contrast, older women were more than twice as likely as older men to live alone (40 percent and 19 percent, respectively).

◆ Older black, Asian, and Hispanic women were more likely than non-Hispanic white women to live with relatives other than a spouse. Older non-Hispanic white women and black women were more likely than women of other races to live alone (41 percent and 42 percent, respectively, compared with about 22 percent for older Asian women and 27 percent for older Hispanic women). The percentages of non-Hispanic white and black women living alone are not statistically different. Also, the percentages of older Asian and older Hispanic women living alone are not statistically different. Older black men lived alone about

three times as often as older Asian men (30 percent compared with 11 percent). Older black men lived alone more often than older non-Hispanic white men (18 percent). The percentages of older Asian and older Hispanic men living alone (11 percent and 13 percent, respectively) are not statistically different.

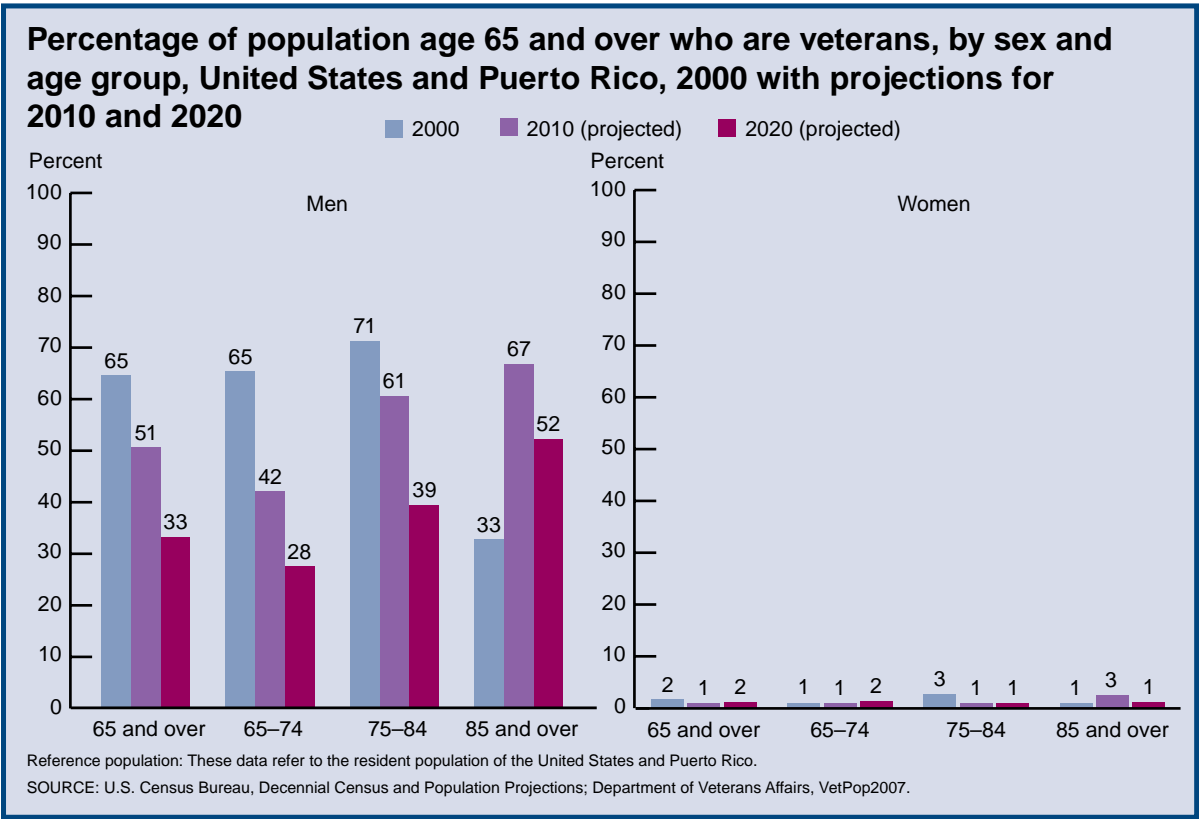
◆ Older Hispanic men were more likely (15 percent) than non-Hispanic white men (6 percent) to live with relatives other than a spouse. The percentages of black, Asian, and Hispanic men (11 percent, 10 percent and 15 percent, respectively) living with relatives other than a spouse are not statistically different.

All comparisons presented for this indicator are significant at 0.10 confidence level. Data for this indicator's charts and bullets can be found in Tables 5a and 5b on pages 78–79.

INDICATOR 6

Older Veterans

Veteran status of America’s older population is associated with higher median family income, lower percentage of uninsured or coverage by Medicaid, higher percentage of functional limitations in activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living, greater likelihood of having any disability, and less likelihood of rating their general health status as good or better.⁴ The large increase in the oldest segment of the veteran population will continue to have significant ramifications on the demand for health care services, particularly in the area of long-term care.⁵



- ◆ According to Census 2000, there were 9.7 million veterans age 65 and over in the United States and Puerto Rico. Two of three men age 65 and over were veterans.
- ◆ More than 95 percent of veterans age 65 and over are male. As World War II veterans continue to die and Vietnam veterans continue to age, the number of veterans age 65 and over will gradually decline from 9.4 million in 2000 to a projected 8.1 million in 2020.
- ◆ The increase in the proportion of men age 85 and over who are veterans is striking. The number of men age 85 and over who are veterans is projected to increase from 400,000 in 2000 to almost 1.2 million by 2010. The proportion of men age 85 and over who are veterans is projected to increase from 33 percent in 2000 to 66 percent in 2010.
- ◆ Between 2000 and 2010, the number of female veterans age 85 and over is projected to increase from about 30,000 to 98,000 but is projected to decrease back to 50,000 by 2020.

Data for this indicator’s chart and bullets can be found in Tables 6a and 6b on pages 79–80.

