

U.S. Census Bureau News

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Facts for
Features

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Older Americans Month: May 2011

A meeting with the National Council of Senior Citizens resulted in President John F. Kennedy designating May 1963 as Senior Citizens Month, encouraging the nation to pay tribute in some way to older people across the country. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter's proclamation changed the name to Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate those 65 and older through ceremonies, events and public recognition.

39.6 million

The number of people 65 and older in the United States on July 1, 2009. This age group accounted for 13 percent of the total population. Between 2008 and 2009, this age group increased by 770,699 people.

Source: Population estimates

<<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2009-sa.html>>

88.5 million

Projected population of people 65 and older in 2050. People in this age group would comprise 20 percent of the total population at that time.

Source: Population projections

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html>>

545 million

Projected 2011 midyear world population 65 and older. Projections indicate the number will increase to 1.55 billion by 2050. The percentage of the world's population 65 and older would increase from about 8 percent to about 17 percent over the period.

Source: International Data Base <<http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/groups.php>>

35

The projected number of people 65 and older to every 100 people of traditional working ages (ages 20 to 64) in 2030, up from 22 in 2010. This time period coincides with the time when baby boomers are moving into the 65 and older age category. (The figures for 2010 are not census counts.)

Source: The Next Four Decades: The Older Population in the United States: 2010 to 2050

<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/aging_population/cb10-72.html>

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42%

The percentage of the 65 and older population expected to be a minority – i.e., a group other than single race, non-Hispanic white – in 2050, more than double the percentage in 2010 (20 percent). Likewise, among those 85 and older, 33 percent are projected to be a minority in 2050, up from 15 percent in 2010. (The figures for 2010 are not census counts.)

Source: The Next Four Decades: The Older Population in the United States: 2010 to 2050
<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/aging_population/cb10-72.html>

Income and Wealth

\$31,354

Median 2009 income of households with householders 65 and older, up 5.8 percent, in real terms, from the previous year. The corresponding median for all households was \$49,777.

Source: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009
<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p60-238.pdf>>

8.9%

Poverty rate for people 65 and older in 2009, down from 9.7 percent in 2008. There were 3.4 million seniors in poverty in 2009, down from 3.7 million the previous year. The corresponding rate for the population as a whole was 14.3 percent.

Source: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009
<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p60-238.pdf>>

Serving Our Nation

9.0 million

Estimated number of people 65 and older who were veterans of the armed forces in 2009.

Source: 2009 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

Jobs

6.5 million

Number of people 65 and older who were in the labor force in 2009. Projections indicate that by 2018, the number will reach 11.1 million.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as cited in the Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2011 (Table 585)
<<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>>

55%

The percentage who worked full-time among people 65 and older who were employed in 2009.

Source: The Older Population in the United States: 2009

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age/older_2009.html>

42%

The percentage working in management, professional and related occupations among employed people 65 and older.

Source: The Older Population in the United States: 2009

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age/older_2009.html>

16%

Percentage of people 65 and older in the labor force in 2009.

Source: 2009 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

Education

77%

Proportion of people 65 and older in 2009 who had completed high school or higher education.

Source: 2009 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

20%

Percentage of the population 65 and older in 2009 who had earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Source: 2009 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

Marital Status and Living Arrangements

56%

Percentage of people 65 and older who were married in 2010.

Source: Families and Living Arrangements

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2010.html>>

28%

Percentage of people 65 and older in 2010 who were widowed.

Source: Families and Living Arrangements

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2010.html>>

66%

Percentage of people 65 and older in households in 2009 who lived with relatives. Twenty-seven percent of all people this age lived alone, while 5 percent lived in group quarters and 2 percent in a household with nonrelatives.

Source: 2009 American Community Survey <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>

Voting

70%

Percentage of citizens 65 and older reporting casting a ballot in the 2008 presidential election. Along with those 45 to 64, people 65 and older had the highest turnout rate of any age group.

Source: Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/voting/013995.html>>

Homeownership

81%

Percentage of householders 65 and older who owned their homes as of 4th quarter 2010.

Source: Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey

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

Population Distribution

Nation

74

The number of men 65 and older on July 1, 2009, for every 100 women in this age group. For those 85 and older, it drops to 46 men per 100 women.

Source: Population estimates

<<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2009-sa.html>>

5.6 million

The number of people 85 and older in the United States on July 1, 2009.

Source: Population estimates

<<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/NC-EST2009-sa.html>>

71,991

Estimated number of centenarians in the United States on Dec. 1, 2010.

Source: Population estimates

<<http://www.census.gov/popest/national/asrh/2009-nat-res.html>>

601,000

Projected number of centenarians in the United States in 2050.

Source: Population projections

<<http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/summarytables.html>>

States and Counties

4.1 million

Number of people 65 and older living in California on July 1, 2009, the highest total of any state. Florida, with 3.2 million, and New York, with 2.6 million, were the runners-up.

Source: Population estimates <<http://www.census.gov/popest/states/asrh/SC-EST2009-01.html>>

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

African-American History Month (February)	Labor Day
Super Bowl	Grandparents Day
Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)	Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
Women's History Month (March)	Unmarried and Single Americans Week
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)
Cinco de Mayo (May 5)	Thanksgiving Day
Mother's Day	The Holiday Season (December)
Hurricane Season Begins (June 1)	
Father's Day	
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. Facts for Features are customarily released about two months before an observance in order to accommodate magazine production timelines. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: 301-763-3030; fax: 301-763-3762; or e-mail: <pio@census.gov>.