

U.S. Census Bureau News

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Facts for
Features

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Older Americans Month: May 2006

Older Americans Month originated with a presidential proclamation in May 1963 and has been proclaimed by presidents each year since. Last year, President Bush stated, "Older Americans teach us the timeless lessons of courage, sacrifice and love. By sharing their wisdom and experience, they serve as role models for future generations. During Older Americans Month, we pay tribute to our senior citizens and their contributions to our nation."

36.3 million

The number of people 65 and older in the United States on July 1, 2004. This age group accounted for 12 percent of the total population. Between 2003 and 2004, the size of this age group increased by 351,000 people.

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/004083.html>>

86.7 million

Projected population of people 65 and older in the year 2050. People in this age group would comprise 21 percent of the total population at that time.

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/001720.html>>

147%

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

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/001720.html>>

483 million

Current world population age 65 and older. Projections indicate the number will increase to 974 million by 2030.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/aging_population/006544.html>
and <<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbagg.html>>

Income and Wealth

\$108,885

Median net worth in 2000 of households with householders 65 and older. In contrast, householders under the age of 35 had a median household net worth of \$7,240.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p70-88.pdf>>

\$24,509

Median 2004 income of households with householders 65 and older, statistically unchanged, in real terms, from the previous year.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html>

9.8%

Poverty rate for people 65 and older in 2004, down 0.4 percentage points from the previous year.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html>

39%

Percentage of total annual personal income of people 65 and older that comes from Social Security payments.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/aging_population/006544.html>

Serving Our Nation

9.1 million

Estimated number of people age 65 and older who are military veterans.

(Source: American FactFinder)

Jobs

5 million

Number of people age 65 and older who are in the labor force.

<<http://www.census.gov/statab/www/>>, (2006 edition, Table No. 577)

Education

73%

Proportion of people age 65 and older in 2004 with at least a high school diploma.

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-attn.html>>

19%

Percentage of the population age 65 and older in 2004 who had earned a bachelor's degree or higher education. <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-attn.html>>

47,000

Number of people age 65 and older enrolled in college in October 2004.

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school.html>>

Marital Status

56%

Percentage of people age 65 and older who were married in 2004.

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>>

31%

Percentage of people 65 and older who were widowed in 2004.

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>>

Voting

79%

Percentage of citizens age 65 and older registered to vote in the 2004 presidential election, the highest rate of any age group. Seventy-one percent of people in this age group reported actually casting a ballot.

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/voting/004986.html>>

41%

Of all the votes cast in the 2004 presidential election, the projected percentage to be cast by people 65 and older. In the 2004 election, people in this age group cast 19 percent of the votes.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/aging_population/006544.html> and <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/voting/004986.html>>)

Homeownership

81%

Proportion of householders age 65 and older in 2005 who owned their homes. This compares with 43 percent for householders at the other end of the age spectrum — under age 35.

<<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/hvs/hvs.html>>

Coming to America

3.7 million

Number of U.S. foreign-born residents 65 and older in 2004.

<<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/foreign/ppl-176/tab02-1.pdf>>

Population Distribution

Nation

72

Overall, the number of men age 65 and older on July 1, 2004, for every 100 women in this age group. For those 85 and over, it drops to 45 men per 100 women.

<<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2004-sa.html>>

4.9 million

The number of people 85 and older in the United States on July 1, 2004.

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/004083.html>>

67,473

Estimated number of centenarians in the United States on Nov. 1, 2005.

<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/2004_nat_res.html>

580,605

Projected number of centenarians in the United States in 2040.

<<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>>

States

17%

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

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/004083.html>>

4.2%

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

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/004083.html>>

3.8 million

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

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/004083.html>>

Recreation

11.3 million

Number of people 65 and older who engage in exercise walking, 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, camping, golf and swimming. (People 65 and older are keeping up with younger adults; exercise walking was number one for them also.) <<http://www.census.gov/statab/www/>> (2006 edition, Table No. 1238)

About 3-in-10

Of all mass market, or “pocket sized,” books purchased in 2004 by adults, the proportion bought by people age 65 and older. <<http://www.census.gov/statab/www/>> (2006 edition, Table No. 1128)

Cars

78%

Percentage of households with a householder age 65 and older who own a motor vehicle.

<<http://www.census.gov/statab/www/>> (2006 edition, Table No. 700)

3%

Percentage of households with a householder age 65 or older who have three or more cars available to use. <<http://www.census.gov/prod/2004pubs/H150-03.pdf>>

Computers

40%

Percentage of people 65 and older who have a computer at home.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p23-208.pdf>>

25%

Percentage of people 65 and older who use the Internet.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p23-208.pdf>>

The following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series:

African-American History Month (February)	Labor Day (Sept. 4)
Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)	Grandparents Day (Sept. 10)
Women's History Month (March)	Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
Irish-American Heritage Month (March)/ St. Patrick's Day (March 17)	Halloween (Oct. 31)
Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)	American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month (November)
Older Americans Month (May)	Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
Mother's Day (May 14)	Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 23)
Father's Day (June 18)	The Holiday Season (December)
The Fourth of July (July 4)	
Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)	
Back to School (August)	

Editor's note: The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: (301) 763-3030; fax: (301) 457-3670; or e-mail: <pio@census.gov>.